

CHAT WITH A POET

THE STORY OF AN INTERESTING EVENING WITH LONGFELLOW.

"Excelsior," the "Wreck of the Hesperus" and the "Old Clock on the Stair" came to be written. "The Bridge" was born of sorrow.

I once wrote to the poet Longfellow asking him to give me some account of the circumstances under which he wrote "The Bridge"—I stood on the bridge at midnight—a poem which an English critic has called "the most sympathetic in this language."

A few evenings later found me at the poet's door at his Cambridge home. He was then verging on seventy years, in the fullness of his experience and the ripeness of his fame.

"I will tell you first how I came to write the 'Psalm of Life.' I was a young man then. I can recall the time it was a bright day, and the trees were blooming, and I felt an impulse to write out my aim and purpose in the world.

"When I was in England I was honored by receiving an invitation from the queen. As I was leaving the palace yard my carriage was hindered by the crowd of vehicles.

"I bowed. 'May I ask, sir, if you wrote the 'Psalm of Life?'"

"I answered that I did. 'Would you be willing, sir, to take a workman by the hand?'"

"I extended my hand to him. He clasped it, and never in my life have I received a compliment which gave me so much satisfaction."

"I wrote 'Excelsior,' he continued, after receiving a letter full of lofty sentiments from Charles Sumner at Washington.

"The clock in the corner of the room," he went on, "is not the one to which I refer in my 'Old Clock on the Stair.' That clock stood in the country house of my father-in-law at Pittsfield, among the Berkshire hills."

"The great clock in the room was beating the air in the shadows as he spoke. I could seem to hear it say: 'Toujours-jamais! Jamais-toujours!'"

"It was these words by a French author that had suggested to him the poem's refrain: 'Forever-never! Never-forever!'"

"Excelsior" had been set to popular music by the Hutchinsons when the poet met one evening the minister's family after a concert in Boston Music Hall.

"My poem entitled 'The Bridge,' he said in effect, "was written in sorrow, which made me feel for the loneliness of others. I was a widower at the time, and I used to sometimes go over the bridge in Boston evenings to meet friends and to return near midnight by the same way.

"The poet was silent a few moments. The sea rose and fell among the wooden piers, and there was a great furnace on the Brighton hills whose red light was reflected by the waves.

"To settle a bet," said the visitor, "how long can a man go without food?"

"Ask the man over there," said the snake editor.

"No; he's a poet," Philadelphia Press.

"My husband has strange ideas of economy." "How is that?" "Why, he seems to think he saves money by drinking so much at the club that he has no appetite for breakfast."

"Always Gets the Last Word." "Say, pa," queried little Billy Blon, "bunker, what's an echo?"

LONDON'S GRASSHOPPER

For Nearly Three and a Half Centuries a Famous Landmark.

The golden grasshopper on the tower of the Royal Exchange has been for nearly three and a half centuries a London landmark as familiar as the cross on St. Paul's or the dragon on Bow church steeple.

Sir Thomas Gresham, a royal agent in three successive reigns, founded the exchange in the reign of Elizabeth. He erected at his own expense a beautiful structure in the Flemish style of architecture, with a tower on the first floor. A bell tower crowned by a huge grasshopper stood on one side of the chief entrance. The bell in this tower summoned the merchants at 12 o'clock noon and 6 o'clock evening.

The fire of 1693 the building was totally destroyed. The statues of kings and queens which ornamented the corridors were precipitated into the enormous cellar and with them the tower and grasshopper.

Gresham was loyally loved by the metropolis, and his generous services were not forgotten. From the mountain of debris the grasshopper was rescued, and it was placed—a lofty vase of gilt brass—above the new dome supported by eight Corinthian columns, and to this hour it swings to the points of the compass, perpetuating the sign and crest of the Gresham family.

The old clock in this tower had four dials and chimed four times daily, on Sunday, the One Hundred and Fourth Psalm; on Monday, "God Save the King"; on Tuesday, "Waterloo March"; on Wednesday, "There's Nae Luck About the House"; on Thursday, "See, the Conquering Hero Comes"; on Friday, "Life Let Us Cherish"; and on Saturday, "Foot Guards' March."

In 1839 fire again devastated the stately building, beginning soon after 10 at night, and by next morning the clock tower alone was standing. It is significant that the last air played by the chimes before they went crashing through the tower roof, crushing the entrance arch below, was "There's Nae Luck About the House," then the eight bells ceased their clanging.

The grasshopper was enshrined and to this day remains, eleven feet of shimmering metal, looking down from its perch 108 feet above the busy streets—John King Colford in St. Nicholas.

Mirth cannot move a soul in agony.—Shakespeare. Candor is the rarest virtue of sociability.—Stern.

No circumstances can repair a defect of character.—Emerson. Cheerfulness is an offshoot of goodness and of wisdom.—Bovee.

Bad men excuse their faults; good men will leave them.—Johnson. There are plenty of acquaintances in the world, but very few real friends.—J. F. Davis.

Charity and personal force are the only investments worth anything.—Walt Whitman. It is generally more profitable to rock on up our defects than to beat at our attainments.—Carlyle.

A man cannot have an idea of perfection in another which he was never sensible of in himself.—Steele. Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul, and the heart of man knoweth none more fragrant.—Hessa Bailey.

Twice Declined. The invitation list of the governor general of Canada is made out strictly in accordance with precedent, but is not kept up to date always, the aid who has to send the invitations out, generally an Englishman or Scotchman, not always being an acorn with changes on the list.

The late Sir Antoine Dorion, chief justice of Quebec, was once invited to some function, as was proper, but Lady Dorion, who was dead, was invited likewise. Sir Antoine accepted for himself, but declined for her ladyship, on the ground that she was in the cemetery. The next year, however, the same mistake was made; so the old judge wrote back to the au-gu-comp in writing: "Sir Antoine Dorion accepts, etc., but her ladyship being still in St. Anne's cemetery, Sir Antoine is compelled again to decline the invitation for her."

Another Name For It. The veterinary made a critical examination of the ailing steer. Here and there, wherever the demarcation of a bone was visible, he attempted to pinch the skin. But it would not work. "What is the matter with it?" asked the owner of the steer. "He has what would be called 'corn' in a man. But as he is only a dumb brute we say he is hidebound."—Baltimore American.

Expert Testimony. "To settle a bet," said the visitor, "how long can a man go without food?" "Ask the man over there," said the snake editor. "Is he the editor who answers questions?" "No; he's a poet."—Philadelphia Press.

Her Idea of It. Mrs. Norrib: "That picture's one of the old masters." Norah: "The new maid?—Well, it can't be of any value, ma'am, or sure he'd 'ave' taken it 'w'd him while he moved."—Harper's Magazine.

Her Head. Maud: "I understand you are about to lose the young pastor that has been preaching for you the last year or two?" Mabel: "Yes. He's going to be married next week."—Chicago Tribune.

A Stander. The lady: "I gave you a piece of pie last week, and you've been sending your friends here ever since." The Trump: "You're mistaken, lady. Them was my enemies."—Judge.

Transformation. An English farmer had a number of guests to dinner and was about to help them to some rabbit when he discovered that the dish was cold. Calling the servant, he exclaimed, "Here, Mary, take this rabbit out and eat it and bring it back a little 'otter!'"

Doesn't It Cost you a Good Deal to run this yacht old man? "Yes, but my wife can't spend a cent when she's here."

Everybody says the baby looks like you. Doesn't that please you? "I don't know," replied Popple, "but I tell you what—I'm glad nobody thinks of saying I look like the baby."—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

You have a good many faults of your own. Why are you so hard on the faults of others?

Sculptured by Nature.

Nature through the active agency of the rains, winds and even the dust sometimes performs wonderful things in the strange fashioning of the obdurate stone. In a form resembling the human face. On the very summit of Mount Tamalpais, a lofty peak that stands about twelve miles from the city of San Francisco, is a most remarkable profile wrought in the solid stone.

Just a few minutes' walk from the end of the railroad that leads up to the mountain's summit, on the trail that circles the crest of the peak, brings one to the Old Lady herself. This huge natural sphinx seems to guard the path where it narrows on a rocky ledge.

The profile is perfect. The seams and creases made by the centuries of weather are like lines of care and age worn in the human face. No one, however, aged in our worldly years, can remember when the Old Lady was young. However, when one passes farther along the path and looks backward the outline of the wrinkled visage is lost, and instead the eye can dimly trace the features of a woman young and as beautiful as an Egyptian princess.

He Had Money Before. Colonel Carr was traveling in New Mexico once, when he ran into a party consisting of Senator Taber and his friends. It was only a few moments after Taber had "struck it rich." Prior to that event he had possessed scarcely enough to buy a postage stamp, but he was making up for lost time.

Carr had lost his watch key and began inquiring for one. Mr. Taber thought that a great joke. The man of a man wanting a watch key in the nineteenth century," he said. After chuckling over it for some time he turned to Carr and asked an explanation. "I want to understand it—a watch key! And a man as up to date as you?"

"Well, the fact is," responded the colonel, "I had enough money to buy a watch before steam winders came into fashion."

It was a center shot and was greeted by a roar from the entire car. Labor got off by buying champagne for the crowd.

An Intelligent Bird. A species of woodpecker inhabits the driest parts of Mexico, where during the droughts it must die of starvation unless it made a store. To prevent this it selects the hollow stem of a species of alpe, the bore of which is just large enough to hold a nut. The woodpecker drills holes at intervals in the stem and fills it from bottom to top with the nuts, the separate holes being apparently made for convenience of access to the column of nuts within.

The intelligence which not only constructs a special storehouse, but teaches the woodpecker to lay by only the nuts, which will keep, and not the insects, which would decay, is perhaps the highest form of bird reasoning which has yet been observed.

Burying a Wife. In Uganda a man can buy a second wife for four bulls, a box of cartridges and six needles, and if he has the luck to go a-wooing when woman happens to be a drug on the market he can buy a suitable damsel for a pair of shoes. A Kafir girl is worth, according to the rank of her family, from four to ten cows, and in Tertiary no father will surrender his daughter unless he gets a good quantity of butter in return, and in certain parts of India no girl can marry unless her father has been pacified by a present of rice and a few rupees.

Water on Battleships. As nearly as possible 8,000 gallons of fresh water are used in a large battleship daily. About two-thirds of this is taken up by the boilers, and the remainder is used for drinking, washing, cooking, etc. When the stores which she has taken out with her from port has been used up a vessel has to depend upon her evaporators for further supplies. Every modern warship is fitted with evaporating machinery to distill the salt sea water.

No Harm Done. Foreman (explaining the accident to the owner of the building)—Harney was working on the roof, sir, and he slipped and fell the whole four stories, bringing the cornice down with him, sir, and breaking both his legs and half his ribs.

Owner—Oh, well, never mind! I intended that cornice to come down in any case.

Charity Begins at Home. Wealthy Merchant (at an evening party)—Gentlemen, we will not allow this lounge occasion to pass away without remembering the poor. In one of my houses there lives a poor clerk whom I shall have to erict tomorrow unless he can pay his arrears of rent by then. Fritz, hand a plate around.—Dorfbarker.

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Health Rules. One of Queen Victoria's health rules is said to have been "Do whatever you like, but do it in moderation," or words to that effect, and a similar rule might be adopted with still greater profit by the men and women of the present day. The people of Queen Victoria's generation had not made a fad of health, and every newspaper they picked up did not worry them with conflicting hygienic rules. The no breakfast band, if he existed, was less prominent than at present, and those who thought that the first ought to be the best meal of the day did not publish their views from every roof-top, figuratively speaking. Vegetarians and meat eaters wrangled long in inconspicuous corners, and the diseases of the cold-bath were content with fewer victims. Today, when all these and a million other so called health rules are being dinned into the ears of a long suffering public on all sides, it is more than ever important to bear in mind that inclinations and distinctions were not arbitrarily implanted by nature in animal organisms; that they exist for our guidance and not solely to mislead us.—New York Tribune.

A Man and a Hatpin. In a theater recently a man down in one of the front rows slipped on the floor a large hatpin with an amber top. Looking about him, he saw that two women and their escorts had just sat down. To one of the former he presented the pin. A shake of the head indicated that he had made a mistake. Then he tried across the aisle. The women seemed to be interested. The pin was a curiosity and its amber of a unique carving. They heitated, but the pin was amber once. Desperately he began the search now. Two ladies unattended seemed likely owners. To them he showed the pin. They took it and enjoyed its pattern. Just then the man felt a tug on his sleeve. It was his wife, and she remarked, "Why are you showing my hatpin to strangers?" He blushed, went over to the feminine pair and explained, "It's my wife's hatpin," he said, but in such conspicuously guilty accents that the women handed it back with doubting smiles.

The Corp de Monserrat. The fatal issue of a recent French duel causes discussion of what the Parisian fencers call the "corp de Monserrat." The history of this stroke is romantic. The hero of the story was a young Parisian musician engaged to be married to a young lady of Bordeaux. Quarreling with a cousin of his fiancée, he put his ears bored at the Bordeaux club. Ignorant of fencing, he dared not resent the insult and renounced his engagement. But he also took fencing lessons from one Monserrat, a maitre d'armes of Toulouse. Monserrat taught him one trick only, and he practiced it for a year. At the end of that time he returned to the Bordeaux club, slapped his man's face and, being called out instantly ran his opponent through the body with his tangling lung.

The Pill and the Cantina. Joseph Savador, the French historian, and Jules Sandeau, a novelist, made their meeting at a public reception the occasion for a dispute as to the respective places which they occupied in the world of letters. "The reading of history is like a pill—it needs the sugar-coating to make it palatable," argued the novelist. "Ah, but it is the ingredient which cures, not the coating," remarked the historian. "Then let us divide honors," said Sandeau, "for if it were not for my sugar coating your historical facts would dry on the shelves."

Man's Essay on Pope. From Armstrong's "Teaching of Scientific Method" we extract the following: "If the proper study of man (sic) be man—as the highest dignitary of our church some time ago asserted," etc. This is not simply due to a natural confusion between A. Pope and the pope. It comes of a poet's having two Christian names, including one for his surname, so that the student of the "Dictionary of Familiar Quotations" is apt to be betrayed by the description of him as Pope, Alexander.—Punch.

Magnets and Magnetism.

The modern theory of magnetism, known as Weber's, aided greatly by the work of Professor Hering, maintains that even the smallest physical quantity, the molecule, present in a bar magnet is itself a minute magnet. Hence the power of the magnet depends entirely, in the first place, upon molecular arrangement.

This can be easily seen by filling a glass tube with steel filings, loosely packed. At first these are all in disorder, but if a magnet is drawn over the tube they begin to turn themselves into one direction till perfect alignment takes place, when the tube acquires the properties of a magnet.

The breaking of bar magnets into pieces, each piece in turn becoming a magnet, confirms this theory. So does saturation, as it is called, when the molecules are arranged and no further effect takes place. The theory of magnetic keepers closing the lines of force, thus preserving and not dissipating the power, is also in accordance with this. The primary source of magnetic power is still unknown.

Gratitude of a Dog. Olive Thorne Miller tells of a dog which belonged to a colonial family and was particularly noted for his antipathy to Indians, whom he delighted to track. On one campaign against the Indians this dog insisted on accompanying his master, although his feet were in a terrible condition from having been frozen during the previous winter. During the fight which ended in the famous Braddock's defeat he became separated from his master, and the latter, supposing him killed, went home without him. Some weeks later, however, the dog appeared in his old home, which was many miles from the battlefield. He was tired and worn, but over his sore feet soft moccasins were fastened, showing that he had been among Indians and that they had taken special pains to be kind to him. Thereafter, though he showed great joy at being again among his own people, neither threats nor bribes could ever induce him to track an Indian.

The "Second Samson." Richard Joy, who died May 15, 1722, at the age of sixty-seven and is buried in the St. Peter's churchyard, Isle of Thanet, Kent, England, was known throughout Europe as the "Kentish Hercules," or the "Second Samson." When but a youth of seventeen years he was invited to London by the king to give an exhibition in remarkable feats of strength. Among the feats of his more mature years were those of breaking with his hands and feet a rope with a tensile strength of thirty-five hundredweight and the lifting of 2,200 pounds. The following is a copy of his epitaph: Hercules here, famed for strength. At last lies here, his breath and length. See how the mighty man is fallen! To death the strong and weak are all one. The same judgment both befall Goliath great and David small.

Antiquity of Masks. Masks are of very ancient origin. In a tomb 3,000 years old at Mycenae Dr. Schliemann found two bodies with faces covered by masks of gold. One of the masks represented the head of a lion. Among ancient Greeks the lion mask was a sign of distinction. With the Peruvians of old it was a mark of royal lineage. In a grave of considerable antiquity in Peru a silver mask was found on the head of a mummy. The mummy of a prince who lived in the reign of Rameses II., discovered in a small vault at Memphis, in Egypt, had a mask of gold leaf over the face.

A Witty Seat. At an auction sale in a Scotland village the auctioneer was trying to sell a number of domestic utensils, including a porridge pot. As usual he was making a great fun. Finishing, his keen eye caught a well known worthy, the bonnie, standing at the back of the crowd, and he shouted out: "Master McTavish, make an offer for this pot! Why, it would make a splendid Kirk bell!" "Aye," replied the bonnie, "if your tongue was in it!"

John Bunyan. The bill of indictment preferred against John Bunyan ran thus: "John Bunyan hath devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service and is a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom, contrary to the laws of our sovereign lord the king." He was convicted and imprisoned twelve years and six months.

Cruel Fate. "Did you see that pale young man calling out 'Cash!' at the ribbon counter?" "Yes." "Fate is awfully funny sometimes. Ten years ago, when we were boys together, his one ambition was to be a mighty hunter and catch mountain lions with a lasso."

His Slippers. A preacher admonished the men in his congregation not to let their desire for "slipped cases" keep them from church on Sunday morning. A young man went home and inquired for his "slippers." His slippers have been known by that name ever since.—Boston Christian Register.

Not What She Meant. Physician (to patient's wife)—Why did you delay sending for me until your husband was unconscious? Wife—Well, doctor, as long as he retained his senses he wouldn't let us send for you.

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A Forgiving Spirit.

In his reminiscences General Gordon tells a characteristic anecdote of an eccentric southern divine, the Rev. Robert J. Breckinridge, who was one of the most eloquent and fervid not to say bitter advocates of the Union cause. His truculent pen and laubing tongue spared neither blood relatives nor ministers nor members of the church, not even those of the same faith with himself, provided he regarded them as untrue to the Union. On his deathbed his family and some of his church members were gathered around him. They were most anxious that he should be reconciled to all men and especially to a southern sympathizer of his own church, Dr. Stuart Robinson of Kentucky, before he died, and they asked him, "Brother Breckinridge, have you forgiven all your enemies?" "Oh, yes; certainly I have." "Well, Brother Breckinridge, have you forgiven our brother, Dr. Stuart Robinson?" "Certainly I have. Didn't I just tell you that I had forgiven all my enemies?" "But, Brother Breckinridge, when you meet Brother Stuart Robinson in heaven do you feel that you can greet him as all the redeemed ought to greet one another?" "Don't bother me with such questions. Stuart Robinson will never get there!"

The word "box" has a great many different meanings. Here are some of its uses as a noun substantive: First, a case of any size or material, akin to pyx, from pyxis, the box tree; second, the driver's seat of a carriage, which often has a lid covering a receptacle for small parcels; third, a present, especially a gift at Christmas time; fourth, inclosed work in a theater or in a court of justice; fifth, a box drama, a snug private house, as a shooting box; seventh, a cylindrical hollow iron in wheels, in which the axle runs; eighth, a trough for cutting miter in carpentry; ninth, the space between the backboard and sternpost of a boat; tenth, an awkward position—e. g., "in the wrong box"; eleventh, the box tree; twelfth, the box iron of a laundress. Box is used also as a verb (thirteenth), to fight with fists or gloves; fourteenth, to go over the points of a compass in order, describing its divisions; fifteenth, to strike with open hand upon the ear; sixteenth, to cause a vessel to turn on her keel, to box haul. Other uses also are consequent upon these.

"Sunday Felks." When Dr. John Cairns went from Scotland to Ireland for rest and travel in 1844 he was at once delighted by discovering from the guides who showed him about that most of the landed gentry were "Sunday felks." "That's a fine castle," he would say, pointing to a big house set like a crown on some rocky hill. "Yes, sir," said his guide. "Tis Sir John O'Connor's," or, "Tis Sir Rory O'More's." He always added, "He's a Sunday man."

"What is a Sunday man?" he asked. "Well, sir, it is a man that has so many warts but again him for debt that he stars about up right in his house all the week and only comes out on Sunday, when the law protects him."

Dr. Cairns' opinion of the landed gentry underwent a change.

Hindoo Witchcraft. All Hindoos believe in witchcraft, and, in strange contrast to the old believers in witchery, they believe that young and pretty maidens are the chief actors in such uncanny mummery. If crops are blighted or if a general sickness prevails they write the names of all the young women of the vicinity on separate tree branches and then immerse the stems of the twigs for four hours and a half in a solution of holy water and aromatic herbs. If one or more of the twigs wither during the specified time the young woman whose name or names are attached thereto is immediately put to death. Thus the influence of the witch is counteracted, the crops saved and health restored.

New Heavly a Brick May Be. Some years ago one man bet another that he could not move an ordinary brick tied to the end of a cord two or three miles long. A straight and level road just outside Chichester, N. Y., was selected for the trial. The brick was not moved, and the man lost his bet for a large amount. It was stated by some one present that the brick, although weighing only seven pounds, would from a distance of two or three miles represent a dead weight of nearly a ton.

His Test of Greatness. "Ah," she sighed, "the great men are all dead." "But the beautiful women are not," he returned. Then she looked soulfully up into his eyes and told him she had said it just to be contrary and not because she thought it for a moment.—Household Ledger.

Resolute to the Law. "Why did you let him get away from you?" thundered the chief. "He—er—took a mean advantage of me," replied the green detective. "He ran across the grass in the park, and—" "Well?" "Well, there was a sign there, Press Off the Grass."—Philadelphia Press.

Erskine's Retort. Erskine, appointed lord chancellor, was offered at a low price the official robes of the retiring lord, but said: "No. It should not be said that I had adopted the abandoned habits of my predecessor."

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LIVER TROUBLE CURED.

Dr. Kennedy's New Medicine, Cal-cura Solvent, Drives the Disease Out of Mr. Larson's System.

A proprietary medicine that is not without honor in the city where it is made, must be a good thing. No chance for deception there, where everybody knows all about the men who make it. In Rondout, City of Kingston, N. Y., where Dr. David Kennedy lived and practiced for so many years, his new medicine is highly regarded and many wonderful cures have been wrought by it. There is Mr. Christopher Larson, the leading painter and decorator of that city, who says: "I have not had a sick day since I was cured of kidney and liver trouble, and painter's colic, by Dr. Kennedy's new medicine called Cal-cura Solvent. It drove the disease out of my system, so it never came back. Nothing like Cal-cura Solvent to purify the blood."

Write to the Cal-cura Company, Dr. Kennedy Row, Rondout, N. Y., for a free sample bottle.

Remember, Only one Dr. David Kennedy ever lived in Rondout, City of Kingston, N. Y., and be sure you get his new and best medicine, which is sold only in \$1.00 bottles. All druggists.

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