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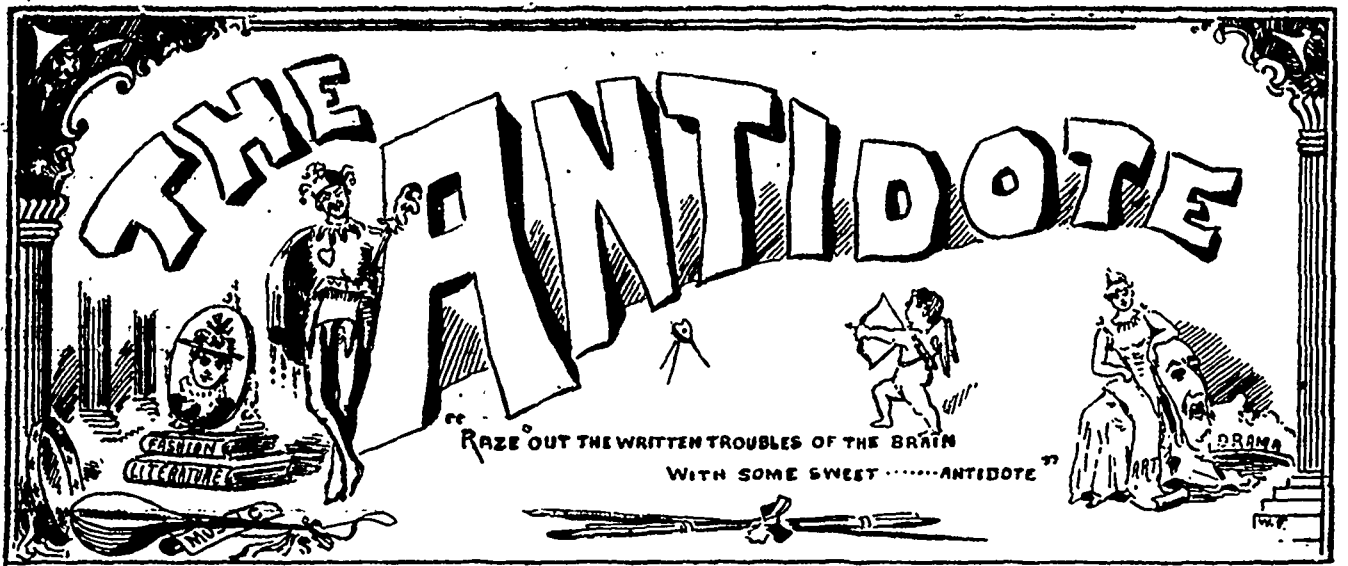
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KEYS.

Everybody must have remarked the extraordinary multiplying powers belonging to keys. There is a gloom about them. In vain do you from time to time make a minute inspection and go over your key-rings and key-boxes, but before long you are wondering to what lock to ascribe this particular, unexplained tramp of a key,—how in the world you came into possession of this would-be ornamental implement with a four cornered head; which can certainly open nothing you are aware of possessing and what you can possibly want with this clumsy kitchen-door affair, looking as if its wards had been made by a process of gnawing and biting—*is something that engages your attention for days upon days.*

There they are: keys and keys, mysterious, unsuggestive! You can find no key-holes for them, and you dare not throw them away, since surely their key-holes must be waiting them somewhere in your keeping. For a while you go on letting them dangle on your key-ring or chain in hopes of some sudden flash of memory or stroke of chance revealing their key-holes to you, but the revelation never comes, and at last you take them off and consign them (if you are of a prudent and packing away turn of mind) to the company of their unavailing brethren, in a limbo of the lockless. They will never come out, and more keys will be added to them.

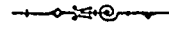
But the mischief of it is that keys do not content themselves with this supernatural multiplying: they also disappear like merely mortal things,—like wineglasses, teacups, pins and buttons. If it were only the having so many keys with no locks, we might accept the phenomenon with meek wonder, as we wonder at there being so many more stars in the sky than we

require for navigating purposes, and so many flowers wasting their sweetness on the desert air: but then we have so many locks without keys. From our wardrobes, our drawers, our doors, our cabinets, our secretaires, and all the various receptacles to which the furniture may refuse handles, the keys drop away like autumn leaves, and, apparently like autumn leaves, wither and pass into dust. But the unexpected keys never fit the deserted locks, and that seems a mystery of evil. It is peculiarly disturbing when, on your returning from your holiday-trip, you have found in your key-box half a dozen keys, whose "raison d'être" is an insoluble problem, to have to send for the locksmith to replace half-a-dozen other keys which have melted out of their locks, no one knows when or how. As a rule, unexpected keys are small, and deserted locks are large. It would seem almost as if vexatious fairies make changelings of keys as they used to do in olden times, of babies, and there is no other theory which can connect those keys with those locks!

The troubles of life assume different aspects to different sufferers: to some the disease, to others, the doctor is the greater trial; to some the dinner of herbs, to others the stalled ox is the mortification; to some the frying-pan, to others the fire is the less objectionable martyrdom; so it is with locks and keys. There are persons, perhaps a majority—for such persons must be unthinking, and the unthinking are a majority—there are persons who hold it a lighter affliction to possess keys without locks than locks without keys. Looking only to the moment, they note the inconvenience of finding their properties secured from their access, perhaps just when they most need them for immediate purposes; and since no like obstruction can ever arise from the possession of aimless keys, which, if they can unfasten nothing, at least fasten up nothing, they take it that the momentary, the removable difficulty—that of the lock whose key has gone into the past—represents the immeasurably greater loss.

This is an evident mistake. The locksmith arrives, forces the lock, puts it back with another key, and all is as

before. The loss is definite; the key some time, more temper, and your expenses. In the other case the loss is indefinite, never at an end. You have forgotten or failed to learn what that key could have unlocked for you; it remains a monument of vanished possibilities, whose chief though unknown disappointments of life; it is the visible but unintelligible record of something you ought to have and have not. You can never tell now, you can only guess, what it might have done if you had discovered its use, and it has become worse than useless, for it is aggravating. What endowment can be more annoying than a possession which its owner is hopelessly precluded from enjoying?



MARK YOUR BIRD.

While young women know, and their parents know for them, that marriage is not merely the happiest and fittest condition to which they can look forward, but the only happy and fit condition—the only escape from dependence on charity or on their own incompetencies and loss of social position, and from all the hardships and hazards of an unskilled and precarious existence—it seems unreasonable that neither the young women nor their parents are able to take active measures to prevent the catastrophe of final spinsterhood. But the instinct which is at the bottom of the prohibition is one too sound to be gainsaid. Marriage should mean love, and love has its own laws and cannot be transacted according to the principles of demand and supply, nor through the medium of parents or any other accredited agents.

That a young woman will have no place in the world unless a husband gives her a home and a purpose in life, is no doubt a strong temptation to marriage, but it is not a reason for it. There is only one allowable reason, and that is love for the man she marries, and whether it be so or not, or only by the training of generations, young women, unless most exceptionally, do not love unsought.

They may of course be deceived as to the seeking, or as to the extent and earnestness of the seeking, but that is

another matter. Their choice of whom to love is among those who have chosen them, or who they fancy have chosen them; and it may be that a girl finds no one present himself whom she can regard with the highest affection, or even it may be that no one presents himself at all. But she will have sinned against her womanhood, if for any reason—even if she thinks marriage the grand and highest duty of womanhood—she gives herself to a husband whose love she does not wholly return—still more if, not having a suitor at her disposal, she counts her chances and selects a man to lead with her to matrimony.

All girls, however, have not so strong a self-respect, nor so high a courage as to look forward patiently to the contemned position of a poverty-stricken old-maid, rather than to marry for the sake of marriage, or to think any suitor the man of their heart, or I have still so much self-respect as to quietly run their risk of getting no offer, or none available, rather than make choice themselves for matrimonial purposes of some likely male acquaintances to train them into winning their hearts and hands. And not all parents can resign themselves to seeing other peoples' portionless daughters getting comfortable suitors, and their own daughters left unprovided for; nor can they believe that their daughters have not a better chance of real happiness unprovided for than married on the hook-and-crook plan. Concerning these persons, the husband-hunting daughters and the match-making mothers, it may be remarked that their efforts oftenest fail from too contrary and peculiar causes. The mothers err by too palpable a concentration of their attentions on the one chosen to be the son-in-law to be, and by an oversight of any other possibilities; the daughters, by desultoriness and the propensity to regard too many men at once as encourageable into serious suitors. A wise old lady skilled in these matters, used to warn her young friends in this way:—
 "The mistake all girls make," she would say, "is paying attention to two or three men at a time; they lose the chance by wanting more chances



than one." "My dear, she added, "Always mark your bird." But husband-hunting girls are a foolish race of sportswomen, and too apt to waste their powder and shot indiscriminately.

"The great problem that I have to deal with," said the keeper of the imbecile asylum, "is to find some occupation for the people under my charge."

"Why not set them to inventing college yells?" asked the visitor.

Mrs. Blingo—Don't you think, dear, it would be a good idea for you to give me an expense book, so that the coming year you will know where all the money goes?

Blingo—I can tell without any expense book, darling. All I have to do is look on your back.

The days of chivalry are spoken of as the dark ages, probably because they were the knight time,

Boys will be Boys.

Boys, when we come to study them in all their varieties, are certainly the most singular animals in creation. Girls, of course, form a very interesting and instructive study, but the ways of boys are inscrutable to the keenest observer. A short time ago, a teacher in one of the public schools of Montreal asked the present writer what he thought of an answer given to an historical question by a youth of fourteen years old. The question in a written examination was: "Give some account of the Spanish Armada." The master gave it as his opinion that the boy was an ignoramus and a fool. The present writer was of opinion that the boy had simply, but impudently, tried to make a fool of the examiner. Our readers can form their own judgment, when they see the answer. It was as follows: "The battle of the Spanish Armada was fought on Sunday, the 18th of June, 1815. It was in this sanguinary fight that the heroic Horatio Nelson lost one of his eyes, and also an arm—dying with these immortal words on his lips 'On Stanley, on!'"

The boy who gave the date of Waterloo so accurately, and who described correctly the condition of Nelson, in addition to quoting Walter Scott's "Marmion," was, I think, no fool.

Here are two instances which show the sheer laziness of some clever boys with good memories, who prefer to learning lines from a book, "catching on" to the supposed words which they hear from the lips of their eloquent masters. Freddie, for example, had to recite the introduction to the "Lay of the last Minstrel." Walter Scott wrote as follows:

"The way was long, the wind was cold:
The minstrel was infirm and old."

Freddie, who had caught up the lines merely by ear, recited them thus:

"The way was long, the wind was cold:
The minstrel was infernal old."

The emphasis which he had on the italicized word "brought down the house," as the phrase runs.

Charlie, his class-mate, surpassed Freddie in improving the original words of the poet's composition. We had to recite before a large and fashionable audience Thomas Campbell's famous ballad of "Lord Ullin's Daughter."

He did so, with the following important alterations of the text:

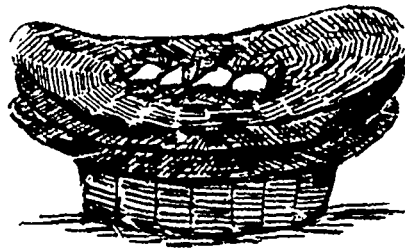
There seems to be no doubt that one of Campbell's stanzas was:

"Come back! come back!" he cried in grief,
"Across the stormy water;

And I'll forgive your Highland Chief,
My daughter, O my daughter!"

Charlie's improved revision ran thus:
"Come back! come back!" he cried in Greek,

"Across the stormy water:
And I'll forgive your Highland cheek.
My daughter, O my daughter!"



"THE LATEST THING OUT IN HATS."

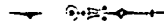
Drops of Comfort.

Reading a newspaper in a railway car and casually dropping on a harrowing account of "thirty-five lives lost!" on the same line, and near the same place, a few days before.

Losing all your ready money in an unlucky speculation, and hearing all your friends ask in wonder how you could possibly be such a fool?

Putting on a white "choker" which you think is very becoming, and being hailed all the evening as "waiter."

Breaking down in the middle of your cack song at a concert, and hearing a malicious rival cry "Encore! Encore!"



A Few Queries.

When a lady draws herself up, where does she go to?

Is it true that the god Pan is the patron saint of cookery?

Some artist is expected to answer this question. If a picture is well hung in a gallery, does it follow as a matter of course that it is well executed?

A perplexed housewife desires to know if the crust of a venic a pastry is always made of doe (dough)?

In lecoming what is called the "Lion of a party," does a man necessarily make a beast of himself?



Comments on Pope.

We are probably all acquainted with Alexander Pope's famous character "Lo! the poor Indian." It is said of him that "He hopes admitted to that equal sky His faithful dog will bear him company."

As this dog must evidently be a Skye terrier, the question naturally arises, how does the Indian expect to get to Paradise with stolen goods in his possession?

Again, there is another line of Pope's in which he says:

"And beauty draws us with a simple hair." This is surely a fine instance of "capillary attraction." It was the foregoing line that Lord Byron wrote on an envelope which contained a single golden hair from the head of the celebrated Lucretia Borgia.

Bringing the Case Home,

"Can you make it convenient to vettle that small account of mine?" said the ninth part of a man to my friend, Augustus Jones.

"Do you owe anybody anything?" asked the imperturbable A. J.

"No, Sir," replied the tailor. "Then, you can afford to wait" said the debtor, and walked off. A few days afterwards, the "suip" called again, and my friend Augustus Jones was for the moment perplexed. He quickly recovered himself, however, and said: "Are you really in debt to anybody?"

"Well, Sir, since you ask me I am sorry to say that I am."

"Then, why on earth, don't you pay?" replied Augustus.

"That's just it" said the tailor, "I haven't got the money, or I wouldn't be pressing you so hard."

"Why, by jove, my dear fellow, that's just my case to a T, and I am delighted that you can appreciate my position. I always held your judgment in the highest respect, and I feel now more than ever confirmed in my high opinion of it. Give me your hand, my boy. Good bye." Exit tailor, musing.

DID YOU EVER.

Did you ever see a cabman who wore spectacles?

Did you ever know the real surname of a waiter?

Did you ever know any one who was actually the nephew of a pawnbroker, and could therefore faithfully speak of him as "my Uncle?"

Did you ever know a church, the richer part of whose congregation was not continually grumbling that "there's always a collection in our church?"

Did you ever know a public billiard marker, or a female lodging-house keeper, who hadn't "seen better days?"

Did you ever have too much wine at dinner without wanting more?

Did you ever hear of a housemaid who would not answer to the name of Mary?

Did you ever buy a fifteen cent cigar (save at a first-rate tobacconist's) that was half as good as a ten cent one?

Did you ever see a Bishop, a Dean, or an Archdeacon of the Anglican Church, wearing a white hat?

A Few Bad Riddles.

(From a Maniac's Note-book.)

1. Why is the washing brought home on Saturday?

Because it's the close (clothes) of the week.

2. What sin did the first apple commit? It damned the first pear (pair.)

3. Why is a dirty tramp like flannel? Because he shrinks from washing.

4. How long ought a widow to weep? Only for a second.

5. Why cannot you stop the Falls of Niagara?

Because dam 'em you can't.

6. What is the difference between temptation and Eternity?

The one is a wife of the devil—the other is a devil of a wife!

7. Why was Ruth unkind to Boaz?

Because she pulled his ears, and trod upon his corn.

8. You may drink my first two syllables, eat my third, and then suck the three without hurting yourself.

Liquorice. I guess.

9. My second does my first, and the whole is the name of a bird.

Wagtail, of course.

Le Rideau de ma Voisine.

ALFRED DE MUSSET.

Le rideau de ma voisine
Se soulève et s'élève.
Elle va, je l'imagine
Prendre l'air au moment.

On entrouvre la fenêtre :
Je sens mon cœur palpiter.
Elle veut savoir peut-être
Si je suis à guériter.

Mais, hélas ! ce n'est qu'un rêve ;
Ma voisine ahae un fourreau,
Et c'est le vent qui soulève
Le coin de son rideau.

Translation of the foregoing French.

My charming neighbor's curtain.
Is lifted up with care:
She's coming, I feel certain,
To taste the evening air.

She wishes to discover
(Oh! how my heart doth beat!)
If I her dandy 'over
Am watching in the street.

Alas! I am mistaken,
She loves a country lout!
And, if her curtain's shaken,
'Tis with the wind, no doubt!

Positive, good; comparative, bet; superlative, better not.

'Do you believe in the transmigration of souls, Joe?' "What's that sir?"
"Why, for instance, that cow had a prior existence in another form—perhaps been a being like myself."
"O, no doubt the cow's been a calf."

—Footpad—"I want your watch."
Cholly—"I-I-I haven't a-any w-with me." Footpad—"Oh, I knew that. Gimme the ticket."—Chicago News Record.

The doctor hangs up his stocking
With a gay and festive grace,
For he knows that Christmas teasting
Will bring him many a case.



THE GREAT ST. JAMES STREET BORE

Long—This water color don't seem exactly clear. I—

Jenkins—Some rattled pated jay that didn't know enough to get a filter, I suppose, painted it.

"What a beautiful woman Miss Barclay is? By Jove, she is a Venus," said Hicks.

"Bosh!" returned Mawson, "Look at her arms; they're so thin you can't see 'em."

"That's all right. She's a Venus of Milo," explained Hicks.

A man is satisfied to make a reputation for himself, but woman, bless her, wants to make one for everybody in the neighborhood.

LIVED HAPPILY WITH HIS WIDOW.

The following epitaph is found in an English churchyard: "Here lies J. S., who for 40 years lived in conjugal happiness with his widow who survives him."

Let us be cheerful while we may,
Nor care nor trouble borrow;
In short, be optimists to-day
And pessimists to-morrow.

Mrs. Yorick (excitedly)—If you keep on like this much longer I shall lose my temper.

Mrs. Velox (calmly)—Don't fret, dear. A thing of that size is not easily lost.

One of the popular Christmas salutations will of course be the mistletoe bough.

Miss Ancient—Here is a century plant we prize very highly.

Fligthy—Yes, yes; beautiful, charming. I suppose you raised it from the seed.

Ella—Are these slippers for Carl?
Winnie—Yes.

Ella—Why don't you embroider his initials on them?

Winnie—Mercy, it is a whole week before New Year's and who knows who I'll be engaged to by that time.

Mrs. Fleecy—Why doesn't Mr. Downy come to church with you?

Mrs. Downey—I would not have it, my dear. Downey talks in his sleep.

Many a one who handles a pen
Suffers from writers' cramps.
It comes of course because his work
Never brings him any stamps.

When Fondleigh asked of Ida Klein
If she would be his life-long "flame,"
She instantly replied to him
"You'll find my answer in my name."

So dull a chap was he alas!
Her meaning he could not define
Until the name he did repeat
And echo answered, "I decline."

Mrs. Hicks—Why, Mrs. Dix, how pale you look!

Mrs. Dix—Yes, I've been having lots of trouble with a boil.

Mrs. Hicks—I'm so sorry! Was it on your neck?

Mrs. Dix—No, it was on my husband.

Talk about your transformations!
We have seen a square man turn round.

Break, break, break
The dainty cups and plates,
But, Bridget, handle with care
The costly coal for the grates.

New York affects to consider walking in haste a sign of life, but it is no indication of progress in this city to see a lot of men tearing up a street.

No man counts up his thousands without seeing that they come to naught.

The poet soon will roar and sing,
With all the music of his soul,
Of any dear and precious thing:
"It's worth its weight in coal."

"The devil isn't as black as he is painted."

"? ; ?"

"Because he is always painted red."

SMILES

Mabel—Were the wedding gifts all displayed?

Janet—Yes, all except the magnificent casket of coal, the gift of the groom; that was under lock and key.

Mobley—Have you the time, old fellow?

Outlate—N-no; but I know from the way my head feels that I probably had last night.

Jones—Has your wife good ideas about Christmas shopping?

James—Well, from the size of the bills I should say she has capital ideas.

Fruit Dealer—These are the best russet oranges; they are sw—

Mrs. Nenrich—Well I don't mind taking a dozen if you will put in the polish to retouch them.

Ethel—What plain tastes Miss Miggs has. She is quite devoted to brown.

Helen—Well, I guess you wouldn't have thought so if you had seen her with Jones last evening.

Jenks—Watson, poor fellow, was robbed again last night.

Palton—Was he held up on the street?

Jenks—No, it was at a church bazaar.

—When the telephone girl broke her engagement she said it was a case of "rlug off."

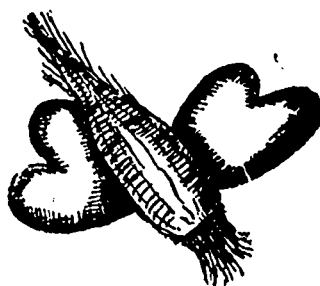
—"His fringes" is the reverent way the street gamin refers to the man with whiskers.

—A reward has been offered for the arrest of the Frankford poet who rhymed minute with "in it."

—An exquisite paper-weight designed by a jewelry firm represents a slice of fried scrapple.

—A novel innovation at a chrysanthemum wedding is for the maid of honor to wear a Japanese costume.

—The hotel visitor who closes the registry book after looking at it incurs the enmity of the clerk. It is an omen of bad luck.



"TWO HEARTS WITH BUT A SINGLE BREATH."

—"I hear Jack married a perfect little ninny." "Oh, not at all; she is very gifted. Why, I counted over 250 presents myself."

—A pension agent doing business here announces his methods as "lightning." Doubtless he first dazzles his customers and then strikes them.

Blobbs—"Life is held very cheaply in the Southwest, I hear." Wigwag—"Yes; the penalty for murder is simply a few moments' suspense."

—Overheard in Court: "How many years will he get?" "How long was the Judge's charge?" "About an hour and a half." "Oh, he'll get about eight years."

—In one of the latest novels the heroine is said to have "blushed like a Marechal Niel rose." A synonymous bit of description would have been "she turned as pink as a canary bird."

—An elderly spinster received a present of a parrot a few weeks ago, and named it William. The bird laid an egg a day or two ago, and its name was changed at once.

—In a Pullman sleeper—Lady (nervously)—"Porter, do you think my things will be all safe here?" Porter—"Deed I does, ma'am; but maybe yo' bettah look under de berf to make sho'!"—Chicago News Record.

—"We need bread more than we knead dough." suggests the—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Miss S.—Ah, Mr. St. John, you have been out shooting. What sort of luck did you have?

Mr. St. J.—Well, I scared up seven partridges.

"How many did you shoot?"

"I didn't bag any, of course, for I had my sniping suit on, don't you know."—Texas Sittings.

When this influenza weather
With its sneezes comes along,
Other people all together
Suffer less than queens of song.
—Detroit Tribune.

Some of our theatrical managers might do well to emulate the example of the heavens in the matter of shooting stars.
—Boston Transcript.

Pertshire Missionary (to poor and motherless boy)—But why is your father not steady? Boy (reflectively)—'Cause he's got a wudden leg.—Dundee Courier.

—Paper bustles belong to the waist basket.—New Orleans Pickayune.

—Simple—"So Jones has moved to Mudford Park, eh? One of those Queen Anne houses?" Cynic—"Yas; one of those houses—Queen Anne in front, Mary Ann at the back."—"The Million."

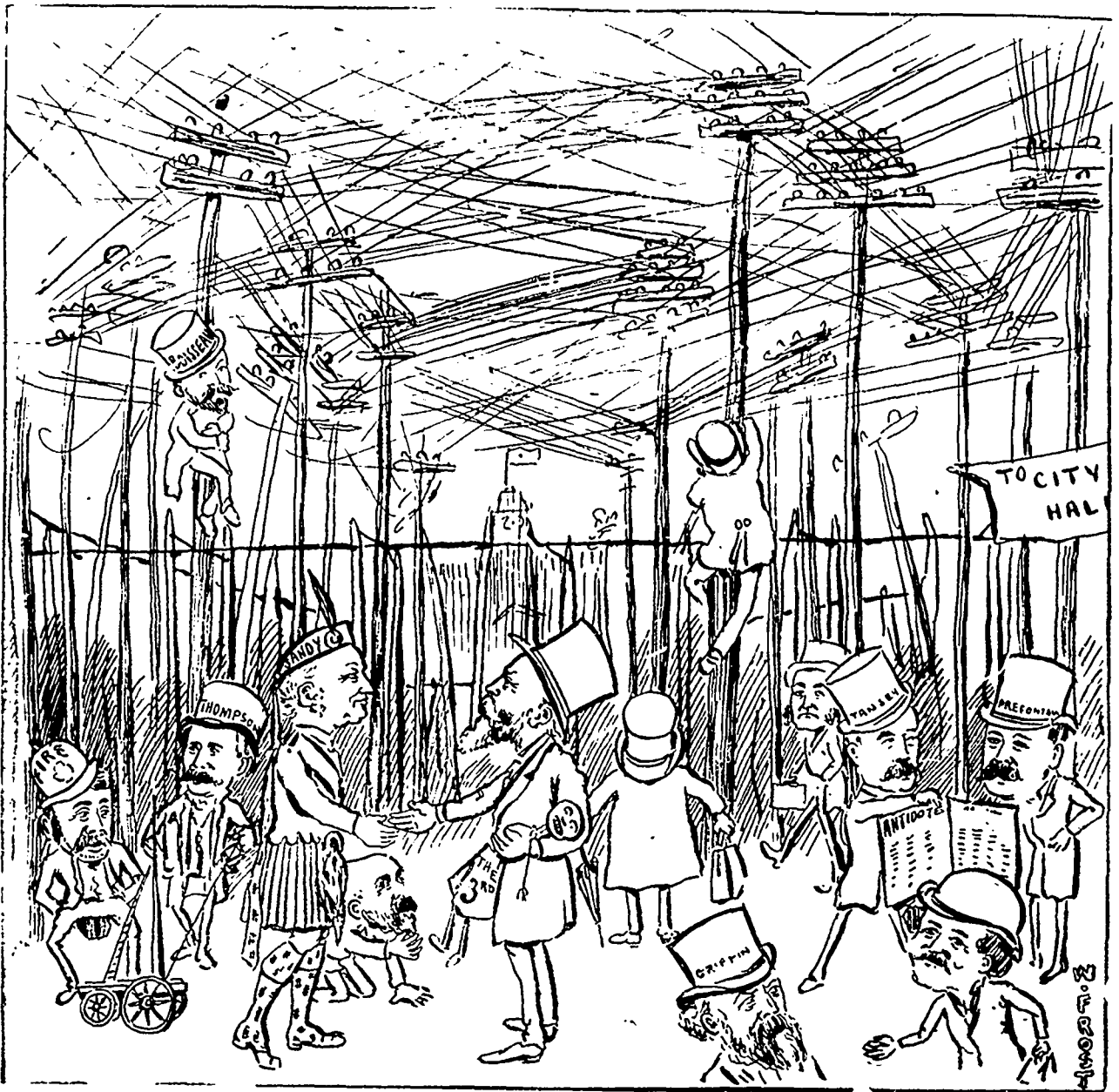
—Fashion now decrees that the back of the piano must face the room. This is to enable the assembled guests to examine the fair singer's throat.—New York Herald.

—"I like the kind of purse well enough; but why do you call it a natural purse?" "Because, like nature, it abhors a vacuum."—Paris Gaulois.

Thou art so like a flower,
So pure and fair and kind,
I gaze on thee, and sorrow
Then in my heart I find.

It seems as though I must lay then
My hand upon thy brow,
Praying that God may preserve thee
As pure and fair as now.

♦THE ANTIDOTE♦



NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

SMILES.

It has been discovered that wine will kill the bacilli of cholera in a few minutes. This discovery will probably stagger a great many.

"Have you ever seen your poems appear?" And he shuddered that she should ask it.

"Yes, very often," he meekly said: "they come out in the waste basket."

New Cook—"I'm told the missus wants things in th' high-toned, fashionable style. Sure, I'm afraid, I won't suit, for it's only plain cookn' I've done." Old Cook—"It's aisy enough. Make iv'rything tast loike something else."

Martin—How well Miss Greenbough keeps her age.

Mrs. Grinder—Why, of course; nothing would induce her to give it away.

—"What is it the French call a man who is fond of the good things of life, a good table and all that?" "A good table, a good table? Why, it is just at the top of my tongue. A—a—oh, a tableau."—Pick Me Up.

—Mrs. Dix—"What is it a sign of to have the family cat howl outside at night?" Dix—"Of a death in the family—if the man is a good shot."—Frank Leslie's Weekly.

—He—"I love you; will you marry me?" She (haughtily)—"You forget yourself, sir." "I have to; I'm poor." —Life.

—A Matter of Doubt—"Is that man there a sculptor or a surgeon?" "I don't know. Why?" "I heard him say he had been doing a football player in plaster."—Indianapolis Journal.

Grocer—I am sorry, but our butter is just out. Landlady—Well, if it's as strong as the last I got I don't see that it needs any exercise.



"My Sweetheart when a Boy," and "My Sweetheart when a Man."

SING A SONG OF CHRISTMAS.

Sing a song of Christmas,
Pockets full of gold;
Plums and cake for Polly's stocking,
More than it can hold.

Padding in the great pot,
Turkey on the spit,
Merry faces 'round the fire,
Sorrow? Not a bit!

A New York paper announces that a hotel in that city is to "be enlarged by reducing the size of its immense rooms."

She—So a sinecure is a position in which a person gets the salary another earns.

He—Precisely, my love.

She—That's the kind of job I want.

He—You have it, dearest.

THOUGHTFUL BOYS MAKE
THOUGHTFUL MEN.

(By J. M. Barrie.)

Urquhart is a boy who lives in fear that his friends and relations will send him the wrong birthday presents. Before his birthday came around this year, he dropped them pretty broad hints as to the kind of a gift he would prefer, supposing they meant to remember the occasion. He worked his people differently, according to the relationship that existed between him and them. Thus to his mother he simply wrote, "A fishing-rod? is what I want;" but to an uncle, from whom there was only the possibility of the present, he said, "By the way, next Monday week is my birthday, and my mother is going to send me a fishing-rod. Wouldn't it be jolly rot if any other body sent me a fishing-rod?—Your affectionate and studious nephew, Thomas Urquhart." To an elderly lady, with whom he had once spent part of his summer holiday, he wrote, "By-the-bye" (he always came to the point with by-the-bye), "next Monday week is my birthday. I am wondering if anybody will send me a cake like the ones you bake so beautifully."

That lady should, of course, figuratively have punched Urquhart's head, but his communication charmed her. She did not, however, send him a cake. He had a letter from her in a few days, in which, without referring to his insinuating remarks about his birthday and her cakes, she expressed a hope that he was working hard. Urquhart thought this very promising, and sent a reply that undid him. "I am sweating," he said, "no end; and I think there is no pleasure like perusing books,

MASTERING THE LANGUAGE.

(At table.)

Hostess—Baron, will you take some liberte?

Distinguished Guest (radying Jaxon)

—Non, merci, Madame; to-day I am vot you say in Engleesh, off my nut.

A SOURCE OF REGRET.

Now, when your joy should be increased,
It's very far from pleasant
To find the man you think of least
Has sent the nicest present.

The Philosopher.

A LECTURER'S BAD BREAK.

A Lecturer on optics, in explaining the mechanism of the organ of vision, remarked: "Let any man gaze closely into his wife's eye, and he will see himself looking so exceedingly small that—" Here the lecturer's voice was drowned by the shouts of laughter and applause which greeted his unscientific remark.

Let us all be up and doing
All day long till set of sun,
For it's pretty safe to promise,
If you don't do, you'll get done.

Ere long the wind will whistle,
But let us still be gay,
For it can not whistle "Comrades"
Or "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay."

A SPRINKLE OF SPICE.

"I know my feet are to stand on," said a crabbed individual in a crowded electric car to his neighbor, "but if it is just the same to you I would like that privilege for myself exclusively. Will you please get down on the floor?"

Featherstone—What did you leave your suburban boarding place for? I thought your landlady was going to be like a mother to you.

Ringway—She was. She wanted me to sleep in a cradle.

Coal dealers are not looked upon as weather prophets, but in many weighs they will make most of the change in this climate.

Any tramp is enough of an artist to object always to wood cuts.

It should never be called pin-money, for it has an ugly trick when placed inside our pocket-book to never stick.

It is said that the bang must go,
It no more o'er foreheads will droop,
But we ardently, earnestly pray
That it will be saved from the soup.

Four leaf clovers now grow thin,
And no longer sung in ballads,
For now it is the latest fad
To mix them up in salads.

THE ANTIDOTE

When the other chaps go away to play, I stay at the school and peruse books." After that Urquhart counted the old lady among his certainties, and so she was, after a manner. On his birthday he received a gift from her, and also a letter, in which she said that her original intention had been to send him a cake. "But your nice letter," she went on, "in which you say you are fond of reading, reminds me that you are getting to be a big boy, so I send you a book instead." Urquhart anxiously undid the brown paper in which the book was wrapped. It was a volume of mild biographies, entitled, "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful men."

From its first appearance among us, this book caused a certain amount of ill-feeling. I learned by accident that Urquhart, on the strength of the lady's letter, had stated for a fact to his comrades that she was going to send him a cake. He had also taken Fleming Secundus to a pastry-cook's in the vicinity of the school, and asked him to turn his eyes upon a cake which had the place of honor in the centre of the window. Secundus admitted with a sigh that it was a beauty. Without comment Urquhart led him to our local confectioner's and pointed out another cake. Secundus again passed favorable criticism, the words he used, I have reason to believe, being "Oh, Crikey!" By this time Urquhart had exhausted the shops of an interesting kind in our neighborhood, and he and his companion returned to the school. For a time Urquhart said nothing, but at last broke the silence. "You saw you two cakes?" he asked Secundus, who replied, with a smack of his lips, in the affirmative. "Then let me tell you," said Urquhart, solemnly, "that the two of them rolled together don't come within five miles of the cake I'm to get on my birthday." Tremendous news like this spreads through a school like smoke, and Urquhart was courted as he had never been before. One of the most pitiful cases of lordyism known to me was witnessed that very day in the foot-ball field. I was playing in a school match on the same side as Urquhart and a boy called Cocky Jones by his associates because of his sublime impertinence to his master. While Urquhart was playing his shoddy became loosened, and he stooped to tie it. "I say, Urquhart," cried Cocky, "let me do that for you!" It will thus be seen, taking one thing with another, that Urquhart's confidence in the old lady had raised high hopes. "Is this the day Urquhart gets his cake?" the "fellows" asked each other. Consider their indignation when he got, instead, "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful

Men." Secundus refused to speak to him; Williamson, Green, Robbins, Tosh and others scowled as if he had stolen their cake; Cocky Jones kicked him and bolted.

The boy who felt the disappointment most was, however, Urquhart himself. He has never been a shining light in his class, but that day he stumbled over the Latin grammar at every step. From nine to ten he was quiet and sullen, like one felled by the blow. It is, I believe, notorious that in a fair fight Cocky Jones could not stand up before Urquhart for a moment; yet, when Cocky kicked, Urquhart did not pursue him. Between ten and eleven, Urquhart had a cynical countenance, which implied that his faith in humanity was gone. By twelve he looked fierce, as if he meant to write his benefactress, and give her a piece of his mind. I saw him during the dinner-hour in hot controversy with Green and Tosh, who were evidently saying that he had deceived them. From this time he was pugnacious, like one determined to have it out with somebody, and as he can use his fists, this mood made his companions more respectful. Fleming Secundus is his particular chum, and after the first bitterness of disappointment, Secundus returned to his allegiance. He offered to mark Cocky Jones' face, I fancy, for I saw him in full pursuit of Cocky in the playground. Having made it up, he and Urquhart then discussed the matter calmly in a corner. They had several schemes before them. One was to send the book back, saying that Urquhart had already a copy of it.

"But, I haven't," said Urquhart.

"Williamson has read it, though," said Secundus, as if that was much the same thing.

"But though we did send it back," Urquhart remonstrated, "the chances are that she would send me another book in its place."

His faith, you see, had quite gone.

"You could tell her you had got such a lot of books that you would prefer a cake for a change?"

Urquhart said that would be putting it too plain.

"Well, then," said Secundus, "even though she did send you another book, it would perhaps be a better one than that. Tell her to send 'The Boy Crusoes.' I haven't read it."

"I have, though," said Urquhart.

"Well, she could send 'The Prairie Hunters.'"

"She's not that kind," said Urquhart. "It's always these improving books she buys."

Ultimately the two boys agreed upon a line of action which was hardly what the reader might expect. Urquhart

wrote letters of thanks to all those who had remembered his birthday, and to the old lady the letter which passed through my hands read as follows:

"Dear Miss—:

I sit down to thank you very faithfully for your favor, namely, the book entitled 'Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men.' It is a jolly book, and I like it no better than a cake, which would soon be ate up, and then nothing to show for it. I am reading your beautiful present regular, and hoping it will make me a thoughtful boy so as I may be a thoughtful man, no more at present,

I am, Dear Miss—,

Your very sincere friend,
Thomas Urquhart."

Our boys generally end up their letters in some such way as that, it being a method of making their epistles cover a little more paper. As I feared, Urquhart's letter was merely diplomatic. He had not come round to the opinion that after all a book was better than the cake, but he had seen the point of Fleming's sudden suggestion, that the plan would be to "keep in" with his benefactress. Secundus had shown that if Miss M— was bothered about this year's present, she would be less likely to send anything next year, and this sank into Urquhart's mind. Hence the tone of his letter of thanks.

It remains to follow the inglorious career of this copy of "Thoughtful Boys make Thoughtful Men." First, Urquhart was openly contemptuous of it, and there seemed a probability of its only being used as a missile. Soon, however, he dropped hints that it was a deeply interesting story, following these hints up with the remark that he was open to offers. He and Fleming Secundus had quite a tiff about it, though they are again good friends. Secundus, it appears, had gone the length of saying that it was worth a shilling, and had taken it to his bed to make sure of this. Urquhart considered it as good as bought, but Secundus returned it to him next day. Examination of the book roused the suspicions of Urquhart, who charged Secundus with having read it by peeping between the pages, which, to enhance its commercial value had remained uncut. This Secundus denied, but he had left the mark of his thumb on it. Eventually the book was purchased by Cocky Jones, but not without a row. Cocky went up to Urquhart one day and held out a shilling, saying that he would give it for "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men." The owner wanted to take the shilling at once, and give up the book later in the day, but Cocky insisted on its being put into his hands immediately. That Jones should be anxious

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to become the possessor of an improving book surprised Urquhart, but in his haste to make sure of the shilling, he handed over "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men." Within an hour of the striking of this bargain a rumor reached Urquhart's ears that Cocky had resold the work for one and sixpence. Inquiries were instituted, which led to a discovery. At our school there is a youth called Dicky Jenkinson, who, though not exactly a thoughtful boy, has occasional aspirations in that direction. Being for the moment wealthy, Jenkinson had remarked, in the presence of Cocky, that one and sixpence would not be too much to give for Urquhart's copy of "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men." Feeling his way cautiously, Cocky asked whether he meant that the book would be cheap at one and sixpence to anybody who wanted it, or whether he (Dicky) was willing and able to expend that sum on it. Thus brought to bay, Jenkinson solemnly declared that he meant to make Urquhart an offer that very day. Cocky

made off to think this matter over, for he was aware that the book had been already offered to Fleming Secundus for a shilling. He saw that by taking prompt action he might clear sixpence before bedtime. Unfortunately, he was not able to buy the book from Urquhart, for he was destitute of means, and he knew it would be mere folly to ask Urquhart for credit. In these painful circumstances he took Robbins into his confidence. At first he merely asked Robbins to lend him a shilling and Robbins merely replied that he would do no such thing. To show that the money would be returned promptly, Cocky then made a clean breast of it, after which Robbins was ready to lend him an ear. Robbins, however, stipulated that he should get half of the spoils. Cocky, as has been seen, got the book from Urquhart, but when it came to the point, Jenkinson was reluctant to part with the one and sixpence. In this extremity Cocky appealed to Robbins, who at once got hold of Dicky and threatened to slaughter him if he did

not keep to his bargain. Thus frightened, Jenkinson bought the book. On hearing of this, Urquhart considered that he had been swindled, and set off in quest of Cocky. That boy was not to be found, however, until his threepence had disappeared in tarts. I got to know of this affair through Robbins, backing up of Cocky, and telling Urquhart that nobody was afraid of him. A ring was immediately formed round Urquhart and Robbins, which I had the pleasure of breaking up. Since I sat down to write the adventures of "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men," I have looked through the book. Jenkinson read several chapters of it, then offered it for next to nothing to anybody who had a fancy for being thoughtful. As no bidder was forthcoming, he in the end lost heart and presented it to the school library. A gentleman who visited us lately, and looked through the library, picked it up, and said that he was delighted to observe that the boys kept their books clean. Yet not so long ago he was a boy at our school himself.

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