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Beating the Nickel in the Slot.

"Gimme a nickel's worth of buckshot," said St. Paul gamin wearing somewhat disordered raiment. His head, says the *Pioneer Press*, just topped the counter in a bazar devoted to sporting goods.

"I suppose he will load them into a rusty pistol and accidentally shoot some one of his intimate friends," suggested a bystander.

"Oh, no," replied the proprietor of the gun store, "he has no firearms. He is going in to beat the nickel-in-the-slot scheme, and I suppose I am participating criminally."

"How?"

"Why, he will put them on the street-car track; the car will convert them into the exact size of nickels and pennies; and, of course, you can anticipate the financial panic liable to ensue in St. Paul shortly, with a gum-machine at almost every corner."

Mercantile Troubles in China.

The Foochow (China) *Echo* says the losses incurred by tea men during this season are computed at \$20,000,000, and failures of other traders have amounted to more than half that sum.

Keep Pegging Away.

This world is a world full of pitfalls and snares. Of Lilliput pleasures and Gulliver snares; With people more ready to curse than to bless, With little to cheer you and much to depress; But the best thing to do is—believe me, I pray— Face your duty, be brave, and keep pegging away.

The pitiful creatures of envy, indeed, Will jeer or will carp if you fail or succeed; There are those without number who lack not the will To give you a kick once you're started down hill. Don't let them disturb you; don't mind what they say; Turn your eyes to the light and keep pegging away.

Devotion to duty a lever will prove; Wile with you can myriad obstacles move; You may find that life's gold overmatcheth the dross. In striking your balance of profit and loss, Be steadfast and patient, be in petal and gay— To business attend and keep pegging away.

With the honey of life must some wormwood be mixed; As the daintiest rose by a thorn is transfixed; But the honey's more sweet from the leaven of gall, And the rose rudely pierced the most fragrant of all. You'll find your reward great and lasting some day, If strong in your faith you keep pegging away.

—John T. Mann.

By the time the ring was answered I was wide awake and had my "professional expression" on. Two men came in, and one held in his arms a limp, senseless figure, a boy, about 3 years old, covered with blood flowing from a gash in his head. I took the little fellow in my own arms and carried him to a sofa, while the men brought me water and seemed deeply interested in all my movements.

A broken arm and the deep cut on the head kept me busy some time, but at last my little patient was made as comfortable as possible, and was moaning with recovered consciousness.

FREDDIE'S FORTUNE.

"Have you far to carry him?" I asked one of the men.

"We don't own him," was the answer. "He was a-running across the street and a horse kicked him over, Jim, here," indicating his companion, "he picked him up, and I come along to help find a doctor, 'cause Jim can't read."

"Needn't a-shoved that in!" growled Jim turning red. "Poor little chap, how he groans!"

"I will give him something to quiet him presently," I said, "and will send word to the station house if his name's not on his clothes."

The men departed and I lifted my charge once more and went upstairs to my mother's room, over the surgery. It did not take many minutes to enlist her sympathies, and we undressed the child and put him in her wide bed, hoping to find some mark upon his clothing. There was none, and when I saw this I spoke frankly, "Mother, there is just one chance for the little fellow's life, and that is perfect quiet. He will have fever, probably be delirious, and to carry him to a hospital, or even to his own home, may be fatal. I will send to the station house and then—"

"You know I will nurse him, John," my mother said. "If his mother comes she must do as she thinks best, but until she does come, leave him to me."

I wrote a description of the child's long brown curls and brown eyes, of the delicate suit of clothes in which he was dressed, and sent it to the station house. No call being made in three days, I advertised him for a week, and still he was not claimed. It was very strange, for the child's pure, delicate skin and dainty clothing seemed to mark him as the child of wealth.

But while he lay unknown, my little patient was struggling hard for life against fever and injuries. He was delirious for many days, calling first "Mamma—pretty mamma!" begging her not to go away, and making our hearts ache by often crying, "Oh, Ann Lucy! don't beat Freddie! Freddie will be good!" or, "Grandma, grandma, don't die!" in cries of extreme terror.

Mother would get so excited with indignation over those cries, that I saw the child had won a fond place in her warm heart.

"He has been ill-treated, John, the pretty darling!" she would say. "I hope the cruel people who could hurt such a baby will never find him again."

The second week of his stay with us was closing and Freddie had regained his reason and was on the road to recovery, when one morning a carriage dashed up to my door and two ladies alighted.

They wore rustling silks of the latest fashion and were evidently mother and daughter. The younger lady was very beautiful, a perfect blonde and dressed in exquisite taste.

"Dr. Morrill?" inquired the elder lady.

"I bowed.

"We called in answer to an advertisement regarding a child, my grandson. You will probably think it strange we have not been here before, but we were obliged to leave town the day before he was lost and have just returned. The nurse who had him in charge ran away, and while we supposed him safe at home he has been lying in a hospital, perhaps dying."

"We were nearly distracted on our return," said the young lady, "when we missed our darling; but an inquiry at the station house sent us here. The officer also showed us your advertisement. Where is our dear child?"

"He is here," I answered, "under my mother's care, and I am happy to say, doing well."

An unmistakable look of disappointment crossed the faces of my visitors, but the elder one said, "can we see him, doctor?"

I asked permission to announce their coming to my mother, and left the ladies alone. When I returned, after some five minutes' absence, I was struck by the change in their faces. The younger one was pale as ashes, and the elder one had a set, hard look of determination, as if nerved by some sudden resolution.

I led the way to my mother's bedroom, where Freddie was in a profound slumber. The younger lady shrank back in the shadow of the bed curtains, but the mother advanced and bent over the child.

There was a moment of profound silence, then, in a hard voice the old lady said, "I am sorry to put you to so much trouble, Doctor Morrill. This is not the child we lost."

A heavy fall started us, and I turned to see the young stranger senseless on the floor. Her mother spoke quickly, "The disappointment is too much for her. We so hoped to find my grandson."

I did not reply. The delirious ravings of the child were still ringing in my ears as he pleaded with the harsh grandmother and aunt. I did not believe the old lady's statement, but, having no proof to the contrary, was forced to accept it.

Long after my visitors had departed, the beautiful blonde still trembling and white, mother and I talked of their strange conduct.

"It is evident they want to deny the child," I said.

"I am glad of it," mother replied. "We will keep him, John. He shall have a grandma to love, not one to fear."

So the Summer and early Autumn wore away and Freddie was dear to us as if he had claim of kinship. His rare beauty, his precocious intellect, and his loving heart had completed the fascination commenced by our pity for his suffering, weakness and loneliness. He called us "Grandma" and "Uncle John," and clung to us with the most affectionate caresses.

Being blessed with ample means, mother and I had quite decided to formally adopt pretty Freddie when he had been a little longer unclaimed in our house.

Dennis, my coachman, was very fond of Freddie, and careful; so I was not afraid to leave my little charge with him while I was indoors, and he was very happy chatting with the good-natured Irishman and waiting my coming.

It was early in November, and mother had dressed Freddie for the first time in a jaunty suit of velvet, with a dainty velvet cap over his brown curls, when one morning I sent him out with Dennis until I was ready to start.

I was making my final preparation for departure when I heard a piercing scream under my window and Dennis saying, "By jabsers, she's fainted, the crather!"

While Freddie cried, "Mamma—pretty mamma!"

I ran out hastily to see an odd tableau. Dennis was supporting in his strong arms a slender figure in mourning, half leaning on the shafts, while Freddie clung to her skirts, sobbing, "Mamma—mamma."

"Bring her in, Dennis," I said.

"I'll do that same, sur," was the reply as Dennis lifted the little figure like a feather weight, and crossing the pavement came into the surgery. I shut out the curious people who followed, and Freddie clung fast to the black dress, never ceasing his loud cries of "Oh, mamma! It is my mamma; come home to Freddie! Mamma—pretty mamma!"

The sound rang through the house, reaching my mother's ears as she sat in her room. She came hurrying down the stairs and entered the surgery just as Dennis deposited his burden in an arm chair. Comprehending the situation at a glance, mother tenderly removed the heavy crape veil and bonnet, loosening a shower of brown curls round a marble-white face, still insensible.

At that moment the stranger opened a pair of large brown eyes, as brown and as soft as Freddie's own, and murmured, in a faint voice, "Freddie! Did I see my boy?"

Then her eyes fell upon the child and in a moment she was on her knees before him clasping him to her heart, kissing him, sobbing over him till mother broke out crying too, and I was obliged to assume my "professional expression" by sheer force of will.

"Come, come," I said gently, "Freddie has been very ill, and can not bear so much excitement."

This quieted the mother in an instant, and she rose, still holding the child's hand in her own.

"It is my boy!" she said looking into my face.

"Freddie," I asked, "is this mamma?"

"Yes," said the little fellow, decidedly; "of course it is. My own pretty, mamma come from heaven!"

"Come from heaven?" she repeated with aly lips and gasping breath. "They told me he was dead, my boy, my Freddie—that he was run over and killed! The nurse saw him fall under the horse's feet!"

"But you see he was not killed," mother said in a gentle tone; "but is well and strong again."

And then motioning me to keep silent, mother told the widow of the child's injuries and recovery, of his winning ways, and our love for him.

"I must tell you first who I am," our visitor said. "I am the widow of Carroll West, who died of cholera in Liverpool only two weeks ago."

"When I heard he was ill I went to him at once, leaving my boy with my

husband's mother and sister. I knew they were not very fond of him, but I had no choice. I found my husband very ill, but he was recovering, when he had a relapse. During all his illness I heard only twice of Freddie—once that he was well, once that he had been killed in the street.

"I came home only two days ago, and they would tell me nothing of where my boy was buried—nothing but the bare fact of his death. I—I—oh, do not blame me—I was on my way to the river to end it all, when I met

It would be tedious to tell in detail all the long conversation that followed, but, authorized by Mrs. West, I called upon her husband's lawyer, and there heard her story.

"I think," said the lawyer, confidentially, "that the Wests are the proudest people I ever knew—proud of their money, their money and their beauty. Carroll West was the only son, Lucy the only daughter when the old man died. He left a considerable fortune, but Carroll has increased his share of it to immense wealth. His mother was very desirous of having him make a great match, and proportionately furious when he married a little dark-eyed seamstress, of no family in particular, and working for a living."

"Carroll," continued the lawyer, "had sufficient good sense to keep up his own establishment until he went into a heavy cotton speculation that called him to Liverpool. Then he left his wife and child under his mother's care, and before he went he made his will. Now, doctor," said the lawyer, speaking very slowly, and with marked emphasis, "that will leaves half his fortune to his wife, half to his child, but in case of the death of the child, the half that is due to Mrs. West and her daughter Lucy. If the mother dies all goes to the child, to revert again to the Wests, if he dies without direct heirs."

We could never tell whether the unnatural grandmother and aunt would have risked a legal investigation. The recognition between mother and child was complete, and the clothing we had carefully preserved was fully identified. Mrs. West did not return to her mother-in-law. For some weeks she was my mother's guest and my patient, being prostrated with low nervous fever, and then she took the house next to our own, her own claim and Freddie's to Carroll West's property being undisputed. We were warm friends for two years, and Mrs. West, senior, with the beautiful blonde, were occasional visitors at the widow's house; but when the violet and white took the place of crape and bombazine, I ventured to ask Adelaide West if a second lover would comfort her for the one she had lost, and my mother became Freddie's grandmother in truth, when his "pretty mamma" became my wife.

Mrs. West is dead, and Lucy married to a titled Italian, who admired her blonde beauty, but unlike many of his compatriots, finds the lovely lady fully able to take care of her own interests and guard her money against too profuse expenditure.—*Evening World.*

Tragic Story of a Diamond.

"There's the most beautiful diamond I have ever seen during an experience of thirty years with the sparkling gems," said a veteran diamond merchant, "he held up a stone that seemed to live in fire. From every crack radiated brilliant colors, and the hue of the stone was that steely blue which delights every connoisseur of the precious gems. The diamond did not weigh over six carats, but it was easily worth \$5,000."

"That stone has a tragic history," continued the man of jewels as he laid the diamond to rest amid a nest of snowy cotton. "It comes from the De Beers mines, in South Africa, and was discovered by a coolie employed by the Company. His practical eye saw that the gem was a marvellous one for beauty of color, and a desire to steal it overcame him. Well, he did steal it, and to conceal the diamond about his person—for the coolies work almost naked in the diamond mines—cut a hole in his flesh under the arm. But the wound did not heal, and the observant eye of the foreman saw what was the matter. A few days after he charged the coolie with having stolen a diamond, but the negro denied it."

"When Jack, the foreman, reached for his own arm the thief made a dash and ran toward the outskirts of the camp like a deer. The foreman followed him, but the fleet-footed negro outstripped him. He knew that a severe punishment awaited him if captured, and centered all his efforts on getting away with the stone, whose value would have made him rich for life. But Jack was equal to the emergency, and drawing his pistol shot the coolie through the back just as he was taking to the hills. His dead body was dragged back into camp, his arm cut open and this beautiful gem in the rough was taken from the insertion. It's a tragic story, but true as gospel, and only a sample of what has happened more than a hundred times in the diamond mines of South Africa."—*Philadelphia Inquirer.*

A Fatal Mistake.

Three children in the Sheffield, England, workhouse were done to death a few days ago by the medical officer who carelessly wrote a prescription for twenty grains of Dover's powder in ten packets, instead of ten grains in twenty packets.

The Italian foreign office has broken off diplomatic relations with the republic of Columbia until a claimed indemnity of \$50,000 be paid to an outraged Italian subject.

BRUTALITY IN A PRISON.

The Whipping Post in the Missouri Penitentiary.

A correspondent of the St. Louis *Republic* who has been there tells of prison punishment in Missouri. He says: "The use of the lash in the prison is common—too common to be of any possible benefit in keeping order. A man goes to the whipping post, not with the feeling that he is being punished for some infraction of the rules, but to gratify the ill-feeling of some guard whose enmity he has incurred. Deputy Warden Bradbury is the one whose duty it is to wield the rawhide. In the middle of the room stands the whipping post and stocks. The men stand facing the instrument of torture, and the guards report the conduct of their men to the Warden. One complains that one of his men neglected his work, or was talking to a fellow-prisoner; perhaps a prisoner was caught carrying bread to his cell from the kitchen. Deputy Warden Bradbury steps up to the whipping post, pulls off his coat, rolls up his sleeves, and in a caressing way picks up a rawhide, which he intently examines to see if it is all right.

"The culprit is brought up to the post. His hands are tied to the post near the ground, leaving him in a stooping position. His neck is placed under the stocks, which are then fastened so that he cannot jerk his head away. The Deputy Warden steps up, and seizing the man's shirt, pulls it up around his neck, leaving the bare back exposed. The prisoner receives from one to twenty-five lashes, according to the offense and the number of times he has been at the post. The Warden tucks his shirt sleeves carefully above his elbow, plants his foot firmly, and with a full swing of his powerful arm, down comes the whip with a swish and a crack upon the bare back of the prisoner. Swish comes the whip again, and the prisoner bites his lip to keep from crying out with the pain, as such a thing only increases the punishment. Crack, the whip again and again strikes the quivering flesh, leaving a thick welt along the skin, and as the force of the blows increases as the Deputy Warden warms up to his work, the welts assume first a red, then a blue hue, and finally the blood trickles down over his back in little streams. Again and again the lash, soft and pliable with the warm blood, curls around the naked form of the crouching and shrinking prisoner until either the allotted punishment has been inflicted or else the prisoner faints from the pain and torture."

"He is then given over to the care of the doctors. From long practice the whipping master can make the whipping more severe in a given number of strokes on the person of one prisoner than another. In case he wishes to make the pain more intense, after one-half the strokes have been given he goes to the other side of the prisoner and makes a series of cross-cuts, making a number of bloody Xs on the back. I have seen a prisoner faint from the severity of the punishment and from loss of blood. After the whipping is over the prisoner is carried to the blood on the rawhide is carefully wiped off, and it is ready for the next culprit. When the whipping was done by an official who was intoxicated or under the influence of liquor, the punishment was always more severe. I have seen one of the officials stagger as he walked up to the whipping post, and I know he was greatly under the influence of liquor."

How We Look at Things.

You and I see everything to some extent differently. You see things from the standpoint of your previously acquired groups of ideas; I from mine. Strictly no two persons can see the same thing in the same way, for it can never happen that two persons have precisely the same groups of ideas relating to any subject. These depend upon our past experience or our education, on the beliefs of our times, on our various sects or parties, on our pet theories, our interests, and our desires. Here is a simple illustration. Suppose an artist and an engineer, standing side by side overlooking a tract of country. What they perceive is wholly different. To the engineer the country presents itself as a possible line for a railroad, with here advantageous grades and there economic bridges. Before the artist is spread out a landscape, with light and shade and harmony of colors. Suppose, again, a plot of level ground in the suburbs of a city. A college student riding by perceives it as a possible ball-ground; a young girl as a tennis-court; a speculator, as an addition for town lots; an undertaker, perhaps, as a possible site for a cemetery.—*Prof. G. T. Patrick in Popular Science Monthly.*

A New Mexican Idol.

An elliptical-shaped gray stone, probably two feet in length and about six inches in diameter, was received at the white house recently accompanied by a letter from Gov. Prince of New Mexico. He stated that the stone was of the idol age, anterior to the arrival of the Spaniards in the western continent, and it was known to be over 300 years old. Among the Pueblo Indians the stone was venerated as a household god, and examination showed that with some rude tools an attempt had been made to depict eyes, nose, and mouth on the upper flat portion, while in the center crossed hands are easily discernible. It now rests on a shelf just above Private Secretary Halford's desk, and as a companion piece there is a primitive gourd sent to the white house by a North Carolina republican.

CONVERSATION AT MEALS.
Make the Dining-Room Bright and Attractive—The Art of Conversing.

Of all the rooms in a home the dining-room should be the most cheerful, not only as to furnishing and lighting, but for the conversation which should be carried on there. Here the family meet for the first time in the morning at the breakfast table, and as this is the family rendezvous, each member of the household should consider it his or her duty to contribute a share to the conversation, and not seem to be wholly absorbed in individual thoughts.

This is the opportunity to make plans for the day, before the members of the family separate for their various duties and pleasures, and one should be unselfish enough to enter into the spirit of each other's plans, even if it does not exactly suit one's mood, and when they meet at dinner they can recount their various experiences.

I know of some women who come to the breakfast table in shabby wrappers looking so gloomy and discontented that it would seem as if they were determined to represent the woman spoken of by Sydney Smith, who had made up her mind in the morning to be disconcerted all day, and nothing could dissuade her from being so.

When there is a large family, each with different characteristics, it would seem as if each might choose for a motto, if only during meals, "Look Cheerful," so that, even if one did not feel so he or she would not dampen the spirits of the others.

I think the worst epithet that can be applied to a person is that he or she is a "wet blanket." And certainly we all know of some persons who, when they appear among us, seem only to lessen our pleasures instead of increasing them.

So, above all things, let us be cheerful at breakfast, in our prettiest toilets, and make ourselves as attractive as possible. The morning is new, the day fresh, and we should try to be in accord with our surroundings.

There are some persons who make a specialty of preparing their conversation for the dinner table by reserving bits of news and stories which they have heard during the day. This is an excellent plan, as a dinner should be looked forward to as "a feast of reason and a flow of soul," as well as an occasion for satisfying one's appetite.

There is a difference between feeding and dining. True, one often gets tired of the same old topics, and when one leads a quiet life and nothing new ever happens, or no outsider appears with a bit of gossip to be discussed over the dinner table, one is apt to become a little sour and serious; but one must think of some new method of entertaining the family, and thereby be entertained themselves.

Reading a few paragraphs from the papers, or the last novel, or from some book of travels, and then taking the lead in the conversation and introducing these familiar topics, is a good way to vary the monotony of a family meal.

A "fad" this season at ladies' luncheons has been the proposition of a toast by the hostess, and the surprising of one of her friends by requesting her to respond to it.

This is certainly a novel plan to interest a roomful of women, and certainly would make an agreeable diversion and give an opportunity to practice the art of ready speaking and cultivating extemporaneous wit.

As women so often nowadays have to take up the cudgels of war and support themselves, it seems quite proper that they should be schooled a little in the art of speech-making.

Among fashionable people it is customary to appear at dinner in full evening dress, which gives the occasion a very festive appearance. Of course there are a great many families who are not fashionable, and who cannot afford such elaborate dinner gowns, and would not care for them, even if they could; but it is well to make some change in one's dress, as it freshens the mind as well as the body. Men like to lay aside their business cares with their business suit, and enter into a different world, as it were, by putting on evening clothes.

Of course men adapt their conversation to their surroundings, and it certainly must be a fact that they bring some cheerfulness into the family, as their advent is eagerly looked for. But where there are no men there might be a few smiles, and women should try to be as agreeable to each other as they are supposed to be to the opposite sex.

Conversation is also an aid to digestion, and a few hours over the dinner table are not hours thrown away.

There are some families who disagree so at the table that they never sit down "as a family," but always invite some outsider to come in and share the meal, whether it is breakfast, or luncheon, or dinner. This seems a great misfortune, as home could never be a pleasant one under these circumstances; and, even with such dispositions as these women must have, they certainly would be unhappy anywhere. There is a Scotch proverb it would be well to remember:

A merry heart goes all the day;
A sad, tires in a row all.

Not an Observer.

Mamma—"What did young De Riche say last night when you asked him whether the moon was shining as he came in?"

Lillian—"Why, he hadn't noticed."

"Hum—m! My dear, I wouldn't waste any more time there, I think."—*Tenc.*