

much astonished at the sight of the ships, which they believed to be living creatures. The ships immediately came to anchor. The admiral went ashore in his boat, well armed and bearing the royal standard. The other captains each took a banner of the Green Cross, containing the initials of the names of the king and queen on each side, and a crown over each letter. The admiral called upon the two captains, and the rest of the crew who landed, to bear witness that he took possession of that island for his fore-reigns. They all gave thanks to God, kneeling upon the shore, shedding tears of joy for the great mercy received. The admiral rose, and called the island San Salvador. The Indians called it Guanahani, and it is now called Cat Island. It belongs to that group called the Bahamas.

(To be continued.)

The Story Teller.

(From Woodworth's American Miscellany.)

HUNTING HENS' NESTS.

A STORY OF MY BOYHOOD—BY UNCLE FRANK.

How much I used to enjoy myself, in the spring of the year, when I lived on a farm! Among all the different sports of the country during the months of April and May, I hardly know which gave me the most pleasure. Let me think. Making whistles out of the boughs of the willow and the chestnut, and serenading the good people of the neighborhood with them—that was fine sport. So it was to see the sheep take their annual baths, under the direction of my father. So was looking after water-cresses, and feeding the chickens, and playing ball, and seeing how nicely our hired men plowed the corn-field, and taking care of the cosset lamb. But I don't know, after all, if there was anything so pleasant, in the spring of the year, as hunting hens' nests. There was something exciting about the business of exploring the barn, the wood-house, and the entire premises, in fact, and being rewarded, after a noisy outburst of cackling, by a whole hatful of eggs.

In these explorations, I was generally attended by my brother, only a little younger than myself, who relished the sport quite as much as I did myself. There is a story of rather a tragic nature connected with one of these hunting excursions, which I have a mind to tell you. There is a little bit of wisdom wrapped up in the tale, which, when the tale is unfolded, I hope you will find and profit by. I say I hope you will profit by it; for, after all, what is wisdom worth, even if you should get your head as full of it as Solomon's was, if you do not make some use of it? Not much, I am sure. Dogs and cats, rats and mice, squirrels and rabbits, geese and ducks—all these animals, though they do not get hold of so much knowledge as we have, generally use what little knowledge they do get. They make the most of it. When they have learned a good lesson, they remember it. It is not necessary, in most cases, to keep teaching the same lesson, over and over again, to the same dog, for instance, after he has once got it by heart. Even the goose, whom we are in the habit of calling a very stupid creature, when she has learned a lesson, generally keeps it in mind, and practises it. I knew of a whole flock of geese once, who got as drunk as fools, eating cherries that had been soaked

in rum. But nobody could ever make a single goose in that flock eat such things after that. They had been drunk once. That was sufficient for them. What a pity that all the members of the human family do not profit by what they learn, as these geese did by their knowledge.

But I am getting off on this "wild goose chase" too far, and I must come straight back to the story.

The interior of our barn—and I am not sure but that the same could be said of all the barns in our neighborhood—had on each side of the wide open space, called the "barn floor," two high beams, running horizontally the whole length of the building. These beams were some twenty feet, perhaps, from the floor. When the hay was all in, the mows on each side of the barn floor reached as high as these great beams, though as the hay was generally taken away during the winter, of course the distance from the hay now to the beams increased. In the middle of the winter, I recollect, it always seemed a great feat to jump from the high beam to the mow, as Peter, my father's hired man, used sometimes to do for the amusement, he said, of the "little shavers." Some loose pieces of timber were placed on the high beams, in the fall of the year, reaching across the barn floor, from one beam to the other. These timbers formed a temporary scaffold, on which they placed bundles of rye and oats, before they were thrashed.

You will readily see that this scaffold was not a safe place for boys. Besides the danger of sliding off, there was also danger that the timbers would spread apart, so as to let a person through. We boys were cautioned, again and again, of the danger of that scaffold, and forbidden to go there on any account whatever.

While hunting for hens' nests in the barn, it used, nevertheless, to seem a great pity to me, that we could not pursue our researches on that forbidden ground. "What a host of eggs there must be on the scaffold," I thought.

One day, when we were not so successful on our hunting excursion as usual, a very meagre collection of eggs having resulted from a search of a couple of hours, my thoughts were drawn so strongly towards the scaffold, that I could hardly turn them in any other direction.

"I wonder how many eggs there are on the scaffold?" I inquired of my brother.

"I guess about a hatful," was the answer.

"A hatful!" I exclaimed; "pooh! more likely half a bushel." I was rather a sanguine boy.

"But there is no use in talking about the scaffold," my brother said. "We couldn't go there, you know, if the whole scaffold was covered with eggs."

I thought otherwise. "I don't believe the folks know what lots of eggs there are among those bundles of rye," I said.

"But," said my brother, "I shouldn't wonder if they knew one thing about that scaffold better than we do."

"What's that?" I asked.

"They know that it is rather a dangerous place," was the reply.

"But Peter goes there," said I.

"Peter is a man," said my brother.

At that remark I remember I laughed: to think that Peter could perform any feat in the way of climbing, which I dared not attempt. Boys have often great confidence in themselves. As they grow older, and gra-

dually draw near the period of their manhood, they are apt to think less and less of themselves. My confidence in myself, on this occasion, was not courage. It was not heroism. It was nothing of the kind. It was something for which I deserved a great deal more censure than praise.

I finally reasoned my brother into the conclusion, that, on the whole, it was best to climb up to the scaffold; or, rather, I talked to him till he had used up all his arguments, for I hardly think he was altogether convinced that I was right. We arranged everything in our own minds, so that our parents would never know that we had climbed the scaffold. They would wonder, we knew, where we got such a large quantity of eggs. But we were going to deal out our information as physicians of a certain school deal out their medicines to their patients—in very small doses. That matter was all arranged.

The next step, to mount the ladder. It was thought best, by all means, to take up two hats. One hat, we thought, would be hardly sufficient to hold all the eggs. So up I started, holding on tight to the rounds of the ladder with both hands, and as tight to the brims of both hats with my teeth.

In spite of myself, somehow or other, I felt my courage o'zing out of my fingers and toes, as I went up the ladder. I trembled a little, I guess. But I went on. I had no notion of being scared out of an expedition which promised a peck of hens' eggs, at the least, and possibly half a bushel.

Yes, I went on. But when I got to the ladder, which rested on the great beam, I began to think that our Peter was a brave fellow, and that the feat I had undertaken was probably the greatest on record. I hesitated, and then climbed, as boldly as I could, in the circumstances, upon the great beam, from which I stepped to the scaffold.

I looked down. Oh, how high that scaffold seemed! What a distance to the barn floor! From the moment my eye fell upon the place where my brother was standing, fear took the entire control of me, and knocked every other thought and idea out of my head. The hats—so I was told afterwards, though I could not have been sensible of it at the time—fell to the floor at the moment that I turned to look downward.

My memory of what took place after I stepped upon the scaffold, is very confused and misty. I remember looking down. I remember, too, that I felt sick; that everything began to go round and round, and that I went round and round with everything; that sometimes I was on the floor, sometimes on the mow, sometimes on the scaffold, and sometimes among the wasps' nests, where the ratters came together; that I wondered how the barn came to tumble over, and how it came to stand up again, and how the bundles of rye could stay on the scaffold, and why I could stay on myself—and—

It was very hazy after that, very hazy indeed.

The next thing I remember now, the next thing I remembered then, was that I was lying on a bed, and a strange-looking man, with a strange-looking pen-knife, was sitting close to me and pinching my wrist. I don't know exactly how a cat in a strange garret feels. I don't know that anybody knows, though it is a very common thing to hear people talk about feeling "as queer as a cat