

The Bossier Banner.

Established July 1, 1859.

"A Map of Busy Life; Its Fluctuations and Its Vast Concerns."

Subscription, \$1.00 a Year, in Advance.

VOL. XXXV.

BENTON, LOUISIANA, THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 1896.

NO. 15.

A Good Story



A COMEDY OF ERRORS.

BY HELEN FORREST GRAVES.

Squire Packenham was very angry. Being a member of the church, he didn't swear. But he slammed the kitchen door so violently when he came in that Katurah, his wife, comprehended at once that something was wrong.

"Dear me, Abram," said she mildly, looking up from the apples she was slicing for pan-dowdy, "there ain't no occasion to take the door off its hinges! What's the trouble now?"

"It's Betsy Briggs!" answered the squire, seating himself, with some vehemence, on a cushioned chair. "The airs that creetur gives herself exceed everything!"

"Airs?" said Mrs. Packenham. I didn't know as them was Betsy Briggs' weaknesses."

"I dunno what you'll call it," said the squire. "She was out in the garden pickin' peas, an' I jest hollered to her, as I come by, to see if she'd be willin' to entertain the sewin' society at her house next Thursday. And, if you'll believe me, she didn't say a word—neither yes nor no!"

"Well, I never!" said Mrs. Packenham. "But," with a gentle desire for extenuation, "you mustn't forget, Abram, that Betsy Briggs is near-sighted."

"That don't prevent her hearin', does it?" the squire demanded, sharply.

"I didn't think o' that," said meek Mrs. Packenham, rejecting a golden summer apple, which had a bruise on its mellowest side. "But I'm quite sure Betsy didn't mean no harm. Betsy never does."

"I dunno how that may be," said the squire, morosely, "but I do know I shan't put myself out to speak to her ag'in, unless she sees fit to apologize."

"I can't make it out at all," said Mrs. Packenham, slowly shaking her head.

Miss Carter was the next person who stopped at the Packenham house. She was a spare female, whose exact age, like that of the obelisk, was wrapped in mystery, and she was a book-agent of the most rabid type and deadly execution.

"P'raps you'd like to subscribe to the Housekeeper's Weekly Visitor, Mis' Packenham?" said she, rounding off her sentences with a prodigious sniff.

"Wal, no," said Mrs. Packenham. "We aren't much o' readers here."

"Or maybe your husband would like to take a copy of the 'Ten Leading American Patriots?'" suggested Miss Carter, struggling with her carnal difficulty.

"Abram don't read nothin' but the newspapers," said Mrs. Packenham. "His eyesight ain't what it was."

"Who's your neighbor down under the hill?" sharply interrupted Miss Carter. "Just beyond the brook, where the bridge is out of repair?"

"Her name is Briggs," said Mrs. Packenham—"Betsy Briggs."

"Well, whoever she is," snorted Miss Carter, "she hasn't no more manners than a mooly cow. Not to notice me, even, and me standin' there, talkin' myself hoarse to her. Not even to turn her head to look at me!"

"Dear, dear!" said Mrs. Packenham, "that's very strange! Betsy's a dreadful sociable creetur. That don't seem like her bit."

"Well, that don't signify," said Miss Carter, seating herself, and opening her leather packet. "But I'd just like you to look at a few recent publications I've got here."

"Oh, don't trouble to show 'em to

me!" said Mrs. Packenham, apprehensively. "I hain't no money to buy, no time to read; and the churmin's behindhand this mornin', and I've got soft-soap to make."

"It won't take a minute," persuasively argued Miss Carter.

And she sat two mortal hours in the squire's kitchen and made Mrs. Packenham subscribe to the Housekeeper's Weekly Visitor for a term of three years before she departed.

"Betsy Briggs managed her the best way," groaned Mrs. Packenham, as she looked into the recesses of her empty pocket book. "What will Abram say?"

The clergyman, a slender dyspeptic young man of six-and-twenty, stopped at the garden gate to give sister Briggs a friendly goo-lafteernoon that day, but she did not return his polite greeting. He repeated it a little louder and still she took no note of his spectacled gaze and his new silk hat.

"I hope I haven't offended her in any way," said Mr. Sweetlands to himself, and he tried to think back to the sentences of his last sermon about gossips and meddlers.

"I don't think I said anything which she could, by any possibility apply to herself. Miss Briggs—Miss Briggs, I say."

He waited a minute or so for a reply, which did not come; then he sighed and walked on.

"These single sisters are perhaps a trifle difficult to manage," said he. "But doubtless experience will smooth my pathway in time."

And, naturally enough, the Rev. Mr. Sweetlands stepped in at sister Packenham's to ask her how she thought he could possibly have offended Miss Betsy Briggs.

And just as he was detailing in Mrs. Packenham's puzzled ears the tale of his perplexity, a stout elderly man, with a sea-faring aspect, rapped at the door with a knobby stick.

"Aho, there!" said captain Giles Gilliloe. "I hope I ain't intrudin', but these is all strange waters to me. I've just hailed a neighborin' craft. Betsy Briggs by name, and she don't lower no signals. P'raps I've sighted the wrong coast?"

"Miss Briggs lives at the next house," Mrs. Packenham said. "That's true enough."

"I'm her cousin," said captain Giles Gilliloe. "She has invited me to moor my craft in these parts for awhile, but I ain't used to heave anchor along side o' them as don't speak to me civil. And I hope I've made my log-book clear."

"I really can't account for it," said Mrs. Packenham, with a troubled expression of countenance. "Set down, cap'n Gilliloe, I've often heard her speak of you, and I'm sure she wouldn't intend any incivility. Set down and have a chat with Mr. Sweetlands, our minister, and I'll step over to Betsy's at once and see what all this means."

The sun had gone down in the crimson blaze which belongs only to July skies—a soft, purpling twilight was brooding over the swamp meadow, and the orange lilies glowed mystically in the apple orchard, as Mrs. Packenham hurried toward the old Briggs homestead, whose chimney stack rose out of a wilderness of tall lilac bushes. There, sure enough, was Miss Betsy in the vegetable garden, her sunbonnet flapping in the evening breeze, but just as Mrs. Packenham laid her hand on the latch of the picket gate, Bowsie, farmer Pond's big red bull, knocked his horns against a weak spot in the adjacent pasture fence and came thundering into the inclosure with his tail in the air, his huge head lowered almost to the ground and a low-muttered note of defiance breathed through his threatening nostrils.

"La, me," cried Mrs. Packenham, "there's that brute loose again! And not a man in sight! And Betsy Briggs with her red caliker gown on. She'll be killed as sure as the world. Oh, dear, oh, dear!"

As the reflection eddied through her mind, the animal made an infuriated charge toward the figure darkly outlined against the hedge of silver-green pea-vines, uttering a savage bellow as he rushed past, and Mrs. Packenham hurried, screaming, down the hill.

"Abram! Mr. Sweetlands! Cap'n Gilliloe!" she shouted. "Help! help! Oh, why don't somebody come? Farmer Pond's Bowsie has knocked poor Betsy Briggs down into the pea-vine and is a-gorin' her awful! Help! help! She'll be killed as sure as the world! Help! help!"

Just as she burst into the door at the end of the kitchen, the opposite one opened, and in walked—Betsy Briggs herself, cool, calm and composed, with a veil folded neatly over her dove-colored silk hat, and a traveling bag in her hand.

Mrs. Packenham sat down and began to laugh and cry hysterically; Mrs. Sweetlands opened his pale blue eyes like watery moons; the squire stared; Captain Gilliloe held out his two brown hands and waved a fore-castle welcome.

Miss Betsy looked around in gentle astonishment.

"Dear me!" said she. "What is the matter? What is everybody looking at me so for? How d'ye do, cousin Giles? Why don't you go on to the house? I thought you was comin' to make me a visit!"

"I—I don't make out this here reckonin' at all," said captain Gilliloe, scratching his puzzled head. "Some-how the wrong signals have been swung out. But it's all right now—aye, aye, it's all right now! The figure-head of the Betsy Briggs can't be mistook."

"I've just been up to Albany," explained Miss Betsy, "to order a new parlor carpet. I went up yesterday, and come down on the evening train; and—"

"But, Betsy," cried Mrs. Packenham, clutching spasmodically at her friend's arm, "who is that in your back garden—gathering peas, you know? For as true as you live and breathe, farmer Pond's Bowsie has trampled her to death by this time."

"That!" said Miss Betsy. "Oh, that's my wire dummy, as I had when I worked at the dressmakin' trade! I just dressed it up in some of my old clothes, as a kind of scarecrow-like, to keep the pigeons from stealing the green peas right out of my pods. They're the sauciest creeturs in all the world. Why, you didn't never take it for a live person did you?"

And everybody laughed the more heartily as their folly became apparent to them.

"I declare to goodness I was clean out of my latitude and longitude," said the sea captain with a chuckle. "Appearances are deceitful," said mild Mr. Sweetlands, rubbing his hands.

"I won't believe my own eyes ag'in!" shouted the squire. And then they all three went to drive the belligerent bull out of Miss Briggs' vegetable garden, and to patch up the defective pickets in the fence, and Miss Betsy herself sat down to drink a comfortable cup of tea with Mrs. Packenham.

"For I'm sure I need one after all I've been through," said the squire's wife.

"Well I declare," said sympathetic Miss Betsy, "it must ha' been a trial. I won't never put that dummy out ag'in."—Saturday Night.

Derailed by a Buzzard.

As the mail train on the Pensacola and Atlantic division of the Louisville & Nashville railway was bowling along between Bonifay and Caryville, Fla., some heavy object struck the headlight, smashing the glass and knocking the burner off the lamp. The oil caught fire, and in an instant the front of the engine was in flames.

The engineer was alarmed, and reversed the lever so suddenly that the cars bumped together with great force, injuring several passengers and derailing the engine.

By hard work the flames were extinguished and then the engine was examined. It was found that a buzzard had struck the headlight and caused the trouble. The bird was found wedged in the headlight, with its feathers burned off and thoroughly cooked. The accident cost the railroad several hundred dollars and traffic was delayed for five hours.—Philadelphia Times.

Children's Column



THE NOBODY MAN.
I walked one day, a long, long way,
Down to Topsy-Turvy Town,
Where it's day all night, and it's night all day—

In the Land of Upside Down.
And who do you think was walking round?
Imagine it if you can:
In the land of Upside Down I found
The Nobody Man!

His head was bowed, and he groaned aloud,
With the burden that he bore;
Misdeeds and mishaps, a wonderful crowd,
Till there seemed no room for more.
"And why are you so heavily tasked,
On such an unequal plan?"
As I sat on a wayside seat, I asked
The Nobody Man.

He sat him nigh with a doleful sigh,
And he said:—"It needs must be;
What 'Nobody' does at home so sly
Is shouldered here by me,
The slips and mishaps that are, soon or late,
Denied by the careless clan.
In the Land of Upside Down all weight
The Nobody Man."

He passed along with a doleful song,
This overburdened wight,
And, bowed with the weight of other folk's
Wrong,

He hobbled out of sight:
And I don't understand how it all can be,
Or why he should bear this ban,
But—well, 'twas a wonderful thing to see
The Nobody Man!
—Winthrop Packard, in St. Nicholas.

THE ESKIMOS.

Eskimos live in the far north. They wear furs and skins to keep them warm. They get these furs and skins from the animals which they catch. Their houses or huts are built of snow and ice, as they cannot get any wood, for trees will not grow in the frozen ground. It is very cold there all the time, and the sun for months is never seen. Even in summer they see ice many feet high; they eat the flesh of the animals which they catch as they can raise no vegetable for the ground is frozen all the time; the Eskimos drink oil and eat fat; they eat most of their food raw; the oil that they get from the whale they use for their lamps.

They drive dogs for horses and use sleds for wagons, and go a long journey across the ice and snow.

Are the Eskimos idle? No; they are not idle for they hunt and fish most of the time.

The men and women dress very much alike; they wear two suits of fur, one made with the fur side in and the other with the fur side out.—Trenton (N.J.) American.

DOGS AND WOODCHUCK.

A correspondent sends to the Youth's Companion from Paris, Me., an entertaining story of three dogs and a woodchuck.

"Some years ago," he says, "I owned a dog, Sport, who was a famous woodchuck-hunter. In the course of one season, when woodchucks were unusually numerous and troublesome, Sport caught twenty-five by actual count."

"One day in June, when I was hoeing corn, I heard a good deal of barking in an adjoining field, and knew pretty well what must be going on. On my way to the cornfield after dinner, therefore, I went across lots to see what Sport was about, and to help him a bit, if need be, by removing a stone or two from the wall in which the quarry had taken refuge.

"A chorus of excited yelps and barks guided me to the spot, and as I drew near I saw that Sport had plenty of help. Zip, a neighbor's dog, was on one side of the wall with him, and on the other side was Rover, a large hound.

"All three dogs had their noses under the stones, and they were digging and making the dirt fly with their paws, and barking and yelping as dogs will when game is almost won. From within the wall I heard the woodchuck's peculiar, defiant whistle.

"Just as I approached, Sport jumped back and dragged forth the

woodchuck. At almost the same instant Zip withdrew his head from the wall and fixed his teeth in the game; and then began a struggle for supremacy, each dog evidently setting up a claim for the woodchuck.

"Rover, on the other side, with his head in the wall, was so eagerly engaged that he did not at once comprehend what had occurred; then it flashed upon him, and he sprang upon the wall and for a moment looked down upon the struggling dogs.

"Like a whirlwind he launched himself from the stones upon the woodchuck, tore it from the mouths of the other dogs and bore it off in his teeth.

"It happened so suddenly that Sport and Zip didn't know what to make of it. They seemed dazed, and looked this way and that as if to ascertain what had become of their prey. As for Rover, he disappeared over the brow of a hill, and I do not think the two dogs left behind ever fairly realized what became of that woodchuck."

GREAT GRANDMAMA'S REMINISCENCES.

"When I hear you children talk so much about the wonders of the kinetoscope, the horseless carriage and the X rays," remarked a certain great grandmamma the other day, "I can't help but think of the many years ago when I was a little girl and news came to us one day that somebody had invented a new sort of wagon that instead of being drawn by horses or mules or oxen ran all by itself. Of course it sounded like a fairy story, just as if they had told me that the magic carpet in the Arabian Nights had been suddenly discovered rolled away in somebody's attic, but we were assured that it was really true. There was something about steam connected with the mysterious carriage; it either ran by it, or under it or with it, or something, we weren't quite sure which. When they explained it to us children, people always added 'It's upon the same principle as the tea kettle, you know,' and although we didn't know in the least what the 'principle' was, we did know what a tea kettle was and we accordingly pictured to ourselves a freakish vehicle shaped like a tea kettle, spout, handle and all, from which issued a white banner of steam, and which 'sung' upon occasion.

In what part of this new wagon people were to ride we didn't understand, but supposed that they were stowed away inside somewhere, like the Greek soldiers in the wooden horse that our history book had made so familiar to us. Just how the strange carriage upon the same principle as the tea kettle was able to move we were totally unaware. Tea kettles never moved; they stood still in one place upon the stove where they were put. It took a good stretch of the imagination to fancy them or anything like them galloping along much faster than anybody could walk—faster, indeed, it was said, than a horse could go. The grown-ups said that there were narrow rails upon which the strange carriage run, whereupon we pictured all our country roads and lanes ornamented with these things. It all sounded very impractical to us, however, as it did to many of the grown-ups for that matter. I remember my father saying with much emphasis: 'Well, there's one thing, this new-fangled locomotive, or whatever they call it, can never supersede the stage coach.' " "Locomotive!" cried one of the little listeners. "Why, great-grandmamma, do you mean to say that you're talking about railway trains?" "Yes," replied great-grandmamma, "when I was a little girl the locomotive was just as much of a novelty to me as the X rays are to you today."—New York Sun.

Her Eloquent Language.

"This house," said the maiden just from school, "is really too full of James fissures." "Who the Sam Hill is James Fisher?" asked the old man pulling puzzledly at his chin whiskers. "Well jimecracks then"—Indiana-polis Journal.

SCIENTIFIC SCRAPS.

There is only one sudden death among women to eighty among men.

Dr. F. Shue says there are forty varieties of edible turtles in the United States.

The planet Mars resembles the earth more closely than any other of the solar systems that we know anything about.

A tricycle has been fitted with two Maxim guns, each weighing twenty-five pounds and capable of firing 600 shots a minute. The machine carries 1,000 rounds of ammunition.

Astronomers calculate that the surface of the earth contains 31,625,625 square miles, of which 23,814,121 are water and 7,811,504 are land, the water thus covering are about seven-tenths of the earth's surface.

Trees are the great water lifters. The wise men tell us that an oak tree of average size, with seven hundred thousand leaves, lifts from the earth into the air about 123 tons of water during the five months it displays its foliage.

It is said that in consequence of experiments with the Roentgen rays, enabling the reading of the contents of letters, a Berlin chemist is experimenting with a substance for the manufacture of envelopes which will be impervious to the rays.

The observations of Alva Clark and Percival Lowell in Arizona have increased the number of canals visible on Mars from 79 to 183, all in geometrical proportions. The seas under these observations have turned to prairies and the lakes to oases.

The air is clear at Arequipa, Peru. From the observatory at that place, 8,050 feet above the sea, a black spot, one inch in diameter, placed on a white disc, has been seen on Mount Charchani, a distance of eleven miles, through a thirteen-inch telescope.

The new collector for supplying current to overhead wires for trolley cars is so constructed that it cannot lose its place on the wire. It dispenses with the overhead wire-switch altogether, and is said to require no attention from the conductor in passing switches or around curves.

English ticket collectors are now supplied with small electric lamps, which are fastened to their overcoats, the current being furnished from a miniature battery carried in the breast pocket. The new invention is a great improvement upon the old-fashioned and cumbersome hand lamp.

Appendicitis, according to professor Dieulafoy of Paris, is generally due to the progressive formation of a calculus analogous to the stones formed in the liver and kidneys. He thinks his theory is confirmed by some recent experiments in which appendicitis was produced by surgical means in rabbits.

Missed the Point.

The Chicago Record recently printed a story touching the slowness—real or imputed—of Englishmen in catching the point of a joke. A party of traveling men were talking about phonographs as they sat around the hotel fire.

"I heard an amusing story about an old farmer the other day," said one of them.

"Interest always attaches to the doings of the agricultural classes," said the Englishman, hitching up his chair with a look of interest.

"The farmer had just driven into town with his mules to sell a load of pumpkins, and stopped in front of the phonograph shop.

"What air them fellers doin' in there with spouts in their cars?" he asked.

"Those are talking-machines," said a man in the doorway.

"The farmer was a little incredulous, but finally left his mules and went in.

"The tubes were placed in his ears, he dropped the nickel in the slot, and a brass band began to play.

"Whoa, there!" shouted the rustic, darting out of the store. "Them mules of mine won't stand no brass band."

At first the Englishman looked anxious, as if he expected to hear the rest of the story. Then suddenly he burst out laughing.

"Great joke on the mules, eh?" he shouted.