

YOUNG FOLKS.

A MAINE BEAR HUNTER.

AMID HIS BEAR TRAPS HE DESCRIBES HIS PURSUIT.

From the *Lewiston (Me.) Journal*.

I found myself hobnobbing with a bear hunter in the midst of his traps the other day. The hunter was Enoch R. Knapp, who lives on Bear River, in the town of Newry. Bear River is a small stream that runs down from a spur of the White Mountain chain and empties into the Androscoggin at Newry. The bear hunter's house is a neat cottage at the base of Bear Mountain, around which the river runs. The road winds among steep hills and thickly wooded mountains till it seemed to lose itself, and to lose you in the bargain.

This mountain has long been known as a favorite resort for bears. The farmers in the vicinity do not try to keep many sheep. One of them went up on the mountain with a yoke of oxen to haul out some timber not long ago. A very large and hungry bear appeared on the scene and rushed at the cattle with mouth open and eyes full of fury. The oxen snorted and started on a wild gallop down the steep mountain. The farmer's judgment was as good as his cattle's. He had nothing with which to defend himself and he had to think lively to devise a way of escape. He did an amusing but brilliant thing. Running between the oxen he caught hold of the ring in the yoke and dangled there until the oxen had carried him to the foot of the mountain and out of the reach of the bear. The old growler jumped and snarled around the oxen's flanks and tore their hides, but could not reach the man between them hanging on for dear life.

Mr. Knapp has a blacksmith's shop opposite his house, where he makes bear traps and shoes horses. His traps are ingeniously made of iron and steel, and one of them looks like two stout waggon springs with a pair of jaws in the middle. These jaws are bands of wrought iron with great steel teeth riveted into them. When the jaws are opened and caught under the stout steel springs, you see a trencher in the middle of the machine. The object of the bear hunter is to induce the bear to step his fore foot on that trencher. The least pressure lifts the catch and the jaws fly together with crushing force. The teeth in the jaws make this kind of a trap a bear-killer as well as a bear-catcher.

Your bear hunter must use considerable craft. Said Mr. Knapp: "I usually build a cubby-house in the woods of old stumps and decayed branches. I sorter pile 'em up around, you know, and leave a little opening for the bear to go in, after he sees the consarn and his curiosity is excited. I catch some suckers or other kind of fish in the river, and hang 'em up in the cubby. Then I try to fix the trap so that the bear will have to step on the trencher if he gets the fish. A bear never steps on a log in his path, but always steps over it. I usually fix the trap on the 'other side of a log or branch, so he will be pretty sure to step over the log and into the trap. A knowing old bear won't go into one of these cubbies. Sometimes after trying to catch an old sheep thief in this way and not getting him, I have caught the old fellow by hanging a string of fish in a careless way on a tree, as if left there accidentally by some sportsman, and putting the trap underneath. Sometimes I fix a track where a bear has a habit of fording a brook. I take away the stone in the brook which the bear steps on when he crosses, and put the trap in its place. When

the bear feels after the old and familiar stone his forepaw is caught in the trap. Some bears have learned to smell a trap, so we have to kill the smell. We do that by daubing it over with lard and beeswax. I have 12 traps, and visit 'em twice a week. The bear is usually caught by the fore-paw. He don't live more than 24 hours after the jaw closes on him, as a general thing. In warm weather the pelt would soon spoil if I did not get it pretty quick after the critter died. The fur is in the best condition when the bears are housing late in the Fall. Then it is as nice as a Merino sheep's wool. I get \$8 to \$15 apiece for my pelts. The bears spend the winter in the ledges about here or under the stumps. Since we had that hurricane that blew down so many trees there have been a lot of cozy places for bears around here."

The skin of a bear, caught the day before decorated the barn door of the Newry bear trapper.

BAD PENMANSHIP.

In spite of the theory of a bad penman who wrote a sprawling hand (was it not the first Napoleon?) that the poorer a man's handwriting is the more character it has, the majority of letter-writers, authors, scholars, and journalists are envious of the clerk and the copyist with their one talent for writing a clear and beautiful hand. As a nation, we have sadly degenerated in the art of using the pen. Comparing the beautiful and uniform handwriting of the last century with the skim-along, spider-track, rail-fence style of the present day, one almost regrets the fact that the goosequill has gone out of fashion and a stiff and awkward writing implement been substituted in its stead.

A fortune awaits the man who will invent a flexible writing stick—not a gold pen tipped with platinum—of some non-corrosive material. It is so hard to break in a pen; and having worn down the point to suit your style, they are likely to snap or splutter before you have tossed off a dozen pages of manuscript. Then there is the annoyance of getting a fibre between the nibs, analogous to that of getting a bit of meat between the bi-cuspidis at the dinner table; and nine persons out of ten will wipe the pen frantically on the occiput to rid it of the filament—and catch a hair! A new steel pen is as awkward as a phenomenally stiff collar, or a pair of new shoes; and, moreover, as the average penman is in continual danger of "impaling himself on his own pot-hooks," perhaps the only relief is found in the type-writer, which seldom betrays one into a loose and slovenly style of handwriting.—*The Current*.

TWELVE PAIRS OF TWINS.

I was reading in the *Blade* about aged twins and of the 12 pairs of twin boys. Now I propose to tell you of what I distinctly remember. I am now 62 years old, and when I was from 12 to 15 years old, my father, Samuel L. Corning, kept the one tavern at the centre of Brookfield, Trumbull County, Ohio, the first range of townships in the Western Reserve, next to the State line of Pennsylvania. Just at night there drove up and halted at the tavern two waggons of the Pennsylvania style, so called in those days, having broad tires, schooner-shaped bodies and linen covers. In them were a man, his wife, and 12 pairs of twins, all boys. They wanted a place to cook their suppers, having their own provisions in the said waggons. That night the boys

all slept in the waggons, but my mother furnished the father and mother with a bed in the house. It excited the curiosity of all the people in that vicinity, as being so far an unheard of thing. Squire Chew kept a hat shop near the tavern and made wool hats, good and durable, such as were made in those days. Before starting next morning he marched the twins, two and two, in front of his shop, and fitted each boy with a neat hat, and the father with one such as he (Chew) wore himself. It was tall, bell-crowned, wide brimmed and trimmed with fur, and a band half an inch in width, of a dirty white color, but green on the under side of the brim to protect the eyes. They received other presents. Ambrose Hart, who kept the one store, gave the mother calico to make a frock for herself, and they resumed their journey for the, at that time, Far West.—*Toledo Blade*.

THE PET YOUNG MAN.

The young man who was raised a pet is becoming a nuisance. He is seldom of any good. What is wanted nowadays is a practical man who can do something else besides smoke cigarettes and twist acane. The time to learn to work and to learn business habits is one's youth. He who leads the life of a butterfly until he is 25 or 30 years of age and then recognizes the fact that he has made an ass of himself, has precious little to recommend him when he applies for a job. This may be a chestnut, but it fits not a few young men of every city in the Union. The boys at the reform farm are better off, if they only knew it, than thousands of the boys who are at large. There is nothing like being practical, and there is but one way to be so, and that is to be so. Acquire business habits, and train yourself to good, honest, hard work. Don't waste your time learning to tie a cravat. You can buy cravats already tied.—*Cincinnati Enquirer*.

REVIVING THE THUMB SIGNATURE.

In mediæval times, when one of the fashionable follies was neglect of education, rulers and other gentlemen, instead of making their mark or endeavoring to sign their names, dipped one of their thumbs in ink and blotted their mark on documents in that way. In some respects it marks the distinction between two signatures even better than the writing employed by civilized people, since the latter may be perfectly imitated and the thumb imprint cannot be counterfeited. On account of the difficulties which it places in the way of deception, it is probable that the thumb system will be taken advantage of by the new custom house officials so as to make it impossible for a return certificate to be used by any Chinese except the one to whom it is regularly issued. No two thumb signatures are alike. Even the imprint of one's right thumb does not correspond with that of the left, and when the two are had together no Mongol can palm himself off for the real holder of a certificate. The complete difference between the arrangement of the grain of various thumbs has been demonstrated in enlarged photographs of such signatures. The lines of the grain are all that are left on the paper. The photographs were shown to Mint Superintendent Lawton, and he wrote to Secretary Manning advising the adoption of the plan they afforded with regard to marking Chinese certificates. If this be done, the description of a departing Chinaman, which, as has been found, applies in most or all particulars to other Mongols, cannot be mistaken.—*San Francisco Chronicle*.

THE ART OF PLEASING.

MR. EDITOR,—Allow me space in the columns of your valuable paper to answer, nay, (it is too difficult to answer), I will say reply to Miss A. T.'s letter of Oct. 3rd. Of course I do not pretend to have the knack asked for, but I shall give my experience in trying to please. Your correspondent says her efforts seem sometimes to be of no avail. Certainly, sometimes our efforts are futile, but they will tell in the end. If we are always found to be trying to be agreeable, our associates will soon know it and they will appreciate it. There are chronic grumblers and fault-finders no one can please, but let us do our part well and we will certainly benefit ourselves and others. One sure but difficult way of pleasing those with whom we come in contact daily, is to study their natures and find out what will please them and what will not, then endeavor to treat them accordingly.

Again, the true art of being agreeable is to appear well pleased with all the company and rather to seem well entertained with them than to bring entertainment to them. A person thus disposed, may not have much learning, nor any wit, but if he has common sense and something friendly in his behavior, it conciliates men's minds more than the brightest parts without this disposition. It is true, indeed, that we should not dissemble and flatter in company; but a person may be very agreeable, strictly consistent with truth and sincerity, by a prudent silence where he cannot concur, and a pleasing assent where he can. Now and then you meet with a person so exactly formed to please, that he will gain upon every one who hears or beholds him. This very often is the gift of nature, and also frequently the effect of much knowledge of the world, and a command over the passions. Last of all, if we follow the Golden Rule—"Do unto others as you would have them do to you"—we will in most cases prove an agreeable victor. Thanking you for the space,

I am, yours, etc.,
JACKSON S. WILSON.

Brussels, Oct.

CURIOSITIES.

Gay old gentleman to boy, on twelfth birthday: I hope you will improve in wisdom, knowledge and virtue. Boy, politely returning compliment, totally unconscious of sarcasm: The same to you, sir!

The Japanese have a coin which takes 1,000 to make \$1. The contribution box must have been used in Japan a great many years.

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