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ON THE SUNNY SIDE.

Hi and whoop-hooray, boys!
Sing a song of cheer!
Here's a holiday, boys,
Lasting half a year!
Round the world, and half in
Shadow we have tried;
Now we're where the laugh is—
On the sunny side!

Pigeons coo and mutter,
Strutting high aloof
Where the sunbeams flutter
Through the stable roof.
Hear the chickens cheep, boys,
And the hen with pride
Clucking them to sleep, boys,
On the sunny side!

Hear the cackling guinea,
Hear the cattle moo,
Hear the horses whinny,
Looking out at you!
On the hitching-block, boys,
Grandly satisfied,
See the old mare kick, boys,
On the sunny side!

Robins in the peach-tree,
Bluebirds in the pear,
Blossoms over each tree
In the orchards there!
All the world's in joy, boys,
Glad and glorified,
As a romping boy, boys,
On the sunny side!

Where's a heart to melting
Where's a soul as free?
Where is any fellow
We would rather be?
Just ourselves or nope, boys,
World around and wide,
Laughing in the sun, boys,
On the sunny side!

—James Whitcomb Riley.

THE GAMBLER AND THE NEWSBOY.

CHICAGO

Sunday Sayings.

"Yes, gamblers are a bad set, as a rule. There is very little good you can say of them."

The speaker was a gentleman to whom I had been introduced at a gathering of military men at the Linden Hotel in St. Louis. The conversation had, in some way, turned upon gamblers and gambling and the speaker continued:

"We have had abundant illustration of the truth of what I say in the men of the 'profession' about this city. By the way, did you ever know, or happen to meet Horace Blake, who became famous for his skill at cards all through this region some years before the war?"

I expressed my ignorance of Blake, and the gentleman continued.

"I know quite an interesting incident concerning Blake. If you don't mind I would like to tell it to you."

"O, you are certainly not going through that long story to-night," said the gentleman's wife, rising from the sofa where she had been sitting beside him, "I don't think Mr. Ray would care to hear it."

But I insisted, and the lady remarked, smiling, "It is a misfortune that you bring upon yourself, then," and moved towards another part of the room.

"Millie never did like to hear that story," said the gentleman, as he watched the graceful form of his wife till it disappeared through the folding doors into the parlor. "She always objects to my telling it, but here goes."

"Down on Sixth street there is a kind of ring tossing establishment that reminds me of an affair that flourished some years ago.

At one end of the room there was a bench covered with spikes, at the other a railing, and the customer, standing before this railing, has the privilege of tossing a half dozen rings over among the spikes. If you ring certain spikes you draw certain presents. The price for half a dozen tosses was ten cents.

Blake was standing in front of this establishment, one afternoon, watching the crowd go in and out, when a news-boy stepped up to the railing and with a serious look on his face, commenced tossing the rings.

One, two, three [illegible] missed their mark, and he stood still for a moment, evidently measuring the distance with his eye.

The fourth ring whirled over the bench and fell prettily between the spikes. Blake and the attendant, as he gathered up the rings, waited for the last shot.

The little fellow leaned clear over the railing, swung the ring to and fro several times, and at last let fly. It went clear over the bench and rang against the wall beyond.

Without a word he picked up his kit, swung it across his shoulder, and started out. His face was flushed, and he would not have raised a laugh from some one at the idea of speaking to him.

Blake looked up, a resolute expression on his strong face. He tried hard to smile but the smile trembled around the corners of his mouth

"Young man, you will have better luck next time, Mr. Blake," he said bravely, but his lips were still quivering.

"Yes, you will have better luck next time Jack. That's the way to succeed. Try hard knock."

The boy turned away like the other could not help notice that there were tears in his eyes.

"You are not crying, Jack," said Blake. "Why you should not mind losing one game of toss and win, toss and lose, any way we take it."

"Double you much, anyhow, sir," said the other with a tough smile to follow of injured pride," he said, overtaking him. "I have known you as one of the pluckiest boys on the street. What made you cast down over the loss of a dime?"

"Well, Mr. Blake, I don't mind telling you. I don't believe you will laugh at me as some others would. You see to-morrow is Christmas, and I thought this morning when I got up, that Nellie ought to have a Christmas present.

"I don't save up much cash. The most of it goes to mother to help keep us in bread and butter. Well, you see, I could earn enough to-day to get something for Nellie. She was worse last night, and—"

The lips were quivering now, very evidently.

"Who is Nellie?" put in the other.

"Nellie? Oh, Nellie is my sister, or my half sister. She has a trouble something about her spine, the doctors say, and she cannot walk out here. She can only sit in the chair. Well, I thought that like enough Nellie—she don't see very much, you know, and can't have very much to think about—I thought she might be pleased if we could give her something to-morrow. She was very much worse last night, and we sent for the doctor, although she cried and begged us not to. She is afraid of the cost, you know. Her face was very pale, and I could not get it away from before my eyes to-day. I tried to sell a good many papers, but there is always something coming into my throat, and I couldn't holler very well. Some way I didn't do very much to-day. I only made fifteen cents. I couldn't buy very much with that, but I thought I would get all I could for it."

"So you tried your chances on the ring game for your sister?" said the other.

"I came by here and heard them tell about the gold watch that was put up. I looked in at them spikes, and then at the rings, and indeed it didn't look hard—it didn't look hard a bit, sir."

"I thought that if I could win that watch for Nellie what a splendid thing it would be, and I put down ten cents. Well, I didn't win, and now—and now—I've only got five cents left, and I can't buy anything at all with that," and here the little fellow began to cry.

Something had fallen into Blake's eye. It must have been a cinder, and he was trying very hard to get it out.

"Here, Jack," don't cry. I hate crying. Brace up, Jack, and be a man. Will a dollar buy a present for Nellie?"

Jack opened his eyes wide. "Why I guess it would, sir, a good deal more than enough."

"Well, Jack, look here. I will lend you a dollar. Mind, lend it to you, not give it to you, and you can pay me in—"

"O I will pay you right away, I will earn the money very quickly."

"I will lend it to you for a year, Jack, he said handing him the money and, by the way, I have a friend who is a Doctor. I would like to have him see your sister. I may call around with him some day."

Jack's eyes glistened and he put out his hand.

"Excuse me, Jack, your hands are not clean," and the gambler turned and walked down the street leaving Jack standing motionless on the corner.

The little room was darkened. Two figures were bending over a bed. Their faces wore an anxious look. A woman and a little boy were watching the heavy breathing of a sleeping girl.

"Some one rapped, Jack," said the woman.

"You go to the door, mother, and tell them not to come in now."

The woman opened the door.

"Is there a news-boy named Jack lives here?"

"Yes, sir."

"I want to see him."

"Pardon me, gentlemen, he is with his sister. She is very low to-day."

"But it is about his sister that we wish to see him. This gentleman is a Doctor. Will you not let us in?"

The woman looked at them doubtfully but opened the door.

"O, Mr. Blake," said Jack, coming forward—"but I'm afraid it's too late."

"I guess not, Jack. This gentleman is a Doctor—Doctor Crosby. He is a friend of mine—"

"An acquaintance," interrupted the other coolly.

"He is a very good Doctor," continued Blake, without noticing the interruption "and I wish him to see what he can do for your sister. I will leave him here," and the gambler left the room.

"Well, Crosby, when can the girl be brought home?"

"I think at least any time, Blake. When I left her at the hospital four days ago, she was able to walk very easily. I think in a month's time your friend will be as strong and well as if she had never been a helpless invalid. Those New York surgeons work wonders. I told you they could do it, Blake."

"Doctor, how much do I owe you?"

"Let me see. Three trips to New York absence from business about two weeks in all. Well, Blake, seeing it's you, I think five hundred dollars will cover it."

The other commenced counting over a roll of bills.

"By the way, Blake, that protege of yours is almost a beauty."

"I don't think I saw her face," said the other quietly.

"Well, I shall bring her back within a week. You will be interested to see her then."

"Will it be necessary for you to bring her back?"

The physician flushed slightly. The gambler was looking him full in the face.

"Well, I thought it would be better for me to go after her. I have had charge of her so far, and it is rather a long journey for a girl to take alone, you know."

"Very well," said Blake, handing him the bills he had counted out. "I think you are right."

"I came to see you, to-day, about something very different—something I have wanted to talk to you about for a long time, but never had the courage to."

Dr. Crosby had just entered the elegantly furnished room of Horace Blake.

"Sit down, Crosby, have a cigar," said the other who was sitting before the fire.

"I want to speak to you about a girl—well, about Jack's sister, Nellie Kohl."

"Why, what's to out her," said the other.

"Now Blake, I know you are a man of honor. I know you will take what I say as from an honorable man."

The other nodded without responding.

"I cured that girl of a terrible trouble, but a trouble greater than the one from which she was relieved—a trouble over which I have no power is hanging over her now."

"What do you mean, Crosby," said the other springing to his feet.

"A trouble," continued the Doctor, "for which you alone can furnish the remedy. Sit down Blake and let me tell you."

"I don't understand you, Crosby."

"I want to make myself understood very clearly, and I am at a loss to know how to do it. I trust you will help me. That girl knows, that while medical skill saved her, it is to you she owes her restoration and her life. Her sense of obligation hangs over her terribly, when she sees you, and she has seen you a good many times since her return."

The other flushed hotly, but made no reply.

"When she sees you," continued the Doctor, "she cannot help but be oppressed by the burden of her debt. It is weighing her down beyond all power of my words to tell you. This is what I want to see you about."

The other smoked in silence for some minutes. At last he arose paced up and down the floor several times, then, turning to Crosby, he said:

"You are right. I ought to have seen it before. Some way, I don't know how, I have become interested in the girl. My visits have annoyed her, I ought to have understood it before. Crosby you are a man of delicacy; you understand these things. I am only a gambler a miserable fellow who has no right to friends."

Crosby made a deprecating gesture, and rose to his feet.

"Yes, I am only a gambler, but rather than let that girl suffer, and suffer on my account, I would give my life. Now I put myself under your direction. Tell me what I shall do, and I will do it."

The Doctor crossed the room to where the gambler stood, and took his hand cordially in his own.

"Spoken like a man Blake. I always knew you were a noble fellow. My respect is increased ten-fold now."

"But what can I do," said the other.

"Well, Blake, I don't want to dictate you, I don't want to say anything that is unpleasant, but it you just go to some other city for a little while—just stay away for a little while, you know—I think it would remedy matters a good deal. But do as you like, Blake, don't let me dictate you."

Inch by inch the confederate soldiers were contesting their ground, but all through the day their lines had been forced steadily backwards, and before the sun set the Union flag was floating on the Rebel ramparts.

Night at last, dropped her curtain over the battle-field. Dim figures were moving about among the wounded and the dying. Half a dozen Union soldiers, apparently under the direction of a tall, dark-faced man, were stopping here and there in their search for the members of their regiment, when they stumbled upon the form of a boy, who lay in the matted grass with his head buried in his arms, which were folded upon the ground.

"Colonel Blake," said one of the men, "bless my soul if here isn't a Rebel drummer boy, and I guess he's gone for it, poor little fellow."

The tall man stopped for a moment, and the boy raised his head.

"Colonel Blake, who said Colonel Blake?"

The men gathered about him, and examined his wounds. One of his limbs had almost been shot off by the cannon ball.

"Yes, stranger," said the little fellow feebly, "you're right—I guess I'm done for."

Something in the boy's voice arrested the tall man's attention, and he bent down very near him.

"Colonel Blake, which is Colonel Blake?" queried the little fellow; this time with great difficulty for his strength was nearly gone.

"I am Colonel Blake," said the tall man.

The boy seemed to be searching his face in the darkness.

"Yes—yes—you're right, Mr. Blake, life is only a game of toss and win, toss and lose at best. You're right, Mr. Blake, I've tossed and lost again."

"Jack," cried the man, "Jack, is it possible that this is you?"

"Yes, it's me, Mr. Blake, it's only me."

The Colonel knelt down by the boy's side and examined his wounds very tenderly.

"O, it's no use, Colonel that ball did the business for me; I'm a goner, won't you tell the others to go away, Colonel."

A slight gesture from the tall man, and the men withdrew.

"O, I'm glad I found you," said the boy when they were alone. "I am ready to die now that I've found you. Do you know that I came after you. We heard you had enlisted in the army. We did not know which army it was, but Nellie told me to follow you, to find you somehow, and tell——"

"Tell me what, Jack?"

"Why, to tell you—bend your ear closer, Colonel, I can't speak much longer—why, to tell you—to tell you you made a great mistake, something about the Doctor, she said, he misunderstood her. She cried, O, very long after you had gone, and her face grew pale, and her eyes grew big and bright, and she tried very hard to find where you had gone. She told me to find you somehow, and tell you you had made a great mistake, and and to tell you to come back. Mr. Blake will you come back very soon?"

"Yes, Jack, and I will take you back with me."

"No, Colonel, I'm done for, but I will go happier if you will promise me just one thing."

"I will promise you anything, Jack."

"Promise me that you will go back?"

"Yes."

"And promise me, that when you get back—promise me, that when you get back—" Jack had with difficulty drawn himself up to a sitting position, and with arms around the tall man's neck—"promise me, that when you get back you will make your wife make Nellie—your—wife."

"I will promise you anything, Jack. Now I must call the Surgeon and he will dress your wound."

The Surgeon was called, but his skill was not needed. The drummer-boy was dead.

The speaker ceased. He had evidently finished his strangely told story, and looking into his eyes I saw they were filled with tears. His wife came up just then. She wore a cloak and hat, and was ready to go to the carriage.

"If you have finished your story, I think we had better go," she said.

"Yes, I have finished, and will go," and we both rose from our seats.

"But General," I said, "do you know that this story is true?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Did you know Blake?"

"Yes, very well. Poor fellow, how I sympathized with him. My wife witnessed the truth of the story. She knew him, and sympathized with him, too."

I glanced at the lady who replied frankly:

"Yes, the General is right. I knew him and sympathized with him, and loved him—and I love him now."

She placed her hands upon the General's arm in a way that I could not mistake.

TERRIBLE NITRO-GLYCERINE.

Its Power of Annihilation as Proved by Many Dreadful Instances.

New York Sun.

"Attending the frightful deaths that so frequently follow the handling of nitro-glycerine in the oil regions," said Myron K. Paige, formerly oil operator in Pennsylvania, "there is one feature the mysterious nature of which is startling. It has puzzled scientific observation and study, and I do not believe to-day that any satisfactory explanation can be given of it. This singular feature is the almost complete annihilation of matter, especially of the human body, which in a majority of cases results from a fatal explosion of this deadly compound. I have noticed it in many instances, and the fact was again called to my mind by the article I read in "The Sun" the other day about the finding of a human hand by fishermen in an isolated portion of the oil regions and the absence of all trace of any other remains. That story, by the way, was doubtless a startling one to many who read it, but to any one who ever lived in the oil country it was simply the telling of the old tragedy in a new form.

"I had a teamster once in my employ—poor Hank France. Like all men of his kind in the oil country, there was nothing either above, below, or on the earth he feared. He was in the habit of carting nitro-glycerine to any well where I wanted to use it, and he and his companion, Warren Jack, actually got so reckless in handling the stuff that other help I had would not stay at work when they knew Hank was coming in with nitro-glycerine, but went to a safe distance until he had deposited the explosive they required and had gone away.

"Hank and Warren actually used to unload the stuff the same as they would a lot of bricks. Hank standing in the wagon and throwing a can to Warren some feet away, and Warren catching it and placing it on the ground in time to catch the next one that Hank tossed him. As it takes a man with a good set of nerves to even ride in a wagon when he knows there is nitro-glycerine under the seat, this manner of handling a compound that the slightest jar frequently explodes will give you an idea of the sort of nerves these two men had. Each one knew that if Warren happened to miss catching a can there wouldn't be enough left of them to cover the bottom of a snuff box, but they had the daring to take the chances.

"No one knew what caused it, and no one would ever have known who it was that was wiped out, except from the fact that they knew who it was that would be coming that way with nitro-glycerine just about that time, and from one or two things we found; but when we heard the explosion that day we said. 'That's Hank's last trip!' The glycerine had exploded about a quarter of a mile from the well. We walked down there. There was the usual cellar that a few cans of the stuff always digs when it goes off, and the usual lot of timber felled. Three hundred feet off to the right of the road in the woods, we found a wagon tire. We found the tail of one horse, and portions of the body of another. In another part of the woods a man's knee was picked up, and, although we searched over an area that it would have been impossible for any of the wreck to have been thrown that was all we found, except Hank's greasy, oil capsoaked overall lying by the side of the road and his watch hanging on the limb of a tree.

"As thoroughly as that does nitro glycerine do its work. All who have had anything to do with it in the oil regions have had illustration after illustration of its annihilative power. The iron frames of wagons, and even nitro-glycerine safes have been removed from human vision by an explosion as effectually as if they had never been formed. Look at that poor reckless devil, George Doran, who disappeared at Red Rock a few years ago. He was walking along with two or three cans of glycerine slung over his shoulder in a bag. To rest himself he shifted the bag to the other shoulder. In doing so he jarred the cans together and disappeared, with a goodly portion of Red Rock. That man weighed all of 200 pounds. All that the most thorough search ever recovered of that 200 pounds of flesh and bone was a part of one foot—less than one pound!

"Some savants have attempted to explain the mystery of this characteristic of nitro-glycerine by the theory of instantaneous vaporization of matter. That might be true as to flesh, but could the great masses of bone in the human body be vaporized in the twinkling of an eye? Could iron be reduced to vapor in an instant? It doesn't seem so to me.

"Others offer the theory of atomization of matter. This theory was disproved by another most melancholy occurrence in Allegheny county, N. Y., two or three years ago. This case was not characterized by such utter annihilation as others. Charles Berridge, a well-known oil man, was blown up by nitro-glycerine. The ground around was covered with spotless, new-fallen snow. On either side was a high and abrupt hill, only a few rods apart. Berridge was a very large man, of perhaps at 180 pounds weight. The remains of the poor man were searched for carefully and long, for he was a good man and a popular one. The coffin in which they were borne to the grave, contents and all, weighed but fifteen pounds! Now for the atomization theory. The greatest force of a nitro-glycerine explosion is always upward. If the matter had been reduced to atoms, however infinite-simal, in falling back upon that spotless snow some trace of them must have been seen upon it. But it remained as spotless as before.

"I wouldn't be in your shoes for a good deal," said one high school girl to another. "I wouldn't have you in them, either," was the tart reply; "you'd stretch 'em all out of shape!"—Burlington Free Press.

SOME STRANGE EXPLOSIVES.

Dangerous Dusts that are Easily Ignited with Astonishing Effects.

"Flour looks innocent enough," an overseer remarked, while watching the the removal of some barrels of flour and other grain from a large warehouse.

"That depends upon how it is cooked," the reporter suggested.

"Just so. It is dangerous in that way; but I was thinking of it as an explosive. Just look across the room. You see, when the sun's rays come in, the air is loaded with a fine grain dust, and if you were provided with microscopic eyes you would see yourself fairly surrounded with small atoms of grain of all kinds. Now, suppose you take a dried ear of corn and fire it. It burns very slowly, and the chances are that it will go out. Shell it, or take the kernels off, and it burns much quicker. Suppose, now, we grind the corn, it will burn quicker still, say in a minute; but if you pulverize it, reduce it to powder or dust, and ignite it, it goes off like a flash, and has great expansive power. That is just the case here. If the room becomes overcharged with dust and is ignited, off it goes, blowing the house to pieces.

"One of the most striking cases occurred several years ago in Minneapolis when the Washington mill caught. Those who knew anything about it just got out of the way as quick as they could; powder wouldn't have sent them any faster.

"Blow up?

"Well, I should rather think she did. The walls of the mill were solid stone six feet thick, and when the explosion came they were just like paper, and the roof, made of sheets of iron, was blown so high from one mill that it landed more than two miles from the spot where it went up. Of course it was helped by the wind, but the force exerted was shown. Men had been blown out through the windows, hurled through the air, and the walls of the building completely demolished by a man's lighting his pipe in a big grain house.

"A curious accident once happened in Scotland in a large house. A man walked in with a cigar in his mouth, and in a second the room seemed to be filled with fire and a terrible roar, but a minute later it cleared off. With the exception of a singeing, not a person was hurt, but every one of the four walls was flat on the ground, and the roof had been lifted bodily and dropped 200 feet away. In such cases there must be a fire first. The dust burns, and a powerful heat is created, and then follows the terrific expansive force that nothing can withstand. The explosion in Barclay street several years ago may be accounted for in this way. In the manufacture of candy sugar and starch are used in great quantities. Their dust accumulates and when when lighted might easily develop power enough to hurl a building to atoms."

"Has the explosive power of different dusts ever been determined?"

"Yes," the flour man replied. "Prof. Peck, the chemist, has made some experiments that demonstrate the enormous power of sawdust, various flours, starch, and grain of all kinds. In one of the experiments he took three-quarters of a ounce of starch, and by raising it as dust in the air, ignited it in a compartment intended to represent a room. When exploded it threw a box weighing six pounds twenty feet in the air. You can judge yourself of the power of the material. Half an ounce of starch ignited in the same way was shown by the Professor to lift the cover of a box, and a heavy man standing on it, three inches.

"One of the most dangerous materials is the wheat dust of flour mills. When burned it goes off like a flash. One of the first movements in making flour is to rattle the wheat and pass a heavy draught at the same time over it to carry off the highly inflammable dust. Yet despite all care, the air often becomes perfectly loaded with it. Prof. Peck has shown what flour would do by taking a box with a capacity of two cubic feet and placing in it a little flour, the light of a lamp entering through a hole in one corner and the muzzle of a bellows through the other. The cover of the box was nailed on, and a man took his place on it. The Professor then worked the bellows, and the small amount of flour within immediately filled the air in the box as dust, the fac-simile of a dust-laden mill being produced. The flour immediately ignited from the lamp, and in a second the cover was blown off and the man lifted several inches into the air, while a blaze of fire burst out at all sides. A number of interesting experiments were performed by the same gentleman, showing that in our large mills and manufactories where dust is likely to be formed, there lurked a power as dreaded as dynamite.

"Peck states that one pound of carbon and two and two thirds of oxygen, when they combine to produce carbonic acid, will evolve heat sufficient, if applied through a perfect heat engine, to lift nearly 600 tons ten feet into the air. Then he assumes that if 40 per cent. of flour is carbon it would require two and a half pounds to accomplish this result."

"Why can't an engine be made to run by dust power?"

"Perhaps that is what Keely is working at, or the same principle, but you would need according to the authority quoted, an engine from which there was no radiation or loss of heat. Perhaps some day it may be accomplished. Some years ago an old tallow in Boston created a great excitement by pretending that he had a machine that was fifty times as powerful as any known power, and a hundred times as cheap. His machine was arranged so that after it once started it kept going by successive explosions of bran dust that was blown into a chamber by a bellows, and ignited by a gas jet, the expansive force acting on a piston. It was a big scheme, and he claimed that he could run a train of cars all day with a quart measure of flour and bran, but I haven't heard of its being applied yet. Perhaps some one will work it up yet and make a fortune, but I doubt it."

Hereditary Transgression.

Kentucky State Journal.

"Mother, what was that you was saying about the children of Adam eatin' fur somebody's sins, last night?"

"Why, Adam, Johnny——"

"What's the matter with Adam?"

"There's nothing the matter with him, but what I was going to say is, that because of the sin of Adam, the father of mankind, eating the forbidden fruit, his children all are punished."

"Well, then, according to that, if my pap does something wrong I ought to be licked for it, eh?"

"That'll do, sir, now. Hurry out after that coal."

SOFTENING OF THE BONES.

The Peculiar Case of Hector Davis, in a Kentucky Farm House.

Hector Davis lives in the hills a long ride from here. A farmer piloted me to the spot. We knocked at the door of the Davis cabin and the first thing that struck my attention upon entering was a middle-aged man sitting bolt upright and supported by a rude and peculiarly shaped frame work. I at once entered into conversation with him and discovered him to be a man of fair intelligence and eager to tell all about himself, in a voice that was as strong as my own.

I grasped his hand upon first entering but his fingers all rolled up together like a cabbage leaf in a mushy sort of way that made me glad to let go of them. Taking hold of his limbs they yielded to the pressure until they were flattened out to twice their proper width. The only indication of bone was in his skull, which, while pliable almost as sole leather, still offered a kind of protection to the poor fellow's brain. His neck was limber as a dish-cloth, and when his head was released from its support, which was something in the shape of a similar contrivance used in photograph galleries, it rolled helplessly about upon his shoulders like a foot ball.

His arm dropped at his side, but with the aid of the muscle he was enabled to partly raise the forearm, although the hand curled over limply and gave the whole a sort of zigzag shape. He shuffled off his slipper and requested me to step on his foot. I did so and it at once spread itself out until it looked as if a railroad train had passed over it. It slowly resumed its natural shape, but it was fully a half hour before he was able to get the foot in his slipper again. "Perhaps you would like to tie my leg in a knot?" he suggested. I found no difficulty in performing this feat, while my friend accomplished the same with the other leg, and after we had also tied knots in both arms he presented a very knotty problem, indeed.

While his body was assuming its former shape I learn from his old, spectacled mother, who had sat during all these proceedings knitting in her rocking-chair, that Hector, who was forty years old, had always enjoyed excellent health and provided well for her until the beginning of his peculiar affliction two years ago. He first observed the softening of the bones of his toes and this rapidly spread to all parts of his anatomy, although beyond making him helpless he never experienced any inconvenience from it. All his vital organs performed their functions properly and she believed he would live to a good age. She had a younger son, then in the field at work, who assisted her in handling him, and altogether they got along quiet comfortably.

TOO HIGH PRICED FOR HIM.

The Reason Rupert Was Fain to Remove His Residence.

Atlanta Constitution.

"Oh, darling, must I leave thee?"

As these words fell like molten drops of lead, a look of deep pain flashed across Rupert Melville's Chicago countenance.

"Oh, Rupy, and must you leave me?" passionately querried the lovely thirty-five-year old, laying her blushing face on his coat-sleeve, and leaving signs that would lead people to think that he'd been drunk and had fallen into a lime barrel.

"Indeed I must, dearest," he fondly answered, bracing himself against the mantelpiece for the final plunge, while his loving eyes counted the freckles on her nose, "I must flee from here, sweet one, and seek some foreign part, where, unknown to all, I may begin a new life."

As the manly fellow spoke these words his form shook from the weight of woe and from that of his companion.

"Where do you think of going?" she asked, childishly toying with his brass watch-chain.

"I had thought of Griffin," he responded feelingly.

"Why do you leave our fair city for Griffin?" she demanded, a jealous flashing from her eyes.

"Because," he faltered, "because—oh, darling, can you stand it?"

"I can and will," she answered firmly.

Then, with a demoniac glare lighting up his long-cut features, Rupert Melville hissed:

"Because the saloons have quit making nickel plates of ice cream.

Wood at $34.92 a Cord.

N. Y. Sun.

An up-town grocer said "Three cents" when he handed a bundle of kindling to a little girl yesterday. As the little girl dropped the pennies into his hand he said to a bystander: "That's the largest bundle of kindling in the market. It measures just 190 cubic inches. Is it cheap in New York, isn't it?"

"About how cheap by the cord?"

"A cord contains 221.184 cubic inches. So there must be 1,164 bundles to the cord. At three cents a bundle the price is just $34.92 for a cord. Good hemlock, like this costs as much as $4 a cord up the country, but wood dealers and railroads and grocerymen have got to have a margin to live on, you know."

What a Pretext Was.

Texas Siftings.

A few evenings ago a little Austin boy was busily engaged in learning his lessons. His father, one of the leading citizens of Austin, had gone to the lodge. His mother was busy sewing. The little boy looked up and asked: "Mamma, what does the word 'pretext' mean?"

"When your father has to go to the lodge three times a week, that is a pretext to get away from his family."

Next day when the boy read out the definition of pretext he created a sensation.

AN INVISIBLE FIRE.

What Worried a Lot of Citizens Who Had Nothing to Do.

Hartford Times.

Scene: Grove street.

Colored man at top of ladder holding hose pipe and directing a stream of water toward the roof.

Pedestrian stops and looks up. Another comes along and looks at the looker-up. The duet is reinforced by another and another.

"Is it a serious fire?" asks one.

"Guess it is; but it all seems to be under the roof."

"Why don't he cut a hole in the roof?"

"He ought to cut off some of the clapboards."

"The house will burn down unless he calls the Fire Department."

"Where is the fire now?" was asked of the colored pipeman.

"Well, boss, dar's one in de kitchen range roun' on de back side. I'm only washin' off dis yere side fer ter git off sum ob der dirt an' clean up de building."

Then the crowd withdrew to find a cigar store.

A STRIKING ADDRESS.

One Head That Need Not Fear the Fiery Terrors of Summer.

An elegantly attired sunstroke made application one day this week to a proud plumed knight.

"Can you give me a job this year?"

"No," replied the knight. "I took you on trial once, but you did not give satisfaction."

"I am out of work and likely to come to want. Can't you give me a recommendation?"

The plumed knight tapped his forehead in imitation of men who think, and a mischievous twinkle glimmered in his east eye.

"Yes, I can give you an introduction to a man who needs you."

So saying he wrote a note which he carefully sealed and handed it to the sunstroke.

"Take that to the man addressed and he will give you a job if you strike him right."

The sunstroke read the superscription and sadly handing back the letter said:

"No, I thank you; I've heard of that man. I am willing to do business with most anybody, but I never would trust myself to fall on the head of that man. No sunstroke with any sort of common sense would take that risk."

The address on that envelope was Benjamin F. Butler, Lowell, Mass.—Chicago News.

A Joke on Daniel Webster.

Daniel Webster began his career in Congress by advocating free trade, but became afterward the leading champion of the protection system. About the year 1846, he was invited to a great tariff dinner at Philadelphia, which proved to be one of the most magnificent banquets ever given in the United States. The immense hall of the old Chinese Museum was engaged for the occasion, and profusely decorated with flags and banners. At that time no Philadelphia paper had a corps of reporters at all competent to make quick work of a two-hours' speech, which requires eight men to report verbatim with the requisite dispatch for an early issue. The consequence was that it was past ten o'clock the next morning before the Whig paper appeared. There was a saucy little Democratic sheet published then, called the Pennsylvanian, edited by the late Colonel Forney, which played a nice trick upon an expectant public. The editor hunted up Mr. Webster's special speech on the tariff delivered in 1824, which was a thorough-going argument for free trade, in direct opposition to the oration of the evening before. Colonel Forney struck off a large edition of that speech as a supplement to his paper, heading it in his largest type, "Webster's Great Speech on the Tariff." The newsboys made the town ring with his cry soon after sunrise. Horace Greeley, who had come over from New York on purpose to hear the speech, and who decided to get an early copy for publication in the New York Tribune, rushed out of his hotel and bought several of them. Many thousands of copies were sold before the joke was discovered. Mr. Webster himself, who loved a joke, took it in good part, laughed heartily, and said to the friend who handed him the paper: "I think Forney has printed a much better speech than the one I made last night."

A LITTLE NONSENSE.

Dry goods—salt fish.

A wedding party—a Mormon.

A notorious eavesdropper—rain.

Stage struck—hit by an omnibus.

On the mash—the careless trucksman.

A band box—the orchestra enclosure.

Marble hacks—the winnings of the small boy.

Capable minister of the interior—a tanner.

Our babies—with all their faults we love them still.

The political spider will have to be fly this year.

The played out straw gets nothing but dead C fruit.

[illegible] Washington Capital.

You have seen the air full for the last day or two of a fine filmy fiber that looks as it floats through the air like a snow flake. General Averill grasped some of this blossom that comes from the poplar trees and said:

"That is the most delicate, beautiful fiber in the world. It is even finer than a spider's web. I can take that, spin it and make the most delicate, beautiful illusion lace or veil, but it will be of course very expensive. It will be lighter and more delicate than the finest silk." General Averill said that he was going to collect enough of this material to spin a veil as a curiosity.