

SAGE-BRUSH STORIES

DISCRETIONARY POWERS

IN the days of our Youth generally do we love those narratives in which the quiet, unassuming, almost delicate-looking man, roughly handled by a bully, whips off his coat (disclosing the arms of an Apollo) and wades into his tormentor—routing him from the field before one could say “Jack Robinson.” With gathering years there is a tendency to be sceptical of such stories, at least we hear them with some touch of scepticism.

But hearken to the tale of the measly-looking little person who arrested the shell-back, the mulatto, and the two coons who raised Hades on Van Doren’s Island, off the coast of the Pacific Province.

He was indeed measly-looking. His clothes hung on him as clothes hang on a nail—for west of the Rockies there is no gay red tunic on the swelling torso of the policeman, no smart cavalry pants add grandeur to his stride. He is often so little in evidence that persons have been known suddenly to sit up in their chairs, in B.C. (after having passed across the Plains and seen the red-coat dotting them), exclaiming ; “I say ! You have no police here !” Far be it from me to say that all the Provincial Police are out of the running when someone is wanted to pose as the blacksmith in a tableau of Longfellow’s celebrated poem ; and yet—hearken to the tale of one of them, a man not unique ; nay, rather a mere unit of a type.