

FOR THE FUNNY MAN.

Theatre hats aren't always high,
In spite of the funny man;
And country chaps are sometimes fly,
In spite of the funny man.
Her father's dog is not always wild;
Sometimes you'll find a well-bred child;
And mothers-in-law are sometimes mild,
In spite of the funny man.

Prohibitionists don't always yearn to drink,
In spite of the funny man;
And "Charlie" occasionally thinks a think,
In spite of the funny man.
Policemen's feet aren't huge at all;
The plumber's bill is sometimes small;
And messenger boys don't always crawl,
In spite of the funny man.

The poets don't have to live on air,
In spite of the funny man;
Those front-row men sometimes have hair,
In spite of the funny man.
Sometimes a brand-new joke is sprung;
Sometimes the ballet girl is young;
And sometimes wives are not all tongue,
In spite of the funny man.

Society girls at balls wear clothes,
In spite of the funny man;
Sometimes a man pays what he owes,
In spite of the funny man.
Sometimes the typist is plain in face;
Sometimes the church-deacon's not at the race;
In fact, this world's quite a decent place,
In spite of the funny man.

MISS SUNSHINE.

A 'Bus Conductor's Romance.

Quite right, sir; I did take a day off yesterday. Just fancy you missing me. We're like part of the machine to most of the passengers, seems to me, wound up to order, an tireless like the wheels. Good joke, eh? Lor! I didn't notice it till you pointed it out; seems like I've done with joking an' laughing for ever.

Married an' done for, you say? Well, no; not quite that; though I have heard it said as a young man married is a young man married, an' great fools I've thought 'em as said it. It ought to be the other way about, to my mind—a young woman married is a young woman married—at least, it's heavy on my heart to-day. No; I haven't been jilted either—never been engaged, or properly in love, so that falls flat.

I seem bitter, you say. Well, I can't help it just yet; later on maybe I shall quiet down—today I do feel a bit heart-sick an' tired o' life.

You want to hear the story? Oh! don't you run away wi' that idea, sir, 'cos there ain't none. No; wrong again. I ain't wearing this bit o' crape for sweetheart, child, or wife, nor yet for relation or friend. Well, if you do want to hear all about it, 'ere goes, though, I warn you, there ain't much to tell.

It's a matter o' three year ago now—almost one o' my first journeys, I remember, from Vauxhall to Baker Street. We was blocked for a minute at the end o' Park Lane—Royalty in the Park, or something o' that kind—an' suddenly a door opened an' the most beautiful young lady I ever saw in my life came tripping down the steps an' into a carriage an' pair fit for a Princess, an' as the door clapt to I saw something bright an' round a-lying on the pavement, which, the next minute, I'd picked up, an' found 'twas a bracelet.

Inside was engraved "From Algernon to Dolores," an' my first thought was as 'er "godfathers an' godmothers in 'er baptism" 'adn't done their duty by 'er (of course, I knew 'twas 'ers all along) by reason of 'er name.

Dolores 'as a mournful kind o' sound with it, an' if ever any living soul in this world looked like sunshine it was 'er that day. I took the bracelet to that 'ouse next day, which was my Sunday off, an' I should ha' been well rewarded for my trouble wi' out the gold piece she gave me by the flash o' joy in 'er face as she said:—

"I thank you over and over again! I wouldn't have lost it for the whole world!"

It was some weeks later that I saw straw put in front of that very 'ouse an' my 'eart fair sank as I feared it might be 'er; but when I asked the men at the mews just near they said it was the gentleman what owned the house—'er father—an' I felt as glad as if I'd picked up a five-pound note. A week later the blinds were down, the straw brushed away, an' soon after that there was a sale there, an' I gave a kind o' sigh, as I thought I'd seen the last o' 'er—Miss Sunshine, as I called 'er to myself, by reason o' 'er golden hair an' beautiful smile.

I only wish that 'ad been the last I saw o' 'er. I'd give summat for it to ha' been!

It were quite three months afterwards when someone in black—a young lady—got into my 'bus in the cheapest part o' Pimlico, an' somehow I couldn't help thinking I'd seen 'er before, though she was shabby an' white an' thin. I don't know as I should 'ave recognised 'er if she hadn't nearly slipped off the step getting out, an' I just saved 'er from falling.

It was the smile, the same smile, an' as she thanked me I said to myself, "Lor, if it isn't Miss Sunshine—or 'er ghost." It was 'er, worse luck, an' twice a day for nigh six months she rode in my 'bus, getting thinner an' paler and more delicate every day—only the smile were always the same—sunshine if ever I saw it—sunshine o' the 'eart, which warms you through an' through.

By that time I'd found out all about 'er—an' it wasn't cheerful 'earing either.

She'd been brought up like a Princess, an'

taught to believe 'erself an heiress to nigh millions, an' she'd been engaged to be married to a gentleman named Gwynne, an' life seemed like a rose-garden to her—roses without thorns.

Then 'er father was taken ill an' died, an' they found there wasn't any money, an' the engagement was broken off, an' she an' 'er mother took one room in Pimlico, an' she—Miss Sunshine—set to work to earn bread for both on 'em.

I didn't 'ear the story from 'er, don't you think it. I wouldn't 'ave presumed to 'ave said one word to 'er—though 'er smile was what I lived for, from Monday morning to Saturday night.

Paler she grew an' thinner, wi' a cough that was just 'orrible to listen to, an' one day I saw 'er boots—an' I knew why she couldn't get rid o' that cold. Lor, sir! she were walking fair on the ground, an' split right away from the sole was the uppers—the least bit o' damp would soak in, an' 'er that delicate that she looked as if a breath would blow 'er away.

If I'd a-known where she lived, I'd ha' chanced it an' sent 'er a pair what you call anonymous, but I didn't—she was always waiting where 'er penny ride began, an' got out where it ended. So one day I picked 'er pocket!

Yes, I did—as she got in the 'bus—an' I slipped back in 'er purse the piece of gold (to the same value) I'd ad from 'er nigh a year back for taking 'er the bracelet, an' called out in my most 'perfectional tones, "Any lady or gent lost a purse, 'cos one's been found, an' can be 'ad on description."

She put 'er hand to 'er pocket an' gave a kind o' faint cry—it 'ad only a few coppers inside, but 'er very look told what it meant to 'er when I 'anded it back to 'er. (I'd slipped the coin well out o' sight; so's she'd think it 'ad been there for ever so long; but she found it, for the very next day, thank Heaven, she'd a new pair o' boots on—that's the best bit o' the whole story I've got to think on.)

Then one day my 'eart fair jumped into my throat, for who should get into the 'bus an' seat 'imself right next 'er but the gentle. I'd seen with 'er in the carriage that first day—'im she was engaged to—'im as gave 'er the bracelet—an' he just says:—

"Good heaven, Dolores—you—"

Well, they talked together on an' on, an' she didn't get out at the usual place, an' as the 'bus emptied I 'eard him vowing as it wasn't 'is fault it 'ad ever been broken off, an' as 'ow he 'ad never loved anybody else. H'd marry 'er now—it was only 'is people who refused to let 'im throw 'imself away.

Well, I guessed just 'ow it would end.

That was the first but not the last, time he met 'er, an' one day she came in wearing a plain gold ring on 'er finger an' looking so happy—oh! so happy, sir, it fair breaks my 'eart to remember. It 'ad seemed like 'er dead self come to life again, as she were in the old days, afore she knew there was such a thing as trouble in the world.

I never liked 'im—Algernon—never. But when I saw that look on 'er face I could 'ave given 'im a free journey there an' back every day in 'is life. He'd come out true after all, an' made 'er forget he'd ever been false.

Well, she didn't wear the black dress any longer, but came out in soft, pretty things an' laces, an' one hat with roses like a picture.

They took a flat near Sloane Street, an' at least once a week I'd see 'em in my 'bus; an' she always smiled, for she'd known me for a long time then, an' seemed in a way to know I liked to 'ave 'er in the 'bus.

Then somehow it came to me that there was the old sad look in 'er eyes again. She wasn't quite so thin an' pale as before, but she didn't look much happier, an' I soon found out he wasn't good to 'er.

Suappy an' selfish, an' always telling 'er what he'd given up for 'er sake, an' 'ow he'd thrown 'imself away, an' the dozens o' fine ladies who'd ha' given their eyes for 'im—an' repeating cruel little things 'is people 'ad said about 'er father being a fraud, an' letting everybody think 'im a millionaire when he was nothing but a beggar.

Ah! I 'eard an' saw, an' found out a lot about those two, in the eighteen months as followed their marriage, an' if ever you want to break a woman's 'eart an' kill 'er soul, you try sneering words—they act quite as sure as blows, only you can't be 'anged for 'em, worse luck, or I'd put a rope around somebody's neck to-night.

No, he didn't strike 'er, an' anybody but a loving, sensitive girl might ha' lived through it—it killed 'er. You see, she were pretty—very, very pretty, an' sweet—very, very sweet, an' though he gave 'er up when the money vanished, he'd 'anked after 'er all the time, partly because she didn't try to 'old 'im to 'is word. Then when he met 'er sudden, he was a true man for a few weeks—he gave up chances o' money in other quarters, an' split with 'is people, an' married 'er; an' from that moment began to repent.

The last time I saw 'em together she looked like a drooping white lily an' he was so careless o' 'er, as they left the 'bus, that I said a most wi'out thinking:—

"Take care o' 'er, sir; she ought not to be out on a night like this. You're a letting the rain drip right down 'er neck."



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"Hang your impertinence?" was his reply, with a scowl like a stage villain. "How dare you presume to speak so to me?" an' she—Dolores—for 'er name came true, long an' long ago—just turned an' smiled an' smiled an' dropped a white rose she'd been wearing. Her lips seemed to speak, but there were no sound, only if ever looks said "good-bye" 'ers did that night.

I picked up the rose—its next my heart now—an' I took the day off to go to 'er funeral yesterday; that's what the bit of crape's for, sir. Neither sweetheart, nor wife, nor friend—only for Miss Sunshine—an' when the parson said "With God, which is far better," I said "Amen"

Pity The Poor Inventor!

"When I was young," remarked the seedy man, "I was an inventor. And one day when I had the disease badly, I invented a machine which I called 'Mother dear,' because it would call you early. It was a clockwork arrangement which was meant to stand by your bedside, and at whatever time in the morning it was fixed for it would drag you out of bed and force you into your clothes. There were a lot of other things attached to it as well, such as a machine which would black your boots, and an arrangement for making a cup of coffee and frying bacon, and so on. Well, I got it all completed at last, and it worked beautifully; and then I got a millionaire to come and look at it, so that he might find the capital to put it on the market."

"Well," said the listener, breaking in upon the silence; "didn't it work?"

"Yes," replied the inventor, sadly, "it worked very well. But that idiot of a millionaire insisted on trying it himself; and he lay down on the bed the wrong way for the machine, so that it dragged him out the wrong way up, and the boot-brushing apparatus got to work on the top of his head, while the other end poured hot coffee down the leg of his trousers, and when he finally got free he broke up my humble little home with the patent. That discouraged me, and I haven't invented any-thing since."

Editorial Regrets.

A country editor, who evidently has troubles of his own, is having heart-to-heart talks with his delinquent subscribers. The following is one of the latest:—

"Good morning. Have you paid your subscription this year? Perhaps you owe for last year or several years. Now, you understand we don't need money; we have millions—to get. But it is really an imposition to let people go on carrying our money when we are strong and healthy and so abundantly able to bear the burden ourselves. For this reason we ask anybody who has any of our money in his possession to leave it at the office or send it by post, freight train, express, or any other way, just so it gets here. Silver and gold are heavy, and it would be a matter of life long regret if anybody should get bow-legged carrying it about for us."

Jim Drew a Full Hand.

"It was this a-way, jedge: Ye see, I doled de cards, and Jim Brown he had a pah of aces and a pah of kings."

"What did you have?"

"Three aces, jedge, and—"

"What did Jim do?"

"Jim, he drew."

"What did he draw?"

"He drew a razzler, jedge."—Philadelphia Inquirer.

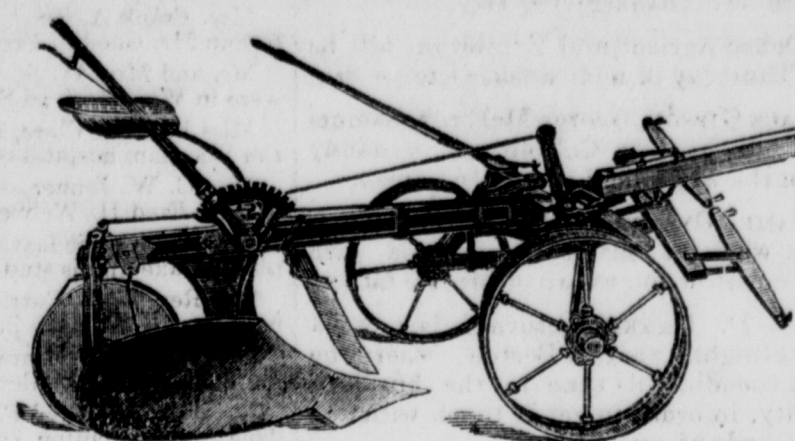
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