

"had been eating pears, and had scattered bits of the fruit around everywhere."

Mr. Jasman, as he sank upon the step, had been made aware that he sat down on something. Something his heart and the sense of feeling told him was a soft, mellow pear. He felt it yielding to the pressure of his weight. He felt it spread out on the cold step until it was as big as half a water-melon. His terrors even magnified and distorted the dreadful reality. He knew that if he rose to his feet he would present the horrible spectacle of a man who had sat down upon a mustard plaster. He felt dreadfully. He could not speak. He dared not rise to his feet. He thought dismally of the short coat, that looked so nobby, but was such a hollow mockery at a time like this; a coat that shone resplendent upon dress parade, but was an abhorrent, disgraceful "no account" for active service. And he inwardly gnashed his teeth, and smote upon his breast, and denounced himself for a vain, conceited, princely fool, for coming away without his overcoat. And all the time Miss Whazzernaim kept chattering away to him, trying to make him talk and wondering what made him so stupid and shy.

The fact is, he was trying to die, but couldn't.

She spoke of the beautiful sunset that was just coming on. He spoke never a word, but dismally wondered what she would say if she should see the picture of a winter sunset, executed in California pear on light cassimere. He writhed in mental agony, and he felt the fiendish pear spread out wider and thinner than ever. Miss Whazzernaim said it was growing colder.

He silently thought if she wanted to feel something so cold that it could stand at an iceberg and warm its hands, she could lay her hand at his heart. She said she was actually shivering. And he thought if she knew what a wild tremor of agitation his quivering nerves were in, she would never think of shivering again. She said if they were going to sit out there any—at-chew! longer, she must really—at-chee! go in and get a wrap.

Then he found voice. He rose, and facing her, while tears filled his eyes and choked his utterances as he thought what a demoralized facade his rear elevation must present to the passers-by in the street, shouted:

"I'd like to rap the icy-hearted son of a gosling that left that pear on the step, over the head with a club, dad burn the—"

She rose like a creature of marble, and gazed at him in indignant, voiceless rebuke. He backed slowly down the stairs. She turned, and with one glance of indignant,

unforgiving scorn, went into the house. With a superhuman effort he conquered his fears, and looked at the step to gather a faint idea of the counterpart picture which he had lithographed upon his raiment, from the cold freestone. His fearful glance fell upon an innocent, flattened, but perfectly innocuous rubber doll, the property of the youngest Whazzernaim.

He looked at the cold, forbidding door of the mansion. He thought of the unforgiving glance that had betokened his dismissal. He thought of the suffering he had so innocently and unjustly undergone. He thought a thousand things that he couldn't be hired to say, and the sun went down behind the isomorphous furnace on West Hill, and left world and Mr. Jasman's heart in starless gloom.

The match is off.

Jasman now spends his days at Sunday-school pic-nics, which he is wont to immortalize in verse:—

THE PIC-NIC MAN.

Under the shell-bark hickory tree

The pic-nic man he stands:

A woeful-looking man is he,

With bruised and grimy hands;

And the soil that sticks to his trousers' knee,

Is the soil of several land.

His hair is mussed, his hat is torn,

His clothes are like the ground;

He wishes he had ne'er been born,

Or being born, ne'er found.

He glares and scowls in wrathful scorn

As oft he looks around.

At early morn, in suit of white,

He sought the pic-nic park:

His face was clean, his heart was light,

His loud song mocked the lark.

But now, although the day is bright,

His world, alas, is dark!

In joyous mood, at early morn,

He sat upon the stump,

But soon, as though upon a thorn

He sat, with mighty jump

He leaped aloft, and all forlorn

In haste he did crump.

For lo, in hordes, the big black ants,

With nippers long and slim,

Went swiftly crawling up his pants.

And made it warm for him;

And through the woods they make him dance,

With gasp, and groan, and vim.

And when the rustic feast is spread,

And she is sitting by,

His wild-woe garland on her head,

The love-light in her eye,

He—woe, oh woe! would he were dead,

Sits in the custard pie.

And now they send him up the tree

To fix the pic-nic swing,

And up the shell-bark's scraggy side,