

The Boarding House Chose!

It was a queer, old-fashioned house, and Miss Tate, the landlady, was a queer, old-fashioned little woman. They were both out of date and out of place, but respectable, at least I thought so when I moved in. It was one of those ugly two-story brick houses, with high gables and no stoop, that were considered pretty fine "residences" 25 or 30 years ago, when brown stone was hard to get and pine slabs, the drift of traffic and the growth of the city had now left this old mansion alone in a wilderness of factories, railroad tracks and vacant lots. Its little patch of garden ground was always black, even in summer, when a few weeds sprang up and turned the stunted foliage toward the smoky sky—the soot, the mold and the dust discolored and stifled them.

But in spite of the forbidding aspect of her house, Miss Tate was a very exacting and even haughty landlady. For instance, she quickly informed me that her boarders could have no keys, that the house was locked up every night at 9.30, and that she "made it a point" to shut off the gas from the whole house at 10. She seemed a bit surprised when I accepted all these conditions, explaining that I rose early, worked at the chemical factory across the road till 6 in the evening and was always glad to get to bed by 9.30, and that I knew the place would be quiet during the night. And so I was installed in the second-story back room.

At dinner that day I got my first impression of the internal economy of the place. There were two other boarders, both old women, both deaf and both garrulous as possible. They talked to one another at the same time, their eyes on their victuals, both equally oblivious to the fact that the other was talking and brought me to my senses. I noticed that Miss Tate, who served the table or sat at its head, paid no attention to the old women, and I followed her example. The meal was good enough, and I was very tired, so I retired to my room directly afterward and read till dark. Then I fastened my door and, without lighting the gas, retired.

But I couldn't sleep. Whether it was the strange surroundings, the throb of all-night machinery in the neighborhood, or some nervous disturbance within myself, I cannot tell, but I must have tossed sleepless until nearly midnight before I became aware of heavy breathing and the soft footfalls of some one in my room, very near—so near that I involuntarily stretched out my hand half expecting to strike some body sitting on my bedside, or standing near it, or striding past. But I was mistaken. I got up and the footsteps ceased. I struck a match and looked around. The room was quite empty, the four bare walls staring at me quite blankly, undisturbed and could hear very distinctly the regular and unmistakable breathing of some living thing—a man, I thought. But as I listened the match burned out, the tread of bare feet began, and the two sounds diminished gradually as if the cause had moved away.

I went to bed again and waited till sleep surprised me, but some time toward morning I awoke to hear a distinct and not unpleasant laugh just at my ear. This time it was certain that I heard a man's laughter, but when I asked how he came there I could not fathom. I slept no more, but as the gray daylight slanted gradually across my dismal room I examined it more carefully. The door was locked, everything within remained undisturbed, without, without, without, as a grave. That morning at breakfast I fancied that Miss Tate looked at me rather curiously, as if she wondered if I had seen anything, heard anything. I contrived to ask her if the two Misses Gilroy and I were the only boarders, and she bridled at once with:

"Why do you ask?"

I was about to say that if she had space I would like to change my room, but she anticipated my thoughts by quickly adding: "I have no more boarders. I have no more rooms, sir."

I knew that she slept in the basement, and that there were but three rooms on the first floor. The two Gilroy women had the second-story front and I had the back on that floor. There was the garret, or attic, but it had no air and no light, and of access except a square trap door just over the landing at the head of the staircase, which led from the front hall to the second floor. Nobody could "room" up there, because there wasn't even a fire-escape outside to give entrance and exit. When I left the house that morning I made a hasty survey of the outside, and might have gone around the narrow side area if I had not seen Miss Tate at the half-closed shutter watching me.

That day I tried to convince myself that my nerves were out of order, but when bedtime came the second night I couldn't help a feeling of rather "creepy" curiosity. About 11 o'clock I heard a creaking noise, the deliberate patter of bare feet, and presently the same calm, strong breathing I had heard before. The sound seemed to pass quite around my bed. I got out and it seemed to be near my north wall. I stepped toward the door and, listening breathlessly, I could hear the murmured breathing just outside. Then it diminished and finally ceased. I did a rather nervous thing just then. I softly unfastened my door and, closing it behind me, stood motionless in the pitch dark. A pale suggestion of light coming in at the hall door downstairs, and presently out of that silent, goomy abyss I heard the footsteps coming back—up the stairs one by one, till I could hear the breathing again, and I saw a darker shadow loom out of the

darkness, gliding up toward the "landing," with easy certainty. I could have laid my hands upon him, or "it," but instead I struck a match—saw nothing at all.

For several nights after that I neither saw nor heard anything unusual, but one morning about a week later I was aware that something had disturbed the order of my room during the night. A bottle of whisky that I had provided for my nerves and hadn't used (honest) was gone. I did not go to work that day, but from a convenient corner of an adjacent lot made some very accurate calculations that convinced me that my room inside was not as wide, allowing for eight-inch walls, as Miss Tate's house would justify.

I went back to my room, telling my landlady that I was ill, but instead of going to bed I bored a small hole above my room and by thrusting in a small walking stick discovered that a thin board partition separated my bed from the brick wall. I left the cane in the hole, passed most of the day reading, and went to bed and to sleep betimes.

The racket that woke me two dead ladies. It seemed as if the house was falling down. Miss Tate came running up out of the basement, and I found her in the landing near of my room. She was there on the floor—the ghost. Miss Tate called him "Poor Peter," but she told me after we had put him to bed in the attic that he was her husband, quite insane with a hallucination that he was the elder Hamlet, "doomed for a certain time to walk the night." She wanted to keep the secret, poor thing, and had put in that private staircase, with a "blind door," so that Peter could have the run of the house during the ghostly hours. He had fallen over my cane, smashed through into the upper hallway and—made me a star boarder for life.

For when he came to that morning he was just as sane as any man. He's time-keeper at the chemical works right now.

GREATEST OF FUR MARKETS.

It is at Leipzig—Felts Sent There From All Over the Globe.

The great fur market of the world is at Leipzig, Germany. Nearly the whole fur trade of the world centres there in one way or another. Even the big market of London is really only a feeder for Leipzig, for more than one-half of the furs bought in London are sent on to the German city, where they are again sold to the merchants, who offer them to the consumers.

Furs reach Leipzig from all the strange parts of the world, some of which are hardly known to white men except by name. The Alaskan Indians, the Esquimaux, Canadian half-breed trappers, Siberian hunters and Australian bush dwellers all work indirectly for the German merchants. Their catches may go through many hands, but they finally reach Leipzig. The primitive hunters of China, who kill their small fur-bearing game with pointed bamboo and catch it in pitfalls, as they did centuries ago, Tartars and Arabians, Abyssinians and Zulus, all are working for this city.

The greatest quantity of furs comes from Bokhara in Turkestan, which produces almost one million of the beautiful astrakhan skins every year. These skins are shipped in a raw state by caravan and over mountains and deserts, through lands where Darius and Alexander fought across the Caspian Sea to Russia. There a railroad takes them to the city of Nijni Novgorod, where most of the skins are dressed and finished. Then they go to Leipzig to be sold.

Russia and Siberia send almost all the sable skins that are taken in their immense hunting grounds to Leipzig. Two million of squirrel skins are shipped to it each year from Russia alone. Thirty thousand foxes and one million lambs are killed annually to supply the demand of the Leipzig fur traders.

THE KING'S SUPERSTITION.

The King is not quite without his share of superstition. Like the rest of the royal family, he has a rooted objection to sitting down thirteen to table, and at the last court supper that aversion came prominently to the front, as by the merest chance one of the household was missing, so the party which fourteen would have numbered fourteen, was found to be one short. This was immediately detected by the King, who absolutely refused to allow anyone to sit down to table till the fourteenth was round. High and low search was made, and for close on half an hour His Majesty, thoroughly weary and overcome as he was, waited until the orthodox number was made up.

"I really shall have to leave this hotel," said the weary man to the proprietor. "There is a baby in the next room to mine, and he cries all night." "I don't see why you should complain," said the proprietor. "His father and mother have him in the same room with them, and they haven't said a word."

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UNIQUE FAMILY GATHERING.

A Gentleman Gave \$150,000 Away at One Sitting.

The newspapers have lately been recording that a certain Yorkshire gentleman and his wife sat down to table with something like a hundred direct descendants, but in that same county, about fifteen years ago, took place a family gathering that surely is almost unique—a gathering whereat the host, as a surprise, gave away \$150,000 in hard cash among his relations.

A Mr. Benjamin Hammond, a handsome and venerable-looking old gentleman, and one full of fire and fun, had made a huge fortune in the wholesale cattle trade. He was childless, but at Bradford had a large number of nephews, nieces, and cousins, some of whom were very rich, whilst many of them were comparatively poor. Mr. Hammond thought he would see which of about thirty of them made good use of any money they might receive of the lifetime, so he in the first instance called on each of them and gave them \$2,500 each.

So well satisfied was he with the result of his experiment that on his birthday a year or so afterwards he again invited the whole thirty, not saying a word, save to his solicitor, that he was the only person to a relation hidden to the feast. When the dinner cloth had been removed and the wine had begun to circulate the old gentleman announced that to each of the relations present the sum of \$5,000 could be at once handed as a free gift.

Never can one who marked the faces of those present forget the marvellous studies in expression that this announcement produced. Mr. Hammond lived for some few years, and it is said that he afterwards wished that he had given even more in his lifetime than he did, such good use generally was made of his gifts.

DIDN'T LOSE MUCH.

At one of the annual fairs which are held at a small town in Russia a Polak, gleaning over the sale of a horse. Paul of course, who was how two such shrewd characters had bargained, the gentleman called the gipsy to him and inquired how much he had got for his animal. The gipsy opened his hand and showed a ten-rouble note (value about five dollars).

"But isn't that very cheap?" "No," said the gipsy, "he is dead lame."

The gentleman then sought out the Pole, and said:

"So you have given ten roubles for a lame horse?" "The Pole, however, with a knowing look, said:

"Lame! He's as sound as you are. I saw he was badly shod, and only limped in consequence." "So you have returned to the gipsy and reported what the other said. The former gave a tremendous and almost significant wink, and whispered:

"He's as lame as a two-legged stool. I had him badly shod on purpose to make people believe that he was the owner of his limping."

When this was communicated to the Pole he seemed for the moment taken aback, and hung his head; then, with a little sigh and a shrug of his shoulders, he said, quietly:

"Ah, well, it's all right; it was a bad ten-rouble note!"

QUEER THINGS.

Billy: "Men go to hunt the North Pole."

Joe: "Well?"

Billy: "But they can't cut any ice until they get back home."

WHY HE DIDN'T.

"Do you believe in secret societies?"

"No. My wife belongs to one, and I have to keep all the secrets."

"SUBSTITUTES" FOR COAL.

In view of the present level of the retail prices of coal, it has been suggested that bath-brick soaked in oil daily, cinders treated similarly, bones, coconut shell, and dried orange peel should be used as substitutes. It is also said that old newspapers fastened with wire into small, compressed bundles burn as slowly as coal.

INEXHAUSTIBLE DIVERSION.

Man ranges, lest his life grow tame, Through sports of every clime. But Cupid plays just one old game, And wins it every time.

Germany has 90,000 more women than men.

A gaily-dressed young lady asked her Sunday school class, "What is meant by the pomp and vanities of the world?" The answer was honest, but rather unexpected, "Them flowers in your hat."

He was watching his neighbor's troublesome boy climb a tree, and he had a look of painful anxiety on his countenance. "Are you afraid the lad will fall?" he was asked. "No," he replied; "I'm afraid he won't."

WAS DRIVEN HOME BY FEAR.

MAN LEAVES FAR NORTH TO ESCAPE ARCTIC LUNACY.

Felt Disease Coming on—Had Developed Symptoms and Was Afraid.

Out of the far North Edwin Barclay McCowan hastened toward civilization, impelled by the fear of insanity. Three years spent in Siberian wastes, in Alaskan wilds and among the denizens of desolate mining camps brought to his mind a realization of his own danger. He felt from what he terms "arctic lunacy." This strange affliction, which lurks in lone places, bred by change of climate and the excess of light and darkness of the northern regions, and has begun to seize in its grip numerous of those seekers after wealth who were attracted to the frozen North by the magnetic stories of golden treasure in the Klondike and at Nome.

McCowan, lawyer, miner, trader and explorer, recently reached his old home in Lancaster, Ohio. He explained that he "felt it coming" and hurried back to civilization to avoid it. He has been driven by the fate of others who had tarried too long, and believes he left just in time.

SYMPTOMS OF DISEASE.

The symptoms are different to those of most all other forms of mental trouble. First, the one afflicted will contract the habit of talking to himself. He will do this unconsciously. Then he will do this within a few days, perhaps a few hours, he will become immediately rich. No argument, no array of facts, no condition, however discouraging, in which he finds himself, will alter this conviction. His physical condition may remain unimpaired, but his mind will continue to burn with feverish hopes, and his loquacity will increase until he wanders off and is frozen to death or is sent back to an asylum in "the states."

McCowan has been travelling for recreation and trading with the Eskimos and Choukaws. He is interested in some mines, but avers he does not yet believe he is suddenly to become rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Friends told him, after his several months in the Yukon Valley, that he had begun talking to himself. That was enough. He went at once to Nome and boarded the first steamer for Seattle. He will return to the north, but not until he has lived in populous communities a sufficient length of time to overcome the effects of his Arctic experiences.

DEPOSITS WORKED OUT.

As the gold deposits become exhausted and the chances of making money in any way are lessened the situation in the mining regions grows worse. McCowan says there is at least \$2,000,000 worth of ruined machinery along the abandoned beach at Cape Nome, the grave of many a hope. Anvil Creek and Snow Gulch are also worked out, and while the district will produce some gold for several years it is these localities that gave Nome its reputation.

Now, according to McCowan, a danger threatens the people of this country. Desperate purchasers of nonpaying claims there and in the Klondike have started to organize a company with high-sounding titles for the purpose of fleecing investors. From what he learned there and in San Francisco and Seattle he is assured that corporations with a total capitalization of \$100,000,000 will be organized this winter and their worthless stock peddled in all parts of the United States and Canada. Solicitors are to receive half the amount they get from buyers.

VICTIMS OF GOLD STOCK.

The business of the legitimate companies is mining, not selling stock," said McCowan. "Most of the paying mines are worked by their owners, and the sale of stock to the people seem to understand this. Servant girls, janitors and others who receive small wages and are not well informed will be selected as victims by these fraudulent promoters. Nuggets will be placed on exhibition in store windows to advertise these mines and entice people into investing."

The Klondike gold fields are the wonder of the time and immense fortunes were made, but the day of big finds is over. The area of gold deposits was limited. The trade on the Yukon was less this year than at any time since the first Klondike rush. Even the Rothschilds have lost money in those regions. They were interested in a syndicate that was to go after gold on a larger scale than ever attempted before. But when their prospectors started to locate the deposits they found not enough to justify the expenditures that had already been made."

In the Arctic region McCowan met Dr. Wiegand, the explorer. He says that in Northwestern Alaska is the healthiest place he was ever in, and that he intends returning there within a year.

A SMILE IN COURT.

At a recent trial one of the witnesses was a green countryman, unused to the ways of the law, but quick, as it proved, to understand its principles. After a severe cross-examination the counsel for the prosecution paused, and then, putting on a look of severity, exclaimed: "Mr. Wiggins, has not an effort been made to induce you to tell a different story?"

"A different story from what I told, sir?"

"That is what I mean."

"Yes, sir; several persons have tried to get me to tell a different story from what I have told, but they couldn't."

"Now, sir, upon your oath, I wish to know who those persons are."

"Well, I guess you've tried 'bout as hard as any of them."

THE MILLIONS OF INDIA.

CENSUS SHOWS INCREASE OF 7,136,925 IN DECADE.

Decrease in the Native States Was Due to Plague and Famine.

The total population of British India, according to a statistical abstract issued by the India Office recently is 294,360,356. This is an increase of 7,136,925 on the census of 1891. Unfortunately, the increase is only to be found in British territory, for in the native States there is a decline of 3,585,938. This is undoubtedly due to the plague and famine, says the London Chronicle. For instance, in Baroda the population last year was 941,058, whereas in 1891 it was 2,415,396. Equally startling are the figures in the Rajputana agency, namely, 4,619,055, as against 12,016,102, and in the Bombay States 6,908,648, against 8,059,298. Indeed, the difference per cent. in the native States between the two periods shows a decline of 5.43, the population of 1881 being 66,047,487, while in 1901 it is recorded as 62,461,549. In British territory the increase is 4.85 per cent. The largest towns are Calcutta, with a population of 1,026,987; Bombay, 776,006 (a decline of 45,758 on the register of 1891, due mainly to plague); and Madras, 509,346.

The religions of India also supply striking figures. There are 207,146,422 Hindus, 62,438,061 Mohammedans, 9,476,750 Buddhists, 2,923,241 Christians, and 18,228 Jews. Of the Christians 453,462 describe themselves as members of the Church of England, 221,040 as Baptists, 76,907 as Methodists, 53,331 as Presbyterians, 37,874 as Congregationalists, and 1,202,169 as Roman Catholics.

MILLIONS ILLITERATE.

There is no return for 1901 of those unable to read and write, but the figures for 1891, which are given, are interesting. No fewer than 118,000,000 males and 127,000,000 females ten years ago were unable to read a newspaper or write a letter, and it is hardly possible to imagine that these figures have been very materially reduced.

The expenditure last year on famine relief was \$4,125,230, an amount nearly double that spent in 1899-1900, when of course the suffering was not so great. In 1897-8, the period of the previous memorable outbreak, \$3,550,405 was spent in relief, a third of which sum was given away in gratuitous relief. Last year \$1,430,712 was granted as "gratuitous relief." The revenue provided by the "famine grant" established in 1877-8 now amounts to a total of \$25,000,000, and of this sum \$23,568,389 has been spent, leaving a balance of \$1,431,611.

The total number of letters and postcards posted in India last year was 469,209,482, an increase of 40,000,000 over those despatched in 1899-1900. In the Post-Office Savings Bank there was deposited at the end of the year a total of 29,000,474 rupees, an increase of 1,073,469 on the figures for the previous year. In 1892-3, 1893-4, 1895-6, and 1896-7 the sums deposited were considerably larger, but the last year's total was bigger than that recorded since 1897.

In the agricultural statistics of British India it is shown that 30,056,002 acres are now irrigated, whereas in 1891-2 the figures were 27,233,420. The area under food grains last year was 182,825,146 acres, which is nearly 10,000,000 acres more than in 1891-2. The total area cropped last year was 226,162,539 acres (the Punjab claiming 28,570,199), and the total area irrigated was 30,056,002 acres, of which the Punjab possessed 9,445,508 acres. This shows the extent to which irrigation has been carried in the northern province.

EXTENSION IN RAILWAYS.

Railways have been considerably extended during the past few years, the mileage in 1892 being 17,894, whereas last year the total was 25,373. In 1901 613 miles were added to those existing in 1900. The gross earnings under this head last year totalled \$22,433,666, while the working expenses amounted to \$10,505,501.

Tea to the value of \$5,768,524 was exported to the United Kingdom last year, the amount exported in 1899-1900 being \$5,327,452. The total amount exported was valued at \$6,367,287.

The British army in India last year numbered 3,317 officers and 72,926 non-commissioned officers and men. The native army there were 1,573 British officers, 2,761 native officers, and 137,937 native non-commissioned officers and men, and there were 30,046 efficient volunteers.

The number of persons killed in 1901 by tigers was 943, and those bitten by snakes was 22,391, but the latter figure cannot be relied upon, for the reason that relatives frequently poison an undesirable member of the family and register the death as due to "snake-bite." The number of wild beasts destroyed was 17,250, and the slayers received "rewards" amounting to 1,004,097 rupees. No fewer than 87,910 snakes were killed, the financial recognition totalling 3,218 rupees. In this case also, however, the rewards were found to give rise to a flourishing and profitable industry in snake rearing.

TYPE-SETTING MACHINES.

Twenty years ago there was not a commercially successful typesetting machine in the world. Even ten years ago these labor-saving machines were but just introduced. Today the Mergenthaler, the Scudder, the Lanston, the Goddard, the Dow and the Simples—all assemble the type by the touch of a finger upon a keyboard. Their speed is said to be limited only by the dexterity of the operator, and one man does the work of five or six by the old and laborious hand processes.

SOME CURIOUS COLLEGES.

SCHOOLS FOR EDUCATING BIRDS AND ANIMALS.

Teaching Monkeys by the "Letter Block" Method—Training the Zebra.

From an Indian journal we glean the singular information that a college for the education of monkeys has recently been opened in Calcutta, says London Tit-Bits. The founders, who are devoted disciples of Garner, share his belief that the monkey possesses human intelligence, in a latent form, which it is the function of the college to develop. The system of teaching is that known as the "letter-block" method. The alphabet is arranged on big block letters, all of which are vividly colored. By definite degrees the letters are so to be taught to place these letters so as to form simple words. As they succeed in doing so, they will be rewarded by gifts of nuts and other dainties. The promoters are sanguine of success.

The zebra has hitherto had a reputation for being absolutely untamable, but Baron Schlegeloff has undertaken the dubious and hazardous task of taming the animal, and has opened an institution for that purpose. That his scheme has met with success is proved by the fact that he has recently been advertising for sale recently broken zebras at from \$150 to \$250 each, while the broken beasts of the same species are offered at about half these prices. His methods of breaking-in, which are his own original ideas, he guards with care.

THE GREATEST JEALOUSY.

Two of the barons' zebras, splendidly broken in, may be seen occasionally drawing the brougham of a retired merchant in a Midland town. In a quiet little town near Berlin there is an institution specially devoted to the training of parrots. The proprietor is a German, and he buys his birds in their uncivilized state from a foreign dealer. Then he takes them thoroughly in hand, and teaches them to speak, not only in German but also in English and French. He has specially darkened rooms, where his feathered pupils are placed during the progress of their training. The grey African parrots are said to be the most apt scholars, and many of them, when their education is complete, sell for good prices.

On the outskirts of a town in South America there is an establishment for the training of wild animals. These animals are purchased from agents and placed under capable trainers who teach them to perform tricks. They are then sold to circus proprietors, who pay big prices for such attractive additions to their shows. In many cases the animals are accompanied by their original trainers, as they get accustomed to man who has mastered them, and are apt to resent the presence of strangers. This is especially the case with lions, tigers, and bears. An untrained lion or tiger may be worth from \$150 to \$250, but a thoroughly trained animal will realize a fortune.

DOUBLE THAT AMOUNT.

The Kingdom of Siam boasts of a school specially designed for the training of elephants. It having been the custom in that clime for many years to employ elephant labor for carrying heavy loads, these mammoth workers are instructed from their earliest years in the art of raising and conveying large logs of timber. Their sagacity and strength render them excellent servants, but those who know them best say they are subject to occasional fits of rebellion, during which it is perilous even for their own keepers to go near them.

It is not generally known that horses intended for service in the British Army are specially schooled and trained for their work. Early in their career they are purposely made acquainted with the rattle of musketry and the roar of artillery. At first they are very nervous and restive under the startling ordeal, but as time goes on they become accustomed to the sounds, and they are then considered ready for active service.

There is a man in Paris who gets his living by teaching birds and white mice to perform tricks. He sells his trained pets to itinerant organ-grinders, who find them paying attractions.

LOOKING FORWARD.

"Did I understand you to state your opinion that Cousin Peltiah Johnson was a 'trifle close,' Mr. Smith?"

"So I said," answered Mr. Smith. "Well, now, I have your idea of what a 'trifle' means. But this story will illustrate Peltiah's generosity."

He and his wife hadn't made their daughter Abigail any birthday present for a number of years, after she was married, and Mrs. Johnson couldn't stand it any longer. She begged Peltiah to get something, but the most she could prevail on him to buy was a white cup and saucer. Mrs. Johnson sent it over to Abigail's by Peltiah himself. He got home about ten o'clock, and his wife helped him off with his overcoat. There was something in one of his inside pockets that stuck out a little, and said she:

"What's this, Peltiah?"

"Peltiah chuckled a little, and said he:

"That's the sasser."

"The sasser?" Mrs. Johnson cried out. "You don't mean to say that you've bought that sasser of Abigail's back again?"

"That's what I've done," said he. "And what for?"

"Well, the cup's pretty good present for once, and I give 'em to understand that they'd get the sasser next year. And that'll give 'em, I see, something to look forward to during a whole twelve-month."

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