

ELIHU PEASLEY VISITS A WASHINGTON THEATER

He and the Congressmen went to one of them air show-houses where you go up three sets of stairs and then crawl down over rows and rows of people to a place to roost and watch the folks under you.

Quite a parcel of soldiers and one thing and another swarmed out of a small door in the platform and began scurrying. A man in the middle was thrashing round with a stick but he couldn't seem to get 'em to pull together until near the wind up, when, I reckoned, they made about as much noise as the village band for a few minutes.

Everybody was busy seeing what the women folks had on, and they had to have powerful magnifying glasses so's to be able to see it.

Then all at once the lights went out and the band struck up with something mellow and sweet, and the side of the house slid up into the air, leaving an old time kitchen and a likely young gal a-peelin' potatoes right in sight. I reckoned she'd be plumb flustered before all us strangers; but we kept still, not breathing a word, and she never knewed we was there.

She was talkin' to herself about her gay and frisky uncle by adoption and her jealous old aunt who had sent a bright her up, when directly in comes the young farm hand with a pitchfork and a water-jug, and tells her how much he's gone on her. She pears to like that brand of talk, but she says, and, however, she throws the potatoes down at him. He pears to be kinder stiffe up to her, and when he thinks her tips is packed up about right he takes her a round smack—never notices us or the old uncle a-doin' on a bench in the doorway.

This here aged party puts his foot down on all the sparkin' in his house. He leads the hired hand off by the ear and throws the jug after him. He storms at the young gal and she peels all the potatoes over twilight hours and never says a word. Then the old maner quiets down and reckons he might possibly overlook it this time if she'd permit him to plant another smack in the same locality. She refused and the old man burned and raged.

I was just about to talk right out in meeting, when things got so warm they had to slide down the side of the house. Then they turned on the lights and me and the Congressmen went out between the ax.

After a while they raised the partition again and I see a country hotel. The farm hand was there with the young gal in boy's clothes. They was rumm'ing away; but for some fool notion or other they didn't raise worth a cent, but just hung round the tavern, and kept tellin' everybody the old uncle beats 'em all. They let on like as if the gal was a boy that the old feller was mean to—but, seems to me, any one would have knowed better; 'cause a boy don't take short steps or talk like a canary bird.

All of a sudden some one looks out the door and says the uncle's a-come in with shot guns and blood-hounds and wants to reason with the young couple.

Well, the runaway gal gets ready to defend herself with a rollin' pin and a broom stick. The hired hand draws out a brace of nickel plated revolvers and gives one to his sweetheart. I saw there was sure to be some shootin', and I made up my mind to get out of range.

Well, I started to find the place I came in at in the dark, not aimin' to step on nobody's coars; but it wasn't long before I got into trouble. Somebody said, "Throw him out!" and the times quicker than I can tell it, they hustled me over their heads to the stailway. They give me a first class start down these; and I went about four steps at a time. After about five minutes I found I was all there, though I felt terribly mixed up in some parts.

When the Congressman came out he said there wasn't no shootin' after all. I was mighty pleased to hear that, and I hope the farm hand, thins out to be a good husband what don't mind buildin' the fire in the mortar's, occasionally, when there ain't any other way out of it.

Skulls as Hard as Stone.

It is commonly believed that the Southern negro has a thicker skull than any other race, but while the Arkeys have a cranium almost bomb-proof, it is to be questioned whether they compare to certain of the Moorish tribes.

These tribes, in the vicinity of Morocco, are inordinately proud of their thick skulls, and from babyhood the heads of the boys are kept shaven, that the inherent tendency toward thickness of skull may be increased.

They have developed their heads to such a degree that one of the diversions of tourists in Morocco is to pay one of these youngsters a sum equivalent to about half a cent for the privilege of breaking bricks on his head.

The skull forms a natural defence and when attacked the Moorish lad wards off his opponent's blows by lowering his head and receiving the thrusts upon his skull.

The thickness of the negro's skull is accredited to the scanty covering of hair upon his pate, nature endeavoring to protect the brain from the rays of the sun by increasing the thickness of the skull.

OLD TIME GAMBLING.

Gaming Scenes in Paris After Battle of Waterloo.

Some of the old stories told of the gaming tables can hardly be believed nowadays, though they are related in such a cool matter of fact style by writers of the time as to show that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the practice formed a part of the high class social life of Paris.

Gronow relates that, having been appointed to the staff of Gen. Picton, who was then starting for Brussels, he obtained \$1,000 from the army agents, "which," he continues, "I took with me to a gambling house in St. James square where I managed some wonderful accident to win 600 pounds" (\$3,000). With this sum he subsequently provided his necessary outfit.

When the allies marched into Paris after the battle of Waterloo Gronow found the Palais Royal a hotbed of gambling. "The very heart of French dissipation." There were tables for all classes, the workman might play with 20 sous or the gentleman with 10,000 francs. The law did not prevent any class from indulging in a game that assisted to flourish in the municipality of Paris. The English visitors were not slow to participate in the play once offered to the general, obtaining leave of absence and never getting the Palais Royal till the time came for his return to the regiment.

Large fortunes were often lost at gambling in those days the losers disappearing never more to be heard of. Lord Thanes for instance who had an income of \$250,000 a year, lost every farthing at play and concludes Gronow "I do not remember any instance where those who spent their time in his den did not lose all they possessed."

Adirondack Incendiaries.

About a year ago great forest fires swept the Adirondack region, burning more than 600,000 acres of timber land and doing an estimated damage of more than \$38,000,000. It is not generally known that the fires that burned more than 75,000 acres were set deliberately.

The Forestry Bureau in Washington has just published the results of its investigation into the extent and causes of these fires. It finds that the railroads caused most of the fires by neglecting to obey the law to provide spark arresters for locomotives. That neglect has been remedied to a large extent. Danger still remains from the spirit of lawlessness that starts "needier" fires.

It was found that during the drought last spring one man set no less than twenty-four of these forest fires in one day. He also tried to shoot a boy who discovered him at this work.

One reason for the increase of incendiarism in the Adirondacks is the ill feeling caused by the closing of private parks and game preserves to the public. The number of these parks has increased enormously in recent years.

Woodsmen resent the restrictions upon their freedom to do as they please in the State's greatest natural pleasure ground.—New York Sun.

Jap Officers and Their Pay.

Military efficiency being so much bound up with the national existence of Japan, the army officers naturally take their profession very seriously. Their pay is small and few have much private means, so that they live in a very modest way compared to the officers of many other armies.

A major general only gets the equivalent of about 158 pounds a year ordinary pay a captain 30 pounds, and a second lieutenant 18 pounds. Most appointments mean additional pay, but foreign service does not. Messages have been established in some regiments, but as a rule the officers only have the midday meal together. Japanese food is cheap consisting as it does chiefly of rice and fish, while rich and poor alike drink the intoxicating liquor of the country "sake."

For this reason entertaining expenses come to very little, and the officer is enabled to maintain his position with but small outlay.

As in the Continental armies of Europe, Japanese officers practically live in uniform, and the latter is serviceable and inexpensive. Little attention is paid to smartness and appearance generally, though all are invariably neatly dressed. Promotion is chiefly by selection, especially in the higher ranks.—New York Evening Post.

British Average Earnings.

The President of the British Board of Trade stated, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, that the average annual earnings of adult males employed in the principal industrial and agricultural occupations in the United Kingdom in a year of average employment might be estimated approximately at \$350 per head.

Paul's Life Story.

Dr. Carl Schmidt of Heidelberg has succeeded after seven years of hard work in placing together 2,000 small fragments of papyrus and translating the contents from the Coptic. He says that he has thus been enabled to give to the world the first accurate and complete account of the acts of Paul. The papyrus was inscribed in 180 A. D.

Fined for Wearing a Crest.

For wearing a crest upon a finger ring without a license, a man was fined \$5.75 in a London court the other day.

A NIGHTMARE.

An Imaginary Adventure in London's Underground.

In the dimly lighted railway carriage a man had been talking to me about the structural weakness of St. Paul's cathedral. He spoke in a bold, fresh scientific spirit and I suppose I had gone to sleep. At any rate, when I roused myself at Blackfriars Station and found myself alone I felt unusually chilly and the station seemed unusually dark. I dropped on the dim platform however and went quickly across it, with the swinging rapidity of a routine to the exit where stood the ticket collector. He was not dressed like a ticket collector however. For some reason (possibly the cold) I had myself remarked he was dressed from head to foot in a black hooded gown such as had been worn centuries before by those friars after whom the place was named. And instead of taking my ticket he merely said to me: "Do not go upstairs."

I looked at him with a dull wonder and then I looked around equally doubtfully. I seemed to be that other monkish form as gathered in the shadows, and the place was like a monastery with every light extinguished.

"Do not go upstairs," said the hooded man. You will see what is being done here. A man like you had far better stay where you are.

Do you really propose to go upstairs? That I should stay in the Underground forever?

Yes, in the Underground he answered. We of the future Church remained in the Underground, in the catacombs. For what was done in the twilight was not good for a good man to see.

I will go up, I cried. It is only at a steep rate.

"Consider it well," he answered with curious calm. We guard ourselves with walls we guard ourselves with our hearts. But your laughter and our love are with us. But the new philosophers and their girl all round with gayer and looser dress is a queer sight.

I will go up, I cried, and broke past him and ran upstairs. Yet I did it with such a solemn and expectant passion that I thought it for granted that I should run upon some enormous organ of violence and obscurity in the night. And it was like the first flash of cold water when I found myself in an utterly empty street turned almost white by the moon.

I strode up the street for two corners and stood before St. Paul's Cathedral. It took us quite cold and colonial in the empty night, like the last temple of some empty planet. Only when I stared a little while I saw the foolish figure of a young man striding on the ugliest steps as if he owned the cathedral.

The instant that I had started to mount the steps he waved at me wildly and cried, "Have you got a new design?"

As I paused irresolute there popped three rabbits out of their holes, three pale men from between the pillars peering at me.

The young man ran half way down the steps and I saw that he had long wandering scars that were as impudent as mine, but his face was whiter than a corpse.

We have cleared the London streets, he explained of every man who has not a design. These three gentlemen have all got new designs. That one, he added, lowering his voice and pointing at one who had a business head and huge ears, that one is Pyffer himself.

And who is Pyffer? I asked, staring at the man whose horrible ears seemed to grow larger as I stared.

You know the great peasant, surely? he asked anxiously. "But you must not speak to him. He never speaks."

I had reached the top step, and now saw the other two men more clearly. One was a blond German with watery eyes and wild mustaches. The other was an elderly man with black whiskers and green spectacles. He was in the middle of an oration when I reached him.

"It is merely," he said, a matter of science a matter for experts. What could be more absurd than the present construction of the thing?"

At this point the pale young man who seemed to be sort of a showman whispered in my ear: "Dr. Blood, he has made conduct a success."

Dr. Blood continued: "What can be more absurd architecturally than dome is a curve. I am against curves."

"Now you trust the expert?" he said. "I'll put this place right in two minutes."

He strode into the interior, and then we heard three taps. And the next moment the dome that filled the sky shook as in an earthquake, and fell sideways. Nothing could express the enormous unreason of that familiar scene silently gone wrong.

I awoke to hear the hoarse voice of the yawning man, speaking for the first and last time in my ear. "Do you see," he whispered, "the sky is crooked!"—G. K. Chesterton, in the London Daily News.

CRIMINALS NEVER CAUGHT.

How Lawbreakers Have Succeeded in Evading the Police.

The Oxford street "doctor," who while ostensibly conducting a legitimate business, yet maintained the closest relationship with the elite of rascaldom, assisting them with his advice and financing and engineering, their most promising schemes, might have posed as a veritable double of the man who so nearly foiled the redoubtable Sherlock Holmes.

True, Bridgewater, has met with his deserts at last and is now undergoing a well deserved term of penal servitude. But his conviction was due to a series of (for him) untucky coincidences, such as no intelligence, now ever known, could hope to guard against or circumvent. And, besides, there are others keener and cleverer even than he, says the London Illustrated who have flouted the police all their lives through and have died rich and respected in the end, without having had a solitary conviction recorded against them although their crimes have been manifold.

Sir Robert Anderson, K. C. B. late chief of the criminal investigation department Scotland Yard, was interviewed by the writer, laid particular emphasis upon one such, the individual responsible for the theft of Gainsborough's picture of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and its sensational restoration after a lapse of more than 20 years.

"That man," said Sir Robert, "lived in a bigger and finer house than the one I now occupy. He was better off financially than I ever was or am ever likely to be. Yet he simply revelled in robbery. It was his profession, you see. He had embraced it as other men embrace the army as a profession, or the law or the church. He took genuine pride in it. And he made it pay from every point of view, save only the moral one."

Further investigation revealed the existence of other master criminals of a like type. One of them he is well known to the police who, however can do nothing for lack of the necessary proofs in an individual, who some few years back conceived a certain diabolical scheme which had for its object the deposing abroad of rich Englishmen and murdering them there for the sake of their money and valuables. This dangerous desperado resides at the present moment in an elegant suite of bachelor chambers on the roof of Hyde Park, and can be met with nightly at "swagger" West End bars as well as at other and more questionable resorts in the same neighborhood.

He never commits a crime himself, but is ever ready with advice and money for the encouragement of those who do commit them. He is liberal, too, and "straight" from his own point of view and for this reason probably not one of the human tools he uses so freely has so far presumed to "round on" him.

Once, however, the police thought they had him, it was when a notorious jewel thief was being tried at the Central Criminal Court for the theft of a duchess's jewels. Scotland Yard knew perfectly well that this man had been financed in his enterprise by the individual in question, who had also disposed through his agents, of the bulk of the stolen property. A word from the prisoner would have sufficed and he would then have gone off with a nominal nine months or so. That word however he refused to speak and was consequently "sent down" for seven years. This was in 1899. He was released in the spring of 1906 went straight from the prison to his "banker" and confederate, and received from him in hard cash the sum of £1,000, with a promise, afterward faithfully kept, of more to follow.

Of a different type of the above, but equally difficult to catch, is the master criminal who, while keeping carefully in the background, devotes all his energies to the furtherance and fostering of some particular branch of rascality. Concerning one such the writer gathered some interesting particulars in the course of a conversation he had with the chief inspector of weights and measures of the London county council.

For years, it appears, this gentleman's detectives have been trying in vain to run to earth a mysterious individual whose business in life it is to manufacture false weights for the use of dishonest costermongers and fraudulent tradesmen generally. Many thousands of these weights are turned out yearly. They are all cast from the same molds and are expensive articles to buy, costing from 30s to 42s a set. But they are absolutely perfect to the eye, even the council's stamp being forged upon them to a nicety, and they consequently command a ready sale at county fairs, markets, etc.

The men who sell them—there are only two or three of them—are perfectly known, but merely to possess false weights is, as the law now stands, no offense, and consequently they cannot be interfered with. If the authorities could lay hands on the actual maker things would be different. But 'his they have so far failed to do.

All the world is a stage and every man thinks he is a star.

Trying times—Court sessions.

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