

BILLY, THE FOOL.

Billy's wife was as weather beaten and almost as gnarled and old fashioned as himself. They were happy in their own way and fond of each other at heart, but to superficial observers their life was one long discord. Billy's satiric tongue delighted in teasing the too susceptible nature of his spouse. But the true bone of contention between them was, if I may so express it, the sugar bowl. The bane of poor Mrs. Billy's days was the effort to keep a supply of sugar in the house. Billy's one great passion was sugar. He would go through fire and water—aye, through brimstone—for sugar. Hide it where Mrs. Billy would, he would find it out, for no pressman had ever such a "nose for news" as that same Billy had for this delectable dainty.

He had one bright accomplishment which made him a prime favorite. He could lilt tunes as well as any man in Munster. How those boys and girls—and old stagers, too—could have the heart and strength to whirl through the "sets" and step dances as they did, after a long day of toil in the bogs and kitchens and gardens! But in one house or another, one yard or another, they mustered on most evenings and showed, as "set" succeeded "set," what airy and youthful natures they preserved through all the labor of life. And no one entered into the spirit of it all with such zest as Billy. His voice almost made the welkin ring as he lilted, in most perfect time, dance tune after tune that made the best fiddlers envious.

But a trial day came in his life. Thus it arose: In the winter of each year he scraped together the rent of his little holding, through the sale of a few "slips" of pigs that had been fattened in the previous months. One particular winter he and his spouse had been harshly pressed by circumstances. Truth to tell, in the long evenings when he lilted his best for the "boys," the poor fellow's hunger was such as would have appalled them had they dreamed of it. Indeed on one occasion when he was bringing out "Follow Me Down to Carlew" in a style that fairly broke his record he suddenly changed color and fell to the floor in a swoon. He had been fasting since morning, save for a small portion of sugar—there was little left in those days—that he had stolen, as usual. But he and Mrs. Billy had every hope that the great winter "fair" in their county town would leave them with a tidy sum as the proceeds of the "slips" sale, that it would pay the rent and leave something in hand for the "black winter."

It was a bitterly cold time, and Billy's good spouse had knitted a rough pair of gloves to save her lord's hands from winter's chilly terrors. Billy stoutly opposed the idea, for he despised gloves "and such frippery," but the "vanithee" had her way this time. So, gloves and all, he started out in the freezing wintry morning and "made" for the fair.

Alas! that day of days he fell before the devil and temptation. He sold the "slips" at a good bargain, but he had "a glass too much." After the late hunger liquor played the mischief with him. He came home, lilted such tunes as the boys never heard "in all their born days." He threw his gloves into a corner with a gesture of contempt and swore he would never take them up again. He stepped up to Mrs. Billy and rolled to the floor. He was dead drunk for the first time in his life, and—oh! tragedy of tragedies!—he had not sixpence in his pocket. The price of the "slips" was lost or squandered or gone to the devil.

Mrs. Billy fainted, and when Billy came to something like his senses he almost fainted too. The year's great item of income was gone. Black ruin stared them in the face. That night and many nights after they went to bed supperless.

Billy and his spouse were proud. They kept their poverty from the neighbors' knowledge. But they suffered sorely. And, no rent being forthcoming, the day came when they were to be turned out of the little home that they loved, that was so sweet with memories. Their hearts were heavy and the world was black for them. The sheriff and his minions turned up at the appointed hour to evict them. The tragedy of their days had come.

As they turned to go out forever, Mrs. Billy's eye caught sight of the despised pair of gloves in a corner. She took them up listlessly and opened a pocket to receive them. She gave a strange cry.

In every finger of either glove a shining sovereign was found. Yes, almost the whole price of the "slips" placed there by Billy in a whimsical hour of that dismal drink day, and, of course, utterly forgotten when his senses returned.

No one was more pleased than the sheriff at the new development. Billy got a terrible lecture from his spouse that evening, but she overlooked all his deprecations in the matter of sugar for a full week afterward.

Billy and his spouse are prosperous now, and he lilt for the "boys" as much as ever. But he is never allowed to go alone to fair or market.—Exchange.

A French geographical society proposes to divide the face of the clock into 10 hours, 10 minutes and 100 seconds each. This is to make time uniform with the decimal system or count by tens. The count by twelves which now shows on the face of the clock survives from the earliest times—probably from long before the invention of letters.

Fishes That Cannot Swim.
More than one species of fish is met with which cannot swim, the most singular of which perhaps is the maltha, a Brazilian fish, whose organs of locomotion only enable it to crawl or walk or hop after the manner of a toad, to which animal this fish to some extent bears a resemblance, and it is provided with a long upturned snout. The anterior (pectoral) fins of the maltha, which are quite small, are not capable of acting on the water, but can only move backward and forward, having truly the form of thin paws. Both these and the ventral and anal fins are very different from the similar fins in other fishes and could not serve for swimming at all. Other examples of nonswimming fishes include the seahorse, another most peculiarly shaped inhabitant of the sea, which resembles the knight in a set of chessmen, and the starfish, of which there are many specimens, which mostly walk and crawl on the shore or rocks, both being unable to swim.—London Fishing Gazette.

A Chinaman's Ideal Wife.
The Chinamen of Australia, when they take a notion to marry, write to a matrimonial agent in Hongkong something as follows: "I want a wife. She must be a maiden, under 20 years of age, and must not have left her father's house. She must also have never read a book, and her eyelashes must be half an inch in length. Her teeth must be as sparkling as the pearls of Ceylon. Her breath must be like unto the scents of the magnificent odorous groves of Java, and her attire must be from the silken weaves of Ka-la-Ching, which are on the banks of the greatest river in the world—the overflowing Yang-tse-Kiang."

The Russian thistle has appeared in many new localities, particularly along railway lines from the northwest.

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- Best quality Spool Cotton, - 3 for 10 cts

Bargains in our Grocery Department.

- No. 1 Island Rice, 18 pounds, - \$1.00
- Japan Tea, per package, - .10
- English Breakfast Tea, per pound, - .25
- Good quality Canned Salmon, - .10
- Best quality Cheese, per pound, - .12½
- 21 one-pound bars of Laundry Soap, - 1.00
- 30 pounds Oatmeal, - 1.00
- 25 pounds White Navy Beans, - 1.00
- Dry Salt Bacon, per pound, - .8½
- Hams, per pound, - .11½
- Loose Coffee, Mocca and Java, per lb. 20c and .25
- Finest quality Honey, per pound, - .6½
- Mustard Sardines, large can, - .10
- Domestic Sardines, large can, - .05
- Matches, 21 boxes for - .25
- Finest Smoking Tobacco, per pound - .25
- Kingsford Starch, 1 pound package, - .8½
- Canned Corn, - .10
- Baking Powder, 1 pound cans, - .25

Bargains in our Clothing Department.

- Men's Suits Clothes, Black all wool Cheviots, \$6.90
- " " Finest Clay Worsteds, 10.90
- Young Men's Suits Clothes, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 years old, - 3.25
- Boys' Suits Clothes, 4 to 14 years, - .75
- Men's fine Black Cloth Overcoat Mackintoshes, 5.00
- Boys' Overcoat, with cape, all wool, - 1.75
- Men's fine Pants. See them, 90c, \$1.10, \$1.25, \$1.39
- Boys' Knee Pants, - 19, 24 and .29
- Men's Bib Overalls, - .49
- Boys' " - .39
- Childs' " - .29
- Men's Underwear, - 35 cts suit
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- Satchels, Valises and Trunks, from 49 cts up
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 - " heavy Split Grain Shoes, double sole, 1.39
 - Boy's fine Congress Shoes, - 1.24
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 - Ladies' Carpet Slippers, - .29
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