

FIRST MATE SILAS TALKS.

He Says the Ice Will Go Out in One Week More.

Bases His Assertion on Present Indications and Observations Covering Many Years.

Although not their chief, the Indians of Moosehide look upon Silas as a sort of first mate; and as Chief Isaac is inclined to be somewhat frivolous, the tribesmen look to Silas to pilot their ship of state on the turbulent sea of life.

Silas is perhaps 40 years of age; but his appearance indicates that his winters have not alternated with summers; in fact, Silas looks as though his life had been all one long winter of discontent with but little seasoning in it.

To Silas has been allotted a large share of the philosophy which has ever characterized the red race. Being in every sense a child of nature, he is a profound student of nature and from his observations is able to draw deductions, the logic of which would do credit to men who have devoted their lives to delving in the archives of scientific research.

In view, therefore, of the scientific bent of Silas' mind, it is not surprising that he should entertain views of his own on the all important question: When will the ice move out down the river? The first mate was up to the city yesterday, having accompanied his wife who desired to purchase a spring bonnet and inquire at the news stands regarding the arrival of fashion magazines. When approached by a Nugget representative and questioned relative to the momentous question—that of the ice—he assumed a look that would not have done discredit to an ancient day seer, and said:

"What I do not know about the history and habits of the Yukon can not be learned this side of the grave. I know all that my forefathers knew, besides that which I have picked up in my own checkered life." My father lived for many years after the sere was on his pumpkin, and to him it was given to be wise in the lore of the country. But my father did not know half so much about the spring habits of the river as I do, for the reason that he was not required to study them. For many years of his life he had a never-failing harbinger, and just two days after the coming of the harbinger the ice in the river would go out."

Here Silas paused and looked intently at a hole in the toe of one of his shoes. "Go on," said the knight of Faber, No. 2.

"Give me a dollar," said Silas, a gleam of intelligence revealing itself in the smile which curled his upper lip and cracked a couple of cold sores, as he placed the silver in the interior realms of his pants.

"The messenger which always foretold to my father the exact date of the going out of the ice was a bull moose that never failed to walk down the bed of Moosehide creek and take a drink from the water running along the edge of the Yukon just two days before the ice would go out. That moose never missed a spring for 41 years. The spring after my father wrapped the drapery of his couch around him and laid down to pleasant dreams the moose never came, and the ice did not go out that year until the 35th day of July.

"I have," continued Silas as he rose, stamped the ground volently with his left foot, which had seized the opportunity to go asleep, "nothing but my own scientific deductions on which to base my prognostications. Do you follow me? Ah, good! I have made these deductions and am now able to state definitely the day and date on which those optic-offending piles of garbage on the river in front of the city will start northward. Give me a dollar. Tanks! Today is Friday, the 4th; on next Friday, the 11th, at seventeen minutes past four, by the fire bell, in the afternoon the ice will start. I can also impart some startling information regarding the damage that will be done by a jam, but it will take more than a dollar to get it."

And Silas, who has a smattering knowledge of the French language, said "Olive oil," as he hastened away to join his wife who just then appeared coming down the street with a large hatbox under each arm.

An Advertising Dodge.

At a meeting of an upper west side political club a few nights ago, after the chairman had asked if there were any remarks on a question before the house, a long silence was broken by a man who arose and said that he would

like to say a few words. He was young, with a face not overattractive, and his clothes were seedy. He attacked the unimportant local subject with the ferocity of an orator upon whose words the fate of nations might have hung. He talked glowingly, continuously and uninterruptedly for many minutes, and in that time he managed to be on both sides of the question at once.

It was evident that he did not want to offend either the supporters or the opponents of the measure. He went back into history and quoted authorities upon abstruse topics, which he managed somehow to make fit the trivial issue. In the course of his remarks he repeated many times the phrase "Now, I, as a lawyer, believe so and so," or, varying it, said: "My friends come to me and say, 'Mr. Blank, what is your position on this question?'" As a lawyer I answer that it appears to me so and so."

When the man sat down, no burst of applause greeted his efforts, but that did not seem to disturb him. Investigation led to the discovery that he was one of a class of men who belong to numerous small political organizations for the purpose of advertising their business at the meetings. The words, "I, Mr. Blank," and "I, as a lawyer," form the key to the method employed.

The hearers are left in no doubt as to the man's pursuit, and there is always a chance that at the meeting some one will be present who will need legal assistance and may be deceived into the belief that the orator is a man of standing in the legal profession. As long as the man's remarks are in order the chairman cannot suppress him. He is looked on, however, as one of the evils to be shunned, and when he gets up to speak those in the secret are weighed down with despair and helplessness.—New York Tribune.

An Ostrich Policeman.

On a Florida ostrich farm one of the birds acts as watchman. This ostrich, who has been dubbed Napoleon, patrols the camp, giving at intervals a cry which may be said to mean "All's well." If anything alarms him, he at once communicates it to his companions by a series of yells as he advances to the attack.

Napoleon stands nearly ten feet high and weighs upward of 400 pounds. He is a savage bird, of unusual intelligence. At night he is unusually ferocious, and often his keeper is obliged to stand off. To see the keeper force Napoleon back to his pen in the morning with a large fork is one of the sights of the ostrich farm. The enormous bird screams with rage and strikes out with his feet, but all the while slowly giving way.

One night the farmhands were awakened by the roars of Napoleon and the agonizing shrieks of a human being. Rushing to the pens, they saw the ostrich chasing a negro. The negro made an effort to get over the fence, when the bird struck him a glancing blow on the thigh, which ripped it open and exposed the bone. For a time it was thought the poor pheasant thief would bleed to death. The fame of this episode has naturally caused the pheasants' quarters to be shunned by other depredators.—Brooklyn Eagle.

On the Stage.

The many thousands in this country who have read Mr. Sheldon's story, "In His Steps"—mainly, of course, and with a quaint significance in cheap editions, which, in defiance of the principal underlying the law of copyright, have not brought a single penny to the author, will be interested to know how "The Better Life," the play based upon the widely-read tale, appealed to an Adelphi audience tonight. The Sheldonian idea, of course, is no new one, for the late Mrs. Lynn Linton, a full quarter of a century ago showed with lurid light in "The True History of Joshua Davidson"—a title which always demands a second keen thought—how the idea of the Christ as portrayed in the New Testament would appeal to a materialistic modern world. But a far greater than Mrs. Lynn Linton had anticipated the cardinal idea upon which the book is based; and the episode of Jean Valjean and the good bishop's silver candlesticks in "Les Miserables," rendered immortal by Victor Hugo, can scarcely be effaced from the memory by even so effective a first act, reproducing, with slight variations, this very tale as that of "The Better Life." Yet, even when all allowance is made for these echoes of a greater past, the fact stands that the play—daring in its application of the principles of an extreme Christian socialism to the complex civilization of today—cannot but command serious attention.—Exchange.

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AFTER SENATOR PERKINS.

Who Wants Alaska's Capital to Stay at Sitka.

Skagway Business Men Accuse Him of Being Prompted By Selfish Motives.

Understanding that Senator George F. Perkins, of California, has been working for the retention of the capital of Alaska at Sitka, the business men of Juneau and Skagway have taken no uncertain exception to his course, and have addressed to him protests declaring emphatically that they consider such action as he is understood to have taken to be inimical to the best interests of Southeastern Alaska.

In the Skagway protest it is stated that it is impossible to disassociate the public position of the senator from that of his private position of the Pacific Coast Steamship company, which has a service to Sitka.

The Skagway protest has been forwarded to the senator. The signatures at the bottom of the document represent thirty-five of the leading and most important business firms of Skagway. The protest, void of superscriptions and signatures, follows:

"We, the undersigned merchants of the city of Skagway, Alaska, are in favor of the removal of the capital of Alaska from Sitka to Juneau, Alaska. We expressed our desires in this matter through our delegates at a territorial convention held in Juneau, and later at a mass meeting of the citizens of Skagway held February 3, 1900, copies of the resolutions passed at which were duly forwarded to you. Also, the facts being personally known to you that the removal of the capital to Juneau would be a great convenience and the saving of much time and expense to the men of this city desirous of doing any legal business, we feel bound to express our surprise at the position you have taken in regard to the same in the United States senate, which amounts to an opposition of such removal and a disregard of the wishes of the people of Skagway.

"Further, it must also be within your personal knowledge that the people of Southeastern Alaska, with the exception of Sitka, is in favor of the removal of the capital to Juneau, and that your position in regard to the same is in direct opposition to the will of the people of this whole section.

"Under these circumstances it is scarcely possible to disassociate your public position as senator from your private position as head of the Pacific Coast Steamship company, and we must therefore regard the latter as representing interests which are inimical to those of this port and those of Southeastern Alaska and take action accordingly. For the consideration of such action we have heretofore signed our names, this ninth day of April, 1900."—Alaskan.

Speed on the Ocean.

In the last sixty years the speed of ocean steamers has been increased from eight and a half to twenty-one and a half knots an hour. Ships have been more than trebled in length, about doubled in breadth, and increased tenfold in displacement. The number of passengers carried by a steamship has been increased from about one hundred to nearly two thousand. The engine power has been made forty times as great, while the rate of coal consumption per horse power per hour is now only about one-third what it was in 1840. The weight of the machinery per horse power has also been very greatly reduced. Were the engines of the Campania proportionately as heavy as those in use sixty years ago, they would weigh about 11,000 tons. In other words, machinery, boilers and coal would exceed the total weight of the ship as she floats today. There could not be a more striking illustration than this, says Popular Science Monthly, of the close relations between improvements in maritime engineering and high speed.

Clearing the River Bed.

The bed of the river fronting the upper part of the city on which all winter there has been a number of scows, small boats and little steamers, is now being cleared of all these preparatory to the expected early breaking up of the ice. The craft is all being hauled out to the bank except in cases of disabled scows which are being converted into fuel. The object is to remove all hindrance to the departing of the ice, and to save the craft from the destruction to which it would surely be doomed if allowed to remain where it lay during the winter.

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