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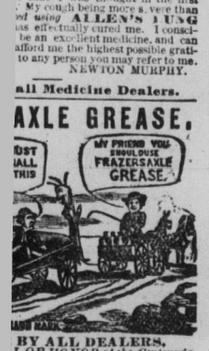

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The Fly.

As small as the dot of an i
Is the brain of a little fly,
And yet he can think;
Can eat and can drink;
He can hear and see
Like you or like me;
He can fly and walk.
Can buzz but not talk;
Can climb up a wall,
And that is not all.
As you lie in bed
Look up over head,
You'll see him stealing
Across the ceiling.
Were you to do that
You'd fall down flat.
So that little fly,
On the ceiling high,
With his tiny brain,
May rightly be vain
For surely 'tis true
He's smarter than you.

So strong is his will
That if you keep still
And would like to slee
He slowly will creep
On your cheek or ear,
And then I much fear,
His will is so strong,
It will not be long
Before you will snake
And he will awake.
His will then you see
The strongest will be.

And on I might go
And cause you to know
That this little fly
Has a brighter eye,
Is swifter to act,
More cunning in fact
With his brain so small
He yet beats us all.

—*F. A. Hassler, in Norristown Herald.*

IN A NUTSHELL.

Old Mark Somerset, hale and hearty, notwithstanding his seventy years, complained of a headache one morning; but notwithstanding Mollie Dore's entreaties that he should stay at home, he persisted in going to his office as usual.

For nearly fifty years he had gone to that office, rain or shine, every morning, and now he scorned to have his first absence caused by anything so trifling as a headache.

So he patted Mollie on the cheek, kissed her white brow, and stepped into his coupe, while the young girl stood by the window and looked wistfully and affectionately after him, till she could no longer see even the dust raised by the carriage wheels.

"There!" she exclaimed, turning away from the window, "I ought not to have watched him out of sight—they say it's unlucky."

And then, with a rather forced laugh at her own superstition, Mollie went away to her room.

She was very fond of the old man who had just left the house, and with good reason, too, for he had adopted her when she was left alone in the world, friendless and an orphan; and from that hour she had never known the want of parents.

He loved her as though he had been father and mother, too, feeling himself in place of both; and Mollie rewarded him with the dutiful and tender affection of a daughter.

Just as the various city clocks marked the hour of noon, old Mr. Somerset was brought home, dead—the headache had been a premonitory system, which, being disregarded, nature had revenged herself by striking the old man with apoplexy.

His head fell forward on his desk, and he never raised it again.

Poor Mollie was stricken to the heart, and mourned as one who refused to be comforted.

The poor girl, young and inexperienced, scarcely knew what to do, but with such presence of mind as she could summon to her aid, gave directions that Mr. Somerset's relatives should be telegraphed for; and in the meantime an old business friend of the deceased merchant undertook to superintend arrangements for the funeral.

All that Mollie said was respectfully attended to by the servants, for she was regarded as the future mistress of the establishment.

Mr. Somerset had spoken of her as his daughter, and if she had not been left sole heiress, there were, at least, good grounds for supposing that she had been munificently provided for.

The relatives of Mr. Somerset arrived on the next day.

They were three persons—the cousin, and only living blood relation of the dead man, and his wife and family.

They took up their abode in the rich man's vacant home, the head of the family evidently feeling himself in his right and lawful place, and his wife no way behind him in asserting her claims.

They looked with much disfavor on Mollie Dore, but were somewhat at a loss how to treat her, and at times were civil, at other times chilling, almost to iceness, till, on the day after the funeral, their minds were made up to a steady course of the latter treatment.

The funeral and all its melancholy accompaniments being over, it became necessary to read the will—but none was forthcoming.

The house was searched, almost from attic to cellar—every possible place in which such a document could have been secreted was ransacked, but in vain!

Mr. Somerset's customary legal adviser being applied to declared that he had never drawn a will for his client, although he would not venture to say that none had been made, because, on having broached the subject more than once, out of respect and admiration for Miss Dore, Mr. Somerset had always assured him that his adopted daughter had been provided for.

"Miss Dore is thoroughly attended to—I have looked after Miss Dore's interest," Mr. Somerset had said, frequently—always adding with a chuckle of immense satisfaction, "It lies in a nutshell, my dear fellow—the whole thing lies in a nutshell."

But the will—if any existed—could not be found; and the precise meaning of the phrase which seemed to afford Mr. Somerset so much satisfaction remained a profound mystery.

As the natural heirs of the deceased, Mr. Harwood, with his wife and family, took possession of the dead man's magnificent establishment and great wealth, the necessary legal preliminaries having been, meantime, properly attended to; and then poor Mollie Dore began to realize that her lines had fallen in very unpleasant places.

But for "the speech of people," as Mrs. Harwood expressed it, they would have turned the poor girl into the street to starve, for what they cared; but as it was they permitted her a small, miserably furnished upstair room in the mansion where she had for years reigned as mistress, while she was obliged to occupy the position of governess to the younger children to pay for her food and lodging.

Indeed in any other house her duties would have been lighter, and she would have had a salary for her services besides, for she was brilliantly educated and accomplished.

Mollie was aware of this, and she more than once thought that she would apply to some of Mr. Somerset's friends to interest themselves in her behalf; but she was too timid and retiring by nature, and dreaded to go among strangers and away from the roof that had from childhood been her home.

There was another reason, too, why—like Hamlet—she preferred the ills she had to flying to others that she knew not of; one of the Harwood family had never treated her with harshness or even coldness; on the contrary he had striven by every delicate and manly attention to atone for the cruel neglect and indignity which the poor girl was compelled to suffer from the rest of the family.

Edward Harwood had admired the sweet face and gentle eyes of Mollie Dore from the first; and as he observed from day to day the calm dignity of her manner and the beauty of her unselfish, uncomplaining character, he soon grew to love her even as much as he had admired her.

And Mollie was not blind to the fact; she loved him in return, as was natural; and notwithstanding the many eyes bent on them from morning till evening the two young people had contrived to make known and to mutually acknowledge the love which they felt for each other.

Then, as declared lovers are apt to do, they became a little reckless in the display of their attachment to each other; and one evening Mr. Harwood coming into the parlor found his son and his "governess," as he called Mollie, sitting hand in hand beside each other.

The gas was not yet lighted, and the tender twilight had betrayed them into that piece of imprudence.

Mr. Harwood could scarcely believe his eyes, and rubbed them pretty hard to be sure that he was not dreaming; and then he burst out in a fury:

"You young scoundrel, what is the meaning of this? And as for you, miss, what kind of conduct is this for a respectable house, and what kind of a young woman do you call yourself?"

Mollie instinctively raised her hands, and covered her ears to shut out the sound of some opprobrious words that she felt were about to follow; but Edward rose, and stepping in front of the girl he loved, confronted his father respectfully but firmly.

"Please be careful how you address this young lady, sir," he said in deep, quiet tones, "for she is my promised wife, and I can allow no man to insult her, even by a thought."

"Promised fiddlestick!" blurted out Mr. Harwood, with increasing fury. "Let me tell you, sir, this is my house, and I shall do and say what I please in it. Insult her, indeed! I guess a man's thoughts are free, and I'll think what I choose, and say it, too, if I want to! And what I do say is this, that if you mean to marry the designing minx there you may understand this—she can't pull the wool over my eyes as she did over that old fool Somerset, and you may both of you clear out of my house this night and forever, if you are such a fool as to stand by what you say and marry her."

"Very well, sir. I am just such a fool as that," Edward returned, with a touch of sarcasm. Then turning to Mollie, he added: "Go and put on your hat, darling, and come with me."

The girl looked at him wonderingly for a moment, then rose and left the room to obey. Edward sat down and waited for her, while Mr. Harwood alternately fumed and exploded with rage.

When he had ordered his son from his house he had not contemplated the possibility of the young man taking him at his word. And his promptness in doing so had placed the father on the horns of a dilemma. He could not retract his words and bid Edward stay; in fact, he determined he should starve rather than marry the girl he had chosen without his consent.

But Edward was his mother's darling, and Mrs. Harold ruled in the house of that name. What should he do? how withstand the anger of his wife? But then, as he speedily reflected, "Matilda would be as savage as himself at the their son marrying that penniless, impudent upstart." Happy thought. He would go at once and tell his wife, and take her advice on the subject. Meantime he did not greatly fear that Edward would leave the paternal mansion at least that evening; for the very good reason that he was quite dependent on his father and had no place to go.

But Mr. Harwood was mistaken. Edward quite intended to take his father at his word; and, worse still, to do so immediately.

As Mr. Harwood left by one door, Molly Dore entered by the other. The preparations were simple, and had taken but a few minutes to make.

All her fine dresses—in which her adopted father had so liked to see her—had been folded away in trunks when she put on mourning for him; and the few articles she had since acquired had been easily packed away in less than five minutes.

She left her trunks to be sent for, and of all her belongings she carried in her hand only a little jewel-case, containing many costly trinkets given to her by Mr. Somerset, and which—since they were undeniably her own property—Mrs. Harwood had not dared to take from her although she would have liked to do so.

Edward took charge of her jewel-case, and the lovers immediately left the house together. Although their affairs had been brought to a crisis with unexpected suddenness, they were not wholly unprepared, for Edward had already spoken to a clerical friend in view of just such an emergency.

So they walked directly to the Rev. Mr. Marnor's and were speedily made man and wife. From there they went to a hotel, and the deposit of Mollie's jewel-case with the proprietor was a sufficient guarantee, although they brought no baggage; but the young wife immediately sent for her trunks.

In opening her jewel-case, that the proprietor might take an inventory of its contents, before giving her a receipt for it, Edward's attention was attracted by a little article of carved wood, and he pointed it out to Mollie. She asked him to take possession of it, and then, when they were in their room, she answered his questions about it.

"I don't know what it is, dear," she said; "Mr. Somerset gave it to me a long time ago, and I locked it in my jewel-case, because he said it contained something very precious. He made me promise not to open it as long as he lived, and I never did; but I know how—he showed me this little silver knob to press on. Isn't it beautifully carved? It looks like the shell of some curious large nut."

"Like a nutshell?—and so it does," said Edward, his heart beating wildly, for he happened to be aware of the phrase used by Mr. Somerset when his lawyer had spoken to him about making a will.

"Open it, Mollie, dear; open it now!" he cried, eagerly. "I am dying to see the inside of it."

Mollie laughed and pressed the little silver spring, and the nutshell opened just in the middle.

A paper, very closely and neatly folded, was inclosed; and this paper Edward caught at with a degree of anxiety that caused Mollie to smile. But she, too, became interested and then a little anxious, when her husband cried out:

"It is the missing will—Mr. Somerset's will, that couldn't be found! Come, my darling, we will take it to the lawyer at once. Make no objections—of course I know it's after office hours, but I know where his house is," and he helped Mollie to tie on her hat, and put on her mantle.

The paper was, indeed, Mr. Somerset's will—drawn up by a strange lawyer, but properly witnessed, and correct in every particular; and by it Mollie Dore, now Edward Harwood's wife, was declared sole heiress to nearly a quarter of a million, to the fine house she had just been turned out of, and, in short, to everything which her adopted father had left.

Well, Mollie was a good and forgiving girl, and she did not exult over the downfall of her enemies; but Mr. and Mrs. Harwood felt that retribution had come, and spent the greater part o their future lives in mutually upbraiding each other for their treatment of Mollie and Edward.

Historic Doubts.

It has been strongly doubted whether Joan of Arc ever suffered the punishment that has made her a martyr, though details of her execution and last moments grace the civic records of Rouen. Several books have been published discussing the question. A Belgian lawyer is the author of one of these. He contends that the historians—who have done nothing but copy each other in the narratives of her death—err exceedingly in saying that it took place on the last day of May, 1473, the fact being that she was alive and well many years after that date. There are good grounds, too, for believing that the pretty tale of Abelard and Heloise is a pure fiction.

Nobody has yet unriddled the mystery of the Man in the Iron Mask, and nobody seems likely to do so, while the identity of the writer of the "Junius" letters is as far from being settled as ever. These are two insoluble enigmas, impenetrable mysteries that baffle solution, and about which, perhaps, the public has become tired of surmises.

An extremely witty and characteristic anecdote told of Lord Beaconsfield will bear repetition. An adherent from a distant county brought his two sons to the then Mr. Disraeli, and asked him to give them a word of advice on their introduction into life. "Never try to ascertain," said the illustrious statesman to the elder boy, "who was the man who wore the iron mask, or you will be thought a terrible bore. Nor do you," turning to the second, "ask who was the author of 'Junius,' or you will be thought a bigger bore than your brother."

Walpole wrote an ingenious work to show—taking for his base the conflicting statements in history and biography—that no such person as Richard III. ever existed, or that if he did he could have been neither a tyrant nor a hunchback. Historic doubts relative to Napoleon Bonaparte was published in London in 1810, and created widespread amusement because of its amazing cleverness. Napoleon, who was a captive at St. Helena, admired the composition greatly. Archbishop Whately and Sydney Smith were both reputed to be the author. Since the publication of that skit numerous imitations have been issued, but none have shown much originality or literary skill, and have therefor vanished into the darkness of merited oblivion.—*London Globe.*

A Strange Ceremony.

The strange ceremony of plowing around a village in order to drive away the cattle plague recently took place in one of the villages of Russia. The *Russky Courier* describes it thus: "The cattle plague broke out in the village of Ozersk, in the province of Kaluga. In a ew days thirteen cows died, and the peasants were panic stricken. After warm discussions, it was decided to drive out the plague after the manner of our forefathers in similar emergencies—that is, by ploughing around the village. At midnight, all the women of the village assembled at a spot, to which were brought the things needed for that half pagan, half Christian ceremony, to wit, a holy image, a plough, harness, a bag of sand, and a pail of tar. A strong young woman was harnessed to the plough, and, with the assistance of two other girls, proceeded to pull it along. A young girl carrying the holy image (*ikona*) headed the procession; she was followed by an old woman with the sand bag, who threw the sand right and left, the ploughing party trying to cover the sand in ploughing, while the woman with the tar pail besprinkled the soil with tar. A crowd of girls and women followed, each carrying some article with which to make a noise, scythes, tin cans, iron pans, boilers, basins, pokers, and other utensils. Though the noise made was indescribable, and the women's yelling and shouting incessant, they were ineffectual to frighten off the plague spirit, for its ravages in that village are undiminished."

Fooled Into Fatness.

In Italy wealthy connoisseurs are very fond of fat ortolans, and this is the device by which they obtain them: They shut the birds up in a dark chamber (knowing that in their natural state it is their habit to feed at sunrise). They then arrange artificial lights which can be cast at will into the dark prison of the birds, on seeing which the ortolans immediately seek the food which is provided for them; the light is withdrawn and they go to sleep; after a few hours it is again introduced, and so the process is repeated five or six times in the twenty-four hours, so that the birds are kept constantly feeding or sleeping; the consequence is that in about three days the ortolan become a delicious ball of fat, and ready for the table.—*Popular Science Monthly.*

Some of the Beauties of Polygamy.

A letter to the Salt Lake *Anti-Polygamy Standard* says: In Sugarhouse Ward, two miles north of Salt Lake City, lives a good Danish saint who, of course, lives his religion, and has several wives. It was the duty of one of the plural women to work on the farm and take care of the cattle and the mules. When not engaged in other saintly avocations, it was the husband's custom to sit on the fence, holding a horsewhip in his hand, and oversee the woman when she was at labor in the field. If she failed to perform the work according to his ideas or instructions, he used to lash her like a refractory horse or mule; in fact he often whipped her more severely than he would his animals, for he held a mule in far higher estimation than he did a woman. "He could get another wife any day, but it cost money to get a mule." Occasionally, when there was not enough to keep her busy on the farm, he hired her out as a house servant, and always collected her wages himself, asking quite a high price for her services. She happened to be hired to a neighbor of mine, and one day when he came for her wages he demanded an extra dollar a week because he had to hire a man to do her chores in the field. This saint believed in polygamy, because when one woman wore out or outlived her usefulness as a laborer, he could easily replace her with a fresh one.

A few miles further from the house, on what is called Mill creek, lives another polygamist, whose three wives are held to the strictest account for every pound of butter, every chicken or egg on the place, and woe to the adventurous one who dares to dispose of either without the consent of her lord and master. The first wife, who is old and crippled with rheumatism, once longed for a cup of tea, a luxury forbidden the women, who are required to keep the word of wisdom, although the husband frequently indulged in that and material comforts. She watched an opportunity when he was absent and traded a few eggs for the wherewithal to make the coveted beverage, which she enjoyed, as she thought, in secret. The husband, however, found it out—a man in polygamy has no lack of talebearers—and he dragged the poor old woman to the creek, plunged her under the water and held her there until he thought her sufficiently punished for her sin in breaking the word of wisdom, as well as for meddling with his eggs, and until she promised never to repeat the offense. I have suppressed the names in both of the above cases, although I could have given them, because I understand that it is the policy of the *Standard* not to show up individuals, but to expose the workings and the debasing effects of the system. The first incident shows in what estimation the majority of men hold the women, and to what depths of degradation the system can reduce a woman who allows herself to be placed in such a position.

The Dandy Crab.

Society and occupation in the world of the sea are represented by masons, builders, marauders, usurpers and plunderers, and all have their distinguishing peculiarities. A fancy of the quaint spider crab, or "dandy crab," as he is sometimes called, is to decorated himself with algæ and sponges, and none but the most brilliant in color seem to please him; this, however, not for vain display, but, primarily at least, for personal protection. When wishing to array himself, he finds a brilliant sponge and pinches off piece after piece with his long, slender claws; these when broken, are dipped in a glutinous fluid contained in the mouth, and are carried to the back and fastened securely. Sometimes after he has attached a particular fragment he reaches back his claw a second time to satisfy himself that it is secure. This practice is indulged in only when the crabs are young and in the fall, and its object is to obscure the crab from hungry sturgeons and skates. When placed in a tank with many animals the crabs take the same precaution against possible enemies, and often cover themselves.

Premeditated Murder by Rats.

Mr. George Clayton, residing in the village of Lansingburg, was the possessor of a white rat, of which he made a great pet, and kept him housed in a snug cage. Last night the pet rodent was foully murdered, and the evidence gleaned from a view of the surroundings this morning tends to show that the homicide was committed by other rodents of a darker hue that had not been petted. The box or cage of the pet rat had been literally gnawed to pieces, and the pet torn to pieces as the marks plainly show. There must have been quite a number of rats concerned in the murder, as the incisors of one or two could not have done the work in a week that was done last night. The destruction of the animal will furnish food for speculation as to the motive for the massacre, and adds a chapter to the statistics on rats.—*Troy (N. Y.) Press.*

The Cradle.

How steadiastly she'd worked at it!
How lovingly had drest,
With all her would-be mother's wit,
That little rosy nest!

How longingly she'd hung on it!
It sometimes seemed, she said,
There lay beneath its coverlet
A little sleeping head.

He came at last, the tiny guest,
Ere bleak December fled;
That rosy nest he never prest—
Her coffin was his bed.

—*E. C. Steadman.*

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

A low story.—The basement.

There are 3,000 births every week in London.

Motherly wisdom—Stick to your flannels until they stick to you.

A gentleman named his dog Penny because it was one sent to him.

Naturally enough, the spot most dear to cattle is their fodderland.

There are 6,000 miles of telephone and telegraphic wires in New York city.

Water, when it becomes steam, is expanded 1,700 times its original bulk.

The ordinary strength of an elephant is calculated as equal to that of 147 men.

The area of arable lands in the United States is estimated at 1,500,000,000 square miles.

There was a law enacted in Massachusetts in 1646 fining any one who made a long speech.

A correspondent wants to know how long bees live. About the same as short bees, we suppose.

Since the beginning of the present century ten general famines have prevailed in Ireland.

The acknowledged version of the Christian Bible has been translated into 226 different languages and dialects.

Rev. Louis Wazawcanayana is a Dakota clergyman. He has one satisfaction, however. Nobody opens his letters by mistake.

We are told "the evening wore on," but we are never told what the evening wore on that occasion. Was it the close of a summer's day?

The only difference between a pig making a glutton of itself and a man making a pig of himself is, that the pig, at some future day, will be cured.

Three days after a baby is born everybody says, "Ketchetty, ketchetty," and digs its ribs with a forefinger. Hence the prevalence of ill-temper in adults.

The United States produce 7,800,000 gallons of cotton seed oil a year, and a share of it gets around to aristocratic pining tables labelled "Huile d'Olive."

Philadelphia contains 103 distinct iron factories, giving employment to nearly 12,000 hands, without including those employed at the Baldwin locomotive works.

Chickweed is an excellent barometer. When the flower expands fully, we are not to expect rain for several hours; should it continue in that state, no rain will fall.

Japan has a surplus of rice equal in value to $25,000,000, but which it cannot realize upon, in consequence of the exclusive character of the navigation laws of the empire.

Thirteen years ago nine brisk young fellows went into the torpedo business n the oil region. Only one, Tom Walley, is left. The others were all killed by their own torpedoes.

It has been discovered that persons who work in petroleum, if they have any bronchial troubles are at once relieved of them; pulmonary affections also yield before the same influence.

The sun shines down
In red-hot beams,
And starts the sweat
In trickling streams;
While we, until the thing will stop,
Must mop, and mop, and mop, and mop.

A man was asked the other day how many children he had, and he replied: "Five boys, and each boy has two sisters." This may be called the new puzzle of fifteen for those who think he has an unusually large family.

A few months ago the Emperor of Morocco gave President Grevy, of the French republic, six splendid horses. The animals proved so refractory and restive that no use has been made of them, and they are eating their heads off in the presidential stables.

There are 7,000,000 of tubes or pores on the surface of the body, which in health are constantly open, conveying from the system, by what is called insensible perspiration, this internal heat, which, having answered its purpose, passes off like the jets of steam which are thrown from the escape pipes, in puffs, of any ordinary steam engine; but this insensible perspiration carries with it, in a dissolved form, very much of the waste matter of the system, to the extent of a pound or two, or more, every twenty-four hours.

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