

THE WORDS THAT CHEER.

Are you ever discouraged, O fellow man? Do you ever feel puny and poor and small? Do you ever, while doing the best you can, Get to wondering what is the use of it all? Oh isn't it pleasant in such an hour To be met by one who has cheerful ways Who approves of your work and admires your power, Oh isn't it bracing to hear his praise? Does doubt ever lodge in your heart, O friend? Doubt of your worth and doubt of your wit? Does it ever appear that you've come to the end? Do you feel sometimes a longing to quit, To give up the hope, to accept defeat, To sink into rest and pass out of sight? In such a dark hour, oh isn't it sweet To be praised for your worth, your work or might? Perhaps you met some one a moment ago Who felt, O friend, as you often do, Who, had you paused a fair word to bestow, Would have gained new strength and new courage, too. The words of cheer and the words of praise That cost so little may have such worth; Oh, I wonder why, in our selfish ways, We let each other be crushed to earth. — E. Kiser, in Chicago Record-Herald.

A TRAGEDY IN TATTERS.

For the Amusement of the Multitude. By Marguerite Stabler.

THE music, the sound of flying hoofs, the uproar of the animals, the wild applause, were still ringing in her ears when Tex broke the spell with—"Bet ye can't do it again!" "Humph! that's nothin'," Petersen's Bab sniffed, trying to hold out her limp little cotton skirt as Mlle. Sylphine had held her gawky wings. And after another mad charge around the corral, poor frightened Pedro was caught and made to take his second hurle. But the applause of Tex and Stuffy was not satisfying. Digging her little brown heels into Pedro's ribs, and taking the three-rail fence as easily as Mlle. Sylphine herself would have done, the two untamed young creatures—Hob and Pedro—galloped at full tilt up the trail. "Oh, Pedro, I can't stand it any longer!" the girl whispered into his sympathetic ear, as, looking out across the bare, brown hills, the deserted "digging," the straggling cabins in the vicinity of Timuc, a choking sensation, which might have come from the clouds of fine red dust and might not, gripped her throat.

"Fresh roasted peanuts here! Two bags for a nickel!" "Balloons, balloons, ten cents apiece!" "Lemonade and soda water, two straws in a glass!" This time it was the gay reality. "And now for the first time this darling feat," arose the deep tones of the ringmaster, "is to be performed before this vast and intelligent audience." Pausing an instant to give the audience time to grasp the nature of the impending feat, he announced, "The One and Only Lady Somersault Rider, the Unquestioned Champion Equestrienne of the World, Mlle. Babette."

An instant the cries of the peanut "venders" were stilled, the hum of the voices ceased, the band ticked off a subdued rocco, the roaring of the caged animals alone was not suppressed. Thousands of eyes strained toward the greenroom tent, while the ringmaster, to cover an awkward delay, expatiated upon the perils of the feat. Meanwhile the Unquestioned Champion Equestrienne clung desperately to Beppo, and sobbed, "Oh, Jim, I can't! I can't do it!"

— Introducing a complete somersault from one horse to another while both rapidly circle the ring, "reached the ears of the trembling little One and Only, as Beppo, through his painted mask, answered: "Hush, you're waiting for you. You must go on. There, quick, you're all right!" And pushing her gently from him, he ran to the springboard, jumping headlong into the ring, which brought down the house, and gave poor Babette a moment in which to grip her courage.

Pedro, when his rider appeared, pranced eagerly toward her. The crowds, eager to witness the danger and risk promised them, leaned forward and applauded her entrance. Beppo, balancing on a pole like a red Daruma, held his breath and watched her as, with one quick spring, the Unquestioned Champion reached the blanket.

"She's all right now," he assured himself, as a group of other clowns sprang upon him and he went down from his perch; but he kept his eyes fixed anxiously upon her. "Drunk, old man?" asked one of the merry-andrews, noticing Beppo's unsteadiness as he walked with his feet in the air.

"Nope, it's Bab; she's off to-night," he answered. Then, "Gee, but I wish it was over," the painted fool sighed to himself, making his way crab-wise to the edge of the ring. As Beppo righted himself a flying figure flashed past him, balancing airily on one foot and throwing kisses to the audience. "Steady Pedro," he got close enough to call, as he caught a glimpse of the white face above the glittering spangles. Pedro heard the well-known voice, and for a moment felt the force of its command, but they had been two days on the road with no exercise, and his spirits were running uncommonly high.

"Work off some of his steam before you do your act!" Beppo called again when next the gauzy figure flew past him. Whereupon the little wisp of a woman arose in her perch, folded her gleaming bare arms, beat a tattoo with the foot of her slipper, and urged her steed to his utmost speed; but the eyes behind the grinning mask that watched the fluff skirts and rose-hued tights swaying like a reed with the horse's motion, guessed the panic that clutched the heart beneath its spangled bodice. The band arose in fainting tones. The audience, eager for the coming moment, held its breath and leaned farther forward.

"Slick ridin', hey?" a "hayseed" citizen gasped into his neighbor's ear. "This here Mlle. What-You-Call-'Em is a winner." "Know who that is?" a supervisor from the foothill district leaned forward to say, bristling with his information.

"Nope," answered the first speaker, immediately forgetting his neighbor, and doubling forward as the second horse pranced into the ring. The next burst of applause was for Queenie as she trotted up to the side of Pedro, crowded past him to the inside of the ring, and, falling into step, made a well-matched span.

"Back, Queenie!" Beppo shouted, forgetting his place as he noticed she, too, seemed gayer than usual to-night. "Clowns outside the ropes!" commanded the ringmaster, cracking his whip, threateningly.

"Who?" the hayseed citizen found time to ask a moment later, handing the foothill man a handful of peanuts. "Remember old Petersen up here at Timbuc?" the supervisor crunched between mouthfuls. "Yep."

"This here rider is his little gel, ran off with an actor-fellow. Remember that?" "Lor, bless my soul, if it ain't little Babbie Petersen sure enough!" exclaimed Madam Hayseed, wiping her lips with her cotton glove.

"Lemonade, sir? Ice-cold soda?" persisted a red-faced boy, hoping the peanuts might have created a thirst; "red and white here, which'll you have?" "Popcorn and chewing-gum!" shouted a second vender, seeing the foothill contingent seemed a good thing.

— used ter git the old man's hosses out into the corral and play circus when she was knee-high to a grasshopper," continued the woman. "And by gum, that's old Pedro she's a-ridin' now," broke in the supervisor; "well, I'll be darned!"

"Balloons! balloons! going fast!" persisted a third eager vender, in line to be next. And while the foothill party gaped wide-eyed after the little girl they had seen from her babyhood breaking colts, jumping ditches and riding bareback over the hills, the "actor-fellow" forgot that his sole purpose for living was to supply the "button-bursting" fun for which he was billed.

Pedro and Queenie were now cantering neck and neck. The great One and Only had already put her act behind its schedule time by her delay in entering the ring, and there was no excuse for dallying longer. At a given sign the band struck up the long, swinging measures of "Jackie Heave-Ho," the horses were reined together, the glittering little figure balanced, crouched, sprang into the air, described a rose-hued semi-circle and landed upright upon Queenie's bare back.

The crowd arose and shouted itself hoarse. Thousands of eyes blinked incredulously after the feat they had just seen, thousands of voices shrieked and called and whistled. The roar of the caged animals came in deafening waves from the menagerie as the band played the gayest airs. And all because little Babbie Petersen had performed the greatest equestrienne feat the sawdust ring had ever seen; while the foothill party began to think Petersen's runaway girl had turned out a great lady.

Beppo, faint from his anxiety, sprang to catch the gasping Lady Champion in his strong, reassuring arms. "Thank God!" arose in his heart. "This is the last—" he began to whisper, when the voice of the ringmaster, in answer to the waves of applause that rose and surged throughout the tent and beat in deafening echoes upon the stand, shouted "Again!"

Seeing nothing of the high-pressure strain the rider was laboring under, and eager to please the enthusiastic audience, the ringmaster took the center of the ring, cracked his whip at Pedro as he turned to the exit, and ordered the feat to be repeated. "Oh, Jim!" the voice of the One and Only faltered as she passed him; but he was powerless.

Headless of his duty to his audience, Beppo again watched the mount of Babette. "This is the last time she shall do it," he swore to himself through drawn white lips, while his grinning mask, turned toward a group of small boys, elicited shrieks of merriment.

Again Queenie fell into step with Pedro, and again circled several times around the ring. Through a mist that did not seem to be dust Beppo followed every motion as the little silver ankles twinkled on their airy perch. In the new light in which he had come to regard the champion lately, the spangles, the tinsels, the tights, the life of the sawdust ring, had grown hateful to him. This gauzy little creature, with her painted smile, bore with her a reverence unguessed by the gaping multitude.

"Oh, Jim!" the choking throat repeated, mechanically, when off she dashed for her second flight, as a more enlightened soul might have called upon his God.

"I don't s'pose she would know us now," a young member of the foothill delegation opined, watching with envious eyes the figure upon whom every thought was centered in a wondrous wonder. "I wonder if she remembers how her pa uster lick her for catching up the colts," sniggered another member.

"I guess them circus people just live on popcorn and soda-water, and has all the balloons they want," the junior member sighed, measuring Babette's short cut from wild horses to grandeur, and planning disastrous future fights for her own chubby limbs.

"Easy, Pedro, easy, old boy," Mlle. Babette whispered, stooping to pat his flying mane. Before her arose a sea of blurred and swaying faces—men and women bending eagerly to witness her peril, drunk with the excitement of the desperate chances she was taking. "Gently, old fellow," she crooned; "you don't understand, but oh, Pedro, I can't do it over again!" And the holiday-minded throng did not know that the gayly bedizened arms, flung out in a wild appeal for help from some unknown source, was not throwing the customary kisses they had seen.

Again the band swung into its rolling "Heave-Ho," again the One and Only reined in the two horses; again she crouched, sprang, described her rose-hued semi-circle and lit, slipped, threw out her arms—and fell.

On plunged the horses, not noticing the loss of their light burden. Before Beppo could leap over the ropes they were back and almost upon the prostrate little figure. Like a flash he sprang between them, but even when the ringmaster came up the curly head, bound with its gay flowers, did not rise. The spangled form lay limp in the sawdust, and as Jim gathered her up in his arms she did not answer his caress.

"Mlle. Babette is not hurt!" the ringmaster hastened to announce. "She presents her compliments to her indulgent audience, and says she will return after the next act and do it better. I have now the pleasure of presenting to you one of the greatest artists on this earth, Beppo. The Famous Funny-Fellow will give an exhibition of his company of fools, full of fun and frolic."

"Beppo! Beppo!" a chorus of voices started up in anticipation of their promised fun. The swinging platform was immediately thronged with merry-andrews, lined up for their quips and jokes. The crack of the ringmaster's whip reached the little group of terror-stricken faces that hung over the unconscious Babette, and Beppo answered its summons, springing mechanically into the ring in revolt against this throng of bloodsuckers who had been regaled by Babette's fall.

Signaling to them to stop their clamor of applause, he raised his hand. "She's dyin'!" he cried wildly; "can't you stop your noise!"

It was Beppo, the funny man, who turned his grinning mask toward them and spoke. The first outburst of applause had not ceased sufficiently for the import of his words to reach them, but he was always funny, so the crowds answered back with a volley of cheers. The merriment of the evening had reached its highest pitch, and the audience was in that happy frame of mind, ready to laugh at anything. "Babette, she's dead, I say!" Beppo's anguished tones repeated.

"Sure, she's a dead one!" a fat boy cried from the front seat. Whereupon the audience seeing, as it supposed, the point of Beppo's joke, laughed uproariously at this reference to the rider's failure, and the fun went on.

The other clowns took their cues from each other, and did their tumbling and sprawling stunts to the edification of the crowd, but Beppo's effort at sadness was tremendously funny, the people thought.

At the end of the act, Beppo slid backward off the platform, and made for the greenroom tent, but not before the people had discovered him, and arose to call him back. "Three cheers for Beppo!" rang above the general clamor of stamping, whistling, and cat-calling. "Bully old Beppo!" shouted the patronizing fat boy.

"Peanuts! popcorn! lemonade!" again shrieked through the audience. "Waal, now, them clowns is dreadfully funny, ain't they?" commended the hayseed citizen.

"She must make lots of money," the foothill supervisor ruminated, his fancy still clinging to the forlorn little figure he had known a few years before flying over the Timbuc hills on wild colts, and taking her "licking" for the offense while devising another feat. But the spirits of the junior member had fallen out of step with the times. The glitter and glory of the life that was Babette's had turned her own little nankeen existence into bitterness. Some people get all the fun, while others don't get any! The little rebel in nankeen forgot that the circus music sometimes stops.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen," the deep tones tried to say again; but they could not be heard. The gay reality of the music, the sound of flying hoofs, the uproar of the animals, the wild applause drowned every other sound.

The crowds were calling for Babette. "Mlle. Babette, the One and Only Lady Somersault Rider in the World." The band struck up the swinging measures of "Jackie Heave-Ho," while Pedro and Queenie pricked up their ears at the familiar strains.

"Babette! Babette!" the crowds still cried. The band played louder, and the broadside hilarity rocked the tent. "She's the winner!" the fat boy shouted.

"She's all right!" the mob echoed. But, "My God, she's gone!" cried the poor painted fool behind his grinning mask.—San Francisco Argonaut.

WHAT SHE WAS THINKING.

And There Was Nothing of Disappointment in Her Thoughts for Mr. Snodgrass.

"May I cherish a hope, Ella, dear, that you will become my wife, the partner of my joys and sorrows, my constant companion through this vale of tears?"

Miss Spudkins did not answer. Her fair head was slightly bent. The color came and went on her dainty cheeks. Her hands were clasped and lay upon her lap, relates London Tit-Bits.

Mr. Snodgrass seized one of them passionately and kissed it. Then he spoke again: "This avowal of love cannot come to you as a surprise, Ella. My devotion to you knows no bounds. It has a fathomless depth and an immeasurable height. Do you not return it in some measure?"

Still Miss Spudkins spoke not. Her eyes seemed to be studying the pattern of the carpet.

"Will you not speak the word which shall betroth our souls for all time and for all eternity? I feel, my precious one, as though we were predestined for each other, and that our love will last while ceaseless ages roll. Tell me you love me, darling."

She did not tell him, and Mr. Snodgrass resumed: "We have known each other since we were children, Ella, dear. This is no sudden fancy of mine. I loved you when you were learning to talk, and my love deepened and strengthened as you gradually acquired that accomplishment. Now my affection is one that has gathered strength through the years until it will not be denied. It will not take 'no' for an answer, Ella, love, why don't you reply? Speak the word which will make me the happiest of mortals."

Yet there was no answer from the fair young girl at whose feet was thus laid the heart of a brave young man; and Mr. Snodgrass once more addressed her: "I know that silence gives consent, but I'd rather hear from your lips the little 'yes' to my plea. Why do you not answer me?"

"I was thinking, Thomas," Ella replied at last, and there was ineffable tenderness in her tones; "of course I love you. I think you were reasonably sure of that, dear, but I was thinking—" And again the far-away look came into her eyes.

"Thinking of what, dear?" "I was thinking whether I should better have my visiting cards engraved 'Mrs. E. Spudkins-Snodgrass' or 'Mrs. Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass.' Which is the more stylish, dear?"

WAR ON RATS AND RAVENS.

Large Sum of Money to Be Spent by France in Campaign of Extinction.

The minister of agriculture, M. Mougout, has asked for 350,000 francs to be voted by the chamber, with which he proposes to combat the plague of rats from which a corner of the Department of Charentes is suffering, says a recent Paris report. The damage done by these little rodents to the crops of cereals last season was so great that the campaign to be waged by M. Mougout has the hearty support of all the farmers of the district thus attacked. The means to be employed for their destruction is a poison to be provided by the scientists of the Pasteur Institute.

But the work of destruction does not stop at the rats. The farmers have petitioned for help in getting rid also of the ravens and magpies which prey upon the game, and part of the 350,000 francs demanded from the nation will be appropriated for this purpose.

The ravens are, however, by no means an unqualified pest, for they have recently done a good turn to the market gardeners of the District of Argenteuil. The vast beds of that fat kind of asparagus which goes by the name of the district, and which is so highly esteemed as a table luxury, was last season attacked by a mysterious disease which ravaged acres of plants. Just as the young plants were approaching maturity they hung their heads and wilted down, and the growers were in despair. Acres of land were ruined and the loss was great.

Then it was noticed that flocks of ravens constantly descended upon the affected beds and carried on a lively war upon a kind of fly, specimens of which were sent up to the Sorbonne to be examined. This fly was found to be the cause of the mischief. The abdomen is furnished with a sting with which the creature perforates the stalk of the asparagus, depositing its eggs in the puncture. Millions of larvae were thus laid, and, quickly hatching out, ravaged the beds, entirely destroying the plants.

Deprived by Mr. Mougout of the good services of the ravens, the gardeners will endeavor to check the spread of the disease by pulling up and burning the affected plants.

Race Prejudice. The Japanese soldier was faint with loss of blood and abstinence from rice. The Red Cross nurse held a bottle to his lips. "What is it?" feebly whispered the soldier. "Whisky," replied the nurse. Resolutely he turned his lips away from the tempting bottle. "No," he murmured, "I don't like the last three letters of the word. They are undoubtedly Russian."

Seeing that he was determined, the nurse gave him a large swig of brandy out of the same bottle, and he was soon himself, again.—Baltimore American.

New Variety of Rhubarb. For a new variety of rhubarb it is claimed that it not only fruits all the year round, but that its flavor resembles a combination of the raspberry and strawberry.

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A northern New York man died recently and his sole claim to distinction lay in the fact that he once held the bridle of the horse of Napoleon's brother. This evidently gave him a slight hold on the ear of imperial fame.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Utopian existence means a mode of life where the other fellow has to divide with you.—Chicago Tribune.



Miss Alice M. Smith, of Minneapolis, Minn., tells how woman's monthly suffering may be permanently relieved by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

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