

## Miscellaneous.

### Bear-hunting Extraordinary

In the fall of 1842, I was engaged in inspecting some lands in the township of King, then almost a wilderness in comparison with what it is now. Wild animals were comparatively numerous, bears and wolves especially. One wet evening I stopped at a newly-erected farm house, occupied by an old English family, who had moved on to the land about two months previously. The house was not even chinked or plastered, and great difficulty was experienced in keeping the candles burning, on account of the wind. The settler, who had determined to make his home in Canada, had brought everything he could with him from England, and amongst the rest the ancient family "spit." To the uninitiated, we must explain that the old English spit, now long banished from modern households, was formed of a bar of steel half an inch thick by one and a quarter inches wide. There was a formidable spear-shaped point at one end, whilst the other was terminated by a strong oak wheel, two inches thick and about eight inches in diameter.

About two feet from the north side of the house was the pig-pen, formed of upright rails set firmly into the earth, and built in this fashion to protect the grunTERS from a bear that had regularly visited the farm for some days previously, and generally had succeeded in carrying off a young half-grown pig, or severely injuring it. Between the house logs and the rails of the pig pen there was a sort of stile built of cross rails, about two feet long, and this stile thus formed was about three feet high, and intended as a defence to the passage of the pigs during the day, from their yard to the garden.

Just after our supper, composed of potatoes and milk, was over, the same ominous sounds which had accompanied the bear's former visits were quite audible. He had found out the new pig pen, and was walking round and round it, seeking, as usual, to get one of the inmates. The pigs were in an awful fright, grunting and running about their enclosure, and endeavouring to escape, whilst Bruin would every now and then dash his paw through the rails in his efforts to catch hold of a pig. No doubt, a few previous or present scratches added to the general tumult amongst them.

The old farmer, who was no hunter, did not know what to do. The bear kept running round the pen, and each time clambering over the stile, quite close to us, and at last determined to use the elevation thus obtained to clamber over the enclosure. The old wife, thus seeing the certainty of ultimate success on the part of the bear, who by this time, with the excitement of the chase,

had ceased to pay any attention to us, although sometimes within four feet of us, now became thoroughly roused, and after reproaching her husband and your humble servant for their pusillanimity—and truth to tell she was an awful scold—seized the afore-said spit, and when the bear next clambered over the stile, she, with a furious exclamation, plunged the weapon into, and about two feet completely through the bear, and about one foot into the pig pen, between the upright rails. The stab was given with a right good will, and the spit driven quite through as far as it would go, accompanied with the usual English expletive of "Drat you, you brute!" and the bear being absolutely transfixed with the spear end of the spit through the rails of the pen, and the other end prevented from being pulled through the logs by the wheel before mentioned, the bear was thus entirely powerless for mischief. He was not killed outright, nor, indeed, so far fatally wounded as to make him quiet. Of course he would have died, but not from the instant effects of the wound. The consequence was that he became furious, and tore about in a frantic manner.

When we found the animal absolutely incapable of resistance, we sallied out, and finished his career with the axe. We feasted from his meat that night and next morning for breakfast. Our former diet of potatoes and milk was entirely thrown in the shade by this wholesale importation of bear meat.

Some may doubt this little anecdote, but it is literally true, and the old man retained the bear skin for many years, and used to boast of his wife's prowess. She, in her turn, certainly used often to jeer at his want of presence of mind, and this little episode formed the source of many an evening's tale.

C.

### Tanning Sheep Skins.

The following directions for tanning sheep skins, which we take from the *Prairie Farmer*, will be useful to some of our readers:

For mats take two long woolled skins, make a strong suds, using hot water; when it is cold, wash the skins in it, carefully squeezing them between the hands to get the dirt out of the wool; then wash the soap out with clean, cold water. Now, dissolve alum and salt; half a pound, with a little hot water, which, put in a tub of cold water sufficient to cover the skins, and let them soak in it over night, or twelve hours; then hang over a pail to drain. When they are well drained, stretch or spread carefully over a board to dry. When a little damp, have one ounce of saltpetre and alum, pulverized, and sprinkle the flesh side of each skin, rubbing in well, then lay the flesh sides together, and hang in the shade for two or three days, turning the under skin upper-

most every day until perfectly dry. Then scrape the flesh side with a blunt knife, to remove any remaining scraps of flesh, trim off the projecting points, and rub the flesh side with pumice or rotten stone, and with hands; they will be very white and suitable for a door or carriage mat. They also make good mittens. Lamb skins (or sheep skins, if the wool be trimmed off evenly to about one-half to three-fourths of an inch long), make most beautiful and warm mittens for ladies or gentlemen.

### A Model Tool House.

"Where shall I find a blacksmith?" said a traveller in a frontier settlement to an individual whom he met on the road. "My horse has lost a shoe, and I wish to have it replaced." "I am a blacksmith," replied the person addressed. "But where is your shop?" "This is my shop," said the son of Vulcan, with a graceful sweep of the hand such as Selkirk may be supposed to have made when he exclaimed, "I am monarch of all I survey;" "this is my shop, but my anvil is a mile ahead."

Almost as extensive as this frontier blacksmith's shop is the tool house of neighbour P. The blue heavens above are its roof; that portion of mother earth included within the boundary fences is the floor, and each field is a compartment. In each compartment may be found one or more farming implements; here a plough standing in the furrow where it was last used; there a harrow gracefully reclining against a fence; cultivators, reapers and mowers, and grain drills basking in the sun; hoes, scythes, grain cradles, rakes, etc., hanging on the trees and fences, whilst about the barn are conveniently congregated rollers, carts, waggons and other implements "too numerous to mention." Neighbour P. is an ardent admirer of the good old adage, "a place for every thing, and every thing in its place."—*Cor. Country Gentleman.*

### Mechanical Items.

Horse-chestnut has great lasting qualities when exposed to moisture, and might be made useful for mill work.

TO CLEAN STONE.—Boil a pound of pipe-clay in three pints of water and a quart of vinegar; put in a bit of stone blue. Wash with this mixture, and when quite dry, rub with a dry flannel and a brush of moderate stiffness. Sweep off the fine dust thus raised with a clean hand-brush.

GRINDSTONE SHARPENING.—A correspondent of the *Scientific American* says:—"The grindstone is a self-sharpening tool, and after having been turned some time (if a hard stone) the motion should be reversed. Sand of the right grit applied occasionally to a hard stone will render it quite effectual.

SELECTING GOOD OAK.—When selecting this wood for whippletrees, &c., choose that