

The Joker Club.

"The Pen is mightier than the Sword."

There is a cockroach that makes his home on our desk that has got more sense than a delinquent subscriber. He—if it is a he one; we are not clear as to that—comes out and sits on the side of the paste dish, and draws in a long breath. If the paste is fresh he eats it and wiggles his polonaise as much as to thank us, and goes away refreshed. If the paste is sour, and smelly bad, he looks at us with a mournful expression, and goes away looking as though it was a mighty mean trick to play on a cockroach, and he runs about as though he was offended. When a package of wedding cake is placed on the desk he is the first one to find it out, and he sits and waits till we cut the string, when he goes into it and walks all over the cake till he strikes the bridal cake, when he gets onto it, stands on his head and seems to say, "Yum, yum," and he is as tickled as a girl with a fresh beau. There is a human nature in a cockroach. When a man comes in and sits around with no business, or any busy day, and asks questions, and stays and keeps us from working, the cockroach will come out and sit on the inkstand and look cross at the visitor as much as to say, "Why don't you go away about your business and leave the poor man alone so he can get out some copy, and not keep us all around here doing nothing?" But when the paper is out, and there is a look of cheerfulness about the place, and we are anxious to have friends call, the cockroach flies around over the papers and welcomes each caller as pleasantly as he can and seems to enjoy it. One day the paste smelled pretty bad and we poured about a spoonful of whiskey in it and stirred it up. The cockroach came out to breakfast and we never saw a person seem to enjoy the meal any more than the cockroach did. It seemed as though he couldn't get enough paste. Pretty soon he put one hand to his head and looked cross-eyed. He tried to climb down off the paste dish and fell over himself and turned a flip-flap to the bottom paper. Then he looked at us in a sort of mysterious way, winked one eye as much as to say, "You think you are smart don't you, old baldy?" Then he put one hand to his forehead as if in meditation and staggered off into a drawer, coming out presently with his arm around another cockroach, and he took him to the paste pot and he filled up too, and then they locked arms and paraded up and down on the green cloth of the desk as though singing, "We won't go home till morning," and they kicked over the steel pens and acted a good deal like politicians after a caucus. Finally some remark was made by one of them that didn't suit, and they pitched in and had the worst fight that ever was, after which one rushed off as if after a policeman and the other staggered into his hole, and we saw no more of our cockroach till the next morning, when he came out with one hand on his head and the other on his stomach, and after smelling of the paste and looking sick he walked off to a bottle of seltzer water and crawled up to the cork and looked around with an expression so human that we uncorked the bottle and let him in, and he drank as though he had been eating codfish. Since that day he looks at us a little suspicious, and when the paste smells peculiar he goes and gets another cockroach to eat some of it first, and he watches the effect.

Now, you wouldn't believe it, but that cockroach can tell, the minute he sees a man, whether the man has come in with a bill, or has come in to pay money. We don't know how he does it, but when a man has a bill the cockroach begins to look solemn and mournful, and puts his hands to his eyes as though weeping. If a man comes in to pay money the cockroach looks glad, a smile plays around his

mouth, and he acts kitterny. He acts the most human when ladies come into the office. If a book agent comes in he makes no attempt to show his disgust. One day an old person came in with a life of Garfield and laid it on the table, opened to the picture of the candidate, and left it. The cockroach walked through the violet ink and got his feet all covered, and then he walked all over the book, and left his mark. The woman saw the tracks, and thought we had signed our name, and she said she was sorry we had written our signature there, because she had another book for subscribers' names. When a handsome lady comes in the cockroach is in his element, and there is a good deal of proud flesh about him. He puts his thumbs in the arm-holes of his vest and walks around. One day we put our face up to a deaf young lady to speak to her, and the cockroach looked right the other way, and seemed to be busy looking over an old copy of the *Christian Statesman*, but when he found that we only yelled at the lady, he winked as much as to say, "Well, how did I know?" O, that cockroach is a thoroughbred—*Peck's Sun*.

A Parliamentary Symposium.

A NIGHT WITH THE JOVIAL JOKERS OF THE LOCAL LEGISLATURE.

The evening sitting was over—the Chamber was cleared and silence brooded over the arena of intellectual gladiatorialship where but lately the sonorous voice of a Lauder woke the echoes but conspicuously failed to perform the same operation for the somnolent occupants of the back seats. The reporters had folded their manuscript, like the Arabs, and silently stolen away—also pencils, foolscap, inkstands, &c., duly charged to the Contingent Fund. But in the refreshment room were gathered a few of the choicer spirits who sought recuperation after the toils of the day, and whiled away an hour with jest and song. A light repast was spread upon the board, and the fragrance of steaming glasses circled upwards to the ceiling.

"Pass the ham to Deroche, he is looking hamously at it," said Grip-on.

"No don't—don't on any account," observed Meredith, "That is, not unless you want to make him mad."

"And why should it make him mad?" queried Merrick.

"Why," returned the eminent counsel for the Biddulphers, "his name might tell you that—Hammel Madden Deroche."

There was a pause of solemn silence during which you might have heard a rolling pin drop, then a faintly appreciative smile dawned on the features of Badgerow and Tooley, then a tentative snicker from Moses Springer, and finally a wild explosive roar intermingled with deprecatory groans that shook the rafters in a way which would have scared Kivas Tully into sending for a contractor right away to put in some more supports and iron braces and things. The joke was a success.

"The usual fine!" said Wood, who officiated as symposiarch, and the waiters stepped forward and re-filled the glasses.

"By the way, Cook," said Waterworth, "I meant to have spoken ahead of you this evening. I rose three times but the Speaker didn't seem to see me."

"I caught the Speaker's eye first, you understand," replied the member addressed.

"Caught his eye? But I yelled out 'Mr. Speaker' as loud as I could holler before you opened your mouth. It's not right."

"No!—well, perhaps it isn't, for this thing of who shall have the floor is all a matter of, not of right, but of caught-'is-eye."

Cries of "Explain!"

Mr. Cook said he had nothing to explain or retract, but he noticed that some gentlemen had smoked out their cigars, and if the matter could be satisfactorily settled by the distribution of a fresh supply, all right.

His apology was accepted.

"Now this," said Tooley, sipping the beverage as he drew a match along the under side of the table, "is really a very good article of old rye. It has a bouquet which titillates the susceptibilities of the connoisseur by its aromatic pungency."

"Yes, I notice it has a *je ne sais quoi* which is entirely *comme il faut*," remarked Watterworth, sneeringly.

"Whiskey," continued Tooley in a meditative strain, seemingly unmindful of the jeer, "while excessive indulgence is always to be avoided—"

General chorus, "Oh, of course!"

"Nevertheless taken in moderation—in strict moderation you understand—cheers the drooping and downcast spirit, brightens the intellect, warms the heart, and sheds athwart our hours of social converse that genial glow which nothing else can excite. In comparison therewith, what, oh what is Watterworth?"

General exclamation and applause.

"Ask us an easy one," said the Treasurer. "Meanwhile you are fined the customary penalty. Here waiter!"

A lull in the conversation here ensued for minutes, when the Symposiarch rose and reminded the company that a few days since a passage-at-arms had taken place between Messrs. Creighton and Fraser over the alleged delay of the Government and their very natural reluctance to proceed with business on the night of the Speaker's dinner. As both gentlemen were present they would favor the company with a duet recalling the affair. (Enthusiastic plaudits.)

Mr. Creighton motioned an attendant to bring him his trusty lute, and after thumping its strings for some seconds, seated himself on a back of a chair and warbled as follows in a mellow contralto voice:—

Oh dear what can the matter be?
Oh dear what can the matter be?
Oh dear what can the matter be?

Parliament don't set to-night

They promised to bring up their measures so rapid,
But so far we've merely had twaddle that's rapid,
And now I declare that the climax is capped,
The people will rise in their night.

Oh dear what can the matter be?
Oh dear what can the matter be?
Oh dear what can the matter be?

Parliament don't set to-night.

They told us this time we should have a short session,
Delay such as this is a serious transgression,
To my wrath it behooves me to give full expression,
Alas 'tis no cause for delight!

Mr. Fraser then took the weapon and after the usual preliminary flourishes, executed the following in the Lig' est style of operatic art:—

The Speaker is giving a dinner this evening,
The Speaker is giving a dinner this evening,
The Speaker is giving a dinner this evening,
And Creighton has got no invite.

So that is the cause of our friend's consternation,
He think that he ought to have had invitation,
And ripping and tearing he calls on the nation,
The thing has disgruntled him quite.

The Speaker is giving a dinner this evening,
The Speaker is giving a dinner this evening,
The Speaker is giving a dinner this evening,
And Creighton has got no invite.

The critics and carpers may howl as they please to,
A good solid gorge is a fine thing to freeze to,
So let Creighton rave if it gives him some ease to,
And we will just laugh at the sight.

Loud applause rewarded the performers and shortly afterwards the gathering broke up.

Dr. Bergin is one of our sapient M. P.'s, only he is rather more sapient than his colleagues. He has published a speech, full of "cheers" and "laughter," in his local paper, without taking the trouble of first delivering it in the House. Plumb and the other orators are laughing at him, but the worthy doctor feels that he has the country at his back. He has taken this course out of regard for the public's feelings, and if a score of other M. P.'s would follow his examples, and spare Hansard the trouble of reporting their vapouring, they would deserve the thanks of all concerned.