

two boats would get close together the pilot on the big packet would turn his boat, as if with the deliberate intention of running into the other boat.

To avoid a collision the other boat would of course be stopped and backed. The big boat, however, under perfect control, would never slacken speed in the least, but under full headway run right up, and, curving gracefully, pass on, sometimes so close as to make it appear that a miracle prevented a collision. These pilots had learned to control their boats so completely that they could do this with perfect safety, and enjoy the fright of people on the other boats. Tom Gross, a pilot who had his life well-nigh scared out of him on two or three occasions by these fellows, was at the wheel on board the *Volunteer* on a trip up the river when one of these big boats was met. Gross knew what was going to happen, and conceived a plan for turning the tables on the jokers. The *Volunteer* had a wood barge in tow, and had transferred the fuel, but at the request of the owner was towing the boat to a point up the river. Gross called a cub pilot to take the wheel and went below, first cautioning the cub not to get frightened at the big boat, but just to "hold her straight up the river and not ring a single bell." Taking an axe in his hands, Gross stationed himself right by the head line by which the barge was fastened to the boat.

On came the big steamer bearing right down on the *Volunteer*, and it was quite evident she would pass very close and on the same side the barge was on. Gross made a guess as to just how close she would come, and, at what he thought was the right moment, he struck a blow with his axe that completely severed the line and the barge, of course, swung right out crosswise of the stream. Gross had guessed right, for before the pilot on the big boat could turn his wheel or ring a bell the steamer struck the barge broadside and crushed it, and at the same time broke so many timbers for the steamer that she was compelled to run for shore. The barge sunk, but Gross had been careful, there should be no one on it, and only two or three persons had seen him cut the line. The owner of the barge collected damage from the steamer that ran it down. The big boat had to be put on the docks, and the pilot was suspended.—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*.

MISCELLANEOUS.

No Boom.

THE Chicago *Tribune* draws this fanciful picture on the basis of striking instances of land-inflation tactics, which have become a marked feature in this country during the past few years:

"Can you direct me to Pacific City?" asked the Buffalo man of a station agent in Dakota, as he left the train at a "huddle" of four or five houses.

"Right across the street for infor-

mation, sir," was the reply, and the stranger walked across to a shanty bearing the sign of "Real Estate," and put the same question to a red-headed man who was busy folding and sealing a prospectus.

"This is it, sir," was the calm reply.

"Why—why—"

"You are disappointed, of course."

"Well, rather."

"You expected to see a city of at least 5000 inhabitants, with parks, schools, factories, churches and all that?"

"Yes, I did."

"That's the way with many others, but it is not our fault. Our object is to go slow and sure, and not create anything like a boom to give fictitious values. We have done remarkably well thus far. One year ago this was the only structure in the city. Now look around."

"Now I can count seven."

"Exactly. That's what our latest prospectus says—improved 700 per cent. in one year. Can you ask a town to go ahead faster than that? Don't confound this wonderful progress with a boom, however. Booms have killed half this western country. We don't want any."

"How's real estate?" queried the Buffalo man after a while.

"Advancing, of course. Six months ago I offered lots on Washington Avenue for \$10 a foot. Today I am asking \$20. That's 100 per cent., isn't it, and nothing like a boom? We are simply growing on our merits alone. That's the proper way for a town to grow."

"Any factories here?"

"There are. A year ago we had none. Now we have a blacksmith and a shoemaker. That's an increase of 200 per cent., and I want you to find a town to match it. There has been no boom, however—remember that. It's just a natural growth."

"What's the population?"

"That's one of the strong points in my new prospectus. A year ago I was here alone. Today we number twenty-two souls. Think of the tremendous per cent. of increase! All legitimate and on its merits, and no boom to cause a rush."

"Are the future prospects flattering?"

"Exceedingly so. This climate is good for catarrh and a check on biliousness. Our seasons are mild, and a farmer can get sixteen hours a day out of the hired men. This is a great distributing point for trade and the centre of manufactures, and we shall seek to have the National capital removed here. We expect six railroads and two canals to cross here, three large universities have asked for sites, and before the end of the year Congress will be asked for a public building to cost not less than a million dollars. Flattering? I should remark. But we ain't doing any crowing about it. It might start a boom, and booms are the bitter foes of new towns. We want to grow on our merits as the coming city of the glorious West. If you write anything for your home paper just put that in—all legitimate and solely on its merits, and no booms need apply."

The Musical Snake.

One of the best known characters in San Diego county, in the southern part of this State, is George Lamb, the driver of the stage to San Jacinto, twelve miles distant. Mr. Lamb has been a settler in the country for a good many years, where he has taken up a piece of land among the San Geronimo mountains along the stage road over which he drives daily.

One warm afternoon as he lay stretched out comfortably under some fruit trees, smoking his pipe and tending his pigs, which were feeding among the alfalfa, he was startled by hearing one of the smallest ones give vent to ear piercing squeals. Looking hastily in that direction Mr. Lamb's eyes almost popped out of their sockets at beholding an immense serpent wrapped round and round about the unfortunate porker, seemingly bent on swallowing it. Curiosity got the better of his timidity, and Mr. Lamb instantly determined to capture his snakeship alive if possible. The struggles of the little porker were soon over, and the snake began devouring it. The grass and weeds had concealed most of the serpent's body so far, but in its effort to make way with the pig the snake's entire body came into view.

CAPTURING THE MONSTER.

If Mr. Lamb had been astonished in the first place he was simply paralyzed now at beholding twenty-five feet of yellow and black snake, nearly the thickness of a man's body. But he was still resolved to capture it; so quickly returning to his cabin he procured some old blankets, fashioned them into a net, and stealing up to the reptile, which was now fast asleep, completely enveloped it. Leaving the monster firmly secured he selected a box canyon about half a mile from his house which had on three sides high, rocky cliffs, with smooth, perpendicular surfaces. On the fourth he constructed in a few hours a strong wall of rock and adobe.

Obtaining the assistance of three Indians he next conveyed the snake to his new quarters, leaving the old blanket for a soft nest. A spring of water bubbled up from among the rocks, and catching a number of cotton tails and jack rabbits he set them loose in the inclosure. Every day he would visit the place and see how his charge was getting along, and soon he and the snake became well acquainted.

Among other accomplishments Mr. Lamb is a fine performer on the accordion, and knowing the passion of the serpent family for soft music of any nature he used to spend many of his evenings sitting on the edge of the canyon filling the surrounding atmosphere with the dulcet strains of such melodies as the "Boulanger March" or "I believe It, for My Mother Told Me So." The scaly monster, its head reared above the ground, and a look of unmistakable pleasure in its glittering eye, would indulge in a gentle hissing, meanwhile swaying to and fro in time with the music.