

"FORTY YEARS OLD."

Call me not old, it cannot be. I feel no touch of time upon my hair; It seems but yesterday I stood beside my mother's grave...

The Digger's Revenge. BY MUMIE NISBET.

THE snow was coming down in great loose flakes, black and ragged like fringed smuts of soot from a burning chimney against the gray sky...

But Jack Bridges did not seem to relish this aspect of nature, although he was young enough to have done so, as he sat shivering inside his great coat...

After he had seen his own people he had to face the parents of his claim, Tom Naylor, and break to them the news of their son's death and burial in a strange land...

He was once more in old England, and coming to his own place a wealthy man, which he had left three years before along with his friend and school mate...

They had both made their wills when the claim showed signs of yielding a return, and after his friend's death Jack had acted like the honest fellow he was...

even with the news of a death, are mixed tidings of good and evil. The parents wept for the son they had lost, and perhaps did not think much about the legacy which he had left, at least not for the first night.

With the sweetheart, pretty Annie Holmes, it was different. Three years of absence from a girl who had not been very sure of her own mind which of the two friends she really liked best, although as Tom had asked her first, and she had accepted him, is a severe test of endurance.

Ten thousand pounds, and Jack back again, the owner of twenty thousand, poor Tom, in that far off, lonely grave, the dingoes may wrangle and fight over your bones, but the girl you left behind you has, at the best, only a grateful kind of sadness over your memory...

Jack, during these courtship months having nothing else to do, passed the time between her house and the post office. He wrote and posted a great number of letters and saved the village postman the trouble of delivering what came to him or for the cottage where his promised wife lived...

One day, however, he got a letter addressed to Annie which he did not give to her. Instead of doing so he sent her a little note by hand saying that he had to go to London, but that he would be back the following evening...

It was a reproachful conversation on the part of Tom Naylor, during which he made some ugly charges of attempted murder and cowardly desertion against his former friend. A remorseful, passionate, beseeching one on the side of the honest Jack Bridges during which he told of his successful love suit, and how it would break the heart of pretty Annie Holmes...

Honest Jack Bridges had a hard task before him on this early winter afternoon. For he had to recount how a rich man had far away from civilization, with the trouble they had to get there together, and the terrible hardships he had endured in the getting away from that desolate and fatal claim, and doubtless he was thinking upon this as he regarded the bleak sky...

He had a duty to perform, so as soon as he had answered a few of his friends' numerous questions, he went off while supper was getting ready, to see the parents and sweetheart of poor Tom. He told his story simply and manfully, and then left them to digest their sorrow and examine the bank drafts which he had placed in their hands.

REYNARD'S ESCAPE.

How a Sly Old Fox Fooled an Entire Pack of Hounds. A clever old fox lived in the edge of a wood near a town. And he would not have been an old fox if he had not been clever, for not far away was the house of the master of the fox hounds, who often did his best to catch the sly old fellow who poached upon his poultry.

Many a narrow escape Reynard remembered, and he became very bold. He began to think that no pack of dogs were sagacious enough to run him down, and so he was often careless. Sometimes he would even break cover when he was well hidden, so that he might have the fun of running away from the whole pack in full cry.



REYNARD GAVE THE HOUNDS A FAIR-WEILL SMILE.

He had been visiting a farmyard that was quite a way from his burrow, and when he came home again he found that the burrow had been filled up with earth. At first Reynard thought that it was done by the badger who had lived in the hole before Reynard drove him out, but soon he saw the marks of a spade, and knew that a man had been there.

While he was examining the burrow, suddenly he heard the cry of the hounds, and he knew that the hunt was out and was after him. He dropped the fat hen he was carrying and trotted away from the dogs, meaning to slip out along a little ravine he knew of. But no sooner had he reached the edge of the wood than he heard a man shout. Then he knew he would have to run for it.

He struggled desperately, and, at last, by a quick push of his fore legs, threw his body back between the sticks. He was at liberty—but just then the hounds were upon him! Reynard made one long leap half-way down the bank, and at that moment the train came opposite him so he couldn't cross the track. But Reynard then showed what a bright old fox he was, for, giving another jump, with the foremost hounds at his very heels, he caught the rear end of a platform car—the last car of the moving train.

Reynard, after this close shave, made up his mind to find a home not quite so near the fox-hounds. He remained on the train until he was well out of reach, and he never went back to his old quarters. This was unfortunate for the poor little rabbit whose burrow Reynard stole when he took a new home. The huntsmen often wondered how the fox got away, but the dogs never told.—Benjamin Webster, in St. Nicholas.

Snake and Blue Jay. After a long struggle the bird kills the reptile.

I witnessed a novel sight a short time ago, viz., the killing and eating of a snake by a blue jay. I am living in an oak grove here where Mr. Jay makes his home the year round. I sat watching one of them feeding a short time ago, in the grass, when I noticed he got excited from some object. With his feathers ruffled on his neck and head, and tail erect, he charged from the lower branch of an oak and made a vicious thump at something in the grass. Again and again he whacked at his snakeship, jumping from one side to the other as lightly as an expert "light weight."

It is always safe to learn, even from our enemies—seldom safe to instruct, even our friends.—Colton.

Time Is Money.

Col. Symphon, who was always asking people to advance him money, died not long ago in a Texas town at the age of eighty-six. Two gentlemen, one of whom had advanced him money very frequently, were talking about the deceased, when one of them took occasion to say: "With him the ruling passion was strong in death."

"Well, you see he even died at an advanced age."—Alex Sweet, in Texas Siftings. Heard Through the Speaking Tube. Cook—So yer goin' to be married, Mary McGinty! An' to a man that was three years kapin' company wid yer sister! Will, Oi doan't begridge ye. Chambermaid—Shmall difference of ye do, Miss Paggin; an' it's the foine, lilligant fellow Oive got, an' he says he'd sooner marry me than me sister any day.

Not a Peculiar Term. "Why do you use such peculiar terms?" asked a lawyer's wife of her husband, who had returned home worn out by his day's labors. "I don't see how you could have been working all day like a horse."

A Deep-Laid Scheme. "No," sobbed the pretty girl, "Harold and I never speak now. And it is all through the machinations of that delightful Sallie Slimmins."

And Nobody Moved. Wool—Hicks never lets an opportunity for fun go by. Van Pelt—What has he been doing now? Wool—In a crowded street car today he gravely arose and said: "Here, let the oldest lady in the car take my seat."—N. Y. World.

She Didn't Scare. Marshall—What the mischief is the matter with you, Raymond; been held up by some highwaymen or have you been in a railway disaster? Raymond—Well, I can't say I have done either. Last night I just hid under the bed to save my wife.—Life.

The Floating Vote. Wife—Now, dear, what do you think will really be woman's place in politics? Husband—As they are so seldom at home I suppose they will be classed as the floating vote.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Good Suggestion. Mother (to runaway Tommy)—Is there any place I can put you and be sure of finding you there five minutes after? Tommy (meekly)—You might try the cupboard.—Arkansas Traveler.

PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY. Widow—Arrah, an' is it yerself, Policeman Murphy, I dunno? Policeman—It is that same, by this token. I've got orders to go down an' arrest two members of the slaughterhouse gang.—Life.

Too Much. Beneath the hammock where she swung I lay on robes of fur. And when by chance it came unhooking, I was much struck with her. —Life.

The Ups and Downs of Life. Full to overflowing is my cup. I'm surely under fortune's frown. The bank that held my funds went up; My stocks have all gone down. —N. Y. World.

An Unsolved Mystery. She—I would like to know why you married me, anyhow? He—That's what I've been trying for six years to find out.—Texas Siftings.

An Improvement. Slydig—Iullo, Flyjig; how are you? Flyjig—I'm not myself at all. Slydig—Really? Let me congratulate you.—N. Y. World.

Marital Amenities. His Wife—Do you wear that fright of a hat on the streets? Himself—No—on my head.—Chicago Record.

Very Familiar. "Beg your pardon, sir, but you seem to be staring at me in a strange fashion. Do you see anything about me that is familiar to you?" "Yes, sir; my umbrella."—L'Intransigent Illustrate.

Appropriate Uniform. Wife (in a fashionable store)—I wonder why all these salesladies are dressed in black? Husband—I suppose because business is dead.—Judge.

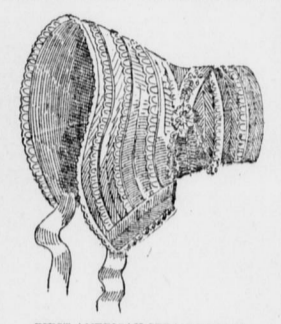
Just the Thing. Jorjins—Do you consider journalism proper work for a lady? Perkins—Certainly. All women have a fondness for press work.—Truth.

A Natural Question. Clara—Mr. Castleton tried to put his around my waist last night. Maudie—Couldn't he get it around?—Detroit Free Press.

FIRST YANKEE BONNET.

Made by Miss Betsey Metcalf, of Providence, R. I. At First Her Work Was Assailed from the Pulpit and by the Press—Preachers Supposed It to Be an Invention of Satan.

Until some years after the revolutionary war all the straw bonnets sold in this country were imported from England. Even those patriotic daughters of the revolution who refused to drink the taxed tea went on buying and wearing the imported bonnets until a young American girl made one for herself, and thus set the fashion of independence for others.



FIRST AMERICAN STRAW BONNET.

of a milliner's shop in that city. Miss Betsey wished to buy it, but as that was out of the question she determined to make one like it. In her old age she used to relate the many difficulties she encountered in this first attempt at bonnet-making in this country. How the straw was too ripe, and consequently so brittle it would break until her patience was nearly exhausted. With a few directions from the milliner Miss Metcalf finally succeeded in sewing the braid together and getting it into the desired form with the aid of flour-starch to stiffen it and a hot flatiron to press it into shape.

When we recall the Puritanical notions of the day, it does not seem strange that this straw work was assailed from the pulpit and by the press. Many ministers preached long sermons in which they warned their fair hearers to flee from the power of Satan as manifested in this new fashion of bonnet making. It was an invention of the evil one to foster pride in their hearts, and thus draw them away from the right path.

At first Miss Metcalf had a monopoly of the business, orders coming to her from within a radius of fifty miles, and help had to be employed to supply the demand. Her friends thought it modest to allow a young woman's name to go before congress, so the process was not patented, and straw braiding became general.

The bonnet-makers would take them along with butter, eggs and other farm products to the village store, where they would be exchanged for dry goods and groceries. Soon, however, large establishments became necessary for carrying on the traffic, though much of the work was still done at home. An agent went out at certain intervals to deliver straw to the workers and to collect the bonnets and hats made, which were sold by this establishment to all parts of the country.

It was natural that at first this industry should flourish in the state where it had birth; but soon Massachusetts became a formidable rival, and today more than half the American straw goods are manufactured in the latter state. The bonnets are now sewed by machines run by steam, the machines being of American invention.

Miss Metcalf married Mr. William Baker, and removed with him to Massachusetts, where she lived to a very old age. She lived to see the large results that came from her first small efforts in straw work. She was visited by many distinguished people, who were glad to meet the first maker of American straw bonnets.—Once a Week.

How to Polish Steel Buckles. Buckles are to be found upon every part of a woman's toilet, and of the many chic varieties, those made of steel take the lead. Old-fashioned specimens that look as if they might date back several generations are greatly prized. "How can I furnish them up?" is the query of the fair owner. Being old acts as a cleansing agent. The buckle to be renovated is dropped in oil that has been heated. It is left there for an hour, when the polishing process begins. The best polisher you will find is the ever useful cambric, or, if you prefer them, the inside of an old kid glove or a soft piece of leather will do the work nicely.

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