

"The strangest and most thrilling piece of swordsmanship I ever saw," said the fencing master, "was in Vermont."

"I was spending the autumn in a mountainous part of Vermont, and there was a military encampment near my hotel."

"Well, one morning an officer's horse started to bolt with the man during the parade, and made at breakneck speed towards a tremendous precipice."

"The officer tried to stop the horse, tried to run its head—no use. On dashed the frantic animal straight for this abyss 300 feet in height."

"We all held our breath. In another minute we expected to see horse and rider go over the cliff. But instead a strange thing happened."

"The officer, within fifty feet of the edge, drew his sword and plunged it twice deep into the horse. The horse staggered, slowed, keeled over, dying. The man had sacrificed the animal's life to save his own."

In a village post-office Miss Peek Had a job at six dollars a week; But she near had a fit And threatened to quit When a postal came written in Greek.

There was a worried look on the grocer's face as he rushed hatless down the street, ran up the steps of Acacia villa, and gave a nervous tug at the bell-pull.

"I—I'm sorry to say there's been a slight mistake, Mrs. Grubble," he panted, as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead with the frayed edges of his apron. "You ordered two pounds of oatmeal yesterday, and by mistake my apprentice put up some sawdust that our grapes came packed in."

"Oh!" replied the lady. "Then I reckon my 'usban' must 'ave got through about arf a pound o' wood for breakfast."

"You don't mean to say that he ate it?" gasped the man in the apron.

"Course 'e did," was the reply. Then the lady leaned back on the door-post, and for three minutes indulged in a loud laugh that brought all her neighbors to the scene.

As a prisoner was brought before Judge Sherman for sentence the clerk happened to be absent. Judge Sherman asked the officer in charge of the prisoner what the offence was with which he was charged.

"Bigotry, your Honor. He's been married to three women."

"Why, officer, that's not bigotry," said the Judge, "that's trigonometry." —Indianapolis Star.

One thing can be said for the insurance companies under the old extravagant management. They gave away good blotters.



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LAS KRIST-KINDEL (THE CHILD)

I had fed the fire and stirred it, sparkles in delight Snapped their saucy little fingers the chill December night, And in dressing-gown and slippers, I had tilted back "my throne"— The old split-bottomed rocker—and was musing all alone.

I could hear the hungry winter prowling round the outer door, And the tread of muffled footsteps on the white piazza floor; But the sounds came to me only as the murmur of a stream That mingled with the current of a lazy-flowing dream.

Like a fragrant incense rising, curled the smoke of my cigar, With the lamplight gleaming through it like a mist-entolded star— And as I gazed, the vapor like a curtain rolled away, With a sound of bells that tinkled, and the clatter of a sleigh.

And in a vision, painted like a picture in the air, I saw the elish figure of a man with frosty hair—

A quaint old man that chuckled with a laugh as he appeared, And with ruddy cheeks like embers in the ashes of his beard.

He poised himself grotesquely, in an attitude of mirth, On a damask-covered hassock that was sitting on the hearth; And at a magic signal of his stubby little thumb, I saw the fire-place changing to a bright proscenium.

And looking there I marvelled as I saw a mimic stage Alive with little actors of a very tender age; And some so very tiny that they tottered as they walked, And lisped and purled and gurgled like the brooklets, when they talked.

And their faces were like lilies, and their eyes like purest dew, And their tresses like the shadows that the shine is woven through; And they each had little burdens, and a little tale to tell Of fairy lore and giants and delights delectable.

And they mixed and intermingled, weaving melody with joy, Till the magic circle clustered round a blooming baby boy; And they threw aside their treasures in an ecstasy of glee, And bent, with dazzled faces, and with parted lips, to see.

'Twas a wondrous little fellow, with a dainty double chin, And chubby cheeks and dimples for the smiles to blossom in; And he looked as ripe and rosy on his bed of straw and reeds As a mellow little pippin that had tumbled in the weeds.

And I saw that happy mother, and a group surrounding her, That knelt with costly presents of frankincense and myrrh; And I thrilled with awe and wonder, as a murmur on the air Came drifting o'er the hearing in a melody of prayer—

By the splendor in the heavens, and the hush upon the sea, And the majesty of silence reigning over Galilee—

We feel Thy kingly presence, and we humbly bow the knee And lift our hearts and voices in gratefulness to Thee.

Thy messenger has spoken and our doubts have fled and gone As the dark and spectral shadows of the night before the dawn; And, in the kindly shelter of the light around us drawn, We would nestle down forever in the breast we lean upon.

... given us a Shepherd—You have given us a Guide,

... of heaven grew dimmer when You sent Him from Your throne. He comes to lead Thy children where the gates will open wide To welcome His returning when His works are glorified.

By the splendor in the heavens, and the hush upon the sea, And the majesty of silence reigning over Galilee—

We feel Thy kingly presence, and we humbly bow the knee And lift our hearts and voices in gratefulness to Thee.

Then the vision, slowly fading, with the words of the refrain, Fell swooning in the moonlight through the frosty window-pane; And I heard the clock proclaiming, like an eager sentinel Who brings the world good tidings—"It is Christmas—all is well!" —JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

BUILDING THE EDMONTON TO DAWSON TRAIL

There arrived in Calgary a few weeks ago a little band of the Royal Northwest Mounted Policemen, to whom the first glimpse of the headquarters barracks in that city was a sight for sore eyes. For they had been away for three years having spent the whole of that time in one of the wildest parts of Canada—MacKenzie district and the north of British Columbia.

They were the men who have been working on the one thousand mile trail from Edmonton to Dawson, and who, now that the great undertaking is almost complete, have been granted a respite from their labors.

The trail which, when completed, will be the longest in the world, has been carried to the fourth road house on trail which runs along the Kispiox river, between Hazelton and Telegraph creek. This point was reached in September and as it is planned to follow the Kispiox trail for forty miles from there, it was decided to knock off work there. The whole party accordingly moved into Hazelton, where four men were left to look after the outfit for the winter.

The remainder embarked in Indian canoes, the three boats which customarily ply on the Skeena river being disabled—either permanently or temporarily—and by this primitive means of conveyance arrived after sundry adventures at Port Essington. Thence they took the C. P. R. steamer to Vancouver and civilization once more. Next summer work will be resumed, and a trail will be opened up between the Kispiox route and Atlin, a distance of some two hundred and ten miles. This will virtually conclude the work, as a good trail already exists between Atlin and Dawson. The new trail is for pack horses only, being a uniform width of eight feet throughout. Later it may be turned into a wagon road. The amount of labor entailed in the carrying out of such a work can only be imagined by those who know the country through which it runs—and who have themselves wallowed through the interminable muskogs, forded the mountain torrents and forced their way through the almost impenetrable bush. It is a work such as those great road builders, the Romans themselves, never undertook.

"The trail is a very difficult one," said Constable Mehan to a reporter. "We left Edmonton with sixty-two horses, and last spring were sent thirteen more. Eight horses and one lone mule were sent to us from the Yukon, and of the eighty-three horses and one mule we now have left one mule and thirty horses. The grub ran short some time before we made Hazelton, and the horses suffered greatly, although, as the country we were traveling through simply swarms with game, the men suffered no inconvenience."

"While blazing the trail through Laurier Pass we lost two men. Their hands were chilled through their thick mittens by the intense cold, and their axes slipped, both of them cutting



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their feet seriously. They were sent back to Edmonton, and one of the men had to have his foot amputated, gangrene having set in."

"Oh, yes," chimed in Constable Young, "and perhaps it was all skookum when we had to get off our mounts in crossing many of the higher summits and break trail for the horses through heavy drifts of snow and with the cold rain pattering on your slicker and running down the back of your neck—and that bloomin' mu-ell! Whenever we'd come to a long snow covered slope that there animal would just squat on his hams and slide down beating us to it and usually breaking open his pack in transit!"

"Well," said Constable Ross, thoughtfully sucking at a much-beloved briar, "mebbe you mind how many times we had to swim the horses across some swift stream and raft the cargo over?" And reminiscent chills shook the bodies of his comrades.

Captain Thomas Bennett, who manages the mile-long seine of the famous Philadelphia shadfisheries, was talking about big fish.

"Most big fish," said Captain Bennett, smiling cynically, "are weighed as a friend of mine once was."

"My friend was taking a walk one morning after a severe illness. As he trudged along he saw an acquaintance a coal dealer, standing beside his scales."

"Just give me my weight, will you?" said my friend, as he stepped on the machine. "I want to see how much I have been pulled down."

"Weight, Bill!" called the dealer to the clerk inside.

"And the clerk, thinking that a wheelbarrow of coal had been put on, called back: "Six hundred, exactly."

A lady asked Pierpont Morgan if he had ever heard the Gregorian music that is sung in the Sistine chapel in Rome.

"I have," Mr. Morgan said. "And how did you like it?" the lady asked. "Those chants, you know, are said to be sung to the tunes which were used in David's time."

Mr. Morgan smiled. "I could never understand till now," he said, "why Saul threw his javelin at David."

