

"Easy Reading" Page.



EMPTIES.

This week we will see how we can succeed in filling this page with "empties." The subject appears pretty dry on the surface. Maybe we'll find meat, maybe we'll find bones. Read along and you will discover that the subject is too vast to be touched in the space allotted here. Don't look for us to develop the ideas, for it will be all we can do to give you a few points and leave you to clothe them with the garments of thought.

'Tis said that empty things make most noise. An empty milk can rolling down the steps of the capitol at Harrisburg makes more clatter than the whole house in session, but it is a question whether the can is more empty than the performances of the august body within.

Here is a long train of empties west bound, "clickety click" go the ponderous wheels as they go over the rail joints. To the vagabond huddled in the corner of a box car the sound assumes a song, telling a story of boundless wheat fields and numberless herds on the distant plains. Of the mighty load brought east and of the multitudes that will be fed by the miracle of steam and steel. Going back empty, but have performed a good work.

Listen to the farmer's wagon clattering along the highway in the evening after the lamps are lighted. What do you hear?

"Chuck! chuck!" as the hubs bump the boxings. Yes, that's it, "chuck" the lumberman's name for food. Coming back from the city market, empty but a worthy task has been accomplished. We

regret to add that the farmer is not so empty as his wagon.

See what's here. A big wagon piled high with barrels and kegs. Mercy on us! what a load. "Aw rats! dat aint no load, them emptys." says a street urchin. I see. Empties, sure enough. But what has been left in the wake of this mountain of cooperage moving back to the brewery for a fresh supply? Hearts have been cheered, pulses quickened, brains have been fired to anger, blood has flowed, vile and blasphemous language has clamored around the foaming spigots of those old oaken iron bound barrels. No, that load of empties has no song of triumph to sing on its way home.

'Tis Sunday, let's go to church. We enter the sacred portals and sit down at the rear. What's this? Services have commenced and as sure as you live there are not a dozen people present. Great billows of pews in all directions, but empty. Three or four hundred could be comfortably seated and only a dozen find their way here. The sermon, too is grand, inspiring, full of truth and full of earnestness. But O! what a discouragement to this or any other minister to preach to empty pews.

In the evening we try another church. Here the situation is reversed. The pews are full but the pulpit is empty. There is a man there and he is talking, but his sermon is like the flotsam on the deep sea of Divine love. Bubbling with the froth and foam of levity, his attempts to warp truth to the pier of eternal things by senseless parables is really pitiful. Empty words, empty results.

Here comes another empty with an empty tomato can hanging to his belt by a string. Did you ever meet the gentleman? If so, did you ever attempt to fill him up? Takes a lot, don't it?

On a raw March night go down to the side track on Manhattan Island where society switches off its empties. There's a string of

them for you---it's the bi
The string of empties mov
ly along propelled by the eng.
of hunger, the only objective re
ward for the shivering, shuffling,
humiliating march, a bite to eat.
My God! what a sight in an age
of advanced civilization and in a
land where storehouses are burst-
ing with food fuel and clothing, and
in a city where a thousand church-
es erected to glorify the Man who
had not where to lay His head,
and even they will not open their
doors to give shelter to these poor
wretches.

There are empty seats in the family circle, empty cradles from which baby has gone forever, empty baby shoes in the bottom drawer of the bureau with one side worn by creeping about the floor, empty arms in the still hours of the night when the waking mother gropes in a moment of forgetfulness for the chubby arms and cherub face that lies festering in its tiny casket.

There will be many an empty stocking on Christmas morning, not so many as last year, for times are better and Santa Claus is not so hard up, but there will be some, and it is heart breaking to think of. To picture a child with its faith strong in the integrity of old Santa, rise up on Christmas morning, go to its stocking and find it empty. Could you stand that? If you could your crust is thicker than ours. Some people think it a foolish piece of sentiment. It is very real to the children however.

Empty heads, empty hearts, empty souls that rattle around inside their possessors like a buckshot in a dried bladder. Empty promises of political parties, empty bottles hid under the hay in the stable. Empties ad infinitum.

And finally, friends, when the empty hearse rattles back from the graveyard leaving our body in its long sleep, may it be said of us that our living in the world has been worth while. No matter how great our possessions while living, death robs us of our last dime, and we go into the presence of our Maker with empty hands.