

His Temperance Lesson

There are many adventures with ghosts that adorn tales and a few that point morals. Here is one of the latter class that has the merit of truth. The moral that it pointed out was its effect, and Congressman Blank at whom it was aimed is now, on the ice wagon.

"Of course," he says, "I know now the explanation of the curious things I saw, but at the time I suffered a shock to my nervous system that I would not undergo again for all the money in Wall street, and some that is floating around there really belongs to me, for it was mine once."

There would be danger in describing Congressman Blank closely, for some of his constituents are strict temperance people and it might affect his vote when he comes up for reelection. In a general way it may be said that he wears the perpetual blush of such good fellowship, slightly accentuated at his nose, with parliamentary dignity. He falls naturally into attitudes that suggest the past of American statesmanship and he never lets his right hand know what his left is doing in politics, unless they are both stretched out to grab the same prize.

No one could ever accuse the Congressman of public intoxication and he held that what he did in private concerned only his accomplices and himself. Among his accomplices is a bachelor lawyer in this city who has frequently been annoyed by the Congressman's thirst for alcohol in private and his obtrusive eulogies of cold water as a drink in public. This lawyer may be called Jones. People who have enjoyed the hospitality of his bachelor apartments sometimes call him "Dear old Jones."

Two weeks ago Congressman Blank was invited to a stag dinner in Jones' rooms. He accepted his first cocktail before dinner with a sigh of enjoyment that amazed some of the other guests who did not know that his preaching and his practice were antithetical. It prepared them for the shock that had been arranged for the Congressman's nerves during the dinner.

Several other cocktails followed while the men were waiting for a belated guest and the conversation turned on the sudden death of a man who had frequently consorted with them on similar occasions. He had fallen down a flight of stairs after a dinner and broken his neck.

"We were like brothers," said Congressman Blank, thickly, "and I always felt that if he died first and it was possible for spirits to communicate with us I would hear from him. I don't believe that it is possible, however."

When the guests were seated at the table Johnson remarked casually that the congressman was sitting at the place usually reserved for the man whose death they had been discussing. Blank shifted uneasily and then looked at his plate. It suddenly rose up from the table and settled back with a slight thump.

The congressman's eyes bulged. His face became purple. He looked around the room. No one else seemed to have noticed the antics of his plate.

Shaking himself together he gulped down his sherry and asked the butler for more. Just as the glass touched his lips his plate again rose from the table.

The sherry glass smashed on the floor and the congressman half rose from his chair. Everyone looked at him curiously and Jones said:

"What's the matter, Blank? Don't that sherry suit you?"

Like a man waking from a bad dream, Congressman Blank settled back in his chair and said that his nerves were unstrung. If his host didn't mind he would try a little champagne at once.

Blank kept his eyes off his plate while he swallowed two glasses of champagne. His color came back and he answered a thrust from a man across the table. Then he turned to his oysters. Two minutes later his plate jumped about four inches above the table and then did a rattle that suggested clog dancing.

"Jones," said Blank, in a thin, nervous voice, "did you say that Harry used to sit here?"

"Always," said Jones. "What's the matter with you?"

"Harry's spirit is here at this plate."

The other guests gazed at the congressman vigorously, but he stuck to his conclusion.

"I know it," he said, "and he is trying to communicate with me through this plate."

"Nonsense, you're nervous. Have another drink," said Jones.

Blank accepted the latter suggestion and rejected the former. He told the other guests what he had seen. As his eyes dropped to his plate it rose again.

"There! Did you see it?" exclaimed Blank.

"I've been watching your plate closely," said the man across the table, "and it hasn't budged."

"There it goes again," said Blank, as the plate rolled around like a drunken man. Thinking that it might be an optical delusion, the congressman held his hand above his plate and the plate came up and bumped it. That settled the matter.

Blank was shaking like a man with the palsy. His face paled as much as its naturally red color would permit. Leaning back in his chair, with his eyes on the plate, forgetful of everyone around him, he said:

"Harry, I recognize you there."

The plate bounced up and down as if in glee, and then it thumped hard.

"Do you want to tell me something?"

Thump, thump, went the plate.

"Two thumps mean yes?" asked the congressman.

The plate thumped twice. Every one around the table was watching intently.

"To think of your being reduced to plate thumping to express yourself, Harry," said the congressman. "It adds a new sting to death."

Thump, thump, went the plate.

"Were you sober when you fell down stairs?"

Thump, violent thump.

"Drunk?"

Two thumps.

"And you want to give me a warning?"

Two thumps.

"Is it not to drink any more?"

The plate bounced up so high that the oysters slid off. Congressman Blank looked around the table as in a daze and said:

"Did you see that? Did you see it?"

"See nothing," said the man across the table.

"Boys," said the congressman wincing unsteadily, "I've had a message from the dead tonight. Poor Harry has advised me not to drink any more. I don't want to spoil your fun but I'm going home. I'm going to preach temperance harder than ever and I'm going to practice it, too. I know a warning when I see it."

He was out of the door before anyone could stop him. As he closed the outside door Jones looked a bit nervous and said:

"Perhaps I ought to have explained."

"Not a bit of it," said one of the other men. "It will do him good. He ought to stop drinking anyway."

They agreed that if Blank didn't mention the incident they would not. Then Jones had the tablecloth raised and drawn from under Blank's plate a flat rubber bag attached to a long rubber pipe that ended in a bulb in Jones' hand.

Two days later all of Blank's friends were talking about the wonderful plate rapping at Jones' dinner, and in self-defense Jones had to explain it. Then Congressman Blank's temperance friends heard about it and in self-defense he had to swear off drinking, either in public or in private. He admits that his thirst has become a torment, but he says that the effects of the shock were such that he will never be strong enough to drink again.

ing the distinguished guest, "that you sent such a message. You have never been impolite before."

"An' dat nigger done tell what I say? Well, he never did have no sense an' no manna! Co'se I 'spected he'd say I's sorry I's ind'sposed!"

Did Not Break Record.

The statement appearing in Sunday morning's Sun that G. H. McLeod in throwing the 56-pound weight during the sports on Victoria day had broken the world's record is untrue. While not wishing in the least to discredit Mr. McLeod's splendid throw of 29 feet 3 inches, yet it lacks 7 feet 6 inches of equalling the world's record, considering the style of throw made. The world's record with the 56-pound weight thrown from a seven-foot circle with a swing or half turn is 36 feet 9 inches held by J. Flanagan and made last year, the best previous record being 35 feet 10 inches held by J. S. Mitchell. The world's record without a follow, which does not permit of a swing and half turn such as Mr. McLeod employed, is 27 feet 4 inches, made two years ago by J. S. Mitchell. In this style of throwing the contestant must toe the mark and is allowed to swing the weight backward and forward only. He may throw forward or backward, but neither his body nor the weight must inscribe any part of a circle. Another manner of throwing the weight is by standing and swinging it between the legs, the record of such style of 27 feet being held by W. J. M. Barry, Chief McKinnon, the veteran athlete who had charge of Saturday's sports. has a record of 28 feet 2 inches made with a swing and turn.

Heart of the Hailstone.

If it were not for the countless trillions of dust particles that float, separately invisible, in the atmosphere, there could be no rain-drops, snow crystals or hailstones. From a perfectly dustless atmosphere the moisture would descend in ceaseless rain without drops. The dust particles serve as nuclei about which the vapor gathers. The snow crystal is the most beautiful creation of the aerial moisture, and the hailstone is the most extraordinary. The heart of every hailstone, as Mr. Arthur H. Bell shows in Knowledge, is a tiny atom of dust. Such an atom, with a little moisture condensed about it, is the germ from which may grow a hailstone, capable of felling a man or smashing a window. But first it must be caught up by a current of air and carried to the level of the lofty cirrus clouds, five or six, or even ten miles high. Then, continually growing by fresh accessions of moisture, it begins its long plunge to the earth, spinning through the clouds and flashing in the sun like a diamond bolt shot from a rainbow.

Stimulation of Plants.

Several methods of applying electricity to hasten the growth and development of vegetation have been tested in Germany. One plan is simply to electrify the air about the growing plants by passing a current through a system of barbed wires from the points of which the electricity is discharged. Another way is to submit the seeds to an electric current before they are planted or sowed. Both of these methods are said to have given favorable results, but the best plan yet tried is that of passing a feeble current of electricity through the soil. A market-gardener near Paterson, New Jersey, is said to have trebled the productiveness of his beds of carrots, beets and other vegetables by sending through them a current derived from the power cable of a trolley line.

Automobile Novelties.

In France launches and canoes are now driven by motors of the automobile type. In Germany an automobile sled has been invented, to which the motion is imparted by a spiked wheel which revolves in contact with the ground. A tiller connected with the front pair of runners serves for steering. A Michigan inventor has devised a sled, which is also driven by a spiked wheel geared to the pedal shaft of a bicycle, and there is already another similar invention of a pair of runners and a rear wheel driven by a motor. Somewhat analogous to the last-named invention is the ingenious application that another American has made of a wheel to drive a catamaran. The wheel is mounted above the central space between the twin boats, and the driving wheel rests on friction rollers which transmit their rotation to a paddle-wheel behind.

One of the peculiar industries of Ireland which has recently received a fresh stimulus is the manufacture of poplin, a kind of goods in which silk and wool are so combined that the silk constitutes the surfaces and the wool the interior part. The silk comes from China, but it is all dyed in Dublin, because they aver in the Irish capital that there is some quality in the Dublin water which insures a brilliance and permanence of color that has not been attained elsewhere.

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