

The Town Fool.

By M. QUAD.

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It was a brutal way of putting it, but everybody in the town of Graham had come to speak of Jimmy Landon as the town fool. It was said that the boy had been born bright enough, but at the age of five a stroke of lightning had worked the change in him. He lost the power of speech, and his mind was weakened, and after the death of his widowed mother he was an inmate of the poorhouse for two or three years. Then he became a hanger-on of the town, having no particular home, but being cared for as an object of charity. Not quite that either. He was always willing to do any work he could to pay his way. He could hear if he could not talk, and though he seemed to have no more mind than a child of three, he got along very well. Two things the boys of the town came to learn in time—Jimmy had a streak of cunning in him, and he was revengeful.

Jimmy Landon was thirteen years old and had been looked upon as the town fool for several years when a sort of event happened in the quiet community. A stranger, who called himself Colonel Bliss and who was so crippled up with wounds that he had to use a pair of crutches, arrived in town and delivered a series of lectures on war. It came to be understood that he had been the colonel of a gallant Illinois regiment and that owing to his wounds and other misfortunes he was in bad financial shape. He did fairly well with his lectures, and he made many friends, and when he proposed to open a singing and writing school he received much encouragement. He could sing, and he wrote a beautiful hand.

The colonel took up his quarters at one of the two inns in the town, where he had the use of the hall used for



HAD BEEN CAUGHT BY A LEG IN A BEAR TRAP.

dancing. He could have had the best room in the house, but he did not want it. He wanted one with a back in the way. Instead of a front view, just beneath his windows was the roof of the kitchen, and below that was the roof of a shed. From thence it was a drop of only six feet to the alley in the rear of the hotel. These things were not taken notice of by outsiders until later on. The town fool took a liking to Colonel Bliss at once. He was drawn toward him by his crippled condition. The lad had never seen anything like it in his life. The colonel could manage to get up and down stairs, but no more. If he left the hotel it had to be in a carriage. Jimmy Landon started out to attach himself to the stranger as a body servant, but his unusual curiosity brought about his downfall. He had served for two weeks when the colonel found him rummaging his trunk and sent him to the right about. Not only that, but he whacked him over the back with one of his crutches. Those whacks destroyed the boy's illusions. The colonel was no longer a god to him. Jimmy had reasoned it out in his silly mind that the trunk was a partnership concern and that he had a perfect right to examine its contents, and he was whacked for doing it and then to be driven away in disgrace aroused a thirst for revenge.

The schools had just got fairly started when more events came along. One night the postoffice was robbed of cash and stamps to the value of \$200. It was a widow who held the office, and everybody felt sorry for her. It was decided that the trick had been done by two men who were seen loafing about the streets at a late hour that night, and the sheriff failed to get any clew. The colonel heard of the robbery, of course, and seemed to take a deep interest in it. In fact, his advice was taken by the sheriff in seeking to solve the affair. Only ten days later the leading dry goods store was entered at night and \$70 in cash taken. As no goods were taken, the sheriff reasoned that some one in the town was the robber, but the colonel differed with him. In his opinion an organized gang was at work and the fellows had been frightened away before they could begin looting up their wagon.

During the next week there was nothing doing. Then a farmer who had sold a lot of cattle and had the money in his house was nearly robbed of every dollar of it. He and his wife were sleeping in a bedroom off the sitting room, and the robber had effected entrance by using a ladder and a second story window. The sum taken was \$300, and now the sheriff and his deputies began to move lively. By the advice of Colonel Bliss, who hinted that he might aid a detective agency in his schools, certain highways were watched at night. Nothing came of that, but the postoffice in a village in a contrary direction was robbed of

\$100 worth of cash and stamps. The town fool could hear, and he heard all about the robberies. He couldn't grasp the particulars the way other folks did, but he absorbed enough of them to make him act queerly. He went about with a grin on his face, and when spoken to about the robberies he put on the most knowing look his face had ever worn. The sheriff thought the lad 10 cents' worth of candy and tried for an hour to get something out of him, but Jimmy simply munched the sweets and grinned. If he had anything up his sleeve he wasn't going to bring it to light just then. The robbery of the farmer was still being talked of when a hardware store in the town was entered and robbed. In addition to \$25 in cash, the robber handled up \$200 worth of the choicest cutlery. There was no clew until Colonel Bliss furnished one. He directed suspicion toward the town fool. Jimmy Landon was brought to the hotel by the sheriff, and the colonel and others set all sorts of traps for him, but were no wiser at the end of three hours. The boy would grin and giggle and lie down on the floor and laugh, but no one else could see where the joke came in—if there was a joke.

For two weeks after the robbery of the hardware store there was nothing doing. The colonel held to it that the boy fool though he was, had become cunning, and it was a hair-raiser. There was a private bank in town, and the owner had quietly put on a watchman. One night this watchman heard suspicious sounds at the back door and raised an alarm and heard some one running away. Fifteen minutes later there was the awfulest kind of a row in the rear of the hotel. None of those who rushed out were prepared for the sights that greeted them. Colonel Bliss, without his crutches, had been caught by a leg in a bear trap, the town fool was rolling on the ground in laughter, a man's trail over the roofs could be traced in the thin snow, and there were tracks leading from the trap back to the bank. Jimmy Landon had suspected the man that whacked him with a crutch and set a trap for him and caught him. There was no getting out of it for the colonel. First, it was shown that he was no more a cripple than any one else, and, second, the plunder of his various robberies was right there in his trunk. He simply stood on his dignity and went to prison for ten years, and the town fool is still today welcome to make his home with any family in the community. The doctors say that his mind will never be any brighter, and other folks say there is no need for it to be.

His Wonderful Method.

"You haven't been married very long, have you?" said a guide at the state capital to a young man who was signing "Mr. and Mrs." in the register for visitors at the desk at the entrance.

"How did you know?" demanded the young man.

"Oh, we get used to such people here and can tell them every time," was the response. "You haven't written that name with 'Mrs.' very long, have you? I believe I can tell how long you have been married from the signature," the guide continued.

"Well, we haven't been married very long, but I don't see how you can tell from the signature. How long has it been?"

"Well, let me see." The guide picked up the book and scanned the name closely.

"You have been married five days today," he said with an air of certainty.

"That's right, it's five days, but I don't see how you can tell."

The young wife had been sitting on the marble bench during the colloquy, and not until the couple went out of the building did she tell "hubby" that the guide had accosted her in the same way and that she had told what they had been married.—St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Bavarian Distances.

In the Bavarian highlands signposts along the roads, instead of stating the number of miles or kilometers to the various villages, give the amount of time which the average pedestrian will supposedly take to traverse the distance. This is merely a practical expression of the very general custom of the peasants in the region, who invariably tell inquirers on the roads not how far it is to a place, but how long it takes to get there. Not only that, but they make the system still more unsatisfactory to the stranger by the additional eccentricity of their own.

For instance, one asks, "How far is it to Oberammergau?"

"A small half hour," will be the answer, or perhaps "A good half hour" or "A big half hour."

Which is puzzling until the stranger learns that a "small half hour" means twenty-five minutes, "a good half hour" thirty minutes, "a big half hour" thirty-five minutes, "a small three-quarters of an hour" forty minutes, and so on.

His Advice.

A young genius named McCarthy went to Commodore Vanderbilt and gave him a suggestion which led the commodore to organize all the little railroads between New York and Chicago into one. Before McCarthy went to Vanderbilt he went to a friend for advice. Here is what his friend told him about the commodore:

"Don't let him scare you. He's as full of power as a turbine. Has a good deal of whir in him. Likes resistance; so does every great force. He's fought a thousand difficulties. He'll take you for another 'n' pitch into ye, like as not. Don't let him scare ye. If he jumps on ye, jump on him. He'll enjoy it 'n' begin to respect ye. It's like puttin' a belt on the turbine—you'll take off a bit of his power and ease him down."—Denver News.

Rubber as Health Guard.

With the approval of Secretary of the Treasury MacVeagh and of Director Ralph of the bureau of engraving and printing the women of the bureau will be furnished with rubber aprons, while their shoes will be fitted with rubber heels. This is the result of the inspection of the bureau by a committee of women representing the National City Federation of Women, who recently recommended the changes in dress.

SIGNALING TO MARS.

Flammation Considers Picketing's Plan Feasible.

APPROVES OF GIANT MIRRORS

French Astronomer, However, Suggests Use of Electric Light Reflectors at Night—Says Martians May Have Tried to Speak to Earth's Inhabitants Ages Ago.

Professor W. H. Picketing's plan of signaling Mars by a series of gigantic mirrors was submitted to M. Camille Flammation. The proposition has the full approval of the eminent French astronomer, who said:

"The project certainly is quite feasible. Signaling with light reflectors, of course, is the only practical method of attempting to communicate with other worlds, and Professor Picketing has very wisely suggested July as the best time for making the experiment, because, although Mars will be nearest to the earth in September, the two planets at that epoch are in opposition so obviously that it would be impossible to reflect the sun's rays from the latter to the former.

"In July, however, while only 90,000,000 kilometers, roughly, will separate the two worlds, they will be so placed that if lines were drawn from one to the other and from each to the sun they would form a triangle and signaling would become theoretically a very simple affair.

"Naturally the practical details of the scheme present difficulties of execution, but none should be insurmountable, especially if the \$10,000,000 proposed by Professor Picketing be placed at his disposal. This is not the first time the plan of communicating with Mars by means of mirrors has been evolved. Forty years ago M. Charles Gros, a friend of mine, made the suggestion, which aroused a great deal of discussion in scientific circles.

"Other savants from time to time have studied the possibilities of such a scheme, but personally I think a still better way of putting a system of mighty light reflectors in practice would be by electric light reflectors at night, as the luminous projections thus thrown from the dark surface of the earth would be seen much more easily than a reflected light intense enough in itself, but neutralized to a certain extent by the bright surface of the sunlit earth.

"In either case the signals could certainly be seen by the Martians, provided they possess instruments and other means of perception equivalent to our telescopes. The experiment might be made in any part of the world. Supposing the signals were seen and answered, the rest would be easy.

"First primitive calls exchanged would be just the interplanetary telegraphic 'Are you there? Once communication is established the invention of a code of thought transmission and intelligible for both worlds would be a comparatively easy matter.

"The fact is there is no doubt that the Martians, if they exist, have already attempted to get into communication with our planet. It must not be forgotten that the telescope was unknown 500 years ago, and only within the last hundred years have astronomers studied Mars seriously, so it may be that, unperceived by the inhabitants of the earth, Mars signaled to us thousands of years ago and, obtaining no response, abandoned the efforts, concluding that our planet was uninhabited.

"The luminous phenomena observed recently on the surface of Mars were not signals; they are satisfactorily explained by natural causes.

"I should add that the signaling suggested by Professor Picketing need not be discontinued even if no immediate results be obtained. But a period of fifteen years must elapse before Mars comes so near the earth as in September. It will come near enough every two years for light reflectors covering an area of a quarter of a mile to be visible to the sister planet."—Paris Cor. New York Herald.

Cobless Corn Experiment.

E. P. House of Greeley, Colo., the dry farm plant experimenter, has received from H. J. Scone of Sidell, Ill., one seed of cobless corn grown by the Illinois man. House asked for three seeds to plant in a hill, but only one could be spared, and it will be carefully tended. The cobless corn grown by the Illinois man resembles very closely the "primitive husk" corn. Each kernel grows on a parent stem, and each kernel is incased in its own husk, all being enveloped in one large husk. The Illinois man has succeeded in eliminating the stem and by taking the very tip of the kernel of the present variety expects ultimately to evolve a perfect cobless corn. The Illinois Agricultural college is fostering the experiment and believes in its success.

New Way to Forecast Weather.

To test the water of Lake Michigan and thereby get the information necessary to forecast the weather is the plan of Major H. B. Hersey, the weather bureau inspector at Milwaukee. He says that to obtain the necessary data will be a work which will require at least three years' experiment, and then there will be every reason to expect successful long distance forecasts can be made. He says there is no doubt that the water of the lake controls the temperature of Milwaukee, and the proposition is to ascertain the temperature of the water at the surface and at twenty-five and fifty feet below it under varying conditions for three successive seasons.

German Prizes For Operas.

Publisher Curt of Berlin, Germany, offers two prizes of \$2,500 and two consolation prizes of \$500 for the best operas and librettos, which must be in German and sent in by May 15, 1910. The winning works will be performed at the Municipal theater, Hamburg.

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BIG BOWLING TOURNEY

Gigantic Task Involved In Preparing For National Contest.

FINEST ALLEYS TO BE BUILT.

Builders Will Have Only Six Days and Nights to Construct Twenty-four. Will Use 226,000 Feet of Lumber and 254,000 Nails in the Work.

Few persons who are interested in the coming tournament of the National Bowling association have any idea of the vast amount of work involved in getting the big Madison Square Garden at New York in shape for the 4,000 or more bowlers from all over the United States who are to compete there for the large purses. Not many of the champion bowlers even can make a rough guess at the task that is to be undertaken.

From the first the problem has been a difficult one to solve. Experts on the building of bowling alleys studied and figured for weeks on the question before it was solved, and even now, although the committee in charge of the preparations is confident that everything will be in shipshape order on May 24, the opening day of the tournament, many who profess to know shake their heads negatively and declare that this will not be possible.

The whole trouble lay in the fact that the builders of the alleys will have only six days and nights in which to do the work. In that time they must put down twenty-four alleys that will be so perfect that no competitor will have the slightest cause for complaint.

The contract for the work has been given to a firm in New York city which has assured the committee that the alleys will be the finest ever built and that the bowler will be able to declare that he failed to roll a high score or win his match because of the alleys. Should any easy scores be missed, they say, it will be the fault of the bowler and not because the alleys "run off" or "carry over."

Because the rent of the Madison Square Garden is \$1,000 a night, and the National Bowling association will be compelled to pay that amount even while building the alleys, it became necessary to limit the time for the work to not more than six days. This, it was admitted, would necessitate the building of twenty-four alleys in faster time than even less than half that number were ever built in the history of bowling. The proposal was put up to the officials of the New York firm, and they without hesitation accepted the contract.

Almost immediately after receiving the contract arrangements for the enormous work were begun. The first step had to be taken so that the work on the alleys could be started exactly on time, and, equally important, the contractors had to engage men to do the work.

Contrary to the general belief, ordinary carpenters are not competent to build bowling alleys. They must be built by men skilled in the work—men who make a business of building alleys alone. There is not a continual demand for this class of labor, and consequently men of this kind are few and scattered about the United States. So in order to prepare for this the New York firm has ordered about 100 of their men, who are located in the various cities of the United States, to plan their work so as to be able to come to New York city in time to go to work in the Garden.

The figures of the materials to be used in building the alleys have been given out and are as follows:

In the first place it will be necessary to use at least 200,000 lineal feet of yellow pine and maple for the beds of the alleys, 20,000 board feet of maple for the divisions, return ways and kickbacks, and 6,000 board feet of spruce and hemlock for the foundations. It will come near enough every two years for light reflectors covering an area of a quarter of a mile to be visible to the sister planet."—Paris Cor. New York Herald.

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NOISELESS AIRSHIP.

Features of Craft Being Built by Captain T. S. Baldwin.

OVERCOMES A BIG HANDICAP.

One of the Most Serious Drawbacks Has Been Clatter of Dirigible Craft's Machinery—California Claims to Have Solved Intricate Problem.

Captain Thomas S. Baldwin, the California aeronaut, whose dirigible airship was accepted by the United States government last year, recently made the interesting statement that the new dirigible now being built for him at Hammondsport, N. Y., will be a noiseless machine.

"I will make my new machine so devoid of noise when in operation," said Captain Baldwin, "that two men in the machine will be able to carry on a conversation if necessary in a whisper. This will be done by muffling the engine and using ball and roller bearings for the propellers. There ought to be no great difficulty in preventing excessive noise in a dirigible while in the air. The solution is one of improved construction.

"Up to the present time the main effort has been directed toward getting in the air. Now that this has been accomplished refinements in mechanical work will follow, and the next few years, I predict, will see scores of improvements which will make airships highly practicable for a number of purposes."

Added interest in the future practicability of airships has recently been aroused from the criticisms made by Prince Henry of Prussia in a lecture which he recently gave at the Marine academy at Kiel, describing his trip in the immense Zeppelin airship. Among other things he regarded the noise of the propellers as a serious disadvantage, being calculated to betray the approach of the ship in wartime. To send orders from the bridge to men in other parts of the ship it is necessary to write them and send them in a carrier attached to an endless wire, as it is impossible to hear a voice above the din of the motors. This difficulty has been experienced in all similar machines.

To permit the man at the motor to give quick orders to the man steering at the rear of the machine Lieutenant Lahm advised the equipment of the government airship with speaking tubes, and this will probably be in use when the military dirigible resumes its aerial flight this year.

Prince Henry in summing up the results of the Zeppelin invention said that the problem of reaching a fixed and not too distant point in not too unfavorable weather conditions was solved, but he thought that the question whether steerable airships were at present suitable as regular means of communication or could be employed for purposes of war must be regarded skeptically.

A steerable airship, he added, could not make headway against wind above a certain velocity, and, further, the internal combustion engine is not yet capable of undertaking a long distance journey. Moreover, the altitude that can be attained is limited by the fact that above a certain height, owing to the decreasing density of the atmosphere, the propellers meet with less resistance, while the motors give unsatisfactory results owing to the decrease of oxygen.

"An airship will always, more or less, be at the mercy of the wind," said Captain Baldwin. "A steamship cannot make its best headway in a storm or against adverse head winds, and the same is true when one tries to sail in changing air currents. My new machine will be built for a speed of twenty-two miles an hour. Going against a ten mile wind, therefore, the machine will go only about twelve miles an hour, and if the wind is greater than twenty-two miles it will be at its mercy to just that extent. But this is the least of the evils, and I believe all the difficulties enumerated by Prince Henry will be overcome in time through improved methods of construction.

"Take the noise difficulty, for instance. No effort has thus far been made to lessen it. Muffling an engine naturally curtails some of its power. The airship people have pursued the policy that they needed the maximum power of their engines. That's all right, but it's necessary for the Zeppelin airship while buffeted by the winds kept aloft although one engine had ceased to work. In the trials with the government machine we frequently found it advisable to throttle the engine, as we were getting more power than we needed. The improvement in gasoline engine building no longer requires that the maximum power be used to attain satisfactory results under ordinary conditions. It is there, however, if needed."—New York Cor. Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Uses For Perfumed Salt.

Perfumed salt is coming to be recognized as just the thing for the teeth. Another sort is recommended for the bath, and there are scores of other ways in which it is used as a toilet article. Mixed with cornmeal, it is placed in the toilet bath, and its use thus said to improve the complexion. Physicians now advise a liberal use of salt on fruit and in food generally, especially in the spring. One time salt was regarded as drying in its effects and injurious to health and to the complexion. Now this theory is displaced. The hot water drinkers put a good teaspoonful of salt into their morning beverage.

Chance For Aeronauts.

King Leopold of Belgium has offered a \$5,000 prize for the best treatise on aeronautics to be brought out this year.

New Speed Record For Typewriting.

A new speed record for typewriting was made at Kansas City, Mo., the other night by E. A. Trefzger of New York, when he wrote an average of 109 words from copy each minute for fifteen minutes. Trefzger was second in the international contest recently, when Rose L. Fritz won the hour contest.

The Dilemma.

"How can I ever learn to understand that girl?" "You can marry her, but when you have done that it will be too late for your understanding of her to be of any benefit to you."—Exchange.

Too Late Now.

"Mother—I hope you are nice to that young man who has been calling, dear. Daughter—I don't have to be, no, mamma, for he's in love with me."—Exchange.

Won Through a Dream.

By GRACE BOWEN.

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In a lonely shack on a North Dakota quarter section Edith Allen was facing the problem that comes to all of Eve's daughters.

A man great in his strength and mightier in his love had asked her surrender—had almost demanded it when he passionately tore aside conventional conversation and bared his heart and his hopes.

That she had sent him away without an answer was not a negative reply to his wooing. She had begged for time to think, a space in which to analyze the emotions surging in her breast.

Moreover, she had thought she loved him, and because she was a product of the city and had dug deep in the printed philosophy of life she wanted her brain to sit in judgment on her heart.

"I know what you would say," imperiously declared Jim, the lover. "I am nearer the animal than you. When fatigue follows a satiated joy of working my recreation is rest—physical comfort and sleep. I find nothing to grip me in books written by men whose lives have been cramped and narrow, by men with water in their veins instead of strong, red blood."

"No, no, Jim; it is not that," interrupted Edith.

"But it is. It is just that. You know. I am a college man. Not from one of your famous eastern institutions, true, but I fancy our North Dakota brand of education will be found the equal of its older relations of New England. I went to please father. He was a poor man and felt that he had missed much because his school days had been few. That his son need not suffer this handicap in life he made many sacrifices.

"I am grateful to him for the love that prompted this self denial, and I am glad that I have what learning I can." "Suppose I had lost you?" "There was a rapping at the door. Consciousness slowly returned to her; she shook recollections of the nightmare from her head.

"What's the matter, Edith? Are you hurt?" "No; I'll be out in a minute. Wait." And she hastily dressed.

"You're ill," he exclaimed when she appeared. "You are ghostly pale." "Oh, Jim, I've had such a dream!" she said.

"Dreams are silly things, Edith. Surely you would not let one frighten you?" he soothingly said.

"But this one did. And, Jim, I know now," and her head dropped to hide the flush of her cheeks.

"Yes?" said Jim, not comprehending. "What you asked me yesterday." "Sweetheart! And your answer?" He eagerly ran to her.

"Yes, Jim, I love you." And in the embrace that followed disappeared the artificialities of troublesome philosophies in the depth of an emotion primitive and elemental.

Guarding a Nail.

A gentleman in Jerusalem told me that he found a Turkish soldier on guard in some part of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where it was not usual for a sentry to be, and inquired of him why he was there.

He pointed to a nail in the wall and replied, "It is my duty to watch that nail."

Asked why, he explained that the Latins or the Greeks—1 forget which—had driven the nail with the view of hanging a picture; that a rival sect had furiously objected, saying that it was an interference with their property and wanted to pull out the nail; that thereupon the Turkish government had intervened and set him to watch the nail and see that no picture was hung upon it and that it was not pulled out.

To allow the picture to be hung would have been to admit the claims of those who drove in the nail. To allow it to be pulled out would have been to admit the claims of those who objected to the driving in of the nail. Therefore the nail must be preserved and the picture must not be hung, and to see that this was so an armed sentry must watch day and night. For aught I know he may be watching still.—Rider Haggard's "A Winter Pilgrimage."

The Amateur Gardener.

I've planted the peas in the rose bed. I've set out some slips in the sun. I'm wondering now with a care furrowed brow.

What the job will be like when it's done. The names that are written in Latin I've studied with scrupulous care. I've mixed up the seeds of all kinds of breeds.

And scattered 'em everywhere.

The scheme will work out beyond question. In a highly original way. The humble string bean side by side will be seen.

With the pink and the peppy so gay. But I tremble to think of the finish. As over the garden I gaze. Will they call me to eat the petunias so sweet.

While tomato plants stand in a vast Washington Star.

Realistic.

She sits at the microscope—Miss Schroeder sings with wonderful realism. Do you think of it? He—Yes; you can almost see the crack in her velvet—L'Inferno Saturday Night.

A Restless Breed.

Mr. Slichman—No, sir, she wouldn't buy that dog. He's a cur between a St. Bernard and—Mr. D. Vey (who is not enthusiastic)—And a St. Vitus?—Puck.

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