THE JOSH BILLINGS PAPERS.

ANIMILOLOGY.

THE POLE KAT.

My friend, did yu ever examine the fragrant pole kat critically.

I guess not, there aru a kritter who won't bear examining with a microskope.

They are beauti'l beings, but oh! how deceytive.

Their habits are slow, but unsure.

They build their house out ov earth, and the house has but one door tew them, and that iz a front door.

When they enter their houses they don't shut the door after them.

They are called pole kats bekause it iz not convenient tew kill them with a klub, but with a pole, and the longer the pole the more convenient.

Writers on natural history disagree about the right length ov the pole tew be used, but i would suggest that the pole be about 365 feet, espeshily if the wind is in favor ov the pole kat.

When a pole kat iz suddenly walloped with a long pole, the first thing that he, she or it duz, iz tew evaporate the air for many miles in diameter, with an akrimonious olfaktory refreshment, which permeates the ethereal fluid, with an entirely original smell.

This smell iz kept popular, in the fashionable world, than bilious extrakt, but the day may cum, when it will be bottled up like musk, and sold for 87½ cents per bottle; bottles small at that.

A pole kat will remove the filling from a hen's egg, without breaking a hole in the shell bigger than a mouse can jump through.

How this is done, historians have left us to doubt.

This is [illegible] "sucking eggs."

This [illegible] are known among human [illegible] have learnt from the pole kat.

Pole [illegible] chickens, young turkeys [illegible]

They [illegible] they are sound [illegible]

[illegible] tew [illegible] fly [illegible]

A [illegible]

[illegible] Pick [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] it.

[illegible]

[illegible] yu [illegible]

One [illegible] especially [illegible] while

A [illegible] in market, at [illegible] is worth 3 dollars and [illegible] him.

This is one way tew make 12 shillings in a wet day.

THE WEAZEL.

The weazel has an eye like a hawk, and a tooth like a pickerel.

They can see on all three sides of a right-angle triangle board fence at once, and can bite thru a [illegible] easier.

They always sleep with one eye open, and the other on the wink, and are quicker than spirits ov turpentine and a lighted match.

It iz no disgrace for a streak ov litening tew strike at a weazel and miss him.

If i owned a weazel litening mite strike at him all day for 50 cents a clap.

I hav tried tew kill them in a stun wall with a rifle, but they would dodge the ball when it came within six inches ov them, and stick their heads out ov another krack, three feet farder off.

They are [illegible] among the small [illegible] you kant cross one into a [illegible] there any more than yu could cook a [illegible] ov light with a knot hole.

Weazles are [illegible] but the supply always equals the demand, they aint useful only for one thing, and that iz, tew kill chickens.

They will visit a chicken house in one night, and take off all the blood with them, leaving the corpse behind.

I hunted 3 weeks for a weazle once (it is now six years ago, and I am just where he waz all the time, and I didn't get him yet.

I [illegible] for him and hold the stake [illegible]

Every [illegible] weazle [illegible] tew withdraw the rewards [illegible] looking up the distrikt skool.

The [illegible] tew on me if i didn't, and I did it, [illegible] a few suit rather warm than [illegible]

A weazle [illegible] the neck, it iz sed will cure the [illegible] but the phellow who sed this had a sore thing; he knu nobody could ketch the weazle.

I waz told when i waz a boy, by a cunnin cuss, that the way tew ketch a crow waz tew put sum salt on his tail. I prakticed all one summer on this but never got sum crow.

I hav did things az foolish az this sence I hav quit being a boy, but prefer to keep mum what they are.

Weazles hav got no wisdum, but hav got what iz sumtimes mistaken for it, they hav got cunning.

Cunning stands in the same relashun tew wisdum that a tadpole duz tew a frog, he may git tew be a frog if he keeps on growing, but he aint one now.

Wisdum knows how tew jump, but about the best thing cunning can do is to wiggle.

I hav saw cunning men who thought they waz wize, but I never saw a wize man who thought he waz cunning.

BOYS.

Had I the planting of them, every mother's son should be in a state of torpor, like that of the claw-sucking bears in winter, at the mischievous, lawless, unlovable period, between the donning of the first short-jacket, and donning the first long-tailed coat. Then a boy has as many legs as a centipede: go where you will, walk as gingerly as you may, one is always sure to be extended for your downfall. Then, his hair sticks out in every direction but that intended by a well-mannered hair-brush. Then, his trowsers are always independent of the anatomy of his legs, and his sleeves of his elbows. His collar also is at war with his neck; and his hat, having been used oftener for a football than for its legitimate purpose, sits awry, like that of an organ-grinder's grinning monkey. Then, the heels of his shoes are trodden down on one side, and his knubby knuckles are spoiling for a fight: and his warwhoop bears no proper proportion to his age or size, being greatly in advance of both. Then he disdains, this embryo man, door mats and clean carpets, and handles delicate articles with smudgy fingers, and bullies his little sisters, and yells "*cry baby*" when they weep, and laps up custards and cream with the thievishness and veracity of a cat, and devours "vittles" greedily, without taking the measure of his own skin or—the appetites of others. Then, he is stone-deaf when you want him to listen, and listening when you think he is stone-deaf. Then, when you need his services, he is just going off with some "feller;" and when you want a "feller," he is as much a fixture as the parlor walls. Then he stands on street corners, and fancies it manly to endure a Spartan nausea, for the precious cigar. Then he addresses his sister on the street after this wise, particularly if there is another boy with him: "Hello, Sazie! Won't you catch it when you get home, Miss!" Then, for all these reasons, and many others which time would fail me to mention, I could wish he would, like the bears, put his claws in his mouth, and, retiring to some dismal cave, passs his embryo stage of implacable meanness in a torpor more conducive to his own self-respect and the happiness of others.

I am aware, Mr. Ion, that *your* son is a paragon, and not to be included in this category, but he is of course an exception, owing to your blessed and wise teachings; and I quite agree with you, that your neighbor's boy, John Smith, may well put on the cap I have cut out—it so well fits him. So you and I won't fall out, my dear, but will agree that there might be a patent taken out for a new style of boy generally, spite of Mr. Beecher's championship of the present one. Pooh! who's afraid of Mr. Beecher? I used to go to school to his sister

FANNY FERN.

YOUNG EMPLOYES.

There is no greater mistake a young man can commit than that of being indifferent to the interests of his employer. It must be admitted that there are circumstances under which it would seem to be almost impossible to feel an interest in an employer's business; but, for all that, it is worth the trial. Be faithful in small things; be attentive to your duties; shirk no employment that is not dishonorable; feel that your employer is fairly entitled to every minute of the time which you have agreed to give him for a stimulated renumeration. The wages may be small—too small; but if you have contracted to work for one dollar a week, when your work is worth ten, stick to your bargain like a man until your term of service has expired. It may seem very hard, but it will instill the great principle of being true to your word.

A TRUTHFUL SKETCH.

Let a man fail in business, what an effect it has upon his former creditors! Men who have taken him by the arm, laughed and chatted with him by the hour, shrug up their shoulders, and pass on with a cold "How do you do?"

Every trifle of a bill is hunted up and presented that would not have seen light for months to come, but for the misfortunes of the debtor. If it is paid, well and good; if not, the scowl of the sheriff, perhaps, meets him at the corner. A man that has never failed knows but little of human nature.

In prosperity he sails along gently, wafted by favoring smiles and kind words from everybody. He prides himself on his boast that he has not an enemy in the world. Alas! sad change. He looks at the world in a different light when reverses come upon him. He reads suspicion on every brow. He hardly knows how to move; or do this thing or the other; there are spies about him, a writ ready for his back. To know what kind of stuff the world is made of, a person must be unfortunate, and stop paying once in his life-time. If he has friends, then they are made manifest. A failure is a moral sieve; it brings out the wheat and shows the chaff. A man learns that words and pretended good will do not constitute real friendship.—*New Jersey Mechanic, Smithville.*

FEMALE BLACKSMITHS.

A special commissioner of the *Daily Telegraph* writes:—The pedestrian explorer of odd places in and about Staffordshire would, in the event of his approaching either Netherton, Rowley, Lye Waste, or Bromsgrove on a Saturday afternoon, encounter a spectacle that might rather puzzle him—a straggling procession of men, women and children, the majority of the former sober, but a few of them drunk, and one and all so scantily and shabbily dressed that their poverty-stricken state of existence is at once made known. The puzzled explorer would naturally be curious to ascertain of what kind of mothers such children could be born. There they are—the women who come toiling down the road, sometimes with a load of rods on one arm, and on the other a baby—women well able to carry such a double load, however. The size of their arms is prodigious. Here comes along one laden with baby and iron, a wizen-faced woman, lank as a plank and about as symmetrical, but whose bare right arm and the fist terminating it might belong to a prize-fighter—a brown fist with a broad thumb, and an arm with sinews standing out like tanned cord; and a muscle—for the woman, like the majority, wears her gown sleeve "tucked up" as a male mechanic wears his shirt sleeve—that bulges to the size of a penny roll. Let the puzzled explorer bottle up his curiosity, and come this way again—say to Lye Waste, on Monday, for an explanation. Here in the village are rows and whole streets of smithy hovels, and the fronts are wide open, and there you may observe them. If you like to "stand" a can of beer you may enter the smithy and have a chat with them—but ill, only on your part. Time is too precious when a woman, stripped like a man from wrist to shoulder, must face the forge for fourteen hours a day in order a shilling may be earned. The street of Lye Waste are narrow and not unclean; and, as before stated, by the side of every house is a smithy, and each one contains from two to five "hearths," or "hearths," as each fire is called, and at night-time the light is so great that strangers are rendered a superfluity. By the middle show that streams out from the numerous hearths would be quite easy to find a place equal to the middle of the street. Whole families work in these smithies. It is nothing unusual to find a mother and her three daughters, the eldest of marriageable age, delving at the forge, and, with a kerchief round her head, wielding the hammer and blowing the bellows, and working away with a [illegible] amongst the banging and [illegible] and flying and singing as merrily as larks. I not [illegible] modiously. Children, too—the poor little [illegible] that the puzzled explorer met last Saturday. The rods they and their parents carried were nail rods; and here they are, the small Vulcans, sweating over an anvil, set up according to their stature, making brads. Pale little wretches, most of them, the firelight betraying with cruel fidelity their haggard, unchildish faces, each one wistful and anxious with the consciousness that bread to eat must first be earned. It appeared odd enough to see the women standing in the smithy ashes with a big hammer in their fist; but it was infinitely more painful to watch these tiny brad-makers, with a wisp of rag round their heads to keep the baby-growth of hair out of their eyes, straightening their small backs and spitting on their palms before they grasped the hammer to make the most of the "heat." For making twelve hundred nails (each one to be nipped off the bar and fashioned from the fire and finished, be it remembered,) she would receive, if all went well, the handsome sum of twelve pence; but they have yet to be weighed to count. The nail merchant takes a promiscuous handful from the bulk and places them in the scale, and, noting the weight, proceeds to count them, and, unless they "tally" exactly fifty to the half-pound, a penny is deducted from the shilling earned. "And this happens once out of every three times about," said the elderly lady who informed me, pausing for a moment to put her hair back with her hammer hand. This petty robbery is called "tailing." The women, when on good work, and sticking to it from eight in the morning until ten at night, can earn six or seven shillings a week. Children employed at brad-making, average two shillings a week, working the same number of hours. The fuel used is coal, slack, or "breese," and costs tenpence a sack.

I got quite friendly with the old lady; and on my asking her whether, on the whole, Lye Waste might be regarded as a place where content reigned she replied, "that it would be all right if it wasn't for the foggers." The "fogger" of the nail-making village is sometimes a chandler's-shop-keeper, or, oftener still, a beer-shop keeper, who likewise does a little in the nail trade. He keeps a little stock of rods by him, with the virtuous intention of discouraging habits of idleness amongst his customers. Say there are half-a-dozen idle fellows boozing in his tap-room, and by and by, they find themselves not more than half-drunk, and with no more money to help them towards the consummation of that blissful condition. "Trust us a quart, master," says a dissipated nailer. "Earn it fust, and you shall have as much as you like," says the honest host. "Here's iron; go home and make a fire, and slip into the work like a brisk lad, and in a couple of hours you may put yourself three, four quarts to the good." "That's how they catch 'em," exclaimed my old woman, who, I think, from her manner, must have suffered from "fog" at some period of her existence; "they never pays 'em a penny; it must be all took out in beer, and there is scores of 'em do it who, I believe, would be sober chaps enough if it wasn't for the temptation." "And is there such a system prevailing amongst the provision shops?" I asked. "Any number of 'em," said she; "and so you find it all hereabouts." "But there is a recent Act of Parliament which forbids that sort of traffic," said I; "I assure you, ma'am, that's against the law." "Ah!" she replied, "there's lots of things agin law and agin nature, I do, down in these parts, that want looking after;" and as she said so, she shrugged her bony shoulders in resignation, and once more took her hammer in her shrivelled old hands that were like nothing human, let alone womanly.

SATURDAY NIGHTS.

What blessed things Saturday nights are, writes some one in the *Tribune*, and what would the world do without them? Those breathing moments in the tramping march of life; those little twilights in the broad and garish light of noon, when the pale yesterdays look beautiful through the shadows, and faces "changed" long ago smile sweetly again in the hush; when one remembers "the old folks at home," and the old-fashioned fire, and the old arm-chair, and the little brother that died, and the little sister that was "translated."

Saturday nights make people human; sets their hearts to beating softly as they used to, before the world turned them into war-drums, and jarred them to pieces with tattoos.

The ledger closes with a clash; the iron-doored vaults come to with a bang; up go the shutters with a will; click goes the key in the lock. It is Saturday night, and [illegible] breathes free again. Home, sweet home, [illegible] that has been ajar all the week gently [illegible] behind him; the world [illegible] Shut in, rather. [illegible] all, and not in the [illegible] —sure the record in [illegible] not in the bank.

Maybe you are a [illegible] Then, poor fellow, [illegible] to you, as you [illegible] wife, blue-eyed or [illegible] true-eyed; [illegible]

[illegible]

"Saturday night!" feebly murmurs the languishing, as she turns wearily upon her couch, "and is there another to come?"

"Saturday night at last!" whispers the weeper above the dying, "and it is Sunday to-morrow, and—to-morrow!"

A DIFFICULT QUESTION ANSWERED.

"Can any one tell why, when Eve was manufactured from one of Adam's ribs, a hired girl wasn't made at the same time to wait on her?"

We can, easy! Because Adam never came whining to Eve with a ragged stocking to be darned, a collar-string to be sewed on, or a glove to be mended "right away, quick now!" Because he never read the newspaper until the sun got down behind the palm-trees, and then stretching himself, yawned out, "Ain't supper *most* ready, my dear?" Not he. He made the fire and hung over the tea-kettle himself, we'll venture, and pulled the radishes, peeled the bananas, and did everything else that he'd ought to. He milked the cows, and fed the chickens, and looked after the pigs himself. He never brought home half a dozen friends to dinner, when Eve hadn't any fresh pomegranates and the mango season was over. He never stayed out until 11 o'clock at a "ward meeting," hurrahing for the out-and-out candidate, and then scolded because poor dear Eve was sitting up and crying inside the gates. To be sure he acted rather cowardly about apple-gathering time, but then that don't depreciate his general helpfulness about the garden! He never played billiards, nor drove fast horses, nor choked Eve with cigar smoke. He never loafed around corner groceries while solitary Eve was rocking little Cain's cradle at home. In short, he didn't think she was specially created for the purpose of waiting on him, and wasn't under the impression that it disgraced a man to lighten his wife's cares a little.

The Hartford *Courant* hardly knows whether Columbus did a good thing or not in discovering this country, and moralizes thus: The Indians never thanked him, for one party. The African had small grounds to be gratified for the market he opened for them. Here are two continents that had no use for him. He led Spain to a dance of great expectations, which ended in her georgeous ruin. He introduced tobacco into Europe, and laid the foundation for more tracts and nervous diseases than the Romans had in a thousand years. He introduced the potato into Ireland, indirectly, and that caused such a rapid increase in population that the great famine was the result, and an enormous emigration to New York—hence Tweed and Hall and the constituency of the Ring. Columbus is really responsible for New York.

A TRUE AND TOUCHING INCIDENT.

A young man and his wife were preparing to attend a party at the house of a friend some miles distant.

"Henry, my dear husband, don't drink too much at the party to-day; you will promise me, won't you?" said she, putting her hand upon his brow, and raising her eyes to his face with a pleading smile.

"No, Millie, I will not; you may trust me," and she wrapped her infant in a soft blanket and they descended.

The horses were soon prancing over the turf, and a pleasant conversation beguiled the way.

"Now don't you forget your promise," whispered the young wife, as they passed up the steps.

Poor thing! She was the wife of a man who loved to look upon the wine when red.

The party passed pleasantly; the time for departure drew near; the wife descended from the upper chamber to join her husband. A pang shot through her beating heart as she met him, for he was intoxicated; he had broken his promise. Silently they rode homeward, save when the drunken man broke into snatches of a song or unmeaning laughter. But the wife rode on, her babe pressed closely to her grieved heart.

"Give me the baby, Millie; I can't trust you with him," he said, as they approached the dark and swollen stream.

After some hesitation she resigned her first-born—her darling babe closely wrapped in a blanket—to his arms. Over the dark waters the noble steeds safely bore them; and when they reached the bank the mother asked for her child. With much care and tenderness he placed the bundle in her arms; but when she clasped it to her breast no babe was there! It had slipped from the blanket, and the [illegible] knew it not. A wild shriek [illegible] arrested him, and he turned [illegible] to see the pale rosy face [illegible] the waters, then sink [illegible] his own intelligence. [illegible] of the [illegible] was just as described.

[illegible]

[illegible] heard of [illegible] Australia. [illegible] in [illegible] to [illegible] When [illegible] the [illegible] table, or [illegible] of eyes in a [illegible] A [illegible] removed to a distance of three [illegible] feet, being released, at once started [illegible] with wonderful and somewhat comical [illegible] to join its fellows; taken away four or five feet, it remained motionless. They are found in a region that is comparatively level, and is nothing but bare rock. Scattered over this barren region are little basins, from a foot to a rod in diameter, and it is in the bottom of these that the rolling stones are found. They are from the size of a pea to five or six inches in diameter. The cause of these stones rolling together is doubtless to be found in the material of which they are composed, which appears to be loadstone or magnetic iron ore. "Rolling stones gather no moss."

IRON HOUSES.

An English firm is doing quite an extensive business supplying Austria with iron dwelling houses manufactured in England, and set up at short notice by English mechanics wherever the purchasers desire. The houses that are most in demand are those which have two, four or six rooms, the purchasers being generally the better class of Austrian artisans. The great want of the advanced working men of the large continental cities has long been for small, comfortable dwellings, and this want is being rapidly met by the introduction of the English houses of iron, which are not only warm, strong, and reasonably elegant, but cheaper than can be built in Vienna, at least of any domestic material. This seems curious when there are taken into account all the charges incidental upon the cost of materials, construction, carriage, and custom-house dues, and it suggests that the enterprise might be made to pay in this country, especially in the immediate neighborhood of the iron and coal fields. The iron houses of America are, with very few exceptions, large and costly, no attempts having been made to introduce dwellings for workingmen similar to the above.

COAL CUTTING BY MACHINERY.—There is now every prospect that the getting of coal by machinery will be more generally adopted than has hitherto been the case. At present it has been adopted at only a few places; but a new machine, patented by Messrs Gillot & Copley, has just been tested at the Wharncliffe Silkstone Colliery, near Barnsley, in the presence of a number of mining engineers from various parts of the kingdom, and with most satisfactory results. In 130 minutes a bank of coal 58 yards long and 4 feet 8 inches thick was cut to a depth of 3 feet 1 inch. The quantity of coal so cut would be about 80 tons in the time stated. In connection with coal machinery, a hydraulic coal breaker, patented by Mr. Chubb, of London, has just been very successfully tested at the Oaks Colliery, Barnsley. It brings down the coal in vast blocks, effecting a saving by making little or no slack. The owners of the Oaks Colliery are so satisfied with the machine that they have given orders for four of them.—*Leeds Mercury.*