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PENLEY'S PRIZE

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CHAPTER I.

THE green shop blinds had been hauled down, the window lights switched off, and the register reset for the next day, and the junior assistants had gone home, as Edwin Payne stood, hat in hand, preparatory to leaving the well stocked store of his employer. It was known s Penley & Co. to the thronging crowds who passed along a busy North London marketing street, and the number of its patrons increased each week. But his brisk "Good night, sir," was answered by an unusual request to stay for a chat.

"What shall we discuss?" queried Edwin; "the offer of a new shop and stock as a prize just announced or the plans for our Christmas show?"

"Neither!" replied his employer, as he came from behind the counter to take a seat near his most trusted assistant; 'but your first suggestion, strangely enough, leads me up to that of which I wish to speak. You will be surprised to hear me say that this shop, with stock, fittings and good will, came into my possession within a fortnight after I first entered it, though at that time I had scarcely ten pounds to call my own."

Edwin looked up with a start of surprise, but his comments were suppressed by Mr. Penley's raised hand, as he proceeded:

"Yes, it is true. Only a few have heard the story, but it is essential and fitting for me to tell it to you, in view of your proposed partnership with me. I will try to describe the occurrences of those eventful weeks just as they happened. So listen carefully, and reserve any questions until I have concluded."

Edwin lit a cigarette, crossed his legs, and saying, "All right, sir, fire away. I am all attention!" he listened to the following narrative.

CHAPTER II.

'Just seven years ago I was perusing the advertisements in a trade paper one Saturday at midday, in the hope of securing a better situation than the one I was then about to leave. One advertisement in particular attracted me by its generous terms. Here is the cutting. I have saved it ever since. I will read it out:

"Wanted at once, a smart assistant (single or married) to take complete charge of a grocery and provision business, cash trade, live out; good wages.—Apply Y. and Y. 90, office of——"

"I applied for the post without delay, and received a reply on the following Monday, in which I was asked to call on a Mr. Maurice at a private city hotel. With all possible speed I hastened to answer the request in person. On arrival at the address given, I was shown into a much mirrored room, the only occupants being two bearded gentlemen with a facial resemblance to each other, apparently about thirty-five and forty years of age, respectively, faultlessly attired, smoking fragrant cigars.

"One of them rose to greet me, saying, 'Well, young man, you are Mr. Penley, I presume! This is my brother, Mr. Yexley Maurice. We have scanned closely all replies to our advertisement in the ——, and have decided to give you the post without further prelude, if this interview is satisfactory. Please be seated, and I will explain our requirements.'

"Somewhat surprised at the affability of my prospective employer, I drew toward the table on a velvet covered chair, and with a nod intended to express mingled gratification and interest, I listened attentively as Mr. Maurice proceeded:

"'This week we have taken a grocery store in a North London main thoroughfare. It has only recently opened, so we bought it cheap. Know nothing of the trade ourselves, and our purchase has been effected for reasons into which we need not now enter. We wish to give a smart young man a chance to show his ability rather than have any responsibility ourselves. Two of the hands are kept. We should wish you to lock up the shop each night, bring the keys round to us at once, and call for them again on your way to the shop in the morning. That arrangement is also for reasons of our own. The rooms above the shop are used for store rooms.'

"After settling smaller details, the interview was concluded by my agreeing to call at the hotel at nine o'clock on the following evening. My new duties were to commence on the Monday week. As I had the rest of the day free I went to meet Minnie (who is now Mrs. Penley). At that time she was a telegraphist in a sub-post-office in this district. She was elated at the news, especially as it involved my moving nearer to her abode, and the hours I should work in the evening would be less than in the previous situation. That evening we went round to look at the store. The proprietor was at the counter, and the stock showed signs of preparation for stock-taking. After I had introduced myself, the elderly and genial grocer told me why he was leaving the premises.

"Said he: 'Some weeks ago two gents drove up in a smart trap accompanied by a chap who looked like an accountant I met once at a trade sale. After much preamble, he asked me point blank if I would let the business to him. I was astounded at the offer, but when I heard his proposed price I became willing to contemplate it. Trade had been getting less owing to company competition. I had a lease on the premises, but my eyesight was failing, so I came to terms. This has been a grocer's shop eight years. I took it over empty. The previous tenant was a diamond merchant. He was drowned at sea, and the assets found in this house, then used as his office, were only just sufficient to pay his local debts. But he had never married, and apparently no one was left to lament the loss of his life.'

"Minnie looked extremely interested in the narration, but I let it all slip from my mind as I stopped his volubility to enquire into the regime of the business and the extent of its operations, which were of chief interest to me, in view of my prospective management.

CHAPTER III.

"After the week of waiting had passed, I entered the store with my mind full of plans for the future development of the business. Mr. Maurice (the younger one this time) took me over the premises, but on reaching the door which led to the basement below the shop, he stopped short, and said:

"'This door I shall retain the key of. The stock has been removed upstairs, and we do not intend to utilize the place. It is very damp down here. The door I will now lock, and it will remain so for the present. All goods that you order pay for on delivery. We have placed sufficient petty cash in the safe to commence with. I shall call in each morning with my brother to inspect the books.'

'After he had left, I commenced to clear up, with the help of my two assistants, the traces of stocktaking during the previous week. After closing at 8 p. m., I took the keys around in accordance with instructions, and called for them on Tuesday morning. On entering the shop I was surprised to see on the sawdust floor faint marks of muddy footsteps. Surely no one could have entered during the night, I thought. Everything was in order as I had left it, so I soon dismissed the matter as a mistake on my part. But that night I resorted to the time-worn but effective, device of tying white cotton across the space I imagined had been traipsed over during Monday night. On Wednesday morning it was broken. I spoke of it to my employers, who said I was suffering from a hallucination probably, as no burglar would enter without disturbing the goods, and that as long as the imagined intruder confined his attentions to sawdust he did not mind such surreptitious visits in the least. But during that day I found a key to fit the door leading below the shop, and also procured a duplicate key locking the front entrance of the shop. Until the evening arrived I suppressed my curiosity to utilize the key I had found and inspect the mysterious basement below the shop, because of the presence of my assistants. We all left at 8 p. m., as usual, and I delivered up the keys but retained the duplicates. I told Minnie an hour after that I felt certain intruders had nightly visited the shop I was in charge of, and that in my employers' interests my determination to stay in it all night to await developments must be put into immediate action. She protested, but I was firm, and left her with instructions to go to her office the next morning via the street in which the store was situated. If it was not open, she was to go back and ask her father to procure a key and go down to the basement. Into that dull and dreary cellar I crept about 11 p. m., after carefully closing and locking all other doors behind me. I glanced around with the aid of the glistening light afforded by a pocket electric lamp. It apparently contained nothing but empty cases, lidless tins, and broken confectionery bottles. But to my astonishment the red tiles which had constituted the floor had been levered up and heaped together in the corners, in one of which I could distinguish, as my eyes became used to the lack of light, a set of gardening implements. Their presence probably accounted for the evidences of digging apparent. While standing there ruminating, I heard the front door of the shop open and close, and subdued voices on the floor above. In a few seconds I had hidden myself in an empty barrel, and pulled a sack, which had been carelessly thrown over the barrel, into a better position. Scarcely had this been arranged when two men came into the cellar with an oil burning cycle lamp alight. Through a convenient hole in the barrel, I perceived them to be Mr. Maurice senior and his brother. Pulling a paper from his pocket the elder one read out quietly, as if to himself:

"'I, Edward Maurice, have this day buried beneath the basement of my offices at —— gold coin and diamonds to the value of £20,000. If I never return from South Africa alive, which colony I am now going to visit, the said specie shall become the property of whoever is tenant in this house ten years from above date——'

"'Now put that paper away, Charles,' said Yexley (the younger of the two). 'You have read that aloud to me a hundred times during the month it has been in our possession. Let's start digging.'

"'All right, Mr. Gardener, so we will. All blessings on the servant who knocked that little box of uncle's on to the floor and revealed that secret partition containing this message. She could have spared us her apologies that time.'

"As they raked up the earth, conversation was continued in subdued tones, and from the sentences which were audible to me, I could deduce the history of the exciting testament I had just heard. It appeared that the two gents were nephews of a Mr. Edward Maurice, the diamon merchant who had rented the premises years ago. Their father had stolen the heart of a young lady who was once engaged to their uncle, and married her. A vow of revenge had been taken by Edward Maurice, and the estrangement had continued even after the birth of his brother's sons, whom he evidently intended should never benefit by him financially, either during his life or after. But his sudden death by drowning at sea came to pass before he had made any other will than the paper locating his hidden possessions, which had passed into the nephews' hands in the box referred to. All these details I rapidly pieced together mentally, until my reflections were suddenly stopped by an exultant cry from Mr. Yexley, as his fork sent forth a sound as if it had struck metal. A few moments after, and the brothers lifted out of the mould an iron box with a rusty padlock that was easily wrenched off. The glitter of gold was before them a few seconds after as the lid was thrown back.

"'At last! This lot is worth nearer £40,000 than £20,000!' exclaimed Yexley, exultantly, as he changed from one hand to the other (as connoisseurs does coffee beans) both cut and uncut diamonds.

"They almost danced in exultation, and I with great difficulty restrained a cry of astonishment. I had reason to regret their jubilant capers, for Charles kicked over a keg that had at one time contained pepper. The potent powder, some of which had adhered to the paper lining, filtered through the staves of my barrel where in my cramped position was becoming unbearable. All my efforts to ignore its influence proved futile, and I soon joined involuntarily in the chorus of sneezes. In a trice the sack was snatched off, and a small silver plated pistol pointed at my quaking countenance. I commenced to make profuse apologies for my presence, but they were stopped by a curt 'Say nothing, sir!' from Yexley, and I was obliged to passively submit to being bound to a bench with a cord belonging to a biscuit case; a 'kerchief was tied over my lips, so that shouting was impossible. I then listened in sullen silence, as Charles commenced to address me, thus:

"'How you got in here to-night we can only guess. Why you came we can do no more than guess at, for we know of your anxiety to protect our interests. We cannot stop to explain our presence, except to tell you that this gold is ours by right, and also because we have fulfilled conditions at a bequest by becoming legal tenants of these premises. But English law is too ponderous in operation for us, and fortunes have been lost over trivial clauses. To avoid all risk, we have taken this course. We are now going abroad. This business, with its stock and fittings, we will present you with—partly in appreciation of your short, but strenuous services, and partly because we do not wish to wait while a sale is effected. We shall send a message to your sweetheart asking her to call at our hotel for the key of this store. By that time we shall be nearing Southampton. Maintain a strict silence on this matter, or our gold will be yours. I'm going out now.'

"Within half an hour, during which Yexley stayed in the cellar, I heard a trap drive to the side entrance. Charles came down again. After dividing the contents of the box into two parcels, I saw them stagger towards the steps with the weight of the specie, and then the door closed leaving me in total darkness. A tumult of thoughts tore at a mad pace through my excited brain. What course should I adopt on the morrow? Was it all a dream? were among the first. But my chilled limbs enforced the reality of the situation; and as I lay there bound, even the prospect of a sudden step into comparative affluence failed to comfort my fears that my release would fail to follow. How I realized during that long night what it was to 'watch for the morning' with eyes that sleep refused to close. But, of course, it came, and with it my dear Minnie. Never shall I forget the look of mingled anguish, love and fear which the grey light coming in from a pavement grating revealed upon her lovely features. Sharp scissors soon cut away the cords, and Minnie almost sobbed out:

"'What does it all mean?'

"'It means happiness,' I replied. 'But tell me how you found out, and came to my relief so soon before I explain.'

"Minnie then informed me that anxiety of mind had caused her to prepare to go out early in the morning, and cycle round to the store to investigate. Underneath the door of her domicile a note had been passed during the night asking her to call for the key, as Mr. Maurice had planned. During these mutual explanations the hour for opening shop came round. By the time my assistants arrived, the basement was locked up, and all traces of my adventure removed. No one but Minnie's parents heard of it; and, after considering all points, we came to the conclusion that it was quite legitimate for us to co-operate with the plans of the brothers, and accept with gratitude their generous gift. We discovered that they had been dealing in diamonds for some years in London, had acquired a good reputation for straightforward transactions, and owed nothing. No other relations could be traced by us to the deceased Edward Maurice, and all information collected ratified the right of my employers to retain the treasure. Thus I entered into possession without compunction, and with the aid of a timely loan for initial operations, built up this business to its present dimensions. Every Christmas I receive an anonymous registered letter bearing the African postmark containing five Victorian sovereigns. That I always devote to some charitable purpose with as little ostentation as possible.

"But here is my dear Minnie coming to call me in to supper. I told her of my intention to tell you to-night, but she evidently wishes me to 'wind up.' So, good night, Mr. Payne. May your energies and capital find a fitting sphere in, and share the success of—

"PENLEY'S PRIZE."

Labouchere and the Ladies.

In Mr. Labouchere women had no champion in the House of Commons, and the announcement of his retirement will cause no regret among the more "advanced" members of the sex. The member for Northampton has no sympathy with political women. It was he who so pitilessly dubbed the dames of the Primrose League "Primrose Follies."—London World.

The military budget of the French Republic foots up to a total of 29,000 officers.

A HUNTER'S NARROW ESCAPE.

ONE evening while I was sojourning in Wyoming a couple of my young friends went out into a quaking asp thicket after grouse. One of them was armed with a forty-four Winchester, the other with a shotgun.

About half a mile from the ranch they entered a thicket, where they knew the grouse were plentiful. They advanced cautiously, parting the bushes, expecting every minute to flush a covey into the scattering trees, when they would have a good chance at them.

They approached a large bowlder, which was about the centre of the thicket, when young Stokesberry, who carried the Winchester and was in front, discovered two or three cub bears playing around the bowlder. Without hesitation two hasty shots brought down two of them and a third shot crippled the other, which raised a terrible yell.

Then out from behind the bowlder came something like a whirlwind—the mother bear—a monster silver tip, breaking the fallen timber and tearing the brush up by the roots. Stokesberry went up a sapling to the top of the bowlder, the bear with a mighty roar after him. The boy with the shotgun jammed it against her side and pulled the trigger, and then took to his heels through the brush.

The shot did not stop the progress of the she bear. It only brought forth another roar.

She kept on after Stokesberry, who had reached the top of the rock, and began to pump .44 bullets into her as fast as he could. But the ammunition was too small and did not seem to do much harm. It only enraged the huge animal.

The rock was not tall enough to protect Stokesberry, so he ran down the opposite side and attempted to make his escape by flight, and probably would have done so, but the fallen timber was a great tangle and the brush thick. He hung his foot and fell. The bear was upon him before he could rise. Then the bloody tussle began. With one stroke of her paw the bear broke two of his ribs, and grabbed him by the thigh with her mouth.

But Stokesberry had held on to his gun. There was only one cartridge in it, and that was in the magazine. From some cause the bear let loose of his thigh and grabbed him by the left arm, just above the elbow. Stokesberry, with his right hand and the breech of the gun on the ground, managed to spring the lever and throw the shell into the barrel, and worked the gun so that he got the muzzle into the bear's mouth and pulled the trigger. It blew the top of the bear's head off, and she fell dead across the body of the young man.

In the meantime the boy had made all possible speed for the ranch, and with two other men, well armed, came back as quickly as they could. They found the bear and the man as I have described, and thought both were dead.

But after pulling the big carcass off of Stokesberry, they found that he was still alive. They hastened to the ranch, got a wagon, dispatched a messenger twelve miles to Carson for a doctor, and used all the remedies they could, which restored him to consciousness before the doctor arrived. He was terribly lacerated and bleeding profusely, and his case looked hopeless. But he had nerve, and in a couple of months he was able to walk about. He had but little use of his left arm.

His friends killed the other wounded cub and brought the four bears to the ranch. The old one tipped the scales at 800 pounds. I afterward bought the hide, but the shotgun, loaded with No. 6 shot, had made a hole about six inches square behind the left shoulder. None of the shot went any further than to the ribs.—Denver Post.

WINTERING FAR SOUTH.

In the autumn of 1901 an exploring expedition left Sweden for the South Shetlands, whence it was to go to the east coast of that extensive and then unknown stretch of land which lies to the south of these islands. There the expedition was to penetrate as far southward as possible and land a wintering party of six persons. On the return of spring the vessel, the Antarctic, was to fetch off the wintering party. But the Antarctic was nipped in the ice and sank, and two relief parties had to spend the winter at two different points. In "Antarctica" the members of the expedition record their experiences during a second enforced wintering. They were all finally rescued and brought home.

We were perfectly unprepared for the eventuality. Had we planned a two years' residence we should have taken larger stoves with us, and should not have experienced the despondency and nervous uncertainty and mistrust of the future.

We had few books. When we wished to delight the eye with a few printed words we would take out the cans of condensed milk and boiled beef and read the labels. We endeavored to make up for this want of light reading by recalling what we had read under happier circumstances, Duse and I, for example, recounting all that we remembered of "Monte Cristo" and "The Three Musketeers."

Strangely enough, it was but seldom we experienced any oppressive feeling that time passed at a snail's pace. We were busy with work forced upon us by a hard struggle for existence. We had unending labor endeavoring to get our winter boots into proper condition. We had only one sail needle, and it was a great piece of good fortune that it never broke as we tugged with might and main to draw it and the thick thongs through the sealskin we used.

Grunden and I made shoes after the same simple plan. Our now bottomless Lapp shoes were provided with inner and outer soles of the skin of the full-grown penguin, and outside the whole we sewed an outer shoe of sealskin with a sealskin sole. It is easy to describe the making of such a shoe, but it took weeks to get one ready. Twenty or thirty stitches a day with the tools we had was a good day's work.

Duse made himself a pair of artistic outer shoes with wooden soles, the materials for which he obtained from the bottom of one of our bread barrels. In order to fasten the sealskin upper to this sole, he had to carve a deep groove with a very blunt knife round the edge of the hard bit of oak.

The sealskin was stuffed into the groove and held fast there with pegs driven in vertically. They had one great advantage over ours, that they did not become so wet during the thaws, Duse being able to go about dry-footed on his wooden soles, while our sealskin soles flapped like wringing-wet rags about our feet.

THE WHALE'S BACK-SCRATCHER

When a naval architect plans an improvement in marine construction he generally has little thought for its effect on the denizens of the sea. The man who invented bilge keels, however, says a writer on South America, provided the whales of the Brazilian coast with just the sort of a back scratcher they needed.

Insect pests annoy the whale, and barnacles find a home on a large part of his body. Sometimes the monsters may be seen rolling on a shallow sandy bottom to displace these pests, or rubbing themselves on the rocks of reefs.

On one occasion the mail steamer Orissa was stopped during a dense fog a few miles off Santa Maria Island in the Pacific. The coast being dangerous, an anchor was let down sixty fathoms or so, and the ship allowed to drift on the smooth water.

About 6 in the morning the captain heard some heavy whale "blows" or "spouts" apparently close at hand. Shortly afterward a continued tremor of the ship was felt. It was too gentle for an earthquake, and was varied with bumps. Soon a huge whale rose slowly out of the water and floated alongside, like a bark bottom up. It again descended, and the tremors recommenced.

Then the crew noticed barnacles and shellfish coming to the surface, and the secret was out. The whale was scraping himself—currying himself—on the sharp plate which projected as a steadier from the vessel's bilge.

Not caring to have him so near, in case he should smash the boats, the captain had him pelted with potatoes and coal; but he took no notice of it until a piece of coal went into his mouth, and was swallowed by mistake. Then he drenched the vessel thoroughly and "steamed" away, a last flourish of his indignant tail indicating that he was seeking quiet in the greater depths.—The Sketch.

GIRL CAPTURED SMUGGLERS.

Two Austrian smugglers recently attempted to cross the Silvretta Pass with heavy loads of tobacco and other dutiable goods from Switzerland into the Tyrol. Learning that the customs official, a man named Komerthal, was ill, they chose a misty night to cross the pass.

Their carefully-laid plans, however, were upset by Fraulein Komerthal, who is a fearless mountaineer. She had persuaded her father to retire for the night, and, taking his gun, stood sentinel on the lonely snow-covered pass.

In the early hours of the morning the young woman saw the smugglers approaching, and hid behind a ledge of rock. When they came up she suddenly confronted them with her gun leveled and ordered them to surrender.

Realizing that the game was up, the smugglers threw down their loads. The woman's voice betrayed her, however, and, finding that neither flattery nor bribery had any effect, the smugglers rushed at the courageous woman with the intention of overpowering her. One of them received the clubbed rifle on his head and fell unconscious in the snow. Komerthal, whom the report of the gun had awakened, then arrived on the scene and captured the second smuggler after a desperate struggle.—London Daily News.

TIGER STORY FROM INDIA.

A man living in a village near Lucknow is reported to have had an extraordinary adventure in the jungle the other day. He had gone in search of two buffaloes that had gone astray when he was attacked by a tiger.

He was unarmed except for a heavy stick, with which he fought until overcome by loss of blood, when he sank unconscious. At this moment the two buffaloes appeared. One of them stood over the wounded man while the other snorted and tossed his head.

The man recovered consciousness and staggered to his feet, when the tiger made another spring at him. The beast was, however, received on the horns of one of the buffaloes, and was so badly wounded that it turned tail and slunk away.—London Express.

She Knew.

A young lawyer had become very much attached to a certain young woman, who was somewhat celebrated among her friends for her repartee. The only obstacle in the pathway of the young man was his exceeding shyness, for while always in command of himself in the court room, he became almost speechless in the presence of his adored one. As one method of showing his devotion it was his custom to shower his inamorata with presents.

The young lady's mother, being far from satisfied with the status of the case, broached the subject.

"My dear," she said, "you have let Mr. Brown practically monopolize your society for a year, and now have scarcely any other callers. Has he ever given you to understand that his intentions are serious?"

"No, he hasn't said anything, but I know they are."

"How can you know it, if he has said nothing?"

The girl smiled.

"Well," she said, "you know he is a lawyer, and lawyers always commence a contract with 'Know all men by these presents.'"—Harper's Weekly.

IS THERE LIFE ON THE MOON?

THERE was a time in the history of the earth when it had no satellite, when it was not the globe we know it now, but a great liquid planet incrusted by a shell some thirty-five miles in thickness. That time is separated from us by an interval which cannot be accurately determined, but which must be measured by millions of years at least. In those early days of its planetary career, the earth spun on its axis with a constantly increasing swiftness that reduced the day to a few hours. When the period of revolution had finally dwindled to a bare three hours, a catastrophe occurred, one of the most fearful in all celestial history. Such was the enormity of the centrifugal force of the earth, that five thousand million cubic miles of its mass were hurled off into space. In that cataclysm our moon was born.

Strange as its origin may be, the moon has still other peculiarities to offer. It is the largest of all planetary satellites, so large indeed that to the inhabitants of a neighboring world it must appear with the earth as a marvelously beautiful double planet.

Because it is smaller in mass than the earth, the attraction of gravitation on the moon is considerably less than it is on the earth. If it were possible for one of us to journey to the moon and live there we should find ourselves able to accomplish six times as much as we can on the earth. We could lift weights six times as heavy, run six times as fast, work six times as hard—all because the moon attracts bodies with but one-sixth the force of the earth. We could leap over barns with ease, and run a mile at express train speed.

Despite the chasm of 253,000 miles that separates us from the moon, we know more of the physical characteristics of the single pallid face which it ever turns toward us than we do of the Arctic regions, or of the heart of Africa. We have studied, mapped and photographed the great dark plains which were once thought to be seas and were accordingly miscalled "maria;" the lofty mountain ranges that sometimes tower 20,000 feet above the seas, and the vast, annular craters that pit the moon's aged features.

Although it once formed part of the earth, the moon is different from our globe in many respects. Charred by by fires long since dead, honeycombed like a giant ball of slag, scarred by terrific volcano upheavals, its telescopic aspect is anything but cheerful. Craters are not uncommon features of the earth, but on the moon their number and size are truly astonishing. At the lunar south pole these dead volcanoes are so closely packed together that to Galileo (the first man who ever saw the moon through a telescope) they seemed like the eyes of a peacock's tail. So large, indeed, are many of these craters that a man standing within one of them would be unable to see the surrounding ramparts, because they would lie below his horizon. A diameter of ten, twenty or even sixty miles is not infrequently met with in a lunar crater.

Are these craters all dead? Most astronomers believe so, but Professor W. H. Pickering, of Harvard University, has recorded a number of observations that seem to point to the activity of a few of them at least. He relies chiefly on the fluctuations in size which have been observed in a comparatively small crater called Linne. On an old map one observer records Linne as a crater of moderate size. A century later it is described as a small, round, brilliant spot. When modern instruments of precision were invented the crater was measured repeatedly, with decidedly surprising results. Once its diameter was four miles; then it grew to six miles, and now it has shrunk to three-quarters of a mile. If this volcano is extinct, how comes it that it changes its size so strangely? Still another proof of activity is found by Professor Pickering in the eccentricities of a gigantic crater called Plato, and in dense clouds of white vapor which have appeared before his eyes, rising from a tortuous cleft known as Schroeter's Valley. So minute have been Professor Pickering's observations that their accuracy can not be seriously called into question.

Granting that a few of the moon's craters are active, it follows that they must discharge someting into space. That something, judged by our earthly volcanoes, must be water and carbonic acid gas. Because the pressure on the moon's surface is exceedingly low, and because the temperature during the long, cold lunar night is probably not far from 460 deg. F. below zero, water can not possibly exist in the fluid state. Ice and snow are the only forms water can assume.

Is there any evidence of snow and ice? Almost every crater is lined with white. The lofty peaks of mountain ranges are hooded in white. At the South Pole the white glare is almost blinding. What is this white sheen? Merely the natural color of the moon's wrinkled face, according to most astronomers—snow and ice, forming where it should form, according to Professor Pickering. The disappearance and reappearance of these white spots are admirably explained by this theory; for snow and ice would vaporize in the long lunar day—equal to fifteen of our days, and congeal again in white crystals as the sun sets.

It has been said that an earthly volcano vomits carbonic acid. Conceding that a lunar crater ejects water in the form of a vapor and carbonic acid gas, is there any reason why life, in its lowest forms at least, may not exist on the moon? Professor Pickering believes that he has discovered traces of vegetation. There are variable spots on the moon, spots that darken after sunrise and gradually disappear toward sunset. They are not shadows, for they are most pronounced when the sun is high in the heavens. They appear quickly at the equator, and encroach on the higher latitudes after a few days have elapsed. They are never seen in the polar regions. It is in these variable spots that Professor Pickering has discovered what he considers to be vegetation. Whether he is right or wrong this much is certain: He has explained with admirable simplicity a phenomenon that has long puzzled astronomers. To offset the objections that the temperature of the moon is too low to support organic life it may be answered that certain lichens thrive in our own Arctic regions, where the temperature rarely rises above the melting point of ice. Moreover, many bacteria resist the most intense cold that we can produce. It may be objected that in a single day vegetation can not grow appreciably, but on the moon a day is equal to fifteen of our days, and may well be likened to a miniature season.

The advances which have recently been made in selenography by Professor Pickering show that although the moon is not a riotously luxuriant abode it is anything but the lifeless orb commonly supposed. It may be desolate and cold, but it is not altogether dead. —Scientific American.

THE OLD SONGS.

Once Popular Ballads That Have Passed Into Obscurity.

How the popular song dies past all resurrection is emphasized by the death in Providence of Samuel N. Mitchell, who was the author of some of the most widely known in their day, says the New Bedford Standard. We suppose that not one in a thousand of the young people who greet with avidity the new songs of this day ever heard of "Touch the Harp Gently, My Pretty Louise," and yet it had a sale in this country of more than 4,000,000 copies, to say nothing of its immense popularity in England. That must have been thirty or forty years ago. Mr. Mitchell wrote "Sadie Ray" for a popular minstrel performer, and it was sung and whistled and tum-tummed on pianos in every nook and corner of this country. Most of the copies long since went into the ash barrels, and the rest are in the attics. Look at the titles of some of Mr. Mitchell's most popular songs: "Dear Sunny Days of the Past," "Dance Me, Papa, on Your Knee," "Amber Tresses Tied in Blue," "The Lane That Led to School." "My Love Sleeps Under the Daisies," "Speak to Me Kindly," "Little Bright Eyes at the Window," "Maggie With the Soft Brown Hair," "Our Comrades 'Neath the Sod," "The Sunny Smile of My Darling," "Sleeping in Death's Camping Ground," "We Deck Their Graves Alike To-day," "When My Love Comes Home to Me," "Put My Little Shoes Away." There are persons who recall them, but for the most part their singing days are over, and ragtime is more to the taste of the younger generation. Mr. Mitchell's verses were largely of the saccharine type that was affected by the tenor soloist of the negro minstrel company, the choruses lending themselves effectively to the pianissimo repetition by the entire troupe, and they thrilled many and many a suspectible heart. As poetry they were not, of course, pretentious. Their author never dreamed that they were. They did give innocent pleasure to thousands of persons, and when they had served their purpose they were pushed aside by the incoming of a new school.

WISE WORDS.

No conflict is so severe as his who labors to subdue himself.—Livy.

Education is a possession of which man cannot be robbed.—Menander.

To be content with what one has is the greatest and truest riches.—Cicero.

He who thinks his place below him will certainly be below his place.—Saville.

Not only he who wrongs you, but he who wishes to wrong you is your enemy.—Democritus.

There is no great achievement that is not the result of patient working and waiting.—J. G. Holland.

Ignorance combined with discretion is more serviceable than skill accompanied by extravagance.—Thucydides.

While the mind is still tender it is easy to mould it; vices which have grown up with us are with difficulty eradicated.—Seneca.

Early English Football.

The American game, however, can hardly be more violent than was the game as originally played in England, if we may judge from the denunciations of its enemies. According to Sir Thomas Elyot, a baronet of the time of the Tudors, the game consisted of "nothing but beastly furie and extreme violence," while Stubbes, the Puritan, describes it as a "bloody and murthering practice" and a "devilish business altogether." The fact that many players are injured seems to him no marvel:

"For they have the sleights to meet one betwixt two, and to dash him against the hart with their elbows, to hit him under the short ribs with their clenched fists, and with their knees to catch him on the hip or pitch him on the neck, with a hundred such murthering devices."

It is not easy to believe that matters can be worse than that even in the United States.—Westminster Gazette.

Horse and Horse.

"It has been the custom for a great many years," observed the Sage of Livelyburg, "to allude contemptuously to us as inhabitants of a one-horse town. But, to-day, my friends, we stand with this stigma removed. Looking from our windows into the streets filled with the electric, the gasoline and the steam motor cars dashing up and down, to and fro, we may utter with conscious pride an expression of gratification that we are a one-horse town no more. In fact, we may almost say that, with the banishment of our horses, we are at last modern, aggressive, up-to-date—a no-horse town of the first class!"—Puck.

Got Along Without Exercise.

The Rev. William Davies, a Hereford vicar, died some years ago. For thirty-five years he took no more exercise than was involved in walking from one room to another; he was a hearty eater, with a marked weakness for such appetizing things as hot buttered rolls (he always had them for breakfast) and roast pork. And yet he never had a day's illness during all these years, was the picture of health, and full of spirits and energy, and he lived to enjoy a hearty meal on his 105th birthday.—London Tit-Bits.

Tomfoolery

FOR OTHERS ONLY.

"No man is indispensable,"
We often say, but then
We can't see why this should apply
To us like other men.
—Catholic Standard and Times.

WOULD BE SOME PUNISHMENT.

"Well, they've got that beef packer in the dock at last."

"I'd rather see him on the jury."

"I'd like to know why?"

"The jury is going to be locked up."

A COMEBACK.

Her—"I wouldn't marry you if you were the only man in the world."

Him—"If I had any such cinch as that you'd never get the chance."—Cleveland Leader.

A FIVE HOURS' STRETCH.

"Her conversational powers are practically inexhaustible?"

"Are, eh?"

"They are, indeed. She talked clear through 'Parsifal.'"

A REMARKABLE GIRL.

"She's a girl of remarkable force of character."

"As to how?"

"She traveled continuously for four months this summer and never mailed a single souvenir postal card."

WANTED THE MONEY.

"Why don't you demand $50,000 instead of $5000?" said the lawyer.

"Oh, because," explained the lady of the breach of promise suit. "Then he might change his mind and want to marry me."—Detroit Free Press.

OCULAR PROOF.

"Before I married I was too careless to save a cent."

"And since?"

"I am not so thriftless. By strict economy I have managed to save a cent. If you don't believe it, here it is."

CAUSE AND EFFECT.

"Excuse me, madam," said the polite hobo, "but I crave your assistance. The iron has entered my soul."

"That," replied the icy-hearted lady, "is doubtless why you look so rusty."

And she slammed the door.—Columbus Dispatch.

AH, YES.

"Why do they speak of a man's possessions as his private fortune?" asked Butts.

"It's this way," replied Nordy. "Some men are in control of trust funds and the like. They have public fortunes. See?"

INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

Raynor—"Did you have a good time New Year's Eve?"

Shyne (bathing his head)—"Best ever."

Raynor—"What did you do?"

Shyne—"I haven't the remotest idea."
—Chicago Tribune.

THE DRAWBACK.

Weary Willie—"Firemen has a cinch; dey don't do nothin' most o' de time but loaf aroun' de firehouse. I'd like ter be a fireman, wouldn't you?"

Tagson Tatters—"Naw, onct I seen a fireman git soaked wid water from a hose."—Philadelphia Press.

EXPLAINED.

"She says she's never been to a horse show."

"Well?"

"And yet she claims to be in society at home."

"You forget that she has always lived in Boston. They are equine exhibits there."

BLOCKED.

Kadley—"Why didn't you introduce me to that stunning Miss Peches when you were with her on the avenue yesterday? Didn't you see me speak to you as I passed?"

Kandor—"Yes, but Miss Peches saw you and spoke to me first."—Philadelphia Press.

REAL SPORT.

"The fiends seem to be having a good deal of enjoyment this morning," remarked Lucifer, as he threw aside the Hades Gazette.

"They are, your majesty," explained an attendant. "They're torturing a bunch of senior class midshipmen just received from Annapolis."

DISCRETION.

Mrs. Trotter—"You'd better get the clerk to put your money in the safe, John. One never knows what may happen in these hotels."

Mr. Trotter—"Great Scott! Mary, I don't want the clerk to know I have all this money. He hasn't made out my bill yet."—Browning's Magazine.

FOR THE HORSE.

"Would you mind walking the other way and not passing the horse?" said a cabman with exaggerated politeness to the fat lady who had just paid a minimum fare.

"Why?" she inquired.

"Because if 'e sees wot 'e's been carrying for a shilling 'e'll 'ave a fit," was the freezing answer.—London Globe.

Put Away For Good.

"A worthy widower up our way," said a man from St. Lawrence County, "has had the misfortune to bury three wives. He is now living with his fourth, who has two boys by a former husband. One day the subject of divorce was being discussed with some visitors, and one of the latter quoted St. Paul's remark to the effect that 'He who putteth away his wife is guilty of grievous sin.'

"One of the lads looked up and said, 'Why, that can't be so, for pa's put away three or four, and he's a deacon.'"—New York Press.