

WITS OF THE HOUSE.

HUMORISTS WHO ENLIVEN THE PROCEEDINGS OF CONGRESS.

Chief Among Them Is "Private" John Allen, Now Serving His Last Term—His Mantle Likely to Fall on Champ Clark.

[Special Correspondence.]

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—Every congress has its humorist, and some of them have half a dozen. There is always some member whose keen wit, mirth provoking drollery and talent as a story teller make him a distinctive character among his fellows. Such a character was the late S. E. Cox, who years ago was recognized as the humorist of the house of representatives, though he was much more than a humorist. So, indeed, have been most of the so called funny men of congress. It well nigh broke Sunset Cox's heart



Photo by Bell, Washington.

JOHN M. ALLEN.

because the house refused to take him seriously long enough to make him speaker, though he was recognized as fully competent for that position.

William E. Mason, now Illinois' junior senator, won much distinction as a wit and story teller while serving in the house. And there are others. The greatest of these, however, is "Private" John M. Allen of Mississippi, who is now serving his last term in congress, having refused unanimous renomination and certain re-election. For 15 years there has been none to contest his pre-eminence as the humorist of the house, and all of his colleagues who have been re-elected to the Fifty-seventh congress sincerely regret that he is not to return, a regret shared alike by Republicans and Democrats and even by those who have had occasion to wince under the shafts of his keen wit. Mr. Allen is a pronounced partisan, and his speeches are often leveled at the Republicans or at some particular Republican member, but there is no venom in his humor, and his opponents laugh as heartily as his Democratic colleagues at the droll stories with which he is accustomed to illustrate a point or clinch an argument. Droll stories, witty sallies, trite aphorisms and pungent sayings are so deftly woven into his speeches as to make them treasurable as humor and telling as argument. Mr. Allen first took his seat in congress in December, 1885, and early in his first term earned a reputation as a wit, which he has sustained ever since. Word that he was on the floor has always been sufficient to empty the cloakrooms and corridors and fill the floor and galleries of the house.

In the last congress, when Mr. Allen attained a place on the committee on appropriations, the committee of second importance in the house, and when he began to aspire to a seat in the senate, he tried to cultivate a dignified, senatorial style, but he could not let pass the opportunity to tell a good story, and often in the midst of a dry speech about the figures of an appropriation



Photo by Clinedinst, Washington.

CHAMP CLARK.

he would convulse the house with laughter with some quaint anecdote of southern life. He was disappointed in his ambition to become United States senator, having been defeated by Governor McLaurin. Mr. Allen is unquestionably one of the ablest men in Mississippi and one of the best known and best liked, and his fitness to serve in the upper branch of congress could not

be questioned. Was it because his people refused to take him seriously that he was denied the senatorial toga? At all events, he has given notice that he will retire from public life after the 4th of next March and will go back to Tupelo and practice law.

There is, however, another phase of John Allen's character besides that of humorist and story teller. He is a modest, able, active and conscientious legislator, whose vote and voice in congress mean much to his constituents, to his country and to his party. It is for his qualities as a man more than for his talent as a humorist that John Allen is highly regarded by all his contemporaries and for which he will be missed in the next congress.

Congressmen are already discussing the question as to who shall succeed "Private" John Allen as the humorist of the house. Perhaps Champ Clark of Missouri possesses these qualities more fully than any other man in congress. He is the most picturesque figure in the house. He is keen of wit, vivacious, epigrammatic and possesses a marvelous fund of anecdote and story. His metaphors and similes are sparkling and original, arousing at times uncontrollable merriment, though giving evidence that there are thought, purpose, character and ability behind the genuous flow of wit and humor.

SAMUEL HUBBARD.

QUAIL SHOOTING IN VIRGINIA

Rare Sport It Is Hunting the Gamy Little Bobwhite.

[Special Correspondence.]

HANOVER, Va., Dec. 24.—Virginia, the "mother of states and statesmen," is, with all its other attractions, the paradise of sportsmen. With dog and gun, it seems to me, a man can have more sport right here in old Virginia than almost anywhere else in the country, or at least anywhere within reasonable distance of the centers of population. This is the home of bobwhite, the gamiest of game birds. The season for the shooting of quail in this state is now well advanced—in some counties it is almost over—but there is still opportunity for hunting in this section, and with a keen scented pointer one can readily raise a covey of birds, and if he is a reasonably good shot he ought to be able to take a good bag of game. The open season in this county and in many other of the counties continues until Feb. 1 and in a few of the counties until the 14th of February.

The quail is so thoroughly identified with this state that naturalists have, in addition to its genus name, ortyx,



AFTER QUAIL IN VIRGINIA.

designated it Virginianus—a just tribute, for nearly every hill and dale of the Old Dominion holds its bevy of these little brown "birds," as they are fondly called by the natives. But few sections of the state are without them, and the scarcity of the birds in those sections, if scarcity it can be called, is caused by the prosperous cattle grazers reducing the plantations to grass, thus destroying the cover in which the quail love to dwell. Bobwhite is one of the most domestic of all the wild bird family. His disposition to frequent the localities close to human habitations is peculiar to himself and followed by no other bird. He seems almost to love the society of man.

So pretty, so small and apparently so confiding is our little friend the quail that it seems almost a shame to kill him. And so indeed it is to kill him after the manner of the pot hunter. To take him except on the wing, as he goes off with a soul stirring whirr on his arrowy flight across the fields, is downright criminal. Hunting Bob fairly and decently with dog and gun is not murder, but an entirely different thing—it is sport.

The first necessity for quail shooting is a good and well broken dog. Either pointer or setter will do. You may have a \$500 Llewellyn with a good pedigree. You will do better to tie him up and go borrow Bill Jones' sunburnt pointer or an old lemon and white setter which never flushes and never mangles a bird in retrieving when you order him in. Without the dog, and a good, well broken one at that, there can be no quail shooting in the sportsman's sense, but in the sharp, crisp air of the bracing fall and winter days, when the sun has melted the snow like frost and the scent lies low and strong, the sportsman, with the dog and gun he loves, can find the highest type of sportsmanly enjoyment. On a good scented day and in a good quail country, such as is found in this and other sections of Virginia, the man who likes hunting for the sake of hunting, and not for the mere sake of killing birds, is sure of a good day's sport. His dog must be fast, and, if the field is large and open, the sport begins the moment the dog is cast off. It is a sight to warm a man's blood to see a well bred, well broken dog beating out a stubble or weed field in quest of the game. Then suddenly there rises from a thicket or bunch of dry leaves a bevy of the brown, swift flying little beauties. Crack goes the gun, and he must be quick and accurate of aim if he brings them to bag. But it is great sport, and nowhere is it so enjoyable as on the velvets of Virginia in these crisp, invigorating December days.

CARROLL WALLACE ROSS.

AUTOMATIC SERMONS.

A London Clergyman Who Has Hit Upon a New Idea.

Almost within shadow of the Monument stands the most extraordinary church in London. This sacred edifice is known as St. Mary-at-Hill.

Into an interior which carries one back to long dead ages—the oaken facade and pulpit are nearly five centuries old—a modern, not to say sensational, note has been interpolated in the hope of solving the problem as to how to bring back the masses to worship. This hope has certainly been gratified, for the edifice at every service time resounds to the tramp of many feet instead of being left to desolating emptiness which characterized it formerly.

From under that ancient pulpit the maw of a huge brass instrument projects itself, a bass drum is seen reared against the legs of a grand piano, a triangular magic lantern is described in the organ loft and before it stretches a huge white sheet supported by the fluted columns of the church.

The brass instrument under the pulpit is called a "monsterphone." It performs pieces of music for the entertainment of the congregation—not necessarily sacred music—and it varies its programme with an occasional address not exclusively on spiritual themes. For the special edification of a Daily Mail representative it gave a capital rendering of Mendelssohn's "Wedding March," followed by an address by the Archbishop of Canterbury couched in simple, telling language, such as his intended hearers would understand.

The magic lantern in the organ loft throws pictures on the screen stretched across the center aisle, and when service is being held "Captain" R. Coleman, sometimes with the aid of a speaking trumpet, explains the incident depicted. A skilled pianist presides at the grand piano, a numerous stringed orchestra ranged before the altar performs pieces of music that are known in every household, the bass drum booms and echoes through the venerable pile, and the Rev. W. Carllie or some other preacher tells his congregation some plain home truths, no subtle, theological hair splitting, no didactics, but straight rhetorical blows from the shoulder.

Such is the scene that may be witnessed at St. Mary-at-Hill during the dinner hour on any week day except Saturday and every Sunday evening. It is the Rev. Mr. Carllie's method of bringing the people to church. He has succeeded, for the congregation, numbering once barely a dozen, is now over 600. At midday the workmen in their toil stained clothes spend part of their dinner interval listening to the "monsterphone" or looking at the magic lantern pictures, and the Sunday congregation is just as homespun in its character. Mr. Carllie is satisfied with the results of his novel effort. He is convinced he is "getting at" the right sort of people and proudly refers to the burglar's picklock and whisky bottle that were recently left in the pews.—London Mail.

The World's Largest Grapevine.

The world's largest grapevine is located in the Carpenter valley, in Santa Barbara county. It had its beginnings in 1842, when a Spanish woman, one Joaquina Lugod! Ayala by name, planted a cutting of the old Mission variety of grape. From the start it gave promise of an unusual future, and today, after half a century of growth, it stands the monarch of the grapevines of the world. The trunk measures at the base 8 feet 4 inches in circumference. At a height of six feet from the ground it divides into four main branches, the largest of which has a circumference of 3 feet 5 inches. It covers an area of 100 by 134 feet. Sixty-five stout posts with crossbeams support its enormous spread of branches.

The present area, large as it may seem, does not fully represent the prodigious growth of the vine, for its owner, Mr. Jacob Wilson, unwilling to concede it more room, cuts it back heavily each year. In 1895 a record was kept of the amount of grapes yielded by "la vina grande" for that season, and the astonishing total of ten tons was recorded. During the World's fair and again at the time of the California Midwinter exposition large sums were offered Mr. Wilson for the removal of the vine for exhibition purposes, but he wisely declined both.—California Cor. Rural New Yorker.

The Good Will Temple.

About ten years ago the Rev. J. S. Bitler, a Methodist minister, saw in a vision a mighty church built for the masses in a large city. Since that time it has been the object of his life to build that temple. He discovered no means, however, with which to build the structure until a year ago last August, when he met A. J. Wharton, a rich mine owner of Colorado. To him Mr. Bitler unfolded his plan, which met with such favor in the eyes of the mine owner that he decided to give his aid to the work. He presented to Bitler 100 acres of mining land, and a telegram the other day announced a rich strike on the land worth \$1,000,000. Mr. Bitler says that he will build a church in Chicago to be called the Good Will temple.

An Excellent Blunder.

Blunders are always entertaining to people who are better informed than those who make them. A choice selection brightens the pages of the report of the board of education for 1899-1900. It would be difficult to beat the following passage from an answer as to the carbon dioxide present in the air: "If you seal up in a tube a plant in one bulb and an animal in the other, the plant will produce the oxygen necessary for the animal and the animal the CO2 necessary for the plant, and they will go on living together for hundreds of years."—London Telegraph.

A BIT OF LACE.

Napoleon Slapped Josephine's Face Because She Cut It.

For \$2,000 has been sold in Paris a piece of lace which was the cause of a quarrel between Napoleon and Josephine in which the cheeks of the empress were slapped. It had been the property of Mlle. Perusset, daughter of a favorite maid of the flighty empress. Napoleon had brought the lace from Italy. He often brought her beautiful things on his return from a successful campaign, and Josephine never asked him how he had got them, for she thought that perhaps he would not care to tell.

It was a large square of the finest old point de venise, and Josephine as soon as she had it in her possession sent for M. Duplan, her man milliner, and asked him to make with it a certain fichu and a peplum.

"Impossible, your majesty," answered Duplan. "The piece is too large, and we could not arrange it gracefully."

"Well, cut it then!"

"Cut a treasure such as that! Oh, madam, I could not do such a thing." "Nonsense!" cried Josephine. The lace was draped on her shoulders. She knew how she wanted it. So she calmly took a pair of scissors and in a second had it set right, while long, narrow pieces of the priceless stuff fell round her.

At this moment the emperor entered the room. "Cannibal!" he cried. And he gave her a sounding slap on her violently rouged cheeks, which were soon covered with tears. Duplan discreetly withdrew, and the lace was thrown into a chest of drawers. Josephine could not bear the sight of it after that and at last gave it to Mme. Perusset, her favorite maid. The odd bits of it have now been sold for \$2,000. Another bundle fetched \$1,000.

The passion of Josephine for lace caused frequent scenes between her and Napoleon. She would save lace, and she seldom let anything stand in the way of acquiring it. It is even said that this frivolous fancy helped to bring about her downfall, for Napoleon, who at first would not hear of forsaking her, one day said to the Prince de Wagram: "The cup is full now, prince. What do you think Josephine did lately? 'Nobbled' one of my young generals and made him pass lace for her in his top boots through my own frontier! Her soul is made of lace, prince, and that is too fragile a stuff for an empress' soul!"—New York Press.

"KING OF INVALIDS."

The Plight Which Gave That Title to a Young Philadelphian.

In a small dwelling at 1218 Cabot street, a little thoroughfare running west of Twelfth street just above Girard avenue, lies a young man known throughout the length and breadth of this broad land as the "king of invalids." His throne is a bed from which he has not moved for ten years.

As his only companion, his faithful nurse, Miss Carrie Dentry, and his pet dog, Charles H. Conrad waits for death, with the knowledge that nothing else can ever release him from his sufferings. Science can offer him no hope, for hundreds of the most eminent physicians have visited his bedside and turned away with a shake of the head.

Rheumatoid arthritis is the name of the strange malady with which he is afflicted, and its effect is the formation of bone around the joints, rendering them extremely sensitive and perfectly motionless. Elbows, wrists, knees and ankles are all dislocated and abnormally enlarged, while the rest of the trunk is emaciated, and trunk and limbs are alike contorted and twisted.

It is not ossification pure and simple, as in this case Conrad's sufferings would be much less. As it is, his whole body is so sensitive that the least touch causes excruciating agony. His arms are bent inward, the left hand slowly growing toward the stomach, between which and it a heavy pad of cloth is placed in an effort to change its course.

Conrad was a strong and athletically built young man when 21 years old, now ten years ago. Exposure brought on rheumatism, and this developed into the present malady.

Through his nurse he is kept in communication with every chronic invalid in the country, and by them he has been given the title of the "king of invalids."—Philadelphia Times.

Paid Sunday School Teachers.

For some time the Sunday school teachers of the Arlington street church of Boston have been paid, and the plan is said to work well. The pastor, the Rev. Paul Revere Frothingham, says: "Sunday school teachers are very much better than they used to be. Teachers today have to have some fitness for the work.—The time is coming when it will be considered a distinction to be allowed to teach. A Sunday school teacher should be able to tell plenty of stories. Children remember stories and so remember what the story teaches. Stories should be picturesque and should appeal to the fancy. Jesus himself was an incessant story teller."

How Wales Eats.

The Prince of Wales is very conservative in the matter of eating and drinking. He dislikes long lists of comestibles, and as to beverages it is well known to his friends that only certain wines are acceptable to his palate. He is also very particular as to what cigars he smokes. The heir apparent likes to sit down at a fixed hour to his meals and, very rightly, waits for nobody. Indeed it is recorded of him that on one occasion a relative of the prince, a personage of high degree, arrived an hour late for luncheon. His royal highness observed: "I hope you will like the coffee. It is still quite hot."



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J. W. WALD,
Sheriff Caddo Parish.
Caucasian, Dec. 26, 1900.

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