

The Family Circle

GOSSIP

First somebody told it,
Then the room wouldn't hold it,
So the busy tongues rolled it,
Till they got it outside;
Then the crowd came across it,
And never once lost it,
But tossed it and tossed it,
Till it grew long and wide,
From a very small lie, sir,
It grew deep and high, sir,
Till it reached to the top of the sky, sir,
And frightened the moon,
For she hid her sweet face, sir,
In a veil of cloud lace, sir,
At the terrible disgrace, sir,
That happened at noon.

THE BOASTFUL DONKEY

Once upon a time there was a Donkey who lived in a field where there was no pond; so he had never seen his own image, and he thought he was the biggest and strongest and handsomest creature in the world.

One day a Lion came through the field, and, being a polite beast, stopped to greet the Donkey. 'Good-morning, friend!' he said. 'What a fine day this is!'

'Fine enough, I dare say!' said the Donkey. 'I never think about the weather. I have other things to think about.'

'Indeed!' said the Lion. 'May I ask what things?'

'None of your business!' said the Donkey rudely; and he set up a loud braying, thinking to frighten the Lion away.

'Why do you bray?' asked the Lion.

'Bray!' cried the Donkey. 'That was not braying—it was roaring!'

'If you think I don't know braying from roaring,' said the Lion, still politely, 'you are mistaken. That was a bray.'

'Very well!' shouted the Donkey. 'If that was, this shall not be!' and he uttered a long and loud 'Hee-haw!' and kicked up his heels in angry pride. 'What do you call that?' he asked proudly.

'I call it a bray,' replied the Lion; 'and a very ugly one. You see, after all, you are a Donkey; look at the length of your ears!'

'How dare you?' cried the Donkey. 'My ears are the finest in the world—everybody says so. And as for roaring, if I have not scared you yet, just listen to me now!' And flinging up his heels again he bellowed till his own long ears tingled with the sound.

He expected the Lion to be terrified, but the Lion merely smiled.

'You certainly can make a most hideous noise,' he said; 'but when all is said and done it is only a bray. If you really wish to know how a roar sounds I shall be happy to oblige you.'

The King of Beasts then began to lash his tail and pretended to fall into a great passion. His eyes flashed fire, his tawny mane bristled; he opened his great mouth, and a roar like thunder filled the air. The Donkey, after one terrified look, took to his heels and scampered off as fast as he could go, tumbled into a ditch, and lay there all day, not daring to move for fear.

The Lion went on his way smiling. 'It is a pity,' he said, 'for a person to live in a place where he cannot see what he looks like.'

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Of course it's all a fable. A donkey does not know his own shadow when he sees it. Still there are a lot of foolish people, who, like the donkey, think they are 'the only pebble on the beach.'

'O. K.'

When the Civil War broke out and the late Cornelius Kendall enlisted there was a large bakery in Chicago, of which his father, Orrin Kendall, was the founder and head. The organisation of the armies made a tremendous demand upon the bakeries for 'ship bread,' or 'hardtack.' The firm of O. Kendall and Sons was one of many bakeries that launched extensively into its making, and they stamped 'O. K.' upon the army bread, just as they had always done upon their crackers. The opinion quickly spread among soldiers that 'O. K.' hardtack was a little better than the average. The letters thus became current army slang for approval, and when the war was over the slang symbol, O.K., was carried into civil life and occupations.

THE CONCLUSIVE TEST

Writing from St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo., to the *Freeman's Journal*, 'S.J.' says:

'I think the following incident which really happened is too good to be forgotten:

'I have sometimes heard it said that the Celt was more Catholic than the Pope. I took the statement to be a Celticism. But the other day I came upon a case in which the Irishman was actually a surer test of the faith than all the Supreme Pontiffs. Here is the fact as it happened less than a month ago in one of the Catholic hospitals of St. Louis.

'A poor Greek had been carried all mangled and torn from a mining accident into the hospital. When the chaplain came to his bedside, the following conversation ensued:

“Are you a Catholic?” (in English and Greek).

“I am” (in Greek).

“Are you a Greek Catholic or a Roman Catholic?”

“I am a Catholic and I am a Greek.”

This sounded bad to the chaplain.

“Do you believe as the Pope of Rome believes?”

“I believe as all the Popes do.” (As the Greeks often call their priests Popes, this reply was worse than the former.)

The chaplain was about to retire, not being able just then to think of any other simple test of the faith, when the Greek seeing him moving away, rose on his elbows and called after him: “I am a Catholic, like an Irishman.” That was conclusive. The glad priest administered all the Sacraments, and the Greek going off was full of consolation.'

THE STATIONMASTER'S REQUEST

A stationmaster at a country station, when making the usual monthly requisition for stores, amongst other things applied for a new sweeping-brush.

When the goods arrived he found there was no brush among them, and on referring to the list he saw that his request for this article had been crossed out at headquarters.

The following month he made a similar application, but with the same result.

Not to be outdone, however, he then forwarded an old brush, which was absolutely devoid of hair, with the following note:—

'As it seems you cannot grant me a new brush, please rub a quantity of "hair-restorer" on the accompanying article, and return to me when it has taken effect.'

THE WORD 'CROWD'

Do you know how many words in the English language mean 'crowd'?

To a foreigner, anxious to master the language, it was explained that a crowd of ships is termed a fleet, while a fleet of sheep is called a flock. Further, a flock of girls is called a bevy, a bevy of wolves is called a pack, a pack of thieves is called a gang, a gang of