

Stopping the "Fire Wagon."

When the first railroad was laid over the western plains and the cars began running to San Francisco the Indians viewed the locomotive from the hill-tops at a distance, not daring to come nearer the "fire wagon."

The Indians stretched a lariat across the track, breast high, each end being held by thirty braves.

"When the engineer first saw it he didn't know what on earth was the matter," said the narrator, "but in a minute more he burst out laughing. He caught hold of that throttle, and he opened her out."

"He struck that lariat going about forty miles an hour, and he just piled those braves up everlasting promiscuous."

They're All Good. Burne-Jones, the famous artist, made many sketches for the children of his friend, J. Comyns Carr.

By special request he made another drawing, illustrating the anatomy of the bad man. On being met with the reproach that the third drawing showed nothing of the details of internal structure he replied:

"There are none. The bad man is quite hollow."

On being challenged to illustrate the anatomy of the bad woman he gravely replied:

"My dear boy, she doesn't exist."

Plymouth Rock. Plymouth rock has become an object of veneration in the United States because of its interesting historical associations.

As is well known, it is the rock or ledge on which the pilgrims are believed to have landed when they first stepped from their boats in the harbor of what is now Plymouth, Mass.

In 1775 part of the rock was removed to the vicinity of Pilgrim hall, but was afterward restored to its original site and is now under the stone canopy that surmounts the main rock on Water street.

Charles Sumner said, "From the landing at Plymouth rock, to the senate of the United States is a mighty contrast, covering whole spaces of history hardly less than from the wolf that suckled Romulus and Remus to that Roman senate which on curule chairs swayed Italy and the world."

The Hypocrite a Genius. Really to be a hypocrite must require a horrible strength of character. An ordinary man such as you or I generally fails at last because he has not enough energy to be a man.

But the hypocrite must have enough energy to be two men. It is said that a liar should have a good memory. But a hypocrite must have not only a good memory of the past, but a consistent and creative vision of the future; his unreal self must be so far real to him.

The perfect hypocrite should be a trinity of artistic talent. He must be a novelist like Dickens to create a false character. He must be an actor like Garrick to act it. And he must be a business man like Carnegie to profit by it.

Such a genius would not be easy to find in any country.—G. K. Chesterton.

A Story of Gambetta. It is told of Gambetta that once, when in the heyday of his power, when he went to some agricultural department to oust a reactionary candidate in favor of one of his friends, he inquired about the agriculturists' wants.

"We are sadly in need of rain," came the answer. "I'll see about it when I get to Paris," promised Gambetta. And his listeners believed in his promise. The record runs that the rain came down in torrents a day or two after and that when the reactionary candidate presented himself he was hoisted at. "Let your party do as much for us as Gambetta, and we'll elect you," they said.

The Very Simple Life.

Pierre Loti, the French author, always did like a practical joke. A French poet who had been advocating a return to the simple life decided one day to make the acquaintance of Loti.

He left his village, he who never travels, stick in hand, to make the journey to Hendaye, the home of Loti, on foot. He prayed the celebrated novelist to receive him without ceremony; that he should be satisfied with a bowl of milk for his repast.

But he was much astonished when the novelist took him at his word. In the dining room at a table without cloth or napkin there was only an immense crock of milk.

The visitor showed some hesitation about beginning the feast. Meanwhile his host began to walk around the room like a bear in a cage, only interrupting his walk from time to time to take a long swig of milk from the crock. Without saying a word the invited the astonished guest to imitate him.

The man of the simple life had found one more simple than himself, and he left the house convinced that the great novelist had become crazy.

Murder Revealed by a Dream. Perhaps the most amazing crime mystery ever solved by a dream was that revealed by a murder trial a couple of generations ago.

The dead body of Mr. Norway, an inoffensive Cornish gentleman, had been found by the roadside between Wadebridge and Bodmin brutally murdered. No trace of the murderer could be found, and the mystery of the crime seemed beyond all solution when Mr. Norway's brother, a naval officer, arrived in England and told the following story:

On the very night of his brother's murder, when he was on his ship in the West Indies, he saw him in a dream walking along the Bodmin road, when from a dark recess in the hedge two ruffians sprang out, slew and robbed him and then made their way to a house in Wadebridge, which he saw vividly in his dream.

He conducted the police officers, and there he found the very two men whom in his vision he had seen commit the murder. They confessed and suffered the extreme penalty of the law.—London Answers.

There Was No Duel. Colonel Crisp when in the Missouri legislature was one of the central figures in a scene which promised bloodshed, which ended in a hearty laugh and which was the cause of an astounding remark from Hon. John W. Farris, the then speaker, said Champ Clark, Crisp and another member got into a debate which grew into a quarrel.

They shook their fists at each other and roared like a pair of Numidian lions. Everybody expected and many hoped to see a regular old fashioned knockdown and dragout fight, which expectation and hope were frustrated and dashed to the ground by Speaker Farris remarking:

"If you gentlemen do not quit fussing and take your seats I will order the chaplain to take you into custody," which so amazed the bellicose legislators that they stood in a state of lingual paralysis, while the spectators laughed till they were red in the face. Humor saved the day.

How He Helped the Blind. "Please help a blind man," said a fellow with green goggles as he held a tin cup toward the line of people issuing from the Union depot.

"I always help the blind," said one of two young men who were passing, and he stopped and took out a five dollar bill. "Can you get a quarter out of this?" "I guess so," said the blind man, fishing out a handful of change and counting out \$4.75. "Well, John," said the benevolent young man's companion as they walked on, "you're a bigger fool than I took you to be."

"Am I?" said John. "Yes, you are. That fellow's more blind than I am. How could he tell that was a five dollar bill?" "Blamed if I know," said John innocently, "but he must be mighty near sighted not to see that it was a counterfeit."—Chicago News.

Settled the Difficulty. An insurance agent had vainly tried to persuade a man to insure his valuables against burglary. "A safe's all very well," he admitted, "but look at the constant trouble of locking up and unlocking to see if your things are all right."

"I've got over that difficulty," declared the weary listener. "Indeed?" said the agent incredulously. "How?" "I've had a window put in the safe," growled the other.

An Indiscreet Memory. The Hostess—Don't you think Colonel Broadside is quite a wonderful old man? Look at him. He is as straight and slender as an arrow, and he has the most wonderful memory. The Lady of Dubious Age—I think he's an atrocious old bore. He remembers when everybody was born.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Poor Dogs! Returned Explorer—Yes; the cold was so intense at the pole we had to be very careful not to pet our dogs. Miss Youngthing—Indeed! Why was that? Returned Explorer—You see, their tails were frozen stiff, and if they wagged them they would break off.—Boston Transcript.

Where Her Thoughts Were. Daughter—To tell the truth, pa, I didn't think much of the close of the sermon. Father—Thought more of the clothes of the congregation, eh?

If a man wishes to be treated with courtesy he should show courtesy to others.

A BIT OF CHRISTMAS

By C. E. WYMAN

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It was Christmas morning and very, very cold. Every few minutes a trainman would come through the car, watching carefully a dial faced thermometer and stopping to turn screws of the heating apparatus in persistent attempts to keep the pointing finger at 70 degrees.

Despite the discomfort of close air, which was none too warm at best, the passengers in the main were joyous faces and didn't seem to consider the numerous packages and bundles an annoyance.

From a wayside station, which looked as if it had never been neighbor to any house where human beings lived, a poor little girl entered and dropped into a seat where an overcoat told that its owner was probably in the smoking car.

The child did not notice this, and in her ignorance of travel it would have made no difference if she had. She might have been eight or ten years old, but that air of self reliance was hers which poverty's child often acquires very young, yet there was nothing forward or "bold" in her appearance.

Her dress was of the scantiest—a thin cotton gown, barely concealing the lack of suitable underwear; a little worn shawl and a battered straw hat.

When the conductor appeared the child presented her half fare ticket with red wax seal, but the small person lifted him a wonderfully frank face and confidently informed him that she was going to grandma's for Christmas and that the package she clutched in her hand contained cookies for grandma.

The conductor smiled down at her. A pitying smile it was, as he thought of his own well fed, well clothed children, with whom he expected to eat a late Christmas dinner when his run was over. The smile lingered on his face as he passed to the next seat and saw that its occupants had heard.

Two women sat in the seat, strangers to each other and as unlike as two persons made on the same general principles could be. One was tall, dignified, young, wrapped in costly furs, everything about her showing the person who never lacked money or leisure; the other, stout, jolly, elderly, comfortable—a kindly and well to do woman.

The two had traveled miles and miles side by side with not a word passed between them. Now both sat with eyes fixed on the form which presented her in front of them. Suddenly the younger woman opened her travel bag and took from it a soft gray shawl. It was at least two yards long and half as wide. Folding it together, she touched the little girl, saying in a low tone, "Stand up, my dear." The child obeyed wonderingly, and this woman in the costly furs placed the folded shawl around the small shoulders, crossed it in front and, bringing the ends to the back, pinned them securely.

"It is yours to keep," she whispered—"a Christmas present." Then, turning to the woman at her side, she said apologetically, "I really did not need it myself." There was a blink of tears in her eyes.

"Well, now," the older woman exclaimed in admiration, "you just set me to thinking! I'm really ashamed that I didn't think of doing something myself. Here, I've got two pairs of mittens for my grandson—just about her size—in my hand bag, and he can't wear out more than one pair this winter. Besides, I can knit another. It's nothing at all to knit mittens." She was busily undrawing the strings of an enormous silk bag, but her glasses were blurred, and her fingers were clumsy with haste.

"What's your name, little girl? Katie? Well, hold out your hands, Katie. My! Aren't they a good fit! There's another Christmas present to keep. And here's a frosted cake. Just eat it right now. Katie. Your grandma won't need it, with all those you've got in your bundle."

The child again obeyed. She did not say, "Thank you." Possibly she did not know how, but she seemed to glow all over, and her eyes returned thanks even if her timid lips did not.

"I'm proud to know you, my dear," the roly poly, comfortable woman said now to the young lady, for she had been saying to herself all the while: "You're the right sort. I can see that." "And I am proud to know you," the other responded, almost shyly offering her hand, which was quickly buried in a big, warm grasp. "We all long to be of service at Christmas time, you know."

At that instant the man of the overcoat sauntered in to resume his seat. He gave a low whistle of surprise at the happy little traveler next the window, glanced at the two women and comprehended the situation. His right hand made a quick dive into his trousers pocket as if to get some money. In another instant he withdrew it and reached up to the rack overhead and lifted down a large paper bundle. Taking the bundle across the aisle to an empty seat, he opened it and took out a smaller package from among many others. Untying this package, he brought to light a flaxen haired doll dressed in the latest style and resplendent in a large picture hat. This he placed in the little girl's arms, saying, "From my little daughter, who would rather you should have it." Then he lifted his hat courteously to the women, took his overcoat on his arm and strode off to find a seat elsewhere. Rich little Katie!

A Christmas Miracle.

The little German children who live in and near the Black Forest call the white chrysanthemum their "Christmas flower," and every year, on Christmas Eve, they gather around their wood fires and listen to the wonderful story the old folk tell about how the flower, which used to be always golden, came to be white.

Long, long ago, says the story, a little beggar child, cold and hungry, came one bitter Christmas Eve to the hut of a poor peasant, who had many mouths to feed. But, taking him in, the kind-hearted child gladly shared their own food with the little stranger. And when their guests had eaten, he rose and thanked them with a glorious smile—and then vanished suddenly, like a vision. And a strange, soft light shined in the peasant's humble dwelling, and made it seem radiant with beauty.

"It is—oh, it is the Christ-child!" cried the little ones, and rushed eagerly to the door.

But he was gone; and, stranger even than his strange departure, there were no foot-prints on the stainless snow.

But in the morning, when the door was opened, a cluster of beautiful white flowers, with rich dark leaves, was found blooming on the threshold. And the lovely fringed blossoms were exactly like the "golden flower," only the soft, waxlike petals were as white as the drifted snow.—[Adapted from an exchange.]

A stranger noticed a sailing vessel flying signals of distress and bore down on her. When she was within the call she asked what was the matter. "Water!" came the answer from cracked lips and parching throat. "Give us water, for we are dying of thirst." Pointing to the surrounding water, the steamer captain cried: "Let down your buckets then and drink." Unknown to the thirsty crew they were sailing in the month of the mighty Amazon and the water around them was river water pouring out to meet the sea. Many a

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