

THE BOOKKEEPER'S LAMENT.

BY ARTHUR J. LAMB.

With fingers weary and worn, With figures scribbling his mind, A bookkeeper sits on a rickety stool Trying his balance to find.

Till figures swim like words, And words are figures in green, Till over the figures he falls asleep, And adds them up in a dream.

"O! for the heathen Chinee! And O! for the ignorant Turk! A bookkeeper never has a soul to save, For on Sunday he must work.

Work! work! work! Till the night is lost in morn! Till worn and tired the bookkeeper creeps Beneath the desk where he always sleeps, And dreams of a balance unbroken—Chicago Star.

A SAD DISAPPOINTMENT

BY DWIGHT BALDWIN.

"A! Pa!" Bob Miller, a bright, vivacious boy of thirteen, burst excitedly into the cosy little room where his father was engaged in writing.

"What's the matter, Bob?" asked the gentleman, looking up. "You know where the river is?"

"Of course," "Well, down where the mill-dam used to be—do you know?"

"Yes, yes," "There's a man there."

"What?" "An awful big man."

"What of it?" "Well, he took away my six fishes, so he did."

"What for?" "Cause he's mean. He said he was a starvin', but he ain't, 'cause he's real fat."

"He's a cookin' 'em there, now," "What did you say?"

"I told him that maybe he didn't know who my father was. He allowed that he didn't, and says I, 'My father's George Miller, an' he's a theatrical agent as makes dates an' papers houses, an' he'll just exactly amble down here an' paste you, if yer don't give me my fish, so he will!'"

"What did he say to that?" "He said—he said, 'I'll cross my heart on it—he said that he wanted you to come, an' that he'd make you dizzier'n your old shoe. Hurry, pa, or he'll be gone. He's got a bile on the back of his neck. A lick there'll count double."

"Go an' lick him yourself, Bob. I can't."

"You don't mean that you ain't goin'?" "Certainly I mean it. Do you take me for a prize fighter?"

"But, pa, I told the man you was a comin'."

"Well?" "An' if you don't go, he'll be awfully disappointed!"

Despite the vexation that the interruption had caused him, the father laughed heartily.

"I'm sorry to disappoint the gentleman, Bob," said he, "but I can't go to-day."

"Then I'll get even with him myself."

"All right."

"I'll need a quarter, though, pa."

"Well, take it, and be off."

"An' an order for the worth of it in the cheapest whisky the old man Bear's got."

"What?" "I ain't goin' to drink it, pa. It's part of my scheme. It's a dandy, pa, an' it'll be pretty odd if I don't get even with his jaw-bones!"

With a great show of reluctance, but secretly pleased at the pluck and mysterious scheming of his son, whom he had not seen for three months, until the preceding day, the theatrical agent complied, and from the window watched the irrepressible Bob as he dashed away towards the principal street of the village.

The boy lost no time in securing a pint of the vilest whisky imaginable.

Then he hurried off towards the river.

He had not proceeded far when he heard a most piteous wailing, and a

moment later a boy of about his own size ran into the street.

"What's the matter, Dick Blye?" he asked.

"Matter! Ma's got one of them pat cat-o'-nine tails, and it stings awful, you just bet it does."

"Where did she get it?" "Bought it on the way from Laporte this mornin' off an' old tramp of a fellow what's goin' to make this town. Your mother'll take two, I know she will."

"No, she won't." "You feel pretty big 'cause your father's here."

"No, I don't. I know this fellow, He's down by the river now a cat'n' my fish. He's got a whole bundle of 'em. I saw the ends, but didn't catch onto what they were. Itally the gang, Dick, an' he'll peddle his whips some 's else."

Dick Blye uttered a creditable imitation of the war-whoop of a dime-novel Indian, and bolted away.

At the verge of the town Bob sat down to await the assembling of his clan.

In ten minutes as many boys, some of them ragged, some barefooted, but all bubbling over with enthusiasm, had joined their acknowledged leader.

When freckled Clem Warren, the last one expected, had arrived, Bob arose and this addressed his band:

"A miserable wretch, mean enough to chase a boy out of an orchard, took six fish away from me a spell ago down by the dam."

"No?" came in an incredulous chorus from the band.

"They were small, and inclined to be wormy in the shoulders."

"That's no difference," broke in Clem Warren. "Fish is fish!"

"This red-handed anarchist is bringing into town a whole passel of whips, regular cat-o'-nine-tails, such as we he's goin' to sell for a quarter apiece, to be used on boys. Dick Blye's mother bought one this mornin'. Roll up yer breeches, Dick."

A murmur of sympathy swept the throng as the lad complied with the order and showed a number of red welts around his fat legs.

"A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind, and not one of the spectators but knew that a like fate menaced him unless the whip-peddler could be prevented from making a canvass of the town."

"We'll make him come off the perch," cried one of them.

"An' off the sun-fish, too," added Bob, "if he has 't eat 'em all."

A few minutes later Bob halted some fifty yards away from the spot where a bearded man of immense stature was broiling fish over a small fire.

To all appearances the boy was alone, but his tried and trusty followers were encamped behind some low bushes near by. In their eagerness to see the monster who dealt in instruments of torture, they were thrusting up their heads at the imminent risk of being observed by the enemy.

"Hello!" shouted Bob. The man started, and dropped the fish he was cooking in the fire.

"Where's your father?" he sneered, after satisfying himself that Bob was unaccompanied.

"He said I had no 'thority to make a date for him."

"Ho! ho!" laughed the man, "why not?"

"I told him what you looked like, an' he allowed you was an old friend of his, as he couldn't fight."

"What are you givin' me?" "He said you once did him a great favor down in Pittsburg."

"Maybe I'm a liberal man."

"Is your name Racine—Philander Racine?"

"The same."

Then here's a bottle of Blue Grass whisky that pa sent you, with an invitation to come to dinner. Anybody can tell you where pa lives—best an' greatest man in town."

"Bring it on."

"Not until the neutrality is disarmed. I'm afraid you'll larrup me afore you taste the stuff."

Bob now took an apple from his pocket, which he punctured several times with a nail. Then he poured over it a little of the contents of the bottle and tossed it toward the whip merchant.

The man began by smelling the fruit, and ended in devouring it eagerly.

Five minutes later Bob had joined his band, and all were watching the trampish individual, as with every outward manifestation of pleasure he sat sipping the contents of the bottle and fell asleep.

"Forward!" whispered Bob, and the forms of the avengers were creeping stealthily along.

The bundle of whips was secured and distributed, the supply in excess of the demand being thrown into the river.

"Remember the Boston harbor tea story in the Reader," cried Bob. "At him, boys!"

The order was obeyed with alacrity. Rudely awakened from his drunken sleep the man, howling with pain, struggled to his feet and attempted to seize the pigmies, who had turned against the giant—whom strong drink had chained—stun weapons which he had brought into their country.

The boys readily cluded his grasp and continued to administer severe if not poetic justice, until they wearied of the sport.

"Now, beoff!" ordered Bob. With a black and scowling face the man complied, and staggered and limped down to the river.

"An' don't come here again sellin' whips to cut up the legs of honest boys," shouted Dick.

"An' don't go blowin' around that I disappointed you," added Bob. "Be sure and come around to dinner. We eat at one sharp, but you needn't show up till a quarter past, bein' as you're in the soup now, and have had fish, and won't relish the two first courses."

AMERICAN FABLES. THE CAGED RABBIT. RABBIT WAS a one day strolling through an apple orchard when he found a nice-looking locking box that seemed to be about his size.

He crawled into the box, and a door suddenly dropped and he was trapped. Before he had discovered that fact a farmer happened along, and the rabbit said: "I am greatly obliged to you for fixing things up for me. I can get in here, and the dogs and foxes cannot pester me. But you should have given me the combination so that I could get out when I wished."

"Don't mention it," said the farmer. "I did not erect that box for your protection, but for your destruction, and it cracked the rabbit's head and took him home for dinner."

MORAL. There are lots of farmers in this world.

THE TWO FIGHTING COCKS. Two cocks in a farm-yard were always boasting of their strength, and at last they arranged a slugging match.

Just as the fight was finished the farmer appeared and said: "You two are a disgrace to the whole farm. I propose to inoculate you into a pot pie."

"But," said the one that had been worsted, "I have already been whipped. Gaze on the dornier window over my

left eye, and observe the resemblance of my other optic to a watch pocket. Can't you let me off?"

"No," was the reply. "Since you have been beaten and your beauty spoiled you have nothing more to live for."

"Will you kindly notice," questioned the other fowl, "what a splendid fellow I am and how I don the other rooster up? You should show me some favors."

"Since you are now the champion," answered the farmer, "you had better die before you lose your laurels."

MORAL. This should apply to the Sullivan-Kilrain fight, but it won't.—Chicago Leader.

THE Puzzled Gentleman from Japan. A distinguished Japanese official visited New York recently, and a member of the municipal government who had been in Japan and can speak the language of the country, undertook to show him around.

"Is that an officer making an arrest?" asked the Japanese, as he saw a man stop a milk wagon.

"Not exactly," replied the official. "He is a milk inspector, and his duty is, under the law, to see that no impure milk is sold in the city. If the milk is all right he will let the milkman pass on; otherwise he will arrest him."

"What is impure milk?" "Milk that has been mixed with chalk or water."

"Is the chalk a poison?" "Oh, no; it impairs the quality, that's all."

"Does water in milk make anybody sick?" "Why, of course not. But when a person pays for milk he wants milk, not water, which he can get for little or nothing when he desires it. It is a swindle on the public to put water in milk."

"But you say no one is hurt by it?" "Feelings are hurt, that's all."

Soon after they passed a low corner saloon, when the door opened and a man who came staggering out tripped, struck his head against a lamp-post and fell heavily on the sidewalk, where he lay as one dead.

"Is this the matter with that man?" asked the foreigner from Japan. "Full of benzine," replied the municipal officer, with a glance of disgust. "It is a name we have in this country for poor liquor—poison whisky, you understand."

"Is there any good whisky?" "Oh, yes; there is good whisky, but some saloons make more money selling bad whisky."

"Bad whisky is poison?" "Deadly poison, sometimes."

"Has the man a license to sell whisky, same as the milkman has to sell milk?" "Of course, or he couldn't carry on business."

"And do you inspect the whisky as you do the milk?" "Never."

"Yet there may be poison in it, while milk is adulterated with chalk and water that does no harm in particular, you say."

"Ahem," said the city official, twisting about uneasily, "let's look at the markets."

At the markets they found officials inspecting the meat that was on sale. "What do they do that for?" asked the Japanese.

"To see that the meat is healthy," was the reply.

"If a man should eat a piece of unhealthy meat would he stumble on the sidewalk and split his head open against a lamp-post, as the man did coming out of the saloon? Would water-headed ox-biter (Bubala erythrina), and the elephant the cattle heron (Bubalus ibis).

The ox-biters belong to the raven family, and in Gordon Cummings' books are listed as being found in such hot countries as Texas.

Impertinent Indifference. Emperor William, who is naturally of an excitable and nervous temperament, never loses any opportunity to school himself to prevent any display of feeling. A few nights ago he gave a most astonishing exhibition of absolute self-control and even cold-bloodedness. During the state performance at the Royal Opera, in honor of the marriage of the Empress' sister to Prince Frederick Leopold, the dress of the premiere danseuse caught fire from a gas-jet in the wings, and in a moment she was wrapped from head to foot in a sheet of flame. With great presence of mind the principal basso, who was standing near by draped in Roman toga and waiting to "go on," dashed her to the ground, and tearing the toga from his shoulders enveloped her in his capacious folds, thereby extinguishing the flames. She was, however, so badly burned that, during three days her life was despaired of, and as it is the poor girl will be disfigured for life. Her rescuer was also badly burned about the hands, arms and face.

The incident, although concealed from the major portion of the audience, was plainly visible from beginning to end to the Emperor, who was seated in one of the stage boxes. Notwithstanding the exciting nature of the scene, he neither raised a hand nor even moved in his chair, and waited to "go on."

Comical Complaint. It is a common complaint of school reformers that pupils are not taught to analyze, but merely learn by rote, which is little better than no learning. But this complaint is based on the theory that youthful minds can analyze correctly, which is true only in a few cases.

In a suburban town, the other day, it fell to the turn of a stout lay of twelve to read the following sentence from the account in the reading-book of the battle of Yorktown:

"The assault upon the British works was made by 500 picked men from the American ranks."

And the boy read it: "The assault upon the British works was made by 500 pick-ed men."

The idea suggested by this reading was so droll that the teacher asked the boy:

"What do you suppose that means?" "Oh," said he, "I suppose they took the pick-ed men so they could run them through the enemy's rank easier."

This brings to mind the case of a boy who, when he was taken to see a soldier's parade, endeavored to explain to a smaller companion the use of the rifle by remarking: "Secretly he kills 'em. They have those so when they are in battle they can duck their heads down and bunt right into the enemy."

A CHAPTER ON BIRDS.

SOME INTERESTING MEMBERS OF THE FEATHERED FAMILY.

Fowls that Act as Guardians—The Ox-Biter, the Hornbill, the Cattle Heron and Other Curious Ornithological Specimens.

ERODOTUS, the Greek philosopher, was the first, so far as the archives show, to make any record of any affinity between birds and animals. He lived about 484 B. C., a time sufficiently remote to allow a small herobrother of his assertions, that have been ascertained to be founded on fact.

His writings, as translated, are highly interesting. He seems a little given to the marvelous, but commentators accept him as accurate whenever referring to anything based on personal observation. His episodes are skillfully interwoven, one entertainingly leading to another, with the language simple and to the point. So this observing old traveler tells of a curious crochilus—the little bird called trochilus—or, by the ornithological name, crochilus acipitans—and the crocodile. After mentioning that all other beasts and birds avoid the saurian monster, Herodotus says:

When the crocodile issues from the water and opens his mouth, which he does most commonly toward the sunset, the trochilus enters his mouth and swallows the leeches which cling to his teeth. The leech is so pleased that he never injures the little bird.

Native Egyptians call the bird "zic-zac," and supplement Herodotus with the declaration that when the accident or weariness the crocodile shuts his mouth on one or more of the birds it or they give him such a naking with beak and spurs that he is glad to open up again without delay. More recent investigations confirm the ancient philosopher, but not the addition by his descendants. The latest disclosures go to show that the trochilus is not often caught in its scaly friend's jaws, but when it is—est fait de lui. It is in the bird's favor that it is unusually active. Its legs are long, beak sharp, and for its size very strong. When alone or with others of its kind it is inclined to quiver, but when the object of its solicitude crawls on a bank of sand to loll in the sun it is wonderfully lively. Leeches in abundance are always clinging to the inside of the crocodile's mouth and tongue, and these the trochilus picks off and swallows with gusto. Beyond this it keeps a sharp eye and ear open for intruders, and on their approach it utters a thing unwelcome or strange gives sharp cries that awaken the crocodile, if asleep, giving it opportunity to escape.

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