

A SEASONABLE SONG.

Yule-tide is here with its feasting and folly,
Wassail and carols and pastimes and song,
With mistletoe, ivy and laurel and holly,
We welcome the season we've waited for long.
Let every mortal a willing hand take in
The sports and the toasting, and right merry be,
The incubus, Care, from our hearts shall be shaken,
Though it clingeth like Sinbad's Old Man of the Sea!

Let music and dances greet jolly Kris Kringle,
He's a genial old fellow with beard all snow-white;
Let o'er the land echo sleigh-bells' merry jingle,
A tune whereof light hearts keep time with delight.
The monarch who kings it this festival season,
Is the Lord of Misrule, and we yield to his sway;
Time, urged with his mischievous pranks, quickly flees
on—
But his reign is not ended till Candlemas day.

With jovial outbursts of rollicking laughter,
Snapdragon, hot cakes, post-pair,* let us play,
Till wild echoes go bumping from rafter to rafter,
And night's shadows melt in the gray dawn away.
O let us be merry with mummery and masking,
Roast turkey, plum pudding, and general good cheer;
'Neath the mistletoe kisses we'll take without asking,
For Old Father Christmas to bless us is here,
Tomato. —JUDSON FRANCE.
* Old Christmas games.

A LIVE REPORTER.

I sing The Live Reporter. He is dead now—that is to say, dead to newspaperdom and public usefulness, having got an office in the Civil Service, not so much for his intrinsic value, but as a slight token of esteem on the part of a member of the Administration who recognized the young man's pre-eminent capacity for the office on discovering that he was not the same newspaper man who had helped him out of obscurity into prominence, and given him many a boost towards a goal in his ambition, which Nature had never intended him to reach. The newspaper man who had done all this is still a newspaper man, living on hope and hard work. These facts are not given as an extraordinary instance of human experience, but only to show how luck occasionally triumphs over pure-gold merit, and to introduce a hero whose first name is Tom.

Tom was one of the rare order of born reporters, with a pronounced nose for news, an unflagging pertinacity of purpose, an unflinching source of ready resort, native wit, common sense, and *bonhomie*. From all of which it will be understood that Tom was not the average college graduate reporter, without my saying so. He was everywhere, and at all times, on the *qui vive* for an item. Nothing daunted him, nothing distressed him, nothing non-plussed him, nothing disturbed his cool self-possession, agitated his mind or ruffled his temper.

In his earlier days the incidents of boarding-house talk supplied him with material which his superior imagination worked up into beautiful and positive facts that even the subsequent investigation of a libel suit failed to shake the originality or dim the lustre of.

There was one of Tom's friends who was getting publicly married, and had asked his journalistic chum to the church. The candidate for matrimony was a great secret society man who kept Tom posted in a good many quarters on Brotherhood Gossip, so it was not surprising that our hero so associated his newly-lassoed friend with the source of his society news that he had no sooner grasped his hand after the ceremony than he forgot occasion and surroundings and quietly observed: "Say, Jim, I just dropped in to see you about that Milligan affair in connection with the West End Cavaliers of Covio. Now, the question is, did Milligan really order the whiskey and cigars, or was —?"

The interview was resumed three weeks' later.

Fever got hold upon Tom, the same as it does on ordinary mortals. Recovering after four or five weeks' siege, the first one he re-

cognized was the doctor, despite whose able efforts he had pulled through.

"Doc.," he whispered, "I've had an awful hunt through town for you. Give us the result of that *post mortem* you held—"

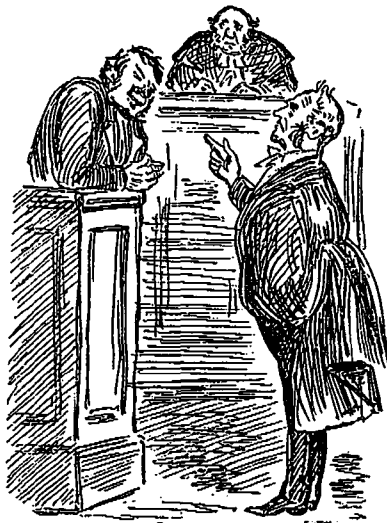
At a house of mourning on one occasion Tom nodded familiarly to the bereaved husband and said: "It's too darned bad! This confounded rain is going to spoil the whole affair. But, say, while you're here just give us the name of the pall-bearers, and a few particulars about how the—"

Visiting the hospital he was shown a patient who had just had his leg amputated. The ruling passion asserted itself, and he accosted the sufferer with: "Nice day. When did you come down? Anything startling with you?"

But about the funniest incident in his remarkable career was when he was allowed a talk with a condemned felon on the morning of the execution. He opened the conversation thus: "Well, old man, what's the latest? You don't get out much, that's a fact, and can't catch on to a great deal. But I'm going to get an item from you to-day, later on. I'd send you a paper with an account of this little fake in it, if I only thought it would find you. I'm going to head it: 'Latest Noose Item,' and you needn't fear but I'll do it up in grand shape. Well, good-day, till I see you again."

Now, Tom, as I have been saying, has quit working and got into the Civil Service. No newspaper man deserves his *otium cum dignitate* better than he; no one could enjoy it more. Tom has not worked hard so long as to be unable to stand nothing to do.

TOLL.



A LEGAL POINT.

Lawyer (severely).—Now, sir, how far is the tavern from your house? How long would it take you to walk the distance?

Witness.—Oh! that would depend on whether I was going there or coming home.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES.

I.—MR. C. COLUMBUS.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century Columbus thought it was about time to carry out his long-formed intention of discovering America. He was considerable of a snob and wanted to do it in fly style, which would require about four ships. He hadn't the necessary money himself, neither had his father, who said he was going to fail in business and retire after salting down a little cash where

the creditors wouldn't find it. Chris. suggested that the money be salted down by giving it to him to buy ships with, but the old chap had a long head and said the scheme wouldn't work, for it wouldn't look straight for him to be bankrupt while his previously impoverished son was buying up a navy. The creditors would be sure to get out a writ of attachment. Still, Chris. didn't give up. He telephoned to several kings and queens in his part of the continent and told them that if they'd put up the dust he'd discover America for them and find a short cut to India. Their Regal Nibbs replied that they weren't investing in colonization schemes that year, and that anyway the democratic spirit of the age was averse to land-grabbing monopolies, and that he had better apply to King Stephen the Oneth, of Sec-Peo-Ar-land, who was constantly on the lookout for fresh townships. Columbus wasn't on very good terms with that greedy monarch, so he gave him the go-by and took a run over to Spain, where he struck up an acquaintance with Queen Isabella. This was in A.D. 1492. Bella told Chris. that she was all broken up on his shape, but she wouldn't give him four ships, because it would make the American navy feel kind of small and mean like to have a fleet four times as big as it was come over to find the country. She said she'd give him two, but Chris was hoggish and insisted on four. At last they split the difference and Chris. got three gun-boats.

It was in the dog days of 1492 that Capt. Columbus jumped on a street car in the town of Palos, Spain, and rode down to the wharf where his three ships were lying, all filled with sailors, sea biscuits, salt pork and Hennessy brandy, enough for a three years' cruise for three crews. The anchors were weighed—they weighed two tons each—the engines started, and the ships moved out. Queen Isabella was sitting on the end of the wharf waving her parasol with one hand and holding a smelling bottle to her nose with the other, while Chris. and his crews stood on the decks singing "The Tar's Farewell." They sailed straight ahead for some months, and then the sailors got tired at the monotony of forever steering into the dim and uncertain beyond. They mutinied and threatened to make the admiral of the fleet food for fishes. Chris. wasn't even a little bit afraid. With his usual *sang froid* (he always carried that in case of emergency) he said: "What, ho! m' trusty henchmen and bums, an' ye but keep with me for one day more I'll give thee each a bottle of brandy, an' if our keels grate not on the pebbly strands and shifting sands of Indian lands I'll cut for home, I will, by gum, boys, I will!" There were no flies on Chris. Columbus. He knew how to talk to a crowd like that. Early next morning while he was seated in his cabin eating cornmeal mush and fish balls and reading the morning papers he was startled by hearing a voice crying "land"! He folded his dressing-gown about him, looked in the glass to see if his hair was parted straight, rushed on deck, and beheld land with real trees growing out of it, and live niggers in pre-historic bathing suits dancing the Saratoga Lancers on the beach. But the ships were not met by a tug bearing a score of newspaper interviewers, as Henry Irving had told Chris. they would be, so he decided that the township he had discovered was not America but India. He therefore called the citizens Indians, which name several of their descendants have retained to this day. That was the serious mistake he ever made. To tell the truth it was neither America nor India that he had found. It was one of the Bahama Islands, of which Europeans knew little or nothing—mostly nothing—and Chris. should have had gumption enough to know it, for all authorized school atlases show that the Bahama Islands are nearer to America than to India.