

Best Short Stories

by

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Best Short Stories

THE POINT OF HONOR

A young lieutenant was passed by a private, who failed to salute. The lieutenant called him back, and said sternly:

"You did not salute me. For this you will immediately salute two hundred times."

At this moment the General came up.

"What's all this?" he exclaimed, seeing the poor private about to begin.

The lieutenant explained.

"This ignoramus failed to salute me, and as a punishment, I am making him salute two hundred times."

"Quite right," replied the General, smiling. "But do not forget, sir, that upon each occasion you are to salute in return."

ALWAYS GET THE FACTS

It is never wise to jump to conclusions. Always wait until the evidence is all in.

A Jersey man of a benevolent turn of mind encountered a small boy in his neighborhood who gave evidence of having emerged but lately from a severe battle.

"I am sorry," said the man, "to see that you have a black eye, Sammy."

Whereupon Sammy retorted:

"You go home and be sorry for your own little boy--he's got two!"

CAN THIS BE TRUE?

A certain Irishman was taken prisoner by the Huns. While he was standing alone, waiting to be assigned to his prison, or whatever fate awaited him, the Kaiser came up.

"Hello," said the Kaiser. "Who have we here?"

"I'm an Irishman, your honor."

Then he winked solemnly.

"Oi say," he continued. "We didn't do a thing to you Germans, did we? Eh, old chap?"

The Kaiser was horrified. Calling an orderly he said to him:

"Take this blasphemer away and put a German uniform on him, and then bring him back."

Shortly the Irishman was returned, in a full German uniform.

"Well," said the Kaiser, "maybe you feel better now. How is it?"

Pat grabbed him by the arm, and leaning over, whispered:

"Oi say, we gave them Irish Hell, didn't we?"

NEW SERVANT-GIRL STORY

The wife of a successful young literary man had hired a buxom Dutch girl to do the housework. Several weeks passed and from seeing her master constantly about the house, the girl received an erroneous impression.

"Ogscuse me, Mrs. Blank," she said to her mistress one day, "but I like to say somedings."

"Well, Rena?"

The girl blushed, fumbled with her apron, and then replied, "Vell, you pay me four tollars a veek--"

"Yes, and I really can't pay you any more."

"It's not dot," responded the girl; "but I be villing to take tree tollars till--till your husband gets vork."

HE WAS BROAD MINDED

Even married life does not affect some people unpleasantly, or take away the fine spirit of their charity.

A certain factory-owner tells of an old employee who came into the office and asked for a day off.

"I guess we can manage it, Pete," says the boss, "tho we are mighty short-handed these days. What do you want to get off for?"

"Ay vant to get married," blushed Pete, who is by way of being a Scandinavian.

"Married? Why, look here--it was only a couple of months ago that you wanted to get off because your wife was dead!"

"Yas, ay gess so."

"And you want to get married again, with your wife only two months dead?"

"Yas. Ay ain't ban hold no grudge long."

MISSED HIS CHANCE

Before introducing Lieutenant de Tesson, aide to General Joffre, and Colonel Fabry, the "Blue Devil of France," Chairman Spencer, of the St. Louis entertainment committee, at the M.A.A. breakfast told this anecdote:

"In Washington Lieutenant de Tesson was approached by a pretty American girl, who said:

"'And did you kill a German soldier?'"

"'Yes,' he replied.

"'With what hand did you do it?' she inquired.

"'With this right hand,' he said.

"And then the pretty American girl seized his right hand and kissed it. Colonel Fabry stood near by. He strolled over and said to Lieutenant de Tesson:

"'Heavens, man, why didn't you tell her that you bit him to death?'"

GREAT RELIEF IN HEAVEN

The following story is from the *Libre Belgique*, the anonymous periodical secretly published in Brussels, and which the utmost vigilance of the German authorities has been unable to suppress.

Once upon a time Doctor Bethman-Holweg went up to heaven. The pearly gates were shut, but he began to push his way through in the usual German fashion. St. Peter rushed out of his lodge, much annoyed at the commotion.

"Hi, there, who are you?" he demanded.

"I am Doctor Von Bethman-Holweg, the imperial chancellor," was the haughty reply.

"Well, you don't seem to be dead; what are you doing around here?"

"I want to see God."

"Sorry," replied St. Peter, "but I don't think you can see him to-day; in fact, he's not very well."

"Ah, I'm distressed to hear that," said the chancellor somewhat more politely. "What seems to be the trouble?"

"We don't quite know, but we are afraid it is a case of exaggerated ego," answered St. Peter. "He keeps walking up and down, occasionally striking his chest with his clenched fist, and muttering to himself: 'I am the kaiser! I am the kaiser!'"

"Dear me! that is really very sad," said the chancellor in a still kindlier tone. "Now I happen to be the bearer of a communication from my imperial master; perhaps it might cheer him up to hear it."

"What is it?"

"Why, the emperor has just issued a decree, providing that in future he shall have the use of the nobiliary particle; from henceforth he will have the right to call himself 'Von Gott'."

"Step right in, your excellency," interrupted St. Peter. "I am very sure the new Graf will be much gratified to learn of the honor done him. Third door to the right. Mind the step. Thank you."

UNCHANGABLE

A story about Lord Kitchener, who was often spoken of as "the most distinguished bachelor in the world," is being told. A young member of his staff when he was in India asked for a furlough in order to go home and be married. Kitchener listened to him patiently then he said:

"Kenilworth, you're not yet twenty-five. Wait a year. If then you still desire to do this thing you shall have leave."

The year passed. The officer once more proffered his request.

"After thinking it over for twelve months," said Kitchener, "you still wish to marry?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, you shall have your furlough. And frankly, my boy, I scarcely thought there was so much constancy in the masculine world."

Kenilworth, the story concludes, marched to the door, but turned to say as he was leaving: "Thank you, sir. Only it's not the same woman."

HE KNEW THE LAW

An old colored man charged with stealing chickens was arraigned in court and was incriminating himself when the judge said:

"You ought to have a lawyer. Where's your lawyer?"

"Ah ain't got no lawyer, jedge," said the old man.

"Very well, then," said his honor, "I'll assign a lawyer to defend you."

"Oh, no, suh; no, suh! Please don't do dat!" the darky begged.

"Why not?" asked the judge. "It won't cost you anything. Why don't you want a lawyer?"

"Well, jedge, Ah'll tell you, suh," said the old man, waving his tattered old hat confidentially. "Hit's dis way. Ah wan' tah enjoy dem chickens mahse'f."

A SERMON ON THE WAR BY PARSON BROWN

The historic colored preacher who held forth so strenuously after the Civil War has almost become obsolete, but in certain sections he still holds his own, as the following sermon, taken from *Life*, will show:

Brederen an' Sisterin: I done read de Bible from kiver to kiver, from lid to lid an' from end to end, an' nowhar do I find a mo' 'propriate tex' at dis time, when de whole worl' is scimmigin' wid itse'f, dan de place whar Paul Pinted de Pistol at de Philippines an' said, "Dou art de man."

Kaiser Bill ob Germany is de man, an' Uncle Sam done got de pistol pinted his way, an' goin' to pull de trigger, lessen Bill gits off his perch, like dat woman Jezebel dat sassed Ahab from de roof top.

Ahab say to his soldiers, "Go up an' th'ow dat woman down," an' dey th'ew her down. Den he say, "Go up an' th'ow her down again," an' dey th'ew her down again; an' he say, "Take her back up an' th'ow her down seben times," an' dey th'owed her down seben times, an' ast if dat ain't enough.

But Ahab done got his dander up, an' say, "No! Dat ain't enough. Th'ow her down sebenty times seben."

And afterwards dey done pick up twelve baskets ob de fragments dereob.

Dat's what gwine ter happen ter dat Bill Heah Him Hollerin.

De Good Book done fo'told dis here war, an' jist how it gwine ter end. Don't it say about de four beasts in de book of Relations, what spit fire an' brimstone, meanin' de Kaiser, de Turks, de Ostriches, and de Bullgeraniums, case two ob dem beasteses is birds, an' Ostriches an' Turkys is birds. De bigges' beast is de Kaiser, case he uses Germans to pizen his enemies. De newspapers say as how diseases is all caused by Germans gittin' in de food an' bein' breathed in de lungs, givin' folks hydrophobia an' lumbago an' consumption.

Dis brings us to de time when Abraham led de chillun ob Israel into Egypt, an' Moses led 'em out again case de folks ob Egypt so bad dey shoot craps all day, and eben make Faro de king. Dey take all de money 'way from de Jews an' raise de price ob cawn an' hay till de po' Jews can't live.

Rockefeller-Morgan Faro, de king, say dey can't go, but Moses done got de Lawd on his side, an' he crossed de Red Sea in submarines, so Faro got drowned wid all his host. De mummy ob dat same Faro is still alive in de big museums ob de world, but whar de host is no man can tell.

Dat de way de Wall Street gang dat been raisin' de price ob food gwine ter pass in dey checks--in de Red Sea ob blood ob dis war.

Moses an' de Jews went trabelin' ober de desert till one day dey gits so hungry dey makes a fatted calf ob gold while Moses up on Mount Sinai gittin' de law laid down. Moses come er-cussin' back an' busted de Law ober Aaron's head, an' den dey killed de fatted calf an' put a ring on his finger. For de prodigal done return, an' dey is mo' rejoicin' ober one sinner sated dan ninety an' nine what doan know 'nuff to put deir money in de contribution box instead ob shootin' it 'way on craps.

Oh, I knows you backsliders, an' ef any ob you doan come across while Dekin Jones passes de box, I'se gwine ter preach nex' Sunday on what happened ter de money-chasers in de temple.

We will now sing two verses ob "Th'ow Out de Lifeline, Anoder Ship Sinkin' To-day."

"OVER HERE"

The hobo knocked at the back door and the lady of the house appeared.

"Lady," he said, "I was at the front--"

"You poor man!" she exclaimed. "One of war's victims. Wait till I get you some food, and you shall tell me your story. You were in the trenches, you say?"

"Not in the trenches. I was at the front--"

"Don't try to talk with your mouth full. Take your time. What deed of heroism did you do at the front?"

"Why, I knocked, but I couldn't make nobody hear, so I came around to the back."

LIFE'S ETERNAL QUERY

Did it ever occur to you that a man's life is full of cussedness? He comes into the world without his consent, and goes out against his will, and the trip between is exceedingly rocky.

When he is little, the big girls kiss him; when he is big, the little girls kiss him. If he is poor, he is a bad manager; if he is rich, he's a crook. If he is prosperous, everybody wants to do him a favor; if he needs credit, they hand him a lemon.

If he is in politics, it is for graft; if out of politics, he is no good to his country. If he doesn't give to charity, he's a tightwad; if he does, it's for show. If he is actively religious, he is a hypocrite; and if he takes no interest in religion, he is a heathen.

If he is affectionate, he is a soft mark; if he cares for no one, he is cold-blooded. If he dies young, there was a great future for him; if he lives to an old age, he missed his calling.

If you don't fight, you're yellow; if you do, you're a brute.

If you save your money, you're a grouch; if you spend it, you're a loafer; if you get it, you're a grafter, and if you don't get it, you're a bum.

So what's the use?

HIGH FINANCE

Even certain professors, who are supposed to be immune from commercial inducements are sometimes financially overcautious. A party of tourists were watching Professor X as he exhumed the wrapt body of an ancient Egyptian.

"Judging from the utensils about him," remarked the professor, "this mummy must have been an Egyptian plumber."

"Wouldn't it be interesting," said a romantic young lady, "if we could bring him to life?"

"Interesting, but a bit risky," returned Professor X. "Somebody might have to pay him for his time."

MATRIMONIAL PROFUNDITY

A young planter in Mississippi had an old servant called Uncle Mose, who had cared for him as a child and whose devotion had never waned. The young man became engaged to a girl of the neighborhood who had a reputation for unusual beauty and also for a very violent temper. Noticing that Uncle Mose never mentioned his approaching marriage, the planter said:

"Mose, you know I am going to marry Miss Currier?"

"Yassuh, I knows it."

"I haven't heard you say anything about it," persisted the planter.

"No, suh," said Mose. "Tain't fo' me to say nothin' 'bout it. I's got nothin' to say."

"But you must have some opinion about so important a step on my part."

"Well, suh," said the old negro with some hesitation, "yo' knows one thing--the most p'izonest snakes has got the most prettiest skins."

THE NEW REGIME

The new change in social conditions to be brought about by the war is illustrated in the following advertisements taken from *Life*:

SITUATIONS WANTED

HUSBAND AND WIFE would like position as gardener and cook, or will do anything. 23 years in last place as czar and czarina. Salary not so important as permanent place in quiet, peaceful atmosphere. Address ROMANOFF, this paper.

EMPLOYERS, giving up royalty, would like to secure position for their king. Steady, experienced, thoroughly broken to crown and sceptre. Distance no objection. Will go anywhere. Small salary to start. CONSTANTINE, 49 Greece, in rear. (Ring Sophy's bell.)

YOUNG MONARCH, 28 years old, 4 years as king in last place, would accept like position in small, tranquil country, Latin preferred. No objection to South America. Light, rangy and stylish, very fast, and thoroughly broken to bombs and revolutions. MANUEL J. PORTUGAL, London.

KING AND QUEEN, Swedish, expecting to make change shortly, would like position as gardener and coachman, cook and laundress. Good home more important than salary. All references. Address GUS and VICKY, care this paper.

EMPEROR, 29 years as Kaiser in present position, expecting to be at liberty shortly, owing to change in employers' circumstances, would like place as assassin, or pig-sticker

in abattoir. No aversion to blood. Cool, resourceful, determined. Address EFFICIENT, care this paper.

WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS;

Thus, seeking to be kind and fraternal, but at the same time perfectly honest, if we make mistakes, we may still comfort ourselves with the assurance which his Irish Catholic servant once expressed to the devout and learned Bishop Whately.

"Do you really believe," he asked her, "that there is no salvation outside of the Roman Catholic Church?"

"Shure, an' I do," she replied, "for that's what the praist ses."

"Well, then, what is going to become of me?"

"Oh, that's all right," she answered, with an Irish twinkle in her eyes. "Yer riverence will be saved by yer ignorince."

WHEN THE "S" FELL OUT

"We are thorry to thay," explained the editor of the Skedunk *Weekly News*, "that our compothing-room wath entered lath night by thome unknown thcoundrel, who thtole every 'eth' in the ethtablithment, and thucceeded in making hith ethcape undetected.

"The motive of the mithcreant doubtleth wath revenge for thome thuppothed inthult.

"It thall never be thaid that the petty thpite of any thmall-thouled villain hath dithabled the *Newth*, and if thith meet the eye of the detethtable rathcal, we beg to athure him that he underethimated the rethourceth of a firht-clath newthpaper when he thinkth he can cripple it hopelethly by breaking into the alphabet. We take occathion to thay to him furthermore that before next Thurthday we thall have three timeth ath many etheth ath he thtole.

"We have reathon to thuthpect that we know the cowardly thkunk who committed thith act of vandalithm, and if he ith ever theen prowling about thith ethtablithment again, by day or by night, nothing will give uth more thatithfaction than to thoot hith hide full of holeth."

FULL PARTICULARS FREE

They were seated in a tramcar--the mother and her little boy.

The conductor eyed the little boy suspiciously. He had to keep a lookout for people who pretended that their children were younger than they really were, in order to obtain free rides for them.

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