

His English Admirers Annoyed Bret Harte

It is said that Bret Harte used to be some weary to exasperation at the foolish admirers who could not separate him from his characters, and who insisted on confounding their experiences and predilections with his own.

Since he wrote of pioneer mining camps in the early days of the gold fever, his characters were often heroic only in part; indeed, they were quite as often rogues as heroes.

"So you say 'great game' over here?" he inquired amiably. "In the States, now, we call it 'big game'—grizzlies, catamounts, buffalo and big horns, don't you know. But we don't chase them with pokers. No, no. They're abundant, but they don't often come into the houses, really. It's usually necessary to go outside with a gun."

At another time he learned that a certain noted hostess, whose invitation to dine he had just accepted, had been concerned whether it were true he was a reformed gambler.

"Not reformed," said Harte, wearily. "Tell her that I am beyond reformation. Tell her that I was my own model for the gambler, Oakhurst, and that the scene of his suicide is pure autobiography."

Americans Accorded Honors by Britain

The first native American to be knighted by an English monarch was Sir William Pepperell, who was born in Kittery, Maine, June 27, 1696. His father was a Welshman who came to New England as an apprentice to a fisherman.

Since Pepperell's time many Americans have achieved knighthood and higher British honors. Lord Astor and Lord Shaughnessy, the former a native of New York and the latter of Milwaukee, being among the more prominent latter-day examples.

Iguana Fearsome Beast

A monster iguana has recently been added to the attractions at the London (England) zoological gardens. When the weather is warm and fine this strange beast is allowed out into the open. With its spiny breast, which turns blue with excitement, the creature looks so terrifying that spectators are not likely to ignore the notice warning them that "The animal is very dangerous. Do not touch."

Despite its fresh-air treatment, the iguana has lost its appetite, so it is being forcibly fed by the attendants.

Honesty

A man who wanted to know what the percentage of crooks is in the world sent a hundred one-dollar bills to as many persons, together with a letter explaining that they had been overcharged to that extent. Nobody had been overcharged, of course, because there had been no business relationship between the sender of the letters and their recipients.

Seraglio's Location Fixed

The ancient palace of the sultans of Turkey at Constantinople is called the seraglio, the Kansas City Times informs us. It is beautifully situated on the site of ancient Byzantium, and incloses within its walls an area of nine square miles, irregularly covered with baths, mosques, kiosks, gardens and cypress groves.

Turned Quarry Into Lake

A heavy blast fired in the Pentax stone quarries, one of the largest workings in central Pennsylvania, turned the quarry into a lake overnight. The charge blew a hole in the bottom of the rock and struck a spring, which in 24 hours made a lake approximately 400 feet long, 100 feet in width and from five to seventy feet in depth.

Saved Time by Taking Three Meals at Once

My mother, writes a subscriber to the Youth's Companion, told us children many times over of an incident that once happened in grandfather's home when she was a girl of sixteen.

A good-for-nothing, shiftless old fellow by the name of Joe Minnick was in debt to grandfather, and in order to get what was coming to him and also to help Joe out grandfather engaged him to cut some wood in the timber section about a mile from the home place.

The family had already finished the morning meal and my mother was clearing the dishes away when the old man came in. Mother promptly prepared the extra meal, and since it was a mile to the timber, she put up a substantial noonday lunch.

After Joe had finished his breakfast he said to mother, "Susan, if you will put the dinner on the table, I will eat it now, for I don't like cold victuals."

Mother did so, and when he had eaten he turned to her and said: "Now, Susan, if you will get my supper for me, I will eat it here and now, and then I won't have to walk all this way back before going home."

Mother immediately cooked old Joe's supper and spread it before him. He ate with avidity, and after this third meal he turned to grandfather and said: "Isaac, I never work after eating my supper. Good evening." And away the shiftless old fellow went! Nor did grandfather ever collect the debt.

Pawnbroker Has Long Been Known as "Uncle"

Authorities differ as to the origin of "uncle" as applied to pawnbrokers. Some say "uncle" in this sense is a pun on the Latin word "uncus," a hook. Before spouts were adopted pawnbrokers used hooks to lift articles pawned. "Gone to the uncus," say these authorities, was soon corrupted into "gone to my uncle's," the pronoun "my" being supplied for the sake of euphony, according to the Detroit News.

But there seems to be a more plausible theory as to the origin of "uncle" as applied to pawnbrokers. People instinctively try to conceal the fact that they have pawned an article. It is natural for such persons to pretend that money thus obtained is from a rich uncle.

Game Birds

In a certain hotel on Broadway three men who, from their conversation, were evidently fond of sports, were, after exhausting golf, tennis, etc., with the first course, now debating as to which kind of game was the best. A large, impressive individual of the professional type stoutly declared that nothing could be compared to the pheasant, while his companion was vainly trying to impress upon his mind that partridge was the best.

"Well, suh," came the unexpected answer, "for mah part, I would rathah have an American eagle served on a silvah dollah."—Western Christian Advocate (Cincinnati).

The Test

The loftiest test of friendship—understood as companionship—is the power to do without it. And in this world of external confusions and separations, there is often such need. We do not yield the friendship, but must forego the companionship. Then comes the proof of our capacity for sacrifice, our loyalty, to the highest of all. We turn our faces from each other, but never our hearts, and walk our opposite ways. Gradually the heavens widen and deepen above us; we find ourselves breathing new, yet strangely familiar atmospheres, sweet with the breath of the old affection; we see ourselves—each sees the other—met once more in a Presence which has never forsaken us.—Lucy Larcom.

Little Known About Atom

No one has ever seen an atom although scientific records of today are filled with research information, all of which has been gleaned from studying the performances of groups of atoms. No microscope has ever been invented powerful enough to make an atom or even a large molecule, which is a group of associated atoms, visible, and there is little hope in this direction because the modern microscope, according to those who should know, is about as near perfect as it may be expected to become.

That's Where They Live

A man went into a telephone booth and started what proved to be a protracted conversation. He had left the door ajar. A line composed of men waiting their turn formed outside. Now and then they could hear the chap in the booth murmur, "Yes, my angel."

"Hello," said the drummer, "central's given somebody heaven."—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

Expression Actually Invitation to Death

The origin of some common expressions is always interesting, and whether the following is authentic or not is an open question. When in ancient days the weaving industry of Halifax, England, was a cottage craft—a farmer's family working on clumsy handlooms—the "pieces" used to be spread out on the hillside, and were therefore peculiarly liable to theft.

Particular crimes led to particular remedies, and a custom, which had the authority of a local law, grew up, that anyone convicted of stealing cloth to the then value of 13 pence halfpenny was liable to immediate execution, a drastic law which naturally safeguarded the cloth industry.

Punishment was carried out, not by hanging, but by a sort of guillotine. This was the Halifax gibbet law, the name of which is preserved by a still standing street in the town, while the actual knife of the gibbet may be seen in the old manor rolls office at Wakefield. Halifax thus acquired a reputation among thieves and vagabonds as the last town in England desirable to visit. And to tell anyone to go to Halifax is equivalent to bidding him to "Go hang!"—Chicago Journal

Genius of Philology Given Stern Justice

Curious pleas have sometimes been put forward in support of the reprieve of notorious criminals. One of the strangest was that on behalf of George Ruloff, an American school teacher, who was convicted in 1870 of a series of robberies and murders, his own wife and daughter being among the victims. For cold-blooded cruelty his record would be hard to beat, but Ruloff had his other side.

He was an ardent philologist, and had been engaged for years on the invention of a universal language. No one could attempt to palliate his crimes, but a widely signed petition was presented to the governor of Virginia for his reprieve on the ground that as his invention, if completed, would be of the utmost benefit to mankind it would be criminal folly to extinguish such a light of learning. The governor thought otherwise and Ruloff was duly hanged.

By No Means

A farmer had a dispute with his son. For some months they quarreled until, at last, wishing to settle matters one way or the other, the farmer issued a summons against the young man.

"Your name is Hezekiah Perkins, is it not?" inquired the son's counsel.

"It is sir," replied the farmer in dignified tones.

"You have brought this action against your son?"

"I have, sir."

"And do I understand you to say that you have ignored your son for the past month?"

"What?" asked the old man, somewhat puzzled.

"Have you ignored your son for the past month?"

"Oh, no," said the old man, shaking his head. "I have had nothing whatever to do with him."

Nothing Snobbish About Him

Two literary lights, one from Harvard, the other from Yale—that's as far as we care to go—were having a jolly little talk when something cropped up which caused the Yale man to remark:

"The trouble with you Harvard men, is you are inclined to be a little snobbish."

"That is not so," replied his companion. "Why, when I rowed on the crew, I knew every man in the boat except three down in the stern."—W. Orton Tewson in the New York Evening Post.

Acres of Flowers

Each year there are acres of flowers, roses, lilies, violets and others, raised in France and southern Italy to supply the world's increasing demand for perfumes. The process of extraction of the oils exuded by the flowers is quite lengthy and millions of freshly picked blossoms are required to make the supply equal the demand. Large distilleries have recently been built in southern Italy for the extraction of valuable oils from citrus fruit rind which yields essences used in the making of perfumes.

Ancient Ban Lifted

A notice dated London, 1895, read: "Several persons of quality were affronted by persons who rode in hackney carriages, wearing masks, etc. Complaint thereof being made to the lord justices, an order was made that no hackney carriage be permitted to go into said Hyde Park."

That ban, which extended more than 229 years, has been lifted and taxicabs are now allowed to use the roads in Hyde park for getting to and from other parts of London.

Unnecessary Deaths

It is estimated that 35,000,000 people die throughout the world annually, and that 70,000,000 are sick. In the United States there are about 1,500,000 deaths a year. Sanitary science has demonstrated that at least one-quarter of these deaths could be postponed, and that 40 per cent of the sickness could be averted. The leading nations of the world are making a united effort to raise the standard of sanitation and to stamp out diseases.

Glass Flowers Close Imitation of Nature

Marvelous artificial blooms that resemble nature's finest specimens in every respect except scent, are now being made by expert glassblowers.

Every part of the flower or plant is faithfully reproduced, from the long, delicate stems and colored petals to the almost invisible pollen. The first thing which the maker of these wonderful blooms does is to blow the petals from glass as thin and fragile as tissue paper. The glass petals are then shaped and colored exactly like the natural ones.

Some of the rarer plants cannot be easily reproduced, and often several experiments have to be carried out with different colors before a really good imitation is obtained.

These glass flowers are used extensively in museums, both to show details of plant or flower formation and as backgrounds for displaying specimens of birds and beasts.

Antiquity and Whiskers

Tradition says that Adam wore a full beard. That is quite a natural supposition since that was before the time of razor advertisements. Beautifully executed bas reliefs have left no doubt that the early Persian kings cultivated whiskers. In fact, for further adornment they plaited them with golden thread. The Winged Bulls of Assyria are but types of those kings. The Chinese are a shaven people; the Egyptians were the same. But the Mohammedans are bearded, and Saladin's son, Turkish historians tell us, wept for fear when he saw the shaven envoys of the Crusaders. The world is, and always has been, divided into shavers and bearded. The greatest benefactor of barbers in the world's history was Alexander. He, who shaved himself to preserve his youth, shaved his army to prevent the enemy seizing their beards.

Venetian Glass

Venice has long led the world in the manufacture of beautiful glassware. Glass works were early established in that city and the taking of Constantinople in 1204 gave the Venetians the opportunity of acquiring additional knowledge of the art. During the Fourteenth century beads, false stones, and imitations of jewels, rather than cups and the like, seem to have been the chief productions of the Venice workman. Venetian glass is usually of extreme thinness, being nearly always blown, and there is an endless variety to be found in the shapes and in the application of color. Glass-blowing, like throwing clay on the potter's wheel, induces beautiful curved forms and strength of substance.

Names of Irish Towns

The following are the names of some townlands in Castleisland district, with English meanings: Ahaneboy, "Little Yellow Ford." Angiore, "Noisy Ford." Ballynaboul, "Town of the Holes." Bawnaskeh, "Lea Field of the White Thorn." Bawnaluska, "Bawn of the Burning." Beheenagh, "Birch Tree District." Caheragh, "Chieftaincy." Cahereen, "Little Mangston." Cangulla, "Hill of the Gallan (Standing Stone)." Coolavanny, "The Field of the Milk." Coolnageragh, "The Field of the Sheep." Crag, "The Rock." Dooneen, "Little Fort." Drumulton, "Wethers' Ridge." Fahaduff, "Black Field." Fecranabrack, "Land of the Trout Streams."

The Cob Dollar

The "cob dollar" was a Spanish dollar which at one time had wide circulation in the United States. In 1778, when the articles of confederation were adopted, the cob or Spanish dollar was used in practically all business transactions throughout the colonies. Owing to its convenience it was adopted with slight change as our standard dollar. Even the dollar sign originated on these cob dollars coined in Spain and her American colonies. The smaller Spanish coins representing fractions of the cob dollar were called "cob money."

Service

"I keep six honest serving men; (They taught me All I Know): Their names are WHAT and WHY and WHEN, and HOW and WHERE and WHO."

WHAT was the Declaration of London? WHY does the date for Easter vary? WHEN was the great pyramid of Cheops built?

HOW can you distinguish a malarial mosquito? WHERE is Canberra? Zebrugge? WHO was the Millboy of the Slashes? Are these "six men" serving you too? Give them an opportunity by placing

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