

**HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF SOME APPARENTLY SLANG PHRASES.**

**"SHOOT THE HAT."**

When the redoubtable William Tell was about to raise his cross-bow to his shoulder to fire at the apple on the head of his son, John Henry, in compliance with the cruel order of the tyrant, Gessler, the lad observed that his father had been indulging, pottle deep, in the seductive bowl, and that his hand was shaking like an aspen leaf. Fearing that the aim of the author of his being would not be true, and that his own head instead of the apple would receive the bolt, the lad cried out to his father, "Hold on a minute, dad, don't fire at the apple, but," pointing to Gessler's cap on the pole hard by, "shoot the hat." Tell obeyed his son's request and let fly, not at the cap on the wooden pole but at one on the pole of Gessler, which he pierced, as well as the head that was inside it, with the fatal missile. This is the true account of the episode, ball-mark warranted, and all others are bogus. The phrase "Shoot the hat," has passed into a proverb or something.

**"YOU TAKE THE CAKE."**

When King Alfred fled from the battle-field of Ridgeway and took refuge in the house of Gubba, he was ordered by the good-wife, who did not recognize her sovereign, to attend to some oat-cakes that were baking on the hearth whilst she went about her avocations, such as secreting stones in the centres of her pound rolls of butter, stowing away the small strawberries in the bottoms of the boxes and so forth. The king, whose mind was busied with other thoughts, neglected the cakes and they were burnt to cinders. This naturally aroused the old lady's ire, and she rated her royal guest in no measured terms, dealing him a heavy buffet on the snoot as a warning to him to be more careful in the future, at the same time telling him there would be no cake for him that day. "Peace, good dame," replied the gentle monarch, taking a fat capon off the spit where it had been roasting. "This is good enough for me, you take the cake." The old woman was so overcome by the cool effrontery of Is Ighness that she despatched her pure country milk to market without putting any water in it.

**"WIPE OFF YOUR CHIN."**

In the reign of the Emperor of China, Sam Lec, in the year 2081 B.C., there was a favored jester at His Highness' Court named Wah Sing Chinn. This varlet was most impertinent to visitors and one day when a distinguished foreigner named Jon Lung Sullivan paid his devoirs to the Emperor, Wah Sing Chinn commenced to play his customary jokes on the stranger. Annoyed at this Jon L. seized the jester and tapping him on the conk sent him sprawling into a huge caldron of puppy stew, whence he emerged in a very woful plight, the savory mess streaming down over his motley garments. The Emperor hastened to appease his visitor's wrath and to apolo-gize for his jester's insolence. "Och! ye naden't mind me, yer Honor, but—" replied Mr. Sullivan, pointing to the dripping Wah Sing, "wipe off your Chinn."

The jester's chin was wiped off as well as his head, which was immediately struck from his shoulders by the deputy chief mandarin.

**"HOW IS THAT FOR HIGGI?"**

This phrase has become distorted by translation. The way in which it originated was as follows. Julius Caesar and two of his officers riding along the banks of a stream called the Rubicon, one of the latter attempted to leap his horse across the river, but failing, floundered into the water. Caesar, laughing immoderately at his warrior's mishap, set spurs to his steed and cleared the stream by several feet, exclaiming as he fled through the air, "Tu es nullus bonus sed quam est istul pro ego?"

(You are no good, but how is that for I?) Bad boys on the streets now use this phrase little knowing its illustrious origin.

**"HOW'S YOUR POOR FEET?"**

This is another phrase which has got mangled up through British ignorance. In the reign of Charlemagne a great fete or holiday was in progress to which several Britishers were invited, amongst them being a certain Lord Ure who was to accompany the Emperor, with whom he was an especial favorite, to the fete. When the time drew nigh for the Imperial cavalcade to start, Lord Ure was nowhere to be found, much to the distress of Charlemagne who enquired, again and again; in the ancient French dialect, "Ou est Ure pour fete?" (Where is Ure for the feast?) The sentence was published in all the journals of the day, *La Grippe*, the comic paper of the period, producing a cartoon illustrative of the incident, the legend being the words made use of by the Emperor and which the benighted Englishmen rendered in their own villainous dialect, and which has been thus handed down to the present day.



**CANUTE COMSTOCK AND GERTRUDE GREEN.**

**A HARROWING TALE.**

Canute Comstock and Gertrude Green Were as nice pair of lovers as ever were seen.

They sat together hand in hand Upon Ontario's billowy strand.

They'd been to Ward's and eke to Mead's, Amid the cut tails and the weeds.

Round by the light house they had gone, To visit the home of the Champion.

They'd walked and walked and walked and walked, And talked and talked and talked and talked.

They'd walked to the East and walked to the West, And they sat them down to take a rest.

They heard not the cry of the wild curlew, Nor the sound of the ferry boat's loud kazoo.

Now the solemn owl from the light-house top Wakes up, and his wings commence to flap.

To whit! To whitt! Too whoo! Too whoo! Yet still on the sands sat the happy two.

Now the ferry whistles give a hideous blast And a dreadful shriek. It was the last!

"'Tis time to go, my dear," he said To the fair young girl he was going to wed.

Then they both walked off at a rapid pace, Till they came to the ferry landing-place.

No boat was there—"we'll have to wait, We'll have another *tete-a-tete*."

The young man said, as on the pier He sat down once more with his dear.

Fair Luna rose; her pallid light Relieved the darkness of the night.

Responsive to the bull-frog's tune, The bank clerk's watch dogs bay the moon.

Anon a man comes down the pier, And for the couple straight did steer.

Quoth he, "Wot ye 'tis twelve o'clock—I am the watchman of this dock."

Then Gertrude said, "Oh dear Canoot, That was a hint for us to scoot."

Oh, watchman, watchman tell me true, Tell me when the next boat's due."

The "watch" replied "I'll tell you when— Tomorrow morning at half past ten!"

Now Canute Comstock and Gertrude Green Had not one nickel them between,

So they walked all night the dreary pier, And they thought the long night was a year.

They walked and walked till the day light broke, And not one word to each other spoke.

**MORAL.**

The moral of this is very clear,— Don't stay all night on an island pier.

**CORRESPONDENCE.**

To the Editor of GRIP.

SIR,—In the church notices on Saturday last we noticed the wonderful attraction at St. George's of "Surplices." It was preceded by a list of the clergy, three in number, and the stated hours of service—but the thought paramount was evidently surplices. Allow me to suggest—for this must have some talismanic force—to St. Luke's church, that they should advertise "surplices and cassocks"; while St. Matthew's might draw the crowd by "legs, surplices, and more cassocks."

Your friend,  
A MAN.

P. S.—Don't confound me with "Amen." Quite the opposite. I don't agree with the advt.

**BARNEY AS A SCIENTIST.**

DEAR MISTHER GRIP,—Its meself is just afther gittin' back from Mont-re-haal, where I wint to meet wid the British Association he special invitation. An' sure an' didn't meself twig yez sittin' there a takin' the countenances av our illasthrous visitors aff on yer thumb nails, an' which no doubt yez'll be afther kapin' fur future use. Meself had the honor av shakin' hands wid all the visitors, an' wid the figure-head av this Dominion—Sir John Macdonald, L. L. D. "An' how is yerself?" sez he to me wid a tremendous slap on the shoulder. "Magnificent," sez I, "how's the youngster?" "Oh! thrivin' bravely, a beautiful child, the very image av meself," sez he. "What paper are yez going to read before the ass?" sez he. "I've prepared a paper on *parfumes*," sez I, "wid the bay at the fut av Yonge-street," sez I, "fur illustration." Nivir a word did he spake, but sayzin' howld av his nose betune his thumb and forefinger, he walked away. I nivir clapt an eye on him all the time meself was there afther that, but Sir somebody towid me he had gone to bed sick.

Yez'll be proud to larn that whin meself was called to the platform to read me paper on "*parfumes*" yer correspondent was listened to wid marked attintion. An' though I'm sorry to see that though the report has bin crowded out wid less important subjects, the *Glob* has taken howlt av it an' shows its appreciation av it in the following words: "We trust that an effort will be made to engage the services av the leading sanitary authority among our visitors from whom to procure a report upon our sewage system." Av course the report will be based on the principal av the survival av the fittest—an the man that survives the visit to the sewer at the fut av Yonge-street will be the fittest man to write out a description av the parfumes ascidin' from it.

Some of the scientific gentlemen were very