

## The Joker Club.

### "The Pen is mightier than the Sword."

#### A MAN IN A MILLINERY STORE.

She had mildly hinted that she didn't care about going to church again until she had her summer bonnet, but at mention of the bonnet he turned round and belched out:—

"Bonnet! Nother new bonnet! Why don't you go down and buy out every infernal bonnet foundry on Woodward avenue and done with it!"

"I haven't had but one this spring," she meekly protested.

"One! Why you've had forty!"

"Only one, my dear, and I can show you the bill."

"Well, that cost forty or fifty dollars."

"Oh, no. The bill is only nineteen dollars."

"Nineteen dollars! Well, that's an outrageous swindle!"

"It is a very plain bonnet," she remarked, "and it was only for spring."

"How much will a summer hat cost?" he asked after reading down to the end of a column.

"Well I'll try to get along with ten or twelve dollars, but you—"

"Ten or twelve demons!" he yelled as he half rose up. "I tell you it's an outrageous swindle, and no one but an idiot would submit! They tuck the price on because they think you don't know bran from broomsticks!"

"Then you go down with me and make the purchase."

"Egad! I will! I'll go this very day, and if I don't buy a better bonnet for \$4 than you ever had for \$10 I'll eat shingles!"

That afternoon they entered a millinery store in company, and the old gent had the look of a man who was bound to win if it broke a leg.

"My wife wants a bonnet," he began as he got settled down on a stool.

"Very well. About what price?"

"Say from \$4 to \$6."

"Yes, sir. Here is one for \$4. It is for a kitchen girl on Sixteenth street, and I call it an elegant thing for the money."

"I—I guess we don't want one for four dollars," he muttered as a chill flew up his spine.

"It's very cheap, I assure you," and the colors are very popular with kitchen girls; but here is one for six dollars."

"Ah that is more like it! Now I call that handsome."

"So it is, sir. That is for a servant girl on Winder street, and she certainly has good taste."

"It is the cheapest bonnet I have made for a year."

"Yes—ahem—no doubt!" gasped the old gent as red streaks began to color his neck and chin. "And what's the price of this one?"

"That is sold to a barber's wife for \$8, but I could get you up the mate to it if you want."

"Barber's wife—ahem—eight dollars—and this one?"

"Well I made the price very low on that one, as it is for a seamstress who always buys of me. I only charged her \$12 for that."

"Seamstress, eh?"

"Yes she goes out for seventy-five cents per day, and of course can't afford any better than this."

Old Whetstone was as red as a strawberry by this time, and it was only by a tremendous effort of will that he could repress a "gosh darn it!"

"You wouldn't care to look at this \$16 bonnet as it is for a machanic's wife," softly remarked the milliner.

"No—ahem—perhaps not," he grunted.

"But this one at \$20 might possible do," she went on "although your wife's position in society would only permit her to wear it for second best. Just wait and I will show you something for \$25 that will charm you."

"I won't, I'll be hanged if I wait a minute!" he exclaimed as he rose up. "I don't feel very well, and I've also agreed to meet a man at the City Hall at three o'clock. Martha, you go head and pick out a bonnet."

"One for—four—for—four dollars," she whispered.

"Four be-hangs! Who said anything about four dollars? If you can make one for \$20 do you, I'd take it; but if you look better in one for \$25, you can have it sent up. What I was scolding about this morning was the shape of your bonnet—not the cost; I still hold the shapes are outrageous; but you've got to have one all the same."—*Detroit Free Press.*

#### SOME CORRECTIONS REGARDING SAHARA.

There has been wild talk now and then of turning the waters of the Mediterranean upon the Desert of Sahara, thus forming a great inland sea, which would be an advantage to commerce and give the camels a much needed rest. A theory has prevailed for many years that all save the oases is an ancient sea bottom, that had dried up from some cause or another, and that making it again a sea would only be restoring it to its original position among the nations. This talk of letting on the water seriously interfered with passenger travel across the desert at one time, and camels frequently started on the long and dusy journey not more than half-loaded. It was a season of great dullness and no inconsiderable suffering among the simple children of the desert, who obtain a precarious and prefitory livelihood by stealing from caravans and robbing isolated travelers. Gray-headed old sheikhs, who had hitherto enjoyed large incomes from the tax levied on summer tourists, complained bitterly that they couldn't make their salt, and freedom gave a sheikh in consequence. Whole lines of camels were drawn off altogether, and numerous oases along the road, that had hitherto been crowded with guests, were compelled to shut up for want of patronage. There is not a more melancholy sight in crossing the desert than an oasis closed. There is a terrible air of desolation about it—shutters fastened, sheds boarded up, sign hanging by one hinge, and listlessly flapping in the breeze, pump out of order and no fire in the bar-room. The fact is, people were afraid to cross the desert, not knowing at what moment the water might be turned on, and those who did undertake it were careful to provide themselves with life-preservers before starting.

We understand that the fright was communicated to the inhabitants of the desert themselves. When a nomad went to bed at night he didn't know at what moment the water would come and wash him out of his tent. We will say, however, that if water succeeded in washing a nomad out of his tent it was more than it ever could do in. He would sit up all night sometimes, waiting for the flood to come, hoping he might be able to swim out,—and we will venture to say that no modern man ever lived on the desert or subsisted on the several courses immediately proceeding it.

It required a great deal of sand for a man to maintain a residence on the desert in those days. It seemed played out as a sensation, and it wouldn't have surprised the oldest retired Mameluke to have heard the bells go ringing for Sahara at any time.

But happily all alarm in that quarter is likely to be dissipated. Dr. Lenz, a scientist, who Lenz disenchantment to the view, has been lecturing in Paris on his trip from Morocco to Timbuctoo, and he takes occasion to correct some of the generally received notions about Sahara. Instead of being the bottom of a dried up sea, it really forms a plateau, 1,100 feet above the level of the Atlantic. Water would have to be brought from the Mediterranean in oyster cans, as it would be impossible to force it to that height by any known appliances. Moreover, in place of being a dead,

level plain, where the traveller has to wade in sand three feet deep from one side to the other, it is greatly varied in its aspect. Rocks succeed sandy plains and the oases are dotted with sheets of water and covered with rank grass, though he doesn't explain exactly what its rank is. Again the temperature is not nearly as hot as represented by dealers in fans and linen dusters, who do business along the edges. How terribly Sahara must have been lied about by geographers and travellers. We don't believe that any of the former ever saw it, and as for the latter they tried to make out a big story about heat, sand, Bedouins and the simoon, which says wig-wag, just to show how much they can stand.

"Ye pays no more attention to me," said Patrick, "than if I was a dumb baste talking to ye."

The czar has succeeded in maintaining absolute monarchy. But he is afraid to come out and see how it is getting along.

A new book asks: "Can she atone?" A more important question to the marrying young man is: "Can she bake?" or "Can she sew on shirt buttons?"

A New York Chinaman has the following notice, which we give according to the revision, "To trust is to bust. To bust is Hades. No trust, no bust. No bust, no Hades."

The last faint spark expires, and the tenacious individual who bravely kept his New Year resolutions has broken them with the same hammer that flattened out his thumb on the new parlor carpet.

"They do not die on the premises," is the recommendation given for a patent rat poison. It makes the rats feel so bad that they go away and die at the house of a neighbor. There is nothing like it.

"It's a long way from this world to the next," said a dying man to his friend who stood at his bedside. "Oh never mind my dear fellow," answered the friend consolingly, "you'll have it all down hill."

She was decorating her room with pictures, and she perched his photograph up on the top-most nail; then she sat down to admire her work, and remarked quietly, "Now everything is lovely, and the goose hangs high."

"Men often jump at conclusions," says the proverb. We saw a dog jump at the conclusion of a cat, which was sticking through the opening of a partly-closed door, and it made more disturbance than a church scandal.

"There is one thing I like about the new version," said old Blunderbuss; "that 'ere text about 'the boy being father to the man' is left out altogether. I always thought that was wrong end to." And he didn't know why the smile went round.

"Are you going to the Thousand Islands this summer?" said Mr. Smith to Miss Unsophisticated. "My goodness, no!" said she, "we couldn't think of going to so many, ma says if we go to Long Branch, Newport and Catskill, we'll be doing very well."

The little ones will keep on saying things. Six year old Mabel is industriously engaged in "cleaning out" a preserve jar which her mother had just emptied. Four year old Bobby looks at her for a while and then blurts out, "Say, sis, don't you wish you could turn it inside out, so's you could lick it?"

The lies about the size of hailstones have been distressingly feeble this spring. We do not remember to have seen a single account in which the stones reached the size of footballs and in only three or four instances have they been larger than hen's eggs. All the old hailstones liars must have resigned, or else they're afraid of Vennor.