

WHERE HE DREW THE LINE.

The man who sold windmills adjusted his chair at a new angle, crossed his feet on the railing of the balcony, locked his hands over the top of his head, and began:

"Curious fellows, those Wayback farmers are; droll chaps to deal with, too; cute and sharp at a bargain. Most of them know a good thing when they see it, so I took a good many orders; but once in a while I come across a conservative old hayseed whose eyes are closed to anything modern. One of that sort helped me to a good laugh the other day, and I might as well pass it on.

"He was a genial, white-headed old fellow, who owned several fine farms, with prime orchards and meadows, barns and fences in apple-pie order, and dwellings serene in comfort.

"He listened closely while I expatiated on the excellence of our make of machines; then taking a fresh supply of Cavendish, he squared himself in his chair, with his hands in his pockets, and held forth in this fashion:

"'Waal, stranger,' he said, 'your machine may be all right; but now see here. I settled here in the airy fifties, broke the trail for the last few miles, blazin' the trees as we came along. I had a fair start, good health, a yoke o' cattle, a cow, an axe, with one bit an' three coppers in my pocket. I built a log house with a shake ruff an' a puncheon floor, an' a cow-shed of poplar poles ruffed with sod. I worked hard, up airy an' down late, clearin' up land by degrees, an' diggin' a livin' out o' the sile by main strength, an' no favors except the blessin' o' the Almighty. The Lord's been good to me. He's gi'n me housen an' barns; He's gi'n me horses an' cattle; He's gi'n me sheep an' swine, an' feathered fowl o' many kinds. An' now, stranger, after all that, I can't be so mean as to ask Him to pump water for 'em.'

"And then," continued the storyteller, "he brought his hand down on his knee with a whack that fairly echoed through the house. Of course I couldn't urge him to purchase after that expression of his sentiments, and I left him. Independent, wasn't he?"

Then the windmill man chuckled, as if he enjoyed the memory of the scene he had just described; and his hearers enjoyed his story so much that when he left he was richer by three or four orders.—*"Editor's Drawer," in Harper's Magazine for November.*

A CHINESE DESCRIPTION OF A

The *Francais Quotidien* quotes an amusing legend of the Chinese notion of a pianoforte:

"The people of the West are in the habit of keeping in their homes a singular

animal. It has four feet, sometimes only three, and it can be made to sing at pleasure. Men and women and occasionally quite young children, have only to sit down in front of it and tap on its teeth, now and again treading on its tail, and immediately it commences to sing. Its song is louder than a bird's but not so harmonious. Despite the terrible development of its jaws, and its habit of showing an alarming array of teeth, it never bites. There is no necessity to chain it up, for it will not run away."

WHERE STEVENSON LIVED IN EXILE.

Three miles behind Apia, on a rising plateau that stands some 700 feet above the ocean level, lie the house and grounds of Vaillima. "I have chosen the land to be my land, the people to be my people, to live and die with," said Mr. Stevenson in his speech to the Samoan chiefs, and his great lonely house beneath Vaca Mountain, the fruit of so much love, thought and patient labor, will never lose the world's interest nor fail to be a spot of pious pilgrimage so long as his books endure and his exile be unforgotten. For Stevenson was an exile; he knew he would never see his native land again when the steamer carried him down the Thames; he knew he had turned his back forever on the Old World, which had come to mean no more to him than shattered health, shattered hopes, a life of gray invalidism, tragic to recall. Whatever the future held in store for him, he knew it would be no worse than what he was leaving, that living death of the sick room, the horror of which he never dared put to paper. I can remember the few minutes allowed him each day in the open air when the thin sunshine of South England permitted; his despairing face, the bitterness of the soul, too big for words when this little liberty was perforce refused him. I recall him saying: "I do not ask for health, but I will go anywhere, live anywhere where I can enjoy the ordinary existence of a human being." I used to remind him of that when at times his Samoan exile lay heavily upon him and his eyes turned longingly to home and to those friends he would never see again.—*Lloyd Osbourne, in October Scribner's.*

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