

TO THE UNATTAINABLE.

Dear, how many the songs I bring to you
Woven of dream-stuffs, pleasure, and pain.
All the songs of my life I bring to you.

A WAR CLAIM.

BY CHAS. T. MURRAY.

"Hurry up, my boy! No skulking about that crib! Live! No! Let the chickens go. Let 'em alone, I say! Bring out that corn!"

The mother had risen, and the look of despair upon the daughter's face had given way to one of tumultuous gratification.

"I have no time for cultivating the ladies," replied he, "though of course," he added, "it would be an honor to meet any friend of yours."

"My dear fellow, because I never saw a woman I would have cared to marry—save one, and—"

"And she wouldn't have you, eh? The old story. Congressmen are a good deal like school-boys, and indulge in many playful personalities that would not be pleasantly received outside of the cloak-rooms."

"What? You have met before?" said the voluble Kentuckian with some surprise. "I'm not certain," she stammered, "unless your name was Miss Belle Parkes?"

"And unless you were the Union non-commissioned officer who wouldn't steal chickens." (Smilingly.) "But stole everything else? Yes, we've met before," said Hale.

"Then there was a general laugh at Hale's expense—a laugh in which other Congressmen heartily joined. The story was repeated and repeated—all save the incident of the kiss, and when the narrative had reached that point Mr. Hale glanced meaningly at his hand and the lady looked slyly down upon the floor. She was still a fine-looking woman, he noted.

"So you've brought that old claim upon you, eh?" said he, knowing I wouldn't get away?" in a tone of badinage. "Brought it with me? Dear me, it has been here a dozen years or more, and she looked around the room as if it were the only war claim unsettled and might have dropped on the floor somewhere, rolled under the committee-table and been forgotten.

"A messenger was summoned and the claim brought in from the files. Mr. Hale found his own receipt as a Government officer duly set forth. He also found favorable reports on the case that it had been twice passed by the House and once by the Senate, but had somehow never got through.

"After adjournment he sought Mrs. Louisa. A long and interesting conversation ensued during which each learned all about the other. She told him of the death of her mother, of her brother, of her widowhood. He described the finding of her brother and his Christian burial.

"It was his dear aunt, who lived on the hill just above the battle-field. She knew where the command was stationed during the fight and sent her old negro to look over the dead. He found the body and they shrouded it, but the two were unable to move it before your troops came that day. The negro was terribly scared, but was in hiding near by and saw you bury it. We removed it to our family ground shortly afterward. Poor boy!"

"Poor girl!" added Mr. Hale, seeing that she knew everything. "It was so good of you, sir, to feel for me. When aunt told me what you had said and done there I was sorry I had not kissed you again!" Her soft Southern eyes were melting and she smiled through her tears.

"Well, he's in good luck." "How so?" "He will have a quiet time of it until he gets out, and then he will be too old to marry."—[Texas Siftings.]

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Mrs. Younghusband—Now that it is the new year, John, I hope that you will be able to say no; and, by the way, won't you let me have a little money? John (heretically)—No.—[New Haven News.]

THE JOKER'S BUDGET.

WEST FOR ALL IS SIGHT.

Citizen (speaking to Wall Street king)—Good morning, Mr. Plunger. Are you going down town now?

Mr. Plunger—I'm going down after a little.

Citizen—I thought you usually went there after a good deal.—[Munsey's Weekly.]

MR. AND MRS. B.

Winkle—Eh! How is this, Binkie? I've heard you say many a time that every man should be master in his own house; but—ha! ha!—old boy, don't seem to be to master here.

Binkie (sheepishly)—This is my wife's house.—[New York Weekly.]

A RESPONSIVE AUDIENCE.

Rawley—Why, Curtin, how is it you were not a first-nighter at your own play?

Curtin—I was too nervous. Are you just from the theater?

Rawley—Yes.

Curtin—Did my pathetic scenes bring any tears?

Rawley—Yes; the people in the house laughed till they cried.—[Munsey's Weekly.]

DIDN'T FOLLOW THE PRESCRIPTION.

Dr. Pillsbury—Well, Mr. Sceptic, did you follow my prescriptions?

Sceptic—No; if I had I would have broken my neck.

Dr. Pillsbury—Why, what do you mean?

Sceptic—I threw the prescriptions out the window.—[Chicago America.]

HARD TO FIND.

First Astronomer—Is there any mention of comets in the McKinley bill?

Second Astronomer—I don't know. Why?

First Astronomer—They seem to be unusually scarce and high.—[New York Weekly.]

THE GIRL WHO SNUGGLES.

She—George, you are a bundle of inconstancy.

George—Why, what do you mean? What have I done?

She—All last summer at the beach you gave me nothing but gas; now you become economical and want it turned down!—[New York Herald.]

LOOKING FORWARD.

Tommy is very hard on shoes and trousers. His mother understands this, and governs herself accordingly when she goes shopping.

One day, while out with another lady, she was buying cloth for a pair of pantaloons for Tommy, and ordered a good deal more than seemed necessary.

"Why do you get so much?" asked her friend.

"Oh," was the reply, "this is for reserved seats!"—[Youth's Companion.]

HIS NEIGHBORS.

Victim—See here, sir! When you sold those lots you said they were in a good neighborhood, and I find they are surrounded by livery barns.

Real Estate Dealer—Certainly. It is the best neigh-borhood I know of.

NOT WHAT WAS EXPECTED.

"Well, Kenniboy, whom do you love?" asked K's neighbor's father.

After a moment of deep thought the answer came.

"Kenniboy," he said.—[Harper's Young People.]

THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE PLACE.

Will Pithough—Cutaway, who is that clerical looking old gentleman that called around yesterday with a statement of my account?

Cutaway (the tailor)—That is Professor Mustee, the famous collector of antiquities. I have just engaged him.—[Puck.]

IT WEIGHED ON HIS MIND.

Mrs. Magnus Scott—If I tell my husband to perform some unusual errand it worries him so much that he can't get it out of his head.

Mrs. Bilsdoo—I have noticed the same thing in my husband. Only yesterday I ordered a load of wood, and during his sleep last night he frequently exclaimed: "Let's have another dollar's worth of chips."—[American Stationer.]

HAD GRADUATED.

Crabapple—Don't you believe, Miss Sweetie, that I could teach you to love me?

Miss Sweetie—Possibly; but as I have made my debut it is rather late to go back to a tutor.

THE GIRL ON HORSEBACK.

Bessie (to horse dealer)—I thought you told me that that saddle horse I bought would like in the bit without the slightest trouble!

Dealer—Well, doesn't he?

Bessie—No, he doesn't! I held the bridle right up to his nose, and clucked several times; but the ugly thing never made a move!

Painless Death.

Dr. Conrad Wesselhoft, endorsed by the Homeopathic Society of Boston, Mass., recommends the use of chloroform to solve the problem of euthanasia—the execution of criminals in a swift and painless manner. That electricity acts with lightning speed on some animal organisms, can, however, be hardly denied, and the variation of its effect is the chief argument used against the reputation of the Kemmler experiment. Exactly the same objection might, unfortunately, be argued against the use of chloroform. Under the influence of ether some persons swoon away like children falling into a deep slumber, while others cough, sputter and struggle under a more and more suffocating difficulty to breathe. Prussic acid, judiciously administered, acts about ten times as quick, and wrould, the arrow-poison of the South American Indians, is said to produce a sort of lethargy which in less than five minutes progresses from a feeling of languor to loss of consciousness; still it may be questioned if anything but old age can cause such a thing as an absolutely painless death.—[New York Voice.]

How Hardtack is Made.

Not one person in 100,000 knows how the army "hardtack" is made. Let me take the world into the mystery. You take some flour, a pinch of salt, a little water; mix the three ingredients well, and then proceed to bake the same. Time hardens the "tack" and improves it. When it gets to the consistency of granite it is at its best. The hardtack has imprinted on its face the letters B. C., because they were so hard to masticate the boys in the army interpreted the initials to mean that they were made before the birth of Christ.—[St. Louis Globe-Democrat.]

JESTS AND YARNS BY FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS.

Brought Him Around—Why He Was Whipped—Cause of the Muzz—All Right, etc., etc.

Boarding-house Mistress—I thought you said your appetite was poor when you came here?

Greedy boarder—It was, but starvation has got in its work.

WHY HE WAS WHIPPED.

Ethel (to her younger brother, who had been whipped)—Don't mind, Bruzzer, don't mind.

Brother (between his tears)—That's just what I was licked for, not minding.

CAUSE OF THE MUZZ.

"Daughter," said Mrs. Bellows, indignantly, after John Jimpson had taken his departure, "how came your hair so disarranged?"

"I shook my head so much while he was trying to get me to say 'yes,'" replied the quick-witted girl.—[Epoch.]

ALL RIGHT.

"See heah, Cadley, did you call me a common ass?"

"No, Snobbuton, I said you were an uncommon ass."

"Aw, that's different. I cawn't stand having anybody call me common 'y'know."—[Epoch.]

JUST THE OPPOSITE.

"My dear," began Mr. Bloombumper. "Don't call me dear!" snapped Mrs. Bloombumper; "you made me feel very cheap by contradicting me before the company a while ago."

THEN THE BARBER PUT ON BLACK.

He came in the barber's in such a dreadful state of nervousness that the barber looked up the razor.

"What's the matter?" he inquired, holding a whetstone behind him in case of any outbreak.

"Why," he answered in an agitated whisper, "I have just noticed my hair is turning gray."

"Oh, that's nothing."

"Yes, not much to you, perhaps, but I feel that bad about it I'm ready to dye."—[Philadelphia Times.]

A FLAT FAILURE.

"Selina," ventured Noah Count, "how would you enjoy living in a flat?"

"Not at all," snapped Mrs. Count. "After living with one all these years I prefer to go out of the flat business."

THAT SHILLING BOY.

'Tis now the chilling winter winds so very fiercely blow,

They nearly freeze a boy to death who has to shiver slow.

To make him clear the walks, poor boy! It seems very like a crime,

He can't stick at it longer than five minutes at a time.

And yet—of course it's very strange and still it's very true,

You'll really be surprised to learn what that poor boy can do.

For though while shoveling snow the cold may freeze him right away,

Just give him skates and ice and he can stay out doors all day.

—[Chicago Herald.]

TIMES CHANGE.

"Ah! so it goes!" sighed the ice man as he half rose from his seat in the car and then sank back again.

"What is it?" was asked by an acquaintance.

"Did you see that man make up a face as me as we passed?"

"Yes."

"Well, he's a butcher, and uses 400 pounds of ice per day. Last year at this time he was sending me up some roasts of beef and tickets to the theater."—[Detroit Free Press.]

HIS IDEA OF BLISS.

Mr. and Mrs. Cooper do not get along well together. She is not to blame, for he is always saying spiteful things. For instance, when she happened to say that a murderer had been sentenced for ninety-nine years in the Penitentiary, he remarked:

"Well, he's in good luck."

"How so?"

"He will have a quiet time of it until he gets out, and then he will be too old to marry."—[Texas Siftings.]

OMELTIC.

"Isn't that omelet rather overdone," said the guest.

"Yes, sir," said the waiter, a gentleman recently from Boston. "It is a done. Anything else?"—[Chicago Tribune.]

THE DIFFERENCE.

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"What's the difference between them?"

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NO ARRESTS.

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Policeman—"Fact is, Mr. Taxpayer, one of them is my son, and the other is your son."

Citizen—Um—er—very pleasant weather we're having.—[Good News.]

EXPERT TESTIMONY.

Judge (to witness)—Who are you? Witness (who is a physician)—I am an insane expert, your Honor.

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A SYNDICATE POEM.

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FRESH OYSTERS.

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AN APT PUPIL.

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John (heretically)—No.—[New Haven News.]

AN OSTRICH FARM.

PROFITABLE BIRDS TO RAISE—HOW OSTRICHES ARE HATCHED BY MEANS OF INCUBATORS—AN OSTRICH PLUCKING.

A mile below Santa Monica, Cal., is an ostrich farm of something like sixty or seventy birds. Some of these are of the original stock brought from Cape Colony in 1882, but most of them are natives.

These awkward birds are a never-ending source of interest to the tourist, and many an honest two-bit drops into the slot at the gate entrance as the fee for seeing the ostriches. But the South African bird has proved profitable on American soil, not alone as an attraction for a Sunday garden or a side-show for a land boom. Every bird is worth money, and every bird makes its owner money.

There are at least half a dozen ostrich farms in Southern California. They have ceased to be a curiosity there, and each now represents a commercial enterprise. Americans buy one-half the millions of ostrich feathers produced annually. It is estimated that this country expends \$3,000,000 a year for these ornaments. Each ostrich when full grown yields a feather income of from \$200 to \$300 per annum. The elegant, long, black and white plumes sell for \$5 each at the farms, and readily bring \$10 each at retail in New York or Chicago.

Every feather has a value. If it is sufficiently large for use it is worth at least 10 cents. The very small ones, otherwise useless, make up into cheap souvenirs and are eagerly purchased by visiting tourists at prices varying from 10 cents to \$1. The plumes produced in Southern California are fully as valuable as those from the far-away Cape Colony.

The eggs, if fertile, sell for \$25 each and generally from 75 to 80 per cent. of all eggs produced will hatch. If not fertile the shell may be demanded at from \$2 to \$5 each as curios and ornaments. A young ostrich just out of the shell is considered equivalent to \$50, and his value increases until he is full grown, when \$500 is a low market price.

The expense of maintaining an ostrich farm is comparatively slight. The birds in this country are usually healthy; their appetites are excellent, for they are satisfied with alfalfa, cabbage and crushed bones for a regular diet. On occasions they expect large and small pebbles, bits of iron, old shoes, tin cans and such delicacies. A hungry ostrich is not particularly hard on his food. It is merely a question of deglutition with him. If what he eats will go down—or rather up—his stomach, he is satisfied, and he is safe to trust his digestive organs to do the rest.

The senses of sight, smell and hearing of the ostrich are keen. He is very timid, and is startled by a slight noise. He can see a man at a distance of three miles, and the ostrich hunter who approaches his game with the wind will be discovered long before he is within gunshot.

Ostriches are not only cautious and able to run at great speed, but they are fighters. A stroke of one of the powerful wings will fell a man, and a kick from a full-grown bird would be more disastrous than a well-directed blow from the right arm of John L. Sullivan. Ostriches are very curious, and their inquisitiveness sometimes leads them into trouble, but if injured in any way and they escape, nothing can persuade them to repeat the same experiment.

One day at the Santa Monica ostrich farm, a keeper accidentally knocked the top rail off one of the paddocks. A large male ostrich had been watching him with interest. The rail fell upon the bird's neck and caused him some pain. He rushed away from his keeper, and, though not alarmed by the presence of any other keeper, he never recovered his confidence in the one to whom he charged took a post at the farthest end of the inclosure, and could not be coaxed to come within reach of him.

The ostrich egg shell is sometimes one-sixteenth of an inch thick. It is fully twenty-four times the size of an ordinary hen's egg. Incubation requires forty days, during which period the male and female alternate in the domestic duty of keeping the eggs warm. Most of the hatching is now done by incubators. A three-hundred-egg incubator has a capacity for but twenty-seven ostrich eggs.

At the farm to which special reference has been made, it was found that the young ostriches after they were removed from the nest are to be seen.

The eggs at this sitting nearly all hatched. The nest consisted of a pile of sand in the center of the small field assigned to the two breeders. The male bird manifested the utmost interest in the business in hand and devoted more than fifteen hours a day to the maternal duty of sitting on the eggs. When his mate went on the nest he would shield her from the excessive heat of that semi-tropical sun by extending his ample wings over her. The two ostriches were models of parental affection. The expert conductor of the male specially won my admiration, for he was ever on the alert to render assistance to his patient spouse, and when the little fellows pecked their way through the hard shell he kept vigilant guard of their progress, and every neglect of its offspring is clearly displayed. There are no feathered animals more dutiful.

The old birds are not awkward, but the young ones have no sense whatever, and so it is necessary to remove the latter as soon as possible after they escape from the shell to prevent them from wandering into danger. It requires skillful coaxing and no little maneuvering to entice the fond parents from the nest, but this accomplished, the young ostriches are transferred to a sand box in the sun, where they must have close attention all day long to keep them from mishaps which their utter lack of discretion and extreme awkwardness would certainly bring upon them.

At night they are placed in an incubator. Until they are several months old the absurdly heedless and tender things require very great care. After they pass from infancy, however, they generally thrive. The losses usually occur within the first month.

When the birds are seven months old the first plucking occurs, and from that time forward they give up their feathers twice a year. The females begin laying eggs at three years of age, and produce from thirty to ninety eggs each annually.

In South Africa until about thirty years ago the natives killed the ostrich for his plumes. Since that date the domesticated birds have furnished most of the feathers of commerce.

Each bird when fully grown has twenty-five plumes on each wing, with two rows of floss feathers underneath. With the white plumes are a row of long feathers, and under them are a smaller size of feathers of commerce.

In the male these are black and in the female drab. The tail has also a

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