Anxious to Taste Canned Lobster Once.

A woman whose face was wan and pinched went into a big Yongestreet grocery store the other day and looked around curiously. She was poorly dressed and had a tattered shawl thrown over her head.

After walking all through the store she approached a counter and asked. "Where are the canned goods?"

The clerk directed her to the counter and she walked over.

"What can I do for you, madam?" asked the man who has charge of that department.

"Have you any canned lobster?" she asked.

"Yes."

"How much is it?"

"Twenty cents."

"Twenty cents!" she repeated the price. She looked at a slip of paper she had in her hand and paused for a moment. "I think I will take four cans."

The clerk got down four cans of the lobster and wrapped them up for her. The woman stowed them away tightly in her bag and gave the clerk in payment one from one of the charitable institutions a dollar's worth of groceries. The clerk was dumbfounded. He looked after her and then at the woman.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"Nothing, only pretty good, but—but—"

"But what?" asked the woman sharply.

"I think that a sack of flour or a load of kindling would be more nearer to you, I think."

"Young man," she answered, "I don't want anything to eat at my place, sir. I never tasted lobster and don't know as I will have the chance to taste it, but I look out of the store, tight when I carried lobster to her home.

Laugh.

Laugh. A good laugh is better than medicine. Learn how to tell a good story. Be a welcome as a sick room. Learn to laugh at troubles to yourself. Try to care for your ills and your troubles to stop asking. If you want a good in the world, keep it going. Learn to hide your troubles under a pleasant smile. Don't hear whether you have a headache or rheumatism. Care do well enough in novels or out of place in real life. Meet your friends with a smile. A good man or woman is always welcomed anywhere, but the dyspeptic or hypocondriac and whatever and is well.

A Slight Delay.

"Is the proprietor in?"

"Take the steak back and broil it."

"You will have to wait a little if there are two other orders ahead."

"I'm sorry guilty of swearing, but I maintain that oaths are unnecessary in language."

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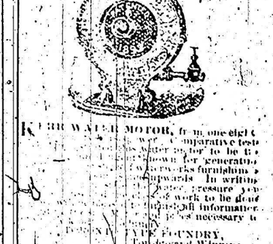

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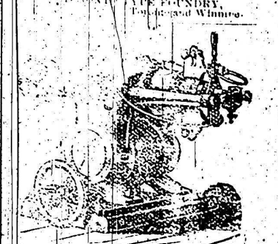

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THE SELECT STORY TELLER

SHORT, BRIGHT FICTION.

The Latest Stories By Popular, Well-Known Authors. Light Reading For the Boys and Girls.

A DAY ON THE OLD PLANTATION.

FAR away from the noise of the busy world lay our old country home, dreaming away its time amid the perfume of Southern roses, and beneath the azure of Southern skies.

We had wondered time after time how our plainty cousin Grace, who had passed the sixteen years of her life in New Orleans, would enjoy spending the autumn on our quiet farm, whose fields whispered of peace and plenty, and whose every spot of ground was endeared by not being the home of our childhood and the abode of our ancestors for generations past.

In truth the house was sadly in need of paint and repairs, and I know Grace's fastidious eyes were to that effect; but mother, in her quiet way, which no one ever disputed, had declared that she would first decorate her five children, and the repairing could come later. Grace came, and when the fresh, bracing October breezes had brought the roses to her cheeks (for she had been very ill and had come to us to recuperate), we all agreed with mother, the old plantation, ten miles distant, lay along the bank of the winding Alabama, and from earliest childhood our chief delight had been to picnic there, occasionally making a festive all-day affair of it, and selecting Saturday, when the children could also accompany us.

The rising sun smiled upon us as, well packed in the large plantation wagon, we were briskly drawn along by the two good mules, the children's pets, and the pride of our old-time driver, Uncle Pomp.

The gorgeous glory of the autumn glow lay around us, and our spirits ran high. Each vied with the other in telling tales of bloody plantation darkies, who had known all our lives, and who every warmly welcomed the coming of "Marse John's chillun," as they termed us; but we had always styled ourselves "the tribe." The huge box stowed away under the last waggon seat was filled with remembrances for the favorite slaves of our family, and old cronies of their pickaninnies.

At last the familiar fields were reached, stretching on all sides as far as the eye could see, lay acres after acres of the snowy staple, hanging ready to be picked. The negroes were there, too, in groups—the darkey never works alone if he can help it—and their songs and laughter rang over the fields, making melody in the bright gold of the sunlight. Across his left shoulder was flung a string, to which was attached the sack for holding cotton, which, when filled, was emptied into the large basket at the end of each long cotton row. A few little darkies were also seen, whom the grown ones always take with them to serve them in any way they may need, but, in particular, to bring fresh water from a spring or branch, which frequently is half a mile distant; and the little blacks tramp back and forth many times during the day bringing the liquid in jugs, from which, in the absence of a cup, they all drink without hesitancy.

Of course the waggon had to be stopped to allow our three days' taste of the delicious water, and imitating the field hands they, too, drank from the mouth of the jug, the reward given to the young blacks for this great privilege of fetching the water being a biscuit apiece—a great luxury upon the plantation, where wheat bread is unknown. The darkies drive on being given, we left the little negroes staring after us in open-mouthed amazement.

A mile farther and we reached "the quarter," as the largest assemblage of cabins is called, the home of the overseer generally being among or near them.

In these days father did not indulge in the luxury of a regular overseer; his eldest son, a young man of five and twenty, acted in that capacity, and was as the darkies declared, "the finest young farmer in the country round." Tom had voluntarily taken upon himself the affairs of the plantation, and he now thought no one could manage as he could, and absolutely refused to leave his business for trifles of any kind, except on rare and stated seasons. He made his home down here, returning to us on Saturday evening, far leaving for his work again long before we had waked upon Monday morning.

Tom had been notified of our coming, and he hastened out to meet us, for he loved us all, from the gray-haired father down to baby May, and the children being then lying, having jumped out to meet him every before Uncle Pomp could bring the mules to a stand.

"There, you little rascals, that is enough," shouted Tom, as he tried to disengage himself from their grasp. "Let some of the others out. If you look in my room, behind the bed maybe, you'll find something Mingo has saved for you."

Visions of that "something" at that moment growing more attractive than Tom, the three boys scampered off, while Tom turned to the ground, beginning with May, a miss of five.

"Overseer for cotton picking, fa—pa? this model farmer. "I hardly know which is fairest, my guests or my crop," he added, turning to Grace and me.

"Thank you," said she. "You are as much of a flatterer as Nature in her beauty. I hope you would not overlook our many attractions."

"We have ambitious appetites," I explained, as we ascended the steps to his gallery and thence into his bachelor home, which had been swept, garnished and arrayed in its holiday attire for our expected visit. "Have you noticed the effect of that face?"

"I have, my dear; but it was unnecessary. Your good soul knows you of old. Tom has had that remarkable set of darkies at work since daybreak, that your honor may see the fruits of their labor in the sheaves," he laughingly looked as he pointed to the darkies who came from the wheat, gathering under their gifts of walnuts and juicy sugar cane, and all their offerings literally at our feet, the big box was brought from the stable by Uncle Pomp and the pickaninnies made happy by the half-worn contents, in a sunbonnet and an insignifi-cant ribbed to each.

"But where is Mingo?" asked mother, when her gifts had been distributed and she had a pair of bright yellow, brand new suspenders in her hand.

Mingo was Tom's body guard—the only one she was never ready to kindle his fire and run his errands, especially if they were in the direction of home, where he invariably spent the night and during day if his business was not very pressing. He delighted in these frequent visits, for he was sure of being well cared for by "de miss."

He's trifling around as usual, I reckon," said Tom, whereupon he called so loudly, after the recreant that his echoing voice greatly amused the little negroes.

Either he had repeated the call several times, Mingo was seen walking leisurely down the road, a basket on his flat head, a very small bow-legged urchin toddling behind him and a lean dog bringing up the rear. A pair of jean breeches, which fairly suggested that they were once long, reached a little below Mingo's knees, and one had to admit that said breeches were a marvel of patchwork and pieces. Shoes and stockings were unknown articles, nor did he feel their need. A bit of string, or "gallus"—to use his mother's phrase—passed one shoulder and was attached to his trousers by means of a chip that, through a loop-hole tied in the string behind and before. A shirt of course white cloth and a dark wool hat with many and various kinds of perforations by way of adornment, constituted the outfit of this typical, "don't care, good-for-nothing darkey, whose idea of happiness is to sleep as much as he can, get as much to eat as he can, and work as little as possible.

"Come here, you young monkey!" called Tom, as Mingo was passing unconcernedly by. He came, the dog and darkey following in his wake. "Where have you been?"

"Wid Tuey."

"Tuey was the little darkey.

"What's Tuey been doing?"

"Nothin'."

"What have you been doing?"

"Been he'pin' Tuey."

This reply caused a general laugh at Mingo's expense, but he stood without moving a muscle, and awaited further questioning.

"What have you in your basket, Mingo?" asked mother, after the laughter had subsided.

"Pinders."

"Pinders!" I cried eagerly. "Whom are they for, Mingo?"

"Ole miss," he replied, recollecting who was his best friend.

"Well, I am sure I am much obliged to you for remembering me," said "ole miss" kindly. "I, too, have remembered you. Do you see the suspenders I have bought for you?"

The negro's eyes fairly beamed with pleasure, and he, overturned the basket of "pinders" at my feet as he made his profound courtesy; but he begged my pardon in most humble tones, which I freely granted, as Grace and I began at once to appropriate mother's gift.

Presenting Mingo with "gallus" was one thing, fitting them to the proper place on his person was another, for buttons and he were strangers, even the front of his shirt being hold together with the ever-ready chip. But when at last the task was completed, a happier darkey never lived than this proud possessor of a ten-cent gift.

"What's your name?" asked Grace of Mingo's seven-year-old companion.

"Joons Munroe War Bensurberry Bannister Ge Master Rice One Thousan' jego," declared the youngster, with parrot-like rapidity and precision.

We all laughed at Grace's expression of horror as she gasped:

"Good heavens! They don't call you by all that, do they?"

"Oh, no," I replied. "They call him Tuey."

"Tuey for short," explained the descendant of Ham, who so often repeated his wondrous name for the edification of us all that the novelty of it had long since ceased for him, and with little change of tone or expression he repeated the startling cognomen several times for Grace's benefit, until she thought she had learned it. Then Tom ordered the darkies out, and with our boys they repaired to the gin house, where, after we had made sad havoc of our gifts of nuts and sugar cane, we followed them.

The gin was at work in earnest when we approached, and we followed Tom up the shaky stairs to the room where the cotton, as it was brought from the field, was cast into the machine, the seed and cotton separated, the former going in one direction and the latter, like flakes of beautiful feathery snow, drifting into what is known as the "lint room," and piling itself up to the very roof of the little apartment, presenting as pretty a picture of a northern snow-storm as one could imagine.

Down the children dived into the soft white staple, disappearing completely from our view as the snowy bed enveloped them. Tom offered to dive with Grace, but she drew back in alarm, half ashamed much sport to the little ones. Then we went down the old stairs, to where some of Aunt Dilsey's favorite "grandchillun" were driving the gin—or rather the mules attached to long poles by means of which the machinery was moved. This was lazy work, riding round and round, but work particularly well suited to the idle little negroes, who were always ready and willing to do it. The shrill whistle of a gin mill on an adjoining plantation betokened the hour of noon, and as if by magic the mules were stopped, unhitched, and soon were being led toward "the quarter" for their mid-day meal. This being Saturday all business for the week was over, and the darkies, rejoicing in their freedom as only darkies can, with shout and song set forth toward their respective cabins to get dinner and pass the remainder of the day either in sleep or in a journey to the nearest country town, which on Saturday is generally abandoned to them entirely.

Aunt Dilsey's delightful country dinner awaited us on our reaching Tom's quarters, and Aunt Dilsey herself, in her neat homespun dress, blue check apron and red handkerchief of yellow, red and blue plaid, welcomed "miss and the chillun," and with old-time hospitality invited us to do justice to her hot rolls, coffee, "tater-pone," chicken pie, fresh butter, fresh eggs, rich buttermilk and other goodies too numerous to mention, she waiting on us throughout the meal, and herself praising whatever of her cooking we had neglected to compliment.

"Remember, we will pay you our accustomed visit after a while, Dilsey," said mother, as we rose from the table, and Dilsey called the largest of her girl "grandchillun" to help her in clearing the table and "puttin' things ter rights."

"Yo' sho' mus', miss, an' brung all de youn' gals wid you—c'ase old Dilsey still lubs white folks' comp'ny!"

And the portly old creature set off to put her house in readiness for her guests, and we found it clean and comfortable, as a negro's quarters seldom are; the feather beds piled high, the quilts stacked neatly in one corner, awaiting the coming of Jack Frost. A negro woman's idea of comfort and riches is measured by the number of quilts of which she is possessed; and the long winter nights are generally spent in "piecin' up quilts"—the scraps of which have been either begged or borrowed for—and in quilting parties, where the waddings and lining are added, the work being generally turned into a frolic in which most of the women of the plantation participate; and in this way more than a dozen "comforts" are got out in one night.

Aunt Dilsey's best chairs were brought out for our use and her quilts displayed for our inspection; while the "grandchillun," ranging in years from three to fifteen, who stood by with gaping mouths and rolling eyes, were ordered out to play, "and not ter come a posterin' of missus an' de youn' ladies any mo'."

As the crowd filed slowly out Grace asked:

"Are they your son's children, Aunt Dilsey?"

"No, honey, dey's de chillun ob my oniest child, my gal, who's a bin nigh onter thirty year ole 'dis comin' Christmus if she had or libed. A likely gal was Missouri, too, as ole miss kin testify."

"Yes, she was a good woman, Dilsey. I only hope you can raise her children as well as you did her," said mother.

"I do try, missus I do, but de times dey is changed now to what dey was den, and de young niggers what is a comin' on is not wuf dey salt, some ob 'em, an' dese chillun is sometimes so naughsus an' agervatin you can't t'nik. Dere's de oldest, Missy Ann, as pear't a young gal as you could fin' any whar, but you all knows her faitih', an' I can't beat it outen her, an' de Lawd knows as how I is tried; but Missy Ann will steal. De cap'n"—all the plantation hands called Tom so—"lows as how she kin steal de lasses outen or ginger cake when I haint a watchin her. Dat mought be—I can't say—but she do pestercate me drefful."

Aunt Dilsey, being once launched on her favorite theme, never ceased until she had given a sketch of the virtues and shortcomings of each of Missour's offspring.

"How are the twins?" I ventured, with an encouraging smile.

"Dem two boys is growin' amazin'," she declared; "an' dey hain't nebber seed a day sickness yit, has General Grant an' Abe Lincoln.

Grace's black eyes twinkled mischievously as she recognized the two names that were inflicted upon more than half the little negroes—jest "arter de s'render."

"Rube Burrer is snodder worrisom' chap as I ever see," continued the grandmother, after a pause. "His daddy had de namin' er him, but how cum he ebber tar strike on sich er name as dat beats my time. Er he do lib long enuf I'low as he'll be jes' like dat tramp as he was name from. Den Mingo cum nex', an yo' all know him, as trifin' er scamp as ever was, but a good-hearted nigger for all dat. He might proud er dem gallusses as you brung him, missus."

"I am glad that he is. I hope you will see that he has buttons on his clothes for those 'galusses.'"

"I will, miss, sho'." And then, in changed tones, Aunt Dilsey went on: "De bes' ob all de youn' uns was dat Garfield, but de Lawd tuk him home while he was a-gathrin' ob las' year's crop. Dey is ter preach his fun'rel tomorrer."

"What," exclaimed Grace, in astonishment, "been dead a year and they are just burying him?"

"No, chile, no; dey berry him de nex' day; but dey air t preach de fun'ral yit. Has yo'nebber heard of preachin' a fun'ral befo', Miss Grace?"

"Never," with emphasis. "Why do you take so long a time to do it?"

"Ter show as how de dead ain't forgot, honey, an' ter be respectable ter dey mem'ry. De family sets in de front benches ob de church, an' de preacher tells all about de dead pusson, and de congation cries an' griebes an' wears dey mournin' 'pard."

Grace had not fully digested this lucid explanation ere the old woman continued: "It is jes' one year dis las' gone Sadday since po' Garfiel' died, an' it rained all dat day an' nigh, c'ase yer know how it allus rain whenever ahy pusson die, expecially of dey be good folks, what b'longs ter de church, an' Garfiel' had jes' joined endurin' ob de big meetin' what was a-goin' on in de cotton pickin' season."

"You have forgotten the other twins, Aunt Dilsey," I said, "the girls."

"Oh, yes, dat so, Bo'lon an' Ninover."

"You certainly delight in historic names, auntie," remarked Grace, much amused.

"Dem's scripter names, chile, as was gib ter'em by dey gran'daddy, my ole man, who, as missus dere'll tell you, was a preacher. Dey's passable gals, but Bab's been laid up ob late wid de misery in de head. Den Tuey he comes nex'."

"Well, wherever did you get his name?" laughed Grace, trying in vain to recall the astonishing revelation of the morning.

"De chillun named him, missy, each one gitin' him one or piece, but we calls him Tuey fer short."

"Very wise," murmured our little visitor, approvingly. "How many more are there?—children, I mean?"

"Jes' one mo', de baby, what my ole man had de namin' ob ag'n, an' he call him John do Baptis'."

"Why did you add the Baptist?"

"Ca'se I prefers 'de Baptis'," declared the preacher's wife in decided tones. "An' ca'se dat is what ob'ry pusson ought to be. If yer nobber read in de good Book as how it do say, 'In dose days come J'ne de Baptis'?" Which startling quotation was Aunt Dilsey's idea of the clause, "In those days came John the Baptist," and which old Uncle Samson, her husband, always used as his text upon "baptism day," and the old autitie was a firm believer in and follower of the injunction.

Just then continued screams from the yard, where the grandchildren were at play, called the old woman to the rescue of the three-year-old John de Baptis', who was almost overpowered by the fighting clan gathered about him, but when Aunt Dilsey had restored peace and returned to her visitors our conversation turned upon other matters, and for the day we heard no more of Missouri's children.

The ride home through the rich glow of the setting sun was, if possible, more enjoyable than the one of the morning, and the home lights twinkled a loving welcome as we dismounted at the steps just as the dusk was closing in.

"And how has my little Grace enjoyed a day on the old plantation?" asked father, as we stopped to gather our holly bushes, autumn leaves and long gray moss stowed in the bottom of the waggon.

"Splendidly, Uncle John! Let's spend another there before I go home."

"Good! We'll do it!" declared Uncle John, who loved any one who loved his old plantation.

As the supper bell rang we hurried in and Grace sighed:

"How I wish we could have brought Aunt Dilsey's good plantation supper along with us."

"And leems War Bensurberry and all the rest of his name too?" I asked in mischief.

Grace stopped short and heaved a deeper sigh.

"Don't mention that name again, my child, it tires me to think of it. Do you suppose I can ever learn to rattle it off as fast as Tuey does?"

"Practice makes perfect," I quoted, as we entered our room; and Grace practised far into the evening hours, and, after all, concluded that Tuey was the most sensible name of the lot.

Wise and Otherwise.

Love lessens woman's delicacy and increases man's.

It matters not how a man dies but how he lives.

Sometimes a man feels the lightest when he has a heavy load on.

In matters of business no woman stops at integrity.

Poverty wants some things, luxury many, avarice all things.

Wit may raise admiration; but good nature has a more powerful effect.

Our affections are our life. We live by them; they supply our warmth.

Method is the very hinge of business, and there is no method without punctuality.

The manufactured product of Great Britain amounts to about $4,100,000,000 a year.

Falsehood has an infinity of combinations, but truth has only one mode of being.

He who receives a good turn should never forget it; he who does one should never remember it.

So varied is the climate of Mexico that all the products of the polar and the tropical regions can be raised there.

They say that money does not bring happiness. This is an experiment, however, which everyone wishes to try for himself.

If you would be pungent, be brief; for it is with words as with sunbeams—the more they are condensed the deeper they burn.

Mr. Henpeck (soliloquizing)—It is when I read of Solomon's many wives that I begin to doubt the great wisdom he is said to have had.

Floor-walker—A lady has just fainted at the bargain counter. Proprietor—What was the trouble? Floor-walker—She found her exact size in something she wanted.

Both the ancient Greeks and the Romans wore wigs. In Rome the light hair from German heads was most fashionable for such purposes, and was imported in large quantities.

Never hold anybody by the button or the hand in order to be heard out; for, if people are unwilling to hear you, you had better hold your tongue than them.

The "devil" on a Nevada daily wants to know why it is that a church has to have a spire stickin' away up in the clouds, while a beer saloon can do a bigger business in a back street basement.

While the miser's money is secreted in a cellar, it is losing interest. The merchant who has goods in stock and fails to let the public know of it, pursues a policy that is equally unsound. In both cases the principal may be secure, but the profit which might be realized is lost.

"Mamma," said a little girl on her way home from a fashionable church, "are people who sit in the middle aisle wickeder than those at one side?"

"Certainly not, dear. Why?"

"Because the minister only preached to them."

FLEURON.

IT was a few days after the Grand Prix, that Henri de Saint-Armel met his intimate friend, Capt. de Boucoiran. Both men were splendidly mounted, and their conversation immediately turned upon horses.

"Fine animal, that mare of yours," said Saint-Armel; "beautifully trained."

"It was a case in which you had to respond cavalierly," answered Henri, "since Fleurch presented you."

The three sat down to luncheon.

"Confess," said the Count, "that marriage hasn't changed me."

"I almost feel like saying, not enough! But I am not here to moralize. Besides, madame is your best excuse. But I am told that your nightingale is silent. True, we are in winter, but that is precisely the time when the nightingales of the stage warble their most brilliant notes."

Never did madrigal produce less effect. Henri and the young woman glanced at each other anxiously.

"Have I said anything amiss?" asked Boucoiran. "Well, let us speak of other things. Do you know, lovely lady, that you are charmingly installed? Such taste! Such comfort! Such a cook! No wonder Henri likes to lunch here, for I doubt if the conjugal board—"

"Decidedly," said the supposed Lucie Bataille, who began to show signs of displeasure, "you have a grudge against my husband?"

"Your husband?" cried Boucoiran, jumping from his chair, "your husband! You are his wife?"

"Look here, my dear fellow," said the Count, pale with annoyance, "Mme. de Saint-Armel will think you are mad. Sit down and lunch quietly."

But Boucoiran had thrown down his napkin, and before anyone knew what he was about had rushed from the room. Never again has he entered the Saint-Armel household since he finally saw his horrible blunder.

The day Fleuron was to be taken to Lucie Bataille, that capricious diva had eloped with a young Russian; and what was to become of the mare? Saint-Armel, like a practical fellow, had presented her to his wife. But the captain was ignorant of these details.

TALE OF A WINDMILL.

How an Agent Worked a Bluff Game on the Mean Man.

A number of years ago I was selling windmills in southern Illinois. One day I struck a country where people despised windmills, and I did not sell a mill a week. I got mad at last and concluded to try a "bluff game." I inquired for the meanest man in the county.

My informant grinned, and pointing to a distant house, said: "Wal, b' gosh Old Jo Larch, over thar's, the meanest man creation could git up."

Away I drove for Jo Larch's.

He was filing a saw on the back porch and paid no attention to my greeting, I went on, "Sir, I am selling the best windmill in the world, and—"

"Git out o' that gate! When I want yo I'll send for yo."

I smiled. "All right, sir; but can I get some supper? I'll pay well for it."

"No!" he yelled. "We've been to supper."

"Can I speak to your wife?"

"Won't do no good."

But it did, for I offered her 85 for a supper, and after a whisper to her husband he growled: "Wal, go in; she'll feed you."

After my supper I said: "Mr. Larch: I'll give you $2 to feed my horse."

And I got it fed.

At last he said I could stay all night and I told him stories and gave him cigars until he promised to put up a mill for one month, and I signed an agreement to remove it in thirty days.

He actually was put up with every kind of tans and pipes to carry water though the yards and house. The neighbors watched with astonishment and envy. When the time was up I drove around with my men, and began to take down the mill. Old Jo stormed Mr. Larch.

"Hold on; I sorter like that jimcrack; ma' be I'll buy it."

"Oh," said I, "this is only an advertisement. Keep at work, boys."

The old man stormed and his wife appeared. It was so handy, made her work easy, and she thought Jo ought to buy it.

At last he offered me full price and pay for my time. I was sorry, but this mill was sold to Mr. Smith, whom Larch cordially hated. He stamped and raved and begged me to leave the mill alone.

I sat down and began figuring on a board. He watched me a moment and then whispered excitedly:

"You think I'm goin' to let that dang Smith beat me? Not much. Here's $50 extra. Go away, and keep your mouth shut."

He gave in with such a humble air that after appearing to consider for some time I agreed. The boards were all replaced and we drove off, hearing the old man chuckle to himself:

"By J'hosiphat, it takes a mighty durned smart agent to git ahead of me."

Why He Ate Rolled Oats.

"The pure food show accomplished one good result, so far as I am concerned, at all event," said a friend of mine the other day. "I have an eleven-year-old boy," he continued, "who is a crank about what he eats. Now I believe firmly in the benefits to be derived from farinaceous foods, especially as a breakfast dish. I have labored assiduously to get that young man to eat at least one dish of rolled oats every morning, but in vain, until recently. He, for some reason, became possessed of a wild-eyed desire to visit the food show, and I procured him a ticket and let him go. Well, he came home with his hands full of advertising cards and joy in his soul. He astonished us all by asking us to buy some of a certain brand of oats, saying that he'd sampled them at the show and that they were great. Delighted to encourage him in the idea, I bought a package and he eats them faithfully every morning, although personally I find them decidedly inferior to those we have been accustomed to use. The true secret of his sudden desire for this particular brand dropped out accidentally. It seems that of all the exhibits the presiding genius of this particular booth was the only one who offered him a sample of her wares, and after he had eaten thereof she told him to ask his parents to try them. He fulfilled his part of the contract, "how faithfully the above explanation demonstrates."

She Was at Home.

"Boy," said the man as he stopped at the gate of a house in John R. street the other day, "is your mother at home?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"I'd like to see her. I suppose I can go right in?"

"Is it business?" queried the boy after looking him over.

"Of course it is. Do you think I'm selling hugs or corsets or clothes-wringers?"

"Oh, no. I'm no canvasser."

"Come to see about the water tax?"

"No."

"Want to put in gas?"

"No."

"Well, you can take your chances if you want to," said the boy as he turned away.

"What chances do you mean?"

"Why, the last feller who called here to see if pa didn't want some more life insurance limped on both legs as he went up the street, and the last census feller who asked ma her age had to stop to rest twice afore he got out of the gate! Go right in, sir! That's ma pounding on the cellar door with a sled-stake to exercise her muscle."

The man thought the matter over for minute and then gave the boy a nickel and went his way without calling.

Over the Cards.

The man was losing every game at cards and the lady or, the other side of the table was laughing at him. "Ah, well," she said, in sarcastic sympathy, when he had to buy another basket of chips, "unlucky at cards, unlucky at love, you know."

"Yes, he respond ed with a smile, "and I guess it must be true, for you see I am still a bachelor."

MISCELLANEOUS READING.

GRAVE AS WELL AS GAY.

Reading For Leisure Moments for Old and Young, Interesting and Profitable.

A PLEASANT INCIDENT.

The Conductor Did What Was Not Expected of Him.

Up in the front was a printed sign which said no newsboys would be allowed to come on the car to sell papers. If they wanted to do business with a citizen they must wayley him before he takes his seat.

Now, it happens that a man is not always ready to buy his paper until he is settled, and know he is on the right car, and that he has small change, and that all the chances for a comfortable progress home have been spized. So he does not like to step out at the gutter and buy his paper. And, obedient to that demand, the newsboys have been taking one little liberty after another until they come right into the cars and sell without let or hindrance.

This was an open car and the man and woman were in a terrible hurry, for they knew the car would go before they were ready. It didn't do anything of the kind. It waited till they were seated, till the man had signalled a newsboy and till the little fellow was standing there on the rail. It started just as he had completed a sale. Then it was discovered that he was such an exceedingly small boy that he couldn't get down with any degree of safety.

No one wanted to get on or off at the next crossing, and the little fellow was being carried far out of the reach of trade winds. He wanted to get down and he dared not. The passengers laugh ed at him. He glowered and tried to risk the descent. But the pace was too swift. He knew he would fall. The man who bought the paper pushed him a little just to scare him. The woman laughed at her husband's wit. The comfortable passengers enjoyed almost a nickel's worth of comedy—that was mighty near a tragedy to him.

No one expected anything human from the conductor. So he surprised them. He swung down on the foot rail, advanced to the troubled little figure, stooped down, and passed his arm about the baby waist, lifted the lad and stepped from the car. He deposited his thankful burden safely on the ground, whirled and caught the last rail of the car and called out: "Harrison—Polk street, depot!" just as if nothing had happened.

And all the passengers were sorry they had laughed.

A Father's Devotion.

A very pretty story was told of Thackeray during his American tour, illustrating the novelist's affection for his daughters. The incident occurred at the house of George Ticknor in Boston, the novelist being a guest of the family at the time.

On New Year's eve he and Ticknor sat smoking together in the library. The latter's wife was also present. The daughters of the house had gone to a party. They sat talking till 11 o'clock, when Thackeray a'oce and said he would go to his room.

"You are not going to retire yet?" inquired his host.

"No," was the answer, "for always at the birth of a new year I drink to the health and happiness of my daughters, but I do not wish to keep you up so late."

"Pray stay with us and we will join you in health to your absent ones."

Thackeray replied that he would be delighted to do it if it would not encroach on the hours of rest. He sat at the side of the great fireplace and filled two or three times at the clock upon the mantel to note the flight of minutes.

"Do not trouble yourself about the time," said Mrs. Ticknor, "I will let you know when it is 12 o'clock."

At the moment the new year began Thackeray took in his hand a glass of sherry, rose to his feet, and said in tremulous tones:

"God bless my motherless girls! God bless them and all who are good to them!"

Drinking the wine, he bade his host good night, and without another word retired from the room, leaving his friends in tears.

Mulligan—The Terror of the Alley.

I was trying to find the man who had promised to paint my front stoop. At the shop they had told me he had started on a job in Hester street, so to Hester street I went. The house the man was painting stood in an alley where humanity swarmed.

As I threaded my way through it humming a tune, I heard a voice call: "Mulligan!" It seemed to come from a window above me, and immediately after I heard a woman remark to another woman:

"The craythur. She's away lookin' for Mulligan again. Sure, her heart's broke with him!"

A moment later I had found my painter. He was saying to another painter: "Which brush do you mean? Mebbe Mulligan took it."

"Was he round here? Then he's got it, sure enough," said the other resignedly.

At this moment a man came out of the basement, trowel in hand.

"Did Mulligan fetch my tin pail out here?"

"Had it at the hydrant ten minutes ago."

"Well, say, why didn't you take it away from him? The good-for-nothing tough! He won't fetch it back an' see how I'm fixed."

I here endeavored to attract my painter's attention to the job I wished him to undertake. He listened with a wandering smile, due to the fact that the other two were engaged in discussing further instances of Mulligan's carelessness, depravity.

I was filled with wonder as to who or what Mulligan might be, and whence came the secret of his unique individuality. Suddenly one of the men exclaimed: "There he is, by Jaw!"

A chorus greeted him.

"Hey, Mulligan, you've goin' to carry it! Where's my grub? Where's Cooney's tin pail? They're hollering for you all through. Hester street." Mulligan advanced with dignity, threw the tin pail at Cooney and passed on. Mulligan was a baby three years old.

The Turning Over of Music.

Everyone who has ever sung a song or played a piece before friends knows the agony of mind engendered over what ought to be the simplest operation of "turning over"—the doubt, hesitation and pain" (to press Browning into service) which too commonly accompany this proceeding on the part alike of the player and of the unfortunate individual (hardly less to be pitied) who has kindly volunteered to oblige at the appointed moment. What social tragedies are still to be written on this topic—what stories of pages turned over many bars before the bottom of the page, or pages not turned over till long after the bottom of the page has been reached, of half a dozen pages turned over in place of one, of the entire music being thrust over bodily into the performer's lap—all of these things and more by and by, perhaps, a London inventor has come to the rescue with what he calls a "music clip," and these woes need be no more. It is a simple, ingenious but simple little contrivance, the main virtue of it residing in the fact that it keeps all the leaves of the music apart, so that the finger may be readily inserted.

The Artist Has Grown Wise.

"Does your artist friend paint portraits true to life?"

"He did at first, but he has learned better."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; the first two or three commissions he executed were so true to life that the sitters refused to take the pictures."

Children have more need of models than critics.

Tom's Stick and Tony.

Tom's Stick was a remarkably gentlemen and conscientious boy. He was too, very methodical in the order of which was to keep the writing of the conduct of from day to day. It was a short-current, and he settled Saturday afternoon. No one hebdomadal balancing day, the boy of till work, for was generally obliged for a considerable amount of elders.

One afternoon the captain, in Tony, wasseon "toddling" the stable, with his little one hand and a small rose. After they had reached the office, and Tony had been rung up, the captain put his accounts as follows:

To not blacking my boots, 2s.

To staying four hours in an necessary, ten stripes.

To not locking the hay five stripes.

To letting the horse go six stripes. Total, twenty

The first-rate day's work is fifteen stripes."

The boy thus struck, the his rawhide and remarked: "You black scamp, what sa villain, why I should lashes across your back."

"Massa," said Tony, "I garden, sir—but ought

"Dog," said the captain, you credit of ten stripes. Come."

"Massa," said Tony, rolling about in agony of fright, "I got—dar's de scoprin' shovel—dat's my nebber been scoured."

"Saucy rascal," quoth Cap bringing in more offences. "There! Here the entry upon his book credit of five stripes, and just be paid."

"Mercy, massa, don't hit yet—oh, Lord! please don't—oh, Lord! please don't! Ketchin' de whip um to de missuss, what de young duck."

"In fact," said the captain young vagabond—that gives you credit of wish you had brought Now we'll settle the

"Lord, ole massa," said Tony grinned the captain adjusted spectacles with great care look close to his eyes a that the fact was as stated was not a little irritated off the account, you rol swear off the account.

"It is fair, ole massa."

"I said the disappoin but——" still the cap cled how to give Tony now; but——" "An t is head.

"My boots, you incorrigi soubled? You want you, out of my costs, ful rascal? And," ad chuckling as well, as the perfect picture

"I enter judgment agai ten stripes," and fo ered the stripes and sa

"!" said Tony. "Ki nigger forgess ole massa t gin off 'bout blackin boot stayin long time bery time else, but dis pa gimme de dubbil. B must keep out ob de dev ed you what, dat judgm go back feel mighty wa

Getting Wishbones.

At fads possess some people the other evening, called on sweet girl graduates, gave her make a present. "Won't you" he asked. "No, only for school chi Suggestions are a present ing to be just a bit cre rted an original collec ch it an old fogey, he judgment. Well, I'm already called a ing about sorting and any number pa "then," she pointedly, might help me in my you can't get a wish ge pa gage as the cin you can do anything enjoy cigar boxes, ke me away th, wonder pennies was made, ose and next to her s that were there, small birds. Sh bone of a humming ichers were interest said that all the girls of ing one with another t Get the wishbones of A nice name with a ated always one at th tention for will pa age.

Some Weather Hints.

The old year when the or stops out of his chee sporadic begin to ge eldn't set and wh and the sun is red ing weather is coming ing sun is red in the ing weather is coming ing sun is red in the ing weather is coming ing sun is red in the