

Selections by the Editor

Bob Burdette's humor is revealed in the following selections. The universal appeal of Burdette is readily demonstrated. Missing a train, smoking that "first" cigar, getting drenched by the old water wagon, the bewitching albeit stern schoolmarm, and the seeds one bought that never grew, these have been common experiences. The production of hundreds of such delightful yarns and poems reveals the many-sided character of this versatile poet, preacher, and humorist. [THE EDITOR.]

Getting Ready for the Train

When they reached the depot, Mr. Man and his wife gazed in unspeakable disappointment at the receding train, which was just pulling away from the bridge switch at the rate of a thousand miles a minute. Their first impulse was to run after it; but as the train was out of sight, and whistling for Sagetown before they could act upon the impulse, they remained in the carriage and disconsolately turned the horses' heads homeward.

"It all comes of having to wait for a woman to get ready," Mr. Man broke the silence with, very grimly.

"I was ready before you were," replied his wife.

"Great heavens!" cried Mr. Man, in irrepressible impatience, jerking the horses' jaws out of place, "just listen to that! And I sat out in the buggy ten minutes, yelling at you to come along, until the whole neighborhood heard me!"

"Yes," acquiesced Mrs. Man, with the provoking placidity which no one can assume but a woman, "and every time I started down stairs you sent me back for something you had forgotten."

Mr. Man groaned. "This is too much to bear," he said, "when everybody knows that if I was going to Europe, I

would just rush into the house, put on a clean shirt, grab up my gripsack, and fly; while you would want at least six months for preliminary preparations, and then dawdle around the whole day of starting until every train had left town."

Well, the upshot of the matter was, that the Mans put off their visit to Peoria until the next week, and it was agreed that each one should get ready and go down to the train and go, and the one who failed to get ready should be left. The day of the match came around in due time. The train was to go at 10:30, and Mr. Man, after attending to his business, went home at 9:45.

"Now then," he shouted, "only three-quarters of an hour to train time. Fly around; a fair field and no favors, you know."

And away they flew. Mr. Man bulged into this room and rushed through that one, and dived into one closet after another with inconceivable rapidity, chuckling under his breath all the time, to think how cheap Mrs. Man would feel when he started off alone. He stopped on his way up stairs to pull off his heavy boots, to save time. For the same reason he pulled off his coat as he ran through the dining-room, and hung it on the corner of the silver closet. Then he jerked off his vest as he rushed through the hall, and tossed it on a hook in the hat-rack, and by the time he reached his own room he was ready to plunge into his clean clothes. He pulled out a bureau drawer and began to paw at the things, like a Scotch terrier after a rat.

"Eleanor!" he shrieked, "where are my shirts?"

"In your bureau drawer," quietly replied Mrs. Man, who was standing placidly before a glass, calmly and deliberately coaxing a refractory crimp into place.

"Well, by thunder, they ain't!" shouted Mr. Man, a little annoyed. "I've emptied every last thing out of the drawer, and there isn't a thing in it that I ever saw before."

Mrs. Man stepped back a few paces, held her head on one side, and after satisfying herself that the crimp would do, and would stay where she had put it, replied:

"These things scattered around on the floor are all mine. Probably you haven't been looking in your own drawer."

"I don't see," testily observed Mr. Man, "why you couldn't have put my things out for me, when you had nothing else to do all morning."

"Because," said Mrs. Man, settling herself into an additional article of raiment with awful deliberation, "nobody put mine out for me. 'A fair field and no favors,' my dear."

Mr. Man plunged into his shirt like a bull at a red flag.

"Foul!" he shouted, in malicious triumph. "No button on the neck!"

"Because," said Mrs. Man, sweetly, after a deliberate stare at the fidgeting, impatient man, during which she buttoned her dress and put eleven pins where they would do the most good, "because you have got the shirt on wrong side out."

When Mr. Man slid out of that shirt, he began to sweat. He dropped the shirt three times before he got it on, and while it was over his head he heard the clock strike ten. When his head came through he saw Mrs. Man coaxing the ends and bows of her neck-tie.

"Where's my shirt studs?" he cried.

Mrs. Man went out into another room and presently came back with gloves and hat, and saw Mr. Man emptying all the boxes he could find in and about the bureau. Then she said:

"In the shirt you just took off."

Mrs. Man put on her gloves while Mr. Man hunted up and down the room for his cuff buttons.

"Eleanor," he snarled, at last, "I believe you must know where those buttons are."

"I haven't seen them," said the lady, settling her hat, "didn't you lay them down on the window-sill in the sitting room last night?"

Mr. Man remembered, and he went down stairs on the run. He stepped on one of his boots, and was immediately landed in the hall at the foot of the stairs with neatness and dispatch, attended in the transmission with more bumps than he could count with a Webb's adder, and landing with a bang like the Hellgate explosion.

"Are you nearly ready, Algernon?" asked the wife of his family, sweetly, leaning over the balusters.

The unhappy man groaned. "Can't you throw me down that other boot?" he asked.

Mrs. Man pityingly kicked it down to him.

"My valise?" he inquired, as he tugged away at the boot.

"Up in your dressing room," she answered.

"Packed?"

"I do not know; unless you packed it yourself, probably not," she replied, with her hand on the door knob; "I had barely time to pack my own."

She was passing out of the gate, when the door opened, and he shouted:

"Where in the name of goodness did you put my vest? It has all my money in it!"

"You threw it on the hat rack," she called back, "good-bye, dear."

Before she got to the corner of the street she was hailed again.

"Eleanor! Eleanor! Eleanor Man! Did you wear off my coat?"

She paused and turned, after signaling the street car to stop, and cried,

"You threw it on the silver closet."

And the street car engulfed her graceful figure and she was seen no more. But the neighbors say that they heard Mr. Man charging up and down the house, rushing out at the front door every now and then, and shrieking up the deserted streets after the unconscious Mrs. Man, to know where his hat was, and where she put the valise key, and if she had any clean socks and undershirts, and that there wasn't a linen collar in the house. And when he went away at last, he left the kitchen door, side door and front door, all the down-stair windows and the front gate wide open. And the loungers around the depot were somewhat amused just as the train was pulling out of sight down in the yards, to see a flushed, perspiring man, with his hat on sideways, his vest buttoned two buttons too high, his cuffs unbuttoned and neck-tie flying and his grip-sack flapping open and shut like a demented shutter on a March night, and a door key in his hand, dash wildly across the platform and halt in the middle of the track, glaring in dejected, impotent, wrathful mortification at the departing train, and shaking his trembling fist at a pretty woman, who was throwing kisses at him from the rear platform of the last car.