

# APRIL 1st

**The Fools.**  
Shh! Shh! Keep still!  
Don't tell it Bill.  
An' we'll have a pile of fun  
Wid a dollar bill—  
Dat's what we will.  
It's just dead easy done!

We'll drop 'er down  
In de road, near town,  
Wid a string on, fine and strong;  
An' behind de gate  
We'll hide, an' wait  
Fer de fools ter come along!



And the fools, they say,  
Who were fooled that day  
Were the fools behind the gate.  
—James Courtney Challis.

## OATCAKE'S APRIL 1.



**F**ARMER Oatcake had come to town on a load of hay. After exchanging it for the market price he proceeded to see the "sights," like farmers sometimes will. He had not proceeded far before his attention was attracted by a huge box on top of which was a board sign, which read as follows:

**LOOK OUT FOR THE BEAR.**

Of course Mr. Oatcake could not resist the temptation of taking a squint at brain, so he ambled up to the box rather nervously and peeped through the bars that had been nailed across the top to keep Mr. Bear safe. Finding that the box was entirely empty Mr. Oatcake began to scratch his head. How had the bear got out? Then someone yelled April fool. Mr. Oatcake allowed that it was a good one.

Later in the day Mr. Oatcake took in the dime museum. He interviewed the fat girl, talked populism with the bearded lady, visited the chamber of horrors, and had enjoyed himself generally when he saw the following sign:

### SEE THE GREAT RED BAT.

Draw Back the Curtain.  
He drew back the curtain. Then he saw a big red bat and turned a double somersault in his haste to get away. He hadn't counted on being April-fooled twice in one day.

After leaving the museum Mr. Oatcake thought he would take a drink or two, and at once proceeded to a convenient liquor dispensary. "I'll take a beer," he said, putting a nickel on the bar. "been April-fooled twice and have concluded to drown my feelings." He was just the individual that the bartender with the decay beer glass was looking for. It was produced in short order, and Mr. Oatcake showed himself to be rather an adept at the art of blowing off the foam. Then he expanded his capacious maw, preparatory to taking a gulp. But it wouldn't gulp worth a cent. It was only an artificially colored glass with real foam. Farmer Oatcake concluded that he had better hitch up and start home. Nearing a railway grade crossing within the city limits he saw a man frantically waving a red flag and telling him to stop.

"No yer don't, yer got darned fannel-mouthed son-of-a-gun; I've been fooled three times already," and he piled the whip with effect. In another instant Mr. Oatcake and his outfit were taking a ride on the cowcatcher of the engine.



**TURNED A DOUBLE SOMERSET.**  
Fortunately he was not badly hurt, but the approach of April 1 always causes him to shudder.

**Why the 'Gators Were Not There.**  
An American naval officer, wishing to bathe in a Ceylon river, asked a native to show him a place where there were no alligators. The native took him to a pool close to the estuary. The officer enjoyed his dip; while drying himself he asked his guide why there were never any alligators in that pool. "Because, sah," the Cingalese replied, "they plenty 'fraid of shark."

They have a brand of whisky in San Antonio called the "Horn of Plenty" because it will corn you copiously.—Texas Sifter.

## THE THREE MISS BROWNS.

**Their Wonderful Present and What Came of It.**

Bang! bang! went the door bell. It rang fearfully.

"Betty," said the boarding-house mistress, "go out and see who that giant is that is trying to break the door bell."

The door bell jingled and rattled and Betty tripped downstairs and opened the door.

A district messenger, three feet high, stood on the doorstep, smoking a powerful cigarette. Now and again a cloud of smoke hid him from view.

The small messenger held his cigarette lightly and gracefully in the air and said:

"Here's a box for Miss Brown. There is 25 cents due on it."

Betty paid the money and took the box.

Then he shot down the steps like a meteor and actually ran to a cigar store on the corner after another package of cigarettes.

"Miss Brown," called Betty from the hallway, "here is a box for you!"

Three pretty young ladies answered the call, for it happened there were three Miss Browns in the boarding-house.

"Which Miss Brown?" asked each in chorus.

"There is no first name," said Betty; "only Miss Brown."

The three fair Miss Browns looked at the box in a brown study. It was certainly meant for a Miss Brown in their boarding-house, for the number had been written in large numbers on the box lid.

The Miss Browns agreed that they would open the box and if there was nothing in it to indicate which of them the box was intended for they would divide its contents.

The three Miss Browns opened the box with gleeful faces and great expectations.

There was nothing in it but a brick. The day was April 1.

## A DREADFUL DAY.

**The Quick-Tempered Father and His Darling Little Boy.**

The father had been out late the night before, "working on the books at the office," you know, and when he sat down to breakfast with his wife and Willie, rosy-cheeked, mischievous, and lovable Willie, their only child, he was not in good humor.

He found fault because the coffee had cooled (while breakfast was waiting for him), he grumbled because his eggs were too hard boiled, and he made his wife and child as miserable as he himself was.

The climax of his ugliness was reached when for some fancied sin on Willie's part he rushed the boy into the parlor and gave him a sound thrashing.

When breakfast was resumed it was eaten in silence except for the child's half-choked sobs.

The father was sorry for what he had done. He had a nervous temperament. He did not stop to smoke his usual morning pipe, but hurried away. As he reached the door Willie came up to him with upturned face and said:

"Willie wants to kiss papa. Willie loves papa."

The father's heart was touched and he regretted his actions. Riding downtown in the train he read in his morning paper of the death of a little boy by being run over while at play by a passing truck. He imagined the scene, and it was impressed upon his mind. Then his mind ran on with strange imaginings. What if his boy should be killed. What if when he arrived home at night Willie should be dead—dead before he could tell his boy how much he loved him, and how sorry he was for his cruel conduct.

Of course there was not one chance in a million of his losing his child; but then there was that one chance. The idea soon developed into a presentiment that haunted him all day. He performed his duties in a mechanical manner, while picturing a white casket, and a chubby little face cold in death. By night he had worked himself into a terrible mental condition. He left the "L" train and walked with nervous steps toward home.

Willie was not playing in front of the house as usual. The father missed the usual kiss and "Hello, papa! I'm glad you've come."

He ascended the steps. He saw white crape on the door bell. He reeled and gasped for breath, and saw nothing but mist. Then recovering himself, he opened the door, and with moist eyes entered the house.

What was it he saw? Was it Willie? Yes, it was his little son who merrily shouted:

"April Fool, papa! April Fool!" And papa didn't do a thing to Willie.—S. R. Egor in New York World.

## SHE DID IT.

**What He Was Sent For, Though Not What He Expected.**

He was young and enthusiastic, and he loved her to distraction.

"If I could but serve you," he said to the object of his adoration, "I would indeed be the happiest of mortals. Command me."

And the damsel blushed and said she would.

"Stay here a moment and I will give you a note to take to a friend. You will bring back a package," and she smiled, oh! so sweetly, as she gilded from the room.

She returned in a few moments and handed him the precious message. Away he flew. Distance was no object to him. He reached his destination. The letter was opened and returned with the remark that the package he was to fetch was at another remote part of the town.

He flew there, only to be referred to the sergeant of police, at the nearest station. The sergeant read the message and directed him to another official, who in his turn sent the young man four miles out of the city. But the elusive package was not to be found.

One sent him to Brooklyn, another to Jersey City, until at length, weary, footsore and unable to go further, he sank upon a doorstep and tearing open the missive read these words:

"Send the fool further."  
The dawn of April 2 was breaking.—New York Journal.

## A Good One on Mr. Blank.

The best April-fool joke of recent times was played on a Chicago commission merchant a few years ago. Chicago commission merchants are not always good natured and Mr. Blank was no exception to the rule. In fact, he was unusually gruff, and was never known to take a joke as such. That is probably the reason that he was a favorite mark for the practical joker. On March 31 one of his friends caused the following ad to appear in the columns of a Chicago paper the following morning:

Wanted—Fifty Maltese cats at once. Highest prices paid. Bring them along. Blank, Commission Merchant, —S. Water street.

When Mr. Blank arrived at his store he was surprised to see a line of boys in front of his store each with a cat under his arm. When he learned what it was all about he became a veritable madman. It was many weeks before he recovered his composure.

## April Fool's Day in Africa.



Missionary—Did you notice which way my colleague went?  
Cannibal—He just passed down five minutes ago.

Folly am I;  
This is my day.  
The old, the young,  
The grave, the gay,  
Able awhile with me to cheer  
The world's dull, humdrum way.

The richest man,  
The proudest girl;  
The polished wit,  
The heavy churl  
Are caught off guard and jostled much  
In folly's merry whirl.

No harm is meant;  
All's but for fun;  
And when the day  
Its course has run,  
Whoever's done the mischief gay  
Have all themselves been "done."

## A Future Convenience.

Diggles had been working hard for a long time with a refractory heating apparatus. He came out of the basement with blue fingers and a red nose, and an expression of repressed emotion on his face.

"Maria," he said, "there's one comfort about it."  
"What is it?"

"We needn't worry about ice next summer. I think I have struck a plan that's entirely reliable. If we want to get anything good and cold we'll take it down and put it into that heating apparatus. Only we must be careful not to leave it too long, or it'll freeze."  
—Cincinnati Commercial-Gazette.

## Harder to Get At.

"I suppose that it would take a great deal of observation and experience to enable a man to pick the fastest horse entered for a race," she remarked.

"Yes," replied the man of mournful experience; "but that isn't what you are trying to do. What you want is to pick the horse that is going to win."  
—Washington Star.

## TALMAGE'S SERMON.

**"DIVINE MISSION OF THE NEWSPAPER." HIS SUBJECT.**

A Fair Statement of the Conditions That Surround Newspaperdom—The Average Daily or Weekly Paper Is an Instrument for Great Good.



WASHINGTON, March 22, 1896.—"Newspaper Row," as it is called here in Washington, the long row of offices connected with prominent journals throughout the land, pays so much attention to Dr. Talmage they may be glad to hear what he thinks of them while he discusses a subject in which the whole country is interested. His text today was: "And the wheels were full of eyes." Ezekiel x: 12. "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing." Acts xviii: 21.

What is a preacher to do when he finds two texts equally good and suggestive? In that perplexity I take both. Wheels full of eyes? What but the wheels of a newspaper printing press? Other wheels are blind. They roll on, pulling or crushing. The manufacturer's wheel, how it grinds the operator with fatigue, and rolls over nerve and muscle and bone and heart, not knowing what it does. The sewing machine wheel sees not the ache and pains fastened to it—tighter than the band that moves it, sharper than the needle which it piles. Every moment of every hour of every day of every month of every year there are hundreds of thousands of wheels of mechanism, wheels of enterprise, wheels of hard work, in motion, but they are eyeless. Not so with the wheels of the printing press. Their entire business is to look and report. They are full of optic nerves, from axle to periphery. They are like those spoken of by Ezekiel as full of eyes. Sharp eyes, near-sighted, far-sighted. They look up. They look down. They look far away. They take in the next street and the next hemisphere. Eyes of criticism, eyes of investigation; eyes that twinkle with mirth, eyes glowing with indignation, eyes tender with love; eyes of suspicion, eyes of hope; blue eyes, black eyes, green eyes; holy eyes, evil eyes, sore eyes, political eyes, literary eyes, historical eyes, religious eyes; eyes that see everything. "And the wheels were full of eyes." But in my second text is the world's cry for the newspaper. Paul describes a class of people in Athens who spent their time either in gathering news or telling it. Why especially in Athens? Because the more intelligent people become, the more inquisitive they are—not about small things, but great things.

The question then most frequently asked: What is the news? To answer that cry in the text for the newspaper the centuries have put their wits to work. China first succeeded, and has at Pekin a newspaper that has been printed every week for one thousand years, printed on silk. Rome succeeded by publishing the Acta Diurna, in the same column putting fires, murders, marriages and tempests. France succeeded by a physician writing out the news of the day for his patients. England succeeded under Queen Elizabeth in first publishing the news of the Spanish Armada, and going on until she had enough enterprise, when the battle of Waterloo was fought, deciding the destiny of Europe, to give it one-third of a column in the London Morning Chronicle, about as much as the newspaper of our day gives of a small fire. America succeeded by Benjamin Harris' first weekly paper, called Public Occurrences, published in Boston in 1639, and by the first daily, the American Advertiser, published in Philadelphia in 1784.

The newspaper did not suddenly spring upon the world, but came gradually. The genealogical line of the newspaper is this: The Adam of the race was a circular or news-letter, created by Divine impulse in human nature; and the circular begat the pamphlet, and the pamphlet begat the quarterly, and the quarterly begat the weekly, and the weekly begat the semi-weekly, and the semi-weekly begat the daily. But alas! by what a struggle it came to its present development! No sooner had its power been demonstrated than tyranny and superstition shackled it. There is nothing that despotism so fears and hates as a printing press. It has too many eyes in its wheel. A great writer declared that the king of Naples made it unsafe for him to write of anything but natural history. Austria could not endure Kosuth's journalistic pen, pleading for the redemption of Hungary. Napoleon I., trying to keep his iron heel on the neck of nations, said: "Editors are the regents of sovereigns and the tutors of nations, and are only fit for prison." But the battle for the freedom of the press was fought in the court rooms of England and America and decided before this century began by Hamilton's eloquent plea for J. Peter Zenger's Gazette in America and Erskine's advocacy of the freedom of publication in England.

But I discourse now on a subject you have never heard—the immeasurable and everlasting blessing of a good newspaper. Thank God for the wheel full of eyes. Thank God that we do not have—like the Athenians—to go about to gather up and relate the tidings of the day, since the omnivorous newspaper does both for us. The grandest temporal blessing that God has given to the nineteenth century is the newspaper. We would have better appreciation of this blessing if we knew the

money, the brain, the losses, the exasperations, the anxieties, the wear and tear of hearts involved in the production of a good newspaper. Under the impression that almost anybody can make a newspaper, scores of inexperienced capitalists every year enter the lists, and, consequently, during the last few years a newspaper has died almost every day. The disease is epidemic. The larger papers swallow the smaller ones, the whale taking down fifty minnows at one swallow. With more than seven thousand dailies and weeklies in the United States and Canada, there are but thirty-six a half century old. Newspapers do not average more than five years' existence. The most of them die of cholera infantum. It is high time that the people found out that the most successful way to sink money and keep it sunk is to start a newspaper. There comes a time when almost everyone is smitten with the newspaper mania and starts one, or have stock in one he must or die.

The course of procedure is about this: A literary man has an agricultural or scientific or political or religious idea which he wants to ventilate. He has no money of his own—literary men seldom have. But he talks of his ideas among confidential friends until they become inflamed with the idea, and forthwith they buy type and press and rent a composing room, and gather a corps of editors, and with a prospectus that proposes to cure everything the first copy is flung on the attention of an admiring world. After a while one of the plain stockholders finds that no great revolution has been effected by this daily or weekly publication; that neither the sun nor moon stands still; that the world goes on lying and cheating and stealing just as it did before the first issue. The aforesaid matter-of-fact stockholder wants to sell out his stock, but nobody wants to buy, and other stockholders get infected and sick of newspaperdom, and an enormous bill at the paper factory rolls into an avalanche, and the printers refuse to work until back wages are paid up, and the compositor bows to the managing editor, and the managing editor bows to the editor-in-chief, and the editor-in-chief bows to the directors, and the directors bow to the world at large, and all the subscribers wonder why their paper doesn't come. The world will have to learn that a newspaper is as much of an institution as the Bank of England or Yale College, and is not an enterprise. If you have the aforesaid agricultural, or scientific, or religious, or political idea to ventilate, you had better charge upon the world through the columns already established. It is folly for anyone to try newspaperdom. If you cannot climb the hill back of your house it is folly to try the sides of the Matterhorn.

To publish a newspaper requires the skill, the precision, the boldness, the vigilance, the strategy of a commander-in-chief. To edit a newspaper requires that one be a statesman, an essayist, a geographer, a statistician, and in acquisition, encyclopedia. To man, to govern, to propel a newspaper until it shall be a fixed institution, a national fact, demand more qualities than any business on earth. If you feel like starting any newspaper, secular or religious, understand that you are being threatened with softening of the brain or lunacy and, throwing your pocketbook into your wife's lap, start for some insane asylum before you do something desperate. Meanwhile, as the dead newspapers, week by week, are carried out to the burial, all the living newspapers give respectful obituary, telling when they were born and when they died. The best printer's ink should give at least one stickful of epitaph. If it was a good paper, say, "Peace to its ashes." If it was a bad paper, I suggest the epitaph written for Francis Chautauque: "Here continueth to rot the body of Francis Chautauque, who, with an inflexible constancy and uniformity of life, persisted in the practice of every human vice, excepting prodigality and hypocrisy; his insatiable avarice exempted him from the first, his matchless impudence from the second." I say this because I want you to know that a good, healthy, long-lived, entertaining newspaper is not an easy blessing, but one that comes to us through the fire.

First of all, newspapers make knowledge democratic and for the multitude. The public library is a hay-mow so high up that few can reach it, while the newspaper throws down the storage to our feet. Public libraries are the reservoirs where the great floods are stored high up and away off. The newspaper is the tunnel that brings them down to the pitchers of all the people. The chief use of great libraries is to make newspapers out of. Great libraries make a few men and women very wise. Newspapers lift whole nations into the sunlight. Better have fifty million people moderately intelligent than one hundred thousand solons. A false impression is abroad that newspaper knowledge is ephemeral because periodicals are thrown aside, and not one out of ten thousand people files them for future reference. Such knowledge, so far from being ephemeral, goes into the very structure of the world's heart and brain and decides the destiny of churches and nations. Knowledge on the shelf is of little worth. It is knowledge afoot, knowledge harnessed, knowledge in revolution, knowledge winged, knowledge projected, knowledge thunder-bolted. So far from being ephemeral, nearly all the best minds and hearts have their hands on the printing press today, and have had since it got emancipated. Adams and Hancock and Otis used to go to the Boston Gazette and compose articles on the rights of the people. Benjamin Franklin, De Witt Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Quincy were strong in newspaperdom. Many of the immortal things that have been published in book form first appeared in what you

may call the ephemeral periodical. All Macaulay's essays first appeared in a review. All Carlyle's, all Ruskin's, all McIntosh's, all Sydney Smith's, all Hazlett's, all Thackeray's, all the elevated works of fiction in our day, are reprints from periodicals in which they appeared as serials. Tennyson's poems, Burns' poems, Longfellow's poems, Emerson's poems, Lowell's poems, Whittier's poems, were once fugitive pieces. You cannot find ten literary men in Christendom, with strong minds and great hearts, but are or have been somehow connected with the newspaper printing press. While the book will always have its place, the newspaper is more potent. Because the latter is multitudinous do not conclude it is necessarily superficial. If a man should from childhood to old age see only his Bible, Webster's Dictionary and his newspaper, he could be prepared for all the duties of this life and all the happiness of the next.

Again, a good newspaper is a useful mirror of life as it is. It is sometimes complained that newspapers report the evil when they ought only to report the good. They must report the evil as well as the good, or how shall we know what is to be reformed, what guarded against, what fought down? A newspaper that pictures only the honesty and virtue of society is a misrepresentation. That family is best prepared for the duties of life which, knowing the evil, is taught to select the good. Keep the children under the impression that all is fair and right in the world, and when they go out into it they will be as poorly prepared to struggle with it as a child who is thrown into the middle of the Atlantic and told to learn how to swim. Our only complaint is when evil is made attractive and morality dull, when vice is painted with great headlines and good deeds are put in obscure corners, iniquity set up in great primer and righteousness in nonpareil. Sin is loathsome, make it loathsome. Virtue is beautiful, make it beautiful.

It would work a vast improvement if all our papers—religious, political, literary—should for the most part drop their impersonality. This would do better justice to newspaper writers. Many of the strongest and best writers of the country live and die unknown, and are denied their just fame. The vast public never learns who they are. Most of them are on comparatively small income, and after awhile their hand forgets its cunning, and they are without resources, left to die. Why not, at least, have his initial attached to his most important work? It always gave additional force to an article when you occasionally saw added to some significant article in the old New York Courier and Enquirer J. W. W., or in the Tribune H. G., or in the Herald J. G. B., or in the Times H. J. R., or in the Evening Post W. C. B., or in the Evening Express E. B. While this arrangement would be a fair and just thing for newspaper writers, it would be a defense for the public.

Once more I remark, that a good newspaper is a blessing as an evangelistic influence. You know there is a great change in our day taking place. All the secular newspapers of the day—for I am not speaking now of the religious newspapers—all the secular newspapers of the day discuss all the questions of God, eternity and the dead, and all the questions of the past, present and future. There is not a single doctrine of theology but has been discussed in the last ten years by the secular newspapers of the country. They gather up all the news of all the earth bearing on religious subjects, and then they scatter the news abroad again. The Christian newspaper will be the right wing of the apocalyptic angel. The cylinder of the Christianized printing press will be the front wheel of the Lord's chariot. I take the music of this day, and I do not mark it diminuendo—I mark it crescendo. A pastor on a Sabbath preaches to a few hundred, or a few thousand people, and on Monday, or during the week, the printing press will take the same sermon and preach it to millions of people. God speed the printing press! God save the printing press! God Christianize the printing press!

When I see the printing press standing with the electric telegraph on the one side gathering up material, and the lightning express train on the other side waiting for the tons of folded sheets of newspapers, I pronounce it the mightiest force in our civilization. So I commend you to pray for all those who manage the newspapers of the land, for all type setters, for all reporters, for all editors, for all publishers, that, sitting or standing in positions of such great influence, they may give all that influence for God and the betterment of the human race. An aged woman making her living by knitting, unwound the yarn from the ball until she found in the center of the ball there was an old piece of newspaper. She opened it and read an advertisement which announced that she had become heirless to a large property, and that fragment of newspaper lifted her from pauperism to affluence. And I do not know but as the thread of time unravels and unwinds a little further, through the silent yet speaking newspaper may be found the vast inheritance of the world's redemption. Jesus shall reign where'er the sun Doth his successive journeys run; His kingdom stretch from shore to shore Till suns shall rise and set no more.

## Follow Duty.

This truth comes to us more and more the longer we live, that on what field or in what uniform or with what aims we do our duty matters very little, or even what our duty is, great or small, splendid or obscure. Only to follow our duty certainly, and somewhere, somehow, do it faithfully, makes us good, strong, happy and useful men, and tunes our lives into some feeble echo of the life of God.—Phillips Brooks.