

His Mongoose Experience.

"Although I sold tickets in a red circus wagon for years," continued the dime museum man, "I was badly fooled once in an animal deal. I mean by this that I fooled myself. I got a letter from a collector, who wanted to know if I would buy a mongoose. I wrote back to have it shipped at once, and it was to be in the museum ready for exhibition one Monday morning. I had a rather hazy idea of what the beast looked like, but I was sure that it was something big, with tusks, and I told our artist to go ahead on that idea and spread himself."

"He did. The picture he evolved would catch any one's eye at any range. He took a whole frame of canvas and painted for a background a tropical island, with the mongoose chewing up sailors on the shore."

"The picture was finished Sunday, and I couldn't help but rub my hands when I looked at it. The moment it was hung out people flocked around it, and the early morning attendance Monday was remarkable. The doors were opened before I got down, and as I went up stairs I heard a subdued growl. 'That's the mongoose,' I said to myself. 'The idiots haven't fed it.'"

"It wasn't the mongoose. It was the crowd growling like a Roman mob behind the scenes. They had been lured by the picture, and when they got to the cage labeled 'Mongoose' they could not see the beast at all. It had buried itself in the straw."

The Leopard and the Pan.

One day a worthy Kulu housewife came out from her cooking and, standing on the ledge of rock at her door, emptied a pan of boiling water into the rank herbage growing below. It fell, splash, on the back of a sleeping leopard, who jumped perpendicularly into the air as high as the roof of the hut. What might have happened next? But who can say? But the astonished woman dropped the pan with a clang upon the rock, and the leopard took one leap down hill. The pan followed, and the leopard's downward leaps became longer and swifter as the pan bounded after it from rock to rock.

When last seen the leopard had just achieved a leap of about 350 feet to the very bottom of the ravine, thousands of feet below, and the pan had whirled about 500 feet over it on to the opposite side. The leopard would have eaten the old woman with pleasure, but a pan which first scalded half the hide off him and then bounded clanging in his wake from the top of the Himalayas to the plains below was something which he could not face.—Good Words.

Is Your Name Here?

A contributor has been amusing himself by trying to answer the question of series of questions. What man in the history of the world whose name began with A—and after that every other letter of the alphabet in order—exerted the greatest influence upon the thought and conduct of mankind?

Of course there are some letters which are not very prolific in the names of great men, but we think most of our readers will be surprised to see how many of the most illustrious names in history are included and how few are excluded.

In some cases the compiler seems to have selected names quite as much with a view to comprehending in the list men of many countries, as because the name given was that of the greatest man of his time. The list follows:

Aristotle, Baco, Confucius, Darwin, Ezra, Franklin, Goethe, Homer, Isaiah, Justinian, Kant, Luther, Mohammed, Newton, Ossian, Plato, Quintilian, Rousseau, Shakespeare, Tasso, Uhlard, Virgil, Washington, Xavier, Young, Zoroaster.—London Globe.

Dangers of Laughter.

It is surprising to learn from the highest medical authority in England that laughter may be injurious.

Laughter in itself, says the British Medical Journal, cannot very well kill, but it may do harm. Hysterical girls and boys with kindred nervous affections are often given to immoderate laughter, which tends to increase nervous exhaustion.

Dr. Feilchenfeld relates an instructive case in which a little girl suffered from very definite cardiac symptoms after immoderate laughter. The patient was 13 years old and had previously been free from any sign of heart disease. After laughing on and off for nearly an hour with some companions she suddenly felt stabbing pains in the chest and was seized with fits of coughing, followed by cardiac dyspnea, very well marked. Feilchenfeld believes that the cardiac disease directly resulted from immoderate laughing.

Defending His Profession.

"Now," said the attorney for the defense, "let us take up the bill presented by the plaintiff in this case for alleged services rendered to my client. I say alleged services, gentlemen of the jury, because these figures show every indication of having been doctored."

"Would it not be better to say 'lawyered'?" asked an indignant physician who was serving as one of the jurors.—Chicago Tribune.

Scotland's Strange Birds.

From the small island of St. Kilda, off Scotland, 20,000 young gannets and an immense number of eggs are annually collected, and although this bird lays only one egg per annum and is four years in obtaining its maturity its numbers do not diminish. Obviously such birds must reach a great age, or they would long ago have been exterminated.

The deserts of Arabia are specially remarkable for their pillars of sand, which are raised by whirlwinds and have a very close resemblance in their appearance to waterspouts.

It is said that so difficult is the art of cutting gloves that most of the principal cutters are known to the trade by name and by fame.

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Didn't Lose His Head.

Prince Louis Esterhazy, military attaché of the Austrian embassy at London, was traveling alone in an English railway, when an elegantly dressed woman entered the carriage. Presently she dropped her handkerchief and employed other expedients to start a conversation, but without avail, for the prince tranquilly smoked his cigar and took no notice of her. At last as the train approached a station the woman suddenly tore her hat from her head, disheveled her hair and as the train came to a standstill put her head out of the window and shrieked for assistance.

The railroad officials hurried to the scene, and to them the woman asserted that she had been terribly insulted by the prince. The prince did not stir from his seat, but continued tranquilly smoking his cigar, and the station master exclaimed, "What have you got to say to this charge?"

Without the slightest appearance of concern the prince, who was seated in the farther corner of the carriage, replied, "Only this," and with that he pointed to his cigar, which showed a beautiful gray ash considerably over an inch in length.

The station master was wise in his generation, and on perceiving the ash on the prince's cigar he touched his hat and said quietly, "That's all right, sir," and arrested the woman instead.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Sunday Trading.

A German shopkeeper went one Sunday morning to a customer in order to demand the payment of a long neglected account. The police heard of this and regarded it as a violation of the new law against trading during the hours of worship. The offender was cited and fined. He appealed to the kammergericht, and was discharged as innocent. What the law expressly forbids, said the kammergericht, is any "public or open labor or trading within the prescribed time."

On the police interpretation two men who talked incidentally about their business relations on Sunday morning on their way to church might be arrested as violators of the law, which would be palpably tyrannical and absurd. This recalls the good old tale of two Sabbatharian farmers who hit upon a consistent method of doing trade on the Lord's day without breaking the fourth commandment. "What would you give for that calf," asked one, "if it were not the Sabbath?" "If it were not the Sabbath I would give you so much," naming the sum. "Tomorrow, then, we will consider it a bargain."—London News.

In Extremis.

Late one night a clergyman was called out to minister to an old man—a worker upon the adjacent railway—who was supposed to be dying. The summons was brought by another old man, the elder brother of the stricken one. While he was bustling about, making preparations for departure, the clergyman forgot momentarily the social status of his visitor and asked, "Is he in extremis?"

The old man was not going to be beaten. "Aye, he's right in, your reverence." After a pause he added as a clincher: "Clean in, poor chap. Right up to the neck, sir."—Cornhill Magazine.

The Sickle of the Sphinx.

The oldest piece of wrought iron in existence is believed to be a roughly fashioned sickle blade found by Belzoni in Karnas, near Thebes. It was imbedded in mortar under the base of the sphinx, and on that account is known as "the sickle of the sphinx." It is now in the British museum and is believed to be nearly 4,000 years old.

Princess Elena Vunwanga, of Fiji, who is ten years of age, has gone to Sydney, N. S. W., with the intention of beginning her education there. It is intended that she shall study medicine in the Sydney University.

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The Mad Poet's Retort.

Many stories are told of McDonald Clarke, known 50 years ago in New York as the "Mad Poet," which show that he had a vein of great shrewdness, such as is often possessed by people who are counted insane.

One day he was seated at a table in a New York hotel quietly eating his simple dinner when two young men took their seats at the same table. They were not gentlemen in the best sense of the word, and it occurred to them that they might have some sport with the poor poet. Consequently one of them said in an unnecessarily clear tone:

"I have seen almost everything and everybody in New York except McDonald Clarke. I have a great admiration for his poems, and I would give a great deal to see the man."

When he paused, the mad poet leaned forward and said with evident gratification:

"Sir, I am McDonald Clarke, whom you say you wish to see."

The young man stared at him with much rudeness for a moment, and then, drawing a quarter from his pocket, he laid it on the poet's plate, saying, "That's for the sight!"

Clarke looked at the coin for an instant, and then, placing it in his pocket, he took out a "York shilling," 12½ cents. This he handed to the young man, saying gravely, "Children half price."—Youth's Companion.

A Decidedly Novel Claim.

A claim once made on the explorer, Cameron, in the neighborhood of Gaboon, Africa, shows the peculiar workings of the native African's mind. Some of Cameron's possessions proved unduly attractive to a native, and he determined on transferring the ownership to himself. He accordingly paid another native \$200 to procure for him the coveted goods.

The assistant took the money and did his best to earn it, but Mr. Cameron had perversely locked up the very articles that the fellow's employer had set his heart upon. The man could not carry out his bargain, and neither did he feel that he could part with the money. Therefore he ran off with it. What more logical than that the man who was the loser by \$200 should expect the explorer to make the loss good? This he assuredly did expect.

He went to Mr. Cameron and told him the story, demanding in the first place the \$200 which he, Cameron, by locking up his goods, had compelled the complainant to lose, and, secondly, the actual price of the goods themselves, which, but for these arbitrary measures, would now have been in his possession. It is not stated that his expectations were realized.—Watchman.

Sterne's Destination.

Laurence Sterne, the writer, was the victim of the intensest poverty. A little time before his death, being in a state of destitution, he went one evening to borrow £5 from his friend Garrick. Upon arriving, he heard music and knew that a party was going on. He heard the merry laughter, and, gently replacing the uplifted knocker, retraced his steps.

We never feel our miseries so keenly as when contrasted with the joys of others, and it is only then that we realize Wordsworth's picture:

And homeless near a thousand homes I stood
And near a thousand tables pined for food.

Another story of this writer does not evoke so much sympathy. It was known that Sterne used his wife very ill, and in talking with Garrick one day in fine sentimental style of conjugal love and fidelity he said, "The husband who behaves unkindly to his wife deserves to have his house burn down over his head."

"If you think so," said Garrick quietly, "I hope yours is well insured."

A Malay Sultan's Letter.

In the cover there were three inclosures—a formal letter of extreme politeness, written by a scribe; secondly, a letter written in my friend's own hand; and thirdly, another paper, headed, "Hidden Secrets," written also in the sultan's own hand. At the top of the first page of the second letter is written, "Our friendship is sealed in the most recesses of my heart." Then this, "I send this letter to my honored and renowned friend" (here follow my name, designation and some conventional compliments). The letter then continues: "You, my dear friend, are never out of my thoughts, and they are always wishing you well. I hear that you are coming to see me, and for that reason my heart is exceedingly glad, as though the moon had fallen into my lap or I had been given a cluster of flowers grown in the garden called Benjerza Sri, wide opening under the influence of the sun's warm rays."

"Unaddressed Letters," by Swettenham.

An Antenuptial Understanding.
"There is one question I want to ask you, dearest," said the beautiful girl as she toyed with the diamond ring on her third finger. "When we are married, will you expect me to bake my own bread?"

"You can do as you like about it, darling," he replied, "but I certainly shall insist upon your not baking mine."

Unhappy Hindoo Women.

The Hindoo holy books forbid a woman to see dancing, bear music, wear jewels, blacken her eyebrows, eat dainty food, sit at a window or view herself in a mirror during the absence of her husband and allow him to divorce her if she has no sons, injures his property, scolds him, quarrels with another woman or presumes to eat before he has finished his meal.

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Elizabeth Cromwell.

Cromwell legends are so ubiquitous in England that it is a real relief to lay one's hand upon a bit of solid fact relating either to the protector or his family. Elizabeth, the second and favorite daughter of Cromwell, married John Claypole of Northborough, and appears to have spent a considerable portion of her 12 years of wedded life in his substantial fourteenth century house. Carlyle asserts Elizabeth Claypole to have been "a graceful, brave and amiable woman," and of her home that it is "now ruined—patched into a farmhouse."

The second statement is not characterized by his usual accuracy, and the first probably needs some modification. For Elizabeth Claypole is credited with some turning of her head over her father's elevation, and at a wedding feast is reported to have exclaimed: "when asked why the wives of the major generals were absent, 'I'll warrant you, washing their dishes at home, as they used to do.' Not a particularly 'amiable' sentence that."

Cromwell seems to have had some insight of her little weakness. "Tell her," he wrote once, "to take heed of a departing heart and of being cozened with worldly vanities and worldly company, which, I doubt, she is too subject to." It is agreed by most authorities that John Claypole himself was little enough of a Puritan, but let it stand to his credit that, after Oliver died, he provided a haven for his widow for the rest of her life in this manor house.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

Barbers on the Ocean.

One of the most important persons on board a well equipped ocean liner is the barber. If he is gifted with a good business instinct, he is in a position to make a good deal of money.

To the average man shaving while at sea is a difficult and hazardous operation. He therefore calls into requisition the services of the ship's barber, a man who by long training is qualified to wield the razor with skill and safety, no matter how much the vessel rolls or pitches.

He is always one of the most heavily "tipped" officials on the ship. If the ship travels on a route with interesting ports of call, the ship's barber makes it his business to lay in a stock of native knickknacks and curios of all kinds.

The inexperienced traveler is naturally a little suspicious of the native peddlers who swarm on board with their wares directly the ship is at anchor. He prefers to purchase his mementos of foreign travel of the barber, who, having bought his stock at wholesale rates, is able to retail the various articles to passengers at prices little if at all higher than those charged by the native tradesman.—Exchange.

Goldsmith's Actor.

Lord Nugent was one evening very eloquent to Goldsmith in praise of M. (a bad actor). "But, my lord," said Goldsmith, "you must allow he treads the stage very ill—he waddles." "Waddles?" said Lord Nugent. "Yes, he waddles like a goose. Why, you know we call him Goose M." "Well, and then, you know, when he endeavors to express strong passion he bellows." "Bellows?" said Lord Nugent. "To be sure he does—bellows like a bull. Why, we call him Bull M." "Well, then," continued Goldsmith, pursuing his triumph, "his voice breaks and he croaks." "Croaks?" said Lord Nugent. "Why, the fellow croaks like a frog. We call him Frog M. But M. is a good actor."

"Why, yes," said Goldsmith, "barring the goose, the bull, and the frog, and a few other things I could mention, and not wishing to speak ill of my neighbors, I will allow M. is a good actor."—"Memoirs of the Earl of Nugent."

The Sea Gull and the Fisherman.

In the fishing village of Auchmutie (the Musselcraig of Scott's "Antiquary") you may frequently witness sea gulls flying into the houses of the fishermen and partaking of food from their hands. One of these sea birds was in the habit of staying in a fisherman's house all the year round except at the breeding season, when it left. Quite recently, while the gull was away, the fisherman removed his home from Auchmutie to Arroath (the Fairport of Scott's "Antiquary"), distant some 9½ miles from the former place, taking up his residence in South street of Arroath. The fisherman never expected to see his old friend the gull again. It was therefore much to his astonishment that he beheld a fortnight later the sea bird come walking into his new residence with stately steps to resume his old familiarities and household ways with his housekeeper.—London Lady.

The Better Drawer.

"Your money or your life!" cried the robber.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the artist, and drew a pistol. The artist had no money, and, according to the critics, not much life, but that was not why he laughed. He laughed because he belonged to the school which draws rapidly and boldly rather than the school which draws laboriously, with great attention to detail.—Detroit Journal.

London Landlords.

There is perhaps no tenant who is so completely at the mercy of his landlord as the occupier of a house in London which belongs to one of the great ground landlords. He is an absolute prisoner within the four corners of his lease. The slightest deviation is accompanied with pains and penalties, but, on the other hand, the landlord reserves all kinds of privileges to himself.

Very little furniture is used in the bedrooms of Turkish houses. Rarely is a chair seen in any of them. A few mats adorn the room, and the bed is stretched on the floor.

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