

My Favorite Stories

By IRVIN S. COBB

The Prudent Mr. Finnerty

The lawyer picked his way to the edge of the excavation for the new terminal station and called down for Michael Finnerty.

"Who's wantin' me?" inquired a deep voice.

"I am," said the lawyer. "Mr. Finnerty, did you come from Castlebar, County Mayo?"

"I did."

"And was your mother named Mary and your father named Owen?"

"They was."

"Then, Mr. Finnerty," said the lawyer, "it is my duty to inform you that your Aunt Kate has died in the old country, leaving you an estate of twenty thousand dollars in cash. Please come on up."

"There was a pause and a commotion down below."

"Mr. Finnerty," called the lawyer, craning his neck over the trench, "I'm waiting for you!"

"In wan minute," said Mr. Finnerty. "I just stopped to lick the foreman!"

For six months Mr. Finnerty, in a high hat and with patent leather shoes on his feet, lived a life of elegant ease, trying to cure himself of a great thirst. Then he went back to his old job. It was there in the same excavation that the lawyer found him the second time.

"Mr. Finnerty," he said, "I've more news for you. It is your Uncle Terence who's dead now in the old country; and he has left you his entire property."

"I don't think I can take it," said Mr. Finnerty, leaning wearily on his pick. "I'm not as strong as I wance was; and I'm doubtin' if I could go through all that again and live!"

The Withdrawal of the Candidate

When Miss Annie Oakley, the famous rifle shot, was traveling through the country giving exhibitions of her skill at theaters, she reached a small town in Texas; and her manager inserted an advertisement in the home paper for a smart colored boy to assist in the performance. Applicants were instructed to apply at the stage door of the local opera house at 1 p. m. sharp.

When the manager arrived he found the passageway congested with little negroes, each eager to testify to his smartness. He made a selection, picking out a spry boy of about twelve. He took his applicant inside and stationed him near the wings.

"You will stand right here and not move," he said. "When the curtain goes up, Miss Oakley will come out and talk to the audience for a few moments. Then I will balance a small apple on your forehead and the lady will go over on the other side of the stage yonder and shoot it off."

The candidate grabbed for his hat, his eyes wildly rolling in search of the nearest path to safety.

"Mistah," he demanded, "who's goin' to shoot what apple offer whose haid? Me, why I wouldn't let mah own mammy shoot no apple offer mah haid, let alone it's some stranger!"

And he was gone.

A Service to the Whole Land

In the early summer of 1918 three of us made a long trip by automobile to pay a visit to a colored regiment at the front in France. The results more than repaid us for the time and trouble. One of the main compensations was First Class Private Cooksey, who, because he had been an elevator attendant in a Harlem apartment house, gave his occupation in his enlistment blank as "indoor chauffeur." It was to First Class Private Cooksey that the colonel of the regiment, seeing the expression on the others' faces when a minenwerfer from a German mortar fell near by on the day the command moved up to the front, and made a hole in the earth deep enough and wide enough and long enough to hide the average smoke house in—it was, I repeat, to First Class Private Cooksey that the colonel put this question:

"Cooksey, if one of those things drops right here alongside of us and goes off, are you going to stay by me?"

"Kurnel," stated Cooksey with sincerity, "I ain't aimin' to tell you no lie. Ef one of them things busts close to me, I'll jest natchelly be obliged to go away from here. But please, suh, don't you set me down as no deserter. Jest put it in de book as 'Absent without leave,' 'cause I'll be back jest ez soon ez I kin git my brakes to work."

"But what if the enemy suddenly appears in force without any preliminary bombardment?" pressed the colonel. "What do you think you and the rest of the boys will do then?"

"Kurnel," said Cooksey, earnestly, "we may not stick by you, but we'll shore render one service, anyway; we'll spread the news all over France 'at th' Germans is couln'!"

The Made-in-England Substitute

An American actor with a reputation for wit—a reputation, by the way, which is deserved—went to a luncheon given by a famous actress to several members of her supporting company. Among the guests of honor was an English leading man, who rather fancied himself—and showed it. He monopolized the conversation, speaking copiously and feelingly of himself, his personality and his merits.

From his place across the table the American eyed him with a rapidly enhancing disfavor. At length he turned to the man sitting next him on the right.

"Our British friend over there is by way of being a regular ass isn't he?" he asked in a whisper.

"Oh I'd hardly go so far as to say that," answered his neighbor.

"Well, he'll do, won't he, till one comes?" said the American.

The Pride of a Creative Genius

A colored person of a formidable aspect was arraigned in a South Carolina court of justice on a charge of mayhem. As Exhibit A, for the case of the prosecution, the mutilated victim of his wrath was presented for the jurors' sympathetic eyes. The face of the victim was but little more than a recent site—a place where a face had been, but was no longer.

When the jury very promptly and very properly had returned a verdict of guilty, his honor, the presiding judge, pointing to the chief complaining witness and addressing the defendant, said:

"This is the most lamentable example of brutality I have ever seen in a long experience on the criminal bench. Surely no human being, unless he were inspired by infernal influences and heilborn suggestions, could deliberately work such wreckage as you have worked upon the countenance of a defenseless and helpless fellow creature. Demons from below surely must have prompted you in what you did. It must have been the devil himself who urged you on and on."

"Well, judge," said the prisoner, "come to think it over, I ain't shore but what you're right. As I look back on it now it do seem lak to me 'at w'en I wuz cuttin' his nose loose from his face wid a razor, the devil was right behind me sayin' 'Tha's right, separate him from his nose.' An' I spects it must a been dem demons you mentioned w'ich suggested to me stomp'n' out his front teeth."

"But judge, bltin' off his ear was strictly my own idea!"

The Sway of Eloquence

Down in my part of the country in the old days of silver tongued speakers and sour mash Bourbon, we were a high strung and sentimental people, and oratory moved us as nothing else would. There was once a brawny blacksmith in our county who was elected justice of the peace on the strength of his Confederate record and because his wife was distantly related to the Crittenden family, and the first case he sat to hear was one growing out of the death of a cow under the wheels of a freight train.

After the evidence was all in, the attorney for the plaintiff made a most effective argument. In vivid word pictures he sketched the abundant virtues of the late cow; he described her sweetness and her gentleness, her capacity as to milk; he told of the great bereavement to her immediate family, consisting of a young calf, and he dwelt upon the heartlessness of a railroad system which by its brutal carelessness had at one fell swoop, as it were, made stew meat of the parent and an orphan of the offspring. His peroration is still remembered. The language of it was homely, yet moving.

"And, finally, squire," he said in summing up, "if the train had been run as she should have been ran, and if the bell had been rung as she should have been rang, and if the whistle had been blown as she should have been blew—both of which they done neither—this here cow would not have been injured at the time she was killed."

As he sat down the new justice said with a voice husky with feeling, "I've done heard enough! Plaintiff wins!" and proceeded to enter judgment for the full amount of damages. But the lawyer for the other side protested. He insisted he had a right to be heard, and though the justice said he had already made up his mind, he admitted that it was no more than fair for the young gentleman to make a speech, too, if he wanted to, and told him to go ahead.

So the lawyer for the railroad cut his moorings and went straight up. He was a genuine silver tongue, with automatic tear valves and a friction-proof jaw. He soared right into the clouds and continued to sail 'round up there for quite a spell. Among other matters pertinent to the issue, he introduced the American Eagle, Magna Charta, First and Second Manassas, Paul Revere's Ride and the Bonny Blue Flag which Bears but a Single Star, concluding the whole by giving the Confederate Yell and bursting into a violent fit of weeping.

As he sank into his seat the justice, with a touch of the true old Jeffersonian simplicity, wiped his streaming eyes upon his shirt sleeve, and in a voice quivering with sobs exclaimed: "Well, don't that beat all! Defense wins!"

Assigning G. B. S. to His Place

When George Bernard Shaw, as a young man, emerged from his native Ireland and moved to England he began writing a column for a London weekly publication. Then, as now, he had the habit of calling a spade a spade and frequently, in his writings, he called it by an even stronger name than that.

At that time Oscar Wilde was enjoying his vogue as a wit and an epigram-maker. One evening an acquaintance, calling upon Wilde, happened upon a copy of the paper to which Shaw was a contributor and reading therein one of Shaw's characteristic articles which was signed with the author's initials, said to his host:

"I say, Wilde, who is this chap G. B. S. who's doing a department for this sheet?"

"He's a young Irishman named Shaw," said Wilde. "Rather forceful isn't he?"

"Forceful," echoed the other, "well rather! My word, how he does cut and slash! He doest seem to spare anyone he knows. I should say he's in a fair way to make himself a lot of enemies."

"Well," said Wilde, "as yet he hasn't become prominent enough to have any enemies. But none of his friends likes him."

Lo the Wise Indian!

Big Chief Meyers, who caught for the New York Giants in the days when the battery of Mathewson and Meyers was famous, was—and still is—a remarkable man. Although a full-blooded Indian of one of the California mission tribes he is a college graduate and, what is rather unusual in a professional ball-player, an exceedingly well-informed lover of art and he has a keen wit. His tribal name was Tortes. One day a curious person asked him why he had taken the name of John Meyers.

"It sounds so Indian," said Meyers. On another occasion a friend invited Meyers to tell him what his favorite pictures were.

"There are two that I particularly like," said the brawny Indian. "One is Abbey's mural painting, 'The Quest of the Holy Grail,' on the walls of the Boston public library. Whenever I'm in Boston I go to see it. And the other is that picture called 'Custer's Last Stand.'"

"Surely you don't mean that atrocious chromo showing a lot of white cavalrymen being killed and scalped—that thing which some harvesting company out West used to give away as an advertisement?"

"That's the identical one," said Meyers.

"But why, in the name of goodness, should you favor that daut?"

"I'll tell you why," said Meyers. "It's the only picture done by a white man that I ever saw where my crowd is getting as good as an even break."

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Better Than Believing in Santa Claus

Two typical wayfarers of the Bowery, penniless and tattered and with their feet half out of their wrecked shoes, were limping through one of the crooked streets of Chinatown. One of them found a small vial containing cocaine which, presumably, had been dropped by a dope fiend.

The tramps had heard many times of the stimulating and invigorating effects of this drug. Also, from association with habitués they knew the common method of taking it. They decided to experiment.

The finder uncorked the vial, poured a quantity of the white crystals into the palm of his hand and sniffed the stuff up his nostrils. His companion finished the bottle.

The effect was magical and almost instantaneous. They straightened their bent figures, drew their rags about them and stepped out briskly. Presently one of them spoke. There was a bloom in his cheeks and his eyes glistened:

"I've about decided," he said, "to make a few investments. I'm going to buy all the diamond mines in South Africa and after I've done that I'm going to buy all the gold mines in Australia."

His transformed partner made answer: "Hold on," he said, "I don't know that I'm prepared to sell 'em!"

NYE COUNTY MINE RICHEST IN NEVADA

W. H. Eardly, assistant manager of the United States Smelting & Refining Company, says Nye County can boast of the richest lead mine in the State through the operations of the San Rafael Development Company at Quartz Mountain, forty-five miles north of Luning.

"The vein has been developed by leasers for a width of twelve feet," said Mr. Eardly after returning from an examination of the property, "and no walls have been found yet. The twelve foot width of ore is at a depth of 190 feet and the lessees have worked it to one end of their block which is four hundred by four hundred feet. The whole face of the stope is highgrade ore and there is no way to determine how much wider it is. The vein appears to be widening as it goes down."

"The lessees are shipping fifty tons a day and are using a fleet of fourteen trucks. On the surface near the shaft there are five hundred tons ready to move and they are producing enough daily to keep the trucks going. The average value of the ore is from \$70 to \$75, with a gold content from \$6 to \$20."

OGDEN MEN TO REVIVE SKIDOO MINE AT BEATTY

The old gold camp of Skidoo, 60 miles southwest of Beatty in Inyo county, California, and a short distance west of Death Valley, is to be revived by men living at Ogden, Utah who have organized the Golden Glow Mines Corporation to take over the old Skidoo mine from W. B. Gray, justice of the peace at Beatty. H. E. Skinner of Ogden heads the new enterprise. The mine was worked and paid dividends about 1907, but has since been idle.

THE COME-BACK

Lieut. John Macready of the air service is determined to rise to an altitude of eight miles in his plane. This would put him higher in the heavens than any human since the days of Elijah. The soaring aspiration is thrilling and worthy. It is a fine thing to be striving upward. But it is also essential to consider the terminal facilities. The greatest factor in a skyward flight is picking out the place to light. — Los Angeles Times.

TONOPAH BANISHES CASH SLOT MACHINES

Money-paying slot machines have been banished from 20 places at Tonopah where they were enjoying a good patronage from minors. There was no interference with card slot machines paying in merchandise.

A lot of people who bought real estate in Florida and then motored down there to find it have discovered that it has been "spurious versenk."

The Coca Cola Bottling Works is putting out the very finest products in the soft drink line. Phone 247.

In the Tenth Judicial District Court of the State of Nevada, in and for Clark County.

In the Matter of the Estate of WILFRED EDWARD TAYLOR, Deceased.

NOTICE OF HEARING PETITION FOR ORDER OF SALE

C. D. BREEZE, Administrator of the Estate of WILFRED EDWARD TAYLOR, Deceased, having filed in this Court a Petition praying for an order of sale of the real and personal property of said estate;

All persons interested in the said estate are hereby notified to be and appear before the said Court, at the Courtroom thereof in the City of Las Vegas, County of Clark, State of Nevada, on Thursday, the 14th day of January, 1926, at 10 o'clock A. M. of said day, to show cause why an order should not be granted to authorize the said Administrator to sell so much of the real and personal property as may be necessary.

Dated December 23, 1925. FLORENCE S. DOHERTY, Clerk of said Court. By Thelma Boyle, Deputy.

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SOUTHGATE CHAPTER NO. 18 of the Eastern Star Meetings second and fourth Mondays of each month at 7:30 p.m., at Masonic Hall. All visiting members cordially welcome. MRS. ACRE S. JONES, W. M. MABEL R. ULLOM, Secretary

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