

## SLANG AND ITS ORIGIN.

THERE ARE NEVER ANY ROWS OVER AUTHORSHIP CLAIMS.

Phrases and "Gags" That Live for a Brief Period in Popularity—No One Acknowledges Having Evolved the Most Striking and Funny Sayings.

"Did it ever strike you," said Capt. Fitzmaurice, an old retired navigator with a quizzical turn of mind, "how odd it is that the origin of all the 'gags' and slang phrases that run riot for a spell from Cape Cod to the Golden Gate never become known? It is odd, now, isn't it?" The reporter acknowledged that it was. "Because, don't you see," continued the captain, "the people of this generation have not, among their other failings and shortcomings, the falling of excessive modesty. Every man, in fact, who does, says or thinks something worth mention, or thinks he thinks, for that matter, generally comes to the front and acknowledges that it was he and none other who said, did or thought this or that. Often the trouble is to find out who was the real original Jacobs among them all, so numerous are the claims put forth by different persons that they are the thinkers, sayers and doers of something remarkable. Now, with all this being true, I take it to be an extraordinary thing that in not a single instance has there been a man or woman coming forward and acknowledging the authorship of any of these terse, picturesque or roughly slangy expressions that sweep the country like a whirlwind and then die out, leaving no trace.

"And it is remarkable how sometimes they die out as quickly as they spread. If track were kept of them all—or a regular register by somebody—this assertion would be more susceptible of proof. But I can recall a number of cases of this kind, even without having anything to aid my memory. You remember that gag about 'How do you sagittate?' or, 'How is your corporosity?' They spread over the country inside of a month, being in everybody's mouth; and then they just as quickly sank into the bottomless pit of the past. I venture to say not one man in a thousand could recall either of the two queer expressions on the spur of the moment if required to do so. It was the same with that old 'Tom Collins' gag, the original of the McGinty gag of today. That was put on its legs early in 1874 in New York. It traveled, and within three weeks it had traveled as far as San Francisco. A man couldn't put his nose into the street in the spring and summer of that year without hearing some reference to the mythical Tom Collins, and a score of topical songs were started at Tony Pastor's, and at the other variety theatres and concert halls, all with Tom Collins in them. In the fall of that year Tom Collins was as dead as a door nail, with no hope of ever resurrecting him. There have been, to my personal recollection, a long string of similar words or catch phrases coined, set in general circulation and then squelched within the past twenty years alone. Others have lost much of their one time popularity, but have survived after a fashion, like 'Where did you get that hat?' 'Cheese it!' 'Come off!' 'Get on to his nibs!' 'And the band played Annie Laurie!' 'Johnny, get your gun!' 'No flies on him!' 'Has your mother any more like you?' 'They all do it!' 'Have you got the mate to it?' 'Shoot that hat!' 'Pull down the blinds!' 'Break away!' and a whole lot of others. You remember when that shibboleth 'West nuts' was first manufactured? No? Well, neither do I. It seems a century ago—the expression appears to us to be as old as Methuselah. And yet it can't be so many years ago when it first originated. Remember the chestnut bells and the lively home industry that sprang up in that article—makers and dealers even advertising heavily to effect sales, and territory for the sales agents being farmed out, much as it is by the sewing machine companies for their agents. Yes, all that happened quite recently, and where do you hear a chestnut bell tinkling now? Nowhere. It has done its duty."

"At the same time," ventured the reporter, interrupting the smooth current of the old captain's talk, "there seem to be some slang phrases and slangy songs that are enjoying a green old age even today."

"These are exceptions—rare exceptions—to the general rule. And when I think of the huge mass of short lived slang expressions, many of them enjoying existence no longer than those sand flies we have with us during a summer day, these exceptions seem all the rarer. There are certain words which arise in this same sudden and impersonal way, such as 'dude' and 'mugwump,' etc., and which fit the needs of the hour, as well as the needs of aftertime. Those, of course, stay with us. They really supply a long felt want, and are made to do permanent duty. But even for these, so far as I know, it is always impossible to find responsible authors of their being. The newspapers and magazines will, subsequently, take the thing up and give derivations of these words and expound their origin and birthplace, but even they have never been able to find the real father of any of these graphic expressions. And that, I repeat, is singular. No more so, however, than the extraordinarily rapid manner in which these words or phrases become, for a time at least, the common property of the whole nation. A case comes to my mind which illustrates this. It was in 1877. In May of that year I joined Capt. Blackwell, an old friend of mine, in a long trip to Chinese waters. I went from here to San Francisco, where his vessel lay. Our journey to Shanghai was a short one. Passing down one of the main streets of that Chinese port the next afternoon, Capt. Blackwell and myself were run into and almost knocked into the gutter by a trio of sailors from the United States man-of-war Kearsarge. The fellows were evidently spoiling for a fight, and to avoid trouble we passed

on without saying anything, when one of them sang out in a stentorian voice: 'Shoot that hat!' He referred to my somewhat battered headgear. Now, the point I wanted to make was this: The Kearsarge had come from San Francisco. When I had left Chicago that piece of slang about discarding or otherwise abusing one's hat had not yet reached that city. Our journey to Shanghai had been made in less than the average time. Yet here was this sailor from the Kearsarge addressing me thousands of miles away from home with an absolutely new phrase. It must have reached San Francisco just in time for this ruffian to have picked it up and to lug it with him to China and fling it at my inoffensive head."—Chicago Herald.

**The Wig Gag.**  
Not long ago Primrose and West's minstrels were playing in a small town down south. Manager Truss was on the door, as usual, looking out for the people who try to crowd their way into shows in one night stands without going through the formality of purchasing tickets. Primrose stood with him, as he is not obliged to appear until some time after the curtain goes up. A very genteel looking, bald headed man, who had bought a gallery ticket, came down and said to Truss: "Excuse me, sir, but I see some friends down stairs here. I would like to run in and speak to them a moment." He was so polite about it that he was allowed to pass in. The usual formality of asking for a permit was waived. But the man did not come out. "Go in and see if you can see him, George," said Truss, and Primrose went in to take a look. "I'd know that bald head among a thousand," he said. But he could not see a bald headed man in the house. He hurried back, blacked up and went on the end. While he sat there he looked around for the bald headed interloper, but he was nowhere to be seen. As soon as he was through, which was long before the show was over, he hurriedly washed off the burnt cork and went back to join Truss. "Find him yet?" he asked. "No," replied Truss, disconsolately. "He's the first man who has beaten me this season." Then the two watched the audience as it filed out. Suddenly Primrose nudged Truss and said: "There he is," pointing out a curly haired individual with two ladies. "Guess you're wrong," said Truss. "No, I'm not," said Primrose; "he's got a wig on." And sure enough he had. "Well, let him alone," said Truss. "He deserves it. No one has ever tried the wig gag on me at the door before."—Chicago Herald.

**The Sioux Sale of 11,000,000 Acres.**  
When an Indian reservation is appropriated by the United States government the eastern view generally is that the Indians have been grievously wronged; but the Sioux have really done remarkably well with their lands, better probably than any other tribe. The original contract was that they should part with no land unless three-fourths of the male adults of the various tribes gave their assent to the concession. The discovery of gold in the Black Hills, however, in 1874 caused over fifty thousand people to flood Western Dakota, so that in 1876 the government declared the extreme western portion of Dakota open to settlement. This was a result of a treaty with Red Cloud and the Sioux chiefs who had been captured and returned to their reservations. This can hardly be deemed a breach of faith upon the part of the United States, for during the Sioux war of 1874-75-76, which resulted in the Custer massacre and the flight into British America of a portion of the tribes under Sitting Bull, the government troops used all possible diligence in capturing and turning back the Black Hills gold seekers. The pioneers poured in from all directions and fought their way to the land of gold; indeed it may be said that the country was captured by them.

"The Indian Rights association," the "Indian Defense association" and the various religious denominations that have their mission schools and lay preachers at work throughout the great Sioux reservation have labored with senators and congressmen to keep faith with the Sioux, and ask no more land save by the stipulation of a three-fourths agreement of the male adults, as provided for in the treaty of 1868.

**How Bank of England Notes Are Made.**  
Bank of England notes are made from new white linen cuttings—never from anything that has been worn. So carefully is the paper prepared that even the number of dips into the pulp made by each workman is registered on a dial by machinery, and the sheets are counted and booked to each person through whose hands they pass. They are made at Laverstock, on the river Whit, in Hampshire, by a family named Portal, descended from a French Huguenot refugee, and have been made by the same family for more than 150 years. About 1860 a large quantity of the paper was stolen by one of the employes, which caused the bank a great deal of trouble, as the printing is a comparatively easy matter, the great difficulty with forgers being to get the paper.

They are printed within the bank building, there being an elaborate arrangement for making them so that each note of the same denomination shall differ in some particular from the other.—St. Louis Republic.

**Regulated by Bugle.**  
Every watch and clock on Governor's Island is regulated by bugle call. Just before noon two enlisted men are stationed at a point commanding an unobstructed view of the tower of the Western Union building. One of these is the post bugler, the other a trained signalman, equipped with a powerful field glass. The non-commissioned officer is required to keep his glass fixed upon the time ball. The instant it drops he gives the signal to the bugler, who stands in readiness, and the latter immediately sounds the specified call, which is heard all over the island, and there is a general consultation and adjustment of watches and clocks.—Exchange.

## HARDENING THE BRAIN.

While we were waiting at the depot in a small town in Arkansas, a colored woman came up and asked if any one of the six white men was a doctor. One of them proved to be, and she rolled her check apron in her hands in a fussy way and asked if he wouldn't "jist step over to de cabin an' see what ailed her ole man." He found that he had time, and said he would go, and two or three of us went along to see what we could see. As we drew near the cabin the woman halted us and said: "Eze bin all de doctah he's had, an' Ize willin' to allow dat I might her made some mistakes. When he was fust taken I gin him turnip seed tea. Was dat right, doctah?"

"I guess so."  
"Later on I changed to a poultice of wild onions. Was dat right?"  
"It might have been."  
"Den I soaked his feet in hot water wid wood wood ashes in it, an' put a mustard poultice on de back of his neck."  
"Yes."  
"Den he allowed he felt wuss, an' so I changed de mustard to his stomach an' soaked his head. He dun complained all de maw'nin', an' now Ize got mustard on his feet, a poultice on de middle, haws radish on his neck, an' he's takin' sassafras tea to warm up de inside."  
"Well!"  
"Wall, if dere's been any mistake, doan' let on to de ole man. Jist skip it ober."

We went in and the doctor examined the patient and found he had a broken rib, and told him what to do for it. As we left the cabin the woman followed us out and exclaimed:  
"Fo' de lawd, doctah, but what blessin' dat you dun come along! I was dun doctah'd de ole man fur softenin' de brain, an' if I hadn't cotched you today I was dun gwine to try to harden 'em up by mixin' sand wid his porridge!"—New York Sun.

## Missionary Trials in India.

Among the hardest things to get used to in India are the scorpions. They infest everything, and one gets as used to turning out one's shoes in the morning as to waking up. In calling on one of my collaborators shortly after my arrival in India, I spoke of the scorpion nuisance, and he casually remarked, "Well, yes, I suppose you think so; but you will get used to them. I killed thirty this morning, and thought it a poor morning for scorpions, too."

Snakes are pretty bad, too, and it's not so easy to get used to them. Cobras have a lingering tenderness for one's bathroom. The reason is natural. Few things are cooler in India, and the bathroom is about the coolest place in the house. I very nearly stepped on one coiled up in my bathroom one morning. It darted into a hole near by and part of its tail stuck out. I offered one of the natives about the house four annas to pull it. He took the money and not only pulled the snake out and killed it, but, as I afterward learned, took it home with him and made a curry of it.

The scorpions were annoyances in church, and yells from the congregation on being bitten by them were not infrequent interruptions. Tigers used to come down from the mountains back of my bungalow, or house, to within a stone's throw.—Cor. New York Times.

## Robbing Peter to Pay Paul.

This expression arose thus: On the 17th of December, 1540, the abbey church of St. Peter, Westminster, was advanced to the dignity of a cathedral by letters patent; but ten years later it was joined to the diocese of London again, and many of its estates appropriated to the repairs of St. Paul's cathedral. One hundred years later, in 1640, we find in "Outlandish Proverbs," selected by Mr. George Herbert, priest and poet of classic renown, the subject of one of Walton's Lives, the proverb altered and set forth as follows: "Give not St. Peter so much, to leave St. Paul nothing." This proverb is quoted by Francis Rabelais early in the sixteenth century. Upon the death of William Pitt, earl of Chatham, in 1778, each of the metropolitan cemeteries laid claim to the honor of burial. The city of London argued that so great a statesman as William Pitt should be buried in St. Paul's, while parliament took the ground that the dust of so great a man as he should come near to the dust of kings, and that not to bury him in Westminster abbey would again be "robbing St. Peter to pay St. Paul."—Detroit News.

## Bird Language.

"To my mind, all birds have a language, and that language is as intelligible to themselves as ours is to us," said the proprietor of a bird store. "I have a pair of canaries and I often listen to their conversation. In the morning one of them gives a 'tw-ect.' 'Are you awake?' he says to the other. The other gives a 'tw-ect.' 'Yes; I'm a little sleepy, though,' and closes his eyes again. 'But it's morning.' 'I don't care,' says the lazy mate, tucking his head under his wing once more. 'It's time to wake up.' This time there is no reply."

"Then the other proceeds to indulge in a morning serenade. He carols up and down the scale. Then the second bird pokes out her head and shakes her feathers. 'It's really impossible to sleep under the circumstances,' she says. 'I hope you don't feel cross, he says. 'Oh, no, only—' And then they patch it all up and indulge in a charming duet."—Detroit Tribune.

## Cost of Japanese Gods.

Out here there are little gods, big gods, good gods and bad gods. They can be had from fifty cents to \$10,000 each. They are made from every material known to man, from clay to crystal and gold. Of course, the wood buddhas, as they are called, are the oldest and most unique. Good old buddhas can be had from \$15 to \$35 Mexican. These are prices here. It is always the best way to figure that an article costing, say, \$20 Mexican here will cost the purchaser \$20 gold landed in the United States.—Yokohama Letter.

## DON'T BLAME THE WORLD.

Don't blame the world because the thorns are found among the roses;  
The day that breaks in storm may be all sunshine when it closes;  
We cannot hope to always meet with fortune's fond caressing;  
And that which seems most hard to bear may bring with it a blessing.  
The buried seed must rot in earth ere it produce the flower,  
And the weak plant to fructify must have both sun and showers;  
So man, to gain development, must struggle with life's crosses,  
And view with calm philosophy his trials and his losses.  
A deadly, pois'nous weed may yield a salve of surest healing,  
The sweetest bloom may pois'nous be although its lane concealing.  
Things are not always what they seem, but still 'twas heaven designed them,  
And we should class them all as good, and take them as we find them.  
Little we know of this brief life, and nothing of its sequel;  
Then let us take in humble trust all that may seem unequal.  
God's ways are not our ways, and he should certainly be trusted;  
All that is wrong in his good time will surely be adjusted.  
—Hawke's Bay (New Zealand) News.

## African Musical Instruments.

"It is rather curious to notice that all the instruments originally identified with negro minstrelsy have come from Africa. "The bones and tambourine, too?"  
"Yes. Both tambourine and bones, or castanets, were brought into Spain from Africa by the Moors. They are both savage instruments, almost unmodified. The fannest and most primitive musical instrument I ever heard of, however, I saw used by a ducky down in Florida, who laid one horny and previously licked forefinger on the edge of a table and sawed across it back and forth with a round stick. The table served as a sounding board, and at each stroke of the stick across the finger a loud drawn, lugubrious note of some loudness was produced. It did the bass for an orchestra at a negro party—consisting besides of a banjo and a tambourine."—Interview in Washington Star.

## Sawing an Arm Off.

Col. H. C. Hamilton, clerk of the United States district court, was telling yesterday how it felt to have a limb cut off. He was perfectly conscious when his arm was cut off in a field hospital, and says of it:  
"It really doesn't hurt except when the first cut around the limb is made, cutting the skin. That's because the nerves are all situated just under the skin, and after they are cut there is nothing to convey the sensation of pain. Cutting through the flesh is like cutting a nail on a bit of dead skin—a dead feeling. Even sawing the bone is only a dull feeling. The real pain is over when the knives get into the flesh."—Atlanta Constitution.

## A Domestic Episode.

American Heiress (now a countess)—My dear, have you put on your coat with the padded shoulders?  
The Count (from behind the portiere)—I haf.  
A. H.—Has the valet laced your stays properly?  
The Count—He has, ma lofe.  
A. H.—And penciled your eyebrows, adjusted your wig and applied the rouge and powder artistically?  
The Count—All is beautifully done.  
A. H.—Then you are a good boy. You shall have another thousand for your gambling debts, and shall ride with Fido and me.—Pittsburg Bulletin.

## Washing in Japan.

Washing was and is still done in Japan by getting into a boat and letting the garments drag after the boat by a long string. It is an economical habit of traveling Japs to get a large amount of washing thus accomplished by a steamboat excursion, and has given rise to the story that once a year they travel to wash. They have no instinct for laundry work like the Chinese, and think it complete when the soap is in the garment, and will not wring it out.—Exchange.

## Wood Pulp Mortar.

New uses for wood pulp are constantly being devised. One of the latest is its employment as the basis of a plastic compound to serve as a substitute for lime mortar in covering and finishing walls, and the process has been patented. It is designed to possess all the desirable qualities of ordinary mortar with the additional qualities of being harder, and when applied to wood work in a thin coat rendering it both fire and waterproof.—New York Telegram.

## "The Author" Did It.

The writer of a recent book of travels continuously refers to himself as "the author;" "the author" saw this, and "the author" was reminded of something he had met with in some other region. To the mind of "the reader" there is a self-conscious awkwardness in such a style. Had he said simply "I" instead, "the reader" would not have smiled so often or so much over his pages.—L. S. G. in The Writer.

## Fish.

Agassiz always taught his pupils to kill fish as soon as caught by a blow on the back of the head, that they might not suffer before dying. Such fish keep better and are better to eat, and the best fishermen in Europe and America always kill their fish as soon as they catch them by a blow on the back of the head.—Exchange.

## A Cheap Affidavit.

It was shown in a lawsuit in a New England town the other day that one Ebenezer Skinner made affidavit that a certain remedy had cured him of rheumatism of twenty years' standing, and all he charged for this swearing was fifty cents. He had never had the rheumatism in his life.—Detroit Free Press.

Statistics and careful estimates of the increase of population in the United States since 1880 indicate that there will be a total of 67,000,000 people at the time of the next census, July 1, 1890.—Statesman.

## AN INTERESTING RELIC.

KENTUCKY'S LIBRARY GETS WHAT IS LEFT OF A RAILROAD.

It is a Piece from the First Railway West of the Alleghenies—A Fatal Accident Causes the Management to Substitute Horse Power for Steam.

State Librarian Thompson, through the suggestion of Col. John O. Hodges, of Lexington, and the courtesy of Vice President M. H. Smith of the Louisville and Nashville railroad, was put into possession of a relic for the state library, which has an interesting bit of history attached to it. The relic consists of two large stones, each about four feet long, eighteen inches wide and twelve inches deep. One stone is hollowed out on the top, the full length of the middle, about two and one-half inches wide and two inches deep. On the edge of this chiseled indentation is a flat strip of bar iron about two and one-half inches wide, fastened with iron spikes driven into drilled holes in the stone. The other stone has the bar iron fastened at the edge of the outer surface. These stones are all that is left of the first railroad west of the Allegheny mountains, and the second railroad ever built in the United States.

## STONES FOR STRINGERS.

The road had its beginning in Lexington, Oct. 21, 1831, when the "corner stone" was laid with appropriate public demonstrations. It was finished to this city, a distance of twenty-eight miles, in December, 1835, stone sills like a line of broad flat street curbing in cities, taking the place of what is now called stringers, to which the rails were fastened. The ordinary straight or slightly curving lines of the road were constructed with plain flat surface stones, but for the average or heavy curves, the stones with a chiseled gutter way in the center were used as a double precaution to keep the flange of the wheel from jumping the rails.

The engineers of the day claimed that the road was the safest and most substantial that could be built, but it was found that for any length of time the action of the machinery pressing heavily against the edge of the stone rendered it liable to wear and crumble, requiring constant attention at a great expense to keep the road in good repair. Despite all this care and cost in the construction this road had the honor of the first railroad accident in the United States. This accident occurred in March, 1835, at a point about two miles the other side of this city. From a report of Thomas Smith, president of the Lexington and Ohio railroad, of which the Lexington and Frankfort was a part, published in 1836 and reproduced by Col. John O. Hodges for his March number of The Trades Journal, the following excerpt is taken:

"Notwithstanding these precautions on the occasions alluded to, the flanges of the wheels of the engine, while passing with the usual speed over an embankment, lost their hold upon the rails, and before the brakes could be used the engine and several cars, one of them containing a large number of passengers, were upset and broken. Two individuals were killed and several wounded. It is probably not within the scope of human invention to devise a means of traveling entirely free from all hazard."

## WHAT ONE ACCIDENT DID.

The locomotive first used upon this railroad was built by Joseph Bruen, of Lexington, in 1835. It had an upright boiler and two upright cylinders and lever beams, both attached to one axle, with crooks at right angles. Bruen got his idea from Thomas H. Barlow, who, it was claimed, built the first locomotive in the world at Lexington, 1826-27. Barlow had a car for two passengers attached to his locomotive, which had power to ascend an elevation eighty feet to the mile. In May, 1827, it was opened for public exhibition in a large room over Joseph Bruen's machine shop, where an oval track around the room was constructed. This was the first train in western America. Gen. Leslie Combs and Dr. W. S. Chipley rode in it at fifty cents a trip. The locomotive was afterward exhibited in Louisville and other cities in the south.

The accident referred to, "in consequence of the respectability of the sufferers and the novelty of the occurrence," directed public attention so strongly to it that the company substituted horse for steam power in the transportation of passengers. This primitive mode of constructing and conducting a railroad was continued until 1842, when a change of ownership brought with it a change from stone to wooden stringers and a return to steam from horse power. An inclined plane at Arsenal Hill, in this city, was in use until 1849, when the tunnel was completed to give entrance to the city and connections with the division of the road to Louisville, a part of which, from the center of Louisville to the Portland wharf, had long been in successful operation.—Frankfort (Ky.) Cor. Louisville Courier-Journal.

## The Dead Marine.

Capt. Mark Welch, late of Belfast, Me., was an old time ship master, and many amusing stories are told of his sea life. Capt. Welch had a great abhorrence of tobacco, and disliked to find tobacco "quids" about the vessel's deck. One night he found an immense "quid" on the quarter deck alongside the house, which had been recently painted. The captain called all hands. The watch below turned out, and as the night was pleasant they could not imagine what the difficulty was. "Get the watch tackle, straps and a handspike, and bring them aft," shouted the captain. The crew obeyed in amazement. "Put a strap around the main boom and hook on the watch tackle," said Capt. Welch. "What is to be done?" asked the mate. "Slings that dead marine lying there against the house and hoist him overboard," said the captain, pointing to the tobacco "quid." It was done. No more dead marines were found lying about the decks after that.—Lexington Journal.

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FOR CHARTER OF INCORPORATION.—Notice is hereby given that an Application will be made to the Hon. Robert L. Johnston, President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Cambria county, on the 7th day of April, A. D., 1890, for the Charter of a Corporation to be called THE AMERICAN MUSIC AND SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENT ASSOCIATION of the City of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, the character and object of which are the advancement and culture of music, beneficial and social entertainments, maris

JAMES M. WALTERS, Solicitor.