

Merry Moments.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

TRUTH, ever anxious to alleviate the sorrows of its readers and to cause smiles to blossom like the rose where now gloom may be reigning, purposes to establish a humorous department in its pages to which a few readers, a very few, will be permitted to contribute, free of charge. The rest of the readers will neither be charged nor paid anything for reading the original effusions, prose and verse, of those who send in their contributions. Those persons who feel a yearning desire to be amiable may forward whatever sums of money they think fit to the gifted being who will preside over this department as a set off to the tortures he will have to undergo in reading most of the contributions sent in. As Virgil remarks:

"Humoristas nascitur, non fit,"

and the humorist is very often not fit, even when he is born, for anything but causing his readers to weep and mourn and wish that he never had been. Such humorists as these, however, need not send in their productions to the talented editor of this department (whose name is withheld for the present on account of the respectability of his family connections) as he is the inventor of a machine which, upon alleged original jokes being submitted to it, separates the good from the fair, the fair from the passable, the passable from the villainous and execrable; all this being done by a simple move of the crank connected with the handle—which crank, by the way is not either the able editor of this department nor in any way connected with him.

This extraordinary machine classifies all contributions according to merit; it ranks Bob Burdette, Bill Nye, Mark Twain, M. Quad and Prof. Wiggins as No. 2 grade humorists; and their scintillations as number two, too; they, therefore, it will be perceived, belong to the aesthetic, or two too class, and any contributions sent in to this department, must be very much superior in merit, weight, (in ring costume,) length of keel, tonnage, and so forth, to anything ever achieved by those gentlemen.

The following rules must be observed by all would-be contributors to this department: Their matter must be very short, though not too short; strike a happy medium between the length of Webster's unabridged dictionary or the speech of an aldermanic candidate when wound up for the day, and Punch's brief advice to those about to marry, namely, "Don't." Something between these two extremes will about hit the mark. It is absolutely essential that poetical efforts should rhyme in places, though many original poets of the present day seem to overlook this important ingredient in well-built poetry. Jokes should have a point concealed somewhere about their persons, the object of this humorous department being more to cause people to laugh than to imagine they are reading an obituary notice of some of their dearest friends. A great many humorists quite ignore the point of their jokes, and their unfortunate readers are at a loss to know whether they are intended to laugh or to burst into tears.

We want to leave no doubt in the minds of our readers as to what they've got to do, and as we have entered into an agreement of a pecuniary nature with a thread and button manufacturer, the more of those articles we can destroy the better. An undertaker has, also, applied to us for any rejected original contributions, which he wishes to read to his mutes and hearse drivers immediately before a funeral, in order to get their faces into proper shape. We shall not comply with his request, however, but shall forward such lugubrious articles to

London Punch. We trust, however, that our contributors will bear in mind that funny articles must be funny to be funny. Contributors will please take notice that the following subjects are barred out: goats, roller-skating, mothers-in-law, plumbers, boarding-house butter, land-ladies, bank-clerks, big feet, ice and coal dealers, and a few more, especially the latter. All contributions must be addressed to "The Editor, 'Merry Moments,' TRUTH."

No money, for whatever purpose sent, or rejected manuscripts will ever be returned. When stamps are enclosed for the return of such rejected articles to their owners, they will be confiscated by the able editor of this department, any of whose own articles will, of course, be above criticism and who reserves the right to sign any contributor's name to such of his own productions as are not, in his own judgment, up to the mark, and to append his own signature to any contribution of surpassing merit.

Having thus briefly explained our intentions, which are strictly honorable, we would wind up with a brilliant peroration were we not entirely out of the article, thus being precluded from ending up in a blaze of glory. However, it's time to stop now. We've stopped.

APOLOGY.

Some mischievous person having pulled out the poetry stop of our composing machine, that wonderful piece of mechanism flatly refused to grind out anything but poetry this week as we failed to get the stop back in time to check the flood of rhythmic melody. If readers do not consider this apology sufficient for the preponderance of first class verse in this issue, we are sorry, and any reader who doesn't like it, can bring his copy of TRUTH to the editor of this department and he will take his little scissors and cut out the offending poetry for them. This should be sufficient.

The Englishman who is Somebody—at Home.

There are braggarts, I'm told, not a few
Whose tongues are so glib
That they flub
Every day,
But let true
You may always believe what I say.

I'm a terrible swell by descent
Through an old and illustrious line,
But my title unhappily went,
With ancestral belongings so fine,
To a distant relation of mine.
To law I should go, 'twas agreed
Attorney and counsel employed,
But in seeking an old title-deed—ahem!
I found it by wile quite destroyed.

Such twaddle never troubled me much
For, thank Fortune, I'm wick as a Jew,
So, my friend, should your fate e'er be such
To require a hundred or two
Come to me; you shall have it; now do.
"Lend some now," do you say? Without doubt,
Though just now I'm unable to lend
With money I never come out,
But wely on the purse of a friend. Ahem!

Could you see me at home, you would find
That my mansion's a model of taste;
Silk curtains embroidered and lined
Dresden vases on built tables placed,
And walls with gold cornices gilded;
But the crowds whom it used to attract
Have lured me to let it on lease;
And I lodge in an attic, a fact,
For the sake of a month or two's peace. By Jove!

I advise you, my friend, not to doubt.
For you know what a boxah I am;
Provoke me too much and one bout
Will show I'm by no means a lamb;
Nor my powahs of slugging a sham;
Were my passion not easily wiled,
I should average a victim a day;
By my anghs is easily cooled;
I forgive and walk nimbly away. Ahem!

You're aware as an author I shoo
The writers of several plays
Acknowledged my dwahs were fine;
To my genius they gave every praise,
Sublime, they declared, were my lays;
"Their titles!" Ahem! 'twas my fate
To be wobbled of my justly earned fame,
Himself, a false friend, to elate
Stole, and published them under his name.

"Can I dance?" What a question to ask!
You will find that at every ball
In the sunshine of plaudits I bask,
My delicate steps are quite gall
To the eyes of both great and of small,
"A specimen." Dire mischance!
I am lame you may easily see;
Lahst night at the Lordknowswo's dance
I tumbled and damaged my knee. Ahem!

As a patriot I glory in arms
My country has witnessed my zeal;
And midst war and her awful alarms
My life has been wiled for her weal.
To the honors I've gained I appeal.
But my medals and crosses to wear
My modesty never allows
For with envy they make equals stare
And inferiority me with bows. Hem!

This terrible country out here
For plebeians is all very well
But the natives have not an idea
How to treat a real—hem!—Beltish swell.
A few wrinkles on that I could tell.
In this country I shall not remain
With its terrible frost and its snow;
I shall go back to England again
That's the land for us swells, don't y'know?
There are buggarts from England who rove,
Whose tongues are so glib
That they flub
Every day
But by Jove!
You may always believe what I say.

Where the Mud Goes Now.

"Oh, father tell me how it is, that, fifty years ago,
The place was known as 'muddy York' which we call
To-day to?"
"The reason was, my son, because Ontario's raging
flood
Had far receded and had left a large supply of mud:
And in this mud a town was built, the town of which
you talk,
Which, on account of this, was known as 'muddy
little York.'"
"But, father, there is lots of mud about the city yet.
The crossings are impassable whenever the weather's
wet."
"Oh, yes, my son, but what you see in modern To-
ron-to
Is nothing in comparison with fifty years ago."
"Then what became of all the mud, dear father, tell
me, pray,
And what was done to clear it up and take so much
away?"
"Oh, many things; the cedar blocks and scavengers
and such,
But, even then, a lot was left." "Oh, thank you, ps,
so much;
What did they do with what was left?" The old man
answered then,
"Oh! nowadays they use that mud for brains for
aldermen!"
Swiz.

QU'APPELLE.

LEGEND OF THE VALLEY AND THE WARRIOR'S BRIDE.

The Qu'Appelle Valley in Manitoba is likely to come into considerable prominence very soon and anything connected with it probably possesses more or less interest for all whose eyes just now are turned in the direction of the North West. It may not be generally known that there is an Indian legend connected with the Qu'Appelle lake and valley; but there is and I propose to give it. Of course all intelligent readers of TRUTH (and are they not all intelligent?) know that Qu'Appelle is the French for "Who calls?" and as the Qu'Appelle district was renamed by French-Canadians, that name, which is only a translation of the original Indian one (Nishishin Shomoganish, or Squitay Wahboo, or some such name) has since clung to it. The legend is given here. The noble red warrior who related it to me could speak no English; I was ignorant of the Indian language, but with that comprehensive grasp common to all great intellects, I contrived to take down his words phonetically, and get them translated subsequently by an interpreter. The fine, tawny old brave, who told me the story, firmly believed in the truth of the legend, and held his hands (when not engaged in scratching himself) pointing upwards as though invoking the Great Spirit to attest to his veracity. He was indeed a picturesque old ruin, in his tattered red coat and blanket, guileless of a knowledge of soap, and was doubtless deeply grateful for my flask of Hennessy's best, which he stole out of my pocket as I was leaving his wigwam. I always did love these noble children of the forest, ever since I read Fenimore Cooper's tales, but I do wish that gifted author had mentioned a few more of their characteristic traits, for they are not all without guile and vermin. Here is the legend:

LEGEND OF QU'APPELLE.

The setting sun sinks slowly down behind the western hill,
While sadly sound, in the woods around, the notes
of the whippoorwill.
The evening breeze sighs thru' the trees in its flight
towards the west
And touches, with its gentle kiss, the lake's unruffled
breast.
No wavelets break beside the lake; the waters seem
to sleep;
The mountains rise toward the skies, precipitous and
steep
In places which, with foliage rich, put forth autumnal
tints.

Adown whose sides the streamlet gilds and, spark
ling, gleams and glints;
Like a silver thread on an emerald bed, it leaps
toward the lake,
While its babbling tones as it sighs and moans, the
faintest echoes wake.

The sun's at rest in the purple west; stars twinkle in
the sky,
And in and out the woods about flits the brilliant
firefly,
The cricket's deafening whirr begins, the nighthawk
booms above,
And frequent, too, comes the answering ooo of the
gentle forest dove.
But hark! 'tis the dash of a paddle's splash as in the
wave it dips,
And the fall of the dropping water as from the oar it
drips.
As the paddler ceases, then once more resumes. And
now dashes forth
A light canoe; it rounds the tongue of land towards
the north,
And swiftly glides to the shelving side of the shore,
upon the strand
It grates, a solitary brave steps out upon the yield-
ing sand.
He is an Indian warrior; this night his journey
lies
Towards a spot which he can reach ere another sun
shall rise.
His errand is to claim his bride upon th' ensuing
day.
Why stays he here? He has heard a voice which
stops him on his way—
A voice from out the darkling woods repeats his
name; he cries
"Who calls?" No answer comes; his hands he holds
to aid his eyes
And strives to pierce the gloom around. Once more,
distinct and clear,
That voice repeats his name which falls upon his
startled ear.
He knows that voice; 'tis that of her who waits his
coming now,
And who will wear the bridal wreath next day upon
her brow.
"Whocalls?" he shouts in faltering tones. And
still comes no reply;
Echo repeats his words! The breeze goes softly
whispering by,
But naught he sees. What mystery's this? He feels
a sudden dread.
Oh! can this be a spirit voice from the realms of the
dead?

His race all know full well that so strange voices
often speak,
And the very thought drives the pulsing blood away
from his swarthy cheek.
He knows not what he fears, but still he feels an in-
ward dread
Of something, for he holds that voice a message from
the dead.
He speeds down swiftly to the shore. He boards his
fragile bark,
Aid, nerved with superhuman strength, he speeds
o'er the waters dark;
The spray is thrown on either side as his prow the
water cleaves,
As far astern in the darkling night the shore the
warrior leaves.
At length he lands once more, and now alight he takes
the road
To the camping ground, which well he knows as his
cherished love's abode.
The morning sun is rising now; the dew lies on the
green,
The birds sing blithely on the trees, by him unheard,
unseen,
He hurries on, far he sees the smoke in curling
wreaths
Ascend from wigwams, where alas! his love no longer
breathes.
He gains the spot, he sees a crowd near a well
known wigwam door.
He hears the death dirge, then he knows that she is
now no more.
With sympathizing faces now the warriors round him
pressed
And told him all the mournful tale. His head upon
his breast
In sorrow drooped. He knew what meant the voice
that he had heard
In yonder wood, and he enquired what hour her
death occurred.
The time was that at which he'd heard the voice
mysterious cry;
Full well he knew it was the sound of the maiden's
dying sigh.
His name she'd called before her death, and when the
moment came
The last word that she uttered was her absent lover's
name.
The warrior heard the tale, then bent his steps
towards the shore,
And entering his frail canoe, was gone and seen no
more.
Swiz.

Etiquette.

The misuse of the words lady and gentleman is almost universal. Often this misuse is offensive, sometimes irresistibly funny. Once in the dining room of a hotel, a table-girl asked me: "Has any other lady taken your order?" I was obliged to confess that I had not had an opportunity to give my orders to "any other lady." A little girl of my acquaintance, whose instincts and training had made her unusually polite for a child, startled the family by saying: "Mamma, the swell lady is at the back door." It was a poor woman who came regularly for the kitchen scraps for chickens and pigs. In a crowded Third-avenue car in New York, some gentlemen friends of mine, were seated. One of those gorgeous Bowery products, in loud ready-made clothes, with a pronounced hat, profuse and vulgar as to watch chain, pin and rings, and the face of a burglar off duty, appeared in the doorway. "Say, you fellows, move over there," said the conductor to my friends, "and give this gentleman a seat."