The Miller Discovers Madam Rain

Mr. Wind and Madam Rain

BY PAUL DE MUSSET

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Synopsis

Many years ago there lived in Brittany a plodding sort of fellow named John Peter, a miller by trade, with his wife, Claudine, and a little son, Peter. They were as poor as church mice.

Claudine fell ill, and the family was in dire straits until assisted by two remarkable individuals, Mr. Wind and Madam Rain, whom John Peter entertained one night while his wife and the baby were asleep.

With their help the family prospered, until one day the Baron, their lord, appropriated all their savings, and John Peter was again obliged to ask aid of Mr. Wind. He was presented with a tiny silver cask, by means of which, through magic, a magnificent meal, with solid silver service, could be supplied to any number of persons. The Baron swindled him out of this, however, and in a short time they were as poor as ever before.

John Peter paid a second visit to Mr. Wind, but spoke untruthfully as to how the silver cask had gotten into the Baron's hands, and was punished by having given him a small golden cask, from which, when tapped with a magic wand, a huge and terrible giant slowly arose amid dense smoke and beat the miller roundly. The miller, however, made a shrewd deal with the Baron, whereby he received 20,000 francs, and the Baron got the cask.

(CONTINUED FROM LAST SUNDAY)

Chapter VI.

ON HIS return to the castle the Baron shut himself up in his own room in order to try his wonderful little cask. He struck it with his wand, and directly out came the smoke, taking the form of a giant, and the giant gave the Baron twenty-five blows with his club.

The servants of the Baron heard him uttering piercing cries. When they ran in they found their master stretched on the floor, but the giant had already reentered his dwelling, and nothing remained in the room save a slight smell of smoke. As the Baron's back was not as tough as the miller's he was confined to his bed for two days with the pain, but he knew better than to boast of the blows he had received, therefore, not a word did he say to anybody of his adventure. He even feigned being highly pleased to possess the little golden cask.

In the meantime the miller and his wife employed their 20,000 francs profitably. They bought fields and meadows, and they pulled down their miserable cabin and had a beautiful farmhouse built in its place, with barns, cowsheds and stables, and a sheepfold besides, where they put a flock of sheep.

John Peter had also plowmen and day laborers and a man to attend to the mill. Instead of grinding corn for others he made flour of the grain which he reaped. Claudine bought herself a silk dress to go to church in on Sundays. As soon as Peter was big enough he was sent to school to learn to read, and at six years old he knew more than either his father or his mother.

These good people might have lived peacefully and happily had it not been for the wickedness of the Baron, who bore them a grudge for the blows he had received and the 20,000 francs he had paid them. He diverted himself by letting game loose on John Peter's land, and then, under pretense of hunting, he, with his dogs, horses and huntsmen, laid the fields waste. In vain did the miller complain; nobody paid the least attention.

One day the Baron had a quarrel with a neighboring lord, and declared war against him. This was only an excuse for levying imposts on his vassals. He overwhelmed John Peter with them, and took away his ploughmen to be made soldiers of and his horses to carry his soldiers to battle.

The miller, seeing himself threatened with the chance of falling again into his former state of poverty, bethought himself of the promises made to him by Madam Rain. So, without saying a word to his wife, he took his hob-nailed shoes, his stick and his woolen mantle, and set off and traveled a long distance until he came to the seashore and the Western grotto.

A gray light reigned in this grotto; a thin fog veiled the entrance, and the damp oozed out from between the rocks. Little spirits with fin-like wings fluttered about. In passing John Peter they threw water on his nose, and whispered:

"Let us wet; let us soak this silly fellow. Let us drench his mantle for him. Let us penetrate through his shoes and stockings."

But John Peter turned up the collar of his mantle, and walked boldly on till he reached the end of the grotto. There he found Madam Rain, surrounded by gray nymphs, each as languishing and with as bad colds as herself.

The dame was taking advantage of its being the middle of summer to lay in her stores. Little spirits were bringing one by one the drops of water which the sun had caused to rise from the sea, the rivers, the woods, the marshes and the meadows. These drops the nymphs collected into golden cups, and then threw them into a large reservoir.

When Madam Rain saw John Peter she began to gape; she blew her nose, and said to him in a lamentable voice:

"Who is this tiresome fellow that comes to disturb me in my employment?"

"Madam," replied John Peter, "a long time ago you rested yourself a while at my house, and then promised to interest yourself in the fate of my child. Little Peter will soon be 7 years old, and I am come to beg of you to do something for him. He deserves it for his good conduct, for he already knows how to read and write."

"What dost thou want me to do for him?"

"Madam, I am a poor peasant with no ideas; and I am unable to imagine anything; so I will leave it entirely to you."

"Booby that thou art!" said Madam Rain, sneezing, "to come here disturbing me and not to know what thou wantest! I must, however, get rid of this man. Since his son knows how to read, let my large copper box be given to him, with the wand and the gilt-edged book. If little Peter is less stupid than his father it will be quite sufficient to make his fortune."

The spirits brought the large copper box, the wand and the gilt-edged book. John Peter put them all under his arm and ran off as fast as his legs would carry him.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT SUNDAY.

The Giant of the Cask, the Miller and His Wife and the Baron

Why Johnny Changed His Mind

This Christmas Story Explains Why One Boy's Stockings Were Not Hung

ONE night when Johnny's mamma had tucked him safely into bed, and his prayers had been said, and just before Conductor Sandman called "All aboard for the Land of Nod," Johnny and his mamma talked

about Christmas, which was only a week off. And Johnny said, "I'm going to hang my stockings, mamma." "Very well, dear," said she, "now go to sleep. Good night!" And then Mr. Sandman cried "All aboard!" and Johnny was on his way to the Land of Nod.

When he got there, he was ever so pleased with the things that he saw there and heard there, except one thing, and that was the last. He thought he heard the sound of sobbing, and, wondering who could possibly be unhappy in the Land of Nod, he looked all around to see where the sobbing came from. And what was his surprise to find that it came from two holey, black stockings—his very own, in fact. Just as he was about to exclaim, they began to speak, so Johnny kept still and listened. And this is what they said:

"Woe is me!" wailed the first, and the second one cried,
"Were there ever two stockings more shockingly tried?"

"He has stubbed out our toes and he has scuffed out our heels—
(I suppose he can't know that a stocking foot feels!)—

"He has tumbled and cut ugly holes in our knees;
He has worn us to rags and we're thin as you please.

"But our last and our worst and our cruelest of woes
Is the one that we now are about to disclose.

"A most terrible prospect before us appears,
I am sure if we could we should burst into tears.

"On the eve before Christmas (the thing must be true,
For we heard him declare it was what he should do),

"We're to meet the most pitiful fate ever sung,
For we two wretched stockings are doomed to be HUNG!"

"Oh, you poor stockings!" whispered Johnny, "I never thought I was hurting your feelings like that!"

And when he got back from the Land of Nod and his mamma kissed him "Good morning!" he said:

"Mamma, I've changed my mind—I guess I'll not hang my stockings, after all. So please put all my gifts on the Christmas tree."

"Very well," said his mamma, and she wondered why Johnny changed his mind.

Christmas of the Puritans

MORE and more after the time of Queen Bess was Christmas made an occasion for mad revelry instead of a joyous Christian celebration.

Finally that part of the English people called the Puritans, who had become disgusted with the growing foolishness of the Christmas celebration, got Parliament to prohibit Christmas festivities of any sort. And for ten years the only way Christmas was celebrated was by a fast. Even for merely decorating their church with evergreens the trustees of St. Margaret's (Westminster) Church, in London, were placed under arrest.

The Puritans went entirely too far, you see, in their sternness, and, naturally, the people rebelled. So they began celebrating Christmas secretly at home with all sorts of festivities. And, because they did it secretly, they felt as if they were very sinful. "When the Church refused to use her pleasant nests Satan stole them and made them snares." So people said at that time; or, as other people put it, "Father Christmas was let in at the back door."

A little later, when the Puritans lost their political power in England and had to seek a refuge elsewhere, many of them, as you know, came to America. Bringing with them, as they did, their stern prejudice against festivals, they completely ignored Christmas for a long, long time.

Their children and great-grandchildren, however, did not inherit their prejudice so strongly, and then, too, they were influenced by the Dutch colonists in New Amsterdam (now New York), who always kept a very merry, but perfectly respectable, Christmas.

So, at last, Puritan New England "came around," and permitted Christmas to be celebrated once again in all her homes with "moderate festivities and rejoicing after attendance at the place where God is preached."

THE POULTRY TANDEM

JOHNNY JUMPERS has a big brother who is handy with tools. And one day last summer Tom made him a cunning little wagon "just his size."

It had solid wooden wheels and a jolly seat, and, best of all, a footboard for little J. Jumpers' two feet to rest on.

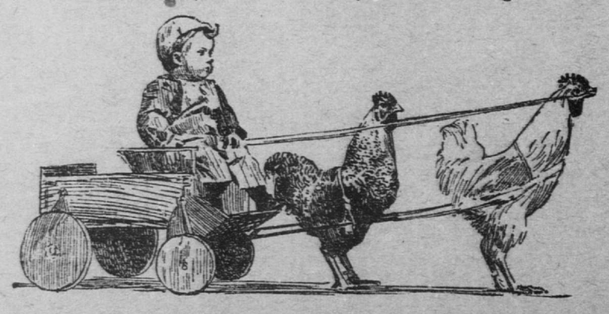
But, alas! there was no pony; no donkey—no! nor dog—to hook the wagon up to.

And Tom was too big to serve as a substitute for an animal.

So, poor Johnny Jumpers, instead of riding in his wagon, had to drag it around himself. And he didn't like it one bit.

This went on for a week or more. Then, one day, what do you suppose happened? Why, Mrs. Jumpers looked out through the window and there on the garden path, to her surprise, she saw Master Johnny driving a tandem team. And, more surprising yet, a team of roosters!

It was Johnny's own original idea. Don't you think it was a good one?



Christmas Week Stories, Games and Tricks

Punning Game.

HERE is a jolly game.

It consists of answering questions which are puns on the abbreviation of our various State names.

Pass around sheets of paper for the different players to write them on, announce one and a half minutes for each answer, and then begin reading out the questions:

1. Which is the most religious State?
2. Which is the most egotistical State?
3. Which is the State where untidy folk ought to live?
4. Which is the father of States?
5. Which is the maiden State?
6. Which is the State for pupils having lessons to study?
7. Which is the best State for miners?
8. Which is the most unhealthy State?
9. Which is the State best fitted to heal the sick?
10. Which is the decimal State?
11. Which is the best State in case of a flood?
12. Which is the State of surprise or exclamation?

The answers are:

1. Massachusetts. 2. Maine. 3. Washington. 4. Pennsylvania. 5. Mississippi. 6. Connecticut. 7. Oregon. 8. Illinois. 9. Maryland. 10. Tennessee. 11. Arkansas. 12. Ohio.

Christmas Greetings.

(From a Fairy to a Child.)

LADY, dear, if fairies may
For a moment lay aside
Cunning tricks and elfish play,
'Tis at happy Christmastide.

We have heard the children say—
Gentle children, whom we love—
Long ago, on Christmas Day,
Came a message from above.

Still, as Christmastide comes round,
They remember it again—
Echo still the joyful sound,
"Peace on earth, good will to men!"

Yet the hearts must childlike be
Where such heavenly guests abide;
Unto children, in their glee,
All the year is Christmastide!

Thus, forgetting tricks and play
For a moment, lady, dear,
We would wish you, if we may,
Merry Christmas, Glad New Year!

LEWIS CARROLL.

Bible Cake a Good Sunday Game.

A FINE cake that you will like real well is made according to the following recipe:

First, See if Tom and the rest of the family can write the answers down without looking up the Bible references. Later, of course, you will want to look them up to see if your answers are correct.

THE RECIPES.

4 cups of I Kings, iv, 22; ¾-cup of Judges v, 25; 1¾ cups of Jeremiah vi, 20; 1¾ cups of I Samuel xxx, 12; 1¾ cups of Nahum iii, 12; 1¾ cups of Numbers xvii, 25; pinch of Leviticus ii, 13; ½-cup Judges iv, 19; couple of teaspoonfuls Amos iv, 5, and season to taste with II Chronicles ix, 9.

Christmas Cards for the Blind.

This is one of the cards in Braille, bearing a Christmas greeting, which have just been issued by the "Weekly Summary," a newspaper published in Braille type at Shere, Surrey.

Snowballs for the Tree.

How are these charming snowballs made for the Christmas tree?

This way: Take empty round candy boxes. You can get them cheaply now—of almost any wholesale candy firm—cover them with cotton wool and fasten a string to each of them. There you have a beautiful, fluffy snowball!

Save this item and make use of it when you are preparing for the Christmas of 1905.

Jolly Cobweb Party.

A FRIEND of Polly Evans did something last Christmas that was fine. She gave a Cobweb Party.

This was really no new idea; cobweb parties were quite the fashion a good many years ago. For the boys and girls of to-day, however, it is a rather novel idea.

She assembled all her guests in the large drawing room. Here each one was given the end of a string and told to follow the string to the other end, where he would find his gift.

These gifts—oh! where were they not hidden? In nooks of the attic, in corners of the cellar—here, there, everywhere!

The strings crossed and recrossed each other, and led through nearly every room and hallway in the house.

You can imagine how often and how unexpectedly the various searchers came face to face and struggled to separate their intertwined strings.

The strings were of various colors, so as to be the more easily distinguished from each other.

Altogether, the Cobweb Party was a charming success. If not too late, why not try it yourselves to-day?

A Double Christmas.

A STRANGER visiting the German colonies of our great cities would think that his almanac needed resetting, for on the evening of December 5 thousands of little stockings are hung up with the same careful clothes-pinning and heart of hope as on the authentic Christmas Eve.

St. Nicholas Eve it is that the "Fatherland" exiles are celebrating. Just as early as any children ever get up, those that are paying honor to the gift-saint tumble out of bed and find their stockings well weighted with fruit and candies and apfelkuchen.

The naughty child that has been a trial to its parents in previous weeks is rather likely to find his stocking laden with coal. It is a hint that a second gift season is at hand, and that it would be well to fall into line with the good children.

And the good children are encouraged to a renewed and severer virtue for the days between their present reward and the fuller holiday that is coming.—Country Life in America.

PUZZLES AND PROBLEMS

Picture Puzzle.

The three pictures given below give the name of a popular vehicle when read in their proper order.

Can you make out what it is?

Christmas Enigma.

I am composed of twenty-nine letters—part of the first Christmas song ever sung.

My 7, 3, 4, 5, 6 is a part of the body.

My 17, 14, 15, 16 something often used for fuel.

My 8, 18, 19, 20 may be secured from a physician.

My 23, 22, 25, 27 is said to turn when goaded to desperation.

My 26, 1, 2, 24, 21, 9 is an act of charity very appropriate to Christmas.

My 10, 13, 12 I am not telling.

My 11, 28, 29, 6 is a coin.

Who can tell Polly Evans the answer?

A Flower Arithmograph.

The answer is the name of a very familiar garden flower, consisting of eight letters. The following words are all spelled with some or other of those eight letters:

1. My 3, 4, 6, 6 descends from the clouds.
2. My 3, 7, 5 denotes a way of moving.
3. My 8, 2, 6 are said to be the lords of creation.
4. My 3, 6, 5, 2 denotes possession.
5. My 3, 4, 8 is a horned animal.
6. My 3, 4, 5, 1, 2 is a kitchen grate.
7. My 3, 4, 1, 2 is great indignation.
8. My 3, 6, 3, 4, 1, 2 is a false appearance.
9. My 4, 1, 2 is duration of time.

Can you tell what the name of the familiar flower is?

Hidden Words.

Find a famous Christmas saying in this story:

"Pick me some flowers, please," said mother to the gardener. "A sweet pea, certainly, and a rose—only one, Arthur, that's a good, willing man. You certainly bestow arduous labor on these ornaments for my pleasure."

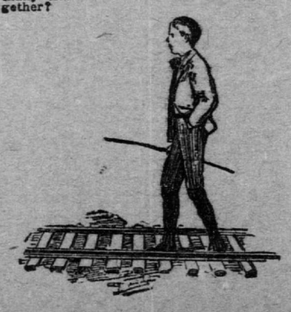
A Puzzle in Punctuation.

Can you punctuate the following so as to make proper sense?

There is a lady in the land
With twenty nails on each hand
Five and twenty on hands and feet
This is true without deceit.

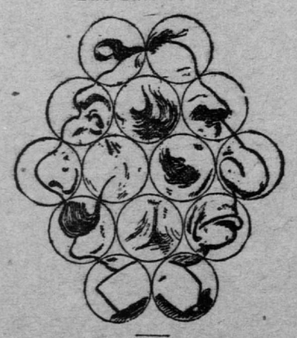
How Many Ties?

If Teddy walks over seventeen times as many ties as you see in this picture, how many ties will he have walked over altogether?



Answers to Last Week's Puzzles and Problems

Two Face Puzzle.



Christmas Acrostic.

S
G A D
B O N E S
M A T T H E W
M A G D A L E N E
J E S U S C H R I S T
B E T H L E H E M
Z A C H A R I A H
H U R
S

Funny Anagrams.

1. At Herb—Bertha.
2. Warded—Edward.
3. Then tear I—Henrietta.
4. May not H—Anthony.
5. Nor Sam do—Rosamond.
6. Rat home bowl—Bartholomew.
7. O! No! real—Leonora.
8. Door thee—Theodore.
9. Teach lot R—Charlotte.
10. Can stone C—Constance.

Teaching Your Dog Some Tricks

Good Advice by an Expert on How to Make the Animal Mind You

Many hold that you cannot begin too early; but this is not my experience, at least with the more advanced tricks. The dog is, I think, far more receptive at a year old, say, than at three or four months, and, therefore, more capable of being taught. The great thing is to teach the tricks gradually. Do not endeavor to cram into the dog's head three or four tricks in the space of time which should be devoted to one. If you do, failure will inevitably result. The dog should, in the initial lessons, always be rewarded by a titbit or two. Cooked liver, in small pieces, is always very much relished.

SITTING UP.—This is a very important lesson to be taught, as upon its thorough accomplishment so many of the other tricks depend. The first thing to do is to take him to a corner of the room, and squat him down upon his hind quarters. Show him the expected titbit, and then hold it over his head with one hand, while with the other the forepaws are disposed in the orthodox way, at the same time repeating the words "Sit up." Go through the same performance until he is able to balance himself successfully, then reward him with a titbit. He may next be tried with less support than the wall corner, and by taking him by easy and successive stages, he may be able to "sit up" without the slightest assistance.

SIT UP AND BEG.—From the "Sit up," the dog can easily be taught to "beg." This really consists in the uplifting of the paws at the utterance of the word "beg." Simply take, first, the right paw, and then the left in the hand; then, after doing this for several times, ask for right or left, as the case may be, finally holding out both hands for the reception of the two paws. The giving of the right paw may further be translated into "Shake hands." Rewards must at first follow, but on no account let these consist of sugar, as is frequently done.

TRUST AND PAID FOR.—This is also a trick which should be taught from the "sit up" position. All that has to be done is to place the small piece of meat upon the nose, saying, "trust," then, holding him under the chin, enjoin him to "keep steady." The meat once properly balanced, "paid for" should be uttered, and the chiff tapped underneath with the forefinger. This will send the meat in the air, and the dog will learn to catch it as it descends. He finally will, at the signal, "paid for," throw it up himself and catch it in the most expert manner.—John Maxie, in The Dog.

Christmas in Olden Times

Heap on more wood!—the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas still.

Each age has deem'd the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer:
And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had roll'd,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night;
On Christmas Eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas Eve the mass was sung:
That only night in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear,
The damsel donned her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dress'd with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the mistletoe;
Then open'd wide the Baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doff'd his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of "post and pair."
All hail'd, with uncontroll'd delight
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the Crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.
The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubb'd till it shone, the day of grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving man;
Then the grim boar's head frown'd on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell,
How, when and where the monster fell;
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassail round, in good brown bowls,
Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trowls.
There the huge sirloin reek'd; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie:
Nor fail'd old Scotland to produce
At such high tide, her savoury goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roar'd with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made:—
But, O! what maskers, richly dight,
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

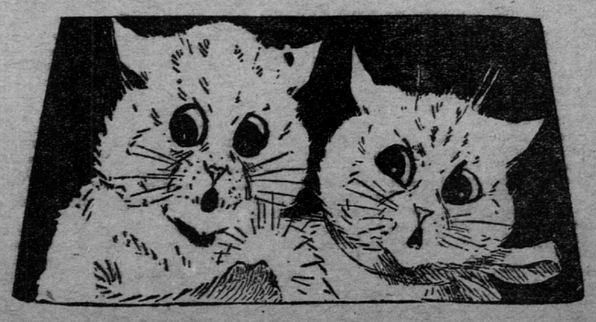
SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE KITTENS' CHRISTMAS

Two little kittens
Hung up their mittens,
And waited for Santa Claus;
For, wasn't it shocking,
They hadn't a stocking
To wear on their cold little paws?

Did you ever see
(He was strange to me)
The Santa Claus of the Cats?

I heard him purr;
He was dressed in fur,
And his sleigh was drawn by rats.

He filled the mitts
Of the two little kits
With goodies that never fail:
Then tied to each thumb,
As a sugar plum,
A fat little mouse by the tail.

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