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What it Means.

Arrayed in snow-white pants and vest
And other raiment fair to view,
I stood before my sweetheart Sue—
The charming creature I love best.
"Tell me, and does my costume suit?"
I asked that apple of My eye,
And then the charmer made reply—
"Oh, yes, you do look awful cute!"

Although I frequently had heard
My sweetheart vent her pleasure so,
I must confess I did not know
The meaning of that favorite word.

But presently at window side
We stood and watched the passing throng,
And soon a donkey passed along
With ears like sails extending wide,
And gazing at the doleful brute
My sweetheart gave a merry cry—
I quote her language with a sigh—
"O Charlie, ain't he awful cute?"

THE BEST MONTH'S WORK

'What a delicious day! I can't believe we are really in the midst of winter. It is like May weather; in the sun one gets almost too warm. I have a strong impulse to go berrying or wild flower hunting, to keep up the delightful delusion that winter is over, but unfortunately I should too soon discover that it is a delusion. Laura, do put down that stupid sewing and let's go out in the sun.'

'But you just said the sun was too warm.'

'Well, let's go out in the shade, then.'

"Isn't it just as pleasant to be in the shade apart from the sentiment of the thing?' retorts Laura, the practical. 'I really can't take the time to be sentimental. This set of aprons must be finished.'

'You are provokingly altered by marrying, Laura, and I'm tired of seeing you with your eternal sewing. Well I'm not married, so there's no reason in my despising and eschewing all pleasant things. I know what I'll do. I have a bright thought.'

And Miss Eliza May (her friends called her Bonny) hurriedly left the room in which Mrs. Eliott persistently sat at the machine toiling over her aprons. Miss May was paying a visit to her old schoolmate—the first since the advent of the rosy-cheeked little boy who was such an absorbent of time and aprons. Miss May was charmingly pretty, and received an added picturesqueness from her present surroundings. The house, which Mr. Elliott had inherited from his forefathers, was a quaint and old fashioned one, with great porches on all sides and a grove of splendid trees growing around it. These, however, were bare and barren now save and except a little clump of evergreens at the back of the house, which looked to-day refreshingly green in the warm sunshine. It was no wonder that when Miss May emerged from the house she turned in this direction. She had assumed a long, deep sun-bonnet of pink calico, probably not so much to protect her complexion as to carry out the idea of its being May-time. She is carrying a shapeless bundle of cord in her arms, with two iron rings attached, which she presently suspended between two trees, when it was shown to be a very roomy and comfortable hammock. With questionable gracefulness—for even bonny May could not get into a hammock gracefully—she rolled herself in and when the draperies of her skirt had been made to conceal the neat little boots and a portion of gray stockings which had appeared for a moment, she produced a book with a suspicious binding of blue and gold, and began to read. But this pursuit seemed not interest her, for in a few moments the book had been tucked away at her side, and the pretty blue eyes down in the deep bonnet disappeared under their silk fringed lids. Miss Bonny was indulging herself in more delusions, and probably imagining that the distant sound of Laura's machine was the hum of summer bees. Perhaps she admitted that the author of the noise was, in one sense, a bee, and she herself the idlest of drones, but if she did, it did not worry her in the least—she was finding it very pleasant to be a drone.

Ten minutes after Bonny had left the room, Mrs Eliott heard a step across the hall, another moment she had uttered a little cry of surprise and given an enthusiastic welcome to a very good-looking young man, whom she called Max, and whom we present to you, more formally, as Maxwell Warner, Esq., by profession a journalist, and a brother to Mrs. Elliot. He had come unexpectedly from his distant home in the city, and walking the half-mile which separated her home from the town, had come upon Mrs Elliot so suddenly that it took her several minutes to realize his identity. Presently she said, eagerly:

'It's too nice, you coming just now I have heretofore been frustrated in my intention and desire of bringing you and Bonny May together, but I meant to write to you at once and beg you to make an effort to come on now, though I hardly dared hope you would have time.'

It is difficult to say what the expression was that passed over Mr. Warner's face while his sister was speaking, but it certainly was not delight. In a moment he asked, anxiously:

'When does your friend arrive?'

'Why, she is here. She came a week ago. Isn't it too lucky. O, Max, she is such a darling.'

One might have fancied that the young man's face fell as he answered:

'Now, look here, Laura. You were quite right in supposing I would be pressed for time about now, and I would have come but for the fact that I have not been very well, and I knew that chance was what I needed. But I can't afford to be idle. I have some important writing to do, and you must not be disappointed if I stick to it pretty closely. I can't enter into any plans of yours for falling in love with your friend, which would be charming, of course, but it is a recreation I haven't time for; and, without considering the young lady, if she is as fascinating as you have represented her, I might get hurt.'

'But, Max,' his sister answered, with regretful disappointment, 'that was just what I wanted. I hoped you would both get hurt, as you call it, and get cured by matrimony.'

'Well, don't hope it any more, Mrs. Laura, if you please. I haven't the faintest notion of marrying for several years to come. I am not rich enough—'

'But Bonny has something, and—'

'But, my dear, I haven't the inclination. I don't want to marry now. I'm too busy. So please don't think of it again.'

It was a disappointment, but Mrs. Eliot dropped the subject, saying as she rose:

'I must go up and have baby brought down, and tell Bonny to order something you like for dinner. Did you see Will?'

'Yes; I stopped at his office. Never mind about dinner—don't bother about me, at all. I'll go out and take a look around the old place, while baby's toilet is making.'

'Well, I'll come and find you presently,' Mrs. Eliot said as she left the room.

Mr. Warner accordingly put on his hat and sallied forth, and naturally enough, the shade of the evergreens attracted him, and so he bent his steps as straight in Bonny's direction as if he had been going to find her, a design of which he was altogether innocent. There was a thick thorn hedge which completely hid her from view until he had come up to and was looking over it, when, with disconcerted suddenness, he found himself standing not ten feet from the now still and motionless hammock, and gazing down the deep pink bonnet into the prettiest face he had ever seen.

The tiny bare hands were prettily folded over the closed book, little golden rings of soft blonde hair were lying close around the pure white brow and temples, and the deep-fringed lids had drooped upon the sweet blue eyes for Bonny was fast asleep.

At first Mr. Warner had been seriously disconcerted, and had hastily stepped back, but his eyes refused to withdraw themselves from this exquisite picture, and so he stood perfectly still and spell-bound. Presently, however, he came to his senses.

'By Jove!' he said, in a tone of suppressed enthusiasm, 'she is sweet. I don't wonder at Laura. How I wish she'd open her eyes. No, I don't; I wish she'd keep them shut forever. She couldn't look this lovely again. An angel in a poke-bonnet; nymph in a hammock.'

And a great many more preposterous similes occurred to Mr. Warner, which I am too discreet to mention. There is no telling how long he might have stood there, head he not been roused by the sound of his sister's voice calling him. With a guilty start he remembered himself, and turning, walked rapidly off. He came up with his sister just as she was turning the corner of the house with the baby in her arms. After he had admired and approved of his young nephew, to the edification and satisfaction of the mamma, the latter said:

"I can't find Bonny anywhere; she is not in her room, and I have called and looked for her in vain—I suppose she has gone to walk, and will be back by dinner. So you mean to begin your writing at once? I hoped you would fall into some plans of amusement for Bonny that I had made in case you come; but now you will do writing all the time, and ——"

"O, you mustn't take me so literally," the young man answered; "I can write as much as is necessary, and still find time for your plans, perhaps. I'm afraid I've appeared churlish and ungracious, but I didn't mean it. I am always ready, of course, to give you any assistance I can in entertaining your guest."

Good Mrs. Laura was undoubtedly astounded at this change of tactics, but she was discreet enough to hold her peace and conceal the astonishment she felt.

In a short time Mr. Eliot arrived, and carried his brother-in-law off to his library, where they remained until just before dinner, when the latter excused himself and went to his room for a short while, and presently descended looking so well dressed and handsome, after the adjustment he had made in his toilet, that Mrs. Eliot—as she presented him to Bonny—felt a conscious pride in each. Max could hardly help smiling as he met the demure and distant gaze of those beautiful blue eyes and responded to her few formal words. She was carefully dressed for dinner, and she had a very dignified little manner and look which Max could not help comparing with the expression and air of the little creature in the poke-bonnet. But she had so much buoyant young life in her that she could not retain her distant manner very long, especially as he was so kind and friendly, and by the time they had joined the laughing at Laura about baby's snub nose, and teasing her about being so very married and settled, and they had a stroll at twilight and a dance in the drawing-room afterwards, they had begun to feel like old friends.

And so the days flew by, and their acquaintance progressed in inverse ratio to Max's manuscripts. Laura found it quite unnecessary to warn her brother against overworking himself, or to inveigle him into the walks and rides and drives she had arranged for Bonny's benefit. Indeed, he had not been in the house ten days before she accused him of having grown lazy and idle, and began to inquire as to the state of the important writing of which he had spoken.

"He doesn't fulfill my idea of an author at all," Bonny said. "Every time he begins to write, if I happen to be near, I take a peep at the manuscript, and instead of its being comprised of thousands of sheets, in which he sits half-buried, it is nothing but one or two little scratched and scored pages that look very much like poetry though he is not that kind of an author, is he, Laura?".

To her surprise Bonny thought she saw him actually blushing as he hastily replied:

"I don't write poetry that I am aware of."

"Why, of coursey ou'd be aware of it if you did," said Bonny, laughing, "unless you resemble the man who, when he had the meaning of poetry and prose explained to him, was astonished to discover that he had been talking prose all his life."

Nothing more was said on the subject that night, but Bonny observed afterward that whenever she found Mr. Warner at work he would be sure to have plenty of loose manuscript scattered around, unmistakably prose compositions; but she once or twice saw him furtively hiding from view some suspicious paper a poem or sketch, for he was a fine artist, but she was quite sure the prose compositions were for exhibition merely.

"You are writing a poem or a collection of poems, I am sure of it, and you don't want us to know it until you come out in your blue and gold dress."

But Max would always deny and protest, so that she had to give up her efforts to detect him.

Bonny's home was so far away, and her visits to her friend necessarily so rare, that she was now come for a long visit; but Mr. Warner was understood merely to have run down for a short stay. However, the days and weeks flew by, and he was still his sister's guest. She certainly made every effort to make him welcome, and it was patent to every eye how delighted she was at his prolonged stay, and at the probable cause of it. But at length he got such urgent letters recalling him, and he had put off his important business affairs so long, that he really saw the unpleasant necessity of taking his departure staring him in the face so persistently that he fixed it just four days from the time of his announcement of this decision.

Of course regrets were expressed and invitations offered on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Eliot, but neither felt any confidence in urging a continuation of a visit which had already been so generous as to time. Well, he could be happy for those four days, he thought, and happy he was, and somebody else appeared to be so happy also, that it was no wonder if Max was obliged to see it.

But at length the night before his departure came, and he and Bonny had been for a walk in the bracing February air, which had now become cold and wintry; and as they were strolling slowly homeward, Max was saying how he loved the country and country life (a bran new predilection, by-the-way!)

'Then I wonder you have the heart to tear yourself away," said Bonny.

"I haven't," said Max.

"Haven't what?"

"Haven't the heart for that, or for anything else. The face is, I have no heart at all. I have lost it.'

He was yielding to a sudden temptation that assailed him to tell her his secret, but a startled look from her wondering and innocent eyes checked him, and he paused and recovered himself.

"I lost it before you saw me, Miss Bonny"—the cheeks flushed, eyes dropped and tears swam—but pride came to her rescue, and she answered some trivial thing. He continued, "I have the picture of the girl who has my heart. Would you like to see it?"

"Yes, thank you," she answered promptly.

They had reached the portico. He stepped into his room and brought out his portfolio, and opening it held it towards Bonny, and there lay the living breathing image of herself asleep in the hammock. She glanced first, timidly, then in astonishment, and stammered:

"How could you?"

"How could I do what? Fall in love with a girl asleep? If the girl loves me, she will close her eyes and let me see once more how she looks asleep."

She accepted the challenge, and he took his first kiss from her blushing cheek. Just then his sister was heard approaching saying:

"Oh, Max, we cannot let you go so soon. You said you had a month's work, and you have done nothing yet."

"My dear Laura," he said, "I have done the best month's work of my life. I have found you a sister."

Mrs. Eliot took it in at once, and pressed Bonny to her bosom. This was her second kiss that day, but how many more she got in years to come we shall not tell. Perhaps the reader may imagine.

Emulation.

The legitimate interpretation of this word is a desire for superiority attended with an effort to obtain it by all praiseworthy means, and without any wish to repress, or oppose others.

There is a nice line of distinction between emulation and ambition. When the latter is directed toward the attainment of excellence then it may become a synonym of the former But in its true sense ambition is an inordinate desire of power or eminence most often accompanied with illegal means to obtain the object.

When Woolsey in the midst of his fallen greatness charges Cromwell to "Fling away ambition," he saw by the dawning light of eternity that he had used a ruinous and unholy thing as a stepping stone to his own aggrandizement, regardless of good or evil to his fellow-men, and he then adds the deeply portentous words, "By that sin fell the angels."

Emulation strives not only for its own good and preferment, but also for that of others. It has no petty jealosies and selfish interests, and uses no tricks of policy and malicious measures to prevent all other competitors from reaching their own coveted goal. The trained racer in sweeping around the course feels but one desire that is to outstrip all other contestants in the race. But take two fine blooded steeds, harness them to a vehicle and start them on a journey. How nobly they work together; how beautifully they co-operate; how the one strives to help the other, to emulate his fellow in the discharge of his duty, and accomplish the work promptly and successfully.

Emulation lifts a man out of personal and ignoble motives, and lifts others with himself into the same pure invigorating atmosphere. It peoples earth with beings of angelic kinship, and as by ambition the angels fell, so emulation thronges heaven's courts with cherubic and seraphic hosts that make the unceasing melodies of the eternal city.

It is fallacy to suppose that the richest treasures of earth's pearls of price, paradoxical as it may seem are to be had "without money and without price." All men even the humblest, may emulate his competitors in winning those jewels that gold cannot buy, and that are stored where thieves do not break through and steal. Every man can become a blessing to himself and his race, can be pure and good in his motives; noble, unselfish, generous and honorable in his actions, in a word can be a peer amid the grandeur of human character, that lustrous pole star of mortal aspirations.

But men sometimes say we have no wealth, no position; we cannot influence others or benefit them by our limited, individual efforts and resources. This is fallacious logic. True, all men cannot be leaders comparatively few have the genius and courage to be the chief of a movement, but every subordinate can follow the leader, can strive to emulate his perseverance, his progressive activity, his hopeful spirit, and noble aspirations. The earnest, fruitful follower of a good cause, does as much for the world, and is as worthy of applause, as he who leads. However great and worthy a leader he may be he is a pulseless figure of "masterly inactivity" unless he has co-operation from his fellow-men. There is no instance on record where the great Napoleon ever conceded to himself or his rare military genius the success of one of his brilliant campaigns. Whenever Victory perched upon the eagles of France, his thanks were addressed to the soldiers of the empire.

Emulation of being enervated by opposition, is energized, enthused and doubly invigorated. Indeed the blows that are struck upon it by selfish jealous, malicious and slanderous antagonists, only serve to give it more nerve and fearful power and swell its watch-word of onward and upward to louder and triumphant song.

The legitimate emulation rejoices at the success of all true worthy men, at the full fruition of every movement or enterprise that is truly for the benefit of individuals or mankind at large. And as a magnanimous victor never exults over a fallen foe, so a man of true emulation feels a profound sympathy and regret at the defeat of his fellow man who was nobly endeavoring to work out beneficial results for himself and the human race at the same time.

As a watchword Excelsior has the stigma of triteness upon it; but so long as man strives to reach after higher things, its sound like the blast of a silver trumpet cannot cease to thrill his heart as he ascends the heights of man's noble aspirations. Higher, still higher; rings like a bugle call from the myriad tongued voices of the age, and emulation stirring within the rising and expanding soul of man, answers back the cry until it reverberates from the rivers to the ends of the earth. The theologian feels it thrilling the inmost principal within him, as he points to a christianity whose every downward step breaks one link in the golden chain that connects man's soul to blissful eternity. It makes the pure flame of love in the heart of the humanitarian burn still more brightly, till it flashes up ever upward towards its natal home in the skies. Higher, still higher; cries the educator of youthful minds: higher, still higher; is written on the hypotheses of the modern philosopher, and the true scientist feels its voice cheering his labors as he reveals natures most secret arcana.

As the years roll by the path of human progress beams more distinct, more marked, and brighter still with the light of true and sublime humanity. May we not hope that the year 1879 will notably illustrate a yet purer and broader promise for the future, and be pregnant with deeds of love, of help to the worthy emulator; of sympathy, peace, and fraternal good will. Angel visitants, no doubt, will hover in mid air over the earth, and rejoice with humanity when a new year dawns in the universal heart of man that shall

"Bring in the truth and right,
Bring in the common love of good."

Author, THOMAS S. POWELL, M. D., Atlanta, Ga.

The Funny Things We Do.

Have you ever reflected upon the very many funny things we do, for which we can give no particular reason? How is it that we do not give five cheers, four cheers, two cheers, one cheer? Why is it that we give three cheers and no more? Who can tell?

Why is it that the majority of people use their right hand in preference to their left, and cannot help smiling at those who use the latter?

Why is it that a man can not see a bundle of toothpicks without helping himself when he does not need them at all?

Why is it that a small boy cannot let the thin waisted wasp fly in peace, without furiously going for it with his new straw hat; or why is it that the small girl always insists upon lugging home a kitten that has not even learned how to open its eyes?

Why is it that when one asks us how many days there are in a certain month, we always say over to ourselves;

Thirty days has September,
April, June and November?

Why is it that we turn to the right instead of the left, when the left is far more preferable, and if adopted would save many an accident on railroad and highway? The driver always sits upon the right of his vehicle; in turning to the right he is farthest away from the wagon he passes, and unless he is an expert, cannot tell how close he comes to the wheels of the man who goes by him whereas, if he turned to the left side he could look straight down, see to the fraction of an inch how close he was approaching an obstacle, and thus avoid it. The engineer runs upon the righthand track, and sits upon the righthand side of his cab. The long, narrow locomotive, with its sand tower, belfry and smoke-stack is in front of him, cutting off his outlook and impeding his observation. He can view only his own track, while the opposite track, save at a distance, is almost wholly unseen by him. (On some railroads the reverse is the custom.)

Custom, owing to causes we know not of, has established these curious precedents, and from observation and education we unwittingly do thousands of things that are, to say the least, funny, and that we cannot possibly explain.

By the Sad Sea Waves.

A gaunt young man, with long, dark hair and a look of yearning after the unknowable, was standing on Coney Island beach on Saturday, and by his side was a woman whom he addressed as "My love." He was watching the white caps far from shore, and she seemed to be looking at the bathers.

Without removing his gaze from the wrinkled surface of the distant water, he exclaimed, "Oh, the great day when the bounding sea shall give up its secrets!"

"Yes," the woman said, with languid interest. "I wonder if that dumpy woman's hair is her own?"

A look of extreme sadness came over his face, like the shadow of an umbrella, and he involuntarily drew back a single step. In so doing he stepped into a hole dug by a golden haired little fairy of four or five summers, and he turned a back somersault.

"My love" looked at him reproachfully, and said: "Leonidas, I am ashamed of you."

He murmured something about the mischievous boys that "put holes behind people for them to tumble over," and then sat down in the sand to take off his shoes and empty the ballast out of them. He had one shoe off and was dusting his instep; just then the largest wave of the afternoon came up and obliterated all the prints in the sand around him—but one. His wife had retreated, and the appealing look that he cast at her while the wave was receding threw a gloom over all the gay throng on the beach.

"Leonidas," she said in a voice choked with emotion, "you had better find a seat on the sunny side of the next train and keep it."

Toward sundown the pair were seen strolling on the asphalt near Cable's. The warm sun and drying wind had done much to repair the young man's misfortune, and "my love" was evidently regarding him more hopefully, for she was telling him that one of the pony carriages was "the Midget's coach," and the urchin driver was Tom Thumb.—Boston Herald.

An Underground Stream.

Last week a negro, while digging a well on Mr. John Walter's place near Albany, Ga., began suddenly yelling out at the top of his voice for the bucket to be let down, which was quickly done, and the darkey was drawn up to the top of the well, trembling and panting, with eyes as white as cotton, and big as saucers. Investigation revealed a swift underground stream, rushing along underneath the spot where the negro had been digging. There was only a thin crust of earth between the negro and the stream, and it suddenly began to give way. The darkey could see and hear the water rushing below him. He escaped without injury, but his tools sank in the water and were lost.