



ANTICIPATION.

Editing a Funny Column.

In an unguarded moment I applied for a position on a rural paper to open a column of wit, fun and frolic. The editor wrote me a long letter on the subject of wit, and gave me his candid opinion of the aforesaid peculiar bird of the varied hue. He said that his readers were staid, homely, plain people, who always looked into the death and marriage items first. He also said that he had produced several funny items that had gone the rounds of the press until they were baldheaded, toothless, and wrinkled. At the close, he offered me the column, and added the dry fact that I'd have a hard row to hoe if I hoped to get up a seven story reputation for bubbling mirth in his paper. I was eager; I was champing the bit of wit, and longed to open the safety valve and submerge the entire press fraternity with the stupendous quality of my humor. The first week I gave the editor of the paper one entire column of fat, fresh, and frisky fun. I read the mirthoozing items over to my wife and she cried with joy. I gave my mother-in-law a whack at the funny business, and she knocked over the centre-table and kicked the coal-scuttle galley west in her contortions of laughter. I knew I was cut out for a Bob Burdette or a Bill Nye. I got a lovely letter full of taffy from the editor after my initial column had been issued. He said that it took two fanners from the cheese-market to hold the compositor up to the case while he was setting up my matter. He also added that his wife's sister, who read proof, had gone and given her flame the chilly go by, trusting to the fates that the writer of the immense brain-matter was single and pinning for female condolence. I was puffed up to the seventh story of conceit. I know I had struck my forte at last. I was cut out, basted, and dried for a funny man of the great press. I rushed to my den and began another series of button-burating, side-splitting mirth. I nibbled



MORTIFICATION.

the penholder; I looked into the inkbottle; I pulled down the curtain and lighted the lamp; I paced to and fro across the floor and—finally I got a pun. I dallied with that pun as a school-boy toys with a green apple. I rolled that pun under my tongue like the sweet morsel we read of. I tossed it to and fro in the confines of my mind. It was the best pun of my life, I thought. I used up my column with that pun. It was the windiest pun you ever saw and long drawn out. The editor sent my offering back with a printed slip cut from a famous, leading funny publication. It was my pun; but got up far better than my funny brain could hope to essay. It was a grounder, and it floored me. I cremated that pun. I sat down again and curry-combed Pegasus. I put in an occasional slip from a funny sheet, and added the usual witty response. When I got through with my work, my manuscript looked like a map of the Franco-China seat of war. The editor sent it back with regrets. He offered me the agricultural department. I took it. I've learned that I know a sight more about cows, plows, patent-reapers, and farm truck than I do about fun.

Briggs's Baby.

Briggs has a boy-baby, about ten months old, who is admitted to look just like his father and to be the smartest boy baby of his age. The other morning the child was sitting on the floor, playing with five or six buttons on a string and taking an occasional nibble at an apple to bring out his first teeth. Mrs. Briggs and a neighbor were talking away as only women can gossip, when the baby hid the buttons under a mat, and started to finish the apple. A bit of skin got in his throat, and he gave a cough and whoop and rolled over on his head. "Oh, them buttons! He has swallowed them buttons!" cried the mother, as she lifted him up and shook him.



REALIZATION.

"Hit him on the back!" yelled the other woman trying to hold the baby's legs still. "Run for the neighbors!" cried Mrs. Briggs.

"Oh, he'll die! he'll die!" screamed the other, as she ran out.

And the neighbors came in and made him lie on his back, and rubbed his stomach, and joggled him about all sorts of ways, and he howled. Then the boy ran for Briggs, and Briggs ran for the doctor, and the doctor came and choked the baby, and ordered sweet oil and a mustard plaster, and told them to hold him on his back. Everybody knew that those six buttons were lodged in the baby's throat because he was red in the face and because he strangled as he howled and wept. They poured down sweet oil and put a mustard plaster across him, and wept over him, and his mother said she could never forgive herself.

The doctor was looking serious, and Briggs was thinking that he hadn't done anything to deserve such a blow, when one of the women pushed the mat and discovered the buttons. Then everybody laughed and danced, and they kicked the sweet oil bottle under the bed, threw the mustard plaster at the doctor, and Mrs. Briggs hugged the howling baby and called him her "woppy loppy poppy little cherub."

He: Birdie, aren't you growing tired of me?  
She: No, Algernon, no! Did you think I was!  
He: No, no; I see it was a false hope.

Blaine, of Maine, does not like to be cartooned. Neither does Mahone, the Readjuster, of Virginia; but with the cartoonists objections are not in order. The caricature exerts a powerful influence in American politics, much more so than the labored editorial. Had cartooning been so much in vogue during Washington's administration that noble gentleman would no doubt have gone crazy, for he was actually sensitive to ridicule.

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