

lowed—viz., five francs—and doubling your stakes each time, your eleventh stake, supposing you were to win or lose consecutively, would be over 5000 francs, and you could double no longer.

In other words, you would have come to a point at which you could not on one turn of the wheel either double your winnings or recoup your losses.

All systems are designed to nullify the effects of zero and the maximum. If one could be certain that zero would turn up, as it ought to turn up, once in every thirty-seven turns, it could be provided against, and the Casino, even with the help of the maximum, would be in a bad way.

But no such certainty is possible, and therefore, every system splits on this rock. And so with the maximum.

Perhaps the most fatal systems of all are those based upon the theory that if red has come up a certain number of times running, black will follow. To illustrate the folly of this theory, take the following example: If you toss a penny in the air 1000 times and it comes heads 999 times, it is, of course, only even money on its being tails the next time.

The third reason, if, indeed, another be needed, why the bank must always win, is that the human and fallible player is always playing against an infallible machine.

The slightest mistake in calculation, the least inattention, and the system breaks down. And to err is human.

So Monte Carlo flourishes, and always will flourish so long as the law allows it to exist.

Romance in Cold Storage.

She wrote her name upon an egg: A simple country girl was she. "Yes, I'll be gone for ever," she said, "And bring a sweetheart back to me."

Into the wide, wide world it went, Upon its shell the message plain; The maiden waited, waited on, With throbbing heart—but hope was vain.

The days, the weeks, the months flew past; A year, another year, rolled by. Alas! no lover ventured near To dry the tear-drop in her eye.

Sad as her case might in the night, She wondered where the egg could be; "O, voiceless man, dost thou behold Somewhere my true affinity?"

Somewhere, indeed, there was a man Whom fate had made for her to own; Somewhere and waiting for the egg He led his love as life alone.

The years sped on till gray and bent, And, trembling, saw an aged man, Approaching slowly on the way.

His locks were white, his shoulders bowed; He feebly leaned upon a cane. She looked, and in her faded cheeks The blush of roses glowed again.

"Twas he, her lover, come at last! "Are you Miss Mary Jones, I pray? I found your name upon an egg I bought in market yesterday."

Ludicrous Incidents of Strike.

Paris, March 20.—Some ludicrous incidents of the extraordinary strike of the Italian railway employees are related by the Rome correspondent of the Petit Parisien.

A train was about to leave Rome for Civita Vecchia, when a porter, zealous to observe the regulations, perceived some rust on the hinges of one of the carriage doors, and the train was delayed until the last speck had been removed.

Another train was kept back until all the carriages had been shunted in such a manner that those with spring buffers alternated with those without.

Yet another delay was caused as a train was starting by a porter crying "Stop! Stop! There is a carriage window open and it must be shut in accordance with Article 676 of the regulations."

The train was delayed until the window had been closed with all possible care.

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GEMS OF LITERATURE

Roger Ascham to His Wife Margaret.

Mine Own Good Margaret: The more I think upon your sweet babe, as I do many times both day and night, the greater cause I always find of giving thanks continually to God for his singular goodness bestowed at this time upon the child, yourself, and me, even because it hath rather pleased him to take the child to himself into Heaven, than to leave it here with us still on earth. When I mused on the matter as nature, flesh, and fatherly fantasy did carry me, I found nothing but sorrows and care, which very much did vex and trouble me, but at last forsaking these worldly thoughts, and referring me wholly to the will and order of God in the matter, I found such a change, such a cause of joy, such a plenty of God's grace towards the child, and of his goodness towards you and me, as neither my heart can comprehend, nor yet my tongue express the twentieth part thereof.

Nevertheless, because God and good will hath so joined you and me together as we must not only be the one—a comfort to the other in sorrow, but also partakers in any joy, I could not but declare unto you what just cause I think we both have of comfort and gladness by that God hath so graciously dealt with us as he hath. My first step from care to comfort was this, I thought God had done his will with our child, and because God by his wisdom knoweth what is best, and by his goodness will do best, I was by and by fully persuaded the best that can be in done with our sweet child, but seeing God's wisdom is unsearchable with any man's heart, and his goodness unspeakable with any man's tongue, I will come down from such high thoughts, and talk more sensibly with you, and lay open before you such matter as may be both a full comfort of all our cares past, and also a just cause of rejoicing as long as we live. You will remember our contrivance together, and wish, our mighty prayer together, that God would vouchsafe to us to increase the number of this world; we wished that nature should beautifully perform the work by us: we did talk how to bring up our child in learning and virtue; we had care to provide for it, so as honest fortune should favor and follow it. And see, sweet wife, how mercifully God hath dealt with us in all points, for what wish could desire, what prayer could crave, what nature could perform, what virtue could deserve, what fortune could afford, both we have received, and

our child doth enjoy already. And because our desire (thanked be God) was always joined with honesty, and our prayers mingled with fear, and applied always to the world too, the will and pleasure of God hath given us more than we wished, and that which is better for us now than we could hope to think upon; but you desire to hear and know how marry, even thus, we desired to be made vessels to increase the world, and it hath pleased God to make us vessels to increase Heaven, which is the greatest honor to man, the greatest joy to Heaven, the greatest spite to the devil, the greatest sorrow to Hell, that any man can imagine. Secondly, when nature had performed what she would, grace stepped forth and took our child from nature, and gave it such gifts over and above the power of nature, as where it could not creep in earth by nature, it was straightway well able to go to Heaven by grace. It could not then speak by nature, and now it doth praise God by grace; it could not then comfort the sick and careful mother by nature, and now thru prayer is able to help father and mother by grace; and yet, thanked be nature, that hath done all she could do, and blessed be grace that hath done more and better than we could wish she should have done. Peradventure yet you do wish that nature had kept it from death a little longer, yea, but grace hath carried it where now no sickness can follow, nor any death hereafter meddle with it; and instead of a short life with troubles on earth, it doth now live a life that never shall end with all manner of joy in Heaven.

And now Margaret go to, I pray you, and tell me as you think, do you love our sweet babe so little, do you envy his happy state so much, yea, once to wish that nature should have rather followed your pleasure in keeping your child in this miserable world, than grace should have purchased such profit for your child in bringing him to such felicity in Heaven? This day, you may say unto me, if the child had lived in this world, it might have come to such goodness by grace and virtue as might have turned to great comfort to us, to good service to our country, and served to have deserved as high a place in Heaven as he doth now. To this, in short, I answer ought we not in all things to submit to God's good will and pleasure, and thereafter to rule our affections, which I doubt not but you will endeavor to do? And therefore I will say no more, but with all comfort to you here, and a blessing hereafter, which I doubt not but is prepared for you.

Your dearly loving husband,
Roger Ascham.

OSCAR WILDE IN PRISON A WARDER'S GRAPHIC STORY

How a "Lord of Language" "Circled the Centre of Pain" and Experienced the Depths of Degradation.

I never saw a man who looked With such a wistful eye Upon that little patch of blue Which prisoners call the sky; And at every wandering cloud That trailed Its ravell'd fleeces by.

Thus in "The Ballad of Reading Jail," under his prisoner pseudonym of "C. 33," wrote the late Oscar Wilde, whose book, "De Profundis," has just been published, and revealed the secret sorrows and humiliations of one who rightly claimed to have been "a lord of language."

An ex-prisoner warder who was at Reading Jail during the entire period of Wilde's incarceration, has further drawn aside the veil that hid the ill-fated man of genius during his degradation and despair "in the depths."

The publication of the posthumous book by the great literary genius, who "sinned and suffered," has induced this warder, who had charge of Oscar Wilde during his imprisonment, to tell how that unhappy man of letters "circled the centre of pain," as he in poignant phrase described the daily prison ordeal.

"The warders strutted up and down, And watched their herd of brutes," wrote Wilde on his release, and in this fragment of verse can be read his own bitter self-contempt. Of the warders themselves, he made no complaint—he regarded them as simply instruments of an iron, soul-killing system that might be right—or wrong.

Sympathetic Warders.

The warders, on their side, knew how terrible was the punishment the former pampered pet of society must be undergoing, for they could see he was suffering a thousandfold because of his strangely sensitive temperament and previous ignorance of all hardships and iron discipline.

"Poor Wilde," writes his former prison custodian, who is by no means the iron-hearted creature warders are generally supposed to be.

"I remember, before he was transferred from Wandsworth Prison, the governor of Reading Jail said to us, 'A certain prisoner is about to be transferred here, and you should be proud to

think the prison commissioners have chosen Reading Jail as the one most suitable for this man to serve the remainder of his sentence in."

"The governor never told us the name, but directly the prisoner arrived, we saw that 'C33' which was his prison letter and number, afterwards, made famous by him thus signing the 'Ballad of Reading Jail,' was none other than Oscar Wilde.

Cause of His Transfer.

"The probable cause of his transfer from Wandsworth Prison was his inability to comply with the regulations as allotted to his class of prisoner. On one or two occasions he had been brought up before the governor there for idleness at oakum-picking or talking."

"I remember my first sight of the fallen literary idol of whom all the world was then talking in terms of infamy."

"A tall figure with a large head and fat, pendulous cheeks, with hair that curled artistically, and a hopeless look in his eyes—that was Oscar Wilde as I first met him."

"Not even the hideous prison garb, or 'C33,' the badge of ignominy he bore could altogether hide the air of distinction and ever-present intellectual force that lifted him always far above the herd of brutes," as he so bitterly afterwards styled his fellow-convicts and himself.

"From the first it was apparent to us that he was totally unfitted for manual work, or hardships of any kind, and he was treated accordingly."

"He was no good for anything—except writing, and that, as a rule, has small place inside a prison. But on account of his former greatness a small concession was made him, and he was allowed to read and write as much as he liked."

"A Bundle of Brains."

"Had this boon not been granted him he would, I am confident, have pined away and died. He was so unlike other men. Just a bundle of brains—and that is all."

"When he arrived his hair was long and curly, and it was ordered to be cut at once."

"It fell to my lot as warder in charge to carry out this order and cut his hair, and I never shall I forget it."

"To Oscar Wilde it seemed as tho the clipping of his locks, and thus placing him on the same level as the closely-shorn, bullet-headed prisoners round him was the last drop in the cup of sorrow and degradation which he had to drink to the bitter dregs."

"Must it be cut?" he cried piteously to me. "You don't know what it means to me," and the tears rolled down his cheeks."

"It may seem somewhat ludicrous to some who do not know, as I do, what a curiously constituted character was that of Oscar Wilde, but I know it cut me to the heart to have to be the person to cause him his crowning shame. Warders have feelings, altho their duty will not always allow them to show it. 'The only task Wilde was put to was

to act as 'schoolmaster's orderly,' which was in the nature of a great privilege, for it meant he could take charge of the books and go round with them to other prisoners, besides having the pick of the literature for himself. Strange as it may seem considering his literary bent, he failed to accomplish even this task satisfactorily."

With His Books.

"Chiefly he remained in his cell occupied with his books, of which in his cell he had a large supply, consisting of poetic works and foreign authors. On his table was always a manuscript book—full of writing in some foreign language—French or Italian, I believe, and Wilde often seemed busily engaged writing in this."

"I think this must have been 'De Profundis'—the work of self-analysis that has just been published."

"His hair was always kept closely cut until about five months before his discharge, and I remember when he was told that it need not be prison-cropped any more owing to his impending release, how pleased he seemed. And he was a man who so seldom lifted his bowed head of shame to smile."

"Wilde was superstitious to a degree, and I recall one striking incident that proved his superstitious fears to be well grounded."

"I was sweeping the walls of his cell, for he seldom followed the prison regulations with regard to scrupulously cleansing his cell daily, and I disturbed a spider which darted across the floor. 'As it made off I raised my foot and killed it, when I saw Wilde looking at me with eyes of horror.'"

"Bringing Bad Luck."

"It brings bad luck to kill a spider," he said, 'I shall hear worse news than any I have yet heard.'"

"At the time I paid little attention to it, but the following morning he received the news that his mother, whom he had deeply loved and honored, had died, and that his shame had hastened her end."

"The saddest story I know of Wilde was one day when his solicitor called to see him to get his signature. I think, to some papers in the divorce proceedings then being instituted by his wife—a suit which, of course, Wilde did not defend. 'Unknown to Wilde his wife had accompanied the solicitor, but she did not wish her husband to see her.'"

"The interview with the solicitor took place in the consultation room, and Wilde sat at table with his head on his hands opposite the lawyer."

"Outside, in the passage with me, waited a sad figure in the deepest mourning. It was Mrs. Wilde—in tears. 'Whilst the consultation was proceeding in the solicitor's room, Mrs. Wilde turned to me and begged a favor. 'Let me have one glimpse of my husband,' she said, and I could not refuse her."

Her Last Look.

So silently I stepped on one side, and Mrs. Wilde cast one long lingering glance inside, and saw the convicted poet, who, in deep mental distress himself, was totally unconscious that any eyes save those of the stern lawyer and myself witnessed his degradation."

"A second later, Mrs. Wilde, apparently laboring under deep emotion, drew back, and left the prison with the solicitor."

"I fancy Wilde, when she saw him, was putting the final signature to the divorce papers, and I do not know if she saw her unhappy husband again. I do not think she ever did."

"At exercise, when he tramped what he called 'The Pools' Parade' with his companions, 'The Devil's Own Brigade,' he would pace along with bended head as the deep in thought, and usually muttering snatches of prose or verse from his favorite authors."

Sorrows of Others.

"He took a most sympathetic interest in the sorrows and troubles of other prisoners, and commented fiercely on the brutality of the prison system when a warder was suspended and finally dismissed for putting biscuits in a cell of a young prisoner whom Wilde believed to have been crying from hunger."

The monotony of the life seemed appalling to Wilde, and when he was released he wrote, you remember:

I know not whether laws be right Or whether laws be wrong; All that we know who be in jail Is that the walls are strong. And that each day is like a year, And year whose days are long.

"I have good reason to know that Oscar Wilde was satisfied with the way two of the warders treated him."

"After his release he sent us thru the governor copies of his soul-stirring poem, 'The Ballad of Reading Jail.' 'My copy is inscribed 'From his friend, the author, Naples, February, 1898.'"

"You remember the masterly way in which Wilde worked out the theme of that wonderful poem which told of the last days in prison of Trooper C. T. Woolridge, of the Royal Horse Guards, who was hanged for the murder of his wife at Clewer, near Windsor."

A Terrible Moment.

"Wilde, of course, never saw the murderer after his condemnation, but he heard the bell tolling for the execution, and it made a terrible impression on his mind."

"He wrote:

The memory of dreadful things Rushed like a dreadful wind, And horror stalked before each man, And terror crept behind. The warders with their shoes of felt Crept by each padlocked door, And peeped and saw with eyes of awe Grey figures on the floor. And wondered why men knelt to pray Who never prayed before."

"Wilde told me that those moments when the bell rang out, and his imagination conjured up the execution scene, were the most awful of a time rich in horrors."

"I always found Wilde extremely good-natured, and he wrote several little things out for me."

"I had recently been married, and a certain weekly paper offered a silver tea service to the young couple who could give the best reason why this service should be given to them."

"I told Wilde of this, and he wrote

out several witty 'reasons,' which I have kept."

"Here are some, very apt, that should have secured the tea service:

1. Because evidently spoons are required, and my girl and I are two.

2. Because it would suit us to a T (tea).

3. Because we have good 'grounds' for wanting a coffee pot.

4. Because marriage is a game that should begin with a love set.

5. Because one cannot get legally married without a proper wedding service."

Witty Wilde.

"These are witty, are they not, and he also wrote out a little essay suggesting the name of a baby boy that would be suitable for Diamond Jubilee Year."

"Oscar Wilde wrote this out in his own hand, and gave it to me."

"It was written in ten minutes, and began: 'Every baby born in the course of this great and historic year should have a name representative in some way of what this year signifies to the British Empire. That is clear. The only question is what it is to be.'"

"St. George would be a capital name—it is a real Christian name, and is borne by St. George Mivart, a well-known writer—the only objection to it is that it refers too specially to England, and leaves out St. Patrick, St. Andrew and St. David."

"Victor, the masculine equivalent of Victoria, would be good, but not the best possible."

"People are sometimes christened Tertius and Decimus, as being the third and tenth sons. Why not call the boy Sexagesimus?"

"Thus the sixtieth year of Her Majesty's reign would be commemorated. Still that is an awkward name, and would not make the youthful owner popular at school."

Fearful of Fric.

"Well, we call girls Ruby, Pearl and other names of precious jewels, and the Irish call their babies 'My Jewel' and the French 'Tres bijoux.' Walter Pater, whose prose we all admire for its noble qualities, called one of his characters 'Emerald.' Jacinth, which is a precious stone, is also a Christian name—the same as Hyacinth and Amethyst."

"Garnet is a Christian name, and the name of a jewel. Lord Wolseley was Sir Garnet Wolseley."

"There is also a name 'Royal.' It is a very good name, but not sufficiently distinguishing."

"Diamond must be made a popular name, so I hope," concluded Mr. Wilde, "to hear it has been given to our baby boy."

"As a warder, I take off my hat to the memory of the author, who, by his sad and premature death, has now silenced forever all who have criticized his conduct and rejoiced at his fall."

RECORDS THAT LONDON HOLDS.

Queer Statistics About the World's Biggest City.

Heavy rainbursts mean a tremendous loss to London. For instance, the damage done in a twenty minutes' tempest to ladies' dresses alone has been assessed by experts at £12,000.

In the case of men's attire, the damage caused by tempests has been assessed at five figures. The amount of damage done to men's hats by the mud of London is also an extremely heavy item.

The loss from injury done by London's smoke to paint, decorations, hangings, carpets and clothes has been estimated by Sir Charles Cookson, taking all these items into consideration, in addition to the cost of extra washing and cleaning, he states that the sum amounts annually to £4,000,000.

Again, the amount of money spent on soap due to the hard condition of the London water is also an immense one. Soap makers have reason to be thankful that London does not use soft, moorland water.

Then, take the quantity of water used for extinguishing fires in the County of London. According to an official return issued by the London Fire Brigade it amounts to some 27,000,000 gallons a year. This gigantic quantity of water weighs somewhere about 120,536 tons.

The actual amount of damage done by fire in London is incalculable. In a statement issued by the officials of the London Fire Brigade, it was stated that in the year 3574 fires occurred in London.

London suffers tremendously from the roads always being "up." For instance, take the case of the disturbance to traffic caused by a single private company, the Gas Light and Coke Company. In evidence before the traffic commission, it was stated that in one year the company pulled up the streets in 21,573 places.

London, and especially one part of London, suffers very greatly from the depredations of rats. The sanitary authorities in the Port of London are continually waging war against rats. These rats are destroyed, and their bodies burnt in ships' furnaces at the London docks. During a recent period of six months' alone the rodents' death roll reached no less a total than 238,531.

Dr. Robert Jones, the resident physician and superintendent to the London County Asylum at Claybury, has made the statement that London is responsible for the production of over seventy insane persons per week.

It seems that the insanity is due, not so much to overwork as to worry and anxiety. Alcohol is the cause of at least a fifth of all insanity occurring in the miles of London and more than half the proportion in women.

The leading family in London is the Smith family. If the number of men

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bearing familiar names were counted in the new issue of the London directory, it would be seen that the Smiths head the poll with a very large majority, as they are responsible for about 1500 entries. Next comes the Jones family with 990, followed by the Browns with 700 and the Robinsons with only half that number.

The City of London itself is only of small area, the total being 638 acres. This area contains 4 1/2 miles of streets, and has a rateable value of practically £5,000,000. This is one-eighth of the rateable value of Greater London.

Every day 100,000 vehicles and 1,250,000 people go into the city, but at night the tide ebbs back and leaves only a paltry village population of 25,000. The population during the day is estimated at 360,000.

In a single day 248,000 people use the crossing in front of the Mansion House, without counting 60,000 people who pass thru the subway beneath the street.

Every working day before breakfast ten more than 37 workmen's trains, 398 cheap trains and 365 ordinary trains run into Central London. In fact, more than 500,000 people arrive in Central London by that hour.

There is one house in London which takes in over £2,000,000 sterling every week. This is Somerset House, and the inland revenue department may well be called the gold field of the Strand. However, the burgling profession avoid Somerset House: altho the clerks of the Bank of England call once every twenty-four hours they invariably do so in broad daylight and take away the money in four-wheelers.

In addition to this precaution, Somerset House has its own staff of police. The staff consists of old police pensioners and army and navy men. At night the private police patrol with lanterns. Then, London has the biggest flagstaff in the world. The flagstaff upon which the Union Jack floats above the houses of parliament is the highest on any tower in the world. In order to get to it, one has to ascend the long semi-circular stairway in existence. Again, the great archway guarding the entrance to the house of parliament is the third highest in the world. The carpet in the Royal Gallery is the largest ever woven.

"For What is Your Life?"

A watching in vain for the reap of A harvest that never was sown; A waiting in wistful patience By a nest where the brood has flown. A dining dry wells in the desert. Where never a drop is shed; A bringing of gifts to the altar. Whose ashes are grey and dead.

The treasures we cloiest cherish Time touches, and lo! they are dust. We weave, and the moth doth consume it; We forge, and the iron is rust. The hopes we let loose in the morning, Like palpitant doves from our hands, Are frozen ere night on lone mountains, Or perish 'mid waterless sands.

Poor fools of beguiling delusions, What boots it to struggle or weep? Fore-fated to find what we wish not, And lose what we long to keep? The bread that we cast on the water For succor of after needs, Lies rotting on festering beaches With sedges, and wracks, and weeds.

O sorrowful ceaseless endeavor, What profits the life that we spend? We break, and at last are broken; We fail, and our potter can mend. We come, but the way of our coming Is a trail that is hid from the sight; We go, and the way of our going Is a passage of blind in the night.

T. J. Hebblewhite.

A Searcher for Knowledge.

The rector was working in his garden and had commenced operations with a hammer on the wall, when a tradesman's boy stopped to look on.

Rector to boy: "Well, my lad, so you want to learn how to train a grapevine."

Boy: "No I don't; I want to know what a parson says when he smashes his thumb."



Show Girl" Co. at the Grand this Week.