

TM 1911/5

Some queer stories
here

B. D.

A deaf man went to make a call. On entering his friend's court yard, a little pet dog, that was sitting at the further corner of it, began opening upon him, and yapped incessantly. The Gentleman looks at the dog, but passes on without minding him, and is ushered in to the master of the house. After the usual salutations and enquiries, he remarks to his host "Surely, Sir, that little dog of yours must be unwell; or else he had no sleep last night." "What makes you think so," says the host, straining at the top of his voice in order to make him hear - "All the time I was passing through the yard, I observed he did nothing but gape and yawn his mouth about."

Specimen of puns

40. Back, there.

A hump-backed man, a dwarf and a blind man were contending for precedence. "Let's determine it," says one, "by seeing which of us ^{three} can say the grandest thing

thing for himself - the dwarf shall begin" - "In that case", says the dwarf, there will be no dispute, but I shall sit first. For I say that I am naturally your chief; inasmuch as you both of you be long to me." "I shall not give up my claims for all that" says the blind man, for great as you are, you are nothing in my eyes; nor more is my Lord there". ~~He~~ Hump back, taking up his turn, tells them they talk like young men, and that great and little has nothing to do with the established rules of Deference in such cases. "You are both of you chrysoes (i.e. youngsters or strait-backed); according to the characters used) and of course must in common courtesy give way to me."

4th. Say 'twas a dog Did it.

A pedagogue seeing one of his young scholars with a large cake in his hand, wished to chouse him of a bit. so pretended to play and joke with him. "Let me bite you out a pretty crescent," says

says he; so setting in his ugly teeth, he¹¹ takes out a segment, leaving a horned vacancy like a young moon. Having swallowed that bit "Let one bite you out a nice half moon to look at" - but the child did not like the game; and covered the cake with his hand. The pedagogue would not give up, & in glut-ton heed Cap'nep set his teeth sharply into the boy's fingers. The boy began to cry; the pedagogue to be alarmed. "There there" says he, coaxing him; never mind; I'll excuse you your reading lesson this morning. When you go in, if they enquire about it, say 'twas a dog, that you could not get rid of, snapped at your cake, & in taking a piece out, bit your finger.

⁴²
~~42~~ What does the almanac say?

A staunch believer in predictions and lucky days - one who would not move a step in any business without consulting the almanac, - was examining an old crazy mud wall, when a large portion of it fell in upon

upon him, and buried him in the ruins. Terrified, bruised, and set fast, he calls out lustily to a servant that was near, "help! help! save me! save me!" "Stop a ^{moment} ~~little while~~" ^{"I had better} answers the servant; "I'll just step in first for an almanac to see if this be a lucky day for removing earth".

14. Despatch me first.

A wife and a concubine were quarrelling violently. The Husband, who in fact was fondest of his young concubine, pretends to be very angry with her, and says, "It is better ^{I should} ~~to~~ kill you at once, I see; that will settle all your disputes". Away runs the concubine to her chamber, and hides herself. He, taking up a large knife, follows after. The wife, who thought him really going to kill the concubine, peeps into the room, but sees no symptoms of killing, except killing with kindness. "Well" says she, in high indignation, coloring and bridling up, if this be your way of killing, I think you ought to have killed me first, that am your wife.

5. This father did it before him

43 A Father-in-law ^{makes love} ~~seduces~~ his daughter-in-law. She repulses him, and breaks the matter to her mother-in-law. "Ah" says the mother, that old ~~crooked~~ husband of mine takes after his father to a hair - He was guilty of the same tricks"

6. Your Grandfather was one.

44 A merchant, who had been long away from home, meets a townsman ^{the new comer} and asks "What news in our town" Says ~~he~~ "the great news is that on such a day a sudden flash of lightning struck dead ten men there and they were all of them Pahoe Lao*." "Indeed!" says the merchant - & pray how is my father, is he alive & well". Your father, replies the other, was mercifully spared to us, but your venerable grandfather was one of the number that heaven received back to itself on that occasion

* men that ^{make love to} ~~sought to~~ seduce their daughters-in-law.

7. Wait for further orders

A ~~mandarin~~ ^{new-made} Mandarin, being arrived at his post, the respectable Elders ^{the}

* The word Lao, which originally meant old & which I have been rendered Elders, is difficult to translate. It means, those who are, or by courtesy are supposed to be old enough to

~~45~~ Waits for further orders.

A new-made Mandarin being arrived at his post, the respectable ^{*}Elders of the place meet to wait upon him. The Mandarin orders all those among them that make free with their daughters-in-law, to go over to the right hand, & the rest to stand on the left. They arrange themselves accordingly, all but one man, who seems uncertain; & first goes over to the right & then hastily comes back again to the left. Says the Mandarin, "what's that for?" Sir, replies the man, kneeling down, I have not yet received your Honor's commands explicitly enough. I don't know which side they are to stand, that make free with their younger brothers wives".

* The word lao, which I have rendered Elders, is difficult to translate. It originally meant old, but ^{often} now means those who are or by courtesy are supposed to be old enough to be of some weight, & has no ^{meaning} connection with the idea of old age & infirmity.

~~46~~ 'Tis all right—go on.

A girl, whose family was in affluence, was affianced to a poor man. He, fearing some attempt would be made to frustrate the match,

match, determines to carry off the lady ¹⁵
by force. The persons employed for this
^{service} ~~exploit~~ by mistake lay hold of her little sister,
and swinging her across one of their backs,
are making off with her. The female at-
endants, finding out the mistake, cry "stop,
stop; you have taken the wrong". The young
sister, riding along a pigback, eagerly
calls out "No, no, ^{no!} go on - 'tis all right -
never mind what they say - they only want
to cheat you".

† ^{Chapter 47} ~~The~~ literary title in China, call-
ed Hien seng, ~~that~~ may be purchased. It
probably was introduced at some time when
the state was very needy, and with an indis-
creet disregard to public opinion; ~~it~~ should
seem to be so constituted as to have some-
thing in it that does not harmonize
with their other institutions; as it is not
only a perpetual topic of sarcasm &
ridicule, but seems in a peculiar man-
ner to give umbrage to students and ^{to} the
literary world in general; and to excite
their spleen, anger, hatred, and contempt.
No office or power of any consequence is
attached to it, I believe; though there may
be

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be some little privileges and rights of interfering, that may occasionally annoy the students. I am aware (from sources independent of these jests) that there exists a most decided and marked esprit de corps among the literary men and aspirants to honors in China, and that they strenuously resist any encroachments on the privileges, rights and dignity of their republic; but what it is in this order of Hien seng, that galls and exasperates them to so great a degree, I am not sufficiently master of details to know: The mere circumstance of its being venal could not alone have such an effect, though, ~~too evident~~, from the very frequent ~~re-~~ introduction of the topic of gold and golden honors with a sneer, and of railleries against money-merit, ~~that~~ it is evident, that it is one of the exciting causes. The jests against these Hien seng are numerous; and are often bitterly severe, and sometimes even savage. They are
seldom

seldom translatable; containing either allusions to books, usages, opinions or ~~or~~ ~~part~~ peculiar to the Chinese, or else grossnesses and indecencies beyond the moral limits of modern Europe. The following one (which lies on the borders) will serve as a specimen of the deep contempt I speak of.

Observe, Ta chang means either the great hall, where those who have obtained a title, go through the ceremonies of investiture ~~and~~, or the great ^{entrails} ~~entrails~~; according to the character used for chang.

⁴⁷~~48~~. A fresh-made Kien-seng ^{*}, coming out of the Ta chang (hall of investiture) was met by an old acquaintance, who bowed to him obsequiously, & then turning to a great lump of Ho's dung, that lay by the ^{way} ~~road~~ side, bowed in like manner to that. "What's that for?" says the Kien-seng; "do you make a reverence to that filth?" "Why not?" replies he;

he; that too comes out of the Tachang. ^{great}
~~quid~~. The joke is none of the most refined; ^{but} ~~but~~ ^{see p. 15}

~~I am a sign of the times, I grant you;~~
~~but it is not one of those which~~
~~will make you a sign of the times~~
~~as you are now.~~ ~~And~~
~~that I laid this just some years ago of~~
~~with a book that has been both~~
~~and a sign of the times and a~~
~~sign of the times.~~ ~~And~~
~~the book is now in the hands of~~
~~the farmer.~~
 the manure that's laid to the hot bed of
 wit, the more luxuriant the plants. We
 are too refined now-a-days; too washy.
 Excuse me, Mr Editor; I am an old man,
 and left school fifty and odd years ago.
~~I was a~~ ~~and I went into breeches (then so called)~~
~~in the year 65; the year~~
 that Jack Selwin in a large party of men
 and women - people of fashion too - but I
 won't

won't tell the story - 'tis too good for you.
 My Executors will find it in my Journal
in puris naturalibus - how they
 will be able to dress it up, so as to make
 it produceable, without smothering the
 pure red and white of the wit of it, is
 past my comprehension. There is but
 one decent person alive, that I am ac-
 quainted with, that I can tell it to now,
 - though there is nothing immoral in it -
 and she'll never hear it, except when
 her deaf cousin is present for me to
 look at and address myself to. Then,
 indeed she still laughs heartily at it;
 and so does he.

⁴⁸
~~20~~. There were two men lived in the
 same town; one as deaf as a post, and
 the other unable to utter a sound; ha-
 ving for some years utterly lost his voice.
 And they were, both of them, at all
 times very anxious to conceal their own
 defects, but fond of playing upon other
 people's infirmities. One day, the deaf
 man, meeting the dumb one, begged to
 be favored with a song. The dumb man was
 aware

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aware of his hearer's infirmity; so
opening his mouth, & moving his lips, &
beating time with his hand, he puts on
all the apparent forms of singing. The
deaf man, deceived by appearances, bends
down his ear, and acts the part of a patient
listener, till at last seeing the lips still, he
concludes that the song is over, when pre-
tending to be highly gratified, he exclaims,
Very good; very good indeed, Sir! I did not
know that you had recovered your voice,
you really sing better than ever you did.
