

NEW SHORT STORIES

Staggered the Interviewer.
It was announced at 26 Broadway that William Rockefeller, treasurer of the oil trust and possessor of a reputed fortune of \$250,000,000, was "down and out."

This apparently sensational news was made public by George Washington Jackson, one of Mr. Rockefeller's personal representatives. It was made public in this way:

An American representative called to see the oil magnate for the purpose of substantiating an interview which, according to the ticker tape, he had given out in regard to the financial situation. Mr. Rockefeller was quoted as saying that better times were coming and that the railroads were overwhelmed with freight they could not handle.

As the reporter entered a dark complexioned but extremely courteous representative of the "system" emerged from behind a desk and said:

"Lookin' tuh see Massah Rockefeller, I reckon? Well, sah, Massah Rockefeller is down and out."

"Down and out!" exclaimed the reporter, staggered by the thought of a tremendous "beat" announcing to the



"LOOKIN' TUH SEE MR. ROCKEFELLER?"
world that the powerful financier who had hitherto conquered all before him in the triumphant march of Standard Oil was at last "down and out."

Then, plucking up courage, the newspaper man added: "What do you mean? Has Mr. Rockefeller resigned from Standard Oil?"

"Well, sah, I reckon he don't do dat just fob de present," responded the courteous George Washington Jackson. "I mean Massah Rockefeller come down tuh his office today, but he's jest now stepped out, sah."—New York American.

Big Tim Lifted the Lid.

Seven words spoken by Timothy D. (Big Tim) Sullivan in the assembly at Albany killed a bill for the passage of which the ways had been well greased.

One of Sullivan's colleagues who had opposed the bill at previous sessions, but was now supporting it, was explaining his change of attitude. "In previous years," he declared, "I was unable to support this bill because the slimy trail of the lobby was on it. These worms of the corridor were offering stocks and bonds for votes for the bill. This year, I thank God, the bill is in new hands, and no one charges that stocks and bonds are being distributed to effect its passage."

"No, Mr. Speaker," "Big Tim" interjected, "this year it's cash."
The bill didn't pass.—Albany Journal.

Reckless Railroad.

Jesse Lewisohn, the financier, told at a shareholders' meeting in New York a railroad story:

"America has a good many railroad accidents," he began, "but we must remember that America is an immense country, with an immense railroad traffic. Our roads, on the whole, are carefully and intelligently managed. They are not managed in the least like a road I heard a story of the other day."

"It was before the war, and a north-erner was traveling on a little railway in New England. Suddenly in an out of the way spot the train halted, and the brakeman leaped out and ran up the track. On the brakeman's return the tourist said to him:

"This is a queer place to stop. There is no station here. What's the trouble anyway?"

"Oh, nothin' of any consequence?" the brakeman answered. "The signal wuz agin us, that wuz all. I've jest sot it right, an' now we'll go on agin directly."

Dividing the Responsibility.

Early in Baron Huddleston's career at the bar he shared rooms with another barrister. Bodkin went one evening to take tea and wine with the future baron, and he particularly noticed the dirty, slovenly appearance of the clerk who waited upon them and of whom the host had for the nonce assumed exclusive possession.

Bodkin strongly advised Huddleston to insist on a change in the treatment of the youngster's person and appearance, and said it was scarcely decent to have a person in that dingy condition about him. "I do not much like to interfere," was the reply, "he looks upon Mr. T. as his master, and at the utmost I cannot claim more than half of him."

"Then," said Bodkin, "I would at all events make him wash my half of his face."—Bench and Bar.

RIVER OF SALT WATER.

Flows Inland in a Greek Island and Then Disappears.

One of the most curious phenomena of geography is found on the southern coast of the island of Cephalonia, near Greece. It is a stream of salt water which for an unknown period has left the almost tideless sea and flowed inland with considerable volume.

The sea enters the land at four points where the coast is practically on a level with the salt water surface. The four initial streams unite to form the little river that flows inland in a broken rocky channel until it finally disappears in the limestone rock and sinks into the earth.

This inland flow has continued almost certainly for several centuries. It is far too great for removal by evaporation, chemical combination or even physical absorption by pores or caverns in the rocks. What becomes of the water that is constantly flowing inland and disappears finally in the fissures that have opened in the limestone?

The question has been the subject of much study, but no conclusive answer has been given. It is probable that there is an underground channel which carries the water back into the sea at no great depth below the surface. The constant influx of salt water at Cephalonia is duplicated as far as is known at no other point of the world.—New York Sun.

SPORTS AND THE SPHERE.

The Basic Pursuit in Most Games is to Drive a Ball.

Some day there will arise a patient investigator who will work out this problem. Why are most sports but the variants of one object, the propulsion of a sphere?

Billiards, baseball, polo, golf, slinging, marbles, squash, handball, football, rackets, cricket, hockey, bagatelle, tennis, shooting, pelota—the basic pursuit in each is to drive a ball, the propulsion of a sphere.

Tipcat, shuttlecock and top spinning are the employment of modifications of the sphere, and archery is but another method of propulsion.

It is a strange limitation of form, and there must be a reason. Those who delve into origins may ascribe the whole motive of sports to some long armed, hirsute ancestor who first threw a pebble at a fellow cave dweller and found it great fun.

Or it may be poor mortal's attempt to get in a small fashion into the tremendous scheme of the universe, which is the everlasting movement of the spheres. Or it may be that sports are framed in inevitable obedience to some irresistible law of nature.

At any rate the fact is sports are based on the propulsion of the sphere and some one ought to find a reason therefor.—New York American.

Wych Hazel, Not Witch Hazel.

The correct name for Hamamelis virginica is not witch hazel, but wych hazel. Our plant has no connection with the magic of the water hunter. The blackthorn of England, Prunus spinosa, was the wood used in these divinations or whatever these superstitious practices may be termed. Hazel had a very wide meaning in the olden times, and the elm as well as the nut now known as such was hazel. One of these elms, now known as Ulmus montana, was the favorite wood for making wyes, or provision chests, and was therefore known as the wych hazel. In the present day it is the wych elm. Our hamamelis received from the early settlers the name of wych hazel from the resemblance of the leaves to those of the wych hazel or elm of the old world. Language reformers imagining that wych should be spelled witch are responsible for the confusion. Wych hazel is the correct term for our plant.

Dangerous Golf.

One of the rules of the Weston-super-Mare (England) Golf club reads, "A ball may be lifted and dropped with the loss of a stroke when played within the railings surrounding the powder magazine." There appears to be an element of danger in this kind of golf which reminds a London writer of a certain golf course on the West African coast, where the eighth and ninth holes are always optional, as several golfers are said to have been lost there owing to the proximity of the jungle, which is known to be a favorite lair of the lion.

Where the Difference Lay.

"One of his complaints against his wife in the divorce suit," said the lawyer, "was that she smoked cigarettes."
"Oh, my goodness! And whenever he comes to see me," cried the bachelor girl, "I smoke and smoke!"
"Oh, he doesn't mind other women smoking cigarettes," declared the lawyer. "He likes it. It is only his wife."
—New York Press.

For the Defense.

Ma—I hear that you've been playing with Donald Smith again. Tommy Now, I told you— Tommy—Playing with him! You see the black eye he's got and you'll soon guess if there was any playing about it.—Punch.

Always at It.

Mrs. Pease—My husband and I never dispute before the children. We always send them out when a quarrel seems imminent. Miss Sharp—Ah, I've often wondered why they're so much in the street!

Pretty Hot.

"Under the equator, gentlemen," remarked an extensive traveler, "it is so hot that the natives have to put bears in ice chests to prevent their eyes from being hard-balled eggs."—London Mail.

A SCOTTISH LEGEND.

Were Pontius Pilate's Scotch Guards at the Holy Sepulcher?

While in a company chiefly composed of Englishmen and Scotchmen last evening the conversation drifted into military matters, and one of the Scotchmen declared, and his statement was borne out by his compatriots present, that the first regiment ever formed in the British army, the First Royal Scots, supplied the guard for the tomb of Jesus Christ after the crucifixion. It appears that the Romans carried off a number of wild, warlike highlanders as prisoners after their conquest of Britain, and these men and their descendants became soldiers of the Roman empire, and as such they guarded the tomb. This Scottish company, for it only consisted of a hundred men under a centurion, was kept distinct from the Roman army proper. At the time of the crucifixion they were called Pontius Pilate's Scotch guards, and their descendants were the nucleus of the First Royal Scots in later years. The archives of this regiment at the headquarters at Glencorse, Scotland, are stated to bear this out. I had heard this some years ago, my informant now being a well known Scotch officer high in the ranks of the British army, and now that this strange tale is corroborated by several others of his countrymen, one of whom is an officer in a well known highland regiment, I am anxious to know if the strange tale can be borne out in fact. Perhaps you or one of your readers could oblige me with the confirmation or otherwise of this statement.—F. S. K., Brooklyn, in New York Times.

Jollyng Versus Guying.

"Queer how a man will laugh if you say you've just been 'jollyng' him and resent it if you declare you are 'guying' him," said a thoughtful looking man who had been listening to the conversation of two young men standing in the aisle. "And, after all, it's quite the same thing. But there's something in the word 'guy' we all resent. I believe that word 'jollyng' wards off many a fit of temper, for there's something about it that sounds cordial and good natured, and it seems as if the man who would flare up at being jollied was a very sour minded person."

"When I was a young man we talked of 'joking' one another, but somehow that sounds rather flat today. Later people 'fooled' one another, but there was too much of a vision of a dunce cap to make that expression very popular. 'Guying' followed, but somehow that savored too much of holding a fellow being up to ridicule. And now we've graduated to 'jollyng,' and I think it's an indication that the world in general is becoming better natured."
—New York Press.

He is sufficiently learned that knows how to do well and has power enough to refrain from evil.—Cicero.

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