



WITH THE WITS



MR. HARMON'S NEW GARDENER.

'Old man Harmon,' as he was generally, if not very respectfully, known, was one of the leading citizens of a thriving Western state. His flowers were his hobby and the pride of his heart. Mike, his head gardener, honest and hard-headed to the last degree, was a very skilful florist, but he and the old gentleman were seldom in agreement. Mike would do what he thought best for his beloved plants, regardless of orders, and consequently had been discharged two or three times every week during the many years of his incumbency.

At last a really serious rupture occurred, and the old gentleman and Mike parted company in good earnest, each expressing in unmeasured terms his joy at being rid of the other.

The flowers immediately began to languish as if grieving for the rough but tender hand that had cared for them so long. Mr. Harmon advertized far and near for a gardener.

Selecting from the numerous replies the one that most struck his fancy, he wrote and appointed an immediate interview.

The old gentleman hastened out on the lawn when the applicant was announced, only to be confronted by Mike, dressed in his Sunday best, bowing and smiling with the best grace in the world, and holding in his hand Mr. Harmon's letter appointing the meeting!

'An' is it a gardener you're wantin', sir?' queried Mike, innocently.

'I am badly in need of one,' responded Mr. Harmon, gravely. 'I had a fairly good man, but he was so pig-headed that I had to let him go. He never seemed to understand that I wanted some little personal enjoyment out of my plants, even if I did lose a few occasionally by experimenting with them. But I must say that he was a good man.'

'The spalpeen!' interrupted Mike. 'To be after not wanting you to enjoy your own blossoms, an' yourself bearing all the expinse of him.'

'I had a good place meself, but I had to leave on account of the boss thinking he knowed so much more than he did, an' wanting me to transplant some of our best plants on a day that wuz cold enough to freeze the nose off yer face, to say nothing of thim tender shoots. But I'm not saying that he wuzn't a gentleman an' the best man I ever worked for.'

The interview proceeded with great solemnity, as between two strangers, and in a half-hour Mike had his coat off, busily going over his tulips and hyacinths, and grumbling comfortably about the moles and the cut-worms.—'Youth's Companion.'



CHILD LOGIC.

Mrs. Lucia Ames Mead, of Boston, aroused a good deal of comment with her recent declaration that tin soldiers had a bad effect on children, inciting in them a love of war.

Mrs. Mead, an engaging author and a noted lecturer, was well qualified to speak on this matter, for she has for a number of years studied carefully and intellectually the child mind.

In the course of her investigations she has come upon many quaint instances of the peculiar reasoning of children. The other day she said:

'I once told a little girl that some folks claimed the moon was inhabited.

'The child sneered.

'"Rubbish," she said. "It can't be. What would the people up there do when there was only a little slit left?"'

THE ELOCUTIONIST'S CURFEW.

England's sun was slowly setting—(Raise your right hand to your brow),
Filling all the land with beauty—(Wear a gaze of rapture now);
And the last rays kissed the forehead of a man and maiden fair,
(With a movement slow and graceful you may now push back your hair);
He with sad bowed head—(A drooping of your head will be all right,
Till your hoarsely, sadly whisper)—'Curfew must not ring to-night.'

'Sexton,' Bessie's white lips faltered—(Try here to resemble Bess,
Though, of course, you know she'd never worn quite such a charming dress).
'I've a lover in that prison'—(Don't forget to roll your r's.
And to shiver as though gazing through the iron prison bars).
'Cromwell will not come till sunset'—(Speak each word as though you'd bite
Every syllable to pieces)—'Curfew must not ring to-night.'

'Bessie,' calmly spoke the sexton—(Here extend your velvet palm;
Let it tremble like the sexton's as though striving to be calm)
'Long, long y'ars I've rung the curfew—(Don't forget to make it y'ars.
With a pitiful inflection that a world of sorrow bears), 'I have done my duty ever'—(Draw yourself up to your height).
For you're speaking as the sexton—'Gyurl, the curfew rings to-night.'

Out she swung, far out—(Now here is where you've got to do your best,
Let your head be twisted backward, let great sobs heave up your chest,
Swing your right foot through an arc of 90 lineal degrees,
Then come down and swing your left foot, and be sure don't bend your knees;
Keep this up for fifteen minutes till your face is worn and white,
Then gaze at your mangled fingers)—'Curfew shall not ring to-night!'

O'er the distant hills came Cromwell—(Right hand to the brow once more;
Let your eyes look down the distance, say above the entrance door)
At his feet she told her story—(Lift your hands as though they hurt)
And her sweet young face so haggard—(Now your pathos should assert,
Then you straighten up as Cromwell, and be sure you get it right);
Don't say 'Go, your liver loves!'—'well, Curfew shall not ring to-night!'

NO SUBJECT FOR CONGRATULATION.

A young lawyer, not noted for intelligence, succeeded in having a client acquitted of murder. Meeting a friend a few days afterward, the lawyer was greeted with warm congratulations.

'Yes,' said the lawyer, mopping his brow, 'I got him off, but it was a narrow escape.'

'A narrow escape! How?'

'Ah, the tightest squeeze you ever saw. You know I examined the witnesses and made the argument myself, the plea being self-defence. The jury was out two whole days. Finally the Judge called them before him and asked what the trouble was.

"Only one thing, my lord," replied the foreman. "Was the prisoner's counsel retained by him or appointed by the Court?"

"No, gentlemen, the prisoner is a man of means," said the Judge, "and engaged his own counsel."

'I could not see what bearing the question had on the evidence,' continued the lawyer, 'but ten minutes later in filed the jury, and what do you think the verdict was?'

'What?' asked his friend.

'Why, not guilty, on the ground of insanity.'—'Memphis Commercial Appeal.'



LADY COOK'S DOG STORY.

Lady Cook, at a dinner during her recent visit to Washington, argued the question of woman suffrage with a senator.

'Ah, senator,' said Lady Cook, at the argument's end, 'you don't consider this question as a whole. You only consider a part of it. You are like the man who weighed the dog.'

'A lady owned a huge St. Bernard dog that she was very proud of. She told her gardener one day to take the dog and weigh him. The man departed with the animal, and half an hour later he returned.

"Towser, ma'am," he said, "weighs just a hundred pounds."

"A hundred pounds!" exclaimed the lady. "He must weigh more than that. Are you sure you weighed him right?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am," said the gardener; "I'm sure I weighed him right, only I couldn't get him all on the scales."



THE WAY OUT WEST.

Grey Fox—Jack Timberwolf makes me sick and tired.

Red Fox—What ails him now?

Grey Fox—Why, his father was shot by the President, and he never stops bragging about it.—'The Pilgrim.'

CHRISTMAS NUMBER GIFTS

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