

Young Folks' Department.

The True Bo-Peep.

About the year 1760 a gentleman in passing through a part of England famous for its fine sheep, stopped one night at an inn where there was placed upon the supper table a roast of fine fat mutton. The talk of the landlord turned from the mutton to the sheep and the great sheep owner of the country; and he amused his guests with an account of a great quarrel between two neighboring gentlemen, each of whom had brought a suit against the other, one for the maiming of his sheep, and the other for what he called unlawful seizure of a part of his flock. The affair, said the landlord, was widely known and had excited considerable interest, and been made the subject of many jests, songs and riddles, the point being as to how a certain flock of sheep could have lost their tails and gotten them back on the same day.

The story of the affair, as related by the landlord, was as follows:

Each of the gentlemen in question was the owner of hundreds of sheep, which fed in large flocks on the uninclosed downs or commons. They were all of a breed, remarkable for their short legs and broad, fat, heavy tails, on which the wool grew so long and thick that they literally dragged on the ground. They were divided into various large flocks, each of which was under the charge of a particular shepherd who appointed others, chiefly boys and girls, to lead them about in smaller companies and watch lest they should get mixed up with those of their neighbors. The shepherds of the two sheep-owners were very jealous of each other, and there was between them a good deal of quarrelling and even at times fighting, concerning pasture, boundaries and the ownership of stray sheep.

One day a simple young country girl, who had about forty sheep in her charge, sat down under a shady hawthorn bush to watch her flock and there unfortunately fell asleep. Some of the animals, finding themselves unchecked, strayed off to a distance and trespassed upon the territory of the rival flocks, where the shepherd cruelly cut off their tails and then drove them back to their own pasture.

The girl meanwhile had awakened and in sore dismay searched for her missing charge, which she at length to her great joy espied coming toward her—but alas! as she soon discovered, without their tails. Thereupon her lover, a young shepherd, went in great wrath with some of his companions and had a fierce battle with the perpetrators of the outrage, whom they compelled to keep the maimed animals and give up instead an equal number of their own flock.

Hence the lawsuits and the bitter enmity between the two neighboring families, owners of the sheep.

When I first came across this account in an old book, *A Journey through England*, I was immediately struck with the similarity of incident to the well-known ballad of "Bo-Peep." Indeed I can hardly doubt that this must have been the origin of the pretty little pastoral with which every child in the land is familiar and the explanation of that puzzling riddle as to how Bo-Peep's flock lost their tails and found them again. The ballad was first popularly known about the time that the book in question was written—nearly one hundred years ago—and was then not a nursery rhyme used to amuse children, but a fashionable song sung by ladies to the music of a spinet. It has since been altered somewhat, but was originally, as we find it in an old collection of "Songs and Ballads," as follows:

Little Bo-Peep
Lost her sheep
And didn't know where to find them;
Let them alone,
And they will come home,
Dragging their tails behind them.

So little Bo-Peep
A watch did keep
Nor troubled herself to find them;
And they all came back,
But alas, and alack!
They had left their tails behind them!

Then she sighed and wept,
And at last she slept,
And dreamt that she heard them a-bleating;
But when she awoke—
She found it a joke—
For again they were a-sneeling.

Then her true love took
His staff and crook
And traveled abroad to find them;
And she saw them soon
By the light of the moon
Dragging their tails behind them:

A Coroner After Paul Boyton.

Unless Capt. Paul Boyton files affidavits as to the truth of the following yarn about his recent descent of the Sacramento River, we cannot consistently recommend it to our readers as a superior article of veracity for family use. He deposes and states that as he passed Antioch about dark one evening he observed a boat being rapidly rowed from the shore. In response to the Captain's courteous hail the occupant gazed at the great navigator with a disgusted expression and said:

"Well, I'm dorned. You're that rubber-suit fellow, eh? I thought you were a floater."

"Well, I guess I am," said the Captain.

"Are, eh?" said the other, brightening up. "I don't know but what you could be legally considered as such. Just grab this line, please, and let me tow you ashore."

"What for?"

"Why I'll tell you," said the man confidentially. "You see I'm the Coroner here, and business is terrible bad—the worst you ever see. I hain't got on any thing for three months. Can't pay expenses. Now if you'd only stop over long enough for me to hold an inquest on you I'd make a stake and stand the cigars besides. Just paddle ashore, that's a good chap. Won't keep you ten minutes."

"All right," said the Captain. "Only don't let any of the jury tickle my nose during the inquest. If they do I'm bound to sneeze."

"All right," said the Coroner. "I'll sit on your head myself."

After the inquest was over the obliged official carefully slid him overboard and shoved him off again with many thanks, but the Captain says the worst of it was that the Coroner telegraphed the dodge to the one at the next town below, and he to the next in order, and so on clear down to the bay, the result being that the great voyager had to paddle like a steamboat to prevent being lassoed and

hauled ashore every landing he passed. He says that one post mortem a week is about all his system can stand.

The Dark Age.

The Dark Ages is a name often applied by historians to the Middle Ages, a term comprising about 1,000 years, from the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century to the invention of printing in the fifteenth. The period is called "dark" because of the generally depressed state of European society at this time, the subservieny of men's minds to priestly domination, and the general indifference to learning. The admirable civilization that Rome had developed and fostered was swept out of existence by the barbarous invaders from Northern Europe, and there is no doubt that the first half of the medieval era, at least, from the year 500 to 1000, was one of the most brutal and ruffianly epochs in history. The principal characteristics of the middle ages were the feudal system and the papal power.

Learning did not wholly perish, but it betook itself to the seclusion of the cloisters. The monasteries were the resort of many earnest scholars, and there were prepared the writings of historians, metaphysicians, and theologians. But during this time man lived, as the historian Symonds says, "enveloped in a cowl." The study of nature was not only ignored but barred, save only as it ministered in the forms of alchemy and astrology to the one cardinal medieval virtue—credulity. Still the period saw many great characters and events fraught with the greatest importance to the advancement of the race. We have not space to give even a synopsis of this long period, but would advise any one who desires to get a clear and comprehensive view of the medieval era to read Hallam's "Europe During the Middle Ages."

There are many comfortable people in the world, but to call any man perfectly happy is an insult.

Got Married to Rest Her Bones.

"Well, missus, I's agoin' to leave you," said Molly to her mistress, who she had loved and grown fat with for a good many years.

"Going to leave me, Molly? Why, where are you going?"

"Oh, I's going to get married; I've worked long enough, and I's going to rest my bones."

Of course Mrs. Jones could make no objection to this common and natural female frailty. So Molly went, and nothing was heard of her for a year or two, when she came back, poor and emaciated, having lost her husband, and all the rest of ill's human nature is heir to having fallen upon her. Mrs. Jones was much surprised to see her coming, and said to her:

"Well, Molly, have you rested your bones?"

"Golly, missus I's rested my jaw bones, and dem's all the bones I've rested."

The Northernmost Editor in the World.

The man who probably claims this distinction is the printer and Esquimaux poet, L. Moller, who edits the illustrated Esquimaux paper, *Atuagaglutit*, published at Godthaab, a Danish colony on the west coast of Greenland 64° north latitude. This enterprising journalist joined the expedition of Nordenflied for the exploration of the interior of Greenland in order to be able to supply his paper with illustrated reports of the journey. Nordenflied gives a portrait of Moller in his recently published work on Greenland, and the face looks remarkably intelligent and good natured. His sketches, too, show considerable talent, being vivid and true to nature. The Esquimaux editor is an interesting man.

There is nothing so valuable, and yet so cheap, as civility; you can almost buy land with it.

Brantford Cold Water Rice Starch, manufactured for Fine Laundry Work.



A FACT.

Young Lady (gazing for the first time upon the windows of the Eckhart Bookstore)
THERE IS IN THAT HOUSE!