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WIT, HUMOR AND WISDOM.

"BLESSED IS HE WHO CAN UNDERSTAND A JOKE, FOR VERILY THERE BE SOME WHO KNOW NOT A JOKE WHEN THEY SEE IT."
—*A more or less ancient proverb.*

Jones, as a name, is picking up. After March 4 there will be three United States Senators with "Jones" on their door-plates.—*Hartford Post.*

A clergyman who preached for a friend surprised his audience and himself by reading at the end of the usual notices:

'I insist on you dining at my house, no matter who invites you.'—*The Beacon.*

English tourist—'Why is it, can you tell me, that your American innkeepers always put pink muslin over their pictures?'

American wit—'Very easily explained. The productions of our chromo manufacturers are so exceedingly natural that we are obliged to take some means to prevent the mosquitoes from biting them.'—*Harvard Lampoon.*

"Bill" Nye invites the Prince of Wale's son, who has just come of age, to be his guest when he visits this country.

"I tender you," he writes, "the freedom of my double-barrelled shot-gun during the prairie-chicken holocaust. I know where the angle-worm grows rankest and the wild hen hatches her young."

Young Artist—(displaying a picture)—'This painting is entitled 'Jonah and the Whale.'

Possible Purchaser—'Where is Jonah?'

Young Artist—'You notice the rather distended appearance of the whale's stomach midway between the tail and the neck?'

'Possible Purchaser—'Yes.'

Young Artist—'That's Jonah.'—*N. Y. Sun.*

'Am I on the right road to the village?' demanded a traveler of an old darkey who was working in a field.

'Yaas, sah,' said the darkey.

The traveler pursued his way, but presently returned very mad.

'I say,' he shouted to the old fellow, 'what did you mean by telling me that I was on the right road to the village?'

'I tol' yo' de truf, deed I did, boss,' replied the darkey, 'but yo' tuk de wrong direkshun, sah.'—*Drake's Magazine.*

A student undergoing examination in the principles of mechanics was asked:

'Why will not a pin stand on its point?'

He returned the following answer:

'In the first place, a point is defined by Eucild as that which hath no magnitude, and how can a pin stand on that which hath no parts and no magnitude? In the second place, a pin will not stand on its head, much less therefore will it stand on its point. Thirdly and lastly, it will if you stick it in hard enough.'—*Tid-Bits.*

Last spring an Indiana man started a bank in a town in Dakota, and about the 1st of October, having secured deposits to the extent of $23,000, a notice was one morning posted on the doors of the bank reading, 'Temporarily closed—hope to pay depositors in full.' The banker wanted to test the temper of the public previous to a big scoop. In the course of half an hour the doors were kicked in, the office gutted, the banker stepped on until he was 17 feet long and only two inches thick, and the chap who held a revolver to his ear jovially remarked: 'Now, then, my friend, we give you just five minutes to unlock that safe and count out the slugs to depositors in full.' Depositors were paid in full, and the banker has come East in search of more civil people.—*Wall Street News.*

A melodrama was being performed in a provincial city and the closing act was to witness the death of the heroine from poison, administered by her lover. The end approached, when the lover said:

'I have forgotten the vial.'

'Kill me with a pistol or a dagger,' whispered the actress.

'I have neither.'

'Kill me quickly, for the audience is impatient!' she exclaimed.

An inspiration seized him, and as she turned he gave her a kick. She faltered and fell, exclaiming:

'I die by the hand of the poisoner!'

It was an effective climax.—*Troy Times.*

Whatever may or may not be said of George Francis Train, no one who has ever met him will deny that the erratic gentleman is remarkably quick at repartee. It was during a lecture he gave in Chicago some years ago that he exclaimed:

'Every man has his price.'

'What is your price, Mr. Train?' cried a voice from the gallery.

Quick as a flash the lecturer faced the questioner and exclaimed:

'Fifty cents admission; children (pointing out the owner of the voice, while the entire audience focussed its gaze at the astonished person in line of Mr. Train's index finger) half price!'—*Harper's Bazar.*

A report having been circulated that coal oil had been discovered on a certain farm in Maryland a resident of Baltimore, who happened to be in the vicinity where he first heard of it, proceeded to the farm to find the owner away and nobody around but the hired man.

'My man,' said the Baltimorean, 'is it true that oil has been found on this farm?'

'Well, there's oil on the pond back there.'

'Where does it seem to come from?'

'Well, that depends,' was the hesitating answer. 'My boss owes me $48 for the work. If he pays me to-day as he agreed to, the oil comes from under a clay bank. If he puts me off any longer it comes from a barrel buried in the mud. That's the way I'm fixed, stranger, and if you have got speculation in your eye you'd better come around and see him later.'—*Wall Street News.*

A man entered a photographer's and said:

'I want a cabinet picture of myself.'

The artist placed him in position and screwed up his machine to the proper focus.

'Now look bright and cheerful,' he said, 'and keep your eye fastened on that hole in the wall.

Instead of looking bright and cheerful the man concaved himself forward, dropped his jaw and assumed a look of infinite weariness.

'What is the matter with you?' exclaimed the photographer. 'Brace up, I say, and look pleasant.'

'If this position costs anything extra,' was the answer, 'I am willing to pay for it. My wife is up in the country visiting friends, and this picture goes to her. I know what I am about. Pull the blanket off, Mr. Artist, and begin counting.'—*Anon.*

A negro woman entered a life insurance office and asked for the manager. A gentleman stepped forward and asked if he could do anything for her.

'Is yesse'f de man whut pays out money when folks die?'

'Yes, if they are insured in our company,' he replied.

'Yes, sah; yes. Wall, my husband whut's named Rufe Evans inshored in dis heah place some time ago, an' I thought dat I'd call round dis ebenin an' git de $500.'

'When did your husband die?'

'He's dead just about now, sah, case when I left home de doctor he say de po' man couldn't live more den fifteen minutes longer, an' I reckon I hab been dat long walking frum de Perkins block ter dis place. You see, I'll need some of de money in de fun'ral. Does wanter to go dar lookin' sloushey an' like—look heah, man ain't yer gwine to gin me der money? Hafter fetch er stiffkt dat he's dead, yer say? Yer's de fust man I ever seed whut wouldn't believe de truf when it's told him. All right, sah, I'll sen' round de corpse on er dray. Dat'll be stiffkit 'nuff.'—*Arkansaw Traveler.*

FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS.

MR. THOMPSON AND THE FAIRIES.

BY ALLEN FORMAN, *in Harper's Young People.*

'Superstition—arrant superstition!' sniffed Mr. Thompson in great disgust. 'Why, I tell you, fairies are an impossibility. They *can't* exist, and I thought that the idea was exploded and dismissed from the minds of sensible people years ago.'

'Why can't they exist?' inquired a young man, who was about the only one among the summer boarders who dared combat the old bachelor.

'Why? repeated Mr. Thompson. 'Why, because they can't, and because they don't. Every strange circumstance formerly charged to fairies can now be traced to natural causes,' replied Mr. Thompson, loftily, as he left the piazza for his evening walk. 'Fairies!' he muttered, as he walked along—'fairies! pooh! ridiculous!'

Mr. Thompson was in no good humor. The boarders had begun a discussion about fairies, and Mr. Thompson had taken all they had said in earnest, and had combated their theories vigorously; finally he lost his temper, and left in disgust. He walked down the road until he came to a grove which bordered a tiny lake.—When he reached the edge of the water he seated himself on a flat stone, and watched the ripples silvered in the moonlight, with the water-lilies, closed for the night, floating to and fro on the surface, and here and there a lily that remained open shining like a white star among the green leaves. Now and then a frog would croak, and the katydids kept up a continual chirping. After a time his attention was attracted by the katydids, which did not seem to be making their monotonous cry, but were playing a regular tune. He listened intently, and could distinguish the time of a march.—Just then the frogs in chorus croaked a prolonged roll-call, which was followed by the bugle-call by a whip-poor-will up in the tree. He had hardly commenced to account for these strange proceedings when a small figure appeared, or rather bounded upon the little space of turf on Mr. Thompson's left. He was a queer-looking little fellow, dressed in a tight-fitting suit of green, and with a most mischievous expression on his face. He came over and seated himself on a toad-stool opposite to Mr. Thompson, and after eying that bewildered gentleman for a few minutes, remarked:

'So you don't believe in fairies?'

'I *did* not,' answered Mr. Thompson, humbly. But how did you know?'

'Oh, I was riding past on a big June bug and heard you deny our existence. I bumped the bug against your hat and tried to knock it off, but it was no go,' answered the sprite.

'Are you a fay?' asked Mr. Thompson, with some hesitation.

'Puck,' was the short answer. Then he continued, maliciously, 'I'll make you believe in fairies before I get through with you.'

'Oh, don't trouble yourself,' said Mr. Thompson, showing some alarm, and preparing to go.

'No trouble at all, I assure you,' was Puck's answer, given with mock politeness. 'Don't go away,' he added, 'your feet are asleep, so don't disturb them.'

Sure enough both of his feet were asleep.—Just then a large moth came flying past, and Puck jumped lightly on its back. Grasping its long antennæ like a pair of reins, he drove the frightened insect back and forth under Mr. Thompson's nose, brushing that portion of the poor gentleman's face with the great downy wings; finally Mr. Thompson began to sneeze. With a triumphant laugh Puck sprang to the ground and cried:

'Now I've given you a fine cold in your head to remember me by; perhaps after a while you will believe in fairies;' and the little rascal rolled on the turf, and laughed loud and long at his mischief.

The katydids struck up a lively train, and a long procession of fairies appeared from among the trees. Some were walking, others were flying on their gossamer-like wings, while others still came mounted on night moths and beetles; and one, who from his appearance Mr. Thompson judged to be Puck's brother, swooped down on the back of a bat. Puck paid no attention to the new-comers, but continued to laugh, when the fairies' Queen stepped from the throng, and struck him sharply with her sceptre.

'How now, madcap? Did we not give strict orders that no mortal should be present at our festival?'

Puck sprang to his feet with a most innocent expression on his face.

'You did, most gracious Queen, but this unbelieving man professed to doubt our existence, and I detained him here in order that you might pass judgment on him.'

'You detained him, boaster!' said the Queen, in amusement, 'and how, pray?'

'I put his feet to sleep,' replied the sprite.

A titter among the fairies greeted this statement, and the Queen continued, laughing:

'Think you he is cured of his unbelief?'

'I have given him a token to keep me in his head.'

'Of what kind?'

'A most mighty cold. If you could but hear him sneeze!' and the mischievous Puck again went off into a fit of laughter.

In the mean time the other sprites had not been idle, but had collected a number of large and ravenous mosquitoes along the shore of the lake, and now let them loose around Mr. Thompson's head. They at once set to work, and when poor Mr. Thompson tried to defend himself against their attacks, he found to his horror that his hands as well as his feet were asleep.

The Queen saw his predicament, and ordered one of her attendants to drive the offending insects away. Then half a dozen stout young knights, armed with lance and sword, sprang upon the backs of their winged steeds, and soon the mosquitoes were impaled upon their spears. The Queen turned upon the author of the mischief.

'You, too,' she exclaimed, severely. 'You and your unruly brother shall pay for this night's sport by guiding this poor mortal home, and thereby lose your share in our merry-making.'

Mr. Thompson felt sorry for the two rascals, and, besides, he wished to witness the fairies' dance; so he made bold to speak.

'If you would kindly permit,' he said, politely, 'I should like to remain; then these two little fellows, who I am sure meant me no harm, can take part in the festivities.'

The Queen bowed graciously, and the katydids, who had been silent, struck up a lively tune. The fairies danced, and Puck and his brother joined the circle.

How long this lasted Mr. Thompson could not tell. He was startled by the deep croak of a bull-frog, followed by a warning cry from an owl that had been watching the proceeding from a hollow log.

'Another mortal,' cried the fairies: and in a second they had vanished. The katydids had resumed their monotonous chirping, and only Puck and his brother were left with Thompson.

'Mr. Thompson sprang to his feet, and found them both asleep.

'Run,' urged the two sprites.

'My feet are asleep,' urged poor Thompson.

'Wake 'em up,' said Puck, crossly, at the same time grasping Mr. Thompson's hand, while his brother caught the other, and before he knew what they were about they had him up to his knees in the lake.

'That'll wake your feet up,' shouted Puck, in derision, as he jumped from one lily-pad to another, and was soon out of sight.

'What on earth are you doing?' came in a familiar voice from the shore. Mr. Thompson turned, and there on the bank was standing the young man who had insisted upon the existence of fairies earlier in the evening.

'What did you go into the water for?' pursued the young man.

'Puck led me in, the young scamp,' growled Mr. Thompson.

'Puck?—what Puck?' inquired the young man.

'Why, the fairy, of course,' was Mr. Thompson's ungracious reply.

'Oh, you've been asleep again, and dreamed—'

'Oh yes, dreamed,' interrupted Mr. Thompson, in high dudgeon. 'I dreamed a cold in my head and mosquitoes and the fairy dance, and dreamed myself into the water—likely;' and Mr. Thompson shook himself savagely as he stepped ashore.

The young man thought that Mr. Thompson would be no very pleasant companion for the home walk; so he left him, with the parting remark:

'Every strange circumstance formely charged to fairies can now be traced to natural causes.'

Mr. Thompson's only reply was an angry grunt, but now he is a firm believer in the 'little folks,' as the Scotch call them.

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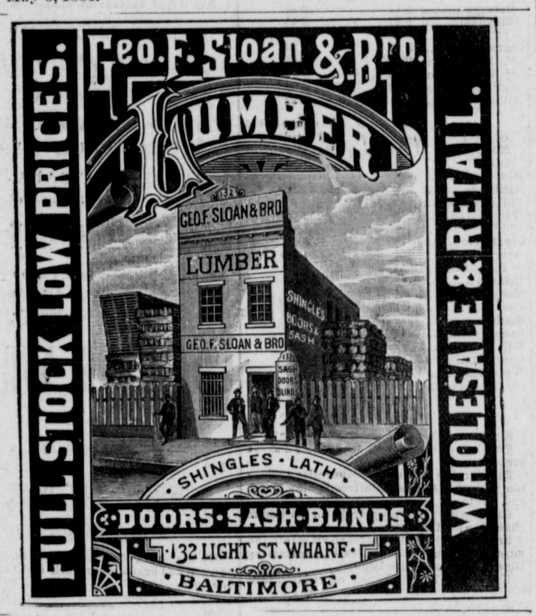

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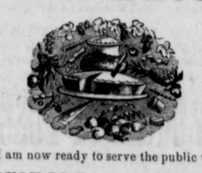

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SCOTT'S POINT

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