

THE IDLE MOMENT

The merchant was sitting at his desk when the door opened, and a seedy-looking individual sidled up to him.

May I ask your attention for a moment? I have here a new letter-fle, my own patent."

"Don't want it!"

"Allow me to—"

"Go away!"

"It's a most—"

"I say I don't want it. Clear out! I'm busy."

"Let me show you this new kind of fountain-pen I've invented."

"A what?"

"Fountain pen."

"Well, I don't want one myself, but there's Mr. Black at No. 6 across the road, he's highly interested in them. Try him."

The inventor departed with profuse thanks. Five minutes later he reappeared, holding a blood-stained handkerchief to his nose.

"That brute you sent me to has nearly killed me. He must be mad."

"Yes, he's got a fearful temper, hasn't he? But I can quite understand his being mad. You see, he bought a fountain-pen yesterday, and this morning the top suddenly came off, and smothered his new grey suit with ink. Good-morning! Shut the door as you go out."

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A commercial was recently advised by a brother ambassador of commerce to call on a certain tradesman with whom he no account. He took the hint, called on the man, and was received most genially.

"May I show you my samples?" inquired the commercial.

The tradesman had no objection, and from an insignificant-looking bag the traveler produced quite a surprising quantity of specimen goods.

"Well," said the affable shopkeeper, when the bag was at last emptied, "there's only one thing I want to-day."

Out came the order-book.

"Thank you, Mr. —," remarked the commercial, delighted at opening a new account; "and what is that?"

"Why," was the reply, "I want to see how you're going to get all those samples into that little bag again!"

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Employer: "Mr. Slack, would you like to have an increase in salary?"

Employee: "Would I? I should say I would."

Employer: "Well, let me tell you, then, that unless you get here earlier and work a great deal harder, you'll never get it in this world."

"Speaking of accommodating hotel clerks," remarked a traveler, "the best I ever saw was in a certain town. I reached the hotel late in the evening. Just before I retired I heard a scampering under the bed, and saw a couple of large rats just escaping. I complained at the office. The clerk was as serene as a summer breeze."

"I'll fix that all right, sir," he said. "James! Take up a cat to Room 23 at once."

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Five young men went into a shop the other day to buy a hat each.

Seeing they were in a joking mood, the shopman said, "Are you married?"

They said, "Yes."

"Then I'll give a hat to the one who can truthfully say he has not kissed any other woman but his own wife since he was married."

"Hand-over-a-hat," said one of the party. "I've won it."

"When were you married?"

"Yesterday," was the reply, and the hat was handed over.

One of the others was laughing heartily whilst telling his wife the joke, but suddenly pulled up when she said:—

"I say, John, how was it you didn't bring one?"

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