

A QUICK CHANGE.

The Sweet Taffy That Came After the Cold Roast.

"Say, Jen," said Katie, the brunette, with white side combs in her hair. "I see Mamie has bleached her hair again. Ain't it terrible?"

"Yes, perfectly awful!" replied Jennie. "She asked me if I would do it if I were she, and I said 'yes.' Don't she look perfectly dreadful—and it's getting streaked already. You could tell in a minute it was bleached, the roots are so dark."

"Sure, I noticed that!" responded Katie. "And, say, did you see the rag of a dress she had on yesterday? And it's fit-gracious! Looked perfectly dreadful, didn't it?"

"Perfectly dreadful," echoed Jennie. "Well, she wanted a pattern, and I gave her the one of that dark blue silk I had three years ago," said Katie.

"You did?"

"Yes, I did."

"Oh?"

"And the hat she was wearing," continued Katie. "Did you get your optics on that?"

"Yes."

"Perfect sight, wasn't it?"

"Where did she get it?"

"Oh, down at the Moody's. I helped her pick it out," was Katie's reply.

"Why, why, here comes Mamie now," she continued. "Hello, Mamie, you dear, sweet thing! How nice you look—too darling for anything!"

"Yes, indeed," added Jennie. "You do look perfectly charming. Say, let's all go and get some soda."

And the three friends walked away together.—New York Times.

THE PEANUT.

It Starts Growing in the Open, but Finishes Under Ground.

Most people of the north suppose that peanuts grow, like potatoes, on the roots of the vine. Others with equal confidence state that they hang from the branches like pea pods. Both are right, and both are wrong. The peanut starts in the air and sunlight above ground in the shape of a flower growing at the end of a long tube. After the fall of blossoms this tube, or peduncle, elongates and bends downward, pushing itself inches into the ground. If for any reason it cannot do this it dies in a few hours. But if it succeeds in burying itself to its own satisfaction the ovary at the base of the peduncle slowly enlarges and forms the familiar pod, which is therefore dug out of the ground.

Scattered over the roots of the plant, however, are numerous warts or tubercles, in which, by the aid of a good microscope, can be seen myriads of minute organisms. These bacteria-like bodies, though they get their living from the plant, contribute materially to its supporting by collecting nitrogen from the air and holding it in storage, so to speak, supplying it to the plant as need requires. These wonderful little storehouses often contain, by analysis, a greater supply of this indispensable fertilizer than the surrounding soil.

The native country of the peanut has long been a matter of dispute, but the department of agriculture states that the weight of evidence seems to be in favor of Brazil. Thus the peanut is added to the four other plants of great importance that America has given to the world—namely, cotton, Indian corn, tobacco and the potato.

The Literary Squire.

Traveling Inspector (cross questioning the terrified class)—And now, boys, who wrote "Hamlet?"

Timid Boy—P-p-please, sir, it wasn't me.

Traveling Inspector (the same evening to his host, the squire of the village)—Most amusing thing happened today. I was questioning the class and asked a boy, "Who wrote 'Hamlet?'" and he answered fearfully, "P-p-please, sir, it wasn't me."

Squire (after loud and prolonged laughter)—Ha, ha! That's good, and I suppose the little devil had done it all the time.—London Answers.

Knocked Into a Coked Hat.

The expression "knocked into a coked hat" is familiar to every one, but perhaps its origin is not so generally known. Coked hat was a variety of the game of bowls in which only three pins were used, set up at the angles of a triangle. When in bowling tenpins all were knocked down except the three at the corners the set was said to be "knocked into a coked hat," whence the popular expression for depriving anything of its main body, character or purpose.

Perfect Happiness.

"Do you really believe there is such a thing in this world as 'perfect happiness?'"

"Of course, but some other fellow always has it."—Philadelphia Ledger.

The Distinguishing Mark.

"How do you distinguish the waiters from the guests in this cafe? Both wear full dress."

"Yes, but the waiters keep sober."—Cleveland Leader.

The Jokes on the Men.

Mrs. A.—Do you ever read the jokes in the newspapers? Mrs. B.—Only the jokes on the men—the marriage notices, you know.—Boston Transcript.

The only wealth which will not decay is knowledge.—Langford.

SALT SEA YARNS.

Signs and Omens to Which the Sailor Grimly Clings.

A JOKE THAT PROVED FATAL.

Superstition and a Guilty Conscience Proved Too Much For the Norseman—A Bucket of Water That Stopped a Mysterious Wailing.

It is a well known fact that in the past the sailor was among the most superstitious of mortals, and even in these enlightened days there are a goodly number of old salts who cling tenaciously to their belief in certain signs and portents. Some, no doubt, of these superstitions have vanished altogether into the limbo of forgotten things, but there will always be a credulous few who will shake their heads solemnly and prophesy dismally if a knife is stuck in the mast or an albatross or a stormy petrel is captured and brought on board. The origin of some of these superstitions cannot be traced. Many of them have been handed down from father to son for a great number of years, with a touch probably added here and there, turning a comparatively ordinary story into a weird and mysterious legend.

The Finn is the most superstitious of all sailors. There are many of this race who still believe in the ominous portent of the phantom ship, the folly of starting a voyage on a Friday in notion by no means confined to seafaring men, the low burning blue lights which are ghost spirits hovering near to give warning of approaching disaster and many other things, all of which fill the sailor's mind with murmurings and speak to him of wrecks.

A story is told of a brigantine which numbered several extremely superstitious men among her crew. One night when there was no moon and a slight ground swell was running the watch, who happened to be the most superstitious of them all, heard an unearthly wailing coming apparently from the very surface of the sea. The mate and the helmsman also heard it, but the former lacked imagination, and, although he was certainly interested, he nearly blew the watch's head off when he ventured to suggest mermaids. The helmsman did not feel quite happy, but he had to stick to the wheel. The watch was pale with terror, but he kept silence owing to the mate's complimentary references to his courage and abilities. Slowly the sound began to move along the ship's side, becoming more and more agonized as it approached. This annoyed the mate, and, going to the side of the vessel, he waited until he had located the sound and then emptied a bucket of water over the rail. There was a gasp, then dead silence, and nothing more was heard that night.

When the watch went off duty he of course gave a detailed and lurid account of the incident to his shipmates, who listened, as he thought, in awed silence and then called on one of the audience for his version of the matter. This man, a Tyne-sider, who dearly loved a joke and had no respect at all for hoary superstitions, had conspired with his fellows to play a trick on the watch. On the night in question he had crept over the bows without a sound, carrying with him the ship's cat secured in a bag. Crouching under the stays, the joker let the cat's head out of the bag, which he tied round the animal's neck so that it could not escape. He then applied his teeth to the unfortunate animal's tail. Everybody knows the fearsome sounds an angry cat is capable of producing, and those to which a cat whose tail is being bitten gives vent are among the most hair raising. The sound was more or less regulated by squeezing the luckless beast's body. The mate's bucket of water was as unwelcome as unexpected and caused the Tyne-sider to beat a hurried retreat.

Not only is the origin of many sea superstitions "wropt in mystery," but also any logical explanation of cause and effect. It would puzzle any one to say why it should be unlucky for the ship's boy to whistle on the weather bow, except that it is generally unpleasant from a music lover's point of view for a boy to whistle on any bow at all.

On one occasion superstition and a guilty conscience caused a practical joke to have fatal consequences. The incident arose through one of the sailors, a Norwegian, locking the ears of the ship's boy for the aforementioned crime of whistling on the weather bow. Not unnaturally the boy was annoyed and determined to pay the Norwegian out. Aided by two other sailors, a white shirt and some string, a very presentable "ghost" was arranged in the foc'sle on the night the Norseman was on watch. He was to be allowed only a glimpse of the "spirit" on entering the foc'sle, and it was then to vanish from view, being jerked by means of a string underneath the bunk of one of the jokers. Everything was ready, and the three conspirators lay in their bunks awaiting their victim. Unfortunately they all fell asleep, to be suddenly awakened by a loud cry from the Norwegian. He stood gazing at the "ghost," the dim light shed by the lamp falling on his ghastly face. The three were about to call out to him when he spoke. "No, no," he cried, "I did not mean to kill you, Morgan! Oh, mercy, mercy!" And he rushed madly from the foc'sle. Terrified, his shipmates followed him, but as they reached the deck they saw the Norwegian throw himself into the sea.—London Globe.

—Miss Antique—He told me my teeth were like stars.
Miss Caustique—Yes? I wonder if he meant to infer that they come out at night.

—Patience—Did you ever try counting ten before speaking?
Patrice—Yes: I tried it once, but I can't do it.

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