DENTON JOURNAL.

1845. A Family Newspaper:—Devoted to Local and General Intelligence, Agriculture and Advertising,—Independent on all Subjects. Subscription, One Dollar per Annum, in Advance. 1903

VOL 58 DENTON, MARYLAND: SATURDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 5, 1903. NO. 5

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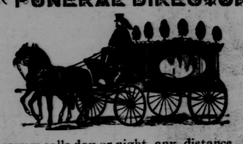

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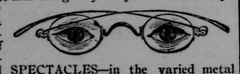

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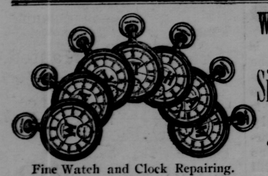

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AT THE ASSEMBLY

The Deftness of a Social Highwayman at a Dance.

HELD UP GUEST FOR DIAMONDS

And With His Valuables of Various Kinds He Made Off and Escaped the Officers Who Were After Him.

The men tell me that I am a pretty good dancer myself, which may or may not be the case.

This, however, I will own up to, whether it is boasting or not—I do know whether a man is a good dancer or whether he is not from the very first moment my finger tips drop upon his arm.

That man about whom I was let in for so much unmerciful chaff at our last assembly ball is a very good case in point. Whatever were his other drawbacks, he was undoubtedly a good waltzer, one of the best I ever danced with.

My fascinating partner and I never were formally introduced. The thing was quite simple, and I dare say the trick has been played thousands of times before. Ask your own brother on his honor if he is innocent of it.

The assembly ball was a gathering of no particular clique or set. It was a room full of people who were in a great measure strangers to one another.

With this last assembly I was feeling at first more than usually out of tune because, although I had been standing by mamma a good ten minutes, I had up till then only ten names scrawled down on my programme, and I had no others in view.

So when a man came up from behind, bowed, addressed me by name and asked for a dance I felt distinctly glad to see him. He was rather tall, dark, with black eyes, black mustache and good teeth, and, for anything I knew, his name might have been Adam.

I couldn't do less than bow slightly and conclude that I had been introduced to him one of the previous years. I also saw fit to give him waltz No. 7, which he asked for.

"And would you take compassion on me and give me another?" said he. "I know so few people here this year—at least so few that I care to dance with. Awfully obliged."

I suppose the compliment was a trifle broad, but it tickled me at the time, and I gave him the dance next after supper.

"By the way," said he, "are you engaged for the 'first extra?' I suppose they have such a thing."

From that very first moment I told myself I was in luck's way. At the first sweep of the waltz I knew it. By the time we made the first round of the floor I felt that I could have danced on with that partner forever.

We danced the dance through to its very last lingering bar, and I said to my fascinating partner—a thing which I very rarely allow myself to say to any man after a waltz lest it should make him unduly conceited—I said, "Thank you."

"Thank you very much," replied he. "I don't think I ever had such a delicious dance before. Could you give me another?"

"You have two others already," I suggested.

So I gave him the supper dance when he asked for it and the extras after and the polka before.

He left me then, and for the most part he stood with his back against a pillar, his hands in his pockets and a very bored expression on his dark, handsome face.

I must confess that we had the fourth together, another waltz. Those tiresome men either wouldn't dance or didn't know me, and I saw visions of sitting it out in single blessedness when my fascinating partner came up and saved the situation.

"Would I again take compassion on him? Might he? Thanks, so much."

Soon afterward he took me upstairs and laughed and showed me a snug little sitting room, which even I had not known of before. He said it belonged to the manager or some one and was not supposed to be used.

"You seem to know the place pretty well," said I, with the idea of trying to find out who he was, because still I couldn't remember having ever met him before.

"I think I may say I know every inch of it."

"Do you live somewhere near here then? I—er—I forget."

"Not so fortunate, I'm afraid. The fact is, I'm a cockney. I ran down here on purpose for the dance. D'you know," he continued, laughing, "it's an awful jar to my feelings to discover such a thing, but I can see you don't recollect me one little bit."

"It's awfully rude of me, I know, but, you see, I come across so many new faces that"—

"Insignificant items are forgotten. Precisely. Well, I shall keep up the incognito a little longer, and then if you cannot flatter me by remembering I shall humble myself and own up to who I am."

My fascinating partner got up and shut the door.

"Miss Conyers, does it strike you that with this dance and the next, which you had given me already, and the supper and the supper extras you have given yourself into my charge for at least three-quarters of an hour? Let me impress upon you that no one is likely to disturb us."

I didn't like his manner one little bit. I am not nervous, but I got up and said I thought it would be better to go downstairs.

"Awfully sorry to differ from you, Miss Conyers, but I must ask you to stay."

He turned the key in the lock and put it in his pocket.

"Please sit down again. Sit down, I say, Miss Conyers, and don't make a noise. I don't think any one could hear you even if you did scream out, but if you try to make the experiment I shall be forced to resort to unpleasant measures. In fact, I shall be compelled to cram part of this antimacassar into your mouth by way of a gag. So now you are reasonable."

"What do you mean?" I gasped, feeling very scared indeed.

"No bodily harm to you unless you force me to it, that I swear upon my honor. And really after those delicious waltzes you have given me I keenly regret having to offer you any annoyance whatever. But, Miss Conyers, business is business, and I have been at considerable trouble and expense to get here tonight to enjoy the pleasure of your society, and I feel sure you will understand that some recompense was due to me. I must trouble you for your diamonds."

"Oh, you cannot mean to"—

"Miss Conyers, I am a man of my word, and let me remind you that time presses. My carriage is waiting for me outside, and I have a long drive ahead of me. Now, must I act as your lady's maid, or do you prefer to unclasp the diamonds yourself?"

With trembling fingers I took off and handed him my necklace and the bracelet and the half dozen little brooches from my corsage.

"Thanks, very much," he said, slipping them deftly into his breast pocket. "And might I venture to remind you of that exquisite star which nestles in your hair? Thanks again. No other trifles you would like to part with? I think, my dear Miss Conyers, if you take off your left glove you might find something interesting there. I believe I see a slight protuberance on the third finger. Thanks once more. You are too awfully good. And now I won't bother you any further."

And he was gone, and I heard the lock shoot in the door, and the key was turned on the farther side.

* * * * * * *

It was a full hour before any one came near to let me out, and by that time my fascinating partner was far enough away.

It was quite true that he had come down from town on purpose for the assembly ball. The police said that he was a well known London swell mobsman.

But unfortnuately they never managed to rediscover his address or, what was very much more to the point, my beautiful diamonds.

Governor Turney's Detail.

Before Tennessee had seceded Peter Turney had organized a brigade and gone to the front. Once, while in winter quarters with a Georgia brigade, a religious revival broke out among the soldiers. After a few days Turney asked how things were progressing and was informed that twelve Georgians had been converted.

"And how many Tennesseeans?" inquired the governor.

"Not one," was the reply.

"What, twelve Georgians and not a Tennesseean? Never shall it be said, if I am able to prevent it, that Georgia has excelled Tennessee. Detail eighteen men immediately for baptism."

Why the Club Failed.

"No," remarked Mrs. Spiteful, "our neighborhood club didn't last very long."

"Yet I understand that you all had a very nice time while it did," said Mrs. Newcomer.

"Oh, yes," replied Mrs. Spiteful, "but one of the rules was that when the session was over all the guests must leave at once. That didn't give any of them a chance to talk about the others after they were gone, so everybody lost interest."—Cincinnati Times-Star.

The Panacea.

"Tell me, Angelina," her lover exclaimed, "do you ever have a yearning for something you cannot exactly define—an irresistible longing of the heart for that which is not yours? Can you guess the object of your desire?"

"Yes," replied the young woman from Boston coyly, "when I get that way I always eat pie."—New York Tribune.

The Silent Englishman.

An Englishman and a German were traveling together in a diligence, and both were smoking. The German did all in his power to draw his companion into conversation, but all to no purpose. At one moment he would, with a superabundance of politeness, apologize for drawing his attention to the fact that the ash of his cigar had fallen on his waistcoat or a spark was endangering his neckerchief. At length the Englishman exclaimed: "Why the deuce can't you leave me alone? Your coat tail has been burning for the last ten minutes, but I didn't bother you about it!"

HOW SHE CURED HIM

Clever Scheme of a Woman With a Forgetful Husband.

THE ABSENT-MINDED FELLOW

Who Sometimes Carried His Wife's Letters for a Week at a Time, Forgetting All About Them.

On a rainy morning two men stood at an uptown crossing waiting for a downtown trolley. As they stood there a woman in some sort of a dainty morning gown gathered closely about her and an umbrella over her head ran down the marble steps of a house near by, sped over to the corner where they were standing and dropped a letter into the mail box. As she turned to go back she was met by a woman in a rainy day skirt, mackintosh and umbrella, prepared for the elements.

"What in the world are you doing out in such a rig as this?" she asked, surveying the other.

"Oh, I had just to run out and mail a letter," explained the first woman.

"Why didn't you give it to your husband? I saw him go by half an hour ago."

"My husband!" and the other laughed scornfully. "Why, he'd carry it in his pocket a week."

"You must cure him," said the other. "Mine used to be like that, but he's not now."

"Oh, how did you cure him?" asked the other eagerly. "Do tell me."

"I sewed up his pockets."

"Sewed up his pockets!" exclaimed the other. "What has that to do with it?"

"Well, he'd forgotten ever so many times, and finally I just thought of a plan to cure him. So one night after he had gone to sleep I sewed up every pocket in the suit that he would wear to the office next day except the one in his coat where he would carry the letter. In the morning when I kissed him goodby I tucked the letter into the pocket myself and said, 'You'll be sure to mail it, won't you, dear?' And he said, 'Yes,' just as he always did.

"When he came home at night he looked kind of queer, but he didn't say a word until finally I couldn't stand it any longer, so I asked as quietly as possible, 'Did you mail my letter, George?' And he said he did and told me all about it. He never noticed until he got way downtown. On the car he was reading, and although he made several dives for his handkerchief into other pockets and did have a sense of mild surprise to find his memorandum book, eyeglasses, match box and all his possessions jumbled into one coat pocket, he didn't fully comprehend what was the matter until he reached the office. He said that letter nearly drove him mad, it"—

"I should have thought it would!" snarled one of the men who was listening.

Just then the trolley came along, and both men made a rush for the car, but the one who had spoken fell behind the other as he surreptitiously shied a crumpled looking letter into the letter box and then hauled himself on to the back platform.—Philadelphia Press.

A Giant of the Deep.

The American Museum of Natural History in New York has what is believed to be the largest whale ever exhibited on land. It is a female finback sixty-eight feet in length. Its body in life was thirty feet in circumference. It is estimated that at least fifty men could be inclosed within the interior of this gigantic animal. The full grown right whale, which is the species usually hunted for its blubber and whalebone, averages from forty-five to fifty feet in length. The whale whose skeleton adorns the museum was washed ashore dead near Forked River, N. J. Scientific theory avers that the ancestors of the whales were terrestrial mammals which gradually became aquatic in their way of living.

Climate Unsuitable.

The owner of a small yacht has in his employ a Finn who acts in the double capacity of cook and deck hand and whom he had always regarded as single. The other day the Finn admitted that he had a wife and two boys in Finland, for whom, he proudly boasted, he recently purchased a $900 house out of his earnings as a sailor.

"Why doesn't your wife live over here?" asked his employer.

"Vell, sir, she don't agree vith the climate," was the response.—New York Post.

Appropriate.

A member of the New York Stock Exchange tells a story of a widow who consulted a stonecutter in relation to a tombstone she desired to have erected to the memory of her husband.

After looking at various designs she selected one with a number of little lambs ornamenting the top.

"But, madam," expostulated the dealer, "such a one is hardly suitable for an adult. Lambs are supposed to typify childhood."

"That's all right," she replied. "You just go ahead and make it as I desire. My husband was a Wall street man, and it will be a great comfort to him to feel that he can reach out any time and corral them."—New York Tribune.

A High Class Convict.

A minister was in the county jail having a talk with the prisoners. He is a kind hearted old gentleman, and he wandered about shaking hands with the unfortunates, at the same time giving each a word of encouragement.

Finally the minister reached the top tier, and there he found a darky doing some work along the range. As it was Sunday, the minister asked him why he was working on that day. The darky replied that the work had to be done and he thought he would do it when he had a good opportunity.

"How long will you be here?" asked the man in ministerial garb.

"Well, I dunno, boss," replied the colored man, continuing his work.

"Do you think it will be long?"

"No, I guess not, boss."

"Are you serving time for disorderly conduct?"

The darky drew himself up to his full height and replied, with considerable dignity: "No, sah. I'ze no common criminal. I'ze a highway robber."—Pittsburg Press.

Talk.

Talk is the ultimate basis of polite society. Money is the main thing, of course, but only as it talks.

In business or politics talk is a mere utility; in love, a superfluity. But in polite society talk rises to the plane of the Boze arts.

It is a boor who talks when he has something to say. The true gentle studies never to have anything to say and is thus able to talk freely all the time without fear of violating the proprieties.

Only scandal mongers are suffered to talk shop in polite society.

Talk is cheap, but a couple of pecks of diamonds skillfully worn do wonders overcoming the effect of this.—Life.

When She Ran.

It was one of Gardiner's schoolma'ams, and the class was away down in the first grade, where the little tots reign supreme. The teacher was trying to explain to the little girl the sentence, "The boy runs."

"What is the meaning of the word run?" asked the teacher.

"Don't know," said the pupil.

"You're not walking when you're running," said the teacher.

"Nope."

"Well, what do you do when you run?"

"I tumble down," piped up the girl, and the teacher sternly said, "Next."—Kennebec Journal.

A Smart Arrangement.

A gentleman was on a holiday at one of the Scottish county towns recently. Seeing a line of hose laid along the street, he asked the man in charge if there had been a fire.

"No," replied the man; "we've only been practicing."

Then the visitor began to quiz the brigade man.

"How do you call out your men when there's a fire?"

"Oh, weel," was the reply, "we jost drap them a post card!"—Pearson's Weekly.

She Has Reformed.

He was deep in his paper and did not want to be interrupted, but of course she didn't care anything about that.

"Did you read about the young couple that went through the marriage ceremony just for a joke?" she asked.

"No," he replied. "What of it?"

"Why, after it was all over they discovered that it wasn't a joke at all."

"Oh, every one who tackles the marriage question finds that out."

He wasn't interrupted again for a full hour.

Resenting an Insult.

Some time ago the play of "Hamlet" was performed at an English provincial theater. In a scene with Polonius the crafty old courtier asks, "Do you know me, my lord?" And the prince responds: "Excellent well. You are a fishmonger."

On hearing this an old woman in the pit stood up and, shaking her fist, shouted excitedly: "Well, and s'posing he is? That's better than play acting any day."

The Tapping of the Death Watch.

The so called death watch, dreaded by the superstitious, is a small beetle which has a very powerful joint in its neck and calls its mate by tapping with its head on the wall or on any surface where it may happen to be located. The noise is similar to that which may be produced by tapping with the finger nails on a table, and the insect can frequently be made to answer such taps.

Justly Condemned.

"What an unfortunate contretemps that was of Mrs. Goldthwaite's at the Rockingham last night," said Mrs. Oldcastle.

"I know it," replied her hostess. "I was tellin' Josiah on the way home that I was surprised that a woman who's the mother of grown-up daughters should of wore such a thing, and with her long neck too."—Chicago Record-Herald.

How She Felt.

Mrs. Black—Sam Johnson done left his wife 'bout six months ago.

Mr. Black—Do she t'ink he am nebbah comin' back?

"Waal, she jest beginnin' to hab hopes."—Smart Set.