A SCENE OF GREAT EVENTS

Memories of Historic Happenings at the Old Willard's Hotel.

The Rendezvous of Brilliant Men and Women for Three-Quarters of a Century—The Old House and the New—The Last Public Gathering.

Modern business enterprise and progress are no respecters of places or persons, unless these can be turned to a profitable accounting. Places in and around Washington, with which the early history of the Capital is closely interwoven, have fallen, one by one, victims of the irresistible tide of modern enterprise.

The old landmarks of Washington which act as reminders of our country, and link the present generation by visible signs to that of the men who fought for and established a free nation, are slowly disappearing, giving way to the business instinct of the twentieth century.

Upon the site of the old Willard Hotel, an old Washington landmark, its new $2,000,000 caravansary is to-day proudly rearing its dome, and it might not be amiss to recall to memory some of the history of the old Willard, which is almost national in character and import.

AN INTERESTING HISTORY.

Few buildings in any city of this country have been the scene of so many interesting and important events as Willard's Hotel. In the early days of the Republic, in 1795, Walter Stewart bought the land on which were erected the first buildings on the old site of Willard's. Prior to 1815 a small building on Pennsylvania Avenue, adjoining the site in question, was the hostelry of that vicinity. When this house was occupied by Reverdy Johnson and his family it communicated with and formed part of Willard's. When it first opened its doors the house assumed the titles of the Queen and the City Hotel, and at the time of its purchase by the Willard brothers it was known as Fuller's City Hotel. Henry A. Willard bought the Pennsylvania Avenue portion of the property May 6, 1856. In 1875 the upper portion of the grounds was purchased, and the hotel was remodeled to its recent form in 1878.

There were four Willard brothers who had a part in running the hotel, which under their management became famous. Edwin Dorr Willard and Henry Augustus Willard were the original owners. Later, Joseph C. Willard was taken into partnership. Edwin Dorr Willard died during the civil war from the effects of a disease contracted while in service. Caleb C. Willard, the present owner of the Ebbitt House, entered the service of his brothers as a bell boy. Joseph C. Willard managed the hotel for a greater number of years than any other member of the Willard family.

The hotel was built by Col. John Tayloe, and was inherited by his son, Benjamin Ogle Tayloe. It was not peculiarly successful, however, as it was thought to be too far up town. Mrs. Tayloe, who was born in Troy, N. Y., visited her childhood's home every summer, and in traveling on one of those floating palaces, the day boats on the Hudson River, she was struck with the business energy, and desire to please everybody, manifested by the steward. On her return, Mr. Tayloe mentioned the want of success which had attended his hotel, and she remarked that if he could get Mr. Willard, the steward of the Albany steamer, as its landlord, there would be no fear as to its success.

Mr. Tayloe wrote to H. A. Willard, a native of Westminster, Vt., who came to Washington, and was soon, in connection with his brother, E. D. Willard, in charge of Mr. Tayloe's hotel, then called the City Hotel. The Willards gave to this establishment the same attention which had characterized their labors on board the steamboat. They met their guests as they alighted from the stages in which they came to Washington. They stood at the head of their dinner-tables, wearing white linen aprons, and carved the joints of meat, the turkeys and the game. They were ever ready to courteously answer questions, and to do all in their power to make a sojourn at the City Hotel homelike and agreeable.

EFFORTS CROWNED WITH SUCCESS.

Success crowned these efforts to please the public, and the City Hotel soon took the first rank among the caravansaries of the National Metropolis. E. D. Willard retired, and Henry A. Willard took into partnership with him Joseph C. Willard, while Caleb C. Willard became the landlord of the Ebbitt House. In time it was determined to rebuild the hotel, which was done under the superintendence of Henry A. Willard.

When the house was completed, November 29, 1847, it was decided that thenceforth it should be called Willard's Hotel, and about one hundred gentlemen were invited to a banquet given at its opening. After the cloth was removed, the health of the Messrs. Willard was proposed as the first toast. Henry A. Willard was seated at the head of the table, with Benjamin Ogle Tayloe at his left and Edward Everett at his right. He was then only twenty-four years old, and not given to making speeches. He modestly arose and with trembling voice stammered: "Gentlemen, I thank you very much for this honor, but Mr. Everett can tell you in much better language than is at my command the feelings of gratitude which I harbor for you."

Mr. Edward Everett complied with Mr. Willard's request, and spoke with his accustomed ease, saying that there are occasions when deeds speak louder than words, and this was one of them. Instead of Mr. Willard returning thanks to the company present, it was the company that was under obligations to him. In fact, he thought that in paying their respects to Mr. Willard, they were but doing a duty, though certainly a duty most easily performed. Mr. Everett went on to say that under the roof which sheltered them he had passed a winter with John Quincy Adams, Chief Justice Marshall, Judge Story, Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Clay, and Mr. Webster. "These are all gone," said he, "but with them I could name another, now living, and not unworthy to be associated with them—Washington Irving."

"Yes, gentlemen," Mr. Everett continued, "there were giants in those days, giants in intellect; but in character and spirit they were gentlemen, and in their familiar intercourse with each other they had all the tenderness of brethren."

The historic memories connected with Willard's would fill a volume. Within its walls the distinguished men of the country have sat in council and at the social board. Its parlors have been radiant with the most beautiful women in the land. Citizens have left its walls to become Presidents, and ex-Presidents have sought its shelter, after yielding place to their successors. One day the scene of the sittings of a Peace Congress, its halls were next filled with a soldiery intent on war.

THE PRESIDENT'S ROOMS.

On the second floor of the hotel were what were known as "the President's rooms." The main entrance on the Avenue was ornamented by a raised portal, surmounted by a balcony, which connected with the "President's rooms," and which has long been the favorite place for presenting the speakers at serenades or popular ovations tendered to distinguished men. From this point of vantage many anti-slavery speeches were delivered to enthusiastic and excited multitudes which blocked the Avenue from the Treasury to Fourteenth Street.

When this famous hostelry was first thrown open to the public, the United States Postoffice Department became one of its first tenants. This branch of the Government occupied a suite of three small rooms on the first floor, at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Fourteenth Street. The entire mail service of the country was looked after in these modest quarters by a mere handful of clerks. The growth of the country can be seen by comparing the present magnificent quarters of the Postoffice Department, and its thousands of employes, with the humble offices of the Postoffice Department of yore.

The winter of 1825 was one of the most brilliant ever known in Washington. It was the period of the exciting election in the House of Representatives, when Mr. Adams, Mr. Clay and General Jackson were candidates for the Presidency. The Marquis de Lafayette was in Washington as the guest of Congress. In the last week of December, 1824, Congress had voted him the munificent sum of $200,000 for his Revolutionary services. A grand entertainment was given on the evening of January 12, 1825, by Congress, to the Marquis de Lafayette, at Willard's Hotel. The management of the affair was entrusted to Joel R. Poinsett, member of Congress from South Carolina, and Secretary of War in Van Buren's Cabinet.

The company assembled at 6 p. m. Two hundred persons were present. Mr. Gaillard, of South Carolina, President of the Senate, presided at one table; Mr. Clay of Kentucky, Speaker of the House, at the other. The President of the United States, James Monroe, sat on one side of Mr. Gaillard, and Lafayette on the other. The latter was supported by Gen. Samuel Smith, of Maryland, a hero of the Revolution, and in the immediate vicinity with Rufus King, General Jackson, John Quincy Adams, Samuel L. Southard, Mr. Calhoun, Senators Chandler of Maine and D'Wolf of Rhode Island, Generals Dearborn, Scott, Macomb, Bernard, and Jessup; Commodores Bainbridge, Tingley, Stewart, Morris, and other officers of distinction.

The dinner was prepared by Joseph Prospere, a celebrated French cook, who had come on from New York for the purpose, and who charged for his services the modest sum of $100. It was the most elegant and elaborate entertainment that had ever been given in Washington, many of the dishes being unique, and artistically ornamented in a style never previously witnessed in this country.

In the midst of the dinner, an old soldier of the Revolution arrived at the hotel from the Shenandoah Valley. He was eighty years of age and had served under Lafayette. Mr. Poinsett being informed of his arrival, descended to the reception room and then escorted him to the dining hall on the floor above and presented him to the Marquis.

"General," said the veteran, "you do not remember me. I took you off the field when wounded in the fight at Brandywine."

"Is your name John Neat?" enquired the marquis.

"It is, general," replied the veteran, whereupon the marquis embraced him and congratulated him on his healthy condition and long life. John Neat also became the guest of Congress and remained at Willard's a fortnight, feasting to his heart's content upon the good cheer provided for him and retiring to bed every night in a comfortable state of inebriation. When he returned to Virginia, Lafayette presented him the munificent sum of $2,000, with which he bought a farm which is now in the possession of his descendants.

The marquis at this dinner gave the following toast: "Perpetual union among the States—It has saved us in times of danger; it will save the world." Mr. Clay's toast was, "General Bolivar, the Washington of South America, and the Republic of Colombia."

Willard's, during those days, was the rendezvous of statesmen, soldiers, journalists, and the beaux of the Capital, and James K. Polk, on March 4, 1845, was inducted into the Presidential office from the hotel which he had selected as his temporary home. His successor, General Zachary Taylor, was inaugurated Monday, March 5, 1849. Prior to his installation he, also, had chosen Willard's as his temporary home. From here he was escorted to the Senate by an imposing procession, headed by twelve volunteer companies. The new President rode in an open carriage drawn by four grey horses, and was joined at the Irving House by President Polk.

President Millard Fillmore, before his inauguration, July 9, 1850, also selected this hotel as his temporary abode. Franklin Pierce, on March 4, 1853, was escorted from Willard's Hotel to the Capitol by Mr. Fillmore, Jesse D. Bright and Hannibal Hamlin, as a committee of Congress, and followed by a company of United States Flying Artillery, a company of United States Marines, and seventeen Volunteer Military companies.

When Jenny Lind arrived in Washington, in November, 1850, she made Willard's her headquarters. She gave her concert and sang in the newly-erected, but then unfinished, hall of the hotel, then the largest auditorium of the kind in the city. President Fillmore, on hearing of Jenny Lind's presence in the city, called, but finding Jenny out, left his card. The President and his family, and the members of his Cabinet, as well as the most famous personages of the day, were present at the concert.

It is related that Daniel Webster was so much carried away by the rendition of a wild mountain song by Jenny that he arose and complimentingly bowed his acknowledgements to the beautiful songstress. On the morning after the concert Jenny Lind was called upon at the hotel by Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, General Cass, and Colonel Benton, who congratulated her on her success.

THE FIRST JAPANESE MINISTER.

In 1859 the first Japanese Minister to this country arrived in Washington. He had a retinue of 200 attaches, secretaries, and servants and selected Willard's Hotel as his temporary abode. During President Buchanan's Administration, Mr. Seward had endeavored to introduce Lord Napier into Republican society, instead of that which Southerners had made so agreeable, and he was mainly instrumental in getting up a subscription ball in Napier's honor. There were 300 covers. It was given at Willard's Hotel in the long dining-room, which was built in 1859. It had been decorated for the occasion with flags of all nations, mirrors and chandeliers. At one end of the room, beneath full-length portraits of General Washington and Queen Victoria, was a dais, on which Lord and Lady Napier received the company. Supper was served at 11 o'clock. It was a bountiful repast. Dancing was kept up until a late hour. A few days afterward, Lord Napier embarked on an English warship for his home, his Government having received information that his recall would not be objected to by President Buchanan.

Mrs. Robert Anderson passed through Washington, January 4, 1861, to join her husband, General Anderson, at Fort Sumter. She returned on January 9, however, and stopped at Willard's Hotel.

On January 5, 1861, a caucus was held at the hotel by fourteen Senators, who formed themselves into a directory to take care of the affairs of the South. Jefferson Davis was one of the participants in this conference.

On February 4, 1861, the Peace Convention met at Willard's Hotel, with John Tyler, presiding, but finding their efforts to restore peace futile, they adjourned March 1, 1861.

The hotel was partially destroyed by fire in the year 1861, but was soon rebuilt.

President-elect Lincoln, accompanied by Ward Lamon and Norman Judd, unexpectedly arrived at the Washington depot at daylight on February 22, 1861, where they were received by Elihu Washburne. Mr. Lincoln went to Willard's Hotel, where he and Mr. Seward met. This incident, when it became known in Washington, created quite a sensation. Mr. Lincoln felt confident that an attempt was to have been made to assassinate him as he passed through Baltimore. After partaking breakfast at the hotel he made a formal call on President Buchanan, at the White House.

Lincoln, prior to his installation in the Presidential office, stopped at Willard's Hotel, being accompanied by Mrs. Lincoln, his private secretary, John G. Nicolay, and John Hay, the present Secretary of State, who was Mr. Lincoln's military secretary. The morning of the inauguration, March 4, 1861, President Buchanan went upstairs to Mr. Lincoln's room and escorted him down, arm in arm, President Buchanan saying to Mr. Lincoln: "Mr. President, if you feel the same satisfaction in entering upon your duties as I feel in getting rid of them, you are a very happy man, indeed."

During the Thirtieth Congress Stephen A. Douglas resided at Willard's Hotel.

On March 6, 1861, three Confederate commissioners arrived in Washington and made Willard's Hotel their headquarters, and the Cassius M. Clay Battalion was organized at this famous hostelry on April 18, 1861, and given arms to patrol the city.

One of the last great social functions performed at Willard's was the dinner of the Masons who were assembled in Washington taking part in the ceremonies of the one hundredth anniversary of the death of George Washington, December 14, 1899. Covers were laid for 400, and the event was one of great importance all over the world. Representatives from England, Germany, Canada, and other foreign countries were present.

The last public gathering of note held at old Willard's was that of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. This order held its annual convention in Washington May 22 and 23, 1900, and the headquarters of the executive committee was at Willard's Hotel.

AMONG SECOND-HAND BOOKS.

Character of Volumes That Endows Them With Value.

(From the Chicago Chronicle.)

"Everyone wants to get something for nothing, that's the trouble," said the second-hand book man as he turned the pages of a book which was neither very old nor valuable.

"Why, yes; don't you?" asked the possible purchaser of that same book.

The book dealer turned to the title page and eyed it thoughtfully. "No," he said finally. "I don't; I am willing to pay a fair price and I want other people to do the same. I have to buy all these books; what do you think I can sell them for?"

But the possible purchaser did not say what he thought; he went away and left the book man standing with the book in his hand.

"Hum," grunted the book man, putting the disputed bit of bookmaking on its shelf.

There was still another possible customer in the room, and toward her the book dealer ambled.

"What can I do for you?" he asked, not at all wanting to know.

This customer looked up from a very good bit of binding she had taken from the shelves.

"Wouldn't he buy?" she asked.

The book man looked surprised, because he did not know this woman and he was not a man to tell his business affairs. But this was no ordinary mood she had caught him in, and after some hesitation he yielded to the temptation and relieved his mind.

"There is a certain line of people, lady, who come in here and want to get books given to them just because this is a second-hand shop. I never could see what they thought I kept a second-hand shop for. Do they want all the benefit of this place? Don't I make it easy enough for customers to buy without their expecting I am going to give away?"

"You make it too easy," said the woman, considering the open shelves with their tempting array.

"This isn't any public library and it isn't a reading room," began the book man again. "When I put a book up for sale here I put it as low as I can, so as to sell it. If I could sell it for $1 I wouldn't mark it 50 cents—that's honest, isn't it? Well, then, I don't want to be called a robber and a thief. I'm no such thing, and I won't stand it. That's all."

"Do you sell many good books?" the woman asked him.

The book man was much relieved by his outburst, and was feeling good humored again.

"Yes," he said, "we sell more than you'd think. People come here who wouldn't buy anywhere else, and they pay very fair prices for the books, too. Now, you take those Roycroft books. We can't sell them for any more than we pay for them if we buy them of the shop, but now and again they come in here second hand, and if they are as good as new we take them and can make something off them. It isn't very often, though, for the sellers want to make all the money, and we have to haggle and haggle before we make a trade.

"Our big sales are in books that come in sets and are well bound. You'd be surprised to see the number of people who come in here regularly to watch for them. They want certain authors, all the best, and then want a pretty good binding, but they can't pay the first price. So they watch our windows and our shelves and when they think they have a good bargain they buy. We have lots of regular customers that way. They come and go, but mostly they keep pretty regular.

"Some of those very same folks will come in with books they have bought of us and want to sell them back and we make the trade. I have actually had a man buy a set of books of me three times and each time bring them back when he was hard up. You see, they get hard up and have to sell something, and they know I will hold the books for them."

"Do you get many real old books that way?" the woman asked.

The book man laughed. "Now that's what everyone is asking for, but I want to tell you that real old books are not so easy to get hold of. People who have them know their value and don't want to part with them. If they do they either don't care for them or don't know what they are worth. And that is mighty seldem."

Beckoning mysteriously, he led the way to a far corner of the store where the old books were piled.

"They are there," he said, pointing to the boxes beneath the shelves. "All we have on hand are piled away there, and they aren't worth much."

They were old books, leather bound, frayed at the corners, yellow leaved, but still without particular merit or value. They were old enough; it was not a lack of age, but of interest, which made them marketless. An old book in order to be valuable must have some particular merit; its age is not sufficient to command it to public attention.

It must be of a first edition or of some particular edition to which was attached unusual interest. Or it may have come from a famous printing house or bindery, the name of which alone would give it value. If the date upon the title page is that of the very early book-making days, then it is very valuable, but for mediocrity of age there is no price.

The majority of the books in this second-hand pile were more than 200 years old, but that is not old for books. They were all old-fashioned enough in printing and spelling to attract attention, but not purchasers.

"They will bring anywhere from $1 to $5, but it is hard to find purchasers, because the real lovers of old books are looking for some valuable article and those who are not interested in the age of the books don't want them." The book man picked up one from the pile as he spoke and handed it to the woman.

SNAKES INCREASING IN INDIA.

The Annual Mortality From Serpents Has Reached 24,621.

(From the London Times.)

The home department of the Government of India has one sphere of activity to which nothing analogous can be found in this country—namely, the destruction of wild beasts and poisonous snakes. During 1899 the number of deaths among human beings attributed to wild animals was 2,966. Fortunately, however, the number is below the average of the last four years, and much lower than the number (4,283) reported in 1897. In 1899 tigers caused the death of 899, wolves of 338 and leopards of 327 human beings, while bears, elephants, hyenas, jackals, and crocodiles were accountable for a large proportion of the remainder. The tiger is most destructive in Bengal, about half of the whole number of the victims of this animal being reported from that province. Man-eaters have especially troubled certain districts, and liberal rewards have been offered for their destruction. In the Bhamo district of Upper Burmah a single man-eating tiger killed about twenty persons. A special reward of 100 rupees was paid for its destruction. More than half of the deaths from leopards occurred in Bengal, while more than three-fourths of those from wolves occurred in the northwestern provinces of Oudh.

Special measures were taken to hunt down a particularly destructive pack near Cawnpur. High rewards were offered and hunting parties organized, but without much success.

The loss of human life from snakes reached the high total of 24,621, a greater mortality than in any of the four preceding years. Nearly half the deaths occurred in Bengal, while the northwestern provinces and Oudh came next with nearly one-fourth of the total. In Bengal the relatively high mortality is attributed to floods, which drove the snakes to the high lands on which village homesteads are built. As will be observed, snakes are more destructive of human life than are the wild animals, but the reverse is true of the destruction of cattle. In 1899 no fewer than 89,238 cattle were destroyed by wild animals and 9,449 by snakes. Of the former 27,988 fell victims to leopards and 24,321 to tigers. The leopard is even more destructive to cattle than the tiger in Bengal. This province is the greatest sufferer from the ravages of wild animals and snakes, its loss being 30,559 cattle. Assam lost 17,010; Madras, 15,529; Burmah, 11,918, and the central provinces, 11,699. The number of wild animals destroyed was 18,887, and the amount paid for their destruction was 107,476 rupees. The number of snakes killed was 94,548 and the rewards paid for this service amounted to 4,151 rupees.

OLD SOUTHERN SERVANTS

Stupid and Slipshod, But Generally Good Natured.

The Style in Which an Old Nurse Fixed Up the Baby to Keep It Warm—Postal Carrier Boston's Easy-Going Ways—"Hoppin' John"

Darkeys are perfectly delightful people to deal with, not the New York importations, who are well dressed and self-conscious, but the good, simple, slip-shod, Southern darkeys; though no doubt it requires a strong of humor and a liking for elemental things in one if he would appreciate this. And certainly it requires that one should not be responsible for them, to be harassed by their strange stupidities; no doubt the mistress of a Southern household finds them far from delightful sometimes, but to visit in such a household and view their odd methods and simplicity with an irresponsible eye is an experience which makes you say that darkeys are delightful. I suppose Southern people are too well accustomed to them to worry constantly over the unchangeable; but I had a friend who was married and went to live in the South, and in a short time she could find very little humor in the peculiar arrangements and customs of her black servants. When I went to visit her she said:

"You see, I have three servants to do the work in this little house, and yet I am worried out of my life half the time, and never feel that I can really wash my hands of any responsibility."

They were like so many children; she never knew what was going on behind her back, and they told her flagrant falsehoods with most serene simplicity. One night when her nurse, a nimble, kind, old woman, was going home, she peeped her good-natured face into the parlor to say joyously:

"De chile fix up fine; she tucked up warm and she fast asleep." A few minutes later my friend called me into the nursery with a look of exasperation:

"Now this is what she honestly believes is leaving 'baby fixed up fine,'" she said. In the child's crib were a soiled towel, a brush, a comb, the child's bottle, her wooden dog, and all the clothes she had worn that day; soiled dress, apron, petticoats, and shoes and stockings. In the middle of this mess she lay, fast asleep. We slipped out all the hard articles, so that she would not roll on them and hurt herself. The next morning my friend tried to speak severely to the nurse, and tried to point out to her that this way of putting the baby to bed was neither cleanly nor comfortable, but the old soul was perfectly self-satisfied and urbane.

"Yes'm, but dat keep her warm, all dose clothes 'round her. If she git uncovered in de night, den all dose clothes heaped up round her keep her warm."

"Well, how about her shoes, and her bottle, and her hairbrush and her toy dog—do they help to keep her warm, too?"

"What! Did she have all dem things in de bed with her?" exclaimed the nurse in hand-raised astonishment: "Well, I never seed de like o' dat chile! She must be reach out after I leave an' pull dem t'ings off de chair." Of course, this was plainly untrue, but my friend had to content herself with saying:

"Well, put such things up on the bureau, where they belong, at night."

"I just guess I will, ma'am," was protested vehemently. "Who would have thought o' such a ting! Ain't you ashamed, you naughty girl?" Whereat the child rushed at her laughing and began rolling her head about in her nurse's apron.

"The child is perfectly devoted to her," said my friend afterward. "I never had a nurse who could entertain her by the hour as this one does, but you see I can't go out in the evening and leave her to put the baby to bed."

She had much trouble with the table servant; he was a very obliging young man, who, I am sure, did the best he could, and always did us the honor to appear much interested in our conversations, laughing out loud when anything struck him as funny; in this way he frequently forgot to wait upon the table. My friend wanted him to serve the vegetables from the sideboard; but he nearly always forgot and put them on the table until the reminder:

"Peter, the sideboard," would cause him to strike his head violently with his silver waiter and exclaim with a grin:

"Pears like I just can't recollect."

Once when she was having company to dinner she arranged a dish of asparagus very prettily, told Peter to pour the butter sauce over it and to bring it to the table covered with a napkin. Peter covered it with the napkin, then poured the butter sauce over the whole dish, napkin, and all, and put it upon the table with a look at the company which said:

"What do you think of that?"

To fish out the draggled napkin, which stuck to the asparagus, was impossible.

"Take it away," said his mistress, "I can't serve it." She said this in a whisper. Peter, who was surveying the dish with an expression of candid interest, exclaimed aloud:

"What, 'tain't right!" and regretfully took the dish out. He was a very dudish young darkey, and when spring came and he had his head shaved be presented at once so barbarously ornate and so comical an appearance that it was with difficulty I accepted his services at table seriously. For all his thick kink had been shaven away save for three round and fussy tufts of wool, and these stood up on his head precisely like the ponpons on a lady's hat. A more fantastic or absurd head dress cannot be imagined. But he was very proud of these ponpons, and he kept feeling them to assure himself that they were artistically round. He always wore a bouquet in his buttonhole when he answered the bell, and this little bouquet formed of a rose geranium leaf lasted him over a week, and I have seen him out at the ash barrel picking over castout flowers when he was hard pressed to find one. He was firm in the conviction that none but a white person should ring the front door bell; and I think one reason was that it made him indignant to waste his appearance in bouquet and clipped head upon "niggers." I have often heard him berate those of his own color.

"What, dis you? How dare you come ringing this bell? comin' here wid your black face! Git round to de back gate as fast as your legs kin ca'y you, ain't yo' know dat de back gate is prowided fo' nigger an' dog?"

But one "nigger" whom he regarded with respect and with whom he was proud to show himself upon friendly terms was the postman. This was a squatty, black man, very stout and very conscious of wearing Government blue. His name was Boston, and Peter out of respect to the uniform, called him "Mr." Boston. He always went the rounds of his delivery attended by two followers, one a small yellow cur, which promptly sat down when Boston rang our bell, knowing that his master would indulge in a pretty lengthy chat with Peter, and the other a barefooted little darkey, who did all the running up and down the steps, while Boston stood on the pavement and bowed. Such deliberate laziness surely no other postman ever exhibited. Behind my friend's house there was a number of darkey huts, in which some of Boston's friends resided, and we would often see him on the piazza of one of these, his boy in the yard chasing chickens, his dog blinking in the sun, he himself comfortably swinging his legs on the rail, chatting away to an admiring circle with our undelivered letters in the mailbag over his shoulder. One day my friend became exasperated.

"He's been there fifteen minutes," she said, "it's perfectly outrageous, and I'm going to speak to him." She went out into the yard, and shouted through a gap in the fence:

"Oh, Boston; I'm waiting for my letters. Why don't you bring them?" Boston looked over his shoulder amiably:

"Somebody call me? Oh, 'tis you, Mis' Andrews. Want yo' letters, cert'nly m'am. Here, Jimmy, yo' triflin' nigger, ain't yo' hear Mis' Andrews call fo' her letters? I declare ef yo' aint good fo' nothin'. Here, tote 'em across de yard an' poke 'em tru' de fence fo' her. Tain't 'cording' to custom; but I don't mind obligin' a lady. You're quite welcome, m'am," he shouted, with a grin; "tain't quite accordin' to custom, to be so unceremonious like, but 'tain't no matter, I'll do it to oblige you."

"Now did you ever?" asked my friend when she came in. "He thinks I'm under obligations to him, wher the truth is he ought to lose his place. What can anybody do with such people?"

But with her cook she really feared to concern herself. "I don't want to know what goes on in the kitchen," she told me. "At first I used to try to oversee it, but now I just let it alone." And she told me of some passes she had had with the cook. This was a big waddling old colored woman with a broad black face; she wore dangling brass earrings and always scuffed about the kitchen with her shoes unlaced and the tongues and laces dragging after her along the floor; the food was rather greasy, and she fried everything—we used to have fried apples and fried bananas, fried steaks and fried hominy; but she made the most remarkable pilaus, with tomatoes and rice—one in particular, which she made with brown beans called "cow peas"; and she called the whole concoction "Hoppin' John."

My friend was very orderly, and she liked to have each kitchen utensil hanging on its own little peg. This taste she had been obliged to dispense with. In fact, her cook had a peculiarly ingenious mind; she seemed to like to contrive uses for things for which they were never intended. For instance, she always used the shovel for the dustpan; for no reason whatever would poke the fire with the meat fork, and always cracked ice with the knife sharpener. These were established customs with her. One day my friend said:

"You'll ruin the meat fork; why don't you take the poker? It's right there."

The cook simply replied: "Oh, tain't no use botherin' wid de poker." But my friend was utterly routed when once she was making the dessert herself; wishing to core some apples she asked the cook for the apple corer.

"Dis is what I use," said the honest soul complacently, promptly wrenching out the handle of the dustpan and handing it to her mistress.

"But where is the apple corer?"

"In de drawer; but dis is just as sharp."

This was quite true; but I understood why my orderly New England friend was obliged to keep the door shut between herself and such purely natural methods.—Jean Edgerton Hovey in the New York Commercial Advertiser.

THE CONDOR A GIANT BIRD.

A South American That Bears the Ornithological Palm.

(From the New York World.)

In the New York Zoological Gardens is a specimen of the condor. This huge feathered freak belongs to the family which produces the largest known bird. Not only is the condor the largest bird that flies, but in its flight it goes higher than any other living creature.

South America produces the largest condors. Some of them weigh more than forty pounds and measure from tip to tip from 15 to 18 feet. Their strength has been noted on more than one occasion to be more than that of a man.

When Von Humboldt was making observations in South America near Mount Chimborazo he saw condors flying high over the top of the mountain. Their altitude must have been not less than 23,000 feet.

A remarkable feature in connection with the flight of the condor consists in its ability to fly upward without flapping its wings. This it does in a series of circles which enlarge as the bird wheels upward in a species of opening spiral.

The condor has also the power of poising itself absolutely still in the air. Darwin observed a condor at a great altitude remain perfectly still for half an hour. No movement was observed during this period, though doubtless there must have been some imperceptible movement.

The next largest bird to the condor is the harpy eagle, found both in South America and the Philippines. These birds do not weigh so much as condors and the spread of wing is not so large.

They are far more fierce in their manner of attack, however, and are more dreaded by natives.

The South American harpy eagles were so named by a Jesuit traveler who first took note of their predatory character. He recalled the ancient mythological tales about the Greek harpies which were wont to fly down on festive occasions, destroying everything within reach and even carrying off persons.

The harpy eagle is larger than any other bird of the eagle class. Its weight and stretch of wing from tip to tip make it rank as the second largest bird that flies. It has a spread of wing of from eight to twelve feet.

The harpy eagle is very swift, being easily able to outstrip the birds upon which it preys. It has also very keen vision. It is able to see, so those who have closely observed it, a white patch no larger than a hen's egg on a green tree or field two miles distant.

Next to the harpy eagle in weight, but not so great in spread of wing, comes the bustard. Bustards have been known to weigh thirty pounds, but their wingspread is never more than nine feet. In early days bustards inhabited the central and northern parts of Europe, but they were much sought after for their delicate flesh.

In Canada the bustard corresponds in a measure to the wild goose, though it is not so large as the European bustard.

Bustards do not resemble in the least—as some have imagined—the buzzards of North America. The former are related to the crane and plover family, whereas buzzards belong to the hawk family and are never eaten.

Owing to its weight and size, the bustard holds a place next to the harpy eagle. Bustards do not fly rapidly and are more harmless than the harpy.

Wild turkeys come next to bustards both in size and spread of wing. Audubon made observations of turkeys weighing more than thirty pounds. Tame turkeys also reach that weight.

The spread of wing of the turkey is not so great as that of either the harpy eagle or the bustard. Hence the wild turkey has to be relegated to a fourth place in the list of "biggest birds."

Wild swans come next in this catalogue of large birds. Some wild swans have been found to weigh twenty-eight pounds. It is estimated that the weight of these birds sometimes approaches thirty pounds. The spread of wing of the wild swan is not very great, seldom exceeding six feet.

As to expanse of wing, it seems the albatross holds the palm. Its stretch from wing to wing is often as great as seventeen feet.

The "great American eagle," which typifies the Union, seldom exceeds ten pounds in weight, and its wing-stretch is not often more than seven feet. This bird can, however, ascend to such a height that it disappears from view.

EFFIGIES OF DEAD MONARCHS.

They Once Took the Place of Corpses Lying in State.

(From the London Mail.)

Sightseers in Westminster Abbey were until a few years ago shown the famous wax effigies of Queen Elizabeth, Queen Anne, King William, of Orange, and his wife, Queen Mary, and many other distinguished persons. These were funeral effigies, models of deceased monarchs that figured most prominently and significantly in the pageants and processions that preceded their burial.

In very early Saxon and Norman times when kings were sometimes "spirited away," and for political purposes mock funerals would have been arranged had not very stringent means been taken to prevent such frauds, to convince the people of the demise of the Crown, the dead monarch's body was embalmed, dressed in its most costly robes, and having been exhibited lying in state, was finally carried on an open bier in the sight of all to its last resting place. An old chronicler describes the cerements of King Henry II. most minutely, and says that he was clothed "in Royal Robes, his crown upon his head, white gloves upon his hands, boots of gold upon his legs, gilt spurs upon his heels, a great rich ring upon his finger, his Scepter in his hand, his sword by his side, and his face uncovered and all bare."

Later the custom and its primary inceptions declined, but it did so, after the manner of all funeral practices, very slowly and gradually. While lying in state continued and the face of the dead was still permitted to be visible, effigies were prepared to simulate the body upon the bier in the final public procession. The figure made represented the departed monarch as closely as possible, and was dressed in the actual robes of the departed. The face was carved in wood until wax modeling came into vogue, and was found to be more like reality, and until the custom was absolutely abandoned wax was used.

A high bier was provided for the effigy to rest upon, so that those who stood in the streets could see the face of the departed, as well as those who crowded the windows. In course of time the exhibition as was only to be expected, became unseemly, ... on account of its essential tawdriness and of the behavior of the crowds who used to watch the procession. When the practice was finally dropped such of the waxen effigies as had withstood the attacks of time continued to be exhibited for a price in Westminster Abbey, where some of them remain to this day locked away in dusty receptacles. They are still visible to those who obtain special permission to view them, but were withdrawn from public exhibition because they aroused amusement rather than the solemn feeling they deserved. The withdrawal from public view is perhaps the best thing that could have happened to them.

The Handwriting Expert

Often I have wondered whether there is any truth in the remark that the nonsense knocked out of people at school is at Oxford carefully and painfully put back. It was at Oxford that Harvey—my husband—formed his friendship for Wyvern Maunder. Wyvern is a "nice boy," a "dear fellow," and a "good chap," according to people's age and point of view. If he is a trifle better looking than the average, he has neither any sort of pose, nor any "views," nor, indeed, anything likely to irritate his fellow-men. He is consequently popular, particularly with women; and they probably know how enormously popular they are with him. It is not the sort of thing a man like Wyvern would conceal from them. In fact, he is strangely susceptible, and I have never met him yet when he was not more or less desperately in love. Theoretically, he is what I believe used to be called a pessimist, and never sees the slightest glimmer of a silver lining without promptly calling attention to the lowering cloud. But this does not in the least interfere with his spirits, which are quite abnormally high. Our friendship has always consisted chiefly in our confiding in each other enthusiastically on matters of no importance whatsoever, and giving to each other simultaneously excellent advice, to which neither even pretended to listen. I talked to him about everything under the sun. His own subject never varied.

However, after a time I listened less eagerly to the comfortable sorrows of the sentimentalist. But he still continued to write to me with some frequency, assuming his confidences to be no less interesting than before. It would, however, be most unfair to accuse him in this matter of indiscretion. Wyvern Maunder's epistolary communications were liable to remain as profound a secret from his correspondent as from the rest of the world. Clear and intelligible in conversation, on paper he became a dark, unfathomable mystery. As a matter of fact, no one had as yet been discovered who could read a single word of his handwriting.

One day I received a letter from him, written apparently, as usual, in bad Arabic, with the handle rather than the point of the pen. From the shape of the letter I thought it did not seem to require an answer, and I had grown accustomed to judging by appearances in these matters. I, therefore, took no notice of it, although it looked a little blacker, the words were larger, and yet closer together, and altogether it seemed more interesting than usual. But our friendship was growing fainter. Besides, I was going to Tunbridge Wells for Easter by an early train with little Gladys (Harvey was to join me the next day), and also I had something on my mind that made me rather absent at the time.

Harvey had risen late, and I went to say good-by to him, not at all liking to leave him even for a day. Then, as I went down and saw his breakfast ready in the dining-room, I found the letter in my pocket; so I put it on his plate, thinking it might amuse him to try to decipher "old Wyvern's scrawl," and went off with Gladys and her governess to Tunbridge Wells. I was thoughtful.

In the autumn I had seen a palmist known as the Wonderful Mrs. Hopkinson, who assured me with absolute certainty of the mistake that a man with the initials A. H. would "come into my life" and "in the early spring" would "save me from a terrible danger." For a time I was skeptical. Yet, as I met in steady succession Anthony Hope, Arthur Humfreys, Andre Hellofalovich, Lord Alfred Haverley and Algy Hazler, and when neither of them appeared to show any desire to come into my life, I felt disappointed. The only one who certainly did take a little trouble at one time was Algy Hazler, and I am bound to say that if one had to be saved from a danger Algy Hazler would have been the person I should have chosen to do it.

But after meeting him and discovering his good qualities—and his initials—at a dinner party, after seeing him accidentally at the theatre and on purpose in the park, he confided in me that he was "privately engaged" to a dear girl down in Hertfordshire.

Privately engaged, indeed! People with the appearance of Mr. Algernon Hazler ought to have the decency to be publicly engaged, and they ought to wear a notice to that effect. Not that it mattered; what in heaven's name had it to do with me! However, it was spring; there appeared to be no dangers about, and that absurd Algy (I never liked him, really) had gone to spend Easter "down in Hertfordshire."

Gladys, Miss Mills and I wandered about the common, bought for each other paper knives of curious Tunbridge ware, and Gladys presented us each with a shell pincushion, demanding first the money to pay for these useful gifts.

The next morning I received a telegram, of which this is an accurate copy:

"To Mrs. Wentworth, Tiles Hotel, Mount Sebastian, Tunbridge Wells.—All discovered. Never return to my roof. Am communicating solely through solicitor. "HARVEY BASSETT WENTWORTH."

Naturally I felt horribly upset and bewildered, and, of course, I simply hadn't a notion of what it could mean. The more I read it aloud to Miss Mills, and the more she read it aloud to me, the less we both understood it. In the shadow of the Toad Rock I took the resolution to ask Harvey what was the matter. I went indoors, when another telegram was given to me at the hotel. It ran thus:

"Come at once to Chiltern Court. Will meet you station. Bring Gladys and Mills. Hope arrange all right, but must tell us everything. Love from Violet. "CHARLEY."

This was, if possible, a greater puzzle than the last. The only obvious thing was that we must leave the Tiles Hotel at once.

Our journey from Tunbridge Wells to my cousin's country house remains a ghastly blank in my memory. I believe that even Miss Mills—and certainly Gladys, who is five—would, if she had been informed of it all, have doubted my utter ignorance of the trouble.

Charley and Violet, my greatest friends, are a delightful young married couple. Charley—well, I think that ought to be enough. Everyone knows what a Charley is like. He was exceptional only in being still fonder of sport of all kinds than most Charleys (particularly for shooting with an airgun at cats).

At the little station at Chiltern we saw Charley.

"Beatrice, get up here. Miss Mills and Gladys can go in the carriage," and in two minutes I was being whirled along on a high dogcart, side by side with Charley, who at once began.

"Well, you've been making a nice mess of it!"

"Charley," I implored, "what is it all about?"

"Oh, Beatrice, hang it!" he answered in a tone of despair, "do shut up that sort of thing, or I can't be the least use. Violet and I'll stick to you, if you'll tell us everything."

"But I don't know anything!"

"You're enough to irritate a saint! Listen. Harvey came to Black's to see me in an appalling state, and I can jolly well tell you if it hadn't been for me he'd have gone straight to Sir James Lawrence. I got him to promise to wait two days and then if I could send him a satisfactory explanation of the letter to come down and give you a chance of explaining."

"Letter! What letter?"

"You know all right!"

"I don't."

"Harvey found on his breakfast table, after you left, a love letter——"

I started.

"A love letter. The servants say you put it there yourself—though I shouldn't have thought even you would be quite capable of that; but perhaps you did?"

"Oh, my dear Charley," I cried radiantly, clapping my hands with joy. "Of course I did! Is that all? Why, I can explain it easily! It's all right. It's a mistake. I'll convince Harvey. He's jealous, then, of——"

"Of Maunder, confound him! I always thought he was a decent chap too. I can tell you, though, Beatrice, you've got to stop this bosh—for, of course, it is bosh."

"No, it isn't," I cried eagerly, "not even bosh! It isn't anything! Don't you see? Wyvern is madly in love with somebody else, and he confides in me. Oh, Charley, I'm so relieved! Of course, no one can read his handwriting, and Harvey must have made a mistake."

"Thank goodness! That's all right, then. I'll wire Harvey something that will bring him down tomorrow morning; and now, do cheer up and make the best of it."

II.

After a night of suspense, I was waiting in the little Japanese room to see Harvey. I heard his voice. He had arrived! I was horribly nervous. He came in, shut the door, and stood in front of me.

I said, "Dearest Harvey, how could you be so absurd——" and I held out both my hands. Harvey put his hands behind his back as though I were a child, and he had a present for me, and I was to guess what it was. So I did the same, though it seemed a silly game. Then he said:

"Now, Beatrice, it's useless trying to humbug me. I insist on a plain answer to a plain question."

He then produced the letter from Wyvern I had left on the table, and asked me to read it.

Anything so entirely unintelligible I never saw.

"What's this, Harvey, about 'Don't laugh at me as a humorous swine'?"

"Rubbish! It's 'Don't laugh at me as an amorous swain.'"

I was sure of my version, but stumbled on—"'You know little, so far, of these liver pills.'"

"'Lovers' ills!'" shouted Harvey. "It's no use wasting time on this. I have copied out the essential part—the part that opened my eyes," and he gave me a paper in his own clear handwriting. This is what I read:

"You are (the?) soul of my existence, you dear woman, and our love is our life. He is frivolous and hateful, and we may (word undecipherable) tell the fool to go hang."

I was appalled at first. Could Wyvern have gone off his head, and really written this nonsense?

"Did you really find this in the letter?"

"Yes. I tell you that, taking it with the rest, I understood it. I thought at first it was a code, or something, but I soon saw it was plain English."

"Plain English! But it doesn't make sense—and Wyvern doesn't make love. Oh, believe me!"

"Silence! If you like, we'll go through the letter together. I wish to be just."

What on earth could "He is frivolous and hateful" mean? Why should Harvey suppose it to refer to him? We went through it and fought the letter word by word, till my brain whirled. One sentence I read, "I bought a shutter on the Alps," which Harvey perversely declared was "I sought a shelter in your arms." It was endless and maddening, until I had a bright idea. Ask Wyvern! Harvey scorned it, saying the idiotic fool would be sure to have some —— clever, rotten explanation, and so we went on, he reproaching bitterly, I denying and crying, until I suddenly said:

"Listen, Harvey! I am certain Wyvern would not write to me in that strain, but I'll make this suggestion: Go to an expert in handwriting, and I'll abide by his decision."

And Harvey agreed, seeming struck with the idea. After grumbling a little more, and a few words with Charlie and Violet, he consented to go back to town and see an expert. He refused to stay to luncheon, and went by the 12:45, provisionally cold and civil in manner.

In the afternoon our troubles were over. The following telegram arrived:

"Everything all right. Too sorry for words. Expert's explanation follows by post. Will come and fetch you tomorrow morning. Love. HARVEY."

And by the evening post I received the expert's version of the important sentences. It ran thus:

"I am quick at making verses, and have finished the play in an hour. It is possible and probable that I shall bring it out as soon as I can get a man to go shares."

"I suppose," Harvey wrote, "that dear old Wyvern has written a play, and hasn't enough money to get it produced himself. If he can't find a capitalist, I'm going to back him up. Forgive me, darling."

* * * * * * *

The next day we went back happy, though I still had an uneasy belief that Wyvern must have been writing to me about some woman—and I was quite certain he would as soon write a play in an hour as a year, also that he was not "quick at making verses." We were talking it over when Wyvern came in, and I signaled to him to say nothing when Harvey discussed it with him.

Harvey put down Wyvern's smiling silence, awkward looks, and apparent entire ignorance of the subject, title, or style of his play, to shyness, and went out, leaving us together, to show his renewed confidence.

Then Wyvern read me his own, real, original and genuine version of the letter. The fatal sentences ran as follows:

"I am sick of dancing attendance on that woman, and can bear it no more. She is frivolous and heartless, and I shall go to Norway to fish as soon as I can get a pal to go too."

Since this happened, the only result of any importance is that Wyvern has learned typewriting. Certainly, the expert did get one or two of the unimportant words right—which was rather clever of him.

Here are the three versions:

Husband's Version: "You are (the) soul of my existence, you dear woman, and our love is our life. He is frivolous and hateful, and we may" (word undecipherable) "tell the fool to go hang."

Expert's Version: "I'm quick at making verses, and have finished the play in an hour. It is possible and probable that I shall bring it out as soon as I can get a man to go shares."

Genuine Version: "I'm sick of dancing attendance on that woman, and can bear it no more. She is frivolous and heartless, and I shall go to Norway to fish as soon as I can get a pal to go too."

And, wasn't it extraordinary? I asked Harvey the name of the expert, and it's Augustus Henderson—A. H., you know! So Mrs. Hopkinson was right, after all.—Punch.

THE GREAT DAM OF THE NILE.

How the Waters of the River Will Be Regulated.

(From the London Post.)

Sir John Aird and Sir Benjamin Baker start for England on Sunday next, having completed their visit of inspection to the great engineering works at Assuan, where the immense dam to hold up the waters of the Nile is being constructed.

The total extent of the dam is one mile and a quarter, of which one mile and an eighth of the foundation is finished. Temporary dams enabling the remaining section to be put in are now carried across the channel. Pumps for getting in the permanent dam foundations will be started next week. The whole of the granite masonry required for the dam is cut and ready to be laid in its place. The parapet alone remains to be prepared.

The portion of the dam remaining to be built is that across the well-known deep western channel. The work is of considerable difficulty, but the experience gained last season in dealing with other channels has rendered the engineers and contractors confident that equal success will be obtained this year in the western channel.

The dam is pierced with 180 openings, about 23 feet high and 7 feet wide, which openings are controlled by steel sluices. The work for the sluice is now well advanced. The discharge through these sluices at high Nile may reach 15,000 tons of water a second. The navigation channel and chain of locks are equally advanced with the dam itself, and the lock gates will also be in course of construction in about three months.

Unless anything unforeseen occurs the reservoirs will be in operation for the Nile flood of 1903. This will be well within the contract time, though owing to the increased depth of the foundations the work done by the contractors has been largely increased.

At Assiut the great regulating dam across the Nile approaches completion, the foundations being practically all in position, leaving a portion of the superstructure to be completed. The sluice openings here number 119, all sixteen feet wide. The delivery of steel work has commenced. The dam is somewhat similar in principle to the well known barrage near Cairo, but the details of construction are entirely different, as the foundations are guarded against undermining by a complete line of cast iron and steel piling above and below the work.

The barrage itself is constructed [illegible] class masonry instead of br[illegible] at the old barrage. [illegible] barrage is overshadow[illegible] magnitude of the [illegible] doubtless rank sec[illegible] work of Egypt. [illegible] work to the reser[illegible] head work to the [illegible] sisting of a regul[illegible] lock. To permit of [illegible] this a diversion ch[illegible] constructed for th[illegible] where four to five t[illegible] gaged in the cutting [illegible] now practically comp[illegible]