

TOOK 233 "DEGREES."

Some Masonic Facts as to Which a Wife Had Been Misinformed.

Her Husband Had Deceived Her Badly, but His Game is Up Forever—She Will Give Him a Degree That Will Paralyze Him—His Skyfugle Story.

A middle-aged lady with a black alpaca dress, worn shiny at the elbows, and a cheap shawl and a cheap bonnet, and her hands puckered up and blue, as though she had just got her washing out, went into the office of a prominent Mason a few mornings since, says Peck's Sun, and took a chair.

She wiped her nose and the perspiration from her face on a blue-checked apron, and when the Mason looked at her with an interested, brotherly look, as though she was in trouble, she said:

"Are you the boss Mason?"

He blushed and told her he was a Mason, but not the highest in the land.

She hesitated a moment, fingered the corner of her apron, and curled it up like a boy speaking a piece in school, and asked:

"Have you taken the whole 233 degrees of Masonry?"

The man laughed and told her there were thirty-three degrees, and that he had only taken thirty-two. The other degree could only be taken by a very few, who were recommended by the Grand lodge, and they had to go to New York to get the thirty-third degree.

The lady studied a minute, unpinned the safety-pin that held her shawl together and put it in her mouth, took a long breath, and said:

"Where does my husband get the other 200 degrees, then?"

The prominent Mason said he guessed her husband never got 200 degrees, unless he had a degree factory. He said he didn't understand the lady.

"Does my husband have to sit up with a corpse three nights a week?" she asked, her eyes flashing fire. "Do you keep a lot of sick Masons on tap for my husband to sit up with?"

The prominent Mason said he was thankful that few Masons died, and and only occasionally was one sick enough to call for Masonic assistance. When a Mason was sick, and was away from home, or when his family desired it, the brethren were only too glad to sit up with him, but there were so many Masons and so few sick that it was only once in two or three months that a brother was called upon to sit up with anybody.

"But why do you ask these questions, madam?" said the prominent Mason.

The woman picked the fringe of her shawl, hung her head down, and said:

"Well, my husband began to join the Masons about two years ago; and he has been taking degrees or sitting up with people every night since, and he comes home at all times of the night smelling of beer and cheese. I thought at first that the cheese was the result of his going to the morgue to help carry brother Masons home after they had been found in the river.

"I have kept a little track of it, and I figure that he has taken 233 degrees, including the grand skyfugle degree, which he took the night he came home with his lip cut and his ear hanging by a piece of skin."

"Oh, madam," said the prominent Mason, "There is no skyfugle degree in Masonry. Your husband has lied to you."

"That's what I think," said she as a baleful light appeared in her eye.

"He said he was taking the skyfugle degree and fell through the skylight. I had him sewed up, and he was ready for more degrees."

"After he had taken, I think, about 150 degrees, I told him I should think he would let up on it and put some potatoes in the cellar for the winter, but he said when a man once got started on the degrees he had to take them all or he didn't amount to anything."

"One time I wanted a hat to wear to church with a feather on it, and he said feathers were all nonsense; and the next day he brought home a leather case with a felt coal-scuttie in it, and a feather on it that couldn't have cost less than \$10, the way I figure millinery. And when he put it on and I laughed at his ridiculous appearance he began to throw his arms around and I asked him what was the matter, and he said it was the grand hailing sign of distress, and if I didn't look out an avenger would appear from a dark closet and run a toadsticker through me for a scoffer."

"He must have spent a fortune on the last 150 degrees. One morning he came home with his coat tail split right up the back and his pants torn just as though a dog had chewed him, and one eye closed up, and a wad of hair pulled right out of his head, and

said he had been taking the 200th degree, but he wouldn't tell me how it happened, because it was a dead secret."

"I tell you what I will do. The next time he says anything about Skyfugle degrees and Consistory nonsense I will use a washboard and cause him to believe there is one degree in Masonry he has missed; and now good by. You have comforted me greatly, and I will be awake tonight till my husband comes from the lodge with his pat hand and I will make him think he has forgotten his ante."

The lady went out to a grocery to buy some bar soap, and the prominent Mason resumed his business with a feeling that we are not all truly good and there is cheating going on all around.

BEAUTY OF OUR GIRLS.

American Girls Beat the World in Variety of Attractions.

The beauty of American girls is a much discussed question. It is said they have no distinct points, but it seems to me that any one who has traveled must easily have settled upon the salient points which go to make up the beauty of an American girl, says a writer in the Illustrated American. A general delicacy of outline as well as coloring are demanded. A woman with very large eyes and no other charms is never rated as a beauty here. When a woman is said to be beautiful in America it means that she has a face molded in delicate lines, features that are thoroughly harmonious, a figure which is neither pronouncedly athletic nor too plump, and small hands and feet. In England if a woman is six feet two, and broad across the shoulders, she is invariably spoken of in the society papers as beautiful, though her feet may outclass the iron-clad and her knuckles stretch wildly abroad.

In Italy and Spain a pair of big, expressive eyes are enough, but in America a thoroughly balanced series of attractions must be shown to win the title. American girls form a lofty, gay, intrepid and dashing army, whose audacity should be feminine. They have all of the athletic look of the English woman, without the ill-fitting gloves and ponderous boots. The assumption of semi-masculine attire robs them of their greatest charm. Womanliness is still the most attractive quality of woman.

Family Resemblance in Writing.

An expert says there is as much of a family resemblance in handwriting as there is in face. Brothers and sisters usually resemble each other in eyes, hair, contour of brow or cheek or chin, and in that more elusive quality we call expression. There are some exceptions to this rule, but not many, and out of fifty families of children the relationship in at least forty-five can be readily traced. So in handwriting the general outlines may vary ever so much, yet the eye of the expert will detect family resemblances here and there which cannot well be hidden. One is bred to the law and falls into the lawyer's beastly habit of writing carelessly; another may be an instructed in penmanship, and may even follow the lines of Spencer with the fidelity of copperplate engraving; another may be a farmer, only rarely touching a pen. Yet in the letters they write when the restraint is off, in the lines that flow from the hand guided by sincerity and masked from the common scrutiny the kindred blood will tell in cold pen and ink, and the brotherhood is revealed.

A Thief in Hard Luck.

At Chengkiatun, China, while a thief was engaged in robbing a house during the absence of the family, the watchman, hearing a noise, entered, but failing to discover the intruder, proceeded to enjoy his pipe. He fell asleep and set fire to the building. The frightened thief was caught by the villagers as he essayed to escape, and as many houses were consumed by the devouring flames, they proceeded to lynch him as an incendiary caught in the act. He was bound hand and foot, saturated with oil, hurled into the burning mass, and speedily cremated, a victim to the blind fury of a Mongolian mob.

The Savage Near the Surface.

Novelist Howells is contributing a series of studies of the small boy to a juvenile periodical, in which he describes the boy's lack of the humane instinct and the ferocity of his code of behavior so far as it relates to his treatment of his youthful companions. Mr. Howells might find an interesting illustration of this point in the case of the two little New Hampshire fiends who stuck pins into a companion, poured hot water on him, burned him with powder and left him insensible. The savage is very near the surface even in the child of civilization.

HOW HE SAVED HIS LIFE.

SERENE AND QUIET, BUT A MAN WHO WOULD NOT HURRY.

Nothing but Spanking Would Induce the Old Man to Run from the Raging Mississippi.

The water was rising rapidly in the lower Mississippi. Heavy rains had been falling above, and the strain on the levees had become so great that hundreds of planters were fleeing to the highlands. Enormous trees swept down the surging flood, and an occasional cabin with some one on the roof could be seen bobbing its way towards the gulf.

Late in the afternoon a man riding a horse drew up in front of a cabin near the river, and seeing an old fellow sitting on a soap box lazily greasing a pair of shoes, thus addressed him:

"Why, what can you be thinking about, sitting here so unconcerned, when the water is rising so fast? The levee has broken up at Cage's bend, and it won't be long until the swamp back yonder will be entirely filled up. What are you thinking about?"

"Wall," he responded, as he dabbed a handful of tallow on the shoe. "I was thinkin' about several things. Was thinkin' that I would go to meetin' tomorrow to hear that new feller that they 'low kin fling down any man on the circuit, an' then I thought that I would go over and whale old Rodney Bales. Rod an' me has been mighty good frien's, but tuther day I tuck up the idee that he shot my dog an' he's got to be whupped. I'm a little sorter curis thater way. When I take up a notion that a man has shot my dog it don't make no difference whether he has done it or not; I jest kain't he'p from whalin' him. My daddy was thater way, an' I jest took after him. Whichever way air you travellin'?"

"I am going to get out of this infernal bottom. I came down here day before yesterday, and if I get out you may rest assured that I'll never come back again."

"Much obliged to you, fur I allus waster rest. Makes no diffrance whether I rest ashored or not. What I'm after is the rest."

"How far is the nearest high ground from here?"

"Oh, you kin find high ground all along the river here. Land right down that is putty high. Couldn't buy it, I don't reckon, fur less than \$50 a acre. Mighty fine land. Cotton stalks grow as high as a hoss."

"I mean a hill; for Heaven knows I don't care what the land is worth."

"Wall, lemme see." He put down the shoes and wiped his hands on the bosom of his shirt. "Thar's a hill 'way out yander summers, but I don't know how you kin git thar from here, but if you was way over at the Abner place, 'W'y you'd be right thar."

"How can I get to the Abner place?"

"Wall, I hain't been over thar in some time, an' I did hear that old Abner had moved away."

"What difference does that make? The place is still there."

"I don't know about that. Piacos don't allus stay thar in this country."

"I'll find my way out all right, for I have a good horse; but what worries me is to see you remain here so unconcerned. I am a member of the American Humane Society, and it is my duty to urge you to save yourself."

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GREASING AN OLD BOOT.

"Don't fret about me, podner. The Bible tells me not to worry, an' that's one part of the good book that I foller out."

"I am really interested in a man so peculiar. How long have you lived here?"

"Mighty nigh all my life."

"Why don't you move away?"

"Feered I mont not have good health."

"You surely have chills, for you are as yellow as a pumpkin now."

"Oh, yes, have lots of chills. Have one mighty nigh every day. Wife an' Tib, an' Bob air in thar now a-shakin' with chills."

"You surely could not live in a place more unhealthful."

"Yes, think I could. None of us ain't dead, but lot of folks that lived up on the high ground is. Some folks mout not like chills, but then some folks don't like ple. I tell you that on a right hot day when the heat dauces down the road like somebody shakin' a mosquito bar, a chill is a mighty fine thing. You see a man gits tired of one sort of weather, such as they have in the hills, but down here he kin have two or three seasons in one day. In the mornin' he's jest a leetle

warm; 'bout dinner time his chill comes on and then he is cool; an' when the fever sets in, 'w'y he's jest about as hot as a white man wants to be."

"You beat anybody I ever saw."

"No. I don't beat nobody. Did beat a ferryman once by wadin' the river, but that was a long time ago an' I have jined the church since then."

Have you ever been run out by the high water?"

"Many a time."

"Then why don't you go now, for you must know your danger?"

"Wall, I am a man of fixed habits an' no matter how fast the water is rising I never make a break for the hills till the water comes up an' wets my pants. Then I know it is time to move, an' I holler for the folks an' we strike out. 'W'y, it so much of a habit with me not to take action in the matter till my pants air wet that one day last August, when we hadn't had a drop of rain for six weeks, a feller that wanted me out of the neighborhood come along through the truck patch whar I was grabbin' some potatoes, and jest as I stooped over he spanked me with a wet board and I called the folks an' struck right out."

"Look here now, that's too much to believe."

"All right, but I reckon a man ought to know what his habits air. If you have confidence enough in me to tell me of your habits, 'w'y I wouldn't dispute you, for I wouldn't know, an' a man ought to be mighty keeful about disputin' something he don't know anything about."

"Well, I'll have to leave you, but I almost feel like committing a crime in doing so."

"Oh, don't take on about me, cap'n. I'll set round here a greasin' of my shoes an' plough gear, an' the folks will be in the house a enjoyin' themselves with thar chills an' atter while the water will come up an' wet my britches, an' then we'll all strike out for the hills. As the water is risin' putty pater, mebbe I'll overtake you, for I don't reckon you kin ride through the woods so mighty fast."

"Good-by, for I see that I cannot save you."

"You could do it, but I don't want to put you to any trouble."

"It would be no trouble whatever to me. Follow my advice is all I can do for you and advising is all I can do for you."

"But you forgit my habits."

"Nonsense; what are you talking about?"

"You know I told you what the feller done while I was grabbin' potatoes. Jest git a wet board an' spank me an' I will hull out."

"I would be willing to take an oath that you are the biggest fool I ever saw."

"Not a fool, but jest a man of habits. It's little enough to ask of you, I am shore."

"All right," said the stranger, as he dismounted, "where is your board?"

"Yonder is one, good an' wet."

The stranger took up the board and spanked the man of habits—spanked him so hard that it made him grin. "All right," said the convert, as he rubbed himself, "we'll mosey. Murt oh, murt!" he called, turning toward the house, "come on now all han's, for it is time to bustle for the hills."

A moment later the family, evidently waiting to hear the tidings of deliverance, came pouring out of the house.—*Optic P. Read, in N. Y. World.*

A Lost Oil City.

This letter is dated at Pithole, but there is no town here, no postoffice, and not even a building left on the site of what was once Pithole City, which in point of postal business transacted was the third city of Pennsylvania. This was in 1865-66. Since then the town has literally disappeared from the face of the earth. It is doubtful if the history of the world furnishes another such strange romance as this town of Pithole in one corner of the Pennsylvania oil regions. To get into Pithole the *Globe-Democrat* correspondent was obliged to "let down the bars," as the territory once covered by a town of perhaps 100,000 inhabitants is now devoted to pasturing cattle. No census of Pithole was ever taken and any estimate of its population must be based on the amount of postal business. From Sept. 25, 1865, the date of the first publication of the local paper, to Feb. 13, 1866, over 20,000 letters were advertised. The total receipts of the Pithole office for the first quarter were \$4,325.04. A population of 100,000 is probably a low estimate, although it was largely "floating." To-day the place is a pasture field.—*Cor. St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

"Hold on, my friend, don't shoot; I'm a Judge." "Wall, s'posin' ye are! Judges ain't no more 'count than de law is nowadays. Ye can't hang a feller, ye can't lectrify him, an' my lawyer kin appeal's fast as you kin sentence. Shell out!"—*Harper's Weekly.*

PATENT RIGHTS.

Some Useful Information Regarding This Much Misunderstood Subject.

The word "patent" means "open;" and it was first made use of to describe the open letters, or "letters patent," by which a sovereign granted to a citizen or subject a monopoly of the exclusive use or sale of any article.

The word is now, in a sense not originally intended, applied to the secret of an inventor which has by him been made open to the whole public in consideration of a right for a limited period to make and sell the thing invented.

The original patent was often for a monopoly of a commodity which the people already freely possessed. The king of England, for instance, granted to individual subjects the exclusive right to sell such articles as salt and vinegar.

Such monopolies as this have been declared wrongful in England, and have never existed in the United States. The only patentable thing with us is a useful invention or discovery which has never before been possessed by the people.

The theory of the patent right is this: The inventor possesses a secret likely to be useful to the people, which secret he reveals freely to the government, for the benefit of the general public. In return for his service in revealing his secret, the government grants him the exclusive right, for a limited time, to make and sell the thing which his invention covers.

The patent, therefore, is simply a contract between the inventor and the people, in which the latter grant the former the sole right for a time to the profits from this invention, in consideration of having the free possession of the invention later on.

In this country a patent lasts only seventeen years. After that time all are free to make full use of the patented invention without payment of any fee or royalty—unless, indeed, the patent is extended by special act of congress. This extension is rarely granted, and only in cases where it is held that the patentee has failed to get the benefit of his patent.

The term of a patent was formerly fourteen years, and it was renewable by the patent office for seven years more. This privilege of extension by the patent office was abolished in 1861, and the term made seventeen years.

There is much misapprehension of the extent and character of the privilege which a patent really grants.

The government, in giving a patentee the right to the exclusive possession of his invention, does not undertake to guarantee him in that right. The invention is, during the term of his patent, his property; but he must defend it before the law in the same way that any other property must be defended.

The possessor of a horse, for instance, even if he has bought and paid for the animal, cannot keep possession of it if some other person can prove that it belongs to him. The holder of a patent may lose his right to it in several ways; and if he does lose the right to it, those who have bought of him his commodity have no more right to use it further, or to be identified by the government for the loss of it or its use than the innocent holder of a stolen horse has to be protected in its possession.

It is possible that some other person may prove that he was in advance of the patentee in the possession or use of what the latter has claimed as his secret or invention. The patentee may have used fraud in obtaining his patent; or he may be selling, as his patented article, something which is not exactly what his application described.

If the government should undertake to guarantee to a patentee, against all comers, the exclusive right to and possession of the thing patented, it would be granting a wrongful monopoly, because this would be a denial of the equal right of all citizens to sue and be sued, and to obtain judgments in accordance with equity and right.

A thing already freely made and used cannot be patented. The right to use it is common to all the people. And on the other hand, the liability of the purchaser of a patented article to lose the right to use it, provided it is proved to infringe some other person's right, is a part of the defence of the equal rights of all.—*Youth's Companion.*

Walking With a Lady.

It is a generally conceived opinion that a gentleman walking with a lady should walk on the outer side of the sidewalk. This idea does very well for a country town, but in a great city where thousands upon thousands of people, all in more or less of a hurry, are continually passing, it is a very poor rule to follow. One writer on the subject says: "The duty of a gentleman is to protect the lady he is walking with; to take all the hard knocks, jostles, and possible umbrella tips to himself, shielding the weaker vessel from many disagreeables, and to do this she must invariably be on the gentleman's right side, where she can promenade at her ease guarded by his many form, and not being obliged one-half of the time to take all the buffa and re-buffa constantly recurring in a crowded thoroughfare." Now, if some of the social leaders of this city were to take the establishment of this custom into their hands it would not be long before Boston could boast of a fad that would be a great benefit to the ladies of the community, and one that I hope to see a recognized custom in the course of not a great number of years.—*Boston Traveler.*