

A GOOD JOKE.

The author of some recollections of "Artemus Ward," tells the following story :

In the spring of 1859 I accepted a proffered editorial position on the *Cleveland National Democrat*, and renewed my acquaintance with "Artemus."

On the first evening of my arrival he volunteered to show me around—a very desirable achievement, as I was to fill the position of city editor. He "showed me around" so successfully, that about two o'clock in the morning I began to feel almost as much at home as though I had lived there all my days, to say nothing of my nights. "Artemus" invited me to share his bed with him for the remainder of the night, and I accepted.

Adjoining his room lodged a young professor of elocution, who was endeavouring to establish a school in Cleveland. He was just starting out in business, and was naturally anxious to propitiate the press.

"Let's get the professor up," said Artemus, "and have him recite for us."

I remonstrated with him, reminded him of the lateness of the hour; that I wasn't acquainted with the professor, and all that; but to no purpose.

"He is a public man," said Ward, "and public men are glad to meet members of the press, as restaurants are supposed to get up warm meals at all hours."

He gave a thundering rap on the door as he shouted :

"Professor-r-r!"

"Who's there? What do you want?" cried a muffled voice, evidently from beneath the bed-clothes, for it was a bitter cold night in February.

"It is I—Brown, of the *Plaindealer*," said Artemus, and nudging me gently in the ribs, he whispered: "That'll fetch him. The power of the press is invincible. It is the Archimedian lever which—"

His remarks were interrupted by the opening of the door, and I could just discover the dim outline of a shirted form shivering in the doorway.

"Excuse me for disturbing you, professor," said Artemus, in his blandest manner, "but I am anxious to introduce my friend here, the new 'local' of the *Democrat*. He has heard much of you, and declares positively he can't go to bed until he hears you elocute."

"Hears me what?" asked the professor, between his chattering teeth.

"Hears you elocute—recite—declaim—understand?—specimen of your elocution."

In vain did the professor plead the lateness of the hour, and his fire had gone out. Artemus would accept no excuse.

"Permit me, at least," urged the professor, "to put on some clothes and light the gas."

"Not at all necessary. Elocution, my dear boy, is not dependent on gas. Here," (straightening up a chair he had just tumbled over) "get right up on this chair and give us, 'The boy stood on the burning deck,'" adding in a side whisper, "The burning deck will warm him up."

Gently, yet firmly, did Artemus roost the reluctant professor upon the chair, protest that no apologies were necessary for his appearance, and assuring him that "clothes didn't make the man," although the shivering disciple of Demosthenes and Cicero probably thought clothes would make a man more comfortable on such a night as that.

He gave us "Casabianca," with a good many quavers of the voice, as he stood quaking, in a single short, white garment; and then followed, "On Linden, when the Sun was Low," "Sword of Bunker Hill," etc., "by particular request of our friend," as Artemus Ward said, although I was too nearly suffocated with suppressed laughter to make even a last dying request had it been necessary. It was too ludicrous to depict—the professor, an indistinct white object, standing on the chair "elocuting," as Ward had it, and we sitting on the floor holding our sides, while A. W. would faintly whisper between his pangs of mirth, "Just hear him."

It wasn't in Ward's heart to have his fun at the expense of another without recompense; so next day I remember, he published a lengthy and entirely serious account of our visit to the professor's "room," spoke of his wonderful powers as an elocutionist, and expressed the satisfaction and delight with which we listened to his "unequalled recitations." The professor was overjoyed, and probably is ignorant to this day that Artemus was "playing it on him."

MARK TWAIN AS A REPORTER.

The life of a reporter was described by Mark in one of his recent Lectures at Chicago, in the following manner :

"I reported on that morning newspaper three years; and it was pretty hard work. But I enjoyed its attraction. Reporting is the best school in the world to get a knowledge of human beings, human nature and human ways. A nice, gentlemanly reporter—I make no references—is well treated by everybody. Just think of the wide range of his acquaintanceship, his experience of life and society! No other occupation brings a man into such familiar sociable relations with all grades and classes of people. The last thing at night—midnight—he goes browsing around after items among police and jail-birds, in the lock-up, questioning the prisoners; making pleasant and lasting friendship with some of the worst people in the world. (Laughter.) And the very next evening he gets himself up, regardless of expense, put on all the good clothes his friends have got. (Laughter.) Goes and takes dinner with the governor or commander-in-chief of the district, the United States Senator, and more of the upper crust of society. He is on good terms with them all, and is present at every public gathering, and has easy access to every variety of people. Why, I breakfasted almost every morning with the governor, dined with the principal clergymen, and slept in the station-house. (Laughter.) A reporter has to lie a little; or they would discharge him. That is the only drawback to the profession. That is why I left it. (Laughter.) I am different from Washington; I have a higher and grander standard of principle. Washington could not lie; I can lie, but I won't. (Prolonged laughter.)"

HOUSEKEEPING.—John and Mary Jane looked at each other during sermon time; shook hands with unusual tenderness on parting Sunday evening; and in a few days all the neighbours knew they were engaged. John began to lay aside a little money. Mary began to make a few things. All this

went on until one day there was a wedding with cake and wine.

The day after the wedding the new unity had a sudden change and unanimity of mind. Instead of boarding with either set of the old folks, they were going to get a house and keep it. They looked over the papers that evening to see how many and what houses were to let. Next day we saw them walking happily and weddingishly up and down the streets where the houses that were advertised are to be seen. The choice fell at last upon a house that looked very fresh outside and new within. The rent was not very high, and they thought they could keep the house and the house would keep them.

In about a month, John had a bad cough, and Mary was down sick with a fever. Soon there was a funeral and a widower. The widower went into consumption, and there was another funeral.—The minister of each funeral spoke about the inscrutable ways of Divine Providence. An old physician who was present had a very knowing look. After he got home he said that ministers might be enlightened a little more upon one of the ways of Divine Providence, if they knew that houses plastered directly upon stone or brick walls will neither allow people to keep them, nor keep people a great while. He knew that the dampness from the wall was the occasion of Mary's fever and John's consumption, and that is the one reason why they are not housekeeping to-day, instead of being laid away in the graveyard. And a little busy-body has reported the whole affair as a warning to all who contemplate housekeeping.

PHOTOGRAPH OF A GHOST ON A TOMBSTONE.—Mr. W. T. Tegilgas, a well-known resident of Strathalbyn, writes to the local press as follows:—"Whilst taking a walk very early one morning, through some motive I cannot account for, I was induced to visit a certain burying-ground, and coming to a grave surrounded by a wall and covered with a slab of slate, I noticed on the slate something strange. It was scarcely light enough to see it at first, but after waiting some minutes I could see it plainly, and it appeared to be a side view of a female. I could distinctly trace the head and body and skirts, apparently full size. Not being satisfied with the sight, I rubbed my hand on the form and found that that portion of the slate was perfectly dry, whilst the parts outside the form were perfectly wet with the dew that had fallen; and still not being satisfied, I walked away and came back in about fifteen or twenty minutes after, and still the form was there; so I determined to visit it again next morning, which I did, and continued doing so for a week or more. During this time I only saw the form once after the first morning; but, not being a believer in supernatural appearances, I tried to define the cause, but failed. In the course of conversation I told Mr. Morton what I had seen, and he visited the place and saw the form, although not so plain as it was when I saw it. The form was to be seen, and it has been seen since by others."—*British Journal of Photography*.

A REPENTANT HUSBAND AND A FORGIVING WIFE.—Here's a true tale of woe; all about a beautiful and abandoned wife in this city. She married a wretch who loved her money not wisely, but too well. When he got the money, he loved somebody else, and departed for the "rolling prairies of the mighty West." His earthly possessions were burnt up in the Chicago fire, and then he came back to New York without a cent in his pocket. Remorse seized him (it must have been remorse), and ascertaining the address of his lawful partner, he thus wrote her:—"I am here and penniless. Forgive the past and come to my arms again." This is what she wrote back:—"I'll come as soon as I can. Excuse delay. I've gone to have a loaded head put on the cane you left." He didn't wait! Remorse seized him again and carried him off. Finis.—*New York Commercial Advertiser*.

A PORTRAIT OF AN IMPORTANT MAN.—"Waiter!" The waiter replied, "Sir?" "Waiter, I am a man of few words, and don't like to be continually ringing the bell, and disturbing the house; I'll thank you to pay attention to what I say, and to remember that although there are three ways of doing things, I only like one way in those who have subordinate stations and minds. In the first place, bring me a glass of brandy and water, (cold) with a little sugar, and also a teaspoon; wipe down this table, throw some coals on the fire, and sweep down the hearth; bring me in a couple of candles, pen, ink, and paper, some wafers, and a little sealing-wax; tell the ostler to take care of my horse, dress him well, slop his feet, and let me know when he's ready to feed; order the chambermaid to prepare me a good bed, take care that the sheets are well aired, a clean night-cap, and a glass of water in the room; send the boots with a pair of slippers that I can walk to the stable in; tell him I must have my boots cleaned and brought into the room to-night, and that I shall want to be called at five o'clock in the morning; ask your mistress what I can have for supper; tell her I should like a roast duck, or something of that sort; desire your master to step in, I want to ask him a few questions; he is in the interest of the Liberals, I believe, and so much the better, for I have a friend who will stand for the town at the next vacancy; send me all the directions; change this five shillings' worth of stamps into coin; none of the silver to be worn; when does the mail arrive with the letters, and what time before p.m. does the mail leave? are there any soldiers quartered in the town, and how many? just tell me what time it is by the clock on the landing, and leave the room." This portrait is from life.

BIG GUNS AND BIG BELLS.—It appears that some time ago, Mr. W. Eggers, of the *South Australian Zeitung*, on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Bethlehem community, forwarded to the Emperor of Germany a photographic plan of the church being erected in Flinder's Street, Adelaide, at the same time requesting that, as a memento of the events Germany had lately passed through, and a remembrance of his Majesty and Empress, one or two captured French cannon might be sent for the purpose of being melted and made into two bells, to be named respectively "Wilhelm," and "Auguste." The sound of these bells from the church tower, it was said, would bring to the minds of future generations the unity which had been brought about in the dear old Fatherland during the Emperor's reign. In reply to this, Mr. Eggers received a communication from Prince Bismarck, stating that the Sovereign had acceded to the request, and that two guns, weighing about 2,600 lbs., would be handed over immediately to any person deputed to receive them; so that now those heralds of death and destruction will ring out "peace and good-will" at the Antipodes.

The *New York Evening Post* relates a remarkable story about a "London lady." This unfortunate person had, it appears, an incurable attachment for other people's gloves. Perfectly honest and upright in all other respects, she could never see a pair of gloves lying about without experiencing a desire to annex them, and so clever had she become in the course of long practice that towards the end of any week during which she had occasion to "do an extensive shopping, she was accustomed to have carried home gloves sufficient to set up a small shop." The regret of the owners of the gloves was poignantly shared by the lady herself, and at length she adopted the course of formally acquainting the tradespeople with her little weakness, begging them to have her watched, and to make out after each visit a bill of delinquencies. This was done throughout a period of two years, the lady paying the accounts as they came in without a murmur. At the end of two years, "owing to a course of gymnastic treatment, a prescribed diet, and vigorous exercise," the mania was subdued, and the lady was able to go into a shop where gloves abounded and to come out with the single pair she wore when she entered. The *Evening Post* expresses surprise at the singularity of the curative measures adopted. But to us that is by far the least remarkable feature in the story. "Gymnastic treatment, a prescribed diet, and vigorous exercise," have long been familiar in this country as a remedy for the constitutional weakness of persons who cannot leave a shop without carrying away articles for which they have not paid. Only, in our matter-of-fact way, we have been accustomed to call the process "imprisonment with hard labour."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

There was a man in Mauch Chunk, Pa., a few days ago, with a patent air-brake for railroad cars for sale. He claimed that it would stop a train going at the highest rate of speed in half its own length. There was a certain railroad man up there who treated this suggestion with scorn, and said he would wager large sums that the air-brake wouldn't stop a train any quicker than any other brake. So he borrowed the contrivance, and fixed it on an open car on the Switchback Railroad, and went up to the top of Mount Pisgah to get a fair start. He let her come down the inclined plane for a while, until she began to move along at the rate of sixty miles an hour, and then he suddenly placed his foot on the brake, and put it on with full power. One minute later the eye of any solitary traveller passing through those wilds might have observed a car standing perfectly still on the track, and a railroad man going down hill among the blackberry bushes and underbrush, headforemost, at the rate—say of forty-six miles an hour. He was carried home on a stretcher, and now that railroad man not only has perfect faith in the availability of the air-brake, but he is convinced that it would be a good thing if some man would invent a machine for taking the flatness and general demoralization, as it were, out of mutilated noses.

AN UNREGENERATE EDITOR.—A noted female advocate of woman's rights, whatever they may be called upon a veteran New England editor, who has a noted antipathy to whatever or whoever may bore him; and he suffered a quarter of an hour's sharp talking to, with unexampled power of endurance. His ordinary meekness gave his visitor much courage, and she abused his opinions and motives concerning "the question," with most unlimited freedom. "Madam," said the old gentleman, "you are certainly the most agreeable woman I ever met. Your person and mind are in perfect harmony—of ugliness—and your reasoning corresponds. If you were a man I should put you down stairs, but, as you are a woman, you may depart; and you must do so quickly—quickly, I say!" With that, old Crusty jumped to his feet, and his tormentor vanished in double quick time. "Of all the old brutes you ever see!" is her preface to what remarks she may have to make concerning him since that event.—*Boston Times*.

Footie, travelling in the West, dined one day at an inn, and when the cloth was removed the landlord asked him how he liked his fare. "I have dined as well as any man in England," said Footie. "Except Mr. Mayor," cried the landlord. "I do not except anybody whatever," said he. "But you must," bawled the host. "I won't." "You must." The strife eventuated in the landlord (who was a petty magistrate) taking Footie before the Mayor, who observed that it had been customary in that town for a great number of years always to except the Mayor, and accordingly fined him a shilling for not conforming to the ancient custom. Upon this decision Footie paid the shilling, at the same time remarking that he thought the landlord was the greatest fool in Christendom—except Mr. Mayor.

An exchange in Northern Texas describes an individual it would be handy to have in an office. Hear him:

"A fighting editor has been employed on this paper. He weighs 450 pounds. His fists are very tools of death; his hair is very short, his eyes are black; his boots are No. 13. O, he is a monster, this fighting man of ours! He goes for a man like an ant for green cheese, or a rooster for a grasshopper. He was never thrashed. Oh! he is a whale! He ate nineteen cans of oysters at our office the other night and called for more. He is the heaviest instrument of total and eternal punishment on record! Come to us ye lean and lank specimens of humanity, spit on our boots if you dare, slide down our cellar doors if you can, and if our Wallpups don't everlasting go for you, the size and belt have nothing in them."

Some idea of the tautology of the legal formula may be gathered from the following specimen, wherein if a man wishes to give another an orange, instead of saying, "I give you that orange," he must set forth his "act and deed" thus—"I give you all and singular, my estate and interest, right, title, and claim, and advantage of and in that orange, with all its rind, skin, juice, pulp, and pips, and all right and advantages therein, with full power to bite, cut, suck, or otherwise eat the same orange, or give the same away, with or without its rind, skin, juice, pulp, and pips, anything heretofore or hereinafter, or in any other deed or deeds, instruments of what kind or nature so ever, to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding."

A funny man in Lafayette, Indiana, played a joke on his landlady by marking his face and pretending to have the small-pox—but when he was hustled out of the house and narrowly escaped being knocked down by his new trunk and other personal effects, as they descended to the sidewalk from the second-storey window, his enjoyment of the thing was not immoderate.