

# OLD ABE PETERS

BY JOE CONE  
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ABE PETERS was a Yankee man an' sharper than a pin. He lived way out in Lonesome Lane, all by himself, an' he would never visit other folks or ask his neighbors in. An' never had Thanksgivin' or a Christmas jubilee. He was the sharpest feller in a trade you ever knew. He was the closest buyer ever seen around the town. An' if he lent a dollar he was sure to get back two. An' always took advantage of the feller who was down. The old folks used to talk of him beside the fire at night. An' dwell upon his dealin's in a most peculiar way. The children used to mock him when he chanced to come in sight. An' this is but a sample of the things they used to say:

"Old Abe Peters of Lonesome Lane,  
Old Abe Peters in town again,  
Poor as a buzzard an' mean as a crow,  
With lots of money, but none to show—  
Old—Abe—Peters!"

There come a mighty blizzard, an' it buried Lonesome Lane. Abe Peters he was covered under seven foot of snow; He tried to leave his shanty, but he found it all in vain; Each day he grew more frightened, with his fodder runnin' low. Some said, "Let's dig out Peters," an' some said, "No; let him go."

They argued o'er the matter till the week was on the wane,  
Till finally they ventured, half a score of souls or so,  
An' this is what they shouted as they dug out Lonesome Lane:

"Old Abe Peters, unbuckle your gold;  
Old Abe Peters, we're dry an' cold;  
Cider or coffee or crackers an' beer  
Or money to buy us some Christmas cheer—  
Old—Abe—Peters!"

Abe Peters saw 'em comin' from his garret window pane; He saw 'em diggin' fiercely through the mighty drifts of snow. His heart warmed for a moment; then it turned to ice again. He scowled with selfish malice on the workers down below. And did he pass 'em coffee? Did he offer Christmas cheer? An' thank 'em for their labor, which, alas, was all in vain? He warned 'em from his dooryard in a manner most severe. An' sued 'em all for trespass when he got around again.

"Abe Peters has vanished from Lonesome Lane;  
Abe Peters will never come back again,  
Just where he is quartered we do not know,  
But it's safe to reckon he's found no snow—  
Old—Abe—Peters!"



Abe Peters saw 'em comin'.

## Christmas In the Caribbean

"I can't be at my own house," remarked a naval officer, "I'd rather spend the holiday season on a cruiser or gunboat down in the Caribbean than in the greatest city of the land. Fun? Why, you don't know what fun is until you come to a celebration like the musical comedy given by the crew of a protected cruiser off Santo Domingo on Christmas night four years ago. "The surgeon wrote the words, and there was a sailor, a regular genius at music, who got up the finest score you ever heard. Why, he'd have made a hit writing music for operas on Broadway if he hadn't died of tropical fever. That comedy—but I guess you'd call it an extravaganza more likely—was the funniest show I ever saw. Maybe it wouldn't have seemed so to you, but to us it was all that could be desired by the most critical."

"But how did you get a stage or scenery or costumes or makeup?" asked the landsman. "Oh, that was all easy," he replied. "As soon as the men told the captain of their plan he gave them the free use of the quarter deck, which was cleared for dramatic action. Then the boys built a platform—as good a stage as you ever saw—and chairs or benches were placed in rows until there were seats for everybody, from the commanding officer down to the cook's helper."

"Curtain? Of course we had a curtain. It was made of old sailcloth, and a series of ropes and pulleys made it rise and fall as smoothly as the one in the Metropolitan Opera House. Then,



"THE 'LEADING WOMAN' WAS A SMOOTH CHEEKED SWEDEN."

on each side of the stage, more sailcloth was used to conceal the dressing rooms and the 'flies'. As for scenery, the carpenters built wooden frames, and these were covered with sails stretched taut, on which the painters put beautiful trees and houses and whatever else was necessary to complete the pictures. The footlights were electric bulbs, shaded from the audience by tin reflectors.

"The costumes and makeup required as much ingenuity. The organizers had procured a good many feminine garments ashore several weeks ahead of time, but all the smaller accessories were made aboard ship. The false beards were constructed of strands of rope, which were carefully picked out and then shaped up by a fellow who had a talent for that sort of work. Of the same material he wove elaborate wigs. Burnt cork did the work of darkening eyebrows, and face paints were mixed in the fo'c'sle—probably from ordinary house paints, for I guess the sailors weren't particular about their complexions."

"The 'leading woman' was a smooth cheeked Swede, and he was rigged up 'regardless.' I can tell you he was a stunner. The bouffants and lace and ribbons he wore would have filled a trunk. The only trouble about him was his voice, but we grew used to that before the end of the first act; what it lacked in feminine delicacy it atoned for in quality. He gave us all the popular songs of a year before in a rich tenor and added a few composed for the occasion, mostly hits at the officers, who took good naturedly all the jokes at their expense. There was a fair plot to the piece."

"The music, rendered by an orchestra of twenty pieces, had been another subject for careful preparation. There were a few instruments on board, and these were supplemented by some bought by subscriptions from the officers, upon whom the men had called for all the cash they needed. The extra horns and drums and stringed pieces were secured at a port we visited a week previously, and the players had been practicing, often to the annoyance of those who had to remain near the fo'c'sle, every night since their equipment was completed."

"Ah, it was a fine show! There we were, a lonesome lot of devils, who hadn't had a look in on a good time for six months. This diversion we enjoyed like schoolboys who had been cooped between brick walls from September to Christmas holidays. After it was over of course we had banquets, the officers in the wardroom and the sailors in the fo'c'sle, and by the next morning every man of us felt he had spent a real Christmas as Christmas ought to be spent."—New York Times.

## The Doll Hospital

By J. A. EDGERTON

[Copyright, 1906, by J. A. Edgerton.] THE world is full of hospitals, not only for disease racked and wrecked human beings, but for dogs, horses, birds and—dolls. And why not? Dolls have ailments as well as other folks—in fact, rather more so. They lose their hair, their eyes, their teeth, their hands, their legs, their sawdust and even their complexions and heads. Small boys delight in crippling and maiming them, rockers smash them, big folks step on them. This is a hard world for dolls. So the doll hospitals flourish. Most large cities support one. Doll surgery has become a science. The poor things do not have to take medicine, fortunately, except paint applied externally and sawdust internally, so that a pharmacopoeia is not required in doll doctoring. The operations are all surgical. But for all that the doll doctors are entitled to place M. D. after their names. M. D. standing for mender of dolls. It is quite a grewsome sight in the

wards and operating room of the hospital itself. There heads, arms, legs, eyes and trunks lie about in startling array. Most of the heads are minus hair and have great holes in the tops of them. Arms or legs are hanging literally by a thread. Noses are broken, hands are minus, feet have been amputated, faces are mashed in, while the internal machinery that makes the doll cry, say "mamma" and open and shut its eyes is out of whack as badly as some people's livers. The wax, china and papier mache babies have never developed appendicitis as yet, or stomach ache, but they are subject to almost every other ill.

The doll hospital is a great boon to the little mothers. They come at all hours of the day, bringing their ailing darlings, or, if they live too far away, they send dolly by express or messenger, with cramped and pathetic notes. One little girl had let her precious fall downstairs and break its leg, another had been listening to a hand organ on the street, and her brother, who was playing that he was a Chinese emperor and was executing some of his subjects, just to keep in practice, had cut dolly's head off with a fire-shovel. Still another small miss of seven had kissed the nose off. Mchitable Jane—dolls usually have long

name, you know—and would the doctors please fix it? They would.

On the work table at the hospital are not only arms and legs galore, but all kinds of wigs, paints, threads and cords, miniature teeth, tiny curling irons, pastes and greases, hanks and scissors of many shapes and sizes and even an appalling assortment of glass eyes of various colors and sizes. The eyes, which open and shut with a weight, are placed in position through the opening in the head. A few stitches serve to mend loose arm or leg, while hooks and cords are usually required to fix a fractured joint. The paint brush touches up a faded complexion, as is the case even with flesh and blood grown folks.

There are almond eyed Chinese dolls with faded yellow complexions and long eues, Indians with feathers missing from their war bonnets, pickaninny dolls with moth eaten wool and angel faced cherubs with a battered appearance that makes them look as if they had been in a Bowery scrimmage. But surgery does miracles, and this particular branch of it performs even greater wonders than that in the sure enough hospitals. It makes bodily members grow on where none had been before, and before its marvelous powers even decapitation is not fatal.



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