

ARTEMUS WARD, JESTER.

SOME REMINISCENCES OF AMERICA'S FAMOUS HUMORIST.

His Life in London Town—Mr. and Mrs. Converse Recall Experiences with the Mirth Provoker—Lecturing a Caddy on the American Situation.

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One evening not long ago I sat in the "Indian room" of Mr. Frank B. Converse's cozy New York home and listened for an hour while my host and his gifted wife, Harriet Maxwell Converse, entertained me with reminiscences of their famous cousin, Charles Farrar Browne, better known to the world as Artemus Ward.

"We were married in 1861," remarked Mr. Converse, "and left America on what may be called an unlimited wedding journey. We wandered through Europe and the Orient for five years, and didn't turn our faces homeward until the early fall of 1866. Then, while stopping at the Langham, in London, I learned that Artemus was in town. I hunted him up, and he returned with me to the hotel. His face was thin, his eyes abnormally bright and his spirits somewhat depressed. He had just contributed his first article to Punch. It didn't suit him. In fact he regarded it with scorn and referred to it as 'infernal gibberish.' Thus weighted down with the blues, he greeted Mrs. Converse, and after formal welcome had been exchanged, exploded: 'Harriet, how nice your hair looks! I never can get mine to suit. Indeed nothing about me curls except this blamed big nose of mine. All the rest is angles.'"

Then he went on to unburden his soul of various grievances. The chief of these was his inability to secure a suitable hall in which to deliver his lectures. Finally he brightened up in the quaint and lovable fashion that so endeared him to his friends, and suggested a visit to the theatre.

"We'll get you a nice seat, Harriet!" he urged, "and then I want Frank to loaf around among the gods with me. Perhaps I can pick up a few ideas."

Here is Mrs. Converse's version of what followed: "The boys saw me comfortably placed in one of the stalls and then left. I grew interested as the play progressed and had forgotten them for a moment, when all at once the house was filled with a sharp, penetrating, uproarious laugh. It came from the top gallery, and looking up I saw Artemus and my husband surrounded by an amused and sympathetic crowd of people whose attention had been distracted from the stage by the 'funny H' American' stories. Quiet succeeded, but when the curtain went down no one appeared to escort me home. I went to the front of the theatre and there found Frank trying to reason with his cousin. Artemus was in one of the wildest of his prankish humors, and was engaged in disseminating information to a cabman on the results of the civil war and the outlook or reconstruction in the southern states. It seems that the boys had left the gallery and were coming in from the street to take charge of me when they were greeted with the query: 'Keb, gents?'"

"Artemus stopped and remarked, 'Frank, here's a chance to do missionary work.' Then turning to the driver he continued: 'No, sir, I don't wish a keb, but I desire a kebban. What is your charge per hour?'"

"Two and six anywhere in the city, sir."

"Here's your two and six and a shilling extra for a tip. Now, I want you to stand there, look me in the eye and receive instruction regarding the perilous state of affairs now prevalent in the great republic over which waves the Stars and Stripes."

"Frank and I went home while he was still talking. He called next day and remarked gleefully: 'I poured red hot facts into that Britisher and the assembled multitude for twenty minutes. Then caddy offered me the money back to let him off, and I let it.'"

The only place Browne thought suitable for the delivery of his lectures was Egyptian hall, and that chance to be seized for the season to an English humorist named George Rose. Rose, over the non de plume of Arthur Sketchley, had written a lot of articles on "The Experiences of Mrs. Brown." These he utilized with some success as material for a course of lectures.

"One day," said Mr. Converse, "I heard Artemus coming along the corridor to our apartments laughing uproariously. He burst through the door and cried, 'Frank, if you'll help me I think I can get Egyptian hall within the week.' 'All right,' I replied, 'command my services. He then outlined his scheme. That evening we dined with some friends, and one of the guests to whom I was introduced was Mr. George Rose. 'What,' I exclaimed, 'is this the famous Arthur Sketchley whose works are so popular in the United States?' He assented as to the name, but was surprised to learn of his foreign fame. I told him of the 'hot fire' his books had created. Indeed, I talked with him all evening. I had eyes and ears for no one else. I scribbled at the shrine of his genius, and finally I remarked: 'What a splendid thing it would be, Mr. Rose, now

that America's most famous humorist is in this country, for you, the foremost English laugh provoker, to go to the states on a lecturing tour! Every one there is fascinated with your writings, and you would be sure of a glorious reception.'"

"He jumped at the bait like a hungry fish. In three days Artemus had the hall and Mr. Rose was en route for New York. He didn't do very well, I understand; and on going home wrote a virulent and abusive book entitled 'Impressions of America.'"

"We witnessed our cousin's subsequent triumphs," remarked Mrs. Converse, "and sorrowed over his physical breakdown. We were with him a great deal during his illness, and would have remained to the last had not an imperative summons recalled us to the United States. We parted just before he went to the Isle of Jersey. He was hopeful with that vain hope that always inspires the consumptive, and promised to join us in New York the next summer. Poor fellow! In a month he was dead."

Mrs. Converse sat silent for a moment and then continued: "Let me tell you a story about Mr. Browne's mother. The good old soul lived in Maine, and nearly every summer had for guests a family of Boston relatives. A lady in the party greatly admired a huge, old-fashioned hall clock that hadn't ticked a tick for years. She also loved Mrs. Browne's jellies. After her return to Boston one autumn she received by express a long, strongly built, queerly shaped box of oak. When opened it was found to contain the coveted clock, and in every cranny about the timepiece were stuffed cans of preserves, some of which had broken in transit. The recipient was of course delighted, and on a gala morning Mrs. Browne said:

"You must at least allow me to pay you for that splendid packing box. How much did it cost you to have it made?"

"Land's sakes! no," responded Mrs. Browne. "You shan't give me a red cent. That box didn't cost nothing. It's the case they sent nephew Ira's body home in after he was killed in the lumber woods!"

At the beginning I mentioned the "Indian room" of the Converse residence. This is an apartment probably without a fellow in America. It is gorgeous with displays in silver, skins, cloth and shells of the handiwork of the Six Nations. Of that once powerful federation Mrs. Converse is an adopted daughter and an unflinching friend.

FRED C. DAYTON.

ARTEMUS WARD'S MATERIALS.

He Found an Unworked Mine and Used It Like a True Genius.

The following letter of Artemus Ward, recently brought to light, shows the sources of his characters, especially the reference to his "two years of peripatetic life" in the west:

WATERFORD, Me., June 5, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR—There is really nothing very remarkable in my history. I was born in this quiet little town about twenty-eight years ago. My father died when I was 12 years old, and at the age of 13 I entered a printing office at Lancaster, N. H. My father was a magistrate and a lumber merchant—a clear headed and thoroughly honest man, so competent in his business as to be consulted on all kinds of law questions, and so honest that he invariably had his hands full of business involving large sums of money. I fear he was a little too honest, for he died poor after all.

I ran away from the office at Lancaster and entered a similar establishment at Norway, this state. This establishment failed, and I roamed through the state, setting type a short time in one place and quietly running away at another. Running away appears to have been my chief weakness at that time. I finally landed in Boston, and worked at my trade until I was declared a tolerably good printer. I then went west and south, and for two years led a peripatetic life. I commenced writing for a paper in Toledo, O., about ten years ago. I succeeded as a paragraphist well enough to achieve a very good local reputation, and moved to Cleveland and took charge of 'The Plain Dealer newspaper.'

I here commenced the Artemus Ward papers. The selection of that nom de plume was purely accidental. I wrote the first Ward sketch on a purely local subject, not supposing I should ever write another. Somehow the name Ward entered my head and I used it. Five years ago I moved to New York and assumed the editorial conduct of Vanity Fair, succeeding Charles G. Leland. For the past four years I have lectured almost constantly, and with a success that is perhaps unequalled, considering what a startling innovation I have made on a long established institution. My writings and lecturing have given me a competency. I have a liberal offer to go to England this fall on a lecturing tour, and I may accept. I am writing now a book of travels, giving my experience among the Mormons. I live in New York city, although I spend a portion of my summers here with my mother. That is about all.

I have only drifted with the current, which has carried me gayly on of its own accord. As I am frank enough to say this, I hope I have a right to say that I am always meant the creatures of my burlesques should stab Error and give Right a friendly push. You are at liberty to use these facts, although my letter is necessarily written in a great hurry, for I am very busy. I am popularly supposed to be "rusticating" here, but it is a gaudy mockery. I am working very hard.

CHARLES F. BROWNE (Artemus Ward).

There has always been a mystery about Artemus Ward's money. He returned from his Utah and California tour with \$15,000, and paid but \$6,000 for his farm; he received at least \$15,000 more in the short interval before his death, yet his executors found barely enough in England to pay the claims against him there and still less in America. Yet his will indicates that he believed himself rich. It had somehow slipped away without his knowing it.

DEATH OF SECRETARY WINDOM.

The Grim Messenger Again Invades the Political Family of President Harrison.

The annual banquet of the New York Board of Trade and Transportation was held at Delmonico's, New York city, last week. Among the most distinguished and honored guests was William C. Windom, Secretary of the Treasury of the United States. Mr. Windom was the chief guest of the occasion. He sat on the right of the chairman of the meeting, and ex-Secretary of State Bayard on his left. Secretary Windom was the first speaker at the banquet. His address had been carefully prepared, and was delivered with a force and clearness that greatly impressed the distinguished company present. In fact, as the Secretary drew near the close of his address, the interest and applause became tumultuous, so much so that, evidently wearied, he requested that the applause should cease. His voice grew weaker and weaker, as he closed his address, and sympathy was excited by his evident physical exhaustion. He finally sat down, and hastily drank a glass of ice water.

The chairman of the banquet, Judge Arnoux, arose to introduce Mr. Bayard, who was the next speaker on the program. The applause gradually subsided, and Mr. Arnoux had begun to speak, when Mr. Windom was seen to slowly recline toward Secretary of the Navy Tracy, who sat to his right. He partially slipped under the table, and instantly those near him arose and rushed to his assistance, among them being Drs. Durant and Robinson. His face turned ghastly white and then purple, an unlighted cigar was crushed in his teeth, and his limbs straightened out stiffly. Quickly, by order of the physicians, he was borne tenderly into an adjoining room, and the doctors pronounced him already dead.

The cause of death was heart disease, which had troubled Mr. Windom for some time. He has had occasional fainting spells, and was nearly prostrated on the steps of the Treasury about a week ago. It is evident that the duties of his position have been too great for his physical strength.

The death of Secretary Windom produced the most profound grief throughout the country. The news was received in Washington with consternation. The wife of the Secretary was in attendance at a reception at Postmaster General Wadsworth's. No one had President Harrison received the telephone message that announced the sad event than he summoned a carriage and hastened to Mr. Wadsworth's residence. The hurried arrival of the President created great excitement, but Mrs. Windom was kept in ignorance of her loss until she reached home, when the news was broken to her as gently as possible.

Mr. Windom is the third Secretary of the Treasury who has died under successive administrations in or immediately following the holding of that office. Secretary Folger's death followed soon after his term of service. Secretary Manning's health was shattered under the burdens he imposed upon himself, and he resigned only to die at his Albany home. Secretary Windom has now been added to this list of unexampled fatalities in a cabinet position.

The funeral of Secretary Windom was held in Washington on Monday of this week, and his remains were interred in the Rock Creek Cemetery.

An Exodus to Oklahoma.

A big exodus of colored people from Alabama to Oklahoma is said to have set in. Fifty families of negroes have left for Kingfisher, and they will be followed in a few days by 200 families. A colored man named Foster, from Leavenworth, Kan., has been at Birmingham for some time working up the business. He represents that the emigrants can secure rich farming lands in Oklahoma for almost nothing and that if enough of them will go they can soon secure absolute control of the government of the Territory. The latter argument seems to be the principal inducement. A number of colored men who owned good farms have sold everything and will join in the exodus.

Rioting in Alabama.

A serious riot occurred at the Carbon Hill mines, Alabama. The striking white miners attacked a cabin filled with negroes who had been put on in their place, and killed five and injured several others. Governor Jones has called out two companies, and sent them to the scene of rioting.

GENERAL MARKETS.

This Week's Latest Reports from the Trade Centers.

FLOUR AND MEAL.—Flour—New York and Pennsylvania, per 100 lbs., superfine, \$3.50; patents, \$3.90; southern family, \$3.90; winter patents, \$3.25. Buckwheat flour—Extra, \$2.55. Rye flour—Superfine, \$4.40. Corn Meal—New York and Pennsylvania, \$3.25. COTTONS.— Middling uplands, 9 1/2c. PROVISIONS.— Beef—Prime, 6 1/2c. Pork—New mess, \$11.75; extra prime, \$10.00; dressed hogs, 4 1/2c.; pigs, 5 1/2c. Tallow, 4 1/2c. Butter—New York and Pennsylvania creamery, 20 1/2c.; dairy, 21c.; southern creamery, 20c.; roll, 18c. Eggs—Fresh, 34 1/2c. GRAIN.— Wheat—No. 2 red winter, \$1.15 1/2; No. 1 Northern, \$1.10 1/2; Southern, \$1.09. Corn—Ungraded mixed, 64 1/2c.; No. 2, 63 1/2c.; southern white, 61 1/2c.; yellow, 61 1/2c. Oats—New York and Pennsylvania No. 2 white, 53 1/2c.; ungraded mixed, 53 1/2c.; ungraded Southern, 51 1/2c. Rye—Choice, 82c.; common to fair, 78c. Buckwheat, 60c. HAY AND STRAW.— Per 100 lbs.— Timothy, prime, 90c.; medium, 80c.; mixed clover, 50c. Straw—No. 2 rye, 75c.; oat, 50c. CATTLE.— Beef cattle, extra, 5 1/2c.; good, 5 1/4c.; medium, 4 1/2c. Hogs—No. 2, \$3.75 per head. Milch calves, 7 1/2c. Sheep—Extra, 6 1/2c.; good, 5 1/2c.; medium, 5c. Lambs, 6 1/2c. POULTRY.— Live Poultry—Hens, 9 1/2c.; chickens, 11c.; dressed, 12c.; chickens, 12c.; live turkeys, 11c.; dressed, 15c.; live ducks, 10c.; dressed, 12c.; live geese, 10c.; dressed, 11c. GRACEFULS.— Coffee—Java, 25c.; Rio, 19 1/2c.; Maracibo, 22 1/2c.; Mocha, 25c. Sugar—Cut loaf, 6 1/2c.; powdered, 6 1/2c.; granulated, 6 1/2c. Molasses—New Orleans, 30c.; New Orleans centrifugal, 24c.; open kettle, 18c.; Porto Rico, 35c. Syrup—Medium to good, 28c.; choice, 31c. NAVAL STORES.— Turpentine, 41c. Rosin—Common to good, \$1.42 1/2 a \$1.45. Tar, \$2.75. Pitch, \$1.90. WOOL.— Good unwashed, 25c.; merino, 20c.; tub washed, 30c. MISCELLANEOUS.— Petroleum 75 1/2c. Whisky, \$1.21 per proof gallon; \$1.27 for job lots. Rice—Domestic, good, 6 1/2c.; prime, 7 1/2c.

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