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Signs of Spring.

Sound of gusty driving rain
 When we wake at midnight hour,
Ice tipp'd branches on the pane
 Beating music to the shower?

Crows that caw from dreaming woods,
 Robins piping in the glades,
Birds that from their winter abode
 Peep and watch like pretty maids.

Grateful odors of damp earth,
 Brook were glee of muddy rills,
Shouting, traveling to her mirth,
 Down the bare banks of the hills.

Here and there a crocus' head
 Thrusting up to dare the cold,
While its sisters, warm in bed,
 Stir their coverlids of mold.

Spring is coming; spring is near;
 She is whispered in the air,
Soon the little nymph will be here,
 Shaking blossoms from her hair.
 —James Buckham in Harper's Bazar.

WITH ANGRY WOLVES

MR. PIPER'S ESCAPE FROM A PACK OF HUNGRY CREATURES.

Attacked by Half Starved Beasts on a Lonely Forest Road, an Old Man Finds a Cave with Two Openings, One of Which the Wolves Didn't Know Of.

Benjamin Piper, an old pioneer of Jefferson county, Wis., had a thrilling adventure with a pack of wolves. It was one evening while he was making his way from Watertown on foot. There was snow on the ground, and it had lasted long enough to make wolves unusually fierce and savage with hunger. Piper had been warned by friends in Watertown not to attempt the trip, but he told them that he had not the slightest fear. Numerous large timber wolves had been seen near these same forests through which Piper had to pass, but as they had not yet ventured to attack any one, little attention had been paid to their presence. But now, in their desperate hunger and while lurking about for something to prey upon, some of them had discovered Piper, and at once set up a howl for its companions. But Piper was utterly indifferent to their howls and walked boldly along.

Suddenly, just as he turned a sharp corner of the roadway among the dense timber, a large gray wolf walked across the road slowly and deliberately about two rods ahead of him and then turned and leisurely retreated to the side from where it came, swinging its tail aloft, and with the hair raised on its neck. It also howled in a dismal manner as if to hurry up its companions, whose answers now began to come from many directions. Piper marched straight ahead as if nothing had happened, save that he picked up a good sized club, intending to throw it at the animal should it approach him again. A moment later the same wolf trotted out from the brush much nearer to him than before, and Piper hurled the club at the animal with tremendous force. But quickly stepping aside and dodging the weapon, the wolf planted itself in the middle of the road and was not disposed to move any farther, but showed its teeth savagely and uttered more howls for its companions.

A DESPERATE SITUATION.

Piper now began to get frightened. He gathered sticks and stones and hurled them at the wolf until it was glad to get out of his way and let him proceed. But he knew from the sounds still coming behind him that a pack of the animals was on his trail and he would need to make haste or they would soon overtake him. He was a strong man and very fleet of foot, but he had had no expectation of winning against a lot of wolves in a foot race, should they determine to pursue him. So he concluded that he must at once bring all his wits into play and, if possible, deceive them. The forest trees around him were rather small to climb and to safe among their branches, and he did not relish the idea of being kept up in a tree all night in such cold weather.

The desperateness of the situation called to his mind a singular cave containing two narrow openings, and he concluded that it might afford him protection and give him a chance to defend himself. So away he hurried for the cave. It was now long after dusk, but the moon shone brightly, yet owing to the shadows of the trees Piper experienced considerable difficulty in finding the entrance to the cavern. Before crawling into the narrow passageway he secured a large, heavy club to use should the wolves attempt to follow him into his retreat. He was scarcely half a dozen feet inside ere he heard their horrible howls near the entrance, and saw their eyes like balls of fire glaring on him from the outside.

At first they seemed disinclined to follow after him, apparently fearing a trap, but finally the boldest one started inside, and then all squeezed themselves into the opening until it was jammed tight.

A BAD HALF HOUR.

As the forward wolf came within his reach, Piper pounded it with his club until it was utterly disabled, but the great pressure of those from behind constantly brought the headmost others nearer and nearer. Piper never stopped fighting, but whacked and beat and gouged and disabled wolf after wolf as they came within reach. But at length the entrance became so perfectly filled with wolves that they could neither get forward nor backward, while their savage howls resounded in the narrow place with such deafening effect that it made Piper tremble, and his sole thought was to get out and away from them.

Groping around with his hands he found some good sized, loose stones, with which he hastily filled into the opening just in front of the wolves as tightly as he could pack it, and then, with club in hand, he crawled along and sought exit at the opposite entrance to the cavern. The dismal darkness prevented him from seeing anything, and it was some time before he found the way out. The wolves did not know, or else had forgotten, this entrance, and Piper left them still howling with fury crowded into the narrow mouth of the cave at least sixty yards away from where he had emerged. He now made his way to the road again, and two hours later had reached home.

A few days later he visited the cavern, but found nothing save a few bones, the dead and wounded wolves having been, as he supposed, eaten up by their surviving companions.—Cor. Chicago Inter Ocean.

Fetching Bonnet Pins.

The little flower pins used to fasten the strings to women's bonnets are quite fetching, especially the violets and pink rosebuds on black velvet. But don't make the mistake one woman did and wear a violet pin with a hat trimmed with pink roses. Even the pin should correspond with the hat.—Good Housekeeping.

Pepper the Rats.

Cayenne pepper sprinkled where rats resort will cause the pests to leave the premises.—New York Journal.

A DANGEROUS GAME OF BLUFF.

Nerve Displayed by a Theatrical Manager in a Tenderfoot Town.

"Sam T. Jack is a splendid bluffer," said a gentleman from Kansas yesterday. "I remember him best when he was traveling through Kansas with a burlesque road company. He once struck Dodge City with a big opera bouffe troupe. It was years ago, when Dodge City was at the very verge of civilization—just hanging on to the edge, as it were. There was no regular show house, and no decent hotel. There was plenty of money, though, and that brought Jack and his company. The town was full of cowboys and roughs, and they all determined to see the show and incidentally have some sport with the management.

"Mr. Jack learned this and realized the necessity of impressing the natives with a due sense of his usefulness as a fighter before the show began. At that time one Peter McCarthy was the deputy sheriff of Dodge City, and was a reasonably efficient officer. For this reason it was that he felt in duty bound to warn Mr. Jack of the awful possibilities of exhibiting himself on the streets of Dodge City in a white plug hat and a fancy vest. The well meaning deputy sheriff affected to despise tenderfeet, but because of this feeling of official responsibility—which sentiment was doubtless more thoroughly aroused at the thought of a possible free seat at the show—he started in to give Jack timely warning, and began his remarks as follows:

"'Be you the show boss?' asked Pete.

"'I am, sir,' was the reply.

"'You all allow to act out in the town hall tonight, I reckon?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'You goin y'se'f?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Be you goin to rustle around town much in that thar white stovepipe hat?'

"'Well,' said Mr. Jack, who had become tired of being catechised, 'if you will submit your questions in writing—provided you can write—I will lay off a day and frame my answers for you, but let me ask a question. Why do you want to know whether I will rustle or no, and why this pointed reference to my Greeley hat?'

"'Wall,' responded the sheriff, a little hot himself, 'cause I 'lows to hyer to give yer a pointer; ef you do w'ar thet hat down town the boys are a-waitin for yer and they'll shoot it chock full o' holes. They don't 'low no such tiles in Dodge.' Pete then looked at Sam as much as to say that he thought the hat would not be worn. But the urbane Sammie smiled serenely and said, 'That's the trick, is it? Well, that's funny. Now, if the boys in highfalutin hilarity should raise the hat and hit the wearer what would be the result?'

"'You just stan your chances, but I reckin y' won't do that—it's kinder ticklish; an' bet that the boys are good shots, but the licker is a kinder lively—an—an—well, they mought raise a little hair, you know—see?'

"'Just so,' said Sam as he continued writing. When he had finished he turned to Pete, and holding in his hand a sheet of paper asked that genius if he could read it. Pete could and did. It read as follows:

> I WILL SHOOT ANY MAN WHO DARES TO SHOOT THIS HAT.

"'Now,' said Mr. Jack, 'I will be going to Wells, Fargo & Co.'s office, near the depot, in just ten minutes—and I go loaded always. I will wear this paper thar'—and he pasted the sheet to the front of his hat. 'All the boys can see it. Tell those who will dare to shoot—if any—that they had better shoot for blood.' Pete's jaw dropped at the ultimatum of the tenderfoot and the latter's display of nerve. The upshot was that the manager wore his tall white Greeley hat—and wore his cartridge belt and guns. The boys were congregated outside the House of Blazes, to care for their hides—and a feeling of respect for the nerve of the wearer prompted them to applaud at his action instead of shooting at his hat, and that night he hung out the sign, 'Standing Room Only,' at 7 o'clock."—Chicago Post.

Ships Wrecked in Fair Weather.

Very few persons know the number of ships that have never been heard from after leaving port. In Great Britain alone, in 1873-4, there were 90 vessels missing; in 1874-5, 137, and in 1875-6, 101; between 1864 and 1880, of 10,569 reported lost the fates of 849 are unknown, and even this list is less than more accurate information would show. A careful investigation of causes of wreckage shows many causes and unexpected results. Among other general principles that have been deduced is that over one-half the wrecks occur when the wind blows less than a fresh gale, or when a ship, if properly found, manned and navigated, could keep the sea with safety. From 1864 to 1874, 529 vessels were wrecked during calm weather; 388 in light airs; 1,910 in light breezes; 882 in gentle breezes, 1,299 in moderate breezes, 2,111 in fresh breezes, 2,239 in strong breezes, 819 in moderate gales, 1,939 in fresh gales, 4,320 in strong gales, 1,924 in whole gales, 375 in storms, 622 in hurricanes, 57 variable and 422 unknown.—Providence Journal.

The Potato.

Humboldt says that at the time of the discovery of America the potato was cultivated in all the temperate parts of South America from Chili up the coast. The Spaniards first noticed it in Peru. The variety of potato cultivated in Europe and North America grows wild in Chili. Different species of the plant are found growing wild in most parts of South America, and, it is claimed by many botanists, in Mexico and Arizona.—New York Herald.

Modest.

"I'm no pig; I don't want the earth," was the remark of a baldheaded, gray whiskered man in a Broadway restaurant a few days ago as he sent back a potato boiled in its skin and part of the soil in which it grew.—New York Recorder.

THE BOY WANTED TO TALK.

But the Father Was Very Sleepy and Lost Track of the Conversation.

"Good night, papa," said the boy, going into his room.

"Good night," said the boy's father as he turned out the gas and got into bed.

"Are you tired, papa?" asked the boy sympathetically.

"Tired enough to go to sleep, anyway," said the father.

"That's good," said the boy. "It's a great thing to be so you can go to sleep as quick as you get to bed, isn't it?"

"Great, indeed," answered the father drowsily.

"What makes us go to sleep?"

"Why, because we are tired, I suppose," a little impatiently. Then, with a thought of the sympathy, "Sleep is necessary after the work of the day."

"Does a cow sleep?"

"Certainly."

"What makes women more afraid of cows than men?"

"Very likely because they are more timid. Women can't protect themselves as well as men."

"Girls are just the same. They run and yell at every little thing. I'm glad I am not a girl, aren't you?"

"Yes; I'm glad you are not a girl."

"No, I mean aren't you glad you are not one."

"Yes."

"If you were a girl, you'd be my mother, wouldn't you?"

"I suppose I would."

"Well, I'm glad you are not, for then you couldn't show me how to make a kite."

"Do you want a kite?"

"Yes, but tomorrow will do just as well. Who made the first kites, papa?"

"The Chinese, I fancy."

"The men in China fly kites, don't they?"

There was no answer.

"Don't they, papa?"

"Don't—er, what was it?"

"Don't the men in China fly kites?"

"Yes."

"Are there any laundries in China, papa?"

"I don't know; I guess not."

"Well, how do the Chinamen learn how to wash?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"The Chinaman down at the laundry has got a fiddle. He can't play very well. Did you ever try to learn to play on a fiddle?"

"No."

"I don't want to learn. I'd rather learn to play a banjo. Did the negroes play on a banjo first?"

"Yes," desperately.

"Who taught them how to make it?"

"I don't know. I guess it came naturally."

"What makes them black?"

"What, the banjos?"

"No, of course not, the negroes."

"The coloring matter in their skin is different from ours."

"Do they ever tan men's skin?"

"Boys' skin is sometimes tanned," with deep meaning.

"Oh, I don't mean that kind of tanning. That's strap oil, isn't it?"

"I guess so."

"What's hair oil made of?"

"Bear's grease, I've read."

"If I could kill a bear when I go up into the Adirondacks on my vacation I could get a lot of hair oil, couldn't I?"

"I suppose so."

"Will I go on the Friday school picnic?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, papa, I want you to help me do an example. This is the way it goes: 'Twenty men dig a ditch 13 2-3 feet wide and 230 yards long in 2 3-4 weeks, working 9 hours a day; 13 men dig a ditch 23 feet wide and 240 rods long in 3 weeks, working how many hours a day?' How do you do that?"

No answer.

"How do you do that, papa?"

"Er—do what?"

"Do that example."

"What example?"

"Why, that one I've just told you. I don't believe you know a word I've been saying."

"Yes, I do; you were telling about that Chinaman playing a fiddle."

"Christopher! That was two or three hours ago. We've talked about a lot of things since."

"Have we? Well, my son," said the boy's father, raising himself on his elbow and looking through the darkness into the other room, "we won't talk any more tonight; we begin with sleep and I guess we had better end with that. Good night."

"Good night!" said the boy, "but I wish you'd tell me where to begin with that example."—New York Times.

Sacred Cats in Egypt.

Herodotus says that when a cat died a natural death in an Egyptian house the occupants of the dwelling went into mourning and shaved off their eyebrows. When a fire occurred they were more anxious to save the cats than to extinguish the conflagration. Nevertheless, in some parts of the same country cats were regarded as unclean animals—for a creature which was considered sacred in one town was often viewed with horror, as impure in a neighboring city. That was the case with the crocodile in Egypt, which in some parts was ruthlessly hunted and destroyed, while in others it was made a pet of, laden with gold ornaments and waited upon by priests.—Washington Star.

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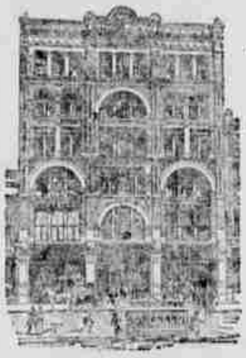

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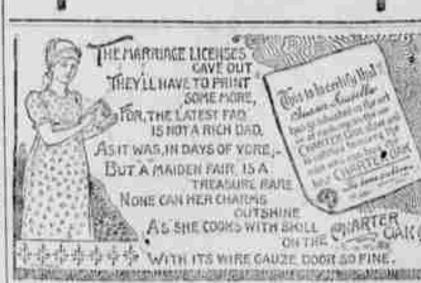

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