GOV. M'KINLEY TALKS

Frank Carpenter Interviews Him at His Home in Columbus.

POLITICS AND THE PRACTICE OF LAW

A Few Words About the Tariff and the Political Outlook.

THE COMING CAMPAIGN

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COLUMBUS, Ohio, August 22, 1895.

GOV. McKINLEY IS a queer presidential candidate. I have come from Washington to Columbus to see what he is doing to make himself President of the United States. Every one knows he is to be one of the leading candidates before the republican national convention. Ohio has declared herself for him, and McKinley clubs are being formed all over the Union. Columbus ought to be the headquarters of the campaign, and I expected to find a literary bureau at work here. There is nothing of the kind. The state house is as torpid as a snake in midwinter, and the governor apparently shows no more interest in wire-pulling than though he were the chief executive of one of the poorest territories of the west. He is not doing a stroke to help along the movement, and he refuses to say a word upon national politics for publication. He will not talk about the presidency, and he says his ideas on public questions are so well known that it is useless for him to make any statement as to the probable platform.

Some of McKinley's Characteristics.

I have known Gov. McKinley for years. He is one of the most modest men in public life. He seems to shun newspaper notoriety and is averse to talking about himself. Up to the present time he has systematically refused to give anything of this character to the newspapers, and my talk with him only came through my long

acquaintance and upon the promise that I would be moderate in my expressions. I spent some time with him in his office at the state house. He is easier to get at than any government clerk in Washington. There is no red tape about his establishment. You walk through the rotunda, down one hall and up another and pass into the ante-room where his private secretaries work. If the governor is disengaged these direct you to go right in, and you find McKinley, who is now perhaps the most talked-of man in the United States, seated at a big, flat desk in a mahogany chair, with a pile of letters and telegrams before him. His private secretary may be on the opposite side of the desk, but as a usual thing you will find him alone, and if you have ever met him before he will be sure to recognize you. He has a phenomenal memory, and he seldom forgets a name or a face. He puts you at once at your ease, and evidently does not consider himself to be any better or greater than you are. He is democratic in his feelings and actions, and he is a good, healthy specimen of commonplace humanity. He is a man of the people, and he believes in the people and can sympathize with them. He is a good talker and can tell a good story, though he never uses anecdotes upon the stump. As you talk with him you find that he has a humorous side to his nature, and he can laugh like a young Bacchus. He has a religious side also, and he never says anything against religion, even in jest. He is a member of the Methodist Church, but I do not think he is a doctrinal Methodist, and he has his jokes now and then at the expense of his friends who belong to other denominations. One of his stories, for instance, gives the reason why a prominent politician could not become a Baptist. It was because he could not bear to undergo immersion, as he could not stand being out of public view for any length of time, and another was as to the Scotch Presbyterian who was noted for keeping the Sabbath and everything else he could lay his hands on.

His Domestic Relations.

Gov. McKinley has an immense correspondence, and the electric wires are kept hot with the business of his position. He dispatches his work quickly, dictating the answers to his letters rapidly, and seldom stopping for a word or an idea. He walks up and down smoking a cigar as he dictates. Tobacco, in fact, is his only vice. He never drinks, and consequently is free from that fault which the man excepted when he spoke of having a perfect wife. You may have heard the story. The man remarked:

"There is only one trouble about my wife. She will swear when she gets drunk!"

Well, McKinley never drinks, and he never swears. His closest friends tell me they have never heard him tell a story, nor utter an expression which could not be repeated in the presence of ladies. He is fond of the society of ladies, and there is no more devoted husband in the United States than he. His wife has been an invalid for the past twenty years, and he has devoted all his spare time to her. The relations which the two sustain to each other are most beautiful. Mrs. McKinley thinks there is no man in the world equal to her husband. She has an oil painting of him so hung that it will be the first thing she sees when she awakes in the morning, and she never tires of talking about him. She has grown much better within recent years, and she is now almost well. She is a beautiful woman, and a very bright one intellectually. She is very anxious that the governor should retire from politics, and she told me that she hoped she could induce him to do so upon the anniversary of their silver wedding, which will occur next January. The two live very comfortably at the Neill House in Columbus, the governor walking back and forth to his work at the state house, which is just across the way.

He Does Not Talk for Pay.

The governor's life, in fact, is quiet, regular and comparatively uneventful. He is attending to the duties of his office, and now and then going off to make a speech in different parts of the United States. It is wonderful how many demands there are upon him for speaking. He receives scores of requests every week, and many of these are accompanied with offers of money. Just the other day he received a letter from Boston stating that the writer would give him $500 if he would deliver a speech there. He replied that he could not go, whereupon the man sent a second letter stating that if the money offer was not enough he would make it twice the five hundred and his expenses. Gov. McKinley, however, does not believe in speaking for money. He looks upon his speaking something as Tolstoi does upon his writings, and he has never accepted a dollar for any of his public utterances. He is a peculiar fellow in his ideas of right, and his views upon this question of public speaking came out this afternoon, upon my telling him that I thought he ought to make a good thing out of his speeches, and that I knew other men who were increasing their income in this way. Before he had replied I asked him what he got for a speech, and he then told me that he had never received a cent for such work.

During my talk with him today I asked him how he prepared his speeches. He replied:

"When I have an important speech to make it absorbs me. It is hard work, and it takes all there is in me. I go over the subject again and again in all its phases in my mind. I read all I can get hold of upon it, and the speech gradually grows until it is ready for delivery. If it is one that has to be given to the press, I dictate it to my stenographer and see that the copy is given out beforehand. This clarifies my thought, and though I seldom make exactly the same speech that I have dictated, it is substantially the same."

"Do you like to speak?"

"No, I do not," replied Gov. McKinley, emphatically. "I dread it. My heart goes down into my boots whenever I get up before an audience, and I trmeble until I have begun to talk. This is always so, and still I have been making speeches for twenty-three years."

"Do you remember your first public speech?" I asked.

"Yes, indeed; very well," replied the governor, with a laugh. "It was upon my return home with the troops at the close of the war. I lived in the little village of Poland, near Youngstown, and a reception was given in honor of the soldiers. One of the judges of the county made the welcoming speech, and I was chosen to give the response. I was then just twenty-one years old."

How McKinley Became a Soldier.

"How old were you when you went into the army, governor?" I asked.

"I was just seventeen," was the reply. "I was acting as a country school teacher at the time the war broke out. My father was anxious to give me a good education. He moved with his family to the little town of Poland, in order that I might go into the academy there, and when I was about fifteen or sixteen he sent me to the Allegheny College at Meadville, Pa. I fell sick there and had to come home. When I became better I took up teaching and got a country school near Poland. This I left to go to the army."

"By the way, governor, what did they pay you for teaching?"

"My wages were, I think, $25 a month, and I boarded around. My parents, however, lived only three miles from the school house, and the most of the time I stayed with them and walked to the school and back every day. Six miles would be a big walk for me now, I suppose, but it did not seem much then."

"Well, while I was teaching," continued Gov. McKinley, "Fort Sumter was fired on, and every one was wild to go to the war. A company was formed in Poland, and I enlisted. Gen. John C. Fremont inspected and mustered in the company. He examined me. I was then very slight, not much bigger than you are. Gen. Fremont, I remember, seemed a great man to me, a boy of seventeen, whose mind had been thrilled with the story of his wonderful adventures in the west. I remember he pounded my chest and looked square into my eyes, and finally pronounced me fit for a soldier."

"In what regiment were you, governor?"

"My first service was in the twenty-third Ohio, and I remained in that regiment throughout the war."

A Modest Soldier.

What was your rank when you entered?"

"It was that of a private," replied Major McKinley. "The first colonel of my regiment was Rosecrans, who afterward became general. Our lieutenant-colonel was Stanley Matthews, afterwards United States Senator and justice of the Supreme Court, and our major was Rutherford B. Hayes, who was to become a general and afterwards to serve as governor of Ohio and as President of the United States."

"It was a remarkable regiment, wasn't it?" said I.

"Yes," replied the governor, "and the great body of the regiment was worthy of the great commanders.

"I remained a private for over a year. I was then promoted to be sergeant of the company. This was after the battle of Antietam. Rutherford B. Hayes—he had become colonel—brought me my commission, and later on I served on the staffs of Gen. Hayes, Maj. Gen. Crook and Maj. Gen. Hancock. In 1864 I was made a major by brevet by President Lincoln."

"How did you like military life, governor?"

"Very much, indeed, was the reply. "I wanted to remain in the army. My friends among the officers urged me to do so, and I would probably be in the military service today if my father and mother had not seriously objected. Somehow or other, they did not think much of my being in the army in the time of peace. The result was that I came home and studied law. I went to a law school at Albany, and then hung out my shingle in Canton, as a young practitioner. I continued to practice law until I was elected to Congress."

"How did you get into politics?"

"My first office was that of prosecuting attorney. My friends made me a candidate in 1869. I was elected and served for two years. After that I practiced law until 1876, at which time I was nominated for Congress. I was not anxious to be the candidate at that time. I thought I was too young to go into politics. I had a good business, and I was not well enough off to enter public life. Still, I was nominated and elected by a large majority."

"How long did you remain in Congress?"

"I served in the House for fourteen years, and was then elected governor of Ohio."

How He Became a Protectionist.

"Governor McKinley, you are the great apostle of protection in the United States. How did you come to make the tariff a life work?"

"I don't know when I was not interested in the tariff," replied Governor McKinley. "I was brought up, as it were, on protection. My boyhood was spent in an iron manufacturing district, and among miners, and Canton, where I went to live, is a center of great manufacturing industries. The first speech I made in Congress was in favor of a protective tariff. It was against Fernando Wood's tariff bill in 1878. As I went on in my study of the question, I became more and more convinced that this was the best way to raise our revenues, and at the same time to support our industries. The tariff will always be a live question."

A Permanent Tariff.

"What do you think of the idea of a constitutional amendment prohibiting the changing of the tariff within a limited period, say, five or ten years?"

"I don't believe that such a thing would be advisable. The changes of conditions might make such an arrangement work great injury, and besides, Congress is the law-making power, and I do not think it would be wise to make this restriction."

"Did the McKinley bill have the effect upon the business of the American people that you expected?"

"Yes; the anticipated effect of the tariff law of 1890 was realized. It was not as fully realized, perhaps, as it would have been had it not been for the change of administration which occurred when it was but two years old. It protected American industries. It started the tin-plate factories, and all agree that they are here to stay.

"Referring to your question as to prohibiting the changing of the tariff within a limited period," the governor went on, "I do not think that the American people would approve of such an act. They want to be let alone, it is true, but they do not want that which is bad and injurious to the country to be allowed to remain. We have got to adjust matters to the present tariff as well as we can until we can change it. We can have no hope of doing this for two years to come, but I believe there will be a change in the future to meet the requirements of the treasury and to promote our industrial development. I think our people believe in protection and reciprocity. There is no doubt that we can produce our own sugar, make our own tin plate and other things which we are now importing from abroad. I believe we should do our work at home, as far as possible, and that with a protective tariff we will have better times and a permanent prosperity."

"What is the condition of the republican party today, governor? Is it alive, dead or dying?"

"It has never been in a more healthy and vital condition than it is today," replied Governor McKinley. "There will be no split in our party in the coming campaign."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

A MYSTERIOUS CASE

The Holmes Murders Equaled in California.

TWO STRANGE DEATHS

The Conflicting Testimony Brought Out by Both Sides.

TWO SUSPECTS ACQUITTED

Written for The Evening Star.

The Holmes murder case, with its almost daily discovery of old bones and development of new horrors, is, perhaps, receiving a larger share of the public attention than any other passing event. It is almost commonplace, however, when compared with a case which it has served to revive in the memory of the writer. As in the Holmes case, the greed for insurance money led to the commission of the crime, but here all resemblance ceases.

Some time in the seventies one J. Milton Bowers arrived in the city of San Francisco from the east and hung out his shingle as a doctor of medicine. He soon established a large and lucrative business by accepting that class of cases which all reputable physicians decline, and being a shrewd, calculating, well-educated man, succeeded in keeping out of the meshes of the law. In due course of time he married Cecilia Benhayon, a young woman. The marriage was not a happy one, however, Bowers being tyrannical and often brutal. Several years passed away, when Mrs. Bowers was seized with a lingering illness, which resulted fatally. A certificate of death was made out in proper form and the body interred. There was an insurance of over $20,000 on her life, and this, together with the unsavory character of the doctor, led to an investigation, which culminated about four weeks after her death in the issuance of an order for the exhumation of the body. A commission of three physicians examined the stomach, with the result that two of them declared they found traces of arsenical poison sufficient to have caused her death. The third one agreed as to the presence of arsenic in the stomach, but was not willing to ascribe it as the cause of death. Bowers was then arrested on a charge of murder.

Circumstantial Evidence.

By the time the case was ready for trial the police had succeeded in forging a strong chain of circumstantial evidence around the doctor. It was developed that he had been married twice before; that the lives of both previous wives had been insured, and that both wives had died in somewhat the same manner as the last one. Contrary to the usual custom of physicians when one of their family is sick, he had refused to call any one in for consultation, and had compounded all the prescriptions himself. The most important witness against him was Alexander Benhayon, his brother-in-law, who identified a bottle of medicine which had been found to contain poison as one from which potions for his sister were taken. During the course of the trial Bowers proved himself in many respects a remarkable man. He directed the tactics of the defense, and during his long, exhaustive examination while on the stand talked as an ordinary man would at the breakfast table. He received the verdict of guilty with the same imperturbable calmness which characterized him through the trial. If he ever felt any emotion his sphinx-like face did not show it.

The trial over, Bowers was sentenced to be hanged. His attorneys, after exhausting all legal devices in the effort to secure a new trial, as a dernier resort, appealed to the supreme court of the state.

A Mysterious Confession.

Over a year had passed. Bowers was in his cell in the county jail awaiting the verdict which would determine his fate, and the people of California had almost forgotten all about him, when, one day, information reached police headquarters that a man had been found dead in a lodging house on Post street between Kearney and Grant avenue. The man was Aleck Benhayon. By his side was a bottle partially filled with cyanide of potassium, and in his pocket was found what purported to be a confession. It consisted of several closely written pages and declared that he, and not Dr. Bowers, was the murderer of his sister; that some weeks before her death he had prevailed upon her to assign the insurance policies to him and had then slowly poisoned her to death. In addition to this, it charged his sister with gross infidelity and gave the names of several men with whom she had been familiar. The reason ascribed for his suicide was that two weeks before he had lost a diary in which he had carefully noted down all the details of his diabolical crime, and death was preferable to the torture from the fear of its discovery. It said that he had never used the assignment of the insurance policies because he was afraid that it would direct suspicion toward him. This sensational discovery was coupled with the declaration of the landlady of the lodging house that Benhayon was not the man who rented the room from her. She said that some days before a young man had looked at the room and engaged it by paying the rent a week in advance. He stated that it was for a friend of his and that it would not be occupied for some days. He gave his occupation as a book agent, but did not leave his name.

The Book Agent.

In the course of a week the police found the mysterious young man in the person of one Dimmig. Dimmig was, as he had stated to the landlady, a book agent. He admitted the renting of the room and said he did so at the request of Benhayon, to whom he had given the key. He was one of the last men in the world one would be likely to suspect of such a crime; of exceptionally jovial, happy-go-easy temperament, he had enjoyed the world as he found it. Nothing criminal could be found in his past career, nor even anything bordering on criminality. Being an expert penman, he had made a living by card writing for a time, but most of his life had been a canvasser. He seemed to take his arrest as a joke and jauntily said that his release would only be a matter of a few days. Many months passed away, however, before he was again at liberty. Within a few days it was ascertained that Dimmig had married the former nurse of Mrs. Bowers. This was link number one which bound him to the condemned murderer; it was also ascertained that Mrs. Dimmig had visited Mr. Bowers on a number of occasions in his cell, and brought him little dainties. Beyond this the police did not get. Dimmig himself had never met the doctor but once, and that was shortly after Bowers' arrest. It must also be stated that Mrs. Dimmig was not the nurse at the time of Mrs. Bowers' death.

Held for Murder.

Sufficient evidence was secured to justify the grand jury in returning a true bill against Dimmig for murder. The theory of the prosecution was that the plot was arranged through Mrs. Dimmig for the murder of Benhayon; that Dimmig wrote the confession; that on the night of Benhayon's death he inveigled him into the room in the Post street house, poisoned him and then placed the confession on the body and the bottle of poison by its side. Against this theory the defense and those who believed in the innocence of Dimmig pointed out the lack of sufficient motive. What, they asked, could have inspired such a man to commit such a crime? Not money, for Bowers had spent his all in the trial. Not friendship, for he had never met the condemned man but once; not enmity, for his relations with Benhayon had always been amicable. What reward could a man with his neck almost in the halter—resting under the very shadow of grim death—have promised that could have been an inducement to any man, however desperate, however wicked, to commit such an act? Then, they pointed out the absurdity of the manner in which the crime was committed, if there was a crime. Would a man determined upon such a deed have rented a room in the third story of a lodging house inhabited by numerous tenants without doing anything to conceal his identity? Was it likely that he would have run the risk of being seen—a very strong risk—while escorting his intended victim to the room, or after he had done his deadly work and was leaving there? Absurd! Preposterous! It must be stated that the police claimed that the entrance to the house was made through a rear and unused entrance up a back stairway.

Conflicting Testimony.

On the trial all this matter was brought out. In addition, testimony was produced proving that Dimmig had purchased cyanide of potassium at a certain drug store, and that he had kept rented another room aside from the house which he occupied with his family, this room also being down town. In rebuttal it was conclusively proved that Dimmig had been using cyanide of potassium for years for a skin disease, a sort of lupus. He claimed that he kept the room down town rented for the purpose of meeting "lady" friends, whose names he steadily refused to give. The theory of the prosecution was that the confession had been written in that room. Two experts testified that the confession was written by Benhayon; one that it was a forgery. There was a very dramatic scene when the latter was giving his testimony. He had been illustrating on a black board the reasons why he came to the conclusion that the confession was forged. Growing excited, he turned to the jury, and, holding the confession in his hand, said: "Why do I know it is forged? Because the handwriting is dead; it is a corpse. There is as much difference between it and genuine as there is between a live man and a cadaver."

Both Men Released.

The jury disagreed. A second trial was had, with the same result. It was a foregone conclusion that there must either be a disagreement or acquittal. The evidence, strong as it was in some respects, was altogether insufficient to allow of a conviction. After the second trial the prosecution saw the futility of their efforts, and after an incarceration of over a year Dimmig was set at liberty.

The supreme court of the state had purposely postponed the consideration of the Bowers case. When, at last, they did consider it they were unwilling to take upon themselves the responsibility of sending him to his death. The decision of the lower court was reversed, and the cause remanded. The proceedings were then quashed, and Bowers walked out of the county jail a free man.

The question as to whether Bowers killed his wife, or whether her brother killed her; as to whether Benhayon killed himself or Dimmig killed him; as to whether the confession was genuine or forged, will probably never be solved. Bowers, Dimmig and Mrs. Dimmig hold the key to the mystery, but it is unlikely that either will ever unlock it.

AN "R" THAT COST $5,841.

Curious Verdict Against the Western Union Telegraph Company.

From the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

The insertion of the letter "r" in the name of H. W. Baker promises to cost the Western Union Telegraph Company about $6,000. In the suit brought by Baker to recover $7,160, loss caused by the delivery of a dispatch from Australia to Abram Barker, a jury in the United States court yesterday returned a verdict for plaintiff for $5,841.51, after deliberating about an hour. Judge Hanford instructed the jury that a telegraph company was charged with the duty of exercising a high degree of care as to promptness, and that any neglect entitled the parties injured to damages. Baker's measure of damage was the amount he would have realized had he accepted a cable offer, less the amount he received.

The defense moved for a non-suit on the ground that the terms of the telegraph blank especially exempted the company from any damages either for mistake or delay, and also as the error was made in Australia by a connecting line, no responsibility could attach, particularly as the cablegram was addressed "Barker," and was actually delivered to "Barker." Mr. Lewis, for Baker, insisted that conditions in a telegraphic message exempting the company from losses could only apply to the sender, not to one receiving the cable; also that, though the error was made in Australia, the Western Union was liable, as it contracted with the Australian company as its agent, and that the mere fact that the message was addressed "Barker" could not excuse the failure to deliver to Baker, where the contents of the message could show it was for the commission merchant. The non-suit was refused.

The case will probably be appealed.

AN INSECT'S HOOF BEATS.

Even the Trotting of a Little Fly Sounds Like Thunder.

From the St. Louis Republic.

The improvements which W. H. Soulby has lately added to the microphone, or "sound magnifier," make it one of the most marvelous mechanical contrivances of the age. The special construction of this instrument is of no particular interest to any one except experts, but what is told of its wonderful powers as a magnifier of sounds will entertain the young and old, as well as the scientific and unscientific readers of "Notes for the Curious."

After the instrument had been completed with the exception of a few finishing touches, Soulby found it absolutely necessary to keep the door of his workshop tightly closed so as to admit no sounds from the outside, otherwise the inarticulate rumblings given off by the "ejector" would have become unbearable. Even with closed doors the cap had to be kept constantly in place on the receiver to keep the instrument from sending forth a roar, which previous investigation had proved to be a combination of sounds produced by watch beats, breathing, the hum of flies, etc.

A fly walking across the receiver of the instrument made a sound equal to a horse crossing a bridge, and when Mr. Soulby laid his arm across the box the blood rushing in his veins gave forth a sound which much resembled that made by the pump of a large steam engine. The playing of a piano in a house across the street was, when ejected from Soulby's machine, like the roar of an avalanche, and the washing of dishes in the kitchen of a house across the alley made a sound which the inventor of the machine says was "a burden to his soul." When anyone entered the room, walked about, coughed, touched the table or door handles, the shriek which issued from the ejector was most painful to hear.

Hundreds of uses have been suggested for the microphone, the most practical being those of blood circulation and lung tests.

Packing Fruit in Borax.

From the San Francisco Examiner.

Frank M. Smith, the borax king, believes that he has solved the problem of preserving fresh fruit so it can be put on the eastern market in a satisfactory condition. For some time he has been experimenting with borax, and finds the ingredients of that salt peculiarly adapted for precluding vegetable decomposition.

The discovery is the result of a suggestion made to Mr. Smith one day while lunching with a friend. The gentlemen were discussing the success that had attended the experiment of boraxing fresh meat, when Mr. Smith was asked why he had never tried preserving fruit in the same way. He said it had never occurred to him, but that afternoon he gave the subject so much thought that as soon as he returned to his home in East Oakland he packed several pounds of cherries in a box of powdered borax. This box was placed in the cellar, and alongside of it he put a large glass dish, filled with the same kind of fruit. Then he awaited developments. The next day he visited the cellar and found the cherries in the dish were beginning to turn. In three days they were so decomposed that it was necessary to throw them away. In order to make a good test he determined not to disturb the packed cherries for three weeks. At the termination of that time the box was opened and the fruit was found as fresh and in as good a condition as when first placed there.

Ready to Barter.

From the Cincinnati Enquirer.

"No," said the gentleman who had come all the way from Plunkville to buy a small batch of green goods, "I didn't bring no money with me; but I got a mighty fine gold brick here that I bought some eight months ago. The fellers I bought it uv tole me not to sell it fer a year yet, but I guess I'll take the chances."

Not Quite the Same.

From the Boston Transcript.

Fogg says he received a letter the other day, and he had a strong presentiment that he would find a ten-dollar bill in it. When he opened it he found a bill for $10, which, he says, though not exactly the same thing, shows that his impression was not altogether astray.

THE PREACHER'S STORY.

A Prize Fight in Which the Strategy of the Weaker Won.

From the Chicago Daily Tribune.

A preacher told this story at a wedding supper on the South Side the other evening:

"I was riding along a country road near Bloomington," he said, "when I noticed a group of sheep in a pasture. There was a large, open space in the midst of the flock, and at either end of the space stood two rams. In the center, but standing a little to one side, was a third ram. The two rams had evidently had a falling out about something or else they had come to settle in a friendly contest which was the better ram. Ram No. 3 seemed to be acting as—judge, umpire—what do you call it? Referee? Yes, that's it, the third ram was the referee. I don't know under what rules the meeting took place; it may have been Queensberry or Rosebery. You see, I am not up to these technical matters.

"When all the preliminaries had been arranged and both contestants had been cautioned, apparently, that there was to be no 'fouling'—I think I have seen that word in the newspapers occasionally, and therefore I suppose it is a correct word to use in this connection—each backed off to the farthest limits of the circle, which, by the way, was not a squared circle. The referee stepped out of the way, and the rams dashed toward each other. When their heads came together there was a terrific crash, and the force of the concussion threw them as far apart as the length of this table."

At this point the guests looked the full length of the table from the passion flowers at one end to the bride's cake in the far perspective, and then at the preacher in the middle distance, but nobody said anything.

"Then," continued the preacher, "they took their places, apparently none the worse for the encounter. Again, evidently at a preconcerted signal from the referee, they dashed together. This time the shock was even more terrific than the first, and I noticed that as one of them went back to his—ah, what do they call it, corner?—he was a little unsteady on his legs."

"Groggy!" ventured the bride.

"I believe that is the technical term," replied the preacher, "although, as I have intimated, I am not at all familiar with sporting phraseology. When time was called for the third round—ahem—that is—I mean to say when the rams had recovered strength for a third collision, there was another rush, a crash, and one of the rams, the one you so aptly described as 'groggy'"—with an acknowledgment to the bride—"fell to his knees. His adversary did not seem inclined to follow up his advantage, but possibly he may have been restrained by the rules of the meeting. At any rate, after contemplating his fallen foe gravely for a moment, he walked back to his place. The other ram, after resting briefly, struggled to his feet. The third ram, the one I have called the referee, looked at him rather inquiringly, as it seemed to me, but the warrior showed no sign of recognition. He ambled to his side of the ring and faced about. A murmur of some sort seemed to go through the flock. The odds were apparently three to one in favor of the other ram; that is to say, it seemed to be the general opinion that the ram with the weak knees had been outclassed, as the other one was decidedly the heavier of the two.

"However, the smaller ram seemed to have wonderful recuperative powers. When the proper interval had elapsed he came up smiling, as it were. I even thought I could see a twinkle in his eye, for I was quite close to the fence, and this thing took place only a little distance away. As the referee stepped back from the center of the ring, where he kept his position between the meetings, the other two rams drove at each other pell-mell. At the very instant when their hard horns would have met, however, the smaller ram suddenly changed his course to the right and the other went through the ranks like a catapult. Just as he turned about, evidently boiling over with indignation at the trick which had been played on him, the other one, with the added force given by a longer run from one side of the circle to a point several feet outside of it, where the larger ram's momentum had carried him, shot at him like a cannon ball, striking him full in the face and driving him several feet away, where he lay limp and helpless. The third ram, who was promptly on the spot, as I suppose every competent referee should be, nodded his head several times—indeed, it looked to me as if he was counting—and then, the fallen ram failing to rise, the whole flock marched away toward a knoll in another part of the meadow with the victorious ram at the head. Presently the defeated ram got on his feet and made his way to a secluded spot down by a little run, where I saw him reclining in the shade of a large willow tree as I rode away."

"What an interesting study natural history is," said the bride's grandmother, as she adjusted her glasses.

"It is, indeed," said the groom's father, coughing behind his napkin.

His Baggage for a Joke.

From the San Francisco Post.

"Steamship passengers frequently resort to practical jokes to relieve the monotony of voyages," said a retired sea captain yesterday, "and while the pranks, as a rule, are perfectly harmless, they sometimes have a boomerang effect. Three years ago we were crossing the Atlantic, and both the owners and myself were exceedingly anxious to make a speedy trip, as a rival liner had the week before lowered the record held by our company.

"On the third day out, just about dusk, the cry of 'Man overboard' rang through the ship, and a hurried investigation elicited the information that several of the passengers had heard a splash, followed by piteous appeals of 'Help, help—save me!' The engines were stopped and the steamer put about, a close watch being kept meanwhile for the drowning man. A half hour was spent in cruising about without results, and we started on our journey under the belief that the poor fellow had gone to the bottom. The inquiry that followed proved puzzling. No one was missing, and we came to the conclusion that a stowaway had committed suicide.

"The next day, however, an explanation came. We had a ventriloquist aboard in the person of a very smart young man, who was too tickled over the success of his joke to keep the secret.

"Then the laugh was on him. As he had caused a serious delay and much annoyance, I notified him that I had made an official entry of the circumstance on my log and the loss of time, and that on approaching shore I would detain him until a sufficient guarantee had been put up that he would answer in court to reply to a demand for financial restitution. I talked of $50,000 being about the penalty under the government mail contract, and it is needless to say he spent the balance of the voyage on tenter hooks. He disappeared before we docked, leaving his baggage behind."

Trustworthy.

From Life.

"So your papa is willing to trust me with you, is he?"

"Yes. He seemed sure you'd fetch me back to him."

A Bad Egg.

From the New York Journal.

Tuthick—"I hear that Haddick is broke."

Erick—"That's a pity. He's an awful bad egg."

From Vogue.

First Club Man (looking over paper)—"By Jove! The engagement of Miss Van Domus and old Tilcott is announced. She appears to have really accepted him."

Second Ditto—"Yes; and, they say, told him everything."

First Club Man—"What courage!"

Second Ditto—"What a memory!"

WHY THINGS GO ASTRAY.

A Study in Stupidity That is Founded on Familiar Occurrences.

From the New York Tribune.

When one considers the happy-go-lucky methods of some clerks and messengers the wonder is not why things go astray, but how any arrive at their destination.

The day before Christmas a parcel from an uptown dry goods shop was delivered on Wall street to the office boy of Mr. Blank. Mr. Blank had gone away to spend the holidays, and did not report at the office for two weeks.

"How did this come here?" he asked. "My name is Blank, and there is no Mrs. Blank. And this is addressed to Pine street and our office is on Wall."

"The feller that brought the goods said you onct had a place on Pine."

"Yes, but I left it more than four years ago."

The goods were returned to the shop, and Mrs. Blank received her belated Christmas gift about the second week in January.

"I ain't much of a hand to read writin'," explained a man who had tried to insist on leaving a large package of stationery with a bridge company, though it was plainly addressed to a life insurance firm.

"You can read writin' better'n me," was the only excuse of a boy who went through a large office building inquiring for Y. Hickson. He was about to leave the building without finding an owner for the telegram, when a man took it from his hand to look at the address and found it was for himself, T. Johnson.

"Is Mr. Null in?" asked a young woman who had just entered an office.

"He is not in the city," answered the clerk.

"Not in the city! We had a special delivery letter from him this morning, and he didn't say a word about going out of the city. I've come all the way from Orange to see him."

"He went away the night before last. Was the letter postmarked 'New York?'"

"It was either from his New York or Brooklyn office."

"There must be some mistake. Mr. Null has no Brooklyn office."

"There is no mistake, and Mr. Null has a branch office in Brooklyn." The tone was indignant. The stranger evidently believed that the clerk was telling untruths, and she could not divine his reason. "This is incomprehensible. I shall look to see if he has left any message for me." She began to search the tables and shelves, as if she had the freedom of the place, and when she found nothing addressed to her glared at the clerk as if he had made away with the note, which should have been there.

"If you will give me writing materials I will leave a letter for him."

"Shall I forward it?" asked the clerk when the visitor handed him a carefully sealed letter.

"No, leave it on his desk. I know he is in town." As she went out of the door she said, in an audible aside, "If I have no answer by tomorrow morning I shall know he has not received it, and in that case I shall not fail to inform him where the blame lies."

When Mr. Null returned and opened the letter addressed "R. Null, Personal," he turned to his clerk in amazement. "How did this come here? It is not for me. My name is Robert, and I am addressed as 'Dear Dick.' I have no acquaintance named Josie Dash, and I don't understand what family matters she refers to."

The clerk explained.

"What am I to do with it?" asked the perplexed recipient. "It is evident she came to the wrong office. There are several Richard Nulls in town, but there is not one on this street so far as I know, and she gives no address."

A few days later a letter came from one of the Richard Nulls, explaining that his cousin had by mistake left a note for him at the office of Mr. Robert Null, and would be much obliged if Robert would forward it to a given address.

He Was One of the Lynchers.

From the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

They were unmistakably westerners. The most unobservant visitor to the immigrant room at the Union station last night before the Missouri Pacific train pulled out for Kansas City would have noticed that. They sat side by side, the old man resting his hands on a bundle covered with a red bandana, and the younger occupying his time scanning the faces that flitted in and out and away. Presently the young man spoke.

"Going far?" was his first question.

"Yes." The old man turned his head.

"West, maybe?"

"Oklahoma."

"Queer, but that's where I'm bound for myself."

"Down on the Shakaskie river," said the old man, as though continuing a sentence.

"Well, I'll be darned if I ain't going right there myself."

"Boomer in the rush of '93?" said the old man, interrogatively.

"Yes; I've a good claim. Got relatives down there yourself, maybe? I expect I know 'em if you have, as I reckon there ain't nary a one in the country that Si Wilson don't know."

"No. I have no relatives there now. I had one—an only son. He left his home over in Illinois, against his parents' wishes, to make the race for homesteads into the Cherokee strip in the fall of '93. After the race we heard nothing from him. Not a line. One day a letter came from the sheriff of Arkansas City stating that my boy had been hung on the banks of the Shakaskie river. A letter from me was found in his coat pocket. A placard was placed upon his breast with the one word, 'Sooner,' traced in it with mud. But my boy was no 'sooner.' It was a cowardly, murderous mob that hung him. Did you hear of that? Was it in your neighborhood?" suddenly questioned the old farmer, as he looked Si Wilson full in the face.

Wilson had grown deathly pale; he did not reply. He seized his carpet bag and rushed out with the remark that he must catch his train. A reporter, who had overheard the conversation, followed and caught up with him, just as he was ordering a drink of whisky.

"Did you see that hanging?" asked the reporter.

"I was one of the lynchers," he said, huskily, "but how I have suffered."

In His Official Character.

From the Detroit Free Press.

I was waiting for the post office at Huntsville to open in the morning and meanwhile talking a bit to the colored janitor, who was sweeping and dusting, when a negro boy, about fifteen years old, came along and halted, and beckoned the janitor to step aside. The old man looked at him sharply, but did not comply.

"Say, yo'!" called the young man.

There was no reply to this, and after a minute he called again:

"Boy! what yo' wants wid me?" sternly demanded the janitor.

"I wants to speak wid yo'."

"Who is yo'?"

"Yo' know who I is. Yo' is dun engaged to my sister Evangeline."

"Oh! you is her brudder Sam. Waal, what yo' want?"

"Kin yo' lend me ten cents?"

"On what grounds, sah?"

"On de grounds dat yo' is gwine to be my brudder-in-law."

"Boy, doan yo' know nuffin' 'tall 'bout philosophy?" shouted the janitor, as he raised his broom over his shoulder. "My bein' engaged to yo'r sister Evangeline as a private citizen, an' my standin' heah representin' de United States guv'ment an' talkin' wid a gem'lan besides, am two entirely different contestashuns. As yo'r fucher brudder-in-law I'd like to obleege yo', but as a representative of dis guv'ment I doan know yo' from Adam, an' if yo' doan' move on I'll hev to smash yo' to bone dust!"

Unprecedented.

From the Chicago Tribune.

Mrs. Billus—"Don't you believe it's true, John, that a person partakes to a considerable extent of the nature of the creatures he eats?"

Mr. Billus—"No. I've been eating fish all my life, and I can't swim a stroke."

Taking a Rest.

From Life.

"Who was the gentleman who sat by you and stared into your face all evening?"

"He's a celebrated mind reader."

"On his vacation?"

At the Zoo.

From Harper's Bazar.

Percy—"Doesn't the skin on the elephant's legs sag awfully, Ellen?"

Nurse—"Yes, indeed, Percy."

Percy—"I should think the keeper would put stocking supporters on the poor thing."

THE PASSING OF POTTER.

His Was a Natural Enough Misconception, but It Was Fatal.

From the Chicago Tribune.

Algernon Potter made a mistake when he tried to climb a tree. Algy in his school boy days was the best climber on the North Side. He could "shin" up trees and flagpoles with an easy grace which won the admiration of his mates, and they dubbed him "champeen." But this was when Algy was young, and slim, and wiry, and trees in that part of the city were but saplings. Now Algy is stout in form and soft in wind and muscle, while the same trees about the trunks of which he was wont to twine his limber legs with ease are now grown to stalwart proportions.

Potter, his inamorata, Bessie, and a girl confidante, May, who was to be bridesmaid at the wedding, were lounging in the shade under the trees in Lincoln Park on Sunday last, when a strong gust of wind caught Bessie's filmy kerchief and sent it whirling up into the air, to lodge in the branches of a big tree. Algy saw the delicate bit of lace-webbed muslin float by and recognized it as one he had given Bessie a few weeks before. He was bound to get it back, and was ready for action even before Bessie, on missing the spidery creation, called out:

"Oh, Algy, get it back for me, won't you, dear? I would not lose it for anything. It's more precious to me than all the others I have."

This settled it and Algy tackled the tree. It was a hot day, and he had a new $65 suit of clothes on. The tree was a big poplar, and the kerchief was caught fast in the first fork, twenty-five feet from the ground. The first ten feet convinced him of several important things, viz., his muscles were soft, the tree seemed to grow bigger in circumference and harder to hold to the further up he got, and whether he ever got the kerchief or not his good clothes were ruined. At twelve feet from the ground he stuck, tired out, limp and disconsolate, ready to slide down to mother earth in an undignified manner, when he heard Bessie say:

"He's doing splendidly, isn't he, May? He'll get it. I know he will. Oh, Algy, you're ever so much better a climber than you claimed to be."

For the first time during the engagement Algy wavered in devotion to his sweetheart. He had doubts as to whether she had suddenly gone crazy or was simply chaffing him. In either case it would never do to give up at this juncture, so he valiantly wiggled up five feet more. His hands were barked and torn, his chin rasped where it had brushed against the tree, his collar wet as a bathing sponge with perspiration, and all