



THE CENTRAL PRESS

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Miscellaneous Reading.

THE BACHELOR'S WAGER.

"Why don't you marry, Joe?" "Marry!" was the answer, made in the most contemptuous manner, accompanied by a tilt of the chair to allow his slippered feet to rest comfortably on the mantelpiece.

and he was willing enough to pay the wager, could it be but fairly won.

"Now, Joe," said Jennie, meeting him at the door, "I'm going to hide you, and have a little talk with the girls, to which you must listen. If you are here I should not like to ask all the questions I intend to, and they might be shy of answering."

"Play eavesdropper, Jennie?" "Exactly; it is fair in such a case. Hark! The bell! There they are! In this closet, Joe!"

"But, Jennie—" "Hush! You win a wife or a smoking-cap, anyhow. Go in!"

And, with a parting push, Jennie then locked the closet door. Joe, forced now to comply, sat down in the large closet, on a stool considerably provided for the purpose, put his eye to a hole in the panel, and took a survey of the visitors just entering. After this he, with a shrug of his shoulders, placed his ear where his eye had been.

The young ladies, both pretty, were dressed in very different styles. Meta wore a light blue silk, with flounces, bretelles of velvet, and a pretty head dress of blue ribbons on her luxuriant light hair. Mary was attired in a pearl colored silk, made perfectly plain, with a rich lace collar and sleeves, and her dark hair in simple braids, with gold headed pins at the back.

Jennie opened her batteries at once. "What a pretty dress, Meta!" "Ain't it? I made it to-day."

"Made it?" "Oh! yes, I make all my own dresses; it is quite a saving."

"I should think it would be, my dressmaker's bills are enormous," said Mary. "I won't have my dresses made anywhere but in Philadelphia, and it costs a small fortune."

"My patterns come from there," said Meta. "Jennie, I am making you a head dress like mine. Do you like it?" "Yes, thank you, very much."

"It is made out of the ribbon I had on my last blue dress. I got a receipt for renovating old ribbons, last week, and tried it. My bretelles are of the same."

"I thought it was bran new," said Mary. "What an economical girl you are, Meta!" Jennie tittered.

"I heard Meta called extravagant, to-day," she said, "come Meta, deny the charge and prove it false."

"I think I can, without any vanity," said Meta. "Father is not rich, and since my mother died I have learned to be economical. I make all my own clothes, bonnets, cloaks and dresses included, and embroider my collars and sleeves."

"What!" cried Mary; "those elegant collars and sleeves you wear? Why, I have often said that although mine cost me so much, they do not compare with yours."

"It is pretty work to take out when my hands would otherwise be idle," said Meta. "See, I have one here. I will work as I defend myself. Then, Jennie, I make many of father's things—his dressing-gowns, underclothes, slippers—and embroider seats for all the worn out chairs and sofas. Our parlor furniture got very shabby, and we could not afford to refurbish; but the curtains I embroidered, and new seats for the ottomans, sofas and chairs, and with some of my tidies and a coat of varnish here and there, made it look quite respectable."

Meta, the fancy articles, shades, and all these things?" "Oh, I make them, and they cost very little. Then father likes a good table, and I have learned to be quite a cook. I put up all our preserves and pickles, make the cake, and provide new dishes constantly."

"Mersey!" cried Mary; "why, the preserves, pickles and cake alone, at our house, costs us a mint of money."

"But, Meta," said Jennie, "how do you find time for all this? I was informed that you spent half your time reading a trashy magazine."

"Oh, Jennie, how can you call it so, when you make it so useful yourself?" "I but repeat another's assertion."

"But, Meta," said Mary, "I should think the patterns and receipts you require for so much work would cost a fortune."

"They cost me three dollars a year." "From the trashy magazine, My Ladies' Magazine furnishes all this valuable information; and father says his three dollars expenditure is a clear saving every year of half his former expenses."

"Let me out! let me out!" cried a voice from a closet behind the young ladies. "What's that?" cried Mary and Meta, both at once.

"Only my cousin Joe. Come out, sir!" And Jennie opened the door. "But what was he doing there?" asked Meta.

"Eating my preserves," said Jennie, giving her cousin a pinch. "No such thing," said Joe, frankly; "I was eavesdropping. I am ashamed to say, Miss Meta, forgive me for the unfounded charges which Jennie has repeated. She defended you at the time, and shut me up here to convince me what a mistake I had made. I take it back; and," he added in a whisper to Jennie, "the bracelet and the gloves shall be sent here in the morning."

"I forgive you," said Meta, laughing. "Mary," said Jennie, "come with me to the dining-room a moment. I want to show you a new basket I made to-day."

Meta was following them, but Joe, inwardly blessing his Cousin Jennie, took her hand and gently detained her. Reader, my tale is told. Joe Harris lost his wager, and won Meta for a wife. To all old bachelors I would say, at parting: "Go thou, and do likewise."

FAMILY COURTESY.—Family intimacy should never make brothers and sisters forget to be polite and sympathizing to each other. Those who contract thoughtless and rude habits towards the members of their own family, will be rude and thoughtless to all the world. But let the family intercourse be true, tender, and affectionate, and the manners of all uniformly gentle and considerate, and the number of the family thus trained will carry into the world and society the habits of their childhood. They will require in their associates similar qualities; they will not be satisfied without mutual esteem, and the cultivation of the best affections, and their own character will be sustained by that faith in goodness which belongs to a mind exercised in pure and high thoughts.

What a poor world this would be without women and newspapers! How would the news get about.

If a man shows that he cannot be bound by oath, let him be bound with chains and fetters.

WHERE IS YOUR BOY?—We saw him last late in the evening in the company of very bad boys, and they each had a segar. And now and then some of them used very profane language. As we looked at your son we wondered if you knew where he was, and with whom he associated. Dear friend, do not be so closely confined to your shop, office or ledger, as to neglect that boy. He will bring sorrow into your household, if you do not bring proper parental restraint to bear upon him, and that very soon. Sabbath and public school teaching can help you, but you must do most.

OH, marry the man you love, girls, if you can get him at all, if he is as rich as Croesus or poor as Job in his fall. Pray do not marry for pelf; it will bring your soul into a thrall; but marry the man you love, girls, if his purse is ever so small. Oh, never marry a fop, girls, whether he is little or tall; he will make a fool of himself and you; he knows nothing well but to draw. But marry a sober man, girls; there are few left on this ball; and you will never rue the day, girls, that you ever married at all.

COULDN'T SUPPORT IT.—A chap in Virginia was taken prisoner by the rebels who demanded that he should take the oath to support the Confederate Government. The fellow said that he had taken a good many big oaths in his day, but he couldn't even support his own family, and to swear to support the Confederate government was taller swearing than he dare do.

A HARD HEADED BUTCHER.—The Fitchburg Reveille says that Charles Burrell, a butcher, jumped in front of the locomotive at Ashburnham Junction, and his head struck one of the brass cylinder heads of the engine with such force as to make a dent two inches square in the cylinder.—Burrell's head is cut, but otherwise he is not much injured, and will survive.

TO SLEEP a greater number of hours than are necessary for rest and refreshment is a voluntary and wanton abridgment of life. He who sleeps one hour a day more than health requires, will in a life of three score and ten years, shorten his conscious existence nearly four years, allowing sixteen hours to the day.

THE INDIANS on the Salt Lake route are well armed with rifles and revolvers, and are committing depredations on emigrants. Two emigrant trains were recently attacked at Lablett's Cut-off, 300 miles north of Salt Lake City. Fifteen or twenty persons were killed.

EDSON B. OLES a well known Democratic politician of Ohio, and a member of Congress from the 9th and 12th Districts of that state from 1849 to 1855, has been sent to Fort Lafayette for discouraging enlistments and other treasonable practices.

"I do not say that man will steal," said a witness on trial, "but if I were a chicken I would roost high when he was around."

Many young men would pay very little regard to the church bells, but for the thought of the church belles.

The ringleaders of the world—the young ladies who lead their lovers on by hopes of marriage.

Very pure water has few fishes in it; very clear-sighted persons have few acquaintances.

What we call croaking is not always to be disregarded, there are frogs in wells of truth.

LARGE ARMIES.—The following facts, culled from the files of an ancient story, may be of some interest at the present time. The city of Thebes had a hundred gates and could send out at each gate 10,000 fighting men and 200 chariots—in all 1,000,000 men and 200,000 chariots.

The army of Terah, King of Ethiopia, consisted of 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots of war. Sesotris King of Egypt, led against his enemies 60,000 men, 25,000 cavalry and 27 scythed armed chariots. 1461 B. C.

Hamilcar went from Carthage and landed near Palermo. He had a fleet of 2,000 ships and 3,000 small vessels and a land force of 300,000 men. At the battle in which he was defeated 150,000 were slain.

A Roman fleet, led by Regulus against Carthage consisted of 300 vessels, with 140,000 men. The Carthaginian fleet numbered 350 vessels with 15,000 men.

At the battle of Cannae, there were of the Romans including allies, 80,000 foot and 6,000 horse; of the Carthaginians 40,000 foot and 18,000 horse. Of these 70,000 were slain in all, 10,000 taken prisoners; more than half slain.

Hannibal, during his campaign in Italy and Spain, plundered 400 towns and destroyed 300,000 men. Ninus, the Assyrian King, 2,200 years B. C. led against the Bactrians his army, consisting of 1,700,000 foot, 200,000 horse and 16,000 chariots armed with scythes.

Italy, a little before Hannibal's time, was able to send into the field nearly 1,000,000 men. Semiramis employed 2,000,000 men in building mighty Babylon. She took 100,000 Indian prisoners at the Indus, and sunk 1,000 boats.

Sennacherib lost in a single night 185,000 men by the destroying angel—2 Kings, 16:35-37. A short time after the taking of Babylon, the forces of Cyrus consisted of 600,000 foot, 120,000 horse, and 2000 chariots armed with scythes.

An army of Cambyses, 50,000 strong was buried up in the desert sands of Africa by a South wind. When Xerxes arrived at Thermoplae, his land and sea forces amounted to 2,641,510, exclusive of servants, eunuchs, women, sutlers, &c. in all numbering 5,283,220. So say Herodotus, Plutarch and Isocrates.

The army of Artaxerxes before the battle of Cunaxa, amounted 1,200,000. 10,000 horses and 1,000,000 foot fell on the fatal field of Issus. When Jerusalem was taken by Titus, 1,101,000 perished in various ways.

The force of Darius at Arbela numbering more than 15,000,000. The Persians lost 90,000 men in battle; Alexander about 500 men. So says Diodorus.—Arian says the Persians, in this battle lost 300,000; the Greeks 1,200.

THE PLAGUES OF SOLDIER LIFE.—A volunteer with Buell's army in Tennessee thus writes of the annoyances that beset a soldier from reptiles, insects and vermin: Go out for a stroll on the mountain and ten chances to one you are bitten by a rattlesnake or stung by hornets, yellow jackets, or bumble-bees; taken a bath in the river, and between snapping-turtles, water-snakes, alligators and blood-suckers, you have a lively time; set down under a tree to read or converse, and in five minutes you are covered with spiders, wood-ticks, bugs, daddy long-legs; try to sleep and swifly traverse your body, and gallopers—as large as humming-birds—present their bills and sing their duns in your ears with a hum as loud and shrill as the scream of a parakeet; and then, while you eat or drink, flies, green, blue, and black, buzz in your ears and mouth, blow in your nose, fly in your victuals, and commit suicide by tumbling into your coffee, and are guilty of many other like impertinences. Yes, eating or drinking, sleeping or waking, walking or standing, these mischievous hecors vex you with a pertinacity unparalleled.

WOUNDED AND KILLED.—It takes but little space in the columns of daily papers; but oh! what long household stories and biographies are every one of these strange names, we read over and forget!

"Wounded and killed!"—Some eye reads the name to whom it is dear as life, and some heart is struck or broken with the blow made by the name among the list. It is our Henry, or our James, or our Thomas that lies with his poor broken limbs at the hospital, or white, and still ghastly face on the battle field. Alas! for eye that read; alas! for the hearts that feel!

"He was my pretty boy that I sung to sleep so many times in my arms!" says the poor mother, bowing in anguish that cannot be uttered. He was my brave noble husband, the father of my little orphan children!" sobs the stricken wife. "He was my darling brother, that I loved so, that I was proud of," murmurs the sister, amid tears; and so the terrible stroke falls on homes throughout the land.

"Wounded and killed!" Every name in that list is a lightning stroke to some heart, and breaks like thunder over some home, and falls a long black shadow upon some hearthstone. Probably the reason why the way of the transgressor is hard, is that it is so much traveled. The richest man on earth is but a pauper fed and clothed by the bounty of heaven.

A GOOD OX.—A physician was once called upon to tender his professional aid to the wife of a recently married countryman, who, by the way, was very little versed in the technical terms which are used by the medical family. The doctor having felt the pulse and viewed the tongue of the patient, together with sundry other wise tricks, prepared a plaster, which he ordered the husband to lay upon his wife's chest; promising to call again on the following day. He came, and after making a usual inquiry respecting his charge, asked if the plaster had been applied agreeably to his instructions.

"Sir," said the husband, with the utmost gravity conceivable, "my wife said she had no chest, and, thinking it would answer just as well, I laid it on her trunk!"

About this time we might have been seen making tracks down the road, in a roar of laughter.

A DUTCHMAN looking for a person by the name of Dunn, who owed him a "small account," asked a wag near Sweeney's eating house where No. 66 Chatham street was, as he "wished to find Mr. Dunn." The wag told him to go into Sweeney's and was the first person at the first table was the gentleman he was enquiring for.

The Dutchman went in, about as slow as a jackass a peck of oats, and this "first gentleman," happened to be an Irishman. "Are you Dunn?" said the Dutchman. "Done? says Pat," by my soul, I am only just commenced!"

QUALIFIED TO ENLIST.—Adam Mudsill says that a lad in Medford after asking his father if he might enlist as a drummer boy, was told that he was not old enough. "Pooh," said Young America, "Bill Jones has listed."

"Well," said the father, "Bill is eighteen years of age, and you are only twelve." "I should like to know what that's got to do with it," replied the lad, "if he is older than I be, I've licked him three times, and can do it again and not half try."—Boston Journal.

VERY POOR.—A trifling young fellow, one of our neighboring counties, not long since, won the affections of the daughter of a bluff, honest Dutchman of some wealth. On asking the old man for her, he opened with a romantic speech about his being a poor young man, &c. "Ya ya!" said the old man, "I know 'all about it; but I'm a little too poor—you has neider in our character!"

Gen. Lew. Wallace is doing a good deal among the miserable loafers who—"I really find—aw—military duty too twy." These compounds of imbecility and egotism are put ineffectually at work on the fortifications, the provost guard exhibiting a heartless disregard of their complexions and their jeweled hands.

GOV. MONTON, of Indiana, has issued a proclamation exempting from the draft the "people called Shakers or Quakers," but requiring them to pay an amount of money which shall be deemed an equivalent for such exemption.

"Will you have some catsup?" asked a gentleman of Aunt Priscilla, at a dinner table. "Dear me, no," she replied with a shudder. "I'm fond of cats in their place but I should as soon think of eating dog soup." The gentleman did not urge her.

A countryman who got a situation at the West-end of London, on entering a room where there was a globe with goldfish, exclaimed—"Well, this is the first time I ever saw red herrings alive!"

It is a vain thing for you to stick your finger in the water, and pulling it out look for a hole; it is equally vain to suppose that, however a large space you occupy, the world will miss you when you die.

"Oh, Miss," said a lovesvainer, "if I were but your bright star, how brightly I would shine for you." "What a pity," said she musingly, "that you can't shine here." He went out directly.

Sailors are so scarce in New York that thirty dollars per month has been offered in several cases without effect, and vessels are now lying in the harbor loaded, and cannot sail for want of seamen.

An intelligent farmer, being asked if his horses were well matched, replied—"Yes, they are matched first rate; one of them willing to do all the work, and the other willing he should."

Gen. Pope's Department of the North West embraces Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and Dakota. His headquarters will be at St. Paul, Minn.

An old maid being at a loss for a profession, made use of an onion. On the following morning she found that all the need had torn in her eyes.

The armed rebel steamer Yorktown, bound from Mobile to Havana, was totally lost on the 26th of August. Crew saved.

Why are indolent persons' beds too short for them? Because they are too long for them.

Modesty in women is like a good check—decidedly becoming, if on.

Can any one define the exact width of a narrow escape.