

WITH THE WITS

FILIAL RESPECT.

"Where's your father, little boy?" said the insurance agent, calling at the back door. "Father's down in the pigsty," said the boy curtly. "You can go and find him. And," he added as an afterthought, "you'll know father—he's got a hat on!"

✦

UNDERNEATH.

She weighed sixteen stone if she weighed an ounce, and she did weigh an ounce. The whole rink shook and rumbled as she struggled round in her efforts to master the whirling art. Suddenly—a terrific thud—a groan—and there, piled up upon the boarding lay a heap of overbalanced femininity. A dozen stalwarts hastened to her aid. But her avordupois was too much for their heaving. "Fetch a lever!" cried one. "Fetch a crane!" shouted a second. The woman opened her eyes. "You will have to wait a moment, madame," politely remarked a third. "We have just sent for the crane. I trust you are not hurt?" "N-n-no, I don't think so!" she gasped bravely back. "But, oh, there are some dreadful lumps in your floor!" "Lumps, be hanged, madame!" growled a half-smothered voice from underneath. "I'm not a lump, I'm one of the attendants!"

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PROOF POSITIVE.

In the silent watches of the night Mrs. Brown prodded Mr. Brown in the ribs, and he awoke with a start. "John," she whispered hoarsely, "get up! There are burglars! I can hear noises downstairs!" "Rest easy, my dear," grunted John, turning over. "There are no burglars. You may always make up your mind to this. If there are burglars in the house they won't be such fools as to make any noise." An hour later he received another dig. His wife was sitting up, a wild look of terror in her eyes. "John!" she cried hoarsely. He leapt on to the floor. "John, there are burglars! I've been listening for ten minutes. I've opened the door. I've been to the head of the stairs, even; and, John, oh, John, I can't hear a single sound!"

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REALLY GREAT.

"Mr. Gladstone once slept in the bed you were in last night, sir," said the hotelkeeper. "Ah!" answered the guest; "Mr. Gladstone must have been a great man, for that's more than I could do!"

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PROVING IT.

"I say, what do you think that is?" said a man to an assistant in a general store. He laid on the counter a paper containing some powdery matter. "Just taste it and give me your opinion." "I should say it was soda," said the shopman, after putting some of it on his tongue. "That's what I said," replied the visitor; "but my wife contended that it was rat poison. Try it again to make sure!"

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THAT TIRED FEELING.

The following conversation is said to have taken place in a Boston elevator: Old Lady—"Don't you ever feel sick going up and down in this elevator all day?" Elevator Boy—"Yes'm." Old Lady—"Is it the motion of the going down?" Elevator Boy—"No'm." Old Lady—"The motion of going up?" Elevator Boy—"No'm." Old Lady—"The stopping?" Elevator Boy—"No'm." Old Lady—"What is it then?" Elevator Boy—"The questions."

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THE MODERN STYLE.

"Where are you going, my pretty maid?" "I'm going first to Smith and Jones' to match a piece of ribbon, then to Jones and Smith's to get a dozen hairpins, next to Jones Brothers' to look at those darling little baby pins, after that to Smith Brothers' to look for some of those nice what-do-you-call-'ems, and then to the hairdresser's, sir," she said.

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PLEADED GUILTY.

Muggins—"Why didn't you protest when they charged you with violating the speed regulations?" Chuggins—"I was too thankful to kick. I've been trying to sell that motor, and it takes a good deal of strain off my conscience to have somebody else testify that she can go faster than a mile in ten minutes."

ONE THING FORGOTTEN.

When Jenkins, returning from his club, went to his bedroom at half-past one, it was with the determination of going to sleep without first submitting to a cross-examination by his better half. So, as soon as he had entered the room and placed his candle upon the dressing-table, he began: "I locked the front door. I put the chain up. The dog is in. The cat is out. The cook took the silver to bed with her. I put the fastenings over the bathroom windows. I put the cake box back in the larder. I did not drink all the milk. It is not going to rain. Nobody gave me any message for you. I posted your letter as soon as I got to town. Your mother did not call at the office. I did not hear of a marriage or engagement. I want an egg for breakfast. I think that is all, and I will now put out the light." Jenkins felt that he had prevented all possible inquiry, and smiled triumphantly. His triumph was short-lived, however, for Mrs. Jenkins asked, "Why didn't you take off your hat?"

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BREAKING IT GENTLY.

Simpkins always was soft-hearted, and when it developed upon him to break gently the news of Jones' drowning to the bereaved Mrs. Jones, it cost him much paper, ink, and perspiration before he sent the following: "Dear Mrs. Jones—Your husband cannot come home to-day. His bathing suit was washed away in the surf.—P.S.: Poor Jones was inside the suit."

✦

THE ANSWER.

"I understand you called on the complainant. Is that so?" demanded a brow-beating barrister of a man he was cross-examining. "Yes," replied the witness. "What did he say?" Counsel for the other side eagerly objected that evidence as to a conversation was not admissible, and half an hour's argument ensued. Then the magistrates retired to consider the point, announcing on their return some time later that they deemed the question a proper one. "Well, what did the plaintiff say?" repeated the cross-examining barrister. "He was not at home, sir!" was the answer.

✦

NOT SATISFIED.

An English peer who visited Scotland was at a dinner given in his honor at a private residence. A little daughter of the host, who was too well bred to stare, but who eyed him covertly as the occasion presented itself, finally took the courage to shyly remark: "And you are really and truly an English lord." "Yes," he answered, pleasantly, "really and truly." "I have often thought I would like to see an English lord," went on the little maid, "and—and—" "And now you are satisfied at last," he interrupted, laughingly. "N-no," replied the truthful child, "I'm not satisfied. I'm a good deal disappointed."

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SARCASM.

Father (at head of stairs)—"Ethel, what time is it?" Ethel (in drawing-room)—"It's a quarter past ten, father." Father—"All right. Don't forget to start the clock again after the young man goes out to get his breakfast."

✦

WHAT HE MEANT.

Wife—"I don't see how you can say that Mr. Whitechoker has an effeminate way of talking. He has a very loud voice." Husband—"I mean by an effeminate way of talking, my dear, that he talks all the time."

✦

SYMPATHETIC.

On one occasion an archbishop, when about to proceed on a railway journey, found so many "society" people travelling first and second that he thought he would be more comfortable in a third-class compartment. His only companion was a farmer, big and burly, who thus addressed His Grace: "I suppose you be something in the clergy line?" The archbishop assented. "Then," continued the farmer, "are you a curate in this neighborhood?" "No," was the answer, "I am—I have no curacy now. I was a curate once, but I am one no longer." "Oh, very sad!" commented the farmer, with a sigh. "I suppose it was the drink!"

Ring Out the Old

(Continued from page 22.)

the copy of a well-known Greuze that he started back as though he were shot. Bottles of varnish, and all the paraphernalia of the trade, stood on the shelf alongside the easel, and the painter's brushes, laid aside for ever, were a pathetic witness to a daring hand that had manufactured Old Masters by the dozen, but had never succeeded with such terrible effect as in the case of the Velasquez masterpiece. Afterwards Sir Walter Perrin believed that he must have gone mad for the moment, for he drove the stick he carried through the face of the smiling Greuze on the easel and split the canvas into a thousand fragments, then he turned back into the room.

"Curse you!" he said. "I will never forgive you."

He rushed past the bed, pausing only to fling another word of contempt at the man upon it, and out of the room. His last memory was of a face ghastly white upon pillows no whiter; of eyes that met his own in an anguish of entreaty; of lips that tried to entreat pardon, only to fling themselves back as from a wall of iron. He had a dim memory of Daphne, pale and alarmed, cowering down against the table; but he was conscious only vividly of his own bitter anger—his wild frenzy of passion that shook him like a leaf.

When he reached home he was cool enough to show little of the storm through which he had passed, and his servants, at least, guessed nothing of it. But he shut himself in his library, and when he had eaten a perfunctory dinner he spent the hours pacing up and down the room, as though he were a prisoner on the wheel. It was New Year's Eve, and he was living through it in a tempest of anger that was milder in his hatred of the man who had so bitterly wronged him. There were parties going on around him in other houses, festivities that gladdened every family, but no one had asked him to visit them that night, and he was glad of it.

At last, exhausted by his emotion, he fell into a chair, and closed his eyes. Between sleeping and waking there came to him the consciousness that he was not alone in the room, and it did not seem at all strange when he saw a procession of white-winged angels forming a circle about his chair, holding by the hand in the centre of the ring a child with a radiant face and a crown upon its head. And when he looked closer the child had

the face of Daphne Vansittart, and touched him on the heart with one small hand. "It is the New Year," he heard a voice whisper in his ear—or was it his own heart that said the words? "And the New Year means love—if we love as God loves."

There were no other words, and when he opened his eyes suddenly the room was still, and very cold, for the fire had burnt low. He started to his feet and put his hand to his heart, for he felt a strange pain there where the child's hand had rested, and behold! a strange thing had happened, for the anger he had felt against Vansittart had died away, and left in its place only a great and tender sorrow for the man who was dying. He moved mechanically towards the door, and, opening it, let in a chime of New Year bells ringing out the old and welcoming the new. It did not take him very long to drive the short distance that lay between the fashionable street in which he lived and the court which Daphne called her home, and when he reached the house he found the door still unlocked, and, knocking, entered quickly. Daphne's landlady, a stout, kindly woman, with a face swollen with weeping, came out to meet him.

"He is going very fast, Sir," she said. "The young lady is with him alone. It's a sad New Year for her, left all alone in the world, though she shan't never starve so long as I have a roof over my head."

Perrin pressed a piece of gold into the woman's rough hand, and shut the door of Daphne's sitting room behind him. The lamp had burnt low in the artist's room, but there was light enough for a man of die by, as Vansittart was dying with low, laboring gasps for breath, and his head resting on his daughter's breast.

"I've come back," said Perrin, in tones that sounded very strange in his own ears. "I've come back, my old friend—to say I forgive you."

A look of such ineffable joy crossed the face of the dying man, that Perrin felt his heart leap within him.

"Thank Heaven! Oh, thank Heaven! But—Daphne?" The lips failed on the words, but Perrin understood. "I will take care of Daphne," he said, "if she will let me." And before day dawned the girl was weeping for her dead father, with her head upon Perrin's breast. The New Year had dawned for them in peace and love, and the dead artist lay sleeping with a smile upon his lips, that the angel of the New Year had left there as he passed through the room.



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