

MISS ELLEN ON BEING PECULIAR

"Yes," said Luella with a characteristic little shrug, "I'm peculiar, and I know it." Miss Ellen paused, her needle suspended in mid-air, and looked sharply across at Luella.

WHEN WATERS RAN COLD

The month was January, and the winter was a bitterly cold one. We were living in Waterloo, Iowa, then, and father was driving a dray. I was only four years old at the time, yet some of the circumstances I am about to relate fastened themselves indelibly on my memory, and furnish a setting of reminiscences round which the story of father's adventure as I have often heard him describe it, gathered until it became one distinct whole.

CLOCK WITH 20 DIALS

San Diego, Cal., has a wonderful clock with twenty dials which tell simultaneously the time in all parts of the world, also the days of the week and the date and month. It stands twenty-one feet high and four of its dials are each four feet in diameter.

PORCUPINE DESTROYS TREES

California Forests Suffer from the Pernicious Activity of the Animals. Reports made to the local forest bureau from Bishop, Inyo county, indicate that the porcupine is seriously damaging the lodgepole pine forests of the eastern slope of the Sierra.

FIVE DAYS UNDER SNOW

A "porgo" in Kamchatka is the name as a blizzard in America, only more so. While it lasts, no man, dog, reindeer travels, and if anyone is caught in it, the chances are that he will not live to tell the tale.

The Women Chums

The Scandinavian ship Sea Gull was sailing in Kara bay, a part of the Arctic ocean lying between Russia proper and Siberia. About five miles from the Russian coast at sunrise in the morning the lookout in the foretop, a woman (women on Scandinavian ships do the same work before the mast as men), saw on the port quarter a black speck on the track of sunlight shimmering on the waves.

"Of course, everybody can't be just alike. We wouldn't run to be like the new candles all run in the same mould, but being different doesn't always mean being peculiar. Somehow that generally seems to have an edge to it, a sort of polite excuse for indulging in a lot of lunt, disagreeable ways. I know that isn't the dictionary meaning of it, but it's pretty apt to be the lived-out meaning.

"There was Lodemey Spriggs. She was a friend of Aunt Susan's, and I wasn't much more than a child when I used to see her, but I've never forgot the impression she made on me. Of all the outspoken, sharp-tongued women I ever knew, she was the worst. My mother what you talked about, for a religion to pickles, she was always on the opposite side, and she never hesitated to speak her mind about anything or anybody. Then she'd finish up by saying with a top-lifted sort of air, 'To be sure, I can't be expected to think like other folks, I'm peculiar!'

"Now, Lodemey had her good points. She was kind enough at heart, and she'd put herself out to help a sick neighbor or be good to a strange cat; but she made so much of her peculiarity and folks could see it so much plainer than the rest that it was pretty much all she got credit for. Child as I was, I got to thinking that being peculiar was about the worst that could happen to a body, and something to be steered clear of like scarlet fever or measles."

"The red had crept slowly into Luella's cheeks." "Miss Ellen," she begged, "you don't think I'm like that yet, do you?" "No, I don't, child," Miss Ellen beamed at her encouragingly. "Only it'll just as well be warned of what we might run into if we don't look out. There we can be extra careful and get set in our little ways that aren't pleasant for other folks."

"But haven't we a right to our own opinions?" objected Luella, comforted but not convinced. "Of course we have; we wouldn't be worth much without 'em; but we wouldn't be forever setting people at odds and ends with 'em. We've a right to our own manners too; but it's just as well to have 'em like a June morning, kind of brisk and bracing, but sunny and comfortable too, as to be bluster and spite like a March gale."

"I see what you mean, and I know it'd better be careful," admitted Luella modestly; "but don't you think some of us are born different and can't help being so?" "Yes, I do, to a certain extent. That's what gives the spice of life, and makes us individual souls instead of five dolls, but I've had considerable experience in being different myself, and I've found it's a pretty good plan to temper our differences with a good deal of love and consideration for the rest of the world. It's the being different for the sake of being different that makes folks peculiar, and that's the kind they're most likely to be proud of."

"I won't do that—truly I won't, Miss Ellen," Luella promised earnestly. "I'll have to be myself I couldn't be that—but I'll begin to watch out this minute not to get 'set' and 'Mr. chy.'"

Miss Ellen folded her last pair of stockings and tucked the cotton into her dressing-bag. "That's right, dearie," she said with an approving smile; "just you blossom out full of your own kind of roses with the special color and sweetness that belong to 'em, and then you'll stand a good chance of being able to keep your particular crop of thorns hid away under 'em where they won't scratch anybody."—M. M. T.

Father was kept very busy through out the forenoon. Finally but a single job remained to be done before Old Frank could be put in the barn and father go to a belated dinner. Some one wanted a load of ice.

The place where father went for his load was deserted by the ice-harvester. The river here stretched away for a mile or two to the north-west, and down this stretch the wind, unimpeded, soared almost to double its speed and keenness.

The bank stopped gently down to the edge of the water. Here father backed up his dray to within a few feet of the ice and left his horse standing while he prepared to cut and load the ice. It was but a few inches thick, where he began splitting off cakes of it with his axe.

He was making rapid headway with his work, and had secured and loaded nearly as much as he wanted, when a considerably larger piece split off than he had anticipated including the portion on which he stood. Taken by surprise he was precipitated into the water which at this point was four or more in depth, with a strong current.

He was clothed to the point of clumsiness. He wore a heavy overcoat with a strap or belt tied round it, a heavy cap, and a pair of thick sheepskin mittens.

He came up somewhat farther out in the stream than where he had gone down, and near thinner ice. He soon succeeded in throwing his hands over the edge of the thin ice, his mittens floating fast instantly.

Then he found that he could maintain himself in this position for an indefinite period, although the strength of the current constantly drew his legs downstream and up under the ice to which he was clinging.

To have clung thus until help could arrive would have been a comparatively easy matter under ordinary circumstances. But although he was in plain sight of the flouring mills on each side of the river, and within possible hailings distance of the bridge which spanned the river below the dam, and in sight of perhaps a dozen houses, no person was visible. The small chance of any one appearing on this bitterly cold day was even smaller at this particular time, as people generally were at their midday meal.

Several times, however, in the next few desperate moments did the splintering ice break his hold, and each time he was fortunate enough to get a new hold before being drawn under. While working thus he drew nearer, partly by design, to the river bank, where the faithful old dray horse was standing.

At last an inspiration seized him, and knowing how well the horse obeyed his least word, he called to Old Frank to back up. The old horse backed a few steps in a slow and deliberate manner. Father watched him with keen anxiety, lest he back too far, and dray, horse and all be precipitated into the icy stream. But his fears were groundless, for when the dray was as near the edge of the ice as father dared risk having it come, the horse stopped at a word of command.

So exhausted and chilled was he by this time that with the upper portion of his body resting over the edge of the solid ice and his hands holding to the wheel, he would scarcely have had power to draw himself out of the water. But taking as firm a grasp of the wheel as possible, he chirruped for the horse to go ahead, and again the animal responded, and father was dragged from his icy bath.

Summoning all his strength and willpower, he succeeded in gaining his feet. Knowing that he must get home at once, and that if possible he must walk rather than ride, in order to avoid being utterly chilled and seriously frozen, he started the horse homeward and staggered along as best he could. I was at home, and happened to be anxiously peering out of the window in the hope of seeing father.

Up the street a block or two was Old Frank, coming home with the dray, and on the sidewalk came a man whom, in spite of his condition, I recognized as father. His clothing was frozen stiff, while from all over him hung icicles, literally by the hundred. He reached the house, and soon made a change of apparel. Remarkable as it may seem, he was not seriously frozen anywhere, nor did he suffer any particular inconvenience afterward as a result of his involuntary and somewhat prolonged plunge-bath.—B. W. McKENNETT.

Thomas Chett was a meek but careful clerk, who, through no greater fault than carelessness, was continually blundering in his work. His most fatal mistake was to misdirect letters, either by substituting a wrong street number, or by writing, say "Cal" for "Col." One day his employer laid on his desk a letter which had been over a month in the mails, and because of Thomas's error, he had not reached its destination—and "Now this has got to stop," said his employer. Such delays waste time and money. If you had used an envelope which hadn't had our address in the corner, we might never have known where this letter went to."

That's true," assented the humble clerk. "But I am always careful to use that kind of envelope just for that reason." Being a little slow of comprehension he did not understand why his patient employer had been so angry and turned away so sternly.

A German proverb. Well," said the old gentleman, walking through the International Exhibition exhibit, "what I see all this world round here I have ever lived to be a year old, and I've never had a mite of care of myself, either. You see I was born in the days before they discovered germs. I have slept with the snow blowing in on my bed, cut through the ice to wash my face, and lands, onto all kinds of rich, heavy loads, got my feet wet and let them get dry again or stay wet put my hands on and took them off when I pleased, am 84 years old and never had a serious illness. I am afraid, now however, that I will never reach 90 years as my father and mother did. Looks like a man don't have a fair show with so many germs ready to floor him."

Simple Rules for Self-Protection. The commissioner's warning and suggestions have reference not only to grip but to tonsillitis, bronchitis, diphtheria and pneumonia. He asks nothing impossible or difficult of the average person. He expects no sacrifice, no giving up of cherished habits. As he says, the price of humanity or of health is not high, in fact a little thought and a little firmness is all that he asks, and the "price" spells more enjoyment and fuller life in the long run.

Moderation in eating and drinking, a reasonable amount of exercise, walking in the open air, ventilation of houses and offices, avoidance of overcrowded places and excessively heavy clothing, these are the very simple and feasible forms of "insurance" which he prescribes. To know them should be to adopt them.—Chicago Record-Herald.

It Might Be Either. A bony, lank village youth of artistic bent, who was snuffed at by his fellow natives, finally disappeared from his usual haunts. He was missed chiefly because his peculiar personal appearance was bound to attract attention wherever it was exhibited.

No one seemed to know whether he had had gone, till the storekeeper, returning from a visit to a near-by city, announced that he had discovered his whereabouts. "I found him!" he proclaimed. "He was in the art museum."

"As a curio," inquired one, "or as an object of art?" "And So Got Riches. An unfeeling monster of a man—although a writer in the Athlone Globe does not so describe him—was asked at a little evening gathering to tell what book had helped him most, after some thought. "All the ladies present bridled, and one asked him in what way his wife's cook-book had helped him—would he not tell them in a few words?" He would. "About as soon as I married," he said, "I made up my mind I'd rather work than eat."

The frozen snow was six feet deep under the sledges. With their snow-shoes, the men dug down into it, till they made an excavation about eight feet square clear to the ground. The sledges, they placed the three sledges round the edge and banked them to the snow which raised the walls higher by two or three feet. With a spauldron from one of the sledges, and a piece of canvas, a roof was improvised. The dogs had been loosed, and at once burrowed holes in the snow and crawled down to sleep. The men laid the bottom of their sleeping bags and prepared for a sleep. The thermometer was thirty-five below zero, and the wind was blowing so hard that they could not tell whether it was snowing or whether the snow was only being driven by the wind.

Every three or four hours, one or two of the men had to climb out and shove the masses of snow from the sledge, which otherwise would have broken in under the weight. No fire was possible, but the heat of their bodies kept the dugout warm enough for them not to freeze. Frozen reindeer meat, raw, and frozen eye bread, formed their meals until on the third day, in desperation, they burned one of the sledges to make themselves some hot tea. Four days went by and still the porgo raged above them.

"I dried fish for the dogs gave out," and the poor animals began to gnaw the harness. The explorer tried to appease the guides by telling them of things in America and giving them lessons in astronomy with snowballs to represent the sun and the planets, and so forth. He found, however, that they thought he was going crazy from hunger and cold, particularly when he did them about the telephone and the planetograph. Then he tried his pocket compass and magnet, and showed them various tricks, which made them sure he was a wizard. This brought them courage for they felt that he could keep them from perishing in the storm, by his magic powers.

Sure enough, on the fifth evening the porgo blew itself out. The stars shone, the wind went down and the men crept numb and starving out of their snow prison, harnessed up the weak but eager dogs, and started very slowly and weakly toward Ghiliga. The Kamchatka sledge dog wears a bell on his neck for occasions when he gets lost in the snow, and the wives and families of the guides in a village near Ghiliga were out listening for them. Women and children came running to meet the sledges as men and dogs came in on a crawl. There was kissing and crying and rejoicing on all sides. A feast of seal fat, deer fat, marrow, cranberries, blubber and tea was soon ready, and after five days in the snow the little Kamchatka village seemed like Paradise.—EDWARD S. ALDEN.

A Decided Improvement. A story is told of a ready-witted Argentinian who was attending at the regular meeting of ministers in his denomination. One of the preachers, in a very excited manner, and with strong indignation in his tones, declared: "What, sir, would the Apostle Paul have said could he have seen the life of luxury led by our present race of politicians and church dignitaries, rolling about in their carriages and living in their palatial residences?" "Well," replied the witty clergyman, "I should think that he would have remarked that things in the church are decidedly looking up."

Great Increase of Paupers in England. There were more paupers than ever at the end of January, despite old age pensions, the proportion in London being the highest since 1881, according to the Government return published yesterday. The total number of paupers in England and Wales was 850,460, of whom 38,831 were indoor. The proportion of a thousand of population was 24.1, an increase of 0.5 from last year and 0.3 in indoor paupers. The total in London was 133,226, a proportion of 27.8, the increase of 0.4 being divided between indoor and outdoor poor.

As the Sea Gull approached the boat the figure in it was discovered to be that of a woman. She was lifted over the ship's side in an exhausted condition, pale and emaciated, but when they asked her questions she could respond only in the Russian language, which was unintelligible to the Scandinavians. One of the crew was a young Russian woman, Katia Jaroff, who had shipped at a Siberian port a few days before. Knowing a little Scandinavian, she was brought forward as an interpreter. A close observer would have noticed a slight start on the part of both her and the woman from the boat when they first saw each other, but they sufficiently restrained themselves so that nothing unusual was noticed. Katia questioned the stranger and reported that she claimed to have been aboard a Russian vessel and incurring the displeasure of the captain, had been marooned. She asked where the Sea Gull was bound and when told that she would first stop at a Norwegian port asked to be transported there. Since she had no money she was required to work her passage before the mast.

Naturally the two Russian women became companions. The woman who had been marooned, Sonia Sarderhoff, was large and soon regained her strength, which was considerable. Katia on the contrary was delicate and she seemed to have been pulled down by some past hardship. Both women were intellectual looking, and their station was evidently far above that of the balance of the crew. Sonia from the time she was able to stand watch offered to do duty also for Katia. This she insisted upon and most of the time did double work relieving Katia.

The first mate, a Swede named Granderson, became enamored of Katia and made love to her. Katia repelled him but persisted. Sonia took the girl under her protection, which led to hard words between the mate and Sonia, and during the altercation Sonia told him that if he did not cease annoying her friend and country woman she would compel him to do so. This interested the crew, who ridiculed Granderson. He paid no attention to Sonia's threat, but persisted in annoying Katia.

One day while he was so doing he was felled to the deck by a blow from Sonia. When the mate got up several of the sailors were laughing at him. He attempted to bring the open palm of his hand against Sonia's ear, but leaving his own face unguarded, he received a knock under the jaw which raised him off his feet and landed him on the deck again.

A fight between a man and a woman brought the crew together to see the mate arose and let drive at Sonia. He was now in earnest, and the fight was more even. Sonia was at a disadvantage from her skirts, but she had the luck to knock her enemy against the capstan, which stunned him, and he was carried below unconscious. That ended the mate's attentions to Katia, and from the time of the fight the two women were inseparable.

But Sonia had nothing to do with any of the women of the crew except Katia. She would not occupy a bunk with the women, sleeping when she did sleep at night on deck. She was a puzzle to the men, and her devotion to Katia excited a good deal of curiosity. The captain, hearing of her quarrel with the mate, reprimanded him and gave orders that the two Russian women should thereafter be treated with every consideration. He even relieved Katia of her part of the duties of a seaman.

Finally the Sea Gull rounded the northern extremity of Norway and, sailing down into the Atlantic ocean, put into Bergen. When the anchor had been dropped in Swedish waters the women went to the cabin of the captain and made a confession. They were both escaped prisoners from the Russian political prison at Kara. Katia had been convicted of teaching the Russian peasantry, Sonia was a man, Michael Vlostoff, who had got himself sent to Kara for the express purpose of freeing Katia, which he had planned to do by bribery. Katia's escape had been made at the time arranged but Vlostoff had been delayed. They had arranged to get away from Siberia which Katia had accomplished. Vlostoff had been obliged to put out in Kara bay in a boat, and fortune decreed that he should be picked up by the vessel on which Katia had shipped.

The captain furnished Vlostoff with a suit of men's clothes, and the pair were married before leaving the ship.—Adelaide TELL in Waterbury Republic.