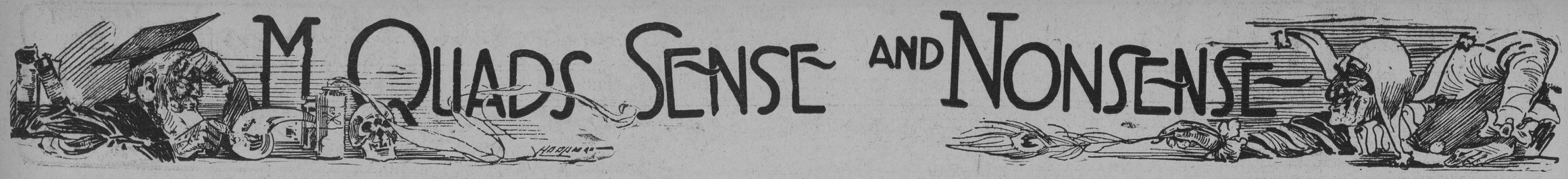

BOWSER MISSES IT---BUT HE'LL NEVER ADMIT IT TO MRS. BOWSER

MR. BOWSER sat and smoked and looked at the cat.

That there was some great problem troubling him Mrs. Bowser realized, but she kept her nose at the book she was reading.

By and by Mr. Bowser got up and walked.

Then he sat down with a bang.

Then he sighed and coughed. He wanted to be asked what was the matter, and, after letting him stew for a while longer, Mrs. Bowser looked up and queried:

"Doesn't that new club of yours meet this evening?"

"No, tomorrow evening."

"Who is to deliver the opening address?"

"They want me to. Mrs. Bowser, I wish——"

"Well, what do you wish?"

"I wish you were a little different woman."

"But how, dear?"

"I wish you didn't stand ready to go back on everything I wanted to do."

"But I don't. If it's anything foolish, I tell you of it, but that's what a wife should do. You must admit that you sometimes take rather queer notions."

"There you go, first thing! There isn't a more level-headed man in this town, and you know it, but you are always talking about my fads and notions."

"Well, what is it this time? I promise you that I won't make one single criticism."

"I understand that an agricultural lecture bureau wants speakers that can address gatherings of farmers in country schoolhouses."

"Yes? You think you understand agriculture, do you?"

"I certainly do."

"Well, there's nothing like confidence in one's self. What terms do they offer?"

"I don't know what they pay, but it must be as much as $300. What's the matter with my dodging out and making half a dozen addresses this winter; I have a reputation as a public man, haven't I?"

"You—you have been in the papers often enough," replied Mrs. Bowser as she shut her teeth hard to keep from smiling.

"Well, then, I am a public man with a fine address, and what more can they ask for?"

"But about the addresses? I don't remember that you have ever composed and delivered an agricultural address."

"I can do it as easy as rolling off a log," said Mr. Bowser as his face began to clear. "All I want is your encouragement, and here and there a suggestion. I will read what I have written, and you can tell me what you think. We will say that I have taken my place in the grandstand. That's where I will speak from, I suppose. I have been introduced and received an ovation. As the applause dies away I step forward and begin:

"'Fellow patriots, it is needless to say that this is one of the happiest moments of my life. Surrounded by——'"

"Please don't get mad," interrupted Mrs. Bowser, "but I don't think you ought to begin that way. That is more of a Fourth of July address. I should put it: 'Mr. President and ladies and gentlemen.'"

"I knew you'd find fault the first thing," growled Mr. Bowser.

"But I'm not finding fault. Leave the beginning as it is and go ahead. There isn't such a great difference, after all, between a Fourth of July address and an agricultural oration."

"Of course there isn't. That's what I figured on when I began. I now go on and say:

"'Surrounded by this large and cultivated audience and standing here under the most prolific sun in the world I would not be the man I am if I did not feel my heart swelling with pride. The clash of arms no longer reaches our ears. The battlefields won by our forefathers——'"

"There you seem to run off the track again," said Mrs. Bowser. "The crash of arms and battlefields have nothing to do with agricultural matters."

"Oh, they haven't, eh? You just wait a minute and don't be so ready to find fault.

"'The battlefields won by our forefathers with their valor and blood are shimmering in the sunshine of peace, and from them you have reaped the corn and pumpkins and squashes I see on every hand. From the field where George Washington drew his sword in defense of liberty come these fat hogs. From the field where Paul Jones laid down his life that America might be free you have driven this Durham bull. From the field where Daniel Webster shouted for freedom as he pressed on at the head of his troops you have gathered the Early Rose potatoes—these mammoth carrots—these——'"

"Stop, Mr. Bowser! Stop!"

"Well, what is it?"

"You must certainly change that. I dont' want to find fault, but you can't have Paul Jones fighting on land."

"And why the devil can't I?"

"Because he was a sailor—a sea fighter. You have Daniel Webster at the head of his troops, but he was never a soldier. You'd be picked up in a minute on those things."

"By the Lord Harry, woman!" said Mr. Bowser, as he flushed red and white, "but you are telling me that I don't know as much as the average boy 10 years old."

"No, I am not. I'm simply telling you that you have got things mixed up. You know better, of course, but you are sometimes absent-minded."

"Never in this world do I get things mixed up! Never in this world am I absent-minded. Mrs. Bowser, you have insulted me!"

There was a bit of doubt in his tones as he picked up his manuscript notes again, flourished his arm and went on:

"When Robert Fulton arose in his place in Congress and declared that agriculture was the bulwark of liberty, men smiled at him, but you have only to look around you today to see what a truism he gave us. Look at those threshing machines, those steam boilers, those windmills, those reapers and mowers and then turn——"

"Mr. Bowser, will you let me say a word?" interrupted Mrs. Bowser.

"What is it now?"

"You are not quite right about two things in that paragraph. Robert Fulton never arose in his seat in Congress."

"But I say he did!"

"I don't see how he could, as he was never a member of that body. You probably meant to say Calhoun or Clay."

"I probably didn't mean to say anything of the kind! That is the third or fourth time you have flung insults into my face, and I am done!"

"But you must not make such mistakes. You speak of agriculture being the bulwark of liberty, and then you go on to mention nothing but manufactures. If you make such slips as those before a crowd you will be almost hooted at. Now go on. We will fill in new names later on."

"Madam, there will be no going on and no filling!" said Mr. Bowser with great dignity as he came out of the grand stand.

"But why?"

"Because I am no fool. I may be baldheaded, but I know when I am insulted."

"You are a strange man. I was merely telling you where you were wrong about names and things."

"You telling me where I was wrong! Now listen to me. In half an hour I will prove that you don't know your A. B. C's. I'll show you that I am right and you are wrong in every criticism you have made."

"Well, let it go that I am wrong. Can't we go riding on the car this evening?"

"Don't attempt to dodge the issue, madam. You have made certain statements. I go to disprove them. When they have been disproved, which they certainly will be, I shall suggest that our respective lawyers have a little talk!"

With that he made her a stiff bow and walked down the hall and outdoors. He had been very decided in his talk, but at the same time he doubted himself. He didn't like to go to his family druggist, but when he failed to find the butcher or the plumber in, he sauntered into the drugstore with a remark about the weather and finally got around to say:

"Say, doc, just who and what was Daniel Webster? I may have got him mixed up with someone else."

"Why, Daniel was a statesman," was the reply.

"And who was Paul Jones?"

"One of the greatest sea fighters America ever had."

"And who—who—" continued Mr. Bowser, but the druggist interrupted him with:

"By thunder, Bowser, but what do you want to keep this up so long for? Your wife knows more in a minute than you do in a day, and why not realize it?"

"Sir, do you mean to insult me?"

"Oh, bosh!"

"Sir, I can lick you in two minutes."

"Nonsense! Go home and be good!"

The druggist refused to go out for a scrap, and Mr. Bowser left the place with rage boiling in his heart. He was looking around for something to destroy when a belated faker yelled "Umbrellas to mend!" at him from across the street. With a blood-curdling whoop Mr. Bowser took his trail, and as the two disappeared down the street in a whirl a policeman came along and mused to himself.

"Those looked like Bowser's coattails, and I'll bet he's been having another row with his wife. Why can't he cuddle down and behave himself?"

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PARADISE FLATS

"VHELL, Mister Janitor, I hope you vhas better," said the German grocer as the janitor of Paradise flats came sauntering in the other evening to take a seat on a sugar barrel near the stove.

"So you heard about my fainting spell the other day, did you?

"It was very dramatic, Mr. Hammerdinger. After breakfast I had got seated in my armchair, a cigar in my mouth and the morning paper in my hand, when I was waited on by a committee of ladies."

"From der Salvation Army?"

"Oh, no. They represented the tenants in the house. Mrs. Duggan had been stirring the families up to kick for the last month, and the kick was due. They came down to bulldoze me about the washing of the windows. In our flats the janitor is expected to do the work, but I had let the tenants take it out in expecting. Where is the dignity of a janitor who washes windows?"

"He wipes all der dignity off mit a rag," replied the grocer.

"True for you. Well, the committee came down and opened on me. They were going to the landlord; they were going to move; they were going to sue for damages, and all that. They were all talking at once, and I saw that something must be done. I simply fainted away and was carried to my bed."

"By golly!"

"They were ready to chew me up a minute before I fainted, but a minute after they were blaming themselves for having been the cause of my death. The way they wept was very affecting. When I came to they said if I would try and live on they would wash their own windows as long as they remained in the flats. How is that for high, Mr. Hammerdinger?"

"By golly, but you vhas a great man—a great man! I don't believe Sheneral Grant could faint avhay like dot. So you don't wash some windows? How about garbage?"

"Oh, I have a lame back, you know. The tenants will carry out their own garbage and ashes."

"Und don't you fix some clotheslines on der roof?"

"Gracious, no! I am a janitor who gets dizzy even going up stairs, and they all know it. Yes, I am a dizzy janitor, and I have to be very careful."

"Und so you don't do nuttings?"

"Well, I'm around, you know, in case anyone asks for advice. I can always be found in my armchair. Mr. Hammerdinger, you have got to have dignity here in your grocery, haven't you? You have got to have dignity to make your clerk respect you?"

"Dot vhas so."

"And to make customers believe that green watermelons are ripe?"

"Yes."

"Well, a janitor has got to have dignity or his tenants will run right over him. He must hold them at arm's length. He must let them understand that it is a great privilege to address him in any language. Do you think there's one of my tenants dares to rush down and tell me that a pane of glass has been broken and a glazier is wanted at once? No, sir! They let three or four days go by. The janitor who hustles is lost."

"Vhas dere some doings in der flats, eh?" asked the grocer, after selling a pint of kerosene to an old woman.

"Yes, something doing. I rented rooms on the third floor to a bridal couple last month. They were joyous and loving. Went cooing around like two doves. Couldn't stir a foot without each other."

"Und don't they coo now?"

"Not any to speak of. The husband came home from work four evenings ago and found his dovey flirting with a red-headed man across the street, and he blacked her eyes, broke up the furniture and beat it. She's there amidst the remains waiting for him, but I don't think he will ever come back."

"By golly, but if my wife winks at some red-handed man she vhas dead in two minutes!"

"And last week," continued the janitor, "I rented rooms to an old man and his daughter. He shed tears when he told me that his wife was dead. I almost took a dollar a month off the rent on account of his tears. They got in new furniture, and got settled, and then something happened."

"Did a big gas bill shump in on 'em?"

"Something worse than that. The girl's real father jumped in on 'em, accompanied by one of her big brothers, and Paradise Flats was a lively place for half an hour. I even ran the risk of my dizziness and went upstairs to see the fun. The first papa got a bad pounding, and what furniture was left unbroken wasn't worth carting away."

"Sooch wickedness—sooch wickedness! Mister Janitor, can you tell me vhy people vhas so wicked?"

"Oh, it's born in certain people, and they can't help it. Why, man, I could tell you of things that would make your hair stand up in horror. Other janitors could do the same. We see crimes all around us. We don't have to look for it. Criminals even come to us to confess."

"Und vhy don't you write some book?" asked the awed and admiring grocer.

"Ah, why don't I? I am writing one, sir. It's more than half done now. Yes, sir, I began it three years ago, and it will be a corker when it comes out. Over 40 murder cases in it, to say nothing of other crimes. It will sell like hot cakes."

"For sure, it will. You vhill call her by some name, won't you?"

"Of course; I have already named it. It is called The Memories of a Janitor Who Kept His Eyes Open and Knew the Game. The title alone will sell the book. But you were asking for news from the flats. Did I ever tell you about Mrs. Dubar's goat?"

"I don't belief so."

"Well, she got one, and he's a jimdandy. He's butted the breath out of every kid in the flats five times over, and all the grown-ups are afraid of him. I'd have borken his neck, long ago, but you see Mrs. Dubar's husband is a district leader and has a pull. The other evening five of the lady tenants were going down on the street to promenade. They were all on the first stairs when that old goat spied 'em from above. He saw a chance for wholesale business and went in. He struck the first one and she helped him to clear the stairs of the rest. Lands, but you ought to have heard the tumbling and screaming! And the fun of the whole thing was that they laid it all off on each other, and there was a hair-pulling match in the lower hall that called for two policemen. The flats have not settled down yet, but I'm pretending not to take notice. I kicked the goat down the basement stairs this morning, hoping to end his life, but he got up as blithe as a lark and ran out doors and sent a butcher sprawling. Oh, there's always something doing around a flat-house."

"Und don't so mooch wickedness make you sad!" asked the grocer, as he solemnly shook his head.

"Yes, now and then, but that's what a janitor is paid for—to feel sad sometimes. Yes, I have my sad hours at times, and as this is one of them I'll take this cantaloupe along and go home and see if it won't help me to look upon life as worth the living."

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Told By a Drummer

IT was down below Bowling Green, Ky., on the line of the Louisville & Nashville road. It was court day in the town, bringing in a large crowd and the "celebrated Indian doctor" was there with his wagon and his cures. He harangued the crowd for 40 minutes before he made the least impression, and then an old man began to edge up in a sneaking kind of way.

"Do you suffer from dyspepsia?" asked the doctor.

"Yaas."

"Then my compound of 44 different kinds of roots will cure you."

A woman advanced and took the old man by the arm and whispered:

"Lemuel, you hain't got no dyspepsia no more'n our cat, and you shan't buy nothin'!"

"Madam, is that your husband?" asked root and herbs.

"Yes, sir."

"I notice that his liver is out of order. Let him take one bottle of my elixir and he will be restored. Let him neglect himself three months longer and he fills a dishonored grave."

The old man was going for a dollar, but she stopped with:

"No, you shan't! Smartweed tea and vinegar will rinse the liver as clean as a whistle, and we've got both in the house!"

"And I—ah—and I—ah—notice that he is predisposed to dropsy," continued the doctor as he waved his bottle around. "This elixir cures dropsy in 48 hours. Neglect the disease and a funeral procession is seen winding its horrid way over these romantic mountains."

The old man went down again, but the wife gave him a push and called out:

"Dropsy! Why, you old idiot, you never had the energy to get it, and if you ever do I'll cure you with sage tea and kerosene oil!"

"And I—ah—and I—ah, discover that his blood needs replenishing," continued the doctor. "My Elixir contains 12 kinds of iron, and is warranted to furnish new blood at the rate of a gallon a day. Some of the best blood in America is the work of my Elixir. President Garfield was about to order 24 bottles the day he was shot. Go into the White House and you'll find it on the sideboard. Jay Gould uses it. Vanderbilt will have no other."

"Jerusha, I'll have it!" said the old man. "I want about eight gallons of new blood the worst way!"

"You don't!"

"I do!"

"You shan't have it!"

"I will!"

Then she shut her teeth hard, drew a full breath, and, seizing the old man by the back of the neck and the coat-tails, she ran him through the crowd and steered him under a wagon, with the remark:

"Now, you lay thar! If this family has got any disease I can't tackle and cure inside of two hours I'll leave and let you run the ranch. Now I'll see to old Elixir!"

But the doctor was a man of policy. When he saw her coming and noticed the color of her eyes, he locked up his medicine chest and calmly began:

"Fellow citizens, I desire to call your attention to these suspenders at 25 cents per pair, and, by the way, here is a cake of scented toilet soap for the lady who prevented her husband from admitting his constitutional ailments in the presence of a life insurance agent. Who takes the first pair?"

FIXING THE DOOR.

There was a crack under the kitchen door—a crevice large enough for one to put a hand under—and Mrs. Cripso kept saying:

"Now, Cripso, don't let this day pass without nailing down a cleat to stop that crevice. It will let in more cold this winter than two tons of coal can drive out."

"Certainly, my dear—certainly. That crevice shall be stopped this very day."

On 15 different occasions in November she reminded him of the fact that he had forgotten the crevice. In December the number of occasions was 20. During the month of January she spoke of it 22 times. In February she began referring to the matter at each meal, and the other day she nailed him down with the remark:

"Cripso, I am going down town, and I'll stop on my way and ask a carpenter to come up and fix that door."

"I'll fix it."

"No, you won't! You just let it alone. I'll have a carpenter here before night, and that door will be fixed."

"I say I'll fix it myself—right away—now," and in five minutes he had a saw and hammer and cleat and was at the job.

Mrs. Cripso went off chuckling over her victory, and upon her return her husband said:

"Well, the old crevice is shut up."

"You fixed it, eh?"

"Fixed it better than any carpenter you could have sent up, and in 10 minutes, too. Come and see."

She took one look at his work and then sat down and whispered:

"Cripso, you just missed it by a hair's breadth!"

"What?"

"Being born a fool! You have nailed the cleat to the floor inside the door!"

So he had. He had shut the crevice and door, too, and when he came to realize it he walked slowly out into the back yard and tried to saw his head off on the clothesline.

HE WON'T PAY.

"I got that notice this forenoon," he remarked as he handed the printed slip into one of the wire windows at the water office.

"Y-e-s, I see," replied the clerk as he handed it back.

"I am notified," resumed the citizen, "that the water is to be shut off from my house unless I pay rates at once."

"Yes, sir."

"Is this despotic Russia or free America?"

"I guess so," sighed the clerk, as he looked over a lot of figures.

"Then you'll shut my water off, will you?"

"I presume we will."

"I don't believe it. We've been frozen up for 10 days, and if anybody can find any water to shut off they may try it on!"

"Frozen, eh?"

"Frozen tight as a crowbar, and whose fault is it? You contract to give me so much water daily or weekly or monthly for so much money. Where's my water today?"

"Then it's frozen?"

"Frozen? Didn't I say every water pipe in my house was frozen as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar? And whose fault is it?"

"I see," murmured the clerk.

"What do you see? Do you see me going around the neighborhood borrowing water, or do you see those frozen pipes? The landlord says he didn't freeze 'em up!"

"No?"

"And I didn't."

"That's so."

"But the weather did. Am I any more responsible for the weather than you are? Why don't you run your water over a heater in the winter and take the chill off?"

"I think we will."

"I don't propose to burn rags to thaw out those pipes."

"No?"

"Nor hire it done!"

"No?"

"Nor pay you one darned cent!"

"No?"

"And I can lick you in two minutes!"

"Yes?"

"And, sir—and——"

"Yes, it is a cold day. Yo-hum! Come again!"

And what could the frozen pipes man do but walk out and kick a dog?

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They Skipped Something.

"Henry," said the wife in confidential tones, "has Mr. Barlow asked you for Maude's hand in marriage?"

"I haven't heard him ask," was the reply.

"Well, I'm quite sure they are engaged."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because last evening in the parlor I overheard them figuring out how they could get married on his salary."

"How much is it?"

"A thousand dollars a year."

"Humph! And how did they come out?"

"Well, at one time they had it all figured out that they could save at least 600 a year, but when they came to go over it again they discovered that they had left out clothes, food, fuel, gas and rent. I think Mr. Barlow went away a little discouraged—I think he did."

A BOY HOBO

THIRTY years ago I was postmaster in a small village in Indiana. There were two stores, two groceries, a chair factory and one or two shops. There was no bank within 14 miles, and, as I had the only burglar-proof safe in the place, the merchants and others were given the privilege of depositing with me for several days at a time. Sometimes, with my own money added, I had over a thousand dollars under lock and key, and there was always at least $50 in postage stamps.

The postoffice building was in the rear of one of the groceries, and I have to smile at the way it was defended from robbers. As a matter of fact, aside from a little bob-tailed dog, it was not defended at all. By breaking a pane of glass a window could be raised. The lock could have been bored off the front door in five minutes. Anyone getting into the grocery part could have sawed a hole in the partition. I trusted to the dog to bark, and I trusted that no robber could get into the safe.

For 10 long years I went on feeling as safe as a bank, and then I got a surprise party. Why robbers had passed me by so long has always been a mystery to me. I lived with my family two blocks up the street, and we were all sound sleepers. After 10 o'clock at night no villager could be found astir unless in case of sickness.

It was a June night, and about midnight when my wife awoke with a case of toothache and aroused me. We had some simple remedies downstairs, and I struck a light and went down. I had reached the lower hall when I heard a soft scratching on the front door, and as I bent an ear to listen a child's voice was heard saying:

"Oh, mister man! Mister man!"

Of course I took it to be some neighbor's child sent for assistance, though I thought it strange not to be called by my name. I opened the door and a ragged boy of about 12 slid into the hall. I had never seen him before. He was dirty as well as ragged, but he had as keen a face as any you ever saw. As he shut the door and stood with his back to it I asked:

"Well, who are you? Is there anyone in trouble?"

"Say, mister, do you know where the postmaster lives?" he replied.

"Right here. I am the postmaster."

"Gee! I hit it the first time, didn't I? Well, you'd better get a move on you. There's three men trying to break into the postoffice! Got a gun?"

"Boy, don't try to joke with me!" I sternly replied.

"You won't find it much of a joke if you stand here the rest of the night! Get into your duds and come on!"

I had no firearms of any sort, but I ran back upstairs and got into my trousers, and then, as we hurried out of the side door, each of us grabbed a stick from the pile of wood handy by and legged it down the street. A window at the postoffice had been pried up and two men had entered and a third was keeping watch outside. It was the outside man that saw or heard us and gave the alarm. The two that were in came tumbling out in a hurry, and the trio ran across the fields. I confess I didn't make a hero of myself. Perhaps it was because I was hatless, coatless and barefooted. I didn't rush in and grab one of the men, as a hero would have done. I think I even lagged behind a little, and was glad to see them running away like rabbits.

But the boy? Ah, there was pluck for you! He tried his best to catch up with the men, and when one of them halted a bit to look back over his shoulder, the lad sent his stick whizzing with such force and good aim that the fellow was knocked down, and got up to be helped away by the others. Next morning we found his hat, three teeth and a big bloodspot where he fell.

The town was aroused, but of what use? The robbers had come and gone with horse and buggy, and had made good their escape. They had only just entered the postoffice as they got the alarm, but they had left evidence behind that they were a band of yeggemen, as postoffice robbers are called. And what of the ragged little stranger? Of course everybody wanted to know, and everybody questioned him. A jackass of a constable was arresting him as a confederate of the robbers, but I put a stopper on that at once. I found out about the lad that night, and the others had to wait till next day. When I had taken him home and given him a square meal I began to ask questions. He told me all there was to tell when he said:

"Well, mister, my name's Billy, and I'm a hobo. Can't say how old I was when I started out, nor how long I've been at it. I s'pose I had a pop and mom, but I don't remember. I was thrown off a freight train over on the railroad by a brakeman, and so I hoofed it across to your town. I was looking for a roost when the robbers showed up."

We all judged the lad to be about 12 years old. He could neither read nor write, but he was as sharp as a needle. He had beaten his way over almost every railroad in the country, and had visited the cities and the larger towns. He hadn't been a tramp, but a hobo. A tramp takes to the highways, but a hobo to the tracks. One walks and the other rides. To call a hobo a tramp is to insult him. You will realize of course that I felt under great obligations to Billy, as did all who had money in my safe. We were ready to give him a home, and to send him to school, and all that, but he wouldn't have it thus. He wouldn't even let us buy him a new suit, or take the $25 purse we made up for him. He pocketed $3 of it, and shook his head at the balance, and said:

"If I had education, a good home, store clothes and money I couldn't be a hobo. They'd drive me out of the purfesh!"

"But it's a bad life for you," was urged.

"Oh, I have lots of good times."

"But you are always in danger and always hungry."

"But I'm traveling about and seeing the country."

The lad was respectful and good-natured about it all, but there was no moving him from his stand. He was a born hobo, and he intended to be one to the last. He let us make things pleasant for him for a month, but was uneasy all the time to get away. He finally disappeared one night without a good-by to anyone, and I heard of him just once after that.

Billy was riding on the bumpers of a freight train a week or so after he left us, and a hundred miles away, when the train broke in two at the top of a long grade and six cars loaded with explosives were left without a brakeman. When they began to go downgrade they got such a start that the locomotive had to make its best time to keep the rest of the train ahead of them. It just had time to take a switch when the runaways came booming along, and four miles further on they must collide with a passenger trade.

"Well, when that little hobo discovered that his part of the train had broken loose and was running away he climbed to the roofs of the cars and set every brake. This was what saved the portion of the train ahead from being run down and what saved the passenger train. The grinding breaks finally did the business, and there was little margin to spare. When their wheels ceased to turn the passenger engine was not a hundred feet away. It was all in the papers, and we read of what a hero our Billy was and how he had been offered money and a home. And his reply had been the same as to us:

"If I had education, a good home, store clothes and money I couldn't be a hobo!"

They said the boy shrank away from the praise and was lost sight of. That was 30 long years ago, and never have I opened a newspaper since without hoping to hear something of Billy, the hobo. Not anothtr line have I ever seen. If living, he is a middle-aged man now, and I wish him all good wishes. If death has claimed him I'd journey far and give liberally to mark his grave with a headstone.

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The Day's Fable.

Once upon a time as a Peasant was returning from the market a Ruffian sprang out of the bushes with a club and cried to him:

"Shell out or you are a dead man!"

As there was no escape for him, the Peasant shelled and was permitted to go on his way. Three evenings later, when walking near the same spot, a man in the garb og a business man, presented a pistol to his ear and politely said:

"My dear friend, come down or take a bullet through the head!"

"But I was robbed only three evenings ago!" protested the Peasant.

"I can't help that."

"And I'll be hanged if you are not the critter that got my shekels! How happens it that you were dressed as a Ruffian that time, while on this occasion you have the appearance of a prosperous man?"

"Oh, we have had to reorganize under the decision of the supreme court, but you have got her hand over just the same!"

MORAL.

What's the difference under what name they rob us?

Arizona Kicklets

WE had forgotten to lie about our editorial staff, and hasten to make good at once. It comprises 1,200 editors and reporters, and not one of them receive less than $100 per week. They consume 1,000 bottles of champagne per day, which is the greatest newspaper record in the known world. By sending in your advertisements a year ahead you are sure of an insertion. We take the advertisements of all fakes and leave the fools to look out for themselves.

The Mosehead Tribune says that we set fire to a schoolhouse in Michigan when we were only 10 days old. Thanks, that we were never in the State of Michigan, and at 10 years old we were taking Sunday school prizes for our meek and lowly behavior. The Tribune means well, but it does get things mixed up.

Our esteemed contemporary came out last week with an announcement that we were loafing in the Red Front saloon on a certain evening to the detriment of our dignity. His statement lacks truth. As editor of the Kicker he went in for a nip. As mayor, after the nip had been disposed of, we took a look around to see if any of the ordinances were being violated.

Mr. George Frayne, of Lone Jack, cooled Mr. Jim Harper, of the same town, with a bullet in the shoulder the other day. Cause of the shooting unknown and of no particular interest.

The editor of the Kicker, who is ourself, and the mayor of this town, who is also ourself, are in receipt of invitations to attend the opening of the Pacific poker rooms next week. As editor of the Kicker we shall accept the invitation, but as mayor we shall decline it. This will probably give us a chance as a private individual without hurting anybody's feelings.

Henry Ruby, of Indianapolis, a traveling man and a guest at the Royal Hotel last week, found unnecessary fault with the number of cockroaches in evidence, and was so persistent in it and so emphatic in his language that mine host Sanders was compelled to shoot him through the shoulder. After having the bullets extracted and lying by for three days the gentleman departed. He explained that there were times when he was "off," and at such times he had been known to find fault even with the color of his own hair.

Editor Blackman, of the Blue Hills Banner, called us a liar in his last issue, and last Sunday we rode over to pay him a friendly call and see how his cucumber plants were getting on. We were still six miles from the town when he mounted his cayuse and left for the mountains at a pace that left the trail smoking.

Some of our friends want to launch our presidential boom at once and get the people used to the sight of the barrel, so that they will not be shy later on. We thank them kindly, but we refuse to be killed off that way. Any candidate boomed in advance of nomination is a dead duck.

John Hammer, of a town in Illinois, writes us that he will soon arrive in Giveadam Gulch to set up as a dentist, and he incloses a dollar and asks us to give him a "puff." In order to earn the money we will say that Mr. Hammer will be lynched within two hours of his drawing his first tooth in the town. It's a way we have had with the last four dentists.

A young man who gave us his name as Samuel Gordon and his place of residence as Pekin, Ill., called on us one day last week and asked us if there was room in Arizona for a hustling young man. We encouraged him to believe that there was, and he gave us his thanks and disappeared. That day he walked eight miles and stole a horse. That night he rode 15 miles and stole two others. When caught the next day he had a fourth. When the rope was around his neck and he was about to be launched, he was asked if he had anything to say. In reply he laid it on us, asserting that if we had not encouraged him to hustle he'd have simply picked up an old, blind cayuse and been content. We shall be careful after this how we sling our advice around.

We are sorry to announce the death of Thomas Ford, of Idaho, which event took place one day last week, during a dispute with a miner. For a year Mr. Ford was a resident of this gulch. Many and many a time, as secretary of the vigilante committee, we entreated Mr. Ford to furnish the subject of a lynching, but he always hung back. It was a foregone conclusion with us that sooner or later he would get what was coming to him, but he departed one day and left us sorrowing. We would have given him a headstone and a couplet here, while over there in Idaho he fills a nameless grave, and there is no curfew to sing his sad song as evening comes down upon the land.

Last Tuesday afternoon a man calling himself Grizzly Bill got into a dispute at the Red Trout saloon with an individual who has been generally known around town as Terrific Tom. Both drew their guns and stepped to the sidewalk and began shooting. Twelve shots were fired, and the only thing hit was Major Callahan's bulldog, who died an hour later. When the parties were arrested and brought before us as mayor we fined each $25, and in default they went to jail for three months apiece. The fine was not imposed so much for infraction of the ordinance as for the poor shooting they did.

A Montana paper charges us with being a madly ambitious man and thinks we ought to be curbed. Madly nothing! Why, fan, we could hire a hundred newspapers to mention us as a candidate for the next presidency, but we are not making a move. We intend to be governor some day, but there is nothing madly about that. That is only the reward for virtue. We wish the press of Arizona would come to understand us as we are.

One Mr. Johnson, of Utah, has gone to the trouble and expense of buying a postal card and writing us to the effect that he will soon arrive in this town for the purpose of plunking us. Mr. Johnson, come along, come along and plunk us and let us plunk at you. Bring your funeral expenses in your hind pocket. Have your will drawn. Overhaul your conscience and make such reparation as you can. When you arrive in town, Mr. Johnson, don't lose time in calling. Delays are dangerous. Come in with a gun in either hand and begin blazing away, and leave the introductions till afterward. You will find us at home and in our usual good-natured mood. If we plunk you we pay for your headstone. If you plunk us the sheriff will give you 10 miles the start.

Colonel Drake, now in Indiana, says that we drove him out of Givadam Gulch at the muzzle of a revolver because we didn't like the cat's-green color in his eyes, and that every human being in the town lives in daily terror of us. The colonel was thought to be the boss liar when here, but the climate of Indiana has improved him. He left here in the night after borrowing $150 of various suckers, and we have to plead guilty to being one.

Colonel Hilton, of the Two-Bar ranch, is one of the best fellows in the world, but he annoys us now and then. Two weeks ago he sent in a poem of his own invention on Judas Iscariot, and because we refused to publish it he came to town yesterday and before we heard of his presence he was banging away at us from the sanctum door. Of course, he didn't hit us, but we don't like smoke and noise. We are down on Iscariot in a general way, the same as the world but we are not going to rub it into his memory at this late day. Let him moulder in peace. As for Colonel Hilton, we may have to shoot one of his thumbs off some day.

We have a letter from a young man in Connecticut asking us how to prepare himself to come West and be a cowboy. The first thing he is to cultivate is a holler that can be heard a mile away. The next is an appetite for a whisky that would burn the hind legs of a wolf. Then get two guns and practice on the draw daily three months. Take three more for target shooting. Then put in about the same time in riding the fly-wheel of a big engine and six months at casting the rope, then, equipped in a sombrero, leather leggins and a red shirt, he can come out to this country and be on the job 24 hours a day and receive half the pay he could get for carrying the hod at home.

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No Alternative.

Wife—Why did you tell the Batsons that you married me because I was such a good cook, when you know I can't even boil a potato?"

Hubby—I had to make some excuse, my dear, and I didn't know what else to say!—London Opinion.

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