SPRING

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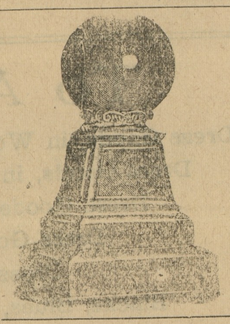

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REAL ESSENCE OF HUMOR

Conjunction of Things That Are Opposite or Dissonant Are the Most Laughable.

It is well known that the essence of humor is incongruity, the conjunction of things that are opposite or dissonant—as the mingling of manliness and gullibility in Fielding's "Parson Adams," of honesty and knavery in "Gil Blas," or of shrewdness and stupidity in Sancho Panza.

The most laughable of incongruities is that which arises from the clash of dignity and meanness, eminence and vulgarity, the solemn and the comic. The sense of the comic is sometimes enhanced by suffering.

When the soul is filled with gloom, a ludicrous incident becomes the more ludicrous by contrast. An Englishman who poisoned himself by mistake told one of his friends that when suffering agonies he was deeply conscious of the grimly ludicrous aspects under which one circumstance succeeded another.

The exquisite irony of the contrast between his own internal sensations and the sunny indifference or stolid surprise of all around him, while he was in a galloping haste to escape death, made an impression upon him which rose above the pain—as, for instance, when his porter asked for leave to change his shoes before he went for the doctor.

SEE PORTENTS IN THE STARS

Enthusiastic Frenchmen Profess to View Promises of Victory in Heavenly "Omens."

Patriotic enthusiasm, now at a high pitch in France, has been seeing in the heavens things which it likes to regard as symbolical of French victory in the war. The most talked of "omen" has been a tricolored star seen over the western horizon last autumn and over the eastern during the winter. Prosaic astronomers have unkindly identified this marvelous star with Venus, which, like any other heavenly body, shows the spectral colors when it is near the horizon. It is remarkable how often Venus has been taken for something that it is not. One would think that no civilized human being could arrive at years of discretion without becoming well acquainted with that lovely planet under her own name, yet her brilliant light in the evening or morning sky is forever starting some wild rumor. In 1797—also a time of patriotic fervor—Venus was hailed in France as the star of Napoleon. In recent years she has most frequently been taken for the light of a spying Zeppelin or aeroplane. It may be added that in some parts of France the "tricolor" star of the last few months was not Venus but Sirius.

Monkey Died Like a Man.

The death of Bill Snyder, the baboon of the Central park zoo, from acute indigestion, is chronicled in the day's news. Bill was not one of the higher order of the monkey family; his kinship to the human race, if he had any, was remote. Yet surely in the manner of his death he displayed a simian resemblance to man.

He died as hundreds of thousands of beings higher in the scale of evolution die, as countless numbers of our "best citizens" die—from overeating. He was as reckless in the indulgence of his appetite for food as the most cultivated member of the human family, and if the circumstances of his death excite surprise, it is that his natural instincts did not preserve him from the fate of the most intelligent human beings.

Bill's death points a dietetic moral for monkeys that exchange the nuts and roots of the jungle for the richer food of zoo captivity and idleness. The application of the moral to mankind need not be considered. A vastly greater number of men die from overeating than from starvation, and the death of a humble simian in the circumstances from this characteristically human ailment, may serve to emphasize the fact.—New York World.

"Rounding Up" Students.

Ingenuity of college students in writing badly after they have "passed off" the required freshman or sophomore course in composition is extraordinary. Perhaps it is a reassertion of native inaptness, perhaps it is sheer carelessness. But the remedy to be adopted at Harvard, after special study of the problem, is a patent one. A standing faculty committee is to be appointed, and "instructors in all courses will be urged to send to the committee any examination book, thesis or other piece of work which has demonstrated the writer's inability to express his thought." The committee will thereupon prescribe additional work in English for the delinquent students. The very warning should end mere slovenliness, and those whose fault lies deeper should be grateful for the discipline.—New York Evening Post.

Will Work Asphalt Mines.

The enormous deposit of asphalt of Leyte province, in the Philippines, is now to be worked for the eastern market by a local company. This almost inexhaustible deposit lies so near the shore line at Tacloban that ships can anchor and take on cargoes of asphalt from lighters loaded at the mines with practically no overland transportation. There is a large and growing demand in the islands for paving asphalt and all the cities of the far East are now in a position to offer a market.

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

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A WOMAN'S CAMPAIGN

By HAROLD CARTER.

Public opinion was not enthusiastically in favor of Raphael when he came to live in East Kemp. Raphael was an Armenian, and his color was that of the lining of a ham sandwich. Of course his nationality was not so much against him as the fact that he had foreign ways.

He had peddled cheap jewelry in the district for several years when he surprised everybody by buying the Drew cottage and establishing himself there with his wife and son, a lanky, ham-colored lad of thirteen. Apparently he had amassed all the money he needed in the peddling line, for he set to work to raise poultry and vegetables, which he sold to Hiram Smith, the grocer.

"Something has got to be done about those people," said Mrs. Daunce, the leader of the social set in East Kemp. "We've got to draw the line somewhere, or we'll all be black and tan before we know where we are."

Everybody followed her lead obediently. It was not malice—just stupidity, and a sense that the Raphaels were rather out of their proper element. Mrs. Daunce forbade her son Harry to go to the Raphaels' house. Harry and young Raphael—his father had changed his oriental name to Washington—had played together a good deal. Harry felt badly about it. But the word had gone forth that the Raphaels were to be ostracized.

I can see Raphael now, in Hiram Smith's store, always with a smile on his pleasant face, and a cheery word. He was the kindest-hearted fellow, and most of the men had a good word for Raphael. It was pre-eminently a women's crusade, inspired by the desire to keep the aliens across the river.

Raphael joined the volunteer fire brigade among his other activities. The sight of the fat, bearded man running like a boy to every blaze was a ludicrous one. When they served out brass helmets—donated by Horace Daunce—Raphael was the proudest of the proud.

Harry Daunce had been ill with scarlet fever for three weeks when the great fire destroyed the Daunce home. There was no need to sound the fire-bell. The flames lit up all East Kemp, and within five minutes the engines were out and the horses galloping wildly toward the scene.

In the front of the crew, his face wild with excitement, was Raphael, in his big brass helmet. He was shouting to the beasts as they galloped up the steep hill toward the furious flames that leaped skyward out of the burning roof.

The servants had got away, but Mr. and Mrs. Daunce and the boy were trapped in the burning wing. Horace Daunce showed that there was something more than superciliousness in him that night. He caught his wife in his arms and crawled along the coping, leaped a six-foot parapet with her, and crouched among the sparks until they got a rope to him.

The moment he had got his wife to the ground he ran back into the flames. He had got half way through the hall toward the stairs when a falling beam knocked him senseless, and one of the men ran in and rescued him.

The boy's white face appeared at an upper window. He was a chip off the old block. He didn't scream or cry—just sat at the window and looked out and waited.

Half a dozen men dashed in, but Raphael was the first. He vanished in an inferno of smoke and flame, and it seemed an eternity before he was seen at the window beside Harry.

He seized the lad in his arms and disappeared within the room again. Only the coiling smoke came out. A crash followed and the whole floor of that room fell in. The flames shot up above the roof tops.

We had about given up hope when out of the debris there appeared a figure, the almost nude body of a man, crowned with a huge, brass, mocking fireman's helmet. In his arms, which were smoldering, he carried a limp body wrapped in a blanket. He staggered out of the fire and smoke, which shot forth angry tongues after him, as if infuriated that he had escaped its malice.

He stood for an instant gaping vacantly about him; then he came staggering down the steps; and so Raphael laid the body of the boy at Horace Daunce's feet. Inside the blankets was Harry, half asphyxiated, but absolutely uninjured by smoke or fire.

Raphael sat down and looked up at us. He presented a spectacle that few of us care to think about. Mrs. Raphael, who had been revived, ran forward, but suddenly another woman shouldered her away. It was Mrs. Daunce. She took Raphael's burned hand in hers and kissed it.

"It is nothing," he said, in his queer accent. "I am an American now, and you have all been so kind, so very kind to my wife and me. And so Washington, he grow up among friends, to be an American."

His eyes closed, and he fell back. I saw Mrs. Daunce trying to comfort Mrs. Raphael, and I knew that the woman's campaign would be abandoned.

(Copyright, 1915, by W. G. Chapman.)

Soothing Subject.

"Here's an article about the nation's 'sweet tooth.'"

"I presume there is nothing in that to alarm an ultra pacifist. Go ahead and read the statistics."

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