The Humorous Side of Life.

Curious Conceits of the Funny Men Seen and Described.

"Ever heerd uf Jim Long, the human giraffe?" Uncle Bill asked of the book agent, who was soliciting subscriptions for "Prehistoric Monsters, Their Haunts and Habits," in six volumes. "He's with Benson Brothers' Greatest Show on Earth, one ring, children half price.

"Curious feller, Jim. Longest neck I ever seed. An' that thar long neck caused poor Jim more trouble than the seven-year itch would an armless man.

"Jest look at the hard times he had with his food. Why, by the time hot victuals had strummered through that long snake-like collar-bolder of hisn an' finally come tew rest in his stomach they wuz lukewarm, leastways.

"Jest as bad with cold victuals. Lost all their coldness goin' down, an' ended up lukewarm jest as if they'd been hot things tew start with. Fact wuz, fifteen minutes after meal time Jim couldn't recollek t' save his life what it wuz he'd jest et—whether t'd been a hot dinner or a cold supper. Ice cream an' biled milk wuz all one t' him.

"Once he went over tew th' Abbots tew dinner. Now Aunt Nancy Abbot's as well-meanin' an old lady as ever be, but Lor'! good intentions can't cook a meal.

"Say though, mayhap that boy Jim didn't eat! Why, that same afternoon he told his mother it wuz th' finest meal he'd ever et, an' how he only wished she could cook as good.

"His mother never said a word, but hustled off tew the kitchen, an' started in tew cook a meal that wuz calculated tew make Jim eat his words, so 's t' speak.

"But that night, when th' things wuz set on the table Jim didn't seem t' take tew 'em much.

"'Jim,' says Missus Long, real anxious like, 'won't you' have a mite more of this apple sass?' 'Ye ain't eatin nothin'. Ye don't feel sick, I hope?'

"'Sick!' roared Jim, slingin' his knife an' fork on the table an' risin' outer his chair all riled an' wrathy. 'Who wouldn't be sick arter beef that tastes like an old shoe that's been resoled with poor leather? While as fur thet stuff which I reckon ye meant fur cabbage—Sick? It's fit tew drive a man tew drink.'

"With that Jim grabbed his hat from off'n the peg an' strutted outer the house, slammin' the door arter him.

"Two hours later old man Long found him up in the bar of the Stetson House a-pourin' in liquor like he wuz afraid someone else might get some.

"'See here, Jim Long,' he began, 'I wanter talk t' you. Ye, durned ungrateful pup, ye, a-worryin' the life outer yer poor mother the way ye have. An' all 'cause ye thought ye didn't like her dinner. Why, you'll allow as what it wuz the finest meal ye ever et when you've really had it.'

"'Really had it,' sneered Jim. 'Will I ever get through really havin' it. Gimme nother whisky, bartender.'

"At that the old man led Jim off t'one side an' commenced tew explain things tew him.

"He told him he hadn't had no beef nor cabbage that night. Said that that must have been what n'e'd had that arternoon at Aunt Nancy Abbot's; but that it had jest finished sifton' through that long neck of his'n about the time he'd set down tew his mo her's meal at home.

"'An' as fur yer thinkin' Aunt Nancy's dinner wuz th' fines' ye ever et,' said Mister Long, 'why, that wuz a compliment tew yer mother's breakfast.'

"Wal, sir, when the old man got through Jim bust right out cryin' in the barroom, an' solemnly swore that as long as he lived he'd never say another word about his mother's cookin' even if it were bad, which it warnt.

"Next day he got religion an' swore off drinkin'. That wuz Friday.

"Sunday he went tew church. That wuz the indirect cause of Jim's jinin' the circus.

"Jim set in the pew thar with his old man an' old woman. Up 'til about the middle of the sermon he wuz a-pravin' an' a-singin' an' a-listenin' like his very soul depended on it.

"But all of a suddint, right in the solem'est part, Jim let out the most orful whoop ye ever heard, an' commenced cavoortin' round that pew like a chicken with its head off.

"Then, yellin' bloody murder, he dove clean over Missus Long inter the aisle an' turned cart wheels all the way down the church an' outer the door.

"Poor Jim! Ye see, the liquor he'd drunk at the hotel Thursday night hadn't sifted down 'til Sunday.

"An' it wuz jest Jim's luck tew be taken suddintly drunk right in the middle of the sermon.

"The people wuz perfectly willin' tew forgive him next day when they learned as how it wuz his neck's fault an' not hisn, but Jim couldn't see it that way.

"He jest mooned an' mooned an' mooned 'til finally one day, when he couldn't stand it no longer, he slunk away outer town an' jined Benson Bros', Greatest Show on Earth, one ring, children half price.

Didn't Keep Good Time.

His legs would not keep time. They made him late at every fight,
'Til he fell down and fractured them
And had them both set right.

SOWED GRASS UPSIDE DOWN.

Italian Labor Responsible for Recent Unpleasantness With China.

"Yis," said Mr. O'Mara, "Oi'll vote th' Dimmocratic ticket, Oi suppose, but Oi must say Oi'm deeply dissipointed thot they have no board in their platform appertainin' to th' raystriction uv Dago in migration.

"Shure an' wasn't it chape Dago labor thot brought on th' late onpleasantness wid th' Chinese? Look at th' expinse thot thot war cost us. What? Ye nivir heard tell how th' Dagoes were mixed up in it? Faith, mon, yer ignorance is subloime!

"Have ye niver noticed th' bare spots in th' lawn a' Batthery Park? Well, th' Dagoes did thot. If they'd imployed Christian whoite min t' do th' work 'twould niver have happened. But what do thim chape, underpaid Eyetalians do? What do they know about sowin' a lawn?

"They threw th' grass seeds about any old way so thot half uv thim struck th' sod upside down. An' what's th' consiquince uv thot? As ye sow, so ye'll reap. Th' seeds thot landed upside down grew upside own, an' we developed one uv th' fothest ingrowo laws thot ivir pinishrated th' bowels uv th' earth.

"It wouldn't have been so bad if th' matter had stopped there, but it didn't. Th' dom grass kept a-growin', an' growin' an' growin' 'til finally about four years affther th' inthroduction uv chape labor in this coun'hry, what d'ye suppose happened? Nothin' less than this:

"One day, during a terrible rainstorm in Batthery Park, the Vice-Roy uv Ski-Hi was walkin' about his gardens in Chiny, when he suddintly perceived a foine, young lawn a-sproutin' up uv its own accord.

"'Lop gow!' says he, which in Christian talk means, 'Where th' devil does this come from?'

"An' where d'ye think it did come from? Troth an' 'twas nothin' more nor less than th' ingrown lawn thot th' Dagoes had planted in Batthery Park, four years before.

"As soon as this was discovered international complications uv th' worst sort set in.

"The Vice-Roy uv Ski-Hi immejiately set up 'Keep Off th' Grass' signs all over his ind of our grass. American toorists naturally raysinted this outrage t' their freeborn personal liberty an' complained accordin'ly t' th' Prisidint uv th' United States.

"The Prisidint protested t' Ski-Hi, who in reply issued a most insultin' edict forbiddin' American children in Batthery Park from pullin' up his grass by our roots.

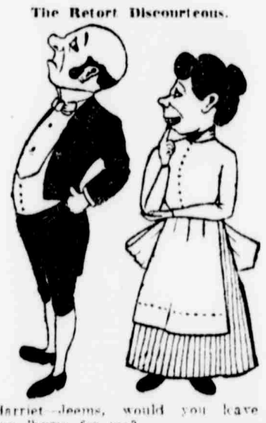
"This last was too much. Hostilities commenced at once, an' before we had finally succeeded in exterminatin' the boxers an' wrasslers an' rest of the haythens, th' war had cost us some odd 9,000,000,000 yens, which would have more than covered th' extry wages required t' hire Christian whoite min t' plant th' grass in th' first place."

The Best of Intentions.

His Reverence—What, Mrs. Flynn, washing on Sunday?

Mrs. Flynn—Sure, an' wasn't it yer Riverince thot towld us thot cleanliness was nixt t' holiness? Oi'm only makin' a humble effort t' git next, yer Riverince.

The Retort Discourteous.



Harriet—Jeems, would you leave yer 'appy home for me?

Jeems—Yes, if you were there.

Shady Repartee.

Mistah Johnsing, yo' habn't got de manners ob a hog!

I know dat, Miss Williams, but it surprises me to heah yo' admit it.

MAD TEAR A-WHEEL.

A Tale of a Bicycle Ride—Its Queer Ending.

The hatless rider glanced back.

The other was still pedalling doggedly after him.

The hatless rider gritted his teeth and bent low over his handlebars. He worked away with an energy that brought beads of sweat to his forehead.

Once more he glanced behind him. He had not succeeded in increasing the distance between them.

The strain was beginning to tell upon him. One more spurt and he would be done for. It was now or never.

He summoned all his rapidly failing strength for one supreme effort and again bent low over the handlebars. Pump, pump, pump! The pedals fairly flew.

But all at once his legs began to stiffen; it was all he could do to make them move at all. He could hear the panting of the man behind him. Now he could feel his breath upon his neck.

He hesitated but an instant, then jumped.

A moment later the other man also jumped.

"Why didn't you tell me you were going to get off?" he snarled. "Any one'd think you'd never been on a tandem before!"

A Wise Bear.

Bunny—Now, what are you doing with those shoes?

Brum—I'm putting 'em on to keep the hunters off my track.

Seasonable Precaution.

Bear—What are you dressed in fur for?

Polar Bear—I'm going back to the North Pole. It will be warmer there than in New York this winter.

Undoubtedly.

No doubt the careless yachtsman who
Casts anchor from o'erhead
Disturbs the chamber-mermaid
Who makes the oyster bed.

POLICE COURT ANECDOTES.

Time's Swift Pace on the Island—Dangers of Horse Marines.

While a police court is not a place that a person in search of out-and-out hilarity would naturally visit, enough humor usually crops up in the course of a day's work to relieve the monotony that would otherwise prevail.

An aged negro once told the Magistrate sitting in Jefferson Market police court that he could do nothing with his wife, and begged that she be sent to the Island.

"Have you ever been sent away before?" asked the Magistrate, turning to the woman.

"No, youah Honah, I nebber——"

"Woman, woman, woman!" broke in her husband, "how can you lie so? Why, youah Honah, dat woman, to mah pos'tive recollection, has been sent up t' de Island fo' t'irty days reg'lary every two weeks ever since I ken remember."

"She must go it at a pretty swift pace," the Magistrate commented in discharging her.

A clean-cut young fellow was brought into the Yorkville court some time ago charged with petty larceny. He exhibited papers showing that he had been honorably discharged from the navy only a few months before on account of an accident.

"How were you hurt?"

"Kicked by a horse, sir."

The Magistrate looked puzzled. Suddenly a light broke over his face.

"Ah," he said, "Capt. Jinks of the Horse Marines, no doubt."

A peppery little Irishman once asked Magistrate Cornell to give him a summons for an Italian who lived on the same block.

"He called me a dirthy Orish schoundrel an' a dom red-headed mick, an' a whole lot ov other things thot Oi wouldn't dare tell yer Honor, at all, at all."

The Magistrate granted the summons and the next afternoon the Italian, with white face and trembling knees, appeared in court. During the course of the examination it turned out that he could not speak English.

"Do you understand Italian?" the Magistrate asked of the Irishman.

"Far be it from me, yer Honor."

"But this man can't speak English. How on earth then did you know he called you a dirty Irish scoundrel? Dismissed."

"Yis, yis, yer Honor, but Oi knew. Oi knew, because——" just how he knew, however, was not learned, as the policeman in charge of the gate hustled him out of court.

From Our College Correspondent.

The prospects this season look gray,
That promising freshman's a jay;
He fumbles at quarter,
Don't start when he oughter,
And is slow getting into the play.

HE WOULD GRIND HIS TEETH.

Sir Lancelot MacLancey Meets His Foe and Fate Does the Rest.

They who fight and run away
Always live to draw their pay.
The Office Boy.

Sir Lancelot MacLancey toyed nervously with his gauntlets.

"And so you spurn me," he mused half to himself, the other half to the fair young maiden who stood blanched but resolute before him. "You spurn me, forsooth, because—because why? I demand to know. It is my right to know," he said hotly, at the same time springing to his feet, which were luckily close at hand.

"Because," she answered coldly, "because Clarence the Cagey hath called thee 'vile underdog' and thou allowest him to go unchallenged."

"But I thought——"

"Coward!"

"But I thought——"

"Begone, coward! Dare not come into my sight again till thou hast made the scurvy rascal eat his words."

"Ods billikins!" he muttered, as, with clanking spurs, he strode angrily out into the darkness. "Yes, I'll make the scoundrel eat his words. I'll challenge him this very night."

II

There's many a slip
'Twixt the throat and the lip.
The Dentist.

Sir Lancelot looked anything but a coward as he pranced into the arena on his black Arabian charger.

Clarence, yclept the Cagey, from the eccentric armor which he wore, cast a sinister glance at Sir Lancelot and ground his teeth.

A moment later there was a flaring of banners and a blaring of trumpets.

The joust was on.

Sir Lancelot drove his spurs deep into the sides of his fiery steed and charged.

His lance caught Clarence squarely over the heart.

"How now, ye roystering bolster!" he cried exultingly.

But the Cagey One's armor had served him in good stead and turned the deadly point aside.

Clarence merely glowered and again ground his teeth.

As soon as he had recovered from the jar Sir Lancelot charged again. But once more his lance was turned aside.

The Cagey One, however, tottered in his saddle, and, with a ghastly gurgle, rolled off his horse. He made a feeble effort to lift the heavy visor from his face, but death's dire hooks were already dragging at his soul.

The grindings from his teeth had choked him.

* * * * *

"My brave one," and Lancelot felt a pair of soft, white arms entwine themselves about his neck.

Criminal Carelessness.

The verdant hills do not appeal
To this unhappy maid.
The twilight hath no charms for her,
'Tis lonesome she's afraid.
Why dont she go away, you ask?
Alas! She's got to stay.
Some thoughtless wretch
Has torn this sketch
And thrown her feet away.

The Ant and the Sprinting Roach.

From the Ohio State Journal.

Once upon a time there was a roach lived in a hole in the wall next door to a wise old ant. Now it happened that the ant did not like the roach and would gladly have murdered him but for the roach's size and great strength, which made the ant no match for him in a contest of strength.

The ant placed poison at the roach's door, but the roach was wary and ate it not. One evening, when the lady of the house came into the room to look for roaches, the ant called upon the roach to come out of his hole, hoping the lady would kill him, but the roach heard her footsteps and kept close. Next the ant tried to compass the destruction of the roach by daring him to climb up the side of the wall, hoping that the roach would fall from a great height and break his neck. The roach, however, refused to climb.

Now it happened that the roach was a great sprinter and was very proud of his ability to get over the ground in a hurry. The ant chanced to think of this, and, going to the roach, challenged him to a footrace. The roach accepted the challenge at once and stated that he could run faster with his front feet tied than any bandy-legged ant in the whole house. The ant selected the spot where the footrace was to be run, which was across a yellow sheet of paper on the window sill. Hither both the ant and the roach went and halted at the edge of the sheet of paper.

"Are you ready?" cried the roach.

"I am!" shouted the ant.

"Go!" yelled the roach, and with that started across the sheet of paper at a dreadful pace, only to fall down and stick fast in a nauseous mire ere he had gone two inches. The ant did not start at all, for well he knew that the racecourse was across a sheet of fly paper.

Moral: There is a weak spot in every man's armor if you can but find it.

THE DOCTOR'S WINNING HAND AT DRAW POKER

A Game on a Mississippi Packet in the Days When Gambling Flourished.

"There's somethin' about a boat, I reckon," said Caleb Mix, the white-haired bartender on the river packet City of Vicksburg, "that puts the devil in a man. Leastways, I don't really know whether its' the boat that does it or the river itself. There's somethin' about the old Mississipp' that seems to get into the blood.

"I've heered tell o' men that come f'm Switzerland an' settled in this country, that went plumb crazy f'm homesickness, an' had to be put in the funny house. They say they go daffy 'count o' never seein' no mountains such as they had at home, bein' as how they gen'ly settle down somewhere where there ain't no mountains.

"Seems funny to me, f'r I ain't never seen no mountains 'ceptin' th' Ozark, an' there ain't nothin' about them that'd send a man bughouse, 'thouten he was to have to live amongst 'em.

"But I reckon it's the same with mountains as 'tis with rivers. If a man's brought up on the Mississippi, same as I was, he ain't reely no good anywheres else, an' if he goes anywheres en' stays a while, he'd dead sure to come back if there's any way to get back, an' he ain't happy till he does. An' the men that lives on the river, whether they travels it or lives on the banks, seem to be different somehow, f'm those that just pass through. Anyhow, I c'n tell 'em every time.

"An' them that gets on a boat the first time, or maybe the first few times, seems to have it go to their heads somehow. They'm like a man that takes his first drink, or gets his first chills and fever. Them that's used to it goes along just as if nothin' hadn't happened, but them that ain't used to it, sometimes does most surprisin'.

"Tain't no ways surprisin', I reckon, that the most on 'em plays draw poker. Maybe it's somethin' about the boat, or maybe it's the river that gets in their heads, but there's most gin'ly somebody playin' an' it do seem like a stranger that sees a game on the river is hell-bent on playin' his own self, whether he knows how or noi.

"Mostly he don't know none too much, an' he's the sucker, but once in a while some feller'll comes along that can play a grown up game, an' then, there'll be doin's.

"I recollect a feller named Goss that used to travel the river a lot, 'long in the early '70s, that was a reg'lar cuss, anyway you was a mind to take him. He c'd drink more red liquor 'n any two men I ever seen, an' when he'd had about so much he were a extry good man to keep away from, for he'd quarrel about nothin' an' he'd rather fight 'n to quarrel.

"'Peared like nothin' sobered him up but a rough an' tumble fight. It were reely amazin' 't he didn't get killed, for there was many carried guns an' knives, them days, more'n they do now, an' he never fit with neither. Just piled in like a mad cat an' struck an' kicked an wrastled an' bit an' gouged like he were plumb dotty.

"Sometimes he'd get licked, an' sometimes the other feller would, but it were always a surprise to them that was lookin' that either of 'em 'd get up alive.

"But all that was on'y his way of amusin' hisself. He didn't make a business of fightin', nor he didn't drink none, 'ceptin' on occasions when he took a day or two off. His reg'lar business was playin' cards, an he were reckoned the meanest gambler on the river.

"'Tain't easy to tell how 'twas, either, 't he come to be called mean. He played crooked, o' course, but they'd all do that if they could without gettin' caught. An' he'd take a man's last dollar acrost the table as quick as he'd take the first, but I never seen a gambler in my life that wouldn't do that, too.

"I reckon it were his manner, more'n anything else, for he sure were a surly dog, even when he were sober, an' how he ever got into so many games as he did with strangers wa'n't easy to understand, but he did it somehow, an' he uster make as good a livin' as most on 'em, year in, an' year out.

"One summer I was workin' on the old Girardeau that was blowed up at New Madrid a year or two later, and it did seem like hell had broke loose on the river pretty nigh every trip we made. We was runnin' f'm St. Louis to Memphis an' back, 'n' somehow or other there was a full boat 'most every trip, spite o' the season.

"We wasn't carryin' so much freight, but a most surprisin' number o' people seemed to be travellin' the river, an' we got more'n our share o' the business. I reckon maybe 'twas 'cause Cap'n Carter, that was runnin' the Girardeau, had the name o' bein' a good, safe navigator, but a man that didn't pay no attention to what was goin' on among the passengers.

"They c'd drink an' gamble an' even fight among themselves as much as they liked, s'long as there wa'n't no knives or guns drawed, an' he'd never open his mouth. Cap'ns is different about such things, an' a good many of 'em won't stand for no such doin's, but Carter, he didn't give a cuss, an' there was some lively times on board.

"Just nat'rally the gamblers was quick to learn about all this, an' there were a good, stiff game in the saloon every trip. An' 'twas nat'ral, too, that that got talked about, an' there was men f'm all over the country buttin' in. Some on 'em was professionals, but a good many was just sports lookin' for a big game, an' now an' again there was some that just wanted to see the fun.

"There was a man got on at Cairo one day, that I was a good deal surprised to see. He were a young doctor named Saunders, that had been practisin' there for four or five years, an' had considerable more to do, lookin' after his patients, than any one man c'd reasonably do, for he sure did know his business.

"He'd took care o' me once when I was laid up with a fever, an' I knowed him well. An' knowin' how busy he al'ays was, I wondered what took him away f'm home.

"When I ast him about it, as I did, he sort o' laughed an' said he were just takin' a few days off, so's to sort o' stretch his legs.

"'I've been workin' too hard, Cale,' he says, 'an' I need a change.'

"Well, there ain't no tellin' what any man'll do when he's lookin' for a change, but I wasn't lookin' to see him set into a poker game inside of an' hour. 'Peared like he were one o' them calm, student-like men that's more to home readin' a book than they is playin' men's games 'n' I looked for to see him skinned to death in no time, more specially as Goss an' a pal o' his, named Porter, was in the game.

"The other two I didn't know, but I heerd after that one on 'em was a lumber merchant f'm Minneapolis, an' the other was a drummer f'm Chicago. They looked like they c'd take care o' themselves, 'n' I wa'n't worried none about 'em, for 'twa'n't none o' my business nohow, but I didn't like to see the doctor done up, an' I looked on pretty close, sayin' to myself that I'd make some excuse to call him one side, if they was to play crooked.

"O' course, I knowed they would if they thought 'twas safe, but I didn't know what the two strangers might be, an' I reckoned they'd go slow at first till they had everybody sized up.

"That's just what they did, too, an' f'm the way the two strangers played, I c'd see that Goss an' Porter 'd have to do some pretty slick work if they was goin' to play tricks. The doctor, he played a sort o' careless, wide-open game, but he knowed what he were about, an' I sized it up that he'd be safe enough till the others had gauged the play, so I just waited an' looked on.

"They was playin' table stakes with a hundred apiece on the table, so there wa'n't no killin' due for a while anyhow. Well, about the tenth deal, or so, I seen Goss hold out a card. I couldn't tell what 'twas but I reckoned it were an ace.

"He were the dealer, an the doctor sat on his right. It were a jackpot an' the others passed out, but I seen that the doctor had three kings an' I looked to see him open it, o' course. 'N' then, I says to myself, the dealer'd have three aces.

"Well, the doctor did'nt open it. He just passed, an' I c'd see Goss look at him, just for an instant, like he didn't know what to make of it.

"There wa'n't but one thing for him to think, though, an' I c'd see that were the thing he thought. That was that he'd made some mistake, an' the doctor hadn't got the kings.

"It was all plain enough to me, havin' saw what I had. All't I couldn't understand was the doctor's play, but I says to myself again, that I reckoned he were as good a player as the rest on 'em, an' maybe better, an' perhaps I didn't need to worry about him.

"That seemed to be about the size of it, too, for Goss opened it an' the drummer an' the lumber merchant both dropped. Porter stayed, o' course, an' we all looked to see what the doctor'd do.

"I was the on'y one that knowed what he had, but I knowed for I'd saw his cards, an' I was just a little skeered for fear he'd come in, even knowing' what I thought he knowed. But he didn't. He threw away his cards an' didn't say nothin'.

"He told me after that he hadn't see Goss hold out the card, but he'd seen him look across the table when he was dealin', in a way that showed him 't there was some signals passin' 'tween Porter an' Goss, an' he reckoned he wouldn't play on Goss's deal. An' after that he seen enough to start him in on some funny business his own self.

"'Pears he'd learned some tricks in the East, when he were a medical student, an' he c'd stack the cards better'n Goss ever dreamed o' doin.' Just naturally, knowin' all them tricks, the way he did, it didn't take him no time to get on to the game Goss an Porter was playin', and he said he made up his mind to have some fun.

"Pretty soon he made some excuse for leavin' the table for a few minutes, an' as he left the saloon he give me a wink that I understood well enough for a signal to see him outside, so I goes out another way an' goes to the bar.

"My nigger was on duty there, an' I made an errand for him that would keep him out o' the room for a few minutes, so 's't I was alone when the doctor came in an' called for a drink.

"While he was pourin' it out, he says to me:

"'Cale, I want a new deck o' cards, the same kind as you are furnishin' to the poker tables.'

"So I gives him one, a red deck, 'twas, an' he ripped off the cover an' threw away the joker an' riffled 'em two or three times as quick as lightning. Then he just ran 'em through, so fast that I couldn't follow his motions with my eye, an' then, all of a sudden I didn't see no cards.

"'Where'd you put 'em, doctor?' I says, but he on'y grinned, an' says:

"'I reely can't tell you Cale, just where they are, but I reckon I ain't lost 'em!' and he finishes his drink an' goes back to the poker table.

"Well, just naturally, you couldn't ha' kept me out o' that saloon with guns after that, an' when my nigger came back, I went back to look on. They was playin' with a blue deck, so I knowed I wouldn't see nothin' o' the red ones for a spell.

"The doctor, he just played along, pertendin' to be almighty careless, an' reely makin' one or two fool bets which he lost as a matter of course, but scoopin' in one good pot on the lumberman's deal, so's't he wa'n't far f'm even when the drummer called for a new deck of different color. O' course, that were just what the doctor wanted, but he were too slick to call for 'em hisself.

"O' course I bring a red deck, an' kep' a look out I ke a hawk, for I knowed somethin' was comin', but even lookin' as I did, I couldn't see it when 'twas did. All't I knowed was, 'twas Goss's deal, an' he shuffled the cards mighty careful, an' passed 'em over to the doctor to cut.

"As nigh' as I c'd tell, the doctor, he cut 'em reg'lar enough, an' Goss dealt 'em.

"The doctor he let his cards lay where they fell an' he never said nothin,' but when the lumber merchant opened it, an' the drummer raised it, an' Porter raised it again, he says:

"'Gentlemen, I don't s'pose 'twould be fair for me to play against you, but I've go you all beat.'

"Well, the others all stared at him, an' nobody spoke for a moment, but finally the drummer says:

"'What sort o' talk is that, anyhow? You haven't looked at your cards yet.'

"'I don't have to look at 'em,' says the doctor, mighty cool, an' I noticed that he were lookin' at nobody but Goss. 'I know every card that every man at the table has got.'

"Well, they all looked at him some more, as if they thought he was bughouse, but finally the lumber merchant says:

"'I certainly don't propose to set in no longer, if that's the kind of a game this is. But as long as you say you can tell all the cards, I'd like very much to see you do it.'

"'I'll do it with pleasure,' said the doctor, 'and you'll remember that I didn't deal the cards. What I did was to change the deck that this gentleman on my left thought he was dealing with. And I did it to prove to you all that I know what I'm talking about. And I would certainly advise you and every other honest man at the table to get out of the game. I would suggest that we all draw down what we have in this pot, first, and then I'll tell you all what cards you have.'

"I c'd see that Goss was gettin' hot under the collar, an' Porter was lookin' at him for a signal, but the doctor hadn't give 'em no chance to kick, and they hesitated. But the drummer spoke up quick:

"'I'm going to draw my money down,' he says, very sharp, an' he did it, so the others did the same.

"Then Goss, he seemed to catch his wind, somehow, an' he says:

"'I don't pretend to understand what you've did,' he says, 'but you claim you changed the deck on me, for I was dealin'. If you did, I'd like to see the other deck. Where is it?'

"'Right here,' says the doctor, slappin a red deck down on the table so quick that nobody seen where it came from. 'But first, I'll tell you what you've got. You've got three kings, an' you've got a flush, and you've got four tens an' you've got four sixes, an' I've got a straight flush.'

"An' he pointed to one man after another as he spoke, an' when he comes to his own hand he turned it over an' showed it.

"It was a straight flush all right, ace to the five of clubs, an' one after another the rest on 'em shoved their cards an' he was right.

"They was sort o' dum'founded, but pretty soon Goss he spoke up again. An' men I seen he were gettin' one o' his nasty fits on, so's there was pretty soon to be a fight, but I see, too, the doctor was ready for him, an' I says to myself that maybe the doctor's idee of a little fun meant a fight, too. An' that was what.

"Goss, he says: 'I don't see's you're done nothin' more'n to show that you're a card sharp, an' you can't expect honest men to play with you.'

"'That's all I've done so far,' says the doctor, 'but you'll notice I ain't won no money. If I was a different kind of a sharp, I wouldn't have told what I did. You haven't told us yet what you did to the deck you thought you dealt with. Now, suppose' you tell us what card you intended to give us all.'

"Well, I was sayin' that Goss fit like a mad cat when he fit. An' if you'd seen him jump across the table at that you'd ha' thought that was what he was.

"But the doctor was a match for him. Porter started to pull a gun, but I was too quick for him, an' I grabbed his wrist an' told him to keep out of it, so the two had it out.

"It wa'n't no shootin' or stabbin' scrape, but Goss was the worst licked man I ever seen in a rough an' tumble, in about fifteen minutes.

"An' after it was all over, the doctor washed hisself and come into the barroom for another drink afore goin' to bed.

"'I ain't had so much fun as that for three year, Cale,' he says to me with a grin."

Folks Who Get That Tired Feeling

find that melancholia is driven away by reading the human interest stories which appear only in THE SUN and THE EVENING SUN.—Ade.

AUTOMOBILISTS OF THE SEA.

DARING EXPLOITS OF GERMAN TOPEDO BOAT SKIPPERS.

Many Disasters Give Proof of the Chances They Take in Manœuvres—Stormy Seas Sought to Test Their Vessels—Dashes by Torpedo-Boat Flotillas.

Prince Henry of Prussia has been put this year in command of the first torpedo boat flotilla of the German Navy, and has sent it through those dashing manœuvres which are peculiar to this branch of the German naval service. The German torpedo boat manœuvres, while their practical utility has been questioned, and while they have become notorious for the disasters which they have caused, are, nevertheless, the admiration of the naval world for the dash displayed by the commanding officers of the boats.

Some photographs taken during the recent manœuvres, show the arrow-like vessels steaming in line at full speed with such slight intervals between the boats that the most trifling accident to one of them would probably result in the destruction of the boats astern.

Germany still believes in torpedo boats of the very highest speed that can be produced, but England would seem to be moderating her ideas in that respect. Heretofore the British have set thirty knots as the standard speed for a torpedo boat, but the group of four new boats recently completed at Chiswick have a speed of only twenty-five knots.

By requiring less speed it is thought that so much will not have to be sacrificed for lightness of construction, and the boats, therefore, will be stronger and more seaworthy.

With her torpedo boats Germany has displayed a disposition to take long chances which has resulted in her losing more vessels of this class in proportion to her fleet than any other nation. The German naval officers went into torpedo boat work with all the enthusiasm and recklessness that marks the automobilist with a new, high-speed machine.

In fact, the German torpedo boat commanders may not inaptly be called the automobilists of the sea, because of the way in which they dash about with the long, lean vessels, and because of the chances they take.

The loss of the torpedo boat commanded by Duke Frederick William of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, who went down with his boat and entire crew, was a catastrophe that called the attention of the world to the things which the Germans were attempting with their torpedo boats. Since then the torpedo boat officers of the German Navy have been a little more careful, though they still take risks which officers of other navies would consider unnecessary and unwarranted.

Competent authorities, such, for instance, as the editors of the semi-official "Statesman's Year Book," declare that while "with the German torpedo boats some absolutely remarkable evolutions are performed which excite admiration, yet their value has been questioned," but adds that "the Germans are probably in advance of all other nations in torpedo work."

This is the testimony of the highest British naval authority. So it would seem that even if Germany has lost more torpedo boats in proportion than any other nation, she has at least accomplished something to be proud of in the drilling and disciplining of her officers and crews.

The Germans do not name their torpedo boats as most of the other nations of the world do, but give them numbers and letters instead. So in the list of Prince Henry's flotilla, instead of reading such names as Viper, Scorpion, &c., we find that the fleet consists of torpedo boats S. 106, S. 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, S. 96, 98, 99, 100 and 101—eleven boats in all of the newest types.

In 1895 the Germans lost the torpedo boat S. 41 off Jutland, and it was in September, 1897, that Duke Frederick William of Mecklenburg-Schwerin went down in his boat, S. 26.

In 1898 the S. 85 went down.

In the course of the naval manœuvres of last year the Germans lost torpedo boat No. 76, a vessel of 150 tons. Only one man went down with her.

Last July the German torpedo boat S. 42 was run down and sunk at the mouth of the Elbe by the British merchant steamer Firsby. She went down at night.

The night was cloudy but clear, and both vessels had their lights burning brightly. The torpedo boat sank about five minutes after the collision, taking down with her the commanding officer and three of his crew.

What came near being another fatal disaster for a German torpedo boat took place last April while the torpedo boat division of the training fleet was proceeding to the eastern Baltic. Off the Island of Moen, torpedo boat S. 32 came in collision with the schooner Odin.

The schooner sank at once and the torpedo boat was badly damaged. She was, however, able to keep afloat until she got to a dockyard.

The waters of the Baltic and the North Sea are stormy most of the time. Before the Kiel Canal was built it used to be a favorite manœuvre with the torpedo boats to go from Wilhelmshaten on the Baltic, around the northern point of Denmark, and so on down to Hamburg or Bremen.

It was almost a foregone conclusion that before the voyage was completed nasty weather would be encountered which would try the seagoing abilities of the torpedo boats and the nerve of their officers and crews. If a boat was lost—well, it simply proved that she was unseaworthy, that was all, and that its type must be improved upon the next time one of that class was built.

The completion of the canal connecting the Baltic and the North Sea has removed the necessity of sending the torpedo boats on the perilous voyage around Jutland, and they probably will be sent over that route less frequently than before, though in manœuvring they are at any time liable to be ordered to make the voyage.

The experience gained by the officers and men of the German torpedo boat flotilla and the points which have been revealed to naval constructors by the passage of torpedo boats from the Baltic to the North Sea by way of the northern point of Denmark have done as much as anything else to develop the German torpedo boat service so that it stands to-day in the position it does.

"It is seldom that a German officer will take chances on running his torpedo boat ashore, but he will take all sorts of chances in keeping her out at sea when the officers of other nations, with boats of similar build, would seek a harbor.

When the German torpedo boats are manœuvring with a fleet of warships of larger growth a favorite performance is for the entire flotilla to make a sudden dash and try to get inside the line of the men-of-war. This is done in all navies when the torpedo boats go out to play at war with a fleet; but in other navies, as a rule, it is the sneaking up of single boats to try and torpedo a battleship before she is discovered which is the favorite game.

But a whole flotilla, making a dash for a lot of men-of-war in line of battle, has something desperate about it which seems to appeal to the Germans.

In the last two years the British have piled up a list of torpedo boat disasters which makes the German record seem tame, but it must be remembered that England has a much larger torpedo boat flotilla than Germany with which to invite disaster.

Last year and this year the British have lost three torpedo boats, the Cobra, Viper and No. 81, and have had no fewer than sixteen other torpedo boat accidents, some of them serious ones. In the same time France has lost one torpedo boat and had two serious torpedo boat accidents.

Italy has had one accident to her torpedo boats, and that not a very serious one. She does not indulge in torpedo boat manœuvres as much as England and Germany. Russia had one accident, not serious, in her torpedo fleet.