WIT HUMOR AND SARCASM FROM THE CARTOONISTS AND FUNNY MEN

HE SEES A SANER FOURTH ALREADY.
Deaf Old Gentleman—There doesn't seem to be the same enthusiasm about the Fourth that there was in my young days.
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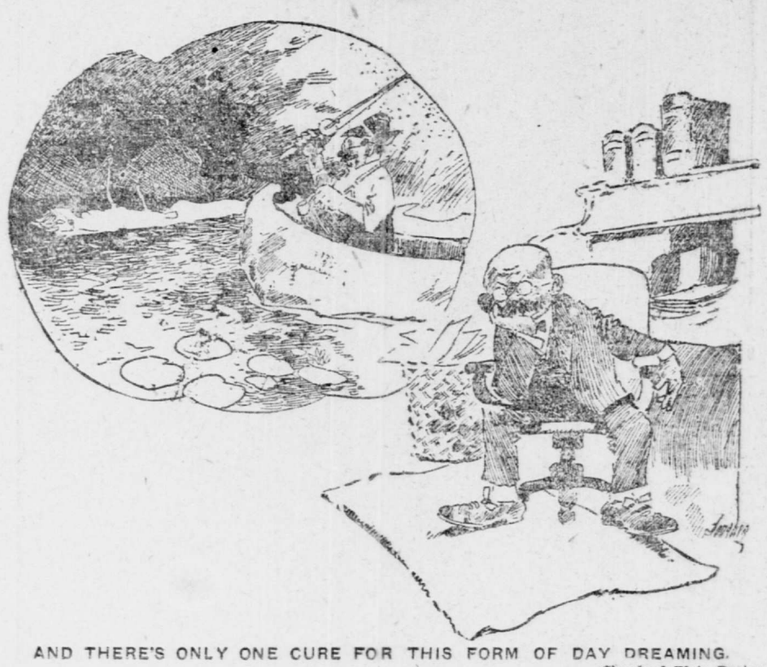
HIS REVENGE.
Despondent Lover—I shall never marry now.
The Cruel One—Oh, yes, you will.
Despondent Lover—Oh, no, I sha'n't. If you won't have me, no one will. —Illustrated Bits.



AND THERE'S ONLY ONE CURE FOR THIS FORM OF DAY DREAMING.
—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

DAVY JONES'S LOCKER.
The Golfer (to the clergyman he has just beaten at golf)—Never mind, old chap; you will get even with me when you read my burial service.
The Clergyman—That will still be your hole, sir. —The Sketch.

BUT FUNERAL PREFERRED.
The Successful Comedian—Cheer up, old man; we all have our trials.
The Disappointed Tragedian—It's a comforting reflection. I shall certainly attend yours.
—The Sketch.

TOLD ON THE VERANDA OF A SUMMER HOTEL

NO. VI.

THE WEATHER BUREAU

By Joseph C. Lincoln.

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"But," says Cap'n Jonadab and me together, jest as if we was "reading in concert" same as the youngsters do in school, "but," we says, "will it work? Will anybody pay for it?"

"Work?" says Peter T., with his fingers in the armholes of the double-breasted danger signal that he called a vest, and with his cigar tilted up till you'd think 'twould set his hat brim afire, "Work?" says he. "Well, maybe 'twouldn't work if the ordinary brand of canned lobster was running it, but with me to jerk the lever and sound the loud timbrel—why, say! it's like stealing money from a blind cripple that's hard of hearing."

"Yes, I know," says Cap'n Jonadab. "But this ain't like starting the Old Home House. That was opening up a brand new kind of hotel that nobody ever heard of before. This is peddling weather prophecies when there's the Gov'ment Weather Bureau running opposition—not to mention the Old Farmer's Almanac, and I don't know how many more," he says.

Brown took his patent leathers down off the rail of the piazza, give the ashes of his cigar a flip—he knocked 'em into my hat that was on the floor side of his chair, but he was too excited to mind—and he says:

"Confound it, man!" he says. "You can throw more cold water than a fire engine. Old Farmer's Almanac! This isn't any 'About this time look out for snow' business. And it ain't any Washington cold slaw like 'Weather for New England and Rocky Mountains, Tuesday to Friday; cold to warm; well done on the edges with a rare streak in the middle, preceded or followed by rain, snow or clearing. Wind, north to south, varying east to west.' No siree! this is to-day's weather for Cape Cod, served right off the griddle on a hot plate, and cooked by the chef at that. You don't realize what a regular dime museum wonder that feller is," he says.

Well, I suppose we didn't. You see, Jonadab and me, like the rest of folks around Wellmouth, had to come to take Beriah Crocker and his weather notions as the regular thing, like baked beans on a Saturday night. Beriah, he——

But there! I've been sailing stern first. Let's get her headed right, if we ever expect to turn the first mark. You see, 'twas this way:

'Twas in the early part of May follering the year that the Old Home House was opened. We'd had the place all painted up, decks holystoned, bunks overhauled, and one thing or 'nother, and the Old Home was all taut and shipshape, ready for the crew—boarders, I mean. Passages was booked all through the summer and it looked as if our second season would be better'n our first.

Then the Dillaway girl—she was christened Lobelia, like her mother, but she'd painted it out and cruised under the name of Belle since the family got rich—she thought 'twould be nice to have what she called a "spring house party" for her particular friends 'fore the regular season opened. So Peter—he being engaged at the time and consequent in that condition where he'd have to put on horns and "mooed" if she'd give the order—he thought 'twould be nice, too, and for a week it was "All hands on deck!" getting ready for the "house party."

Two days afore the thing was to go off the ways Brown gets a letter from Belle, and in it says she's invited a whole lot of folks from Chicago and New York and Boston and the land knows where, and that they've never been to the Cape and she wants to show 'em what a "quaint" place it is. "Can't you get," says she, "two or three delightful, queer, old 'longshore characters to be at work 'round the hotel? It'll give such a touch of local color," she says.

So out comes Peter with the letter.

"Barzilla," he says to me, "I want some characters. Know anybody that's a character?"

"Well," says I, "there's Nate Slocum over to Orham. He'd steal anything that wan'n't spiked down. He's about the toughest character I can think of, offhand, this way."

"Oh, thunder!" says Brown. "I don't want a crook; that wouldn't be any novelty to this crowd," he says. "What I'm after is an odd stick; a feller with pigeons in his loft. Not a lunatic, but jest a queer genius—little queerer than you and the Cap'n here."

After a while we got his drift, and I happened to think of Beriah and his chum, Eben Cobb. They lived in a little shanty over to Skakit P'int and got their living lobstering, and so on. Both of 'em had saved a few thousand dollars, but you couldn't get a cent of it without giving 'em ether, and they'd rather live like Portugees than white men any day, unless they was paid to change. Beriah's pet idee was foretelling what the weather was going to be. And he could do it, too, better'n anybody I ever see. He'd smell a storm further'n a cat can smell fish, and he hardly ever made a mistake. Prided himself on it, you understand, like a boy does on his first long pants. His prophecies was his idols, so's to speak, and you couldn't have hired him to foretell what he knew was wrong, not for no money.

Peter said Beriah and Eben was just the sort of "cards" he was looking for, and drove right over to see 'em. He hooked 'em, too. I knew he would; he could talk a Come-Outer into believing that a Unitarian wasn't booked for Tophet, if he set out to.

So the special train from Boston brought the "house party" down, and our two-seated buggy brought Beriah and Eben over. They didn't have anything to do but to look "picturesque" and say "I snum!" and "I swan to man!" and they could do that to the skipper's taste. The city folks thought they was "just too dear and odd for anything," and made 'em bigger fools than ever, which wa'n't necessary.

The second day of the "party" was to be a sailing trip clear down to the lifesaving station on Setuckit Beach. It certainly looked as if 'twas going to storm, and the gov'ment predictions said it was, but Beriah said "No," and stuck out that 'twould clear up by and by. Peter wanted to know what I thought about their starting, and I told him that 'twas my experience that where weather was concerned Beriah was a good, safe anchorage. So they sailed away, and, sure enough, it cleared up fine. And the next day the gov'ment fellers said "clear" and Beriah said "rain," and she poured a flood. And, after three or four of such experiences, Beriah was all hunky with the "house party," and they looked at him as a sort of wonderful freak, like a two-headed calf or the "snake child," or some such outrage.

So, when the party was over, 'round comes Peter, busting with a new notion. What he cal'lated to do was to start a weather prophesying bureau all on his own hook, with Beriah for prophet and him for manager and general advertiser, and Jonadab and me to hel; put up the money to get her going. He argued that summer folks, from Scituate to Provincetown, on both sides of the Cape, would pay good prices for the real thing in weather predictions. The gov'ment bureau, so he said, covered too much ground, but Beriah was local and hit her right on the head. His idee was to send Beriah's predictions by telegraph to agents in every Cape town each morning, and the agents was to hand 'em to subscribers. First week a free trial; after that, so much per prophecy.

And it worked—oh, land, yes! it worked. Peter's letters and circulars would satisfy anybody that black was white, and the free trial was a sure bait. I don't know why 'tis, but if you offered the smallpox free, there'd be a barrel of victims waiting in line to come down with it. Brown rigged up a little shanty on the bluff in front of the Old Home and filled it full of barometers and thermometers and chronometers and charts, and put Beriah and Eben inside to look wise and make b'lieve do something. That was the office of "The South Shore Weather Bureau," and 'twas sort of sacred and holy, and 'twould kill you to see the boarders tiptoeing up and peeking in the winder to watch them two old coots squinting through a telescope at the sky or scribbling rubbish on paper. And Beriah was right 'most every time. I don't know why—my notion is that he was born that way, same as some folks are born lightning calculators—but I'll never forget the first time Peter asked him how he done it.

"Wall," drawls Beriah, "now to-day looks fine and clear, don't it? But last night my left elbow had rheumatiz in it, and this morning my bones ache, and my right toe j'int is sore, so I know we'll have an easterly wind and rain this evening. If it had been my left toe, now, why"——

Peter held up both hands.

"That'll do," he says. "I ain't asking any more questions. Only, if the boarders or outsiders ask you how you work it, you cut out the bones and toe business and talk science and temperature to beat the cars. Understand, do you? It's science or no eight-fifty in the pay envelope. Left toe joint!" and he goes off grinning.

We had to have Eben, though he wasn't wuth a green hand's wages as a prophet. But him and Beriah stuck by each other like two flies in the glue pot, and you couldn't hire one without t'other. Peter said 'twas all right—two prophets looked better'n one, anyhow; and, as subscriptions kept up pretty well and the bureau paid a fair profit, Jonadab and me didn't kick.

In July Mrs. Freeman—she had charge of the upper decks in the Old Home and was rated head chambermaid—up and quit, and being as we couldn't get another capable Cape Codder just then, Peter fetched down a woman from New York; one that a friend of old Dillaway's recommended. She was able seaman so far's as the work was concerned, but she'd been good looking once and couldn't forget it, and she was one of them clippers that ain't happy unless they've got a man in tow. You know the kind: pretty nigh old enough to be a coal barge, but all rigged up with bunting and frills like a yacht.

Her name was Kelly, Emma Kelly, and she was a widow—whether from choice or act of Providence I don't know. The other women servants was all down on her, of course, 'cause she had city ways and a style of wearing her togs that made their Sunday gowns and bonnets look like distress signals. But they couldn't deny that she was a driver so far's her work was concerned. She'd whoop through the hotel like a no'theaster and have everything done, and done well, by 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Then she'd be ready to dress up and go on parade to astonish the natives.

Men—except the boarders, of course—was scarce around Wellmouth Port. First the Kelly lady begun to flag Cap'n Jonadab and me, but we sheered off and took to the offing. Jonadab, being a widower, had had his experience, and I never had the marrying disease and wasn't hankering to catch it. So Emma had to look for other victims, and the prophet shop looked to her like the most likely feeding ground.

And, would you b'lieve it, them two old critters, Beriah and Eben, gobbled the bait like sculpins. If she'd been a woman like the kind they was used to—the Cape kind, I mean—I don't s'pose they'd have paid any attention to her; but she was diff'rent from anything they'd ever run up against, and the first thing you know she had 'em both poke hooked. 'Twas all in fun on her part first along, I cal'late, but pretty soon some idiot let out that both of 'em was wuth money, and then the race was on in earnest.

She'd drop in at the weather factory 'long in the afternoon and pretend to be terrible interested in the goings on there.

"I don't see how you two gentlemen can tell whether it is going to rain or not. I think you are the most wonderful men! Do tell me, Mr. Crocker, will it be good weather to-morrer? I wanted to take a little walk up to the village about 4 o'clock if it was."

And then Beriah'd swell out like a puffing pig and put on airs and look out of the winder, and crow:

"Yes'm, I jedge that we'll have a southerly breeze in the morning, with some fog, but nothing to last, nothing to last. The afternoon, I cal'late, 'll be fair. I—I—that is to say, I was figgering on goin' to the village myself to-morrer."

Then Emma would pump up a blush, and smile, and purr that she was so glad, 'cause then she'd have comp'ny. And Eben would glower at Beriah and Beriah'd grin sort of superior like, and the mutual barometer, so's to speak, would fall about a foot during the next hour. The brotherly business between the two prophets was coming to an end fast, and all on account of Mrs. Kelly.

She played 'em even for almost a month; didn't show no preference one way or the other. First 'twas Eben that seemed to be eating up to wind'ard, and then Beriah'd catch a puff and gain for a spell. Cap'n Jonadab and me was uneasy, for we was afraid the Weather Bureau would suffer 'fore the thing was done with; but Peter was away, and we didn't like to interfere till he come home.

And then, all at once, Emma seemed to make up her mind, and 'twas all Eben from that time on. The fact is, the widder had learned, somehow or 'nother, that he had the most money of the two. Beriah didn't give up; he stuck to it like a good one, but he was falling behind and he knew it. As for Eben, he couldn't help showing a little joyful pity, so's to speak, for his partner, and the atmosphere in that rain lab'ratory got so frigid that I didn't know but we'd have to put up a stove. The two wizards was hardly on speaking terms.

The last of August came and the Old Home House was going to close up on the day after Labor Day. Peter was down again, and so was Ebenezer and Belle, and there was to be high jinks to celebrate the season's wind-up. There was to be a grand excursion and clambake at Setuckit Beach, and all hands was going—four catboats full.

Of course, the weather must be good or it's no joy job taking females to Setuckit in a catboat. The night before the big day Peter came out to the Weather Bureau, and Jonadab and me dropped in likewise. Beriah was there all alone; Eben was out walking with Emma.

"Well, Jeremiah," says Brown, chipper as a 'mack'rel gull on a spar buoy, "what's the outlook for to-morrer? The gov'ment sharp says there's a big storm on the way up from Florida. Is he right, or only an 'also ran,' as usual?"

"Wall," says Beriah, goin' to the door, "I don't know, Mr. Brown. It don't look just right; I swan it don't! I can tell you better in the morning. I hope 'twill be fair, too, 'cause I was cal'lating to get a day off and borrer your horse and buggy and go over to the Ostable campmeeting. It's the big day over there," he says.

Now, I knew, of course, that he meant he was going to take the widder with him, but Peter spoke up and says he:

"Sorry, Beriah, but you're too late. Eben asked me for the horse and buggy this morning. I told him he could have the open buggy; the other one's being repaired, and I wouldn't lend the new surrey to the Grand Panjandrum himself. Eben's going to take the fair Emma for a ride," he says. "Beriah, I'm afraid our beloved Cobb is, in the innocence of his youth, being roped in by the sophisticated damsel in the shoo-fly hat," says he.

Me and Jonadab hadn't had time to tell Peter how matters stood betwixt the prophets, or most likely he wouldn't have said that. It hit Beriah like a snowslide off a barn roof. I found out afterward that the widder had more'n half promised to go with him. He slumped down in his chair as if his mainmast was carried away, and he didn't even rise to blow for the rest of the time we was in the shanty. Just set there, looking fishy-eyed at the floor.

Next morning I met Eben prancing around in his Sunday clothes and with a necktie on that would make a rainbow look like a mourning badge.

"Hello!" says I. "You seem to be pretty chipper. You ain't going to start for that fifteen-mile ride through the woods to Ostable, be you? Looks to me as if 'twas going to rain."

"The predictions for this day," says he, "is cloudy in the forenoon, but clearing later on. Wind, sou'east, changing to south and sou'west."

"Did Beriah send that out?" says I, looking doubtful, for if ever it looked like dirty weather, I thought it did right then.

"Me and Beriah sent it out," he says, jealous-like. But I knew 'twas Beriah's forecast or he wouldn't have been so sure of it.

Pretty soon out comes Peter, looking dubious at the sky.

"If it was anybody else but Beriah," he says, "I'd say this morning's prophecy ought to be sent to 'Puck.' Where is the seventh son of the seventh son—the only original American seer?"

He wasn't in the weather shanty, and we finally found him on one of the seats 'way up on the edge of the bluff. He didn't look 'round when we come up, but just stared at the water.

"Hey, Elijah!" says Brown. He was always calling Beriah "Elijah" or "Isaiah" or "Jeremiah" or some other prophet name out of Scripture. "Does this go?" And he held out the telegraph blank with the morning's prediction on it.

Beriah looked around just for a second. He looked to me sort of sick and pale—that is, as pale as his sun burned rhinoceros hide would ever turn.

"The forecast for to-day," says he, looking at the water again, "is cloudy in the forenoon, but clearing later on. Wind sou'east, changing to south and sou'west."

"Right you are!" says Peter, joyful. "We start for Setuckit, then. And here's where the South Shore weather bureau hands another swift jolt to your Uncle Sam."

So, after breakfast, the catboats loaded up, the girls giggling and screaming, and the men boarders dressed in what they hoped was sea togs. They sailed away 'round the lighthouse and headed up the shore, and the wind was sou'east sure and sartin, but the "clearing" part wasn't in sight yet.

Beriah didn't watch 'em go. He stayed in the shanty. But by and by, when Eben drove the buggy out of the barn and Emma come skipping down the piazza steps, I see him peeking out of the little winder.

The Kelly critter had all sail set and colors flying. Her dress was some sort of mosquito netting with wallpaper posies on it, and there was more ribbons flapping than there is reef-p'ints on a mainsail. And her hat! Great guns! It looked like one of them pictures you see in a flower seed catalogue.

"Oh!" she squeals, when she sees the buggy. "Oh! Mr. Cobb. Ain't you afraid to go in that open carriage? It looks to me like rain."

But Eben waved his flipper, scornful. "My forecast this morning," says he, "is cloudy now, but clearing by and by. You trust to me, Mis' Kelly. Weather's my business."

"Of course, I trust you, Mr. Cobb," she says. "Of course, I trust you, but I should hate to spile my gown, that's all."

They drove out of the yard, fine as fiddlers, and I watched 'em go. When I turned around, there was Beriah watching 'em too and he was smiling for the first time that morning. But it was one of them kind of smiles that makes you wish he'd cry.

At ha'f-past ten it begun to sprinkle; at eleven 'twas raining hard; at noon 'twas a pouring, roaring sou'easter, and looked good for the next twelve hours at least.

"Good Lord! Beriah," says Cap'n Jonadab, running into the weather bureau, "you've missed stays this time, for sure. Has your prophecy works got indigestion?" he says.

But Beriah wasn't there. The shanty was closed, and we found out afterward that he spent that whole day in the store down at the port.

By two o'clock 'twas so bad that I put on my fleskins and went over to Wellmouth and telephoned to the Setuckit Beach lifesaving station to find out if the clambakers had got there right side up. They'd got there; fact is, they was in the station then, and the language Peter hove through that telephone was enough to melt the wires. 'Twas all in the shape of compliments to the prophet, and I heard Central tell him she'd report it to the head office. Brown said 'twas blowing so they'd have to come back by the inside channel, and that meant landing 'way up Harniss way, and hiring teams to come to the port with from there.

'Twas nearly 8 o'clock when they drove into the yard and come slopping up the steps. And such a passel of drowned rats you never see. The womenfolks made for their rooms, but the men hopped around the parlor, shedding puddles with every hop, and hollering for us to trot out the head of the weather bureau.

"Bring him to me," orders Peter, stopping to pick his pants loose from his legs; "I yearn to caress him."

And what old Dillaway said was worse'n that.

But Beriah didn't come to be caressed. 'Twas quarter past nine when we heard wheels in the yard.

"By nighty!" yells Cap'n Jonadab; "it's the camp-meeting pilgrims. I forgot them. Here's a show."

He jumped to open the door, but it opened afore he got there and Beriah come in. He didn't pay no attention to the welcome he got from the gang, but just stood on the sill, pale, but grinning the grin that a terrier dog has on just as you're going to let the rat out of the trap.

Somebody outside says: "Whoa, consarn you!" Then there was a thump and a sloshy stamping on the steps, and in comes Eben and the widder.

I had one of them long-haired, foreign cats once that a British skipper gave me. 'Twas a yeller and black one and it fell overboard. When we fished it out it looked just like the Kelly woman done then. Everybody but Beriah just screeched—we couldn't help it. But the prophet didn't laugh; he only kept on grinning.

Emma looked once around the room and her eyes, as well as you could see 'em through snarl of dripping hair and hat-trimming, fairly snapped. Then she went up the stairs three steps at a time.

Eben didn't say a word. He just stood there and leaked. Leaked and smiled. Yes, sir! his face, over the mess that had been that rainbow necktie, had the funniest look of idiotic joy on it that ever I see. In a minute everybody else shut up. We didn't know what to make of it.

'Twas Beriah that spoke first.

"Hel hel hel!" he chuckled. "Hel hel hel! Wasn't it kind of wet coming through the woods, Mr. Cobb? What does Mrs. Kelly think of the day her beau picked out to go to camp meeting in?"

Then Eben came out of his trance.

"Beriah," says he, holding out a dripping flipper, "shake!"

But Beriah didn't shake. Just stood still.

"I've got a s'prise for you, shipmate," goes on Eben. "Who did you say that lady was?"

Beriah didn't answer. I begun to think that some of the wet had soaked through the assistant prophet's skull and had give him water on the brain.

"You called her Mis' Kelly, didn't you?" gurgled Eben. "Wall, that ain't her name. Her and me stopped at the Baptist parsonage over to East Harniss when we was on the way home and got married. She's Mis' Cobb now," he says.

Well, the queerest part of it was that 'twas the bad weather was really what brought things to a head so sudden. Eben hadn't spunked up anywhere nigh enough courage to propose, but they stopped at Ostable so long, waiting for the rain to let up, that 'twas after dark when they was half way home. Then Emma—oh, she was a slick one!—said that her reputation would be ruined, out that way with a man that wa'n't her husband. If they was married now, she said—and even a dummy could take that hint.

I found Beriah at the weather shanty about an hour afterwards with his head on his arms. He looked up when I come in.

"Mr. Wingate," he says, "I'm a fool, but for the land's sake don't think I'm such a fool as not to know that this here storm was bound to strike to-day. I lied," he says; "I lied about the weather for the first time in my life; lied right up and down so as to get her mad with him. My reputation's gone forever. There's a feller in the Bible that sold his—his birthday, I think 'twas—for a mess of porridge. I'm him, only," and he groaned awful, "they've cheated me out of the porridge."

But you ought to have read the letters Peter got next day from subscribers that had trusted to the prophecy and had gone on picnics and such like. The South Shore weather bureau went out of business right then.

SHARP PRACTICE AT A BAZAAR.
Lady Grace—Come along, he won't buy any.
Lady Beatrice—He'll have to as soon as he moves. He's bound to break them! —Punch.

GALLANT.
She—Now that I have taken my doctor's degree, do you think I will succeed as a physician?
He—You are already an ornament to the profession. —Fliegende Blätter.

HINT TO YOUNG ANGLERS.
In pike fishing, should the beginner be fortunate enough to catch an unusually large fish, he had better get the assistance of some professional fisher, or other person of experience, before weighing the fish, as there is considerable art in this. —Punch.

WHY THEY DIDN'T LIKE IT.

A story is told of a well known actor-manager when on tour last year. On the first night of his stay in a certain border town there were cries for a speech, and at last the genial actor stepped before the curtain. He thanked the audience for its gratifying demonstration, and let fall in conclusion some pleasant remarks about the beauties of the town, but the speech was received in frozen silence. When he got behind the curtain he remarked to the local manager that the good people of —— seemed singularly unresponsive.

"Yes," replied the manager, "you see, your speech was all right except in one particular. You kept mentioning the name of the town where you were playing last week."—The Tatler.

THEY ALSO SERVED.

A story from Berne says that a referendum was approaching its completion; the votes had been given, and the chairman was ready to declare the figures. In this moment of anxious expectation when the fortunes of the country were at stake, a voice from the public gallery was heard crying, "Waiter!" The result was instantaneous. The whole sovereign assembly of the Swiss people rose to its feet as one man and answered, "Yes, sir!"—The Tatler.

WHAT HE CAME TO SEE.
Alan (in clear and bell-like tones, five minutes after the curtain has gone up on the first scene of "The Merchant of Venice")—Mother, which is Shakespeare? —Punch.

THE DESERTER.

"Do you desire to have it understood," asked the judge, addressing the lady who wanted the divorce, "that your husband deserted you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Please tell the court as concisely as you can how he deserted you."

"Two months after we had completed our wedding trip he scolded me because he thought I was extravagant in the matter of getting clothes, and I went home to my people."

"Yes. Proceed."

"Well, I waited and waited and waited for him to come and beg me to return to him, and he never did."—Chicago Record-Herald.

SWITCH OFF!
Young Golightly (to pretty girl)—Is the seat next to you engaged, miss?
Miss—No; but I am! And he's going to get in at the next station! —Comic Cuts.