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THE OLD SPECKLED HEN.

John Highow live I not fifty miles from here,
Was large of heart and in his faith sincere,
He was a farmer very well to do,
And had a wife devoted, kind and true,
But yet one sin life's devious ways has set,
She was inclined to worry and to fret,
'Bout this or that, servants or hired men,
But just now 'bout a poor old speckled hen.

The rounding year had on their efforts
smiled,
The great barn loft with sweetest hay was
filled,
The yellow pumpkins 'neath September's
skies
Had grown to more than their accustomed
size,
The honey bees had bounteous sweets dis-
tilled,
And rip'ning apples all the orchard filled,
But in her heart there was no joyous song;
The hen with many speckles had gone
wrong.

The various crops in garden and in field
Had given forth a more than generous yield,
The sheep and cattle both had multiplied,
And in the house and barn were laid a
good supply of all they made or grow
To meet their wants the coming winter
through.

Yet she could find no comfort night or
day,
The speckled hen had laid her eggs away.

And so one day when to her house there
came

An aged friend, we will not call by name,
And frankly asked how they were prospering
now.

Poor Mrs. Highow knit her anxious brow,
And bowing down her discontented head,
Forgetting all the blessings round her
spread.

Declared that she was awfully distressed,
The speckled hen had gone and hid her nest,
And so it is too many souls possess

The same great weakness that caused her
distress.

The little hills that life's pathway beset
We magnify, and o'er them fume and fret,
With eyes downcast and half despondent
tread,

We overlook the blessings round us spread,
The true alike of women and of men,
And every life has its old speckled hen.

—Thomas F. Porter.

The Carelessness of Peters.

BY LUKE SHARP.

GEORGE Peters was a very, very methodical person for so young a man. When a letter got into Peters' hands it went through a certain routine and the answer departed from him to the copying book and from the copying book to the envelope and the envelope, letter and all, with enclosures marked, went into the letter box with a regularity that nothing but the office clock could emulate, and even that, the clerks said, was not as regular as Peters, for they claimed it was always fast in the morning and mighty slow in pointing to 6 o'clock.

It is little wonder, then, that Peters stood high in the confidence of old man Bentham. Bentham was Bentham Brothers & Co. There were no brothers and no company—that was merely the firm name—it was all Bentham. Perhaps there once were brothers and perhaps there was once a company, but that is all ancient history, anyhow, and has nothing to do with this strictly modern story. And it did not interfere with the fact that old Bentham's name was a lovely thing to have at the bottom of a large check.

The clerks never speculated on the probable effect of love on Peters, because it never occurred to them that such a thing as Peters falling in love was within the bounds of possibility. Love, they argued, was not an article that can be docketed and ticketed and referred back for further information, and entered in the day book and posted on the debit or credit side of a ledger, so what on earth could Peters do with it if he had it? Manifestly nothing. If they had known as much about human nature as you or I, they would have surmised that when Peters did fall, it was time to stand from under.

And who should Peters fall in love with but the very woman of all others whom he ought never to have given a thought to—in other words, pretty little Miss Sadie Bentham, if you please. It made Peters himself cold when he thought of it, for he knew he had just as much chance of getting the moon or the laurel wreath as the consent of Old Man Bentham. The clerks always said that it was Miss Sadie who fell in love with Peters, principally, I suppose, because she should have known better, and I think myself there is something to be said for that view of the matter. Anyhow she came to her father's place of

business very often and apparently very unnecessarily, but the old man was always pleased to see her, no matter how busy he happened to be. At first she rarely looked at Peters, but when she did flash one of those quick glances of hers at him poor Peters thought he had the fever and ague. He understood the symptoms later on.

I don't know how things come to a climax, neither do the clerks, for that matter, although they pretended to. Besides they are divided in their opinions, so I think their collective surmises amount to but very little. Johnson claims that it was gone over the telephone, while Farnam says she came to the office one day, her father was not there, and proposed to Peters on the spot. One thing the clerks are unanimous about, and that is that Peters, left to himself, would never have had the courage. Still, too much attention must not be paid to what the clerks say. What can they know about it? They are in another room.

Peters knew that he had no right to think about that girl during business hours. He was paid to think about the old man and his affairs, which were not nearly so interesting. But Peters was conscientious and he tried to do his duty. Nevertheless, the chances are that unconsciously little Miss Sadie occupied some small portion of his mind that should have been given up to the concerns of Bentham Brothers & Co., and her presence where she had not the slightest business to be threw the rest of his mental machinery out of gear.

It is very generally admitted now that the sprightly Miss Sadie managed the whole affair. No one who knew Peters would ever have given him the credit of proposing an elopement—"accuse him of it," as Johnson puts it. She claimed that while she could manage her father all right enough up to a certain point, yet that in this particular matter she preferred to negotiate with him after marriage rather than before. She had a great deal of the old man's shrewdness—had Sadie. He used to say he would not like to have her as an opponent on a wheat deal.

Well, to come to the awful point where Peters' methodicalness nearly upset the apple cart. The elopement was all settled, Peters quaking most of the time, and he was to write her a letter giving an account of how arrangements were progressing. It will hardly be credited—and yet it is possible enough when you think what a machine a methodical man gets to be—that Peters wrote this epistle to his girl on his desk and put it in the pile of letters that were to be copied into the old man's letter book! The office boy picked up the heap at exactly the usual hour, took them to the copying press, wet the tain leaves and squeezed them in; the love letter next to the one beginning:

"DEAR SIR—Yours of the 23d received and contents noted."

Peters got the corner curled letters still damp, and put them all in their right envelopes, and Sadie got hers in due time, but did not know enough about business correspondence to know that her first love-letter was written in copying ink and had been through the press.

Next day when old man Bentham was looking over the leaves of the previous day's letters he suddenly began to chuckle to himself. Old Bentham had a very comfortable, good-natured, well-to-do chuckle that was a pleasure to hear. Even Peters almost smiled as he heard it.

"Peters!"
"Yes, sir."
"Have you all the letters, Peters, that these are the answers to?"
"Certainly, sir."
"There is one I want to see, Peters."
"What is the name, please?"
"Petty. I did not know that we dealt in this line of goods, Peters."
"H. W. Petty, sir."
"I don't know the initials. Here's the letter."

Peters was stricken. He was appalled—dumb—blind. The words "Darling Petty" danced before his eyes. He felt his hair beginning to rise. The book did not fall from his hand simply because he held it mechanically—methodically. Old Bentham roared, then closed the door so that the clerks would not hear his mirth.

"That's one on you, Peters. It's too good to keep. I must tell that down at the club."

"I wouldn't if I were you, sir," said Peters, slowly recovering his senses as he saw the old man had no suspicion how the land lay.

"No, I suppose it wouldn't be quite

the square thing. But of all men in the world, Peters—you. Why do you elope? Why not marry her respectably at the church or at home. You'll regret going off like that all your life."

"Miss—she—that is—prefers it that way, sir."

"Oh, romantic, is she? I wouldn't do it, Peters."

"There are other reasons."

"Father or mother against, as usual, I suppose. Well, you refer them to me, Peters. I'll speak a good word for you. But what am I to do while you are away?"

"I—I thought perhaps—perhaps—Johnson would take my place."

"All right. I can put up with Johnson for a week, maybe, but think of me and get back as soon as she'll let you."

If old Mr. Bentham did not mention it at the club he did at home.

"You remember Peters, Sadie. No! no! that was Johnson. Peters is in my room, you know. No, the red headed man is Farnam. He's in the other room. Peters has the desk in the corner. Staidest fellow on the street. Ever so much older than I am—in manner of course. The last man in the city you would suspect of being in love. Well, he wrote!"

—and so Mr. Bentham told the story.

Sadie kissed him somewhat hysterically when he promised to say a good word for Peters and said he was very kind hearted.

"Besides, papa, you ought to have a partner in the business. There is no Co., you know."

"Bless me, child, what has Peters's wedding to do with the company? He is taking the partner, not me. I can't take Peters into partnership merely because he chooses to get married."

"Oh, I thought that was customary," said Sadie.

There was no elopement after all. The clerks say that it was the conscientious Peters that persuaded Sadie out of it. But as the old man found he had to give way, it came to the old man this.

"Sadie," the old man said, "I think I'll change the name of the firm. I'll retire and it will be after this 'Bentham, Husband & Co.'"—Detroit Free Press.

Colossal American Fortunes.

Nowhere in the world are individual fortunes so great as in America. There are nine Americans whose possessions are reckoned at from \$50,000,000 to \$150,000,000. There are probably one thousand Americans who are worth \$1,000,000 or more.

The largest personal fortune in any foreign country belongs to the Duke of Westminster, a British peer. It consists of entailed estates, and he therefore has only a life interest in it. It is estimated at \$60,000,000. The accumulated wealth of the Rothschilds is enormous but no one member of this famous family of money-getters is considered worth over \$40,000,000. The Rothschild family wealth, however, is undoubtedly the greatest in the universe. The fortune of Baron de Hirsch, the philanthropist, does not exceed \$25,000,000.

Monarchs, despite the splendor in which they live, do not figure in the comparison of riches with untitled American citizens. The incomes of many of them are heavy but they are derived from the civil lists. In other words their subjects contribute the money which they avishly spend. Queen Victoria is perhaps the richest crowned head. She may be worth \$15,000,000 but not more. The stories of her vast hoardings are untrue. The Emperor of Austria is next to the Queen of England in wealth. Most of the other European rulers are figuratively speaking, beggars. The Emperor of Germany has nothing. The Czar of Russia is poor in his own name, unless by reason of his being an absolute autocrat he may be considered to own the land he governs. The Pope is without personal possessions. All in the vatican belongs to the church.

Money is more easily made in America than elsewhere because the opportunities are more numerous and more favorable. Fortunes of \$1,000,000 attract no more attention nowadays than those of \$100,000 did two decades ago. Fortunes are likely to increase as fast if not faster in the future than they have in the past.—Atlanta Constitution.

It is estimated that the various transatlantic steamship lines now carry to Europe about one hundred thousand cabin passengers a year. The average expenditure of their sojourn abroad will not fall short of \$1000 each. It will thus be seen that the donation from America to Europe every year is \$100,000,000.

LADIES' COLUMN.

EXTRAORDINARY COMBINATIONS ON HATS.

Hats for summer of every sort and kind, and as variously trimmed, are to be worn, and the most extraordinary combination of colors appears in the decoration. In some cases it requires all the skill of the milliners to make the result other than either flashy or dowdy, the claim for admiration resting upon that very doubtful quality sometimes put forth as a plea for toleration, if not for admiration, that its beauty consists in its ugliness. "Uncommon" certainly some of the bonnets and hats look, and whether it be that what is fashionable needs no other recommendation in women's eyes, or that the milliner has attained such perfection in her art, and such nice discrimination in the blending of colors, it is certain that shades originally hostile to each other can now be reconciled.—New York Post.

SUMMER GOWNS.

The princess gown is still a feature of prevailing styles. It is strange, too, for there is no other mode of cutting a dress which is so hard to make a good fit. It is especially used in the woolcrepons, which are so pretty and so cheap. If it were not for the appalling prices good dressmakers charge, there is no reason in the world why everyone should not have pretty gowns this summer. With gingham, summer silks, India silks, wash silks and wool crepons all at fifty cents a yard, and point de gene lace at astonishingly low prices, every one of us ought to look as dainty as dainty can be. And then these things can be made up so simply, with not a scrap of trimming except a band of velvet ribbon round the waist and the bottom of the sleeves and the collar, which is finish enough.—Chicago Herald.

AGGRESSIVE, PROGRESSIVE WOMAN.

A young woman in St. Louis made \$1300 last year furnishing bread to the Woman's Exchange. She was a high school graduate and wanted to teach, but while waiting for a place turned to bread making. She now has built a large oven at home and is satisfied with her profession. Miss Louise E. Francis is the editor and proprietor of the Castroville (Cal.) Enterprise. As editor she writes every line in her paper, she keeps her own books, is her own advertising agent, and not long ago, when her foreman was awfully and her printers struck, she rolled up her sleeves, set the type, ran the press and got her paper off to mail herself. Miss Francis is only twenty-two, and is making money. Mrs. Ida A. Harper until recently was the managing editor of the Terre Haute Daily News. She is now the associate editor of the Indianapolis News. Her capacity for work is large. At one time she traveled and wrote different letters to eleven different journals, each unlike the other. Mrs. Mary Eagle, the wife of Governor Eagle of Arkansas, is regarded as the best parliamentarian in the Woman's Board of Managers for the World's Fair. While Governor Eagle was Speaker of the Arkansas House of Representatives she thoroughly familiarized herself with parliamentary usage. A co-operative dressmaking establishment has been started in St. Louis. By paying so much cash down, according to one's means, each customer is for that occasion a stockholder and receives her dress finished according to contract.—New York Sun.

FASHION NOTES.

Blue and green are colors now used in combination.

Wide sashes of black watered ribbon are in demand.

White bunting is a favorite material for house dresses.

Black silk ulsters are shown for dust cloaks for traveling.

Gloves have very long cuffs. Some of them are very elaborately embroidered in gold, jet or steel.

Surah silk is not the favorite it was of old. It does not wear as well as others owing to the stiffness in it.

Deep Spanish fringes in black silk cord, having a lattice-work pattern, are seen on light silks, over which black lace is used.

The shoes for evening wear, at present, almost always match the toilet, and the material made use of in the gown is often seen in them.

In novelties in dress fabrics it is impossible to escape from patterned mater-

ials. Every textile fabric shows some device or other. The most "Frenchy" combine stripes and brocaded figures.

The diversity in round hats and bonnets is more displayed in the trimming than in the shapes, which have not materially changed. In the hats the brims are narrow and the crowns very small.

A great novelty is shown in chiffon scarfs, with fringed and satin striped ends and striped edges, which are draped around the hat, and either knotted in a full bow or the ends left hanging in the back.

The long street skirts are going out of fashion, and in their place is a prettily shaped round skirt, which just escapes the ground. Demi-trains are for calling and house wear, and long trains appear only on very elaborate occasions.

The very latest Parisian fancy is the Greek bonnet. It is made of jet, and in front is a jet moon. Instead of the conventional ribbon ties are three strings of jet beads, fastened on either side by a crescent, and finished at the back with a mauve and green aigrette six inches high.

The Newspaper.

Philip Gilbert Hamerton, in his papers on "Intellectual Life," thus speaks of the paper: "Newspapers are to the civilized world what the daily house-talk is to the members of the family—they keep our daily interest in each other, they save us from the evils of isolation. To live as a member of the great white race that has filled Europe and America and colonized or conquered whatever territory it has been pleased to occupy, to share from day to day its thoughts, its cares, its inspirations, it is necessary that every man should read his paper. Why are the French peasants so bewildered at sea? It is because they never read a newspaper. And why are the inhabitants of the United States, though scattered over a territory fourteen times the area of France, so much more capable of concerted action, so much more alive and modern, so much more interested in discoveries of all kinds and capable of selecting and utilizing the best of them? It is because the newspapers penetrate everywhere, and even the lonely dweller on the prairie or the forest is not intellectually isolated from the great currents of public life which flow through the telegraph and press."

The Dog Knew Where to Jump.

A very knowing dog got into the train which was coming down from up river, at Great Works, Monday. The train started up, and the dog still stayed aboard. The train began to move faster and faster, until it was going at the rate of twenty miles an hour. The dog did not dare to jump. The animal got out on the lowest step. At last the train reached a swamp. It then gave a tremendous leap and landed in safety in the soft mud and water. The dog was injured and ran back.—Bangor (Me.) News.

Gibraltar is Carefully Guarded.

It is only recently that people have been permitted to ascend the rock and signal station at Gibraltar. Since last November the British military, with their families, and persons connected with the British navy, have been permitted to visit this fine lookout. The privilege, however, has not been extended to the citizens of Gibraltar nor to strangers visiting the fortress, a circumstance which is generally resented, particularly by the subjects of the Queen.—Chicago Herald.



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