THE BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC
ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR IN ADVANCE
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The Revenge of the Elephant.

The past is the most cruel of all masters.

A danger that is known is a guide-post to safety.

It's often unwise for a man to be as funny as he can.

The closer you get to some people the more distant they are.

About the easiest thing in the world is not to become a millionaire.

Lawyers are so plentiful that but few criminals get a chance to plead guilty.

The old scriptural sobriety was effectual doing; ascetic sobriety is effectual dullness.

It sometimes worries a woman because some particular man isn't worrying about her.

If there be any truer measure of a man than by what he does, it must be by what he gives.

Lots of people wait in vain for their ships to come in simply because they neglected to launch them.

Glass eyes are now made with such perfection that the wearers themselves can't see through the deception.

What an absurd thing it is to pass over all the valuable parts of a man, and fix our attention on his infirmities.

It is human nature for man to look out for number one, but the charming young widow always looks out for number two.

How easy is pen-and-paper piety! It is far cheaper to work one's head than one's heart to goodness. I can make a hundred meditations sooner than subdue one sin in my soul.

The assimilation of Hawaii will be complete when the islanders are seen eating New England pie, and the inhabitants of the "pie belt" partake cheerfully and adequately of the Hawaiian national dish, poi.

Interest in the project to replace the Maine by a battleship to be called the American Boy, to be built by means of contributions from the youth of America, continues unabated. Scores of contributions and letters of inquiry arrive daily at the Cincinnati headquarters. Schools all over the country are giving entertainments for the benefit of the fund.

Hot air has recently been employed with some success in the treatment of joints which have been stiffened or distorted by chronic rheumatism or gout. The limb is encased in a large cylinder into which very hot dry air is introduced. The temperature of the air within the apparatus is often above that of boiling water, yet patients are said to be able to bear it for several hours without discomfort, and indeed in many cases with positive relief of the pain and uneasy sensation in the affected joints. The treatment must be repeated at moderately frequent intervals, although benefit often follows even one baking.

The present emperor of China—Ti Kwang Su be indeed still living—attempted to check a revolt in his dominions by granting the reforms demanded by the insurgents. The result was disastrous to him, but the essay did him credit. In it he followed the example of one of his predecessors nearly a century ago, who on a memorable occasion said in a public proclamation: "An attempt at revolution has been made, for which I blame myself. It must arise from the low state of my virtues and accumulated imperfections. My ministers and I have governed carelessly, and caused the present occurrence."

A striking example of corrupt Chinese methods has just been brought to light. The taotai of Shanghai and imperial director of railroads was summoned to Peking by the emperor for a conference on important affairs of state. At the outer gate of the city he was told his baggage would be confiscated if he did not pay thirty thousand taels duty. Much of his baggage being contraband articles which it was not lawful to take into the city, he paid the money. At the inner gate he was similarly stripped, and mulcted in the sum of twenty thousand taels. So it cost him nearly thirty-two thousand dollars to get into the city in compliance with the emperor's order. No wonder, we say, that under such a system China is in the process of hopeless decay! Yes, and if corruption is condoned even in the least degree in our own land, may we not be in danger of a like fate unless we mend our ways?

Men now living can remember when Rowland Hill effected the adoption of the "penny post" in England, and the vast progress it marked in human intercourse and information. Today we stand upon the threshold of a penny post era, not only throughout the British empire, but in all the English-speaking world. It will be a time of mighty forward movements toward that intimate intercourse and sympathetic mutual knowledge that are the essential prelude to the brotherhood of man.

The new South has its King Cotton, but there are other crop kings. A syndicate of sovereigns is better for the South than the sole monarch of the past. Of one of the Georgia counties the Atlanta Constitution picturesquely remarks, "There the corn grows full-eared, and the bulging bolls of cotton bid defiance even to four and one-eighth cents per pound. This, however, is because there is wheat to the right of it, potatoes to the left of it, and fattening cattle and rolling hogs before it."

George Dilly of Logan, W. Va., who was supposed to have lost his life in the campaign against Santiago, met instead a horrible death at Ronceverte a few days ago.

Dilly was mourned as dead by his parents in the little mountain home. He left with the avowed intention of enlisting in the army, and the last heard of him was when he was in camp in one of the Southern regiments and wrote home to his parents that he was going to the front. That he was the victim of the war was agreed by every one until the visit of a circus at Ronceverte.

While the circus was stationed there three men employed by the show as canvas men seemed to take great delight in annoying a large female elephant, Junas, and her baby. Although repeatedly warned by her keeper to desist they paid no heed to his warnings, but persisted in tormenting the animal in many ways, the most annoying of all being the spiriting away of her baby while she was tied to her stake.

The men would do this frequently, and the big beast with almost human instinct would cry aloud for the babe and pull at her stake in a frantic effort to go to her offspring, but she had never succeeded, and after keeping the babe away some time it would be returned to her.

While at Ronceverte, Dilly, who was but twenty years old, together with the men, after old Junas had been made fast to her stake, spirited the baby away and then lay down on the ground in another end of the tent to watch the ravings of the big elephant, which seemed to delight the many hundreds of sightseers who were in the menagerie at the time.

"BEFORE DILLY WOKE UP SHE PICKED HIM UP FROM ALL THE OTHER SLEEPERS AND HAD HIM SECURELY IN HER TRUNK."

When the big beast missed her babe she became more frantic than ever, and after fretting and calling the little one for some time, all the while tugging away at her chain, she quieted down, and the perpetrators of the cruel joke, who had been watching her, fell asleep and forgot to return her lost one.

After the men had fallen asleep the big beast again became frantic over the absence of her baby and made the effort of her life to free herself.

She finally succeeded, and instead of going in search of the lost one, rushed through the crowded tent to where the men lay asleep.

Before Dilly woke up she picked him out from all the other sleepers and had him securely in her trunk. Amid the cries of her keeper and attendants and the screaming of women and children she hurled her tormentor to the ground several times with terrific force, breaking almost every bone in his body. Then tossing him aloft, she gave a shrill cry, and when the man came down upon the ground trampled him to death. After satisfying herself that Dilly was dead the animal returned to her stake and was made fast. Her keepers had learned a lesson.

BACHELOR HOSTS.

Rank High Among Entertainers—Trained to Fill the Position.

A distinct feature in the society life of the day, and one which widens each year, is the number of entertainments now given by bachelors; indeed, bachelor hosts rank high among entertainers, and their popularity is thoroughly established. The facilities now at command, and of which men are not slow to avail themselves, for entertaining are far greater than was formerly the case, says the London Queen. Here and there a smart ball was given by a bachelor host, or a dinner party at which lavish expense was the keynote, but these entertainments were necessarily restricted in number and only the very rich attempted to enter the lists as hosts. Now, almost every bachelor so disposed is able to invite ladies to some sort of entertainment, large or small, as the case may be, to dinner, to a supper after the play, to luncheon, to afternoon tea. The numerous clubs which now exist to which members have the privilege of inviting ladies render entertaining an easy matter to those bachelors who, though living in town or coming thither for a few months have no actual residence and locate themselves in the vicinity of their clubs. The clubs out of town and the clubs in town and the clubs by the river are all noted for the parties given by bachelor hosts—dinner parties and afternoon parties. Not a few bachelors reside in chambers, or in flats, and when these same are particularly well appointed from an artistic point of view, many are the smart "teas" there given. Not so long ago, a bachelor, when giving a dance or a dinner party, thought it necessary to be supported by a relative, a sister, an aunt or a sister-in-law, and ladies were supposed to expect the presence of a hostess on the occasion, but now it is thoroughly understood that a bachelor host can receive ladies without the countenance of the before-mentioned relative, and if present, it is as a guest, not as a hostess. Young men are, as it were, trained from boyhood to become bachelor hosts. June 4, at Eaton, is memorable for the luncheons and teas annually given by boys of from 14 and upward, to their relatives and friends; again, these said boys are accustomed to entertain each other in their rooms, and many are the hampers dispatched to them for this purpose by their parents. Then, too, the undergraduates at Oxford and Cambridge not only "play the host" in commemoration week at Oxford, and in the "May week" at Cambridge, but during each term they entertain the ladies of their acquaintance at luncheon and afternoon tea at their rooms, both in and out of college. Young subalterns in the army are equally given to entertaining the ladies at whose houses they have been bidden to dine and dance; and thus from boyhood to manhood, from youth to middle age, bachelors successfully fulfill the role of "host" and continue it more or less after marriage.

Bound to Come Down, Too.

"How milk has come up!" "But it's higher in Africa." "How do you know?" "Because that's where cocoa nuts grow."

FREAKS OF LIGHTNING.

Out of every three persons struck by lightning two recover. Experts say the electricity in a thunderbolt is not very great, but the voltage is. In old times vessels used often to be struck by lightning and the loss by that cause was very great. From 1790 to 1840 no fewer than 280 ships of the British navy were struck, 10 men being killed and 150 wounded. Nowadays warships, as well as big merchant vessels, have lightning rods running down their masts into the sea, so that the electricity is carried off. In these days nobody hears of the destruction of a vessel by lightning. Churches, if they continue to be built as now, will always be favorite targets for lightning. They are the buildings most commonly struck.

One of the best evidences of the value of lightning rods up to date has been afforded by the Washington monument. It is capped by a small four-sided pyramid of aluminium, which metal, so cheap to-day, was very costly at the time of the building of the greatest obelisk that the world has ever known. This aluminium tip is connected with the ground by four copper rods which go down into the earth. On April 5, 1885, five immense bolts of electricity were seen to flash between the monument and a thunder-cloud overhanging in the course of twenty minutes. In other words, the monument was struck fiercely five times, but it suffered no damage whatever. On June 15 of the same year a more tremendous assault was made upon the monument from the heavens and the result was a fracture of one of the topmost stones. The crack still remains to show what nature can do in the way of an electrical shock, but the slightness of the damage is evidence of man's power to protect himself from such attacks. The obelisk is ideally located for attracting electrical assaults from the skies and yet, while many times hit, it has suffered only once and that time to a trifling extent.

Enlisted for a Term of Years.

"War," wearily slighed the editor, "is a horrible thing, yet people will rush into it. It is hell, indeed!" "Yes, that's true," replied a friend; "but the fighting is over now. It doesn't last like it used to." "Oh, yes! the soldiers have quit killing each other, but the poets won't be mustered out for years to come."—Puck.

He Knew.

"Willie Jones," said Mr. Grimface, the schoolmaster sternly, "I am very much afraid from your behavior you wish me to chastise you. Do you remember the old precept beginning 'Spare the rod?' "Yes, sir," said Willie. "Spare the rod and lose the fish."—Harper's Bazar.

Jealous of Himself.

"Is he really so jealous?" "Why, he is even jealous of himself since some one told him matrimony had made another man of him."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Why Isn't the Ocean Swell a high roller?

PRAYER OVER STOLEN MUTTON

Russia, Being Satiated, Asks for Undisturbed Digestion.

Russia having grabbed all the land that she wants under the menace of war, now asks for a pause in the conversation that she may say grace over her stolen mutton, says the National Review. Russia satiated is alive to the benefits of undisturbed digestion. In plain English, there is no moral sanction to the czar's proposals, except that of the bishops and Mr. P. Hughes. The source is tainted. The hands are not clean. Russian intrigues in other quarters are approaching maturity. She is Manchuriating in Persia. Strategical lines of railway on the confines of Afghanistan, destitute of commercial value, are building by Russia with the simple object of harassing British rule in India. A Russian mission in Abyssinia, under the cloak of religion, is poisoning the Emperor Menelik's mind and inspiring him with jealous antipathy against England's mission on the upper Nile. For two years past Russia has done her utmost to launch the army that defeated the Italians at Adowa against the English on their arrival on the Blue Nile. While these things are, is it not contrary to reason and to sense that men should speak of the czar's message as though it were a deliverance from Sinai? If Russia is really converted from the error of her ways, deeds, not words, are required as a demonstration of the sincerity of the imperial proselyte. Until those deeds are forthcoming Englishmen will do well to remember who is the power that invites them to maintain a peace they have no desire to disturb. Militarism has kept the peace. Now that the sleeping dogs are to be awakened and old quarrels raked up, it is possible that the St. Petersburg conference may lead to Armageddon rather than to amity. Among life's greater ironies this is what may be expected.

A Tandem Ride.

Two lovers on a tandem bike,
Taking a moonlight run;
Two hearts that beat in love alike,
Four feet that pedal as one.

* * * *

Four hands clasped and four lips smack'd
When the bike ride was done.
—Detroit Free Press.

She Was Obliging.

She had risen several times to let a gentleman pass out between the acts. "I am sorry to disturb you, madam," he remarked, apologetically, as he went out for the fourth time. "O, don't mention it," she replied, pleasantly, "I am most happy to oblige you; my husband keeps the refreshment bar."—Exchange.

How They Got On.

May—"You say Mr. Little has a family of ten, and he gets only $12 a week. How on earth does he get along?" Jennie—"Oh, every Little helps."—Philadelphia Record.

Violence Unexpected.

"Penelope's new fall suit is a perfect wreck." "Did she get caught in a rain?" "No; she went to a millinery opening, and it turned into a bargain rush."—Detroit Free Press.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

"THE CRADLE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

From the Following Bible Text, Chron. XII, 32:—"The Children of Issachar Had Understanding to Know What Israel Ought to Do."

Great tribe, that tribe of Issachar. When Joab took the census, there were 145,600 of them. Before the almanac was born, through astrological study, they knew from stellar conjunctions all about the seasons of the year. Before agriculture became an art they were skilled in the raising of crops. Before politics became a science they knew the temper of nations; and whenever they marched, either for pleasure or war, they marched under a three-colored banner, which was a combination of a few hundred or a few thousand people within the church walls, the telegraph will thrill the glad tidings and the telephone will utter them to many millions. Oh, the infinite advantage that the twentieth century has over what the nineteenth century had at the starting! * *

I do not believe there is in all this house a temperance pledge, and you would have to take out a torn letter-envelope or a loose scrap of paper for the inebriate's signature. I found out afterward that there was only such temperance pledge in the audience, but only one that I could hear of. Do not leave to politics that which can be done now in ten thousand reformatory meetings all over the country. The two great political parties, Republican and Democratic, will put a prohibitory plank in the platform the same day that Satan joins the church and turns perdition into a camp meeting. Both parties want the votes of the traffickers in liquid death, and if you wait for the ballot box to do the work, first you will have local option, and then you will have high license, and then a first-rate law passed; to be revoked by the next legislature.

Oh, save the young man of today, and greet the coming century with a tidal wave of national redemption! Do not put upon the cradle of the twentieth century a mountain of demijohns, and beer barrels, and rum jugs, and put to its infant lips wretchedness, disease, murder, and abandonment in solution. Aye, reform that army of inebriates. "Ah," you say, "it cannot be done." That shows that you will be of no use in the work. "O, ye of little faith." Away back in early times, President Davies of Princeton college, one day found a man in utter despair because of the thrall of strong drink. The president said to him: "Sir, be of good cheer; you can be saved. Sign the pledge." "Ah," said the despairing victim, "I have often signed the pledge, but I have always broken my pledge." "But," said the president, "I will be your strength to keep the pledge. I will be your friend, and, with a loving arm around you, will hold you up. When your appetite burns, and you feel that you must gratify it, come to my house; sit down with me in the study, or with the family in the parlor, and I will be a shield to you. All that I can do for you with my books, my sympathy, my experience, my society, my love, my money, I will do. You shall forget your appetite and master it." A look of hope glowed on the poor man's face, and he replied: "Sir, will you do all that?" "Surely I will." "Then I will overcome." He signed the pledge and kept it. That plan of President Davies, which saved one man, tried on a large scale, will save a million men.

Alexander the Great made an imperial banquet at Babylon, and though he had been drinking the health of guests all one night and all next day, the second night he had twenty guests and he drank the health of each separately. Then calling for the cup of Hercules, the giant, a monster cup, he filled and drained it twice, to show his endurance, but as he finished the draught from the cup of Hercules, the giant, he dropped in a fit, from which he never recovered. Alexander, who had conquered Sardis, and conquered Hallcarnassus, and conquered Asia, and conquered the world, could not conquer himself; and there is a threatening peril that this good land of ours, having conquered all with whom it has ever gone into battle, may yet be overthrown by the cup of the giant evil of the land—that Hercules of infamy, strong drink. Do not let the staggering, and bloated, and embruted host of drunkards go into the next century looking for insane asylums, and almshouses, and delirium tremens, and dishonored graves.

Another thing we must get fixed is a national law concerning divorce. William E. Gladstone asked me while walking in his grounds at Hawarden: "Do you not think that your country is in peril from wrong notions of divorce?" And before I had time to answer he said: "The only good law of divorce that you have in America is the law in South Carolina." The fact is that instead of state laws on this subject, we need a national law passed by the Senate of the United States and the House of Representatives, and plainly interpreted by the Supreme Court of the country.

There are thousands of married people who are unhappy, and they ought never to have been wedded. They were deceived or they were reckless, or they were fools, or they were caught by dimple, or hung by a curl, or married in haste, or expected a fortune and it did not come, or good habits turned to brutality, and hence the domestic wreck. But make divorce less easy and you make the human race more cautious about entering upon lifetime alliance. Let people understand that marriage is not an accommodation train that will let you leave almost anywhere, but a long train and then they will not step on the train unless they expect to go clear through to the last depot. One brave man this coming winter, rising amid the white marble of yonder Capitol Hill, could offer a resolution upon the subject of divorce that would keep out of the next century much of the free-loaism and dissoluteness which have cursed this century. * * *

It has been the custom in all Christian lands for people to keep watch-night on all the year goes out and a new year comes in. People assemble in churches about 10 o'clock of that last night of the old year, and they have prayers, and songs, and sermons, and testimonies until the hands of the church clock almost reach the figure twelve, and then all bow in silent prayer; and the scene is mightily impressive, until the clock in the tower of the church, or the clock in the tower of the city hall, strikes twelve, and then all rise and sing with smiling face and jubilant voice the grand doxology, and there is a shaking of hands all around.

But what a tremendous watchnight the world is soon to celebrate! This century will depart at twelve o'clock on the thirty-first of December, of the year 1900. What a night that will be, whether starlit, or moonlit, or dark with tempest. It will be such a night as you and I never saw. Those who watched the coming in of the nineteenth century, long ago went to their pillows of dust. Here and there one will see the new century arrive who saw this century enter, yet they were too infantile to appreciate the arrival. But on the watchnight of which I speak, in all neighborhoods, and towns, and cities, and continents, audiences will assemble and bow in prayer, waiting for the last breath of the dying century, and when the clock shall strike twelve there will be a solemnity and an overwhelming awe such as has not been felt for a hundred years, and then all the people will arise and chant the welcome of a new century of joy and sorrow, of triumph and defeat, of happiness and woe, and neighborhood will shake hands with neighborhood, and church with church, and city with city, and continent with continent, and hemisphere with hemisphere, and earth with heaven, at the stupendous disclosure and the majestic arrival. May we all be living on earth to see the solemnities, and join in the songs and shake hands in the congratulations of that watch night; or, if between this and that any of us should be off and away, may we be in habitants of that land where "a thousand years are as one day," and in the presence of that angel spoken of in the Apocalypse, who at the end of the world will, standing with one foot on the sea and the other foot on the land, "swear by him that liveth forever and ever, that time shall be no longer."

BISMARCK'S FORTUNE.

Old Chancellor Was Always Economical and Never Charitable.

The fortune of Bismarck may be estimated at more than $100,000 income, says the Boston Post. He was one of the largest landed proprietors of Prussia. He owned a brewery, a paper factory, a sawmill, and distilleries. He was always proud to say that everything that was consumed in his house was the product of his own property. The donations given to him on several occasions formed the greater portion of his fortune. His property at Varzin was purchased by him in 1866, after war with Austria, with the $300,000 which was then presented to him. After the war of 1871 Emperor William took out of the indemnity milliards $800,000 for Bismarck and this sum served to purchase the great domain of Friedrichruh. This latter castle is remarkable for its simplicity. There are some portions of it that are simply whitewashed and without any ornamentation whatever. Up to 1845 Bismarck was obliged to live rather modestly. The inheritance of his father bettered his pecuniary situation and brought him the property of Schonhausen; and it was shortly after that when he married Johanna von Puttkammer. For some time Bismarck's charity was eagerly solicited, but the old chancellor was always economical and he rarely responded to appeals for aid. Some years ago he caused to be inserted in the paper a singular advertisement declaring that it was useless to ask him for assistance.

GLADSTONE AS A CHEMIST.

Another Science the Great Statesman Was Familiar With.

If Mr. Gladstone seldom indulged in sarcasm it was not because he lacked the gift—for he possessed it in a high degree—but because he forbore to use it, says the Fortnightly Review. To hurt an opponent's feelings gave him pain and when he did it unintentionally he would sometimes cross the floor of the house, and, sitting for a few minutes by the side of the man whom he had just demolished, say something to assuage the wound. One of his most persistent, but never ill-natured, critics was the late Sir John Pope Hennessy, who told me the following story to illustrate this generous trait in Mr. Gladstone's character: Sir John prided himself on his knowledge of chemistry and in one of the debates on the commercial treaty with France he made a speech exposing, as he believed, a serious chemical blunder in the treaty. Mr. Gladstone followed, "and soon turned me inside out in the most amusing manner," said Hennessy in relating the story, "proving, as if he had been a chemist by profession, that it was I who had blundered egregiously." Having thus disposed of his critic Mr. Gladstone went and sat by him for a moment. "I hope you don't feel hurt, Mr. Hennessy," he said. "Your speech was ingenious and it may console you to know that the emperor of the French made precisely the same objection that you have made. The fact is, both you and he know a good deal about chemistry, but not enough to keep you from going astray."

Bar on the Cycle in Morocco.

The universally popular cult of the cycle has received a check in one part of the world. The Emperor of Morocco, who only a short time ago purchased a luxurious cycle-wheeled cab from one of the largest manufacturers, has now forbidden the use of the cycle in his domains.

Optimistic.

An editor in the flooded Brunswick district, who always makes the best of things, writes: "We are all drowned out down here, but, thank God, we're floating on the roof, and we don't have to pay house rent."—Atlanta Constitution.