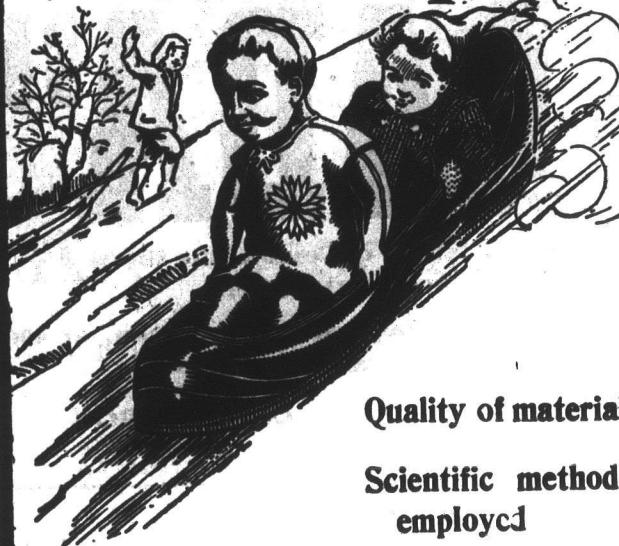


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## JUST A FEW FUNNY STORIES.

### Elder Brown's Big Hit.

Pa and ma are Methodists, and all us children, too. And pa's a pillar in the church, and owns a whole front pew, And pa and Mr. Watkins, who's a big, bald-headed man, Go 'round with little baskets getting all the cash they can. The preacher always talks with pa when meeting is dismissed, And when there's extra doings pa's invited to assist. And our Presiding Elder, Reverend Ebenezer Brown, 'Most always stays at our house every time he comes to town.

I used to be afraid of him. He seemed so big and tall, And kind of sad and solemn like, I couldn't smile at all. We children hardly dared to speak when he was in the house; But every one just slipped about as quiet as a mouse. Ma said we needn't feel afraid; that he was just the same As pa or any other man, except a bigger name; But we still feared that he could see just every thought we had, And so we kept a-trying not to think of something bad.

But one time in the morning when the family was at prayers, And Elder Brown and all of us kneeling by our chairs, We heard old Rover—he's our dog—begin to whine and growl, And then old Tabby—she's our cat—well, she began to yowl. 'Twas 'way out in the kitchen that the two commenced to spat; But in a minute here they came a-tearing, and the cat Ran right up pa's bent back until she reached his shoulders, where She stopped, and said to Rover, "You just touch me, if you dare!"

We knew that there'd be trouble. Rover is so very proud And sort of overbearing that he never has allowed A cat to dare to boss him; so he made a great big leap, And he and pa and Tabby, they all tumbled in a heap. Oh, say, but it was awful! I saw brother Henry grin, And sister Lucy snickered; but it seemed a dreadful sin. Till Elder Brown laughed right out loud to see the funny fuss— And since that time we've liked him 'cause we know he's just like us.

### The Fog at Squonk.

"Talking about fog," said Uncle Obed, a white-whiskered Squonker, as he tipped his chair back in the chief grocery of Squonk and crossed his knees about a foot higher than his head, "when I was a young man the fog down here to Squonk was so all-fired thick that the wind could not blow it away. The wind only dried it and left it lying around in drifts. We used to cut it up in stove lengths and use it for fuel, as it was easier to chop than wood. One day I got caught in the fog when I was in swimming when the fog was so thick that you could hold on to it to keep from sinking. It came up all of a sudden, and I could not tell which way the land was to save my life. I can tell you I got mighty scared when I could not tell which way I was a-swimming. I struck out and just took the chances on heading in the right direction. Soon bang went my head against something solid!"

He paused a moment, and a boy who was munching a peppermint lozenge interrupted him by asking: "Was it a boat you struck?" "I thought so at first," replied Uncle Obed, "but it wasn't no boat at all. It was a rocking-chair, and I landed right a-settin' in it."

While the grocery crowd opened its eyes in blank astonishment the boy, who was still engaged in grinding on the peppermint lozenge, found time to ask:

"What! a rocking-chair rocking in the sea?"

"No, not in the sea," replied the old water-dog, with a chuckle; "not in the sea but on my front stoop. You see, I had been a-swimming right along in the fog and not in the water at all, and I never could understand how I ever had such luck as to land kerflop in that there rocking-chair."

"Many queer things must have happened when you had one of those fogs on," said a by-stander, whose remark was intended to draw the old Squonker out.

"I just guess there did," replied old Uncle Obed, in a reminiscent sort of way; "I just guess there did. Sometimes the schoolboys would make a lot of fog balls (just like snowballs, you know) and have a regular fog ball fight with them after the fog banks had went away. They also made fog forts and fog men. If you could only get on top of a fog bank once you could roll the stuff up into balls, and the more you rolled them the bigger they got."

"How could you get on the top of a fog bank?" asked one of the summer residents.

"When we began to climb on top of them," replied old Uncle Obed, "we used to lay a ladder up against the side of it and clamber up."

"And what did you want to go up for?" asked the boy, who was still masticating the peppermint lozenges.

"To catch fish. Sometimes codfish and bluefish would swim in on the fog, just like I did when I lit into the rocking-chair, and when the fog went away they would be left flopping on the ground."

"You may think it sounds like lyin' to say we could walk around on the fog that was wet enough to swim in, but it won't seem so funny when I say that we wore snowshoes. We used to wait until the fog got sorter dry, and then we'd press chunks of it out fer wall paper, rugs, and mattresses. After we got these things pressed out we'd varnish them, and that would waterproof them, so they'd never warp or lose their shape. I have seen ducks swimming in wet fog down here to Squonk, and I've seen hens scratching around in dry fog. It's all a question of your fog's bein' wet or dry. I've seen a fine imitation of mineral wool made out of fog such as we used to have down here to Squonk, and once when we had clipped the sheep the fog sprouted on them and grewed so fast that we got five or six crops that couldn't fall off every summer. This fog wool was just like raw silk, and the silk-worm was put out of business by the silk sheep. Gosh, you ought to see the curtains we made out of it! But it wasn't as good, by a jugful, for blankets and shingles as the raw fog right off the sea. Sometimes we would strain it for pearls."

"What!" exclaimed the crowd. "Strain it for pearls," reiterated Uncle Obed, as if it was nothing unusual.

"Do you expect us to believe that, Uncle Obed?" asked the crowd.

"Do you think it's onreasonable?" "Well, rather!" answered the crowd, in chorus.

"All right, then," replied Uncle Obed, with an injured air, "then I won't tell you nothing more about the wonderful fog down here to Squonk. I used to drive staples into it and fasten the cows to the same with a rope to keep them from straying away, and I have pasted and nailed circus posters and advertisements onto it; but I won't tell you nothin' more about it because you ain't got no faith in nothin' I say when I'm tellin' you these yarns of things what happened in my childhood, and therefore there ain't no satisfaction in telling you about 'em."