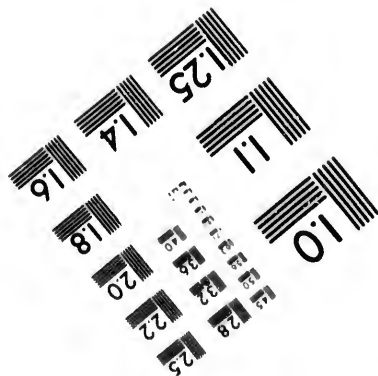
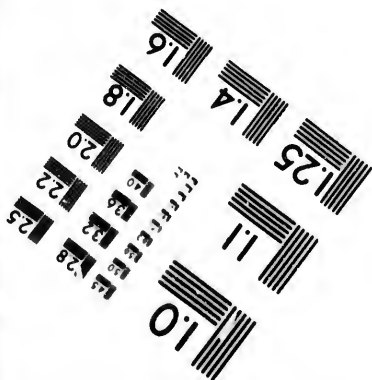
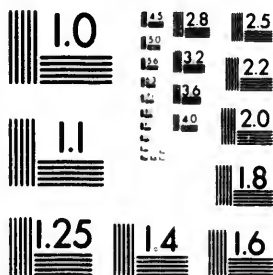


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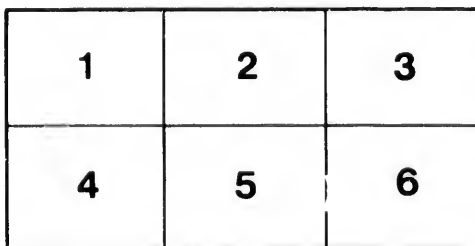
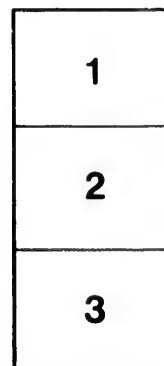
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1572

Heart-Broken

Coroner,



And

Other

Wonders.

BY

I. BELDING

AND

HARRY A. WOODWORTH.

GOOD HEALTH TO YOU!

The most delicious and satisfying of beverages are the Havelock aerated waters.

They are natural mineral waters from the famous springs at Havelock, N. B.

They are bottled in the form of Ginger Ale, Lemonade, Sarsaparilla, Orange Phosphate, and Club Soda.

The demand for the Havelock waters grows steadily year by year.

Their rare medicinal qualities make them unrivalled as a cooling and refreshing summer drink.

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A

Heart-Broken Coroner,

AND

OTHER WONDERS.

BY

A. M. BELDING

AND

HARRY ALBRO' WOODWORTH.

SUN PRINTING COMPANY, ST. JOHN, N. B.

1895.

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Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year 1895, by
A. M. BELDING and H. A. WOODWORTH,
at the Department of Agriculture.

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This Book is Endorsed by Leading Citizens.

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Any book to which H. A. Woodworth is a contributor should be read by everybody, and would be an ornament to any library. Mr. Woodworth is a brilliant prose writer, a gifted and graceful poet, and must be classed as one of the most original minds of this generation of literary men. I take very great pleasure in paying this tribute to his worth. He is a great man.

A. M. BELDING.

In a comparison between A. M. Belding and any other prose or verse writer of this century the latter must appreciably suffer. Mr. Belding stands easily first. His versatility is unrivalled, and even trifles in his hands are exalted to the dignity of lofty themes. It affords me unbounded pleasure to pay this tribute to his worth. He is a great man.

H. A. WOODWORTH.

TO OUR FRIEND—THE CRITIC.



Thou "Heap Big Injun" of the intellect,
Eternally in paint and feathers decked,
To scalp the wretched and presuming wight
Whose fond delusion is that he can write.
Thou art supreme! Thou art the Sagamore!
And we but pigmies at thy wigwam door.
Thy smile can fill aspiring souls with joy,
Thy frown can wither and thy breath destroy;
They learn full soon who challenge thy decree
There is, alas! no other chief but thee.
What though the wretched scribbler inly curse
The hand that calmly blots his cherished verse?
Thou art unmoved; thy fiat absolute
No protest brooks, although a world were mute.
Puissant Mogul of the Universe!
Thy pardon grant that we, poor worms—or worse—
Presume to cross thy star attended path,
And stir the awful fountains of thy wrath.
Nay, furthermore, thy grace let us implore
While we thy mind this query lay before
—How many souls the way of grief would walk
If on thine own great skull should fall the tomahawk?

B.

A HEART-BROKEN CORONER.

THE writer has long felt that the coroners of this country have not received at the hands of the living public the measure of attention which is justly their due. In what regard they may be held by those no longer living cannot of course be readily ascertained, though it must have been a relief to many a man who died and "never knew what struck him" to learn from the deliberations of a coroner and his jury that it was "visitation of God" or other equally well defined cause to which he was indebted for the great change.

But the coroner deserves more recognition from the living. It is not enough to say of such men that "the coroners had a keen race for the body, but Coroner Brown arrived first and at once impanelled a jury," as the daily papers sometimes tersely state the case; or that "while Coroner Smith was away at supper the man died and Coroner Jones who had meantime arrived proceeded to hold the inquest." Such accounts are entirely too meagre. For my own part, I have always felt that the life of a coroner, so full of incident, so marked by shrewdness, patience and courage; and sometimes marred by griefs not a whit less harrowing than that which tears the bosoms of the friends of those brought before him in his official capacity, afforded a rare field for the biographer. It is therefore a labor of love to prepare for publication the following account of an incident that recently transpired in a Canadian town.

James Blake lived in a town the name of which, for prudential reasons, is withheld. Crossing the street one evening, Mr. Blake thoughtlessly crossed the path of a rapidly approaching carriage and was knocked down. He was somewhat injured,

and another carriage was called to convey him to his home, when a physician was summoned. The accident occurred early in the evening, when many citizens were abroad, and it therefore became the subject of general comment. An item of news does not generally lose anything in relation, and no one will be surprised to learn that in a comparatively short time it was widely known that Mr. Blake had been run down by a reckless teamster and almost killed.

This was the version of the affair that reached the ears of Coroner Smith, and within ten minutes after its receipt he was at Mr. Blake's door. The doctor, who was just departing, met him in the vestibule of the house.

"The most shocking affair I ever heard of!" said the coroner with an expression of deep concern. "Is—is he dead?"

"Who?"

"Why—Mr. Blake. I hope none of the rest of the family are ill?"

"Oh, no," said the doctor.

"And is there any chance at all for Mr. Blake?" anxiously queried the coroner.

"Well—yes," said the doctor, with something very like a smile lurking about the corners of his mouth. "His chances, I should say, are rather better than yours tonight."

"Ah!" with rather a dubious smile. "I'm very glad—very glad indeed."

"Did you wish to see him?" politely inquired the doctor.

"Oh no! Oh no!" hastily replied the coroner. "But I heard he wasn't likely to get over it, and there has been so much reckless driving lately that if this case had proved fatal—as I was led to believe—I would have felt it my duty as a coroner to hold a most searching investigation. Life is held altogether too cheap by these rascally teamsters."

"Just so," said the doctor. "But I rather think Mr. Blake will be able to investigate this case himself in a day or two."

"Ah! Then I needn't stay. And I'm very glad, I'm sure. Good night, doctor. You're not going now?"

"Not for a few minutes," replied the doctor, and went into the house again.

Coroner Smith went out and down the path, but half way down the garden he met another man going up. After a sharp glance at the latter he walked on to the gate, then turned back and took up a position in the shadow of some shrubbery.

The other man strode briskly up to the door and rang the bell. The doctor met him and came out into the vestibule.

"How do you do?" said the new-comer briskly. "Is Mr. Blake hurt bad as they say? I heard just now he was likely to die."

"Oh, no," said the doctor, "he isn't dying."

"Likely to last some time, eh?"

"I sincerely hope so," said the doctor.

"It's a terrible affair," cried the visitor. "To think that a man can't cross the street without being run over. Will he last through the night, do you think?"

"Oh, yes. He isn't so bad as that. Will you go in and see him?"

"Well—perhaps I'd better not disturb him tonight. Of course, as a coroner, I feel that some action ought to be taken in the matter."

"Coroner Smith was here a few minutes ago," said the doctor.

"Was he?" ejaculated the other. "Has he gone?"

The doctor nodded.

"Oh!—Well, I'm very glad Mr. Blake is not as badly hurt as was reported. Is there any hope?"

"I think he'll pull through," said the doctor.

"You don't say so! How people will lie! Why, I heard just now he was dying. But if the case should happen to turn out more seriously than you expect, I hope you'll let me know, doctor. I think we should make an example of some of these

reckless villians. But I hope there won't be any need of it in this case. Well—good night, doctor."

"Good night," said the doctor.

The visitor went away, but at the gate met a third party hurrying in. They scrutinized each other closely, and after the last comer had passed up the path towards the house the other dropped into the shadow of a gate post and waited.

Meantime visitor number three had been admitted to the vestibule by the doctor, who had concluded to remain at the house a while longer.

"Good evening," said the visitor. "I'm the coroner. I just heard of the accident. It's a terrible thing. We must get right down to the bottom of this affair. Is he still alive?"

"Sir," said the doctor, "you are the third coroner that I have seen within less than twenty minutes."

"What! Was Smith here? And who else?"

"Really," said the doctor, "there are so many coroners now that—"

"Oh! No matter—no matter. Are—are they here now?"

"No."

"Ah! He's alive then?"

"And likely to be," said the doctor.

"Well, well! Is that so! But I think I'll just stay a little while and—"

The speaker was interrupted by the sudden opening of the door and the unceremonious entry of a stout man, who sniffed disdainfully as his gaze fell on the other visitor.

"Where's the corp'?" he demanded of the doctor.

"The what?"

"The corp'—Blake's body."

"You might just step in and inquire of Mr. Blake himself," politely suggested the doctor.

"What! Isn't he dead?"

"No sir."

The stout man stared at one and then the other for a full minute.

"I don't believe it!" he declared at last.

"You don't believe what?" queried the doctor.

"I believe you're trying to fool me. I just heard on the street that Blake was killed dead. If that's so, there's got to be an inquest, and that's what I'm here for."

"I dare say," observed the doctor, who stood against the inner door, "that Mr. Blake will let you hold one. Come in—we'll ask him."

But before he could open the inner door there came a knock at the outer one.

"Another one, I'll bet a dollar," commented the doctor.

He opened the outer door to admit a man who stood on the threshold, but, before the latter could enter, another rushed up the path, dashed past him and brought up with a thud against the stout man, who fiercely resented the action. Before the door could be closed two more forms emerged, one from behind a clump of shrubbery and the other from behind a gate post, and rushed into the vestibule.

"Any more?" shouted the doctor, leaning out of the door and peering down the path.

A man on the opposite side of the street started to cross, and footsteps were heard approaching from other points.

"Gracious!" ejaculated the doctor, shutting and bolting the door. "If this thing continues we'll have to call out the militia."

There were now six coroners in the vestibule. Turning to them the doctor politely inquired:

"Well, gentleman—what can I do for you? I very seldom have so many patients on hand at once."

Silence followed this observation, while the members of the group critically surveyed one another

"You must have come for something," pursued the doctor.

"What did you expect to find? A holocaust—or the results of an earthquake?"

"We generally strike something in our line when we get on your trail, doctor," sarcastically rejoined one of the coroners.

The doctor was about to answer as he felt the merits of the occasion deserved, when the inner door opened and a voice inquired:

"Can I be of any service, gentlemen?"

It was Mr. Blake himself.

"Some visitors to see you, sir," said the doctor with a malicious laugh.

"Come in, gentlemen," said Mr. Blake with great courtesy.

"The doctor said a few minutes ago that I might expect some visitors—come in."

But there was a wild break for the outer door instead, and the six coroners reached the street together a moment later.

Here they were immediately joined by four others.

"Is he dead?" eagerly inquired the latter in chorus.

"No!" growled the stout man. "He's as lively as you are. Blast it all! That's the second false alarm I've had today."

"Business isn't very good," remarked another. "I haven't had a case for a fortnight."

"It's been three weeks since I had one," said a third. "People don't seem to consider us at all lately. I'm ready to summon a jury on any man that dies within a week after he's taken sick, but it beats all how they hang on."

"I'd have had one last week," chimed in a fourth, "but while I was after the hearse Brown snatched the body. It was that man that was killed on the wharf last week."

"I didn't snatch no body!" angrily retorted Brown. "There was no one in charge when I got there. That was my district anyhow. You're a little too fresh, you are."

"Don't you talk to me!" shouted the other in rising anger. "You're always snupin' around to try and get ahead of somebody."

"See here! Do you want your head punched r hotly demanded Brown.

"No fear of you punching it," scornfully retorted the other.

"There isn't—hey?"

"No, there isn't—not a little bit!"

[It is perhaps fair to state just at this point that, while the foregoing portion of this story is universally accepted, there are some who are disposed to doubt the absolute accuracy of what follows. With the evidence before me, however, I am bound to say that, extraordinary as it may appear, there does not seem to me any good cause for scepticism. Hence it is here given in its entirety.]

"Have it out!" cried all the other coroners, crowding around the belligerents. "Fight it out!"

"Oh yes," sulkily growled Brown's opponent. "You fellows would like to get a case right here, wouldn't you?"

"Don't be a coward," sneered one of the group.

He at whom this taunting remark was aimed rushed furiously at the speaker, and in a twinkling they were rolling on the ground, grappling each other by the throat.

Brown also rushed in but was checked by Smith, and on the instant they, too, were locked in a deadly embrace.

The other coroners quickly took sides and the engagement became general. It was short, sharp and deadly, for the football mania had struck the town that season, and to come out of a scrimmage alive and unharmed would mean everlasting disgrace. And there was another reason why in this particular instance the result should be disastrous.

At the end of exactly six minutes two of the coroners detached themselves from the mass, and slowly and painfully dragged themselves to their feet. The stout man was one of them. The rest were motionless.

The two survivors looked at the victims and then at each other. One thought filled the minds of both. If both lived they must divide the inquest.

Each stealthily surveyed the other, and each summoned all his energies for a terrific effort.

Both were so intent on their own affair that neither noted the approach of a third party till his voice broke the stillness.

"Great Heaven! What does this mean?"—stooping over the prostrate group—"These men—are they dead?"

"Yes," growled the stout man, relaxing the tension of his muscles with manifest reluctance.

"Why!—you've all been fighting!" exclaimed the newcomer, noting in the dim light the battered appearance of the survivors. "Do you know what this is? It's murder;—I'm a coroner, and by—"

"What!" yelled the other two in chorus.

"I say I'm a coroner—I'll have the pair of you arrested for murder!"

"You're no coroner," scornfully rejoined the stout man. "That won't wash. There was only ten coroners in this town. Eight of 'em's there—and the other two's here." As he spoke the stout man first indicated the tangled mass of bodies and limbs, and then his late opponent and himself.

"You'll find I'm a coroner all right," said the newcomer complacently. "Didn't you know there was a new lot appointed today?"

Before either of the others could reply the sound of a carriage approaching at breakneck speed startled them all.

It was the carriage of another belated coroner, who had only just heard of the accident to Mr. Blake, having been out of town when it occurred. On nearing the two groups the horse took fright and, despite the owner's desperate efforts to control him, dashed past for some distance at full speed, then wheeled sharply to one side and completely upset the carriage. The occupant was thrown out head foremost, and went with terrific force straight against a stone wall. No man could stand that shock and live.

With one accord the three coroners dashed toward the spot.

"That's my corp'!" shouted the stout man, finding himself distanced in the race.

The others paid no heed. The man who had arrived just before the carriage hove in sight was the least fatigued and forged rapidly ahead. He would without doubt have been first on the fatal spot had nothing occurred. But suddenly, just as he had almost reached the place he stumbled and fell headlong. He did not rise again. With unerring instinct the stout man paused and stooped over him. He was dead. In his great zeal to fulfil the duties of his new office the unfortunate fellow had broken his neck.

Thus there now remained but the stout man and his original opponent. Meantime two fresh cases had been added. For a moment each paused to recover his breath, and then, with the single cry—"You'll swing for this, you murderous villain!" each rushed in fury at the other.

As each was compelled to act the dual part of an officer in attack and a criminal in defence, the onset was terrific and the conflict of titanic force. But the stout man triumphed. It was a sorry victory, however, for as he at length slowly raised himself on his elbow he felt his own vital energies fast failing. He moaned in anguish as he looked about him.

"All gone!" he gasped. "All gone but me—and I'm goin'. Here's eleven corp' and the'll soon be twelve—and not a coroner in sight."

Devotion to duty was paramount, even in that supreme moment, and the unfortunate man shed tears of agony.

"Such a beautiful case, too," he sobbed. "It would have been in all the papers in the country. Here I haven't set on anything but one pauper for a month, and now—now when I've struck the beautifullest case I ever saw—I've got to peter out."

The distracted man paused to wipe away the fast falling tears, and then resumed:

"And maybe there won't be any inquest at all. That man said there was a new lot appointed today—but maybe there wasn't any more than him for this town. Oh—Why can't I live!"

It was a quiet street, with scattered houses and few passers-by, but at this juncture a young man chanced along and was attracted by the groans of the sufferer. He hurried across the street, gave vent to a series of horrified exclamations at what he saw, and then bent over the stout man.

"Eleven corp'," moaned the latter, "and the'll soon be twelve."

"In Heaven's name!" ejaculated the young man, "what's the matter?"

—"And no coroner to set on 'em," went on the stout man dismally. "Young man—do you know any coroners?"

"Why, yes," was the prompt reply. "There's one lives quite near. And he's home, I know. He never goes out at night."

"That's why I didn't know anything about him," muttered the stout man.

"Shall I go after him?" eagerly queried the other.

"No!" said the stout man with sudden energy, "You needn't get him. A coroner home on a night like this! No sir—don't bring him here. Don't let no coroner like that set on me. Why isn't he on the trail?"

"I don't know. But I heard him say once that coroners had no business going about looking for jobs."

"Oh Lord!" groaned the stout man. "And he's a coroner! I guess I've lived long enough. I don't want to live any longer. I never thought I'd live to hear of a man like that being a coroner. I—i—I—ah—h—h!"

He fell back motionless. The young man leaned over him and felt his pulse. It had ceased beating. The last of the twelve coroners had died of a broken heart.

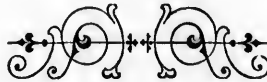
NOTE.—The manuscript of this narrative was submitted to a gentleman who, after a careful perusal, flatly asserted that it was a scandalous and libellous fabrication. Upon being taken somewhat sharply to task for such an abrupt and unqualified expression of unbelief, this person, assuming a most derisive tone and manner, asked the following question :

“Is there anything in that yarn about undertakers?”

Possibly there are others who will regard the omission of any such reference as fatal to the credibility of this story, and the objection should therefore be dealt with.

The writer would be the last to charge or even insinuate that any undertaker would be for a moment dead to the responsibilities resting upon him. It must be borne in mind, however, that the office of an undertaker is not a political appointment, and it might therefore occur that there might be a town where the number holding such office would be limited to the ordinary requirements of the place. Such may have been the case in the town alluded to in this narrative, and it may have been a busy season with them at this particular time. There is, at all events, no evidence to the contrary, nor is there any evidence that undertakers were epidemic in the place at that time. This would seem to effectually dispose of the objection noted.

B.



The Conscientious Game-Warden.

My friend the game-warden said to me,
As we stood by his doorstep one autumn day,
“There are none of us of too high degree
To heed what the Bible has to say.

* * * * *

“There are pools that lie near that spreading tree
That ‘her branches unto the river sends,’
Fair as the fish-pools in Heshbon they be,—
And there the sport of the salmon ends.

“‘In season and out of season’ they die,
Oh, ‘the wickedness of men is great!’
To ‘do after the law’ they do not try,
Alas! they ‘have kept not their first estate!’

“Even now, at night the river is lit
With lights that pale in its damp, dank breath,
Like will-o’-the-wisps that onward flit,
Decoying their game to a dismal death.

“The light-bearing spirits—evil are they;
Evil are they, and treacherous;
“‘And their works are in the dark, and they say,
Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?’

“But I see them, and I know them too,
And to follow their lights, like salmon, I’m fain,—
But what does the Bible say to do?
What does it tell us, again and again?

“ ‘When sinners entice thee, consent thou not,’
 ‘Walk not thou in the way with them,’
 ‘In the way of the sinners to stand none ought,’
 And many a similar apothegm.

“ I forbear to pluck the mote from their eyes,
 Least perchance I get in my own some dust,
 So I go to my bed, and refreshed I rise,
 For calmly sleeping the sloop of the just.

“ ‘For the righteous there is great reward,’
 And when I arise, and down stairs go,
 I find some salmon !—I thank the Lord,
 But where they come from I do not know.

“ With thankful heart the good gift I greet ;
 A blessing I ask ere I partake ;
 ‘Whatsoever is set before me, I eat,
 And I ask no question, for conscience sake.’”

W.

THE HOME OF GLOOSCAP.

ON the side of the Basin of Minas nearest the North Star, which the Micmac hunter of old set in the sky to guide him in his wanderings, is a high rock of trap, joined to a shore of shales, named in the Indian tongue Puleweech Monegoo, and in the English Partridge Island, the meaning of which is the same. This was the home of the magician, the creator, the god Glooscap. On its summit are trees—the most graceful being the mountain ash, of which Glooscap made the first man. The rugged sides of the cliff, torn in the springtime by the magician of the frost, whose forces Glooscap once routed, reveal large amethysts. These gems, as blue and as shy as the

violets that sleep in the shade above them, are like unto those which the friend of man gathered for whom he loved. On the western horizon is the kettle that he overturned in his wrath—now a lonely island. To the southward is one of the mountains that guard a valley which in the noontide of the year is white with apple blossoms. This ridge was once the home of the beavers that Glooscap hated with all the vigor of his great soul.

In the old days the dam reached from Blomidon, on the other side of the Basin, to the Parrsboro shore, and caused a great flood, which was throughout all the valley of Annapolis. The deliverer buried his shovel in the side of the dam that touched the Parrsboro shore. Then there was a rush of waters. The whole mass took a swing around; and is now a long mountain, stretching far westward from Cape Blomidon, and parallel to the Parrsboro shore. And the western end, which once touched that shore, is now called Cape Split, or by the Indians Pleegun, which means "the opening of a beaver dam."

As to the shovelful, some believe one thing concerning it, some the other. The Micmacs say that the beavers hastened eastward up the shore, and that Glooscap threw at them a shovelful of earth, which is now Five Islands. One tale is that he had no shovel—that he made the break in the dam and the shot at the beavers with his hands. There is a flavor of improbability about the latter story.

The Indians on the St. John River say that there was only one beaver disturbed by the breaking of the dam, and that Glooscap slung a rock at him. The rock fell into the St. John near Grand Falls, making a considerable splash; the beaver escaped. But thinking people are inclined to doubt this story, and to pin their faith to the Five Islands theory, as these are only fifteen miles from Parrsboro, and would not be much of a pitch for a man like Glooscap. Still, the Indians on the St. John offer to show anybody the rock.

Glooscap had many a feast at Partridge Island with his boon companion, Kit-poos-eag-unow (the hyphenated name is not

entirely a product of modern civilization) who early tasted the sweets of adversity. Like Malcolm, he was taken untimely from his mother, and was thrown to the bottom of a well by a giant who had a grievance against the family. He was as much at home in the well, however, as Glooscap's uncle the Great Turtle would have been, and came from its depths unharmed.

One night Glooscap and Kit-poos-eag-unow went out on the Basin to fish by the light of a torch made from a tall pine. They speared a whale, which was tossed into their stone canoe. They took it to Partridge Island, and ate it, blubber, bones and all. Not a single trace of the whale may now be found at Partridge Island.

Glooscap used to amuse himself somewhat after the style of the prophet Jonah. Like the man who fled into Tarshish, he had a whale for an excursion boat, but whereas the prophet, who liked being in the shade, rode in the hold, Glooscap remained on deck. It is not a generally recognized fact among naturalists that whales acquire the tobacco habit, but it is certain that this whale smoked, using a long pipe which Glooscap supplied. An Indian once suggested that this fact might throw some light on the expulsion of Jonah.

Glooscap it was who formed the Boar's Back, the high roadway that extends over so great a portion of Cumberland, and which the country folk aptly describe as a "cur'osity." He did this vast engineering work in order to accommodate some friends of his who were staying at Fort Cumberland, which in those days had a name that, turned into English, is Hardwood Point. These friends wanted to go to Parrsboro, and could not wait for the train.

The powers of evil were not friendly to the good Glooscap. One night they came to Partridge Island to tear down the wigwam of the chief. But Glooscap was prepared for their coming. He summoned to his aid the frost sprites, who, in the language of the Indians, "froze onto" the most of the evil

powers, and left them dead in the woods. The survivors have plagued mankind ever since.

Glooscap engaged an old woman as his wigwam-keeper, of whom he was very fond. Her most prized ornament was an amethyst that he found on Partridge Island. A beautiful and lazy youth was his chore-boy.

The maker of men dwelt for a long time on Partridge Island, showing the Indians many things in woodcraft and medicine. But these people did not always treat their benefactor with respect, so he left them, intending to return when he found himself better appreciated.

He gave a farewell party to all the country's birds and beasts, with the exception of his enemies the beavers. It was the greatest show on earth.

After the sparrow had finished the last crumb, the Micmac Hiawatha stepped into his stone canoe, and paddled from Partridge Island to the Islands of the Blessed. After his departure there was as great confusion among the beasts as was at the tower of Babel, for they no longer understood one another. Many feuds arose from this cause, which their descendants continue to this day.

The owls still mourn for Glooscap, and may be heard in the woods near Partridge Island crying "Koo koo skoos! Koo koo skoos!" which, any Indian will tell you, means, "Oh, I am so sorry! Oh, I am so sorry!" And the loons, once the messengers of Glooscap, have ever since been seeking their great Master.

But as surely as Boabdil, who reigns under the ground, shall return to Granada, and again establish his court there, so shall Glooscap come back from the lands beyond the sleeping place of the great sun, and once more rule along the shores of the lovely Basin of Minas.

W.

DE GAS-PE-REAUX.

(Acadian-French Dialect.)

I tink de snow she's start for go,
Hrank Babinee! Hrank Babineau!
Soon be time for de gas-pe-reaux,
H-r-rank Babinee! Hrank Bab-i-neau

Me gal took a trips to de State dis spring
She's make some trouble in me for sing.
Me fader she's in Miramichi,
Me moder he's got drunk on spree.

I see some feesh on de bito¹ cross,
When I stop for make drink my hoss.
It's seldom² whar dat net-scoop's³ go,
I left him here bimeby, by Jo!

Me gal his name she's Rosy Wite,⁴
We go troo road for drive some night.
I ax him eef she was my bride,
She don't say notting but kees dat ride.

Eef Demiång she'll give Rosy jaw,
I'll put Demiång on top de law.

I tink de snow she was leave for go,
Hrank Babinee! Hrank Babineau!
Soon be feesh on de big bito,
H-r-rank Babinee! Hrank Babineau!

1. Aboideau. 2. Strange. 3. Scoop-net.

4. An instance of Acadian Anglomania. The poetical name "LeBlanc" is in many cases discarded for the less euphonious English equivalent.

I vote for Grit—for cash she's good,
 But I hurraw for Josy Hood.⁵
 Wit politique and de gaspereaux,
 We'll got reech time for nex' year's snow.

And Rosy he's got back some queek,
 And we'll have weddin' she'll stop two week.
 Good day, me frent, I'll tol' you quite,
 And I'm Sackveel^b to-morrow night.

Oh, I tink de snow she's start for go,
 Hrank Babinee! Hrank Babineau!
 Soon be time for de gas-pe-reaux,
 Hr-r-ank Babinee! Hrank Bab-i-neau!

W.

5. Josiah Wood, Esq., M. P., who is extremely popular among the Acadians of Westmorland, is to them "Josy Hood."

6. "I'm Sackveel"—I'll be in Sackville.

Douglas Sladen's Visit to Grand Pré.

The Only True Version.

IT has been reported that Mr. Douglas Sladen, the most cosmopolitan of any of the Australian poets, is about to publish a book upon his travels in Canada. Therefore, presuming that the work will contain an account of his trip to the land of Evangeline and gravenstein, I have decided to give to the world—and Mr. Douglas Sladen in particular—a true version of his visit to Grand Pré.

One summer day in 1889, when two boys—my cousin Jim and I—were returning from a fishing excursion in the vicinity of that village, we saw two men standing under some old French willows, and looking like strangers in a strange land. One of

them beckoned to us, with the air that Byron used when he called the slave who gave the required information about Salamis. As we leisurely approached them, I confided to Jim my suspicions that the tall, thin man with the soulful eyes and the languid air was a poet. But Jim was doubtful.

The gentleman on whom no suspicion had been cast, a broad-shouldered, good-natured looking man, was the first to speak. "Would you please tell us where Basil the blacksmith's shop used to be?" he asked.

"Oh! Mr. Sladen," said the other, "do you suppose that they *do* know where Basil labored?" Then it was that we noticed that the satchel of the broad-shouldered man bore the initials "D. S."

My cousin Jim promptly told the tourists that the famous Acadian smithy used to be in a field a few hundred yards away. So we all went to the field, and Jim pointed out the ruins.

Down on their knees went the tourists. Not a stone was left unturned.

The tall, thin man was even more excited than the stout one. "Oh, Mr. Sladen, Mr. Sladen," he exclaimed, in a frenzied tone, "this is where Basil toiled! And *oh*, Mr. Sladen!" he yelled, in an excess of joy, "here is where the forge stood!" And Mr. Sladen agreed with him.

In Jim's home that evening, after a guileless Acadian maiden told how she had met two strangers, who had asked if her father's smoke-house was an old French dwelling; after she confessed that she had informed them it was, much to their satisfaction—Jim told how he had shown the tourists the site of Basil the blacksmith's shop. After some enquiries it was found that my cousin, in his heart's innocence, had exhibited the spot where a barn was burned ten years before.

After the travellers had paid their homage to Basil the blacksmith at the site of the burned barn, Jim asked them if they would like to see some relics that had recently been dug from "the old French well." They said, with much emotion, that

they would, so Jim took them to a stile, and pointed out the large house in which the relics were.

"Now," said Mr. Sladen, and echoed his companion, "we must say thank you, and good-bye. We can find the house very easily."

It is true that Jim and I were not dressed for calling; but it is also true that our second cousin owned the house that the poet and his friend preferred to visit without us, and that we were on our way to that house. Therefore we kept on.

The tourists seemed distressed at the failure of this attempt to expel Acadians, but it was not until they reached the next stile that they turned around again, and shook hands with us. "Good-bye, boys," said Mr. Sladen, while a tear glistened in his eye at the thought of parting, "we are much obliged for your kindness, and we shall not trouble you to accompany us any farther."

"Yes," said his companion, "we are very much obliged for your kindness—are we not, Mr. Sladen?—but really, Mr. Sladen and I do not wish to trouble you to accompany us any farther."

We politely intimated that it was no trouble, and continued to follow in their footsteps. At last we were on the grounds, and it was touching to observe how sorry those people were to part with us, but how they really could not put us to any more inconvenience. We did not allow them to outdo us in politeness, but opened the front door, and requested them to enter.

They accepted our invitation, with some show of apologetic surprise, and we showed them the relics that some of our relatives had found at the bottom of the old well. Many of these they accepted as genuine, but there were a few about which Mr. Sladen was inclined to be skeptical.

As a general thing, when anybody doubted these relics, Jim was wont to become very angry. He did not indulge in a show of wrath, however, when Mr. Sladen disparaged his treasures, but brought out some more "French relics," about fifteen years old.

"Now these," said Mr. Sladen, in a voice calm with assurance, "are undoubtedly Acadian relics. I am sorry that I have not the same faith in those you showed me before." And Jim was happy.

A month or so afterwards, several of the leading periodicals in different parts of the world published an article by Douglas Sladen, telling of his visit to Grand Pré. Although his account of the village was not as inaccurate as might be expected under the circumstances, it was not as flawless as the description of the other poet who saw the place only in his dreams. Mr. Sladen still held to his erroneous ideas in regard to the relics, and quoted "Evangeline" in speaking of our second cousin, designating him as "the wealthiest farmer of Grand Pré"—which he is not.

If Douglas Sladen's new book is accurate in every detail, it will be one of the most remarkable works on Canada ever written by a foreigner. In a noble and forgiving spirit, I freely allow him the use of the only account of his visit to Grand Pré that can be placed in the hands of the young without danger of their being led into the seductive path of romance.

As to Jim, I am afraid he is already far along that dangerous road. He now dwells in the Sam Slick house at Windsor, and takes delight in showing offending tourists the place where Judge Haliburton was victor in a fierce and bloody duel, although all the other biographers of the first American humorist testify that he was a man of thoroughly peaceful disposition.

W.



SORRAY FOR PETE.

(Acadian-French Dialect.)

I was sorray for Pete.

Pete she was go for lose his honly fader. She was seek on de house tree summer and seex winter till presaintlee she's go for die, so she'll not be seek some more. Dey put de news on de paper and de funeral she's big time.

Pete she's feel some alone,¹ and say she's make start for Boushaugan Road, for she couldn't stay Shediac some more. Dat time you know I was come sorray for Pete.

So Pete makes his hoction, and I go for drive him in 'Boushaugan one mornin' 'bout haf-pass noon. She'll not say some-ting at all, but cry his eye out. So wen we come onto de ho-tel on top de road, I tol' Pete, "May we be frent." Dat means she was French for les' go for have some-ting for drink.

But Pete she'll cry: "Oh, me poor fader!"

Den I'll say, "Me frent, she was got for arrive."² We mus submit!"

Den me and Pete she's go after de ho-tel, and we drink ourself, and Pete she's pay de hexpense, and don't feel so bad 'cause his fader don't live some more. So we drive troo de road on top de hoods, and Pete she's feel happy since dat, and don't say not a cry 'cause his fader she's sorray for him. Den we come for some more ho-tel and I'll say:

"M-a-ay we be frent!"

"Oh, me poor fader," Pete say wit cry, and praise down³ de devil what carry him hoff. I feel sorray for Pete, so I say:

"Me dear frent, we mus' submit."

So we drink on de hexpense of dat hoction, and she make

1. "Some" in this instance has an intensive force. 2. "Arrive"—happen. 3. "Praise down"—curse.

Pete forget she was sorray, and he sing some song. But she don't stop long, for when we come on sight de nex' ho-tel, he cry up two times twice :

"Ci, me poor fader !

"Oh, me poor fader !

"Oh, me poor fader !"

I come nex' for cry myself, so I say : "We mus' submit. May we be frent." So we drink ourself some more.

Pete she was hard man for satisfy,⁴ she tink so great of his fader. But I tink she mus' not die on top his fader, so I cheer him on well's she can, an' Pete she's not die yet.

But all de time she was dat way—

"Ma-ay we be frent !"

"Oh, me poor fader !"

"We mus' submit !"

An' dat hoction she'll not pay well, and Pete she'll got drunk on spree, but he don't mind his fader so great, and I was sorray for Pete.

W.

4. Comfort.

A Night at Pokeville Corner.

[This is not a story. If the author has succeeded in making a readable sketch out of a few of many such wonder tales that he in common with others has heard over and over again it should interest those who have not heard them, and those to whom they are already a memory will probably not object to have that memory refreshed. Somewhere, in some quiet rural settlement it may be, they have heard the annals of the neighborhood set forth by old settlers, and have found that the age

of miracles is not past—if the old settler be an authority. This much of introduction seems necessary. The tales that follow, only excepting the contributions of the curly-headed young man, and the groundwork of these also, are as they came to the writer at various times and places, each believed by the narrators with an implicitness that defied all contradiction. A solicitous friend has, however, suggested that perhaps somebody would regard this sketch, or parts of it, as reflecting upon their religion. It may therefore be as well also to observe just here, that, if any man after reading it feels that his religion, or anybody's religion, is made the subject of ridicule, the author will guarantee the full cost of having that person's head examined by a competent commission on lunacy.]

It was a night in late November. A cold, gloomy, starless night, with suggestion of storm. A dismal night, a cheerless landscape. Such a night, in fact, as would make one long for the ruddy glow of the firelight and the charm of good companionship. This at least was the view entertained by half a dozen persons who sat around the fire in the guest room of the Traveller's Rest at Pokeville Corner, an out of the way, cross-roads cluster of houses in the interior of a New Brunswick county.

They formed a cosy half circle around the large, old fashioned franklin, in which a hardwood fire blazed and crackled. The host, a burly, red faced man; an innocent looking young man with blue eyes and curly hair; an elderly man whose speech denoted a native of the Emerald Isle; an old farmer, of a decidedly credulous cast of countenance; a tall, lank individual, sharp featured, long faced and with a sceptical curl to his upper lip; and a nondescript youth, the son of the landlord. On the whole, they formed a rather striking group. The host, the Irishman and the gaunt personage were smoking. There may not be any evidence of individuality in pipes, but it is worth noting that the host smoked a large pipe, the Irishman a short

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one, and the gaunt man a long and slender one. As might be expected, the host poured forth volumes of smoke, the Irishman short, sharp puffs, and the gaunt man a long, thin stream. The host, the Irishman and the credulous looking farmer had just explored a closet in the rear of the room. It was a mysterious closet, not open to all comers, and some people shook their heads when it was mentioned in conversation outside the Traveller's Rest. One gentleman, an advocate of prohibition, had affirmed in a fine burst of rhetoric that it contained "distilled ruination," and he was not contradicted. Having in mind the mystery attached to it, the reader will not be surprised that on their return from its depths the conversation of our three friends should drift into a discussion of mysteries in general.

"I tell you what it is," said the host, in reply to a remark from the old farmer, "there's a mighty sight of things we can't explain."

This profound observation was received with approval.

"Now," he continued, removing his pipe, "I'll tell you a thing that puzzled me more than anything I ever experienced before or since. It happened about five year ago. I had a very fine young cow—as fine a cow for milk and butter as ever was in these parts, to my mind. Well sir, old Mrs. Kelly out here used to have an eye on that critter every time she passed, an' she often bantered me to make a trade for an old cow she had. She kep' that up till I got sick of listenin' to her; for I hadn't no idea of partin' with that cow; so at last I told her one day she might as well spare her breath for she wouldn't git that critter under no consideration. I'd lost temper with the old lady an' I spoke a little sharp. She never said a word—jist give one more look at the cow, an' walked off. Well sir, from that day, that cow wasn't worth the feed we give 'er. No sir. Her milk got to be poor an' thin, an' blue, an' there was less of it, an' we had to churn it, an' churn it, an' churn it, before we got any butter;—an' then the butter was like so much

grease. It was no use to feed 'er. So at last I said we'd fat er, an' sell 'er for beef. We tried it; but, would you believe, we might as well 'ave fed the stuff to a holler log. She wouldn't fat. She kep' gittin' poorer an' thinner the more we fed 'er, till at last there didn't seem to be nothin' there but bones an' horns. My wife said the old woman must 'ave bewitched 'er. I begun to think at last that mebbe there was somethin' in it; so one day I stopped the old lady an' asked 'er if she still felt like makin' a trade. Well, she said she wouldn't mind tradin' if I'd give somethin' to boot—my cow bein' so poor. But I told her it was trade even or no trade. Hanged if she didn't take me up. An' as true as I set here, she hadn't that cow a month before the critter looked as well as ever, an' give as much milk an' as good milk as ever she did. Now, I never used to believe in witches, but I'd like somebody to explain that."

With a triumphant glance around, the host relighted his pipe and puffed vigorously. Then he removed the pipe for a moment, and repeated:

"I'd like somebody to explain that, so I would."

"Witches, o' course," said the Irishman.

"Bah!" ejaculated the gaunt man, contemptuously.

"Don't you believe in witches?" queried the old farmer.

"No!" replied the gaunt man. "A humbug."

"You can't make me believe that," asserted the farmer, with a knowing shake of his head. "I know that old woman, so I do, an' if ever there was a witch she's one of 'em, too. Now, I'll tell you something. Spring before last she come to my old lady for a settin' of turkey eggs, an' the wife wouldn't let her have 'em, because she was gonto set 'em all herself. The old woman was bound she'd have 'em, whether or no; an' at last the wife had to say right up an' down she shouldn't have 'em, nohow. Mrs. Kelly went away after that, an' next day the wife set the turkey eggs—thirty-six altogether. Now, how many turkeys d'ye s'pose was hatched out of the lot? Jist four

—four out of thirty-six. An' three of them died before the summer was out. Wha' d'ye think of that now? Eh?"

This proud query was launched at the gaunt man, who sniffed contemptuously and persisted in his declaration that this talk about witches was sheer humbug. His inexcusable perversity incensed the Irishman.

"Ye don't belave it!" remarked the latter, with a scorn at least equal to that of the gaunt man. "Well thin, I'll tell ye what I know about 'er. Last year my ould woman had a barrel av saft soap in the cellar in under the house, down. Well, Mrs. Kelly come to 'er one morning, an' ask 'er for some o' it. My ould woman tould 'er she hadn't anny to spare, at all. She wanted it all for herself. Well, Mrs. Kelly coax 'er, and coax 'er. But divil the use was in it—my ould woman wouldn't give in to 'er. At last, says she, 'the divil take yer ould soap,' an' away she wint. An' whin the ould woman tould me, 'now,' says I, 'mind I'm tellin' ye, they'll be somethin' 'll come out o' it,' says I. An' faith, thrue enough, whin the ould woman wint down into the cellar nixt morning, there was the soap barrel busted, the hoops off, an' the soap scattered all over the flure an' spoilt. A tight, new barrel it was too, wid big, hardwood hoops on it, like iron. See that now! What cause that, d'ye think, av it wasn't the witches? Ayeh?"

Such an array of evidence ought certainly to satisfy and convince most persons, but the gaunt man refused to be convinced, and was heard to make some caustic remarks about "foolish ideas," and "silly superstitions." Such persistent obstinacy was astounding, and the young man with the blue eyes and curly hair now took up the gauntlet.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I can't tell you anything about the woman you have been talking about, but I can tell you something about an old lady who lives out in our section. And I know it's true, for I have heard it told a hundred times over, and by different people. She got her eye on a fine yoke of steers that a neighbor owned, and she wanted to buy them for

her own old man. She did all the buying. Well, gentlemen, the man wouldn't sell, though he was sorry enough afterwards. Before that, his cattle were as fine a pair as ever you saw under a yoke. He could go anywhere, and do anything with them as well as it could be done with horses. But after that they acted the very Old Boy with him. When he put them at the plough they'd pull off and turn round, and back up, and play all sorts of tricks. He stood it for a few days, but at last he got so out of patience that he seized a club and struck one of them a blow across the nose. The blood followed. And, do you know, they went all right after that; and that night he heard that at the very minute he drew blood from the steer, the old woman that had bewitched them tumbled into the fire and was almost burnt to death. I've heard that story, as I said before, over and over again, from dozens of people who knew both parties."

"I don't misdoubt it," said the host, puffing vigorously, "jist exactly sich a case as that about my cow."

"Wha'd 'ye think of that, now?" triumphantly demanded the old farmer, turning to the gaunt man.

"What can he think, but that it's the truth!" scornfully remarked the Irishman.

"I don't believe it at all," obstinately declared the skeptic. "Old women's fables—that's all."

"Well, all I hope is that you'll never have to believe it," said the old farmer, in a tone that seemed to indicate a measure of doubt concerning the matter.

"But I have more to tell you," said the relater of the story. "The most astonishing part is to come." He did not state, however, that this last and most astonishing part of the story was vouched for by dozens of people.

"I dassay," said the old farmer. "There's no end to the mischief sich critters kin do when once they make up their minds to it."

"An' what was it, I wonder?" queried the Irishman.

"Yes, tell us," said the host.

"Well, everything went all right until the old woman got cured of her burn and got out again. The cattle worked first rate. But one day she went past where they were feeding in the field; and the next morning when the owner went after them, what do you suppose he found?"

"Didn't find them at all," suggested the host.

"Found them dead," suggested the old farmer.

"Found thim blind," suggested the Irishman.

"Found them all right," asserted the skeptic.

"Wrong, gentlemen, all," replied the curly headed young man, slowly and very impressively. "He found them turned into pigs."

At this announcement, so gravely made, the gaunt man burst into a loud fit of laughter. The others, who had accorded so gracious a reception to the first part of the story, did not thereafter feel themselves at liberty to utterly reject the last part; and, indeed, had they been so inclined, it would have been impossible to have doubted the sincerity of the curly-headed young man, who, to judge from his appearance, regarded the levity with which his story was received by the gaunt man as a grievous personal affront.

Feeling that the laughter was as much at the expense of himself and his neighbors to the right and left as at that of the last speaker, and a little nettled thereat, the Irishman directed a fiery glance at the enemy and boldly asserted:

"Faith, an' it might be true enough, for all ye know!"

"Indeed it might," said the old farmer approvingly.

"It might, indeed," added the host, by way of further emphasis.

"Bah!" again ejaculated the skeptic.

"Oh, it's easy to say bah!" cried the old farmer testily, "but it don't prove anything."

"I tell you," declared the gaunt man, "that all this talk about witches, ghosts, and devils is just superfine, blank nonsense."

"The Bible says: 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,'" said the old farmer, in a tone of guarded triumph, at the same time giving the host a knowing wink.

"It doesn't matter to me, what the Bible says, or doesn't say," replied the skeptic, with the utmost assumed indifference.

"If the Bible said that the moon was made of green cheese, there'd be some to believe it and teach it. But that's no reason why I should."

"If you believed more it would be all the better for yourself," responded the other in a tone of lofty commiseration, suitable to the length, breadth, and depth of his own capacity for belief.

"So you say," drily commented the skeptic.

"An 'ye don't belave in divils?" interrogated the Irishman, who had been waiting with impatience for a chance to speak.

"No, I don't," promptly replied the skeptic.

"More's the shame for ye, thin," retorted the Irishman. "Ye'll belave it some day."

"Ay, will he," said the old farmer, with an approving nod.

"Yes siree!" cried the host, with an answering nod.

"When that time comes, I'll let you all know," said the skeptic in a mocking tone, as he applied a coal to the pipe he had just refilled.

"Didn't the divil appear to me own uncle's cousin, comin' home from the fair?" flashed out the irate Irishman.

"You don't say so!" remarked the skeptic, with much assumed interest.

"He did, that," was the emphatic reply.

"Your uncle's cousin must have been a bad man."

"He wasn't, thin. Nor a handier lad wid a shillelah in three counties than 'im—or a better hearted one."

"And what did the devil have to say for himself?" inquired the irreverent skeptic.

"He never would tell that. But, 'pon my faith, it's fine an' scared he was whin he come home, afther."

"I don't doubt it," said the skeptic. "How many drinks had he taken?"

"Sorra a bit av the drink was in it at all," the Irishman stoutly asserted. "He told me himself that he seen 'im so plain as I'm seein' you this minute. An' I belave him. I could tell you more than that, too. But av you don't belave that, where's the use in talkin' at all?"

"I don't believe that," coolly responded the skeptic.

At this, the Irishman, in high dudgeon, closed his lips over his pipe stem, and said no more. But the old farmer had been impatiently awaiting his turn to speak.

"Well, I kin tell you somethin' that happened not fifty miles from here. It was in a lumber camp on Bell's Brook. There was a hard gang in there that winter, an' they got playin' cards every night, an' at last got so that they played all day Sunday, too. An' they cussed an' swore over 'em in the most awful way. So one Saturday night—an' a dark, stormy night it was, too—some fellers come over from another camp, an' they all got at it, all but the cook. It was the cook told me about it. The strange fellers had some liquor, however they got holt of it, an' they all got drinkin' an' cussin' an' swearin', an' stuck to the play till midnight. Then the cook he told 'em they better stop, but they all ripped out an' swore they didn't care no more for Sunday than they did for the Old Boy, an' they kep' right on. One feller said he wished the devil would come in, so's they'd see what kind of a hand he held; an' the rest all laughed at it."

Here the speaker paused. Perhaps it was to get a fresh supply of breath, in order duly to emphasize the climax of his story; or it may have been with a view to stimulate the curiosity of his auditors. This last, so far as two of the persons were concerned, was wholly unnecessary.

"Wasn't that fearful, now!" piously ejaculated the Irishman.

"Awful! Awful!" cried the host, in the same tone.

"Well, sirs," said the old farmer with great emphasis, "they had their wish!"

"I don't wonder," said the Irishman.

"No siree," added the host.

"What happened?" asked the skeptic, with provoking coolness.

"Why," said the old farmer, lowering his voice, and speaking with grave solemnity, "jist when they was laughin', in walks a man, an' asks to have a hand with 'em!"

"By gosha! I thought so! I thought that 'ud be it," declared the Irishman.

"Me too," said the host.

"I don't see anything very queer about that," said the skeptic.

"You don't!" echoed the Irishman. "I wonder what would you think quare, at all."

"Well, let's have the rest of the story," said the host.

"He set down," said the old farmer, "an' begun to play. He looked all right at first, but the cook was settin' back, an' happened to look down at the feller's feet. An', sir, one of them feet was cloven."

"My! Oh, my!" interjected the Irishman.

"Yes, sir. An' jist at that minute the cook heard a noise at the camp door. He looked, an' there he seen somethin' beckonin' for him to git out of that. He jist yelled to the rest to look. They did look, an' the stranger among 'em; an' he no sooner seen what was at the door, than he up with an awful yell an' out of the camp, goin' right through the corner of it, tearin' the logs loose as he went. I seen the camp afterwards myself, an' the corner was tore out of it then; for the men wouldn't stay in it any more after that night."

"And what got the man at the door?" blandly inquired the gaunt man.

"It wasn't a man. The cook said he couldn't describe it—but it wasn't a man."

"I don't believe that yarn at all," said the gaunt man. "That cook was a long-winded liar."

The old farmer was now as much incensed as the Irishman had been, and therefore closed his lips and said no more. The host, while apparently believing in devils in general, was not prepared just at that moment to give particular evidence concerning the matter, and so held his peace. But the curly-headed young man stepped boldly into the breach, and challenged the skepticism of the gaunt man

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have heard just such a story about a house down along the Kennebecasis. It was a tavern in the old days, before the railway, when farmers took their produce to market in Durham boats. They used to stop over at this house for a night, both going to and coming from the city. I guess there were some wild nights spent in that house; for a man that didn't drink in those days was hard to find. One night, a drunken crowd were playing cards very late, and had been pretty high over the game, when one fellow that had won a good deal began to talk just as the man did that we've heard about tonight. And sure enough, in stepped a stranger none of them had ever seen before—a very dark complexioned man, dressed in black broadcloth. He sat down to play, and won everything before him till near midnight. Then he got up and went over to the big, old fireplace, and stood on the hearthstone warming his hands. They said his eyes blazed like coals of fire. Well, just as the clock struck twelve, he gave a stamp with one foot, and went like a streak up the chimney. They looked, and found the print of a cloven foot in the hearthstone. And afterwards, whenever they tried to start a fire there, they were nearly stifled with the smell of brimstone. They had to close up the fireplace at last, and use a stove."

There was silence for a little after the conclusion of this story, broken at length by the old farmer.

"I believe it," he said emphatically, as if that settled the matter.

"I don't," said the skeptic, no less decisively.

"Small odds av ye don't," muttered the Irishman, in a scornful undertone.

"It looks reasonable, now don't it?" sneered the skeptic, "that the devil would want to break up a swearing card party? That sort of thing would be just in his line, I should think."

This view of the question evidently had not presented itself to the minds of the other speakers, and its presentation by the skeptic was followed on their part by a brief sojourn amid the mists of perplexity, from which they were at length triumphantly led forth by the Irishman.

"'Twas the Lord sint 'im," remarked that gentleman, with profound conviction.

This brilliant solution of the difficulty made everything clear again, and the unfortunate skeptic, who had tilted his chair against the wall, and sat with his head back puffing thin columns of smoke towards the ceiling, found himself once more in a hopeless minority. At this critical juncture the host, the Irishman, and the old farmer felt it once more incumbent upon them to go on a mysterious quest to the adjoining closet, and the skeptic improved the time of their absence by delivering a tirade against superstition in all its forms, for the benefit of the curly-headed young man and the host's son, the latter of whom grinned and said nothing. The gaunt man had just launched out upon the subject of priests and preachers, and faith cures and the like, when the others returned, and the old farmer promptly resented a slighting reference to clergymen in general, in which it was stated that they possessed no greater power than anybody else.

"If you seen what I seen, you wouldn't say that," said the farmer. "I know a man that was laid up with rheumatism for ten year, an' he was cured, as well as ever he was, by a minister prayin' with him. He never had a twinge of rheumatism since."

"Spleen, you mean," said the skeptic, in a scornful tone. "This talk about priests and preachers having more power than other people is all bosh."

"I'll tell ye something now," said the Irishman, who had been cured of his own spleen through faith—in the contents of the closet. "I'll tell ye something that I know about a praste. An', mister, av ye don't say he had more power than yerself have got,—yer a quare man, that's all I've got to tell ye."

"Fire away, then," said the skeptic.

"It happen' up Montreal way," explained the Irishman. "The praste was travellin' in the train, an' whin they come to his station, the train didn't stop. Says the praste to the conductor, says he, 'Aren't ye goin' to let me aff here?' 'No,' says the conductor, says he to him, 'we're a-past the station,' says he, 'an' ye'll have to be goin' on to the nixt wan'. 'But I must git aff here,' says the praste to him. 'Well, ye can't, an' that's all about it now,' says the conductor, walkin' aff from him. Faith, wid that, the praste took out a little book out av his pocket an' begun a-radin' in it. An' av he did, faith, the train stop right up there an' thin, an' not a start would she start for thim after. Well thin, after a while along comes the conductor, an' says he to the praste, says he, 'We're stuck. The driver can't make anny stame at all,' says he. 'An' I don't know what will we do at all, now,' says he. Says the praste to him, 'Did ye thry would she go backwards,' says he. 'I never thought av that,' says the conductor, an' away he wint again. Well sir, they thry, an' sure enough back she wint all right till they got to the station an' stop there. Thin the praste put his little book back in his pocket agin, an' hop aff, an' says he to the conductor, says he, 'Thry now would she go ahead.' So they thry, an' sure enough she wint away all right agin', an' the praste wint home. See that now, for what the praste done!"

"And do you believe that yarn?" inquired the gaunt man.

"I do," was the emphatic answer. "Don't you belave it now?" This appeal was made to the old farmer, who hitherto had never failed to come to his aid.

"Well—ah," began the latter cautiously, for he was a good Protestant and hesitated to encourage the pretensions of Rome,

"I—ah—well, I wouldn't like to say that—ah—that it was altogether true ; but I wouldn't say there wasn't somethin' in it, after all."

Having thus done his duty to Protestantism, without combing his neighbor's hair too fiercely the wrong way, the old farmer felt himself in a position to relate another story on his own account, and resolved to shut off further remark, or question, or criticism, by beginning at once.

The Irishman was about to enter an indignant protest against the sudden defection of his late ally, and hurl back the insinuation levelled against the priest, but before he had recovered from the temporary amazement caused by the conduct of the old farmer, the latter had addressed himself to the skeptic.

"Of course, now, you don't pretend to believe in anything, but I'm goin' to tell you somethin' that I know myself. About twenty odd year ago there was a fearful dry summer, an' in the place where I lived then there didn't come no rain for weeks an' weeks. It was the greatest drooth I ever seen in my life. The pasturs was all burnt out with the sun, till the cattle couldn't git hardly anything at all to eat, an' the brooks an' springs was all dried up so that the cattle couldn't git water to drink in hardly any of the fields, and the crops was all droopin', an' it looked as if we'd have a famine sure enough. The sun was like fire every day, and the air was smoky an' hot an' dry, an' everybody was prayin' for rain to come. Well, sir, there was two old preachers in that part then, reg'lar old sperrit movers. So they said at last they'd call a meetin' in the old schoolhouse an' pray together for it to rain. I remember it first-rate. I was there that night. An' old Mr. Hynes—Father Hynes we used to call him, though he wasn't a priest—he prayed an' prayed, and wrestled for ever so long. An' that was a prayer. We don't hear no sich prayin' an' preachin' nowadays, with these here broadcloth preachers, an' their talk about science, an' the stars, an' the universe, an' sich notions. I never heerd sich a movin' prayer before that or sence that

An' the other man prayed, an' they all prayed, an' they kep' it up till late at night, too. Well, sir, after it was all over with we went home, an' the first thing I heerd in the mornin' when I woke up was the rain patterin' on the roof an' makin' the winders rattle. How it did pelt down that day! An' I'll never believe anything else but that it was them old preachers an' that meetin' that night in the old schoolhouse that fetched that rain. We don't have such prayin' nowadays." In conclusion, the narrator sent a regretful sigh into the halcyon past, while the gaunt man laughed to himself softly.

"You think they started the rain, hey?" he remarked, and laughed to himself once more.

"Yes, I do," said the old farmer with defiant emphasis.

Again the skeptic laughed. Then he braced himself for argument.

"Now, see here. Every country has what it calls a Weather Bureau, that studies and watches, and reports when storms are coming. And people depend on that; and when a storm is reported, the storm signals are ordered up along the coast to warn vessels. And the vessels heed it, too; and experience only makes them heed it more. A great deal of money is spent in that work. Now, according to your idea that money is all wasted; for if at any time an old preacher wants a little storm, all he has to do is to ask. Or if he wanted to prevent one, or stop one, I suppose it would be all the same. All bosh, I tell you. The atmosphere, like everything else, is under law; and that law is never interfered with."

"I don't believe it," said the old farmer, growing suddenly skeptical. "The maker of that law has a right to improve that law if he sees fit."

"Then you must have a poor opinion of the ability of the maker of the law," said the skeptic.

"How's that?"

"Why you seem to think he couldn't make a good enough law the first time, but one that he'd have to be tinkering at

afterwards whenever some wise man suggested an improvement. Now let's suppose a case. Suppose two men owned land joining, we'll say, at the foot of a hill. One man owned the wet marsh and the other owned the dry hill. Now suppose the marsh owner wanted dry weather and the hill owner wanted rain, which would be very likely; and suppose that one of them got down on each side of the line fence, and they both prayed. What kind of weather do you suppose they'd get?"

"That isn't a fair way of puttin' the case," said the farmer with a shake of the head. "Them would be selfish cases. Mebbe it wouldn't be best to answer them."

"Very well, then," said the gaunt man, "if a man doesn't know what's best, and can't be allowed to decide the question, it isn't reasonable to imagine that he'd have any influence at all in the matter."

"Ask and ye shall receive," quoted the old farmer.

"That's an apt quotation, and a very sensible remark," said the gaunt man, with a contemptuous laugh. "You'd better ask for a little earthquake while you think of it. It would be worth your while to convince the rest of us."

A sharp retort was checked on the lips of the farmer by the Irishman, who was still restive under the slight lately put upon his veracity.

"I don't know nothing about yere prachers," he remarked, "and more'n that I don't care." This for the benefit of the old farmer, whom he at the same time favored with a resentful glance. "But I do know something about a praste that could cure anny kind av disease an' do annything he like, he could. An' I'll tell ye wan thing he done. He was a-drivin' home wan night in winter, whin the snow was deep, an' he met a crowd av min in a big sled, jist where the drifts was big an' the road narrah. They were all drunk, an' singin' an' carryin' on in fine style. Whin they met the praste they didn't know who was it at all, an' faith they wouldn't give him anny av the road. 'Gimme half av the road min?' says he, 'for my sleigh

is light an' I'm afeard I'll get stuck,' says he. But divil the turn out would they turn out for 'im, but kep' right on aginst 'im, an' druv' 'im out into the deep snow. 'An' ye won't gimme half av the road?' says he passin' thim. 'No,' says they. 'Well, thin, stop there,' says he, 'till I tell yez to lave.' An' aff he wint, an' av he did, faith they stop there, an' not a move could they move till he come back agin an hour afther, an' tould thim to go 'long out o' that. 'Now,' says he to thim, 'whin ye meet a man nixt time, see will yez turn out for him' An' faith he serve thim right, too. See that now, what the praste done!"

"O, that can't be true," said the bulwark of Protestantism, in a very positive way. "No man could do that."

"Yere prachers couldn't do it annyhow," retorted the Irishman.

"It isn't any harder to do that than it is to bring rain," said the gaunt man, delighted at the turn affairs were taking. "Mister," he continued, turning to the curly headed young man, "couldn't you testify now?"

"I can so," was the prompt reply. "What we have just heard reminds me of something that happened once on the head waters of the Miramichi. And as both a priest and a preacher were mixed up in the affair I'll tell you about it; and then you can judge for yourselves what powers they have."

Here the speaker paused for a moment to clear his throat, while the others settled themselves into comfortable listening attitudes and directed their whole attention toward him. He had an easy manner of gesticulation, and a very confidential bearing, which made his stories worthy of attention as much for the method as the matter of them.

"Now, in the first place," he began, "I may say that these two men lived near each other, and were on remarkably good terms; and they agreed very well indeed on all ordinary questions. One spring when the stream-driving had begun, the boss of the drive made his men work as hard on Sunday as on any

other day, and the priest and the preacher heard about it long before the drive got down to their part of the country. So one day when they met they talked it over, and said that it was a great shame and that they ought to try and stop it. Well, they went to the boss, and from him to the owner of the logs, but it was of no use. The owner told them to mind their own business and he'd mind his, and that all the ministers between there and Halifax couldn't stop him from working when he wanted to work. Then they talked it over again, and finally agreed to accept the challenge. So the very next Sunday they got into a carriage in the morning and drove to where the men were at work. They hunted up the boss and told him they wanted him to stop. He swore at them and ordered them to clear out, and all they could say didn't seem to have any effect at all. So at last the priest sat down on one bank of the river and the preacher went across and sat down on the other bank, and they both took out their little books and began to read. Now, what do you think happened?"

Nobody ventured a suggestion, for all felt from experience that conjecture was of no avail when the curly headed young man was approaching the climax of a story. He therefore continued in his gravely confidential way :

"Why, sirs, the logs in the stream first stopped, and then began to move back up stream like a streak. One man tried to jump from the shore on to a log, but by the time he struck the water where he thought it would be it had gone out of sight around a bend in the river."

Nobody laughed. This was evidently too serious a matter for levity.

"Well, sirs, when the boss saw the way his logs were getting out of sight he yelled to the ministers to stop for heaven's sake and he'd never work his men on Sunday any more."

"Then I suppose the logs began to come down again like a streak," said the gaunt man, as the other paused for a moment.

"The ones that were in the stream did," was the reply; "but the ones that were at the tail of the drive, away up the river, had gone too far. Between five and six hundred of them had got back into the woods on the stump again, and they had to be cut down the second time."

"Oh, Lord!" ejaculated the skeptic. Then everybody looked at everybody else and again at the curly headed young man, whose expression of simplicity and candour was certainly unimpeachable.

"You saw that?" asked the skeptic at last.

"No, sir, I didn't see it; but I saw a man that said he knew it for a fact." This was said in a tone indicating that the speaker at least regarded the evidence as conclusive. There was another pause and another interchange of dubious glances. Was this young man in earnest? He certainly looked so. Again the gaunt man spoke.

"Young man," he said, measuring him from head to foot with his eye, "you're either the biggest liar or the darndest fool I ever met in my life. That's all I've got to say."

The frank presentation of such a pair of alternatives seemed to trouble the young man exceedingly.

"Don't you believe it, now?" he enquired, with an appealing glance at the host, the Irishman and the old farmer.

"I'm afeard yere jokin'," said the Irishman.

"You must be," said the old farmer.

"I am very much in earnest gentlemen, I assure you," solemnly answered the young man.

"Well, then," said the gaunt man, "you've been properly taken in and done up by somebody. But I needn't be surprised. I've heard just such yarns, a hundred times over, as I've heard to-night, about witches, and ghosts, and devils, and priests, and preachers, and all that sort of tomfoolery. But I never yet saw either witch, or ghost, or devil, and I'd like to see the thing that could scare me, day or night. It makes me

sick to listen to such trash. I'll go home." He rose from his chair and knocked the ashes out of his pipe.

The old farmer and the Irishman also rose, and the three went out together. The first two lived close beside the Traveler's Rest, the gaunt man had a mile or more to traverse. The three were somewhat curt in their parting salutations, for the farmer and the Irishman were much incensed at each other over the question of priest and preacher, and both of them were wounded by the skepticism of the gaunt man. When the door had closed behind them the host said to the curly headed young man, who was a native of another settlement and was merely spending the night at Pokeville Corner :

"That long, thin feller is the biggest brag and the biggest coward in this county."

"No!" ejaculated the curly headed young man.

"But yes," repeated the host,— "ain't he, Bill?" This to his son. The latter nodded and chuckled.

Whereupon the three entered into an animated conversation that was punctuated with numerous chuckles and winks, and vigorous slapping of the shoulder of the curly headed young man by the big hand of the host.

Meanwhile the gaunt man trudged homeward in the darkness. The night was exceedingly gloomy and cheerless. The road at one place wound through a wooded ravine which popular tradition said was "hanted" by the spirit of a woman whose body had been found there many years before.

A bridge spanned a brawling stream in the centre of the ravine. The darkness was so intense that objects could be but dimly perceived the width of the road distant from the eye.

When the gaunt man had almost reached the bridge he suddenly became conscious of a something on the opposite side of the road keeping pace with him as he walked, but making no sound whatever. It was shrouded in white, and to his startled consciousness appeared to glide rather than walk. He rubbed

his eyes to be sure that he was not mistaken. But there was no mistake. The thing was there. He quickened his pace. The apparition did likewise. He strained his ears to catch some sound, but failed. He halted. The mysterious thing also came to a standstill. He started again, hurriedly, and it held its place directly opposite. He spoke. No answer.

"You needn't think you can scare me," he declared at last in a very high and somewhat shrill key.

No reply.

"If I come over there you'll drop that rig pretty quick—sure's you live."

Still no answer.

"Where'd you get that sheet?" This in a less confident tone.

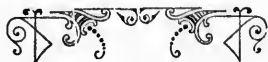
Silence once more ensued.

They were now crossing the bridge. Suddenly, just as they reached the farther end, the white robed figure seemed to rise several feet into the air, and then, with a wild, wailing, unearthly and prolonged scream, sank suddenly out of sight.

The gaunt man was for a moment paralyzed, and stood staring with protruding eyes at the spot where the thing had disappeared. Then his faculties returned, and with a gasping howl of terror he turned and ran for his life, never pausing till the light of his home flashed welcome through the darkness.

Some twenty minutes later the landlord of the Traveller's Rest, his son and the curly headed young man might have been seen sitting before the blazing fire, literally helpless from the effect of loud and long continued bursts of delirious laughter.

B.



THE EGOTISTIC SENATORS.

—o:q:oo—
(A Tale of Acadie.)
—

'Twas at the depot in the vale where Gabriel wooed and won ;
A train had just come in, a band to play had just begun ;
Two senators were in that train—Washburn and Allison.

And the band played “Annie Rooney,” and “Annie Laurie” too,
And all the tunes those senators in happy childhood knew,
Till those two noble statesmen quite enthusiastic grew.

“Oh, hark,” said Minnesota’s pride, and waved his dainty hand,
“I hear delicious music from a serenading band,
“For we are honored even in this lotos-eating land.”

Then out upon the platform went the happy senator,
And bowed, and waved his hat, and bowed, and waved his hat
once more,
And like a cheerful lunatic about the platform tore.

Then cried he unto Allison, with weird, wild western screech,
“Come, take up their attention for a moment, I beseech,
“Till I think up a gorgeous Chauncey M. Depew-ful speech.”

Then out upon the platform went Iowa’s senator,
And swung his hat, and bowed, and bowed, and swung his
hat some more,
And like a cheerful lunatic about the platform tore.

Then to the smiling statesmen said a friend, in manner bland,
“These folks are getting frightened, so I wish you’d understand
“You are listening to music by the Parrsboro Cornet Band.

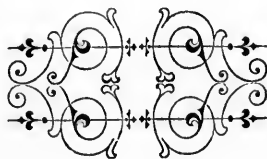
“ From Parrsboro to Kentville on a picnic they have come,
“ And with their thrilling tunes they’re striking Kentville people dumb,
“ But there’s not a durned Republican for whom they’d whack
the drum.

“ Their vast superiority to Kentville’s band they’ve shown,
“ They think that they are playing to their countrymen alone,
“ And Allison, and Washburn too, are names to them unknown.”

Then those two saddened senators both turned a trifle pale ;
They who caressed the British lion longed to twist his tail,
And felt about as out-of-place as Jonah in the whale.

And back into the car went those two statesmen “ all forlorn,”
And drowned their sorrows in the bowl of President Van
Horne,—
Sadder and wiser senators they rose the morrow morn.

W.



POINT OF VIEW.

A good deal depends upon point of view. One is particularly impressed with this thought during a political campaign or a religious controversy. It is always apparent, but somehow we do not always take it into account. Perhaps this is just as well. While we might echo Burns's aspiration to be able to see ourselves as others see us, and while to this might be added a desire to see other things as others see them, it is by no means certain that the result would always be in the direction of increased happiness. Our sensibilities might suffer a shock now and then, and some cherished beliefs from which we derived great comfort might be rudely shaken.

For example: On the train once I made the acquaintance of an agent for tombstones, and was so unfortunate as to enquire how he found business.

"Poor," replied the man, "very poor."

"That seems odd," I said. "Yours is not a business affected as others are. The death rate does not noticeably decrease, and I should think there would always be a demand for those emblems of grief which bereaved ones erect in loving memory of dear ones departed. It is to me a source of melancholy pleasure to note, in strolling through a cemetery, how loving hands keep green the graves, as their hearts keep green the memories of those they have lost."

"Oh, as to that," said the dealer in monuments, "I don't know that there's any falling off in the demand from year to year, but this is the dull season."

"I don't understand," I said.

"Why," explained the other, in the most matter-of-fact and business-like way, "it's the fall of the year, and it's no use for people to put up tombstones when nobody is going there to see them for the next six months."

B.

THE BATTLE OF THE CATS.

[NOTE—The New York Advertiser has said that the International Cat Show will not be a success without specimens of the Kilkenny and the editorial breeds. Anyone versed in history or catology should know that all the Kilkenny cats were annihilated, the one by the other; and the editorial cat, judging from its non-appearance in the McClure's Magazine illustrations of the interior of the New York Sun office, must also be extinct.

It is probable, therefore, that the editor of the Advertiser will not be satisfied with the New York cat show. If, however, he goes to Mace's Bay on one of the nights that the Maine cats gather to dispute with those of New Brunswick, he will see an International Cat Show such as but few are privileged to witness.

I am indebted to my good friend Mr. Alexander Heron, of Marysville, for the principal facts hereinafter recorded. Mr. Heron has convinced me that New Brunswick cat-lore is as interesting as that of the ancient Persians.

I once asked an old farmer who lives in the wonderland of Digby, and has told me many remarkable tales of the pixies and nixies that inhabit that region, if he had ever seen a fairy. "No, not exactly," he answered, "but my great-grandmother knew a man who knew a man who had shot one." I may say in this connection that although Mr. Heron has been at Mace's Bay on several occasions, he was never there on a dimly moonlit night, and hence never saw the talking cats. But he has met many people who have both seen and heard them, so that his testimony may be taken as even more accurate than that of the Digby farmer.

Speaking of cats—who or what is more free? You dare not steal a cat in Persia, and you cannot in England or America.

The laws of the latter countries say that a cat is no man's—and no old maid's—property. Thus are cats doubly free. If your cat is taken by your neighbor into his dwelling, you cannot recover it by law. Where the cat's future abiding-place is, depends upon the notion of the cat. If the animal likes your neighbor's house the better, it is useless for you to take the cat from him; if it prefers your house, the neighbor may take your cat, and take it again; but the cat will come back. The cat is the true emblem of freedom. A cat has nine lives; and a cat may look at a king.]

The Grimalkin Chronicles say that Tom Connor's cat was the last of the feline race endowed with the gift of speech; but the Grimalkin Chronicles are somewhat imaginative. Tom's cat, it will be remembered, held high revel at Cork, Ireland, and hunted rats on the fighting green of Spike Island when the moon was down and the gaugers were sleeping. The cat of Connor visited all the fairs for miles around, hurrahing for Dan O'Connell and the green flag of Ireland, and swearing death to her oppressors. This cat has lived his allotted lives, but his lineal descendants may be found at Mace's Bay, in the County of Charlotte and the Province of New Brunswick. There cats do still talk.

According to a lady who dwells there, cats is witches. She left her old home because of the weird doings of a coal-black member of the species as wicked as that "glaring-eyed sepulchral Tom" who dined on the breath of the small people of Dullborough.* She went back to the house some hours later, and saw the cat parading up and down the kitchen. The cat's eyes were drops of living fire. Her hairs were erect, and from them sparks were flying in all directions. Every few minutes she would sit down, place one paw on her heart and wail most piteously: "Oh, my, what shall I do? They have left me because of my actions! Oh, my, what shall I do?"

*As recorded in the "Uncommercial Traveller."

There was once an old woman at Mace's Bay who had a share in some property, and her brothers and sisters considerably wished to manage it for her. They harassed her so much that she decided to give up all claims to the estate, and became very gloomy in spirit because of her trouble. As she sat by the fire she told her sorrow to her cat, even as the future Marquis of Carabas told his to the kitten in the top-boots. And the cat spoke, as its ancestor did to the miller's boy. "Don't give up the property!" said the cat. "Don't yauow do it, I say! You have the best right to it, and if you fight hard they can't get it. If they come here again and worry you as they've been a-doin', they'll find I'll come up to the scratch." And the cat swore a horrible oath, which fell like a benediction upon the woman's heart, and she concluded to hold on to the property.

There was a great battle near the head of Mace's Bay some years ago, in which five hundred cats took part. It seems that an Eastport cat rather indiscreetly remarked to the descendants of Tom Connor's Tom that the color of the flag of Ireland was not green, but orange. The Eastport cat made his escape, but war was declared by the insulted ones against all cats in the State of Maine. The Eastport cat acted as a recruiting sergeant, and brought three hundred cats of an orange hue across the line to Mace's Bay. These cats made in chorus the impudent remark that there was nothing green in their optical organs. The green-eyed cats numbered only two hundred, but made a gallant onslaught.

Never was there a battle like this in the world before. Such yells had never till then pierced the ambient ether. They congealed the marrow and made ghastly pale the red corpuscles of the blood. The profanity of the leaders was something awful. It was worse than that of General Washington at the battle of Monmouth. The smell of ozone lingered near the spot for years, and even now chunks of that substance may be found in the crevices of the rocks, where it condensed and settled.

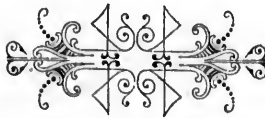
As at the Battle of the Boyne, the green lines were wavering, even as the green grass before the orange flood that sweeps over New Brunswick marshes. It was up with the orange cats, and down with the green. Then, above the din of the battle-field arose the awful cry of a cat from the ould sod, "Faugh a Ballagh! Erin go Brau-au-ugh!"

The weird words echoed down the green ranks, and imbued them with new life. The dead arose, and the blood of the orange cats stained the ground. Those that were not torn to orange ribbons turned their tails to the victorious foe and swiftly made for the river St. Croix, which they swam, in their exceeding terror.

But a cat never acknowledges himself beaten; and now on dimly moonlit nights the Eastport cats return to Mace's Bay and dispute about the battle. Many of the people of the village have seen them, and have heard their curses, which are both loud and deep. But if you shout "Erin-go-Braugh," the Eastport cats disappear as if by magic.

These are the stories told. And if proof is necessary and the narrator's word is doubted, go down to Mace's Bay and ask the first person or cat you meet.

W.



MRS. SMALL.

(A Character Sketch.)

This story has no plot. It is not loaded. There is nothing to recommend it further than that it presents faithfully to the reader an interesting personage whom I would regard it as a misfortune not to have met. For Mrs. Small, though she lives in Plunkett Settlement, which is a "wayback" place, and though she probably will not see this sketch, or even hear of it, is to my mind deserving of an introduction to a wider circle than that in which she moves.

Mrs. Small lives on a farm in Plunkett Settlement. Mrs. Small and her husband—her second husband. Mrs. Small owns the farm, and does not exactly disown the husband. She is small only in name. And she has a tongue—has Mrs. Small. Her first husband died, so she affirms. Ill-disposed neighbors say he was killed—talked to death; but they only whisper it. The principal witness having gone to appear before a higher court, it would perhaps be as well to believe, or at least assume, that Mrs. Small's first husband did, as she says, die. He is certainly dead, and his forlorn relict has appropriated Mr. Small. The latter is a short man, slightly stooping, and profoundly convinced that stout women with tongues are not to be trifled with. He would say as much, in his wife's absence; in her presence he would doubtless pause to consider. They have no children.

It so chanced that I spent a summer holiday in Plunkett Settlement, and so made the acquaintance of Mrs. Small. Driving along one day in the carriage of my friend Deacon Flint, I chanced to ask who lived in a particular house, with a thrifty garden in front of it, and the deacon informed me that

it was the home of Mrs. Small. I thought from the fact that he said "Mrs. Small" that she was a widow, but learned later that it was customary in the settlement to place the lady (in this case) in the position usually accorded to the man. It was Mrs. Small, not Mr. Small, who lived there and was the presiding genius of the place. I said to the deacon :

"That's a nice garden she has."

Now Deacon Flint, as I afterward also learned, had a cross ; and that cross was Mrs. Small. She had once quarrelled with him about a goose from her flock that had met a violent death in the vicinity of the deacon's oat field in the meadow. Her geese had wandered away in her absence, and one of them had not returned. Mrs. Small had discovered the body, and they held a post mortem enquiry, and the next time the deacon came that way Mrs. Small went out with the defunct fowl and confronted him. He had vigorously protested his innocence and the innocence of his whole family ; but Mrs. Small held up the proof of blood guiltiness and declared the self evident fact that "somebody done it," and hinted darkly that that somebody "didn't live fur off, nuther." The deacon was much incensed, and made some heated remarks ; whereupon the irate lady rejoined that he "needn't come round there with his mealy mouth ; he was nothin' anyway but a whinin' old hippercrit." The imputation was horrible. It rankled in the bosom of the good man for many months, and though he was now able to say "forgive us our trespasses," etc., with his customary unctuous vigor, he was not prepared to hold out the olive branch to Mrs. Small. Therefore, my allusion to that lady was passed by in dignified silence and he changed the subject.

In due time I made the acquaintance of Mrs. Small. It chanced one day that I was taking a stroll with a young lady along the road. When we reached Mrs. Small's, we found that energetic and estimable lady in her garden, near the road. She

was overseeing the operations of Mr. Small, who, with a hoe in his hands, was evidently improving the condition of some healthy looking beets by removing some even healthier looking weeds. Mr. Small was in his shirt sleeves, and wore no waist-coat. He wore one suspender only, which gave him a rather lop-sided appearance. His boots were muddy; ditto his trousers; and one trouser-leg was thrust in a boot and one was not. His face was not very clean, but his expression was meekness itself. Mrs. Small wore an ample sun-bonnet and held her dress very high. The effect was imposing.

"Small," she was saying, "do git your feet off that row. You won't leave a blessed beet in the hull patch." Mr. Small lifted his feet obediently, and then plunged after a bunch of weeds. He pulled up a beet.

"There! What did I tell you? I knowed it. There's another one gone. You're sich a blundergut—now look at your feet agin. Small, when will you learn to do things right? Gimme that hoe, an' go feed the pigs. They're squealin' as if they hadn't a bite for a fortnight."

Mr. Small meekly departed, remarking to himself with the sad emphasis of profound conviction that, "the Old Boy 'll git that women some day."

When we came up Mrs. Small walked over to the fence, planted the hoe upright, and crossed her palms on the top of the handle.

"Well, Maggie," she said to my companion, "an' how be you to-day?" We went over and I was introduced. Mrs. Small wiped her hand on her apron and shook hands with the stranger.

"I aint very peert lookin' to-day," she said, "but a body can't allus look nice; an' Small and me thought we'd do a little work in the garden, seein' it was so dry. Drat the muskeeters. A body can't hardly live for 'em."

"You have a very nice garden," I said.

"It aint nothin' to what it might be. Small haint no taste

for vegetables, an' I have to look after it myself mostly. But won't you come in?"

"No, thank you, Mrs. Small," my friend said. "We have to go to the village. But we will call some day."

"I'll be glad to see you any day. It does me good to have a little chat; an' Small aint no talker." It would perhaps be difficult to say just wherein lay the merit of Mr. Small, or if he possessed any. It may be that he was distinguished by being nothing in particular. That seemed to be the opinion of his owner and law-giver, and she ought to know.

My friend suggested that we should accept Mrs. Small's invitation to call on her, and it was so agreed. The good lady was given timely notice, and we went. A little bird having told me all about it, I am able to inform the reader of what transpired at the Small domicile that day before our arrival. On that particular day, in view of our coming, Mrs. Small was chiefly concerned with indoor matters; and Mr. Small enjoyed an immunity from superintendence as gratifying as it was unusual. When he came in to dinner his general appearance was more than usually confident. But his countenance was somewhat lowered when his wife's eye fell on the towel, to which he had succeeded in removing most of the dirt from his face and hands.

"Small! Look at that towel. D'ye s'pose I haint nothin' to do but wash towels fur you to dirty? Hey? Why don't you wash your face? Aint they water enough in the house? I do hope you'll have sense enough to slick up a little an' look like somebody when them people's here."

"What people?" queried Mr. Small, who was altogether ignorant of the expected honor.

"Why, Maggie Allan and that man from town. They're comin' here this afternoon to tea."

"Be they?" murmured Mr. Small.

"Yes, they be. An' don't you come to the table in your shirt sleeves, nuther."

Mr. Small looked despondent.

"Will I have to black my boots?"

"Oh, they won't look at your boots," said Mrs. Small with fine sarcasm, "your face 'll hide your boots. But don't you forgit to use the butter knife. It aint polite to jab your own knife into the butter dish."

This, Mr. Small considered, was a direct impeachment of his intelligence.

"Think I haint got no sense?" he fiercely demanded.

"Well, you know, Small, you haint got much. Don't you?"

Mr. Small was too dignified to make any reply. He had seated himself at the table, and now seized a potato and began to peel it with his fingers.

"Haint you got no knife an' fork, Small?" inquired his wife, who on any other day would perhaps have been less strict in the matter of discipline. Mr. Small made no answer. He took up a bone in his fingers and gnawed it viciously.

"Git under the table, Small. Git under the table with Bounce. You haint no more manners than the dog has. I never in all my born days seen sich a man."

Mr. Small grasped knife and fork as his only defensive weapons, and discussed the remainder of the dinner in a way that even the critical soul of Mrs. Small could not condemn. But in shoving back his plate he upset a dish of salt.

"There! Now you've done it. Now there's somethin' sure to happen."

"Well, it 'ud happen anyway," argued Mr. Small.

"No it wouldn't. Throw a pinch uv that salt over your right shoulder, quick."

"What for?"

"It'll mebbe keep the bad luck away. Do it, Small."

Mr. Small threw a pinch of salt over his shoulder and then asked:

"Anything else?"

"Yes. Git out doors before you do somethin' more. You're the onluckiest critter that ever was born."

Mr. Small passed out of doors with a sigh of relief.

The house occupied by this amiable couple was a low farmhouse of the ordinary kind, with a door and two windows in front, windows in the ends, and a kitchen attached to the rear. The house was shingled on the outside, and, as it had never been painted, was grey and time-worn. A graceful knob adorned the front door, but the kitchen door was provided simply with a wooden latch and string. In the main house, down stairs, there were dining room, sitting room, and bedroom. The sitting room was in front, at one end, and was reserved for the reception of "company." The blinds on its windows were usually closed, except on such occasions. As there were no children in the family, the marks of greasy fingers were absent, and there was less of "wear and tear" than in ordinary households. Behind the house was the barn, a large and airy building beneath whose ample eaves the swallows had their nests in summer. The barn was old, its roof leaked, and large cracks between the boards on the sides and ends permitted the entrance of slanting sunbeams or driving rain or snow. The appearance of the articles stowed away in the barn harmonized well with its forlorn and dejected aspect. Its youth had been dull and uneventful, and its old age was barren and lonely and without cheering memories. True, it had known many generations of young swallows, and barnyard fowls, and sheep and cattle; but its grey old roof had thrown back no loving echo of childish laughter and song. No children had clambered over its great beams and over the haymows, and through the mangers in search of white or brown or speckled eggs. Hide and seek had never run riot around and through it. No lithe young limbs had run up and down the ladders to and from the top of beam or scaffold, or tumbled with laugh and shout down

upon a yielding bed of hay or straw. Its life had been lonely. And there it stood, gravely growing old, and patiently submitting to the chastisement of time. The great doors had no clasp or latch. When closed, they were braced by a large fence-pole leaned against them. This fastening was an unpatented invention of which Mr. Small claimed the credit; and as the claim was not disputed, doubtless Mr. Small was justified. In short, the general appearance of the buildings and their surroundings showed quite clearly that little in the way of adornment had ever been attempted by the occupants. There were pigs and a large number of fowls in the barnyard, which was perhaps closer to the house than an aesthetic nose might be supposed to desire. The pigs had invariable appetites, and an invariable habit of strenuously announcing the fact. Their music, suggestive as it was of pork and fall prices, was doubtless more to Mrs. Small's taste than that of the Riverton band, which played on state occasions. It would not be enough to say that she tolerated pigs—she liked them. The Small farm was largely overgrown with bushes, and tiny fields of grain and potatoes scattered here and there over a large area showed that the owner was one of those who, as a neighbour phrased it, "farmed in patches all over creation." But Mrs. Small would have promptly resented neighborly advice on the subject of farming, as an unwarranted interference with the inalienable rights of woman. And so would Mr. Small.

When my friend and I arrived, we found Mrs. Small resplendent in a many-colored calico gown waiting to receive us. "Come right in," she said affably. "Come right in. Take off yer things an' set right down. I been lookin' fur you this last hour."

"You'll be likely to get enough of us before night, Mrs. Small," said my companion, laughing.

"Lord bless you, no. I only wish you'd come oftener. I

git so lonesome sometimes that I have to go out an' talk to Small. Though I s'pose he'd ruther I staid in the house."

This supposition corresponded so exactly with the fact that Mr. Small, had he been present, could only have been restrained by prudence from giving his emphatic assent.

We were ushered into the before-mentioned sitting room, which was of a good size, well lighted, and variously furnished. The walls were covered with paper, the design of which was such as might have delighted the soul of an ornithologist. Birds on the wing, birds on branches, birds on nests, large birds, small birds, birds of every kind of shape and plumage were there. At first sight the ordinary observer might fancy that here was an attractive study in still life; a little later he would wish there were not quite so many birds; and, finally, he would be seized with a murderous desire to have the designer's scalp in one hand and a club in the other.

On the table was a cloth presenting another study in still life. The design was a recumbent cow with calf at her side, and, as it was many times repeated, the effect was similar to that produced by the wall paper—a fierce desire for the sudden and violent extinction of the author.

The floor was covered with mats, and a conspicuously new one adorned the centre, its brilliance putting to shame the dinginess of its more venerable companions. As soon as we were comfortably seated, Mrs. Small pointed with some pride to the mat and asked :

"Wha' d'ye think uv my new mat, Maggie?"

The mat had in the middle of it that which was intended to represent a dog of considerable dimensions. The outline had first been drawn with charcoal on the coarse canvas, and then filled in with cloth of one color. The animal had straight hind legs, and his tail seemed to have grown at random. His head was set on his shoulders without any intervening neck, and the whole animal presented a vain-glorious appearance, not at all in harmony with that of the average dog. The design was a

monument to the combined artistic skill and knowledge of Mrs. and Mr. Small. To say that it was beautiful would be—well—to lie, and my friend parried the question by asking another.

“Oh! Why, you didn’t make it yourself, did you?”

“I did so. Hooked every speck uv it myself”

“Isn’t there a good deal of work about it?” I asked, coming bravely to the rescue.

“’Deed there is. I’ve set here an’ hooked an’ hooked till my arms ached. But I hooked every blessed mat on this floor myself.”

“They make the room a great deal more snug and comfortable,” I said, which was indeed true.

“Yes,” said thrifty Mrs. Small, “common folks like us can’t afford no fine carpets, an’ we have to make shift the best we kin. An’ there’s lots uv rags that ’ud go to waste if we didn’t do somethin’ with ’em. Now, there wus suits an’ suits uv clothes belongin’ to my first man, an’ Small couldn’t wear ’em, so I hooked ’em into mats.”

I looked at the mats and half fancied I could see the late lamented gentleman slowly taking shape before me, dressed in one of the “suits an’ suits;” but the momentary spell was broken by the sound of a cracked voice outside, singing, or trying to sing some sort of ditty. It was Mr. Small. He was working in the barnyard, surrounded by pigs and fowls, and was solacing himself with a little music, as well as endeavoring perhaps to fortify himself for the ordeal of the supper table. This little interruption gave chance for a turn to the conversation, and the first man was temporarily left to moulder in peace.

“Have you been in the city lately, Mrs. Small?” I inquired.

“Not sence last fall. I gen’ally go down onst a year, in the fall, with the fowls an’ vegetables. Small haint no idee about sellin’ things, so I go myself. Like as not he’d give half uv ’em away to the fust lyin’ critter that come along. But they

don't fool me with no yarns about what things is wuth. Now, a man come to me last fall in the market an' wanted to buy some turkeys, but he wouldn't offer me no price fur 'em, so I jist told him to take 'em at my price or leave 'em, an' there was nothing more to say about it. 'Look here, ma'am,' says he, 'you're the smartest woman I ever seen in this market, an' I'd like to buy them turkeys an' have it to say I bought 'em from the best bargainer I ever seen.'

"Mr.," says I, "compliments is cheap and turkeys is wuth fifteen cents a pound. There's the turkeys. Ef you want to buy, buy; if you don't, you kin leave room for them what will."

"And did he buy them?" asked Maggie.

"He did. He bought 'em all, an' paid for 'em. But, my land! Look at that Sally Flint goin' down the road." Miss Flint was just passing. "My! aint we proud. Jist look at them frills an' furbelows. An' look at that hat. Flint's roosters must 'ave had a good crop uv feathers this year. Some people-haint no more sense about what's becomin' to 'em than an Injin squaw. Though I wouldn't have it known that I said so.—But I must see where them chickens is. Like as not Small 'll let 'em tear every blessed thing on the farm out by the roots."

Mrs. Small went out to the kitchen door; and, as she left the intervening doors open, the ensuing dialogue was audible to her visitors. Mr. Small happened just at that moment to be busily engaged in the barn, and several hens had taken advantage of his temporary absence to make the better acquaintance of some early potatoes just outside the fence. Mrs. Small discovered them and her ire was at once aroused.

"Small!" she screamed.

Small appeared in the door, bare-headed and with a hatchet in his hand.

"Small! Look at them there hens."

"I see 'em," said Mr. Small, nodding, and looking at the hens still in the yard.

"You see 'em, do you? Well why don't you stir your old bones an' git 'em out uv that?"

"They haint doin' nothin'," said Mr. Small.

"They haint, eh? Did you set 'em to dig them taters?"

Mr. Small followed with his eye the direction of her extended arm and saw the offending fowls.

"I didn't notice 'em," he said humbly, making a break for the fence.

"No. An' you wouldn't notice 'em, Small, if they wus scratchin' that bald place on top uv your head."

This reference to his infirmity, if so it might be termed, nettled Mr. Small, exceedingly.

"You go in the house," he snapped, "an' mind your own business. My skull aint any thicker 'an yourn."

"Take care a straw don't fall on it, Small. It 'ud be apity to have it cracked," with which parting shot the irate lady went in and slammed the door.

"Have you many fowls, Mrs. Small?" I politely inquired.

"I've got thirty odd chickens, an' twenty turkeys, an' seventeen geese. But most uv the chickens is roosters, an' they scratch awful. We can't hardly keep a seed in the ground fur 'em. We have to shet 'em up every time we go 'way, an' when they're out somebody has to be watchin' 'em all the time. It's enough to tire the life out uv a body, dear knows it is. But it pays to keep 'em if they kin be kep' alive till fall."

For an hour longer Mrs. Small entertained us with the tribulations of farm life, the negative qualities of Mr. Small, and the positive qualities of his memory enshrined predecessor. When supper was announced, Mr. Small came in. He had small eyes, full straggling whiskers, and a bald head. Mrs. Small sat at the head of the table, her husband at the foot, and we sat opposite each other at the sides. The table was small, and the

four made up a snug party. Mr. Small studied his plate with deep earnestness.

"Small! Pass the bread. Now folks, take right holt an' help yerselves. Don't wait fur no compliments. Fur my part I never could see no sense in mincin'. There's the stuff to be eat—let's eat it. That's what I allus say."

"Quite right," I said, "It makes one feel more at home." The supper was really very nice, and we enjoyed it, though somehow I could not get rid of the idea that the "first man" might at any moment rise up from the mats under our feet and call for a cup of tea. Mr. Small eyed his wife furtively from time to time, and exercised great care in the manner of taking his food. Remarks that were addressed to him by my companion or myself received from him monosyllabic answers or were volubly answered by his wife, who was now the impersonation of good nature and affability. But presently Mr. Small forgot himself for a moment, and in taking a sip of tea made a good deal more noise than was considered to be either polite or necessary. Catching his wife's eye, he saw something in it that made him shrink into his clothes to such an extent that for a moment it seemed he would disappear altogether, leaving clothes for another mat and a vacancy for a third man. He gradually recovered, and managed to get through the rest of the meal without mishap. He got away as quickly as possible, and returned to the apparently more congenial companionship of the pigs and fowls. Soon after tea we took our departure, and were accompanied for a short distance up the road by Mrs. Small, whose well of conversation seemed bottomless. Finally, with mutual invitations and promises for future visits, we separated, and the good lady returned to gladden the heart of her husband by assuring him that he was a "danged old fool."

"Your Mrs. Small is a remarkably interesting study," I said to my companion as we walked homeward.

"You should hear her discuss her neighbors when she feels like it," was the laughing reply. "She left them alone to-day

—all but Sally Flint—but it was because you are a stranger. You ought to hear her when she gets a fresh supply of news about somebody. Her tongue is a lance then, and the worse the news the better for Mrs. Small.”

“Does she always quarrel with Mr. Small?”

“Oh, yes. He’s used to it. And she always gets the best of it. She ‘bosses’ him in everything. They say that she actually went out one day and showed him how to hold the plough.”

It was most unkind thus to talk of the good lady in her absence. We admitted it to each other—but what would you? People will talk. And for my own part I could not resist the temptation afforded by Mrs. Small’s invitation to visit her that day and study her peculiarities.

But if one were disposed to think from the foregoing recital that Mrs. Small was entirely devoid of finer feelings the assumption would be far from the truth. And as a parting reference an incident that brings this fact out very clearly may be cited.

The Plunkett Settlement picnic was an annual affair in which Mrs. Small took a deep interest. It was in connection with the supper winding up one of these events that the incident occurred.

While the ruddy, well dressed children at the tables were paying the tribute a good appetite invariably yields to the skill of a good cook, a boy, poorly dressed and with a thin, pinched face, stood partly hidden by the trunk of a huge elm, and watched with great wistful eyes the progress of the feast. The same boy might have been seen during the earlier part of the afternoon moving shyly about the grounds watching the games, though never sharing them, and standing always at a little distance from the groups of people, as though fearing to go nearer. How eagerly he watched those games. And yet, if anyone passed near him, his eyes were on the ground and his whole

expression seemed to say, "I know I ought not to be here, but, please, let me stay?" No one had paid any attention to him, and now he stood there gazing wistfully at the tempting tables and the happy children. His was no holiday costume; his no happy face. Mrs. Small, bustling around the tables, happened to spy the ill-dressed form and the longing, hungry eyes, and she went up to him. He saw her coming and turned his face away as if in fear or shame.

"What's your name, little boy?" asked Mrs. Small, placing her hand on his shoulder and bending over him.

"Jim Lawson," was the timid answer, while the head with its ragged hat bent low, and one little bare, brown foot moved restlessly back and forth among the grass.

"Is any of your folks here, Jim?"

"No, ma'am."

"An' aint they nobody here belongin' to you?"

"No, ma'am." Jim's voice was growing fainter all the time.

"You poor little feller! Set right down here, an' I'll git you somethin' to eat. Don't run away now. Set right down there by the tree, an' you shall have a nice lunch all to yourself."

Away went Mrs. Small on her errand, while hungry Jim sat down and felt that somehow he had got a sudden glimpse of heaven, and wondered that it did not fade again. Mrs. Small felt, with a delicacy that did her infinite honor, that he would rather not go to the table and be stared at by his better-dressed neighbors. She soon returned with a plate heaped high with food and placed it in his hands. And how eagerly he set to work. The glimpse had not yet faded. And Mrs. Small, good Mrs. Small, beamed down upon him with a look of placid satisfaction on her ample brow.

"Have you any brothers an' sisters, Jim?"

"One brother, ma'am."

"An' why didn't he come too?" Jim stopped and looked

"He's sick, ma'am. Been sick a long time—nearly all summer."

A minute later Mrs. Small was engaged in earnest conversation with another lady, and emphasizing her remarks by sundry nods in the direction of Jim.

"Why yes, to be sure," said the other lady. "Dear me! Sick all summer. I must call and see him. Lawson used to work in the factory, but I remember hearing my husband say he had lost his place. That poor fellow looks half-starved. Of course he shall have something to take to his brother."

Jim had suddenly ceased eating. Mrs. Small hurried over to him.

"Why, you aint done, Jim? Take holt, man. Take holt an' fill yourself. Don't be a bit bashful, now."

"Please, ma'am," said Jim, "if you don't mind, I'd rather quit now and take something home for Tom."

"Bless your dear heart," cried Mrs. Small, patting him on the head with her plump hand, "'Tom shall have some too. You eat away, now, an' don't stop as long as you kin tuck another bite into you."

Jim needed no further invitation, and it is probable that the buttons on his old jacket were never before in such danger of being burst off. Mrs. Small went away again, and did not return until he had finished his meal. Then she came up, in company with the other lady, and carrying a parcel.

"Bless the child," she said, "he wanted to stop before he had enough, so he could take some home to his brother. Here, Jim, here's somethin' for 'Tom."

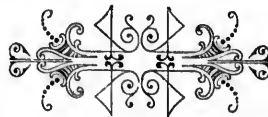
The parcel was pressed into his hands, and so overcome was he that he could only whisper his thanks; but his expression was too eloquent to be misunderstood.

Then Mrs. Small patted him on the head again and said, "Bless the boy," the other lady promised to call and see Tom, and the two ladies went back to the tables.

Jim looked after them, then looked at himself, and at the parcel, and could hardly believe that all this was not a dream. He had come to the picnic, not expecting anything like this. What a happy ending to his forlorn day. And how glad Tom would be, and mother. He must not stay a moment longer, but hurry home. The rest of the games might be played now, or not. It was all the same to Jim as he trudged merrily homeward, the happiest of the happy.

And it was all owing to the deacon's "cross," the terror of Mr. Small.

Madam! your health. There are smooth-tongued patterns of propriety who would pass you by on the other side for fear of contact with you, but have not one half your claim to our respect. You have no children, Mrs. Small, but you have the mother instinct, and if we would prefer to see your first man get a little more rest, also your second man, and sometimes your neighbors—yet we gladly pay to your kindly heart our tribute of profound respect. B.



A GENTLEMAN OF DISCERNMENT.

Mr. Pete Taylor was a gentleman of discernment. He said so himself.

"I want you to unde'stand I wusn't bawn yiste'dy," was his favorite way of giving outward expression to his inward consciousness regarding the matter.

And not one of the other denizens of Willow Grove pretended to know as much about anything as Mr. Pete Taylor did about everything.

It followed as a matter of course that when other colored persons at Willow Grove were greatly surprised at, or deeply interested in something, Pete was able to preserve a lofty calm, and wear an expression of philosophic indifference. He was not to be agitated by commonplace impulses, such as move the thoughtless herd of commonplace people.

It is therefore no cause for surprise that, on a day of great commotion among the people of Willow Grove, Pete should be found leaning against a post and surveying with imperturbable serenity the excitement among his neighbors.

A woman had died the day before, and the nature of the disease had not been determined. There was, in fact, some fear that it might be such as to call for a quarantine and the unlimited use of disinfectants, and therefore the authorities had decided on an inquest.

Hence the commotion. Pete stopped an excited group and asked where they were going.

"We's goin' to de inquest. Aint you comin', Pete?"

"Inquest!" echoed Pete, removing his left foot from a large potato patch, which it had concealed from view,— "Wha' for? Whah's de use holdin' an inquest? Aint she dead?"

"Yes—she's dead."

"Huh!" grunted Pete. "Must be mighty smart people round yere."

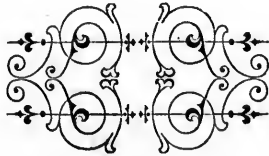
Nobody ventured to dispute this statement. To do so might be to display ignorance, and make the luckless disputant a target for Pete's withering sarcasm.

"She's dead—aint she," repeated the oracle, after waiting in vain for somebody to speak.

"Yes—she's dead enough," admitted the group.

"Well, ther." said Pete, with his most profoundly judicial air and manner 'whah's de use of holdin' an inquest? Why didn't they hold it.'fore she died? Mebbe she'd be livin' yit. This yere lettin' people die an' then holdin' inquests is reg'lar gallus doin's. An' ef I had my way I'd hang these yere doctors wherever I seen 'um."

Whereupon Pete turned his back on the group and walked airily away. But he turned up at the inquest later on, and absorbed so much additional contempt for judicial proceedings as practised in such cases that the merest reference to it for years after was enough to arouse in his bosom feelings of the most profound disgust and indignation. B.



THE ORDER OF THE BATH.

Once the merry Duke of Kent,
Grandsire of the Prince of Wales,
Through fair Nova Scotia went,
And a score of mirthful tales
Told throughout the lovely vales
His adventures represent.

All display and glory scorning,
Tired of pomp and show of court,
Without flourish, without warning,
This prince of "the rale old sort,"
Who grew stout on royal port,
To Port Royal came one morning.

At the inn where he was staying,
In the town DeMonts had founded,
Towards the old French orchard straying,
Through the kitchen Edward bounded,
When a figure nicely rounded
Caused unfortunate delaying.

'Twas a bashful Nova Scotian,
Flushed with anger and alarm,
O'er a tub of suds in motion,
Hiding her colonial charm
And each pretty dimpled arm,
Bending as in deep devotion.

As the Duke, with admiration,
Saw this sweet Acadian daughter,
This fair maid of lowly station,
Stooping toward the soapy water,
By her hidden head he caught her,
With a cry of exultation.

And he ducks her raven tresses
In the suds, with princely laughter,
And the wicked prank redresses
By a kiss delivered after,
When with roar that reaches rafter,
Her revenge the Duke confesses !

For the contents of the tub
Make a truly royal lather,
As the maiden he watched scrub
Throws them o'er Victoria's father ;
And *this* "earthly prince" looks rather
Warmer than Beelzebub.

Suds o'erspread his noble features,
In his eyes are soap and water ;
What a sight for London preachers !
In Port Royal, town of slaughter,
This sire of a noble daughter
Looks the meanest of God's creatures !

Nova Scotia's population
Honors Edward's memory,
But this simple tale's narration
Fills their honest hearts with glee ;
They respect the maiden free,
And her bold retaliation !

Nova Scotians, hold your own !
Never falter, never cower !
Fearing neither state nor throne,
Emulate your own Mayflower,
That defies the Ice King's power ;
You will *never* be o'erthrown !

W.

THE BOB-TAILED CALF.



HE was an old farmer. My powers of observation have been so strengthened by a study of the methods of Sherlock Holmes, that I knew this at once. I also gathered that he was very cross-eyed.

He was on his way to Boston—for the first time, he informed me. And when he said that he knew a good many young fellows about my age in Boston, whom he had not seen since they were so-high, I trembled for that old farmer, as I thought what a shining mark he would be for the confidence men. So I gently led up to the question of bunco-steerers, whereupon he winked, and grinned, and winked again, and told me a story which made me tremble for any confidence man that might chance to meet this honest old farmer.

“You may have noticed,” he said, “that I am a little cross-eyed. Well this here misfortune got me into trouble onct. You see, when I was runnin’ out my land limits I’d sight on one side of a tree, an’ blaze on the other, so that the line got to be kinder uneven.

“Well, that blazin’ begat a lawsuit, and that lawsuit begat a mortgage.

“I’ve had a good many queer critters on my farm, but I never had a mortgage before, and, sir, it’s the worst of ’em all. It’s just like one of these here octypuses, a-stretchin’ first one feeler out, an’ then another, till first thing you know it’s got the hull farm in its clutches. I know what mortgages is like, an’ I didn’t want to harbor one for long, I tell you, so I made up my mind not to keep this one till it had growed up. It wasn’t such a terr’ble big mortgage when it started—only a two hundred dollar one, but times was bad, an’ I hadn’t had

much spare cash ever since our summer boarder had the rasality to die of the indigestion owin' me thirty-five dollars an fifty cents.

"Well, when I was worryin' about that mortgage, our old cow had a calf. I didn't much think when I saw that critter growin' up in the woods, as wild as the wind, that it'd prove to be a reg'lar golden calf for me.

"It was the waywardest critter I ever seen—the craziest an' the cussedest. An' then my dog bit its tail off one day, an' that made it more of a candidate for a lunatic asylum or a race track than ever. I guess its gene'logical tree included the cow that set Chicargo on fire—likewise the cow that jumped over the moon.

"Well, I was down in St. John one day, an' when I went into the hotel I seen somethin' more cur'ous than ever I seen in the woods, an' I've knocked round the woods consid'able. It was one of these Boston fellers that calls themselves towrists, an' wears bloomers, an' glasses, an' peakéd caps with ear-lugs, an' has one of them guns that breaks in two in the middle.

"'Good mornin', sir,' says *it*.

"'Good mornin', sir,' says I.

"'You live in the country, do—you—not?' says the specimen, grinnin' like a chezzycat.

"'I do, don't I,' says I, endeavorin' to speak in the fashion.

"Then the Boston feller asked me if I had any deers down my way. An' just then I happened to think of that frisky calf-o' mine, an' how I'd often thought how like that critter was to a deer. So I said that there was deers up there, but they was pretty hard to find if people wasn't acquainted with the country.

"'If I could only find a deer,' says the Boston feller, 'I wouldn't mind givin' twenty-five dollars.'

"'Twenty-five dollars!' thinks I to myself. 'Well, my young Boston friend, I'm inclined to think that to-morrer will wit-

ness one of the most excitin' deer hunts ever seen in this country.'

"Well, sir, I made an agreement with that feller, that he was to give me twenty-five dollars if I took him to where he could kill a deer, an' I drove him up to the farm that night.

"He was up before I was next mornin', dressed in his glasses an' oversocks, a sight to scare any deer out of its skin.

"I'd had a long talk with my grown-up boys the night before, an' we come to the conclusion that this feller, despite his ways wasn't our ways, was our guest, an' as such it was our duty to make things as pleasant as possible for him. The boys wanted to go with him an' see the fun, but I persuaded 'em to stay home, so's our Boston friend could have all the bigger glory.

"So we went out into the woods, with our guns an' the dog, an' we s'arched around for some time, but we didn't see no deer. So bimeby we come to the burnt pastur'-lands, an' there was that calf, browsin' as calm an' as quiet as you please.

"Howsomever, the dog made a run for the calf, an' the critter acted the deer to perfection. It put for the woods, tight as it could go.

"'Now's your chance,' says I, 'blaze away.'

"Well, the feller fired—but he didn't kill no deer, an' when I looked at him, I wasn't a bit surprised. For he was shakin' like a popple. His knees knocked together, an' his hands was tremblin' like that city gal's was that spoke pieces to the school-house concert.

"'What in time's the matter with you?' says I.

"'Oh,' says the feller, after he had calmed down a little, 'that's all right—that's natural. Every hunter has turns like that when he sees a deer for the first time. It's what they call "buck ager."' "

"Well, I'd heard of buck ager in the story-books, but I swom I didn't think a calf'd cause it. But I held my tongue, an' didn't say nothin'. I was too busy figurin' on how to kill

that calf with my old single-barrel so's to make the feller think he killed it himself.

“By this time the calf was a good ways in the woods, an' I was surprised to see the feller spruce up all of a sudden, an' make for them woods without any trace of buck ager left. He tumbled over a few logs, and skinned that Roman nose of his, but these was mere incidents, an' he didn't mind 'em in the least.

“Well, we tired that calf clean out—still, I was kind o' surprised when we come on it again to see that feller raise his gun, an' fire the left barrel straight as a die, an' hit that calf right betwixt the eyes, so that it toppled over, dead as a megather'um.

“Well, sir, you never seen a man so tickled in your life. He explained how buck ager was just a tempo'ry disease, an' how it just struck a feller the first time he ever seen a deer, that was all. After that the feller'd be all right.

“Well, we had a hearty meal of ven'son that evenin', after which the Boston feller forgot all about his buck ager, an' told me of his deer huntin' exper'ences in the Adirondacks. It seems he was quite a vet'ran hunter. Then we went out into the back yard, and purty soon my oldest son come up.

“I hear some o' you killed a deer to-day,' says he.

“‘Yes,' says the Boston feller, as proud an' as eager as ever I seen a person, ‘I killed him—shot him right through the brain.’

“‘Where do you live when you're home?’ says my son.

“‘Boston,' says the feller, proud-like.

“‘Boston, eh? An' are you aware, sir, that no person not havin' his domercile in New Brunswick shall be entitled to kill any deers without havin' first obtained a license? Now, sir, where's your license?’

“The Boston feiler's jaw fell about three inches.

“‘Now, sir,' says my son, fishin' a copy of the game-laws out of his pocket, ‘I'm the game warden for this district, an'

as you can see by these here statoots you're liable for from twenty to fifty dollars, besides the costs of prosecution, an' twenty dollars for license. It would have been cheaper, my friend,' says he, 'to have got out your license first. But bein' as you're ignorant of our laws,' says he, generous-like, 'though ignerance aint no excuse, I'll compermise on fifty.'

"Well, the feller paid his fifty, an' mighty glad to get off so easy.

"'Now, there's just one more little item,' says my son, after he'd pocketed the cash. 'This is the close season for deers. Penalty not less'n one hundred nor more'n two hundred for each an' every offence. Here it is in black an' white, sir.'

"The Boston feller looked as if ven'son didn't agree with him very extry.

"'Now, I'm willin' to make a compermise, an' keep it out o' the courts,' says my son, 'specially as I understand you've got to leave for Boston to-morrer—so say we make it an even hundred. You'll probly make on it.'

"The Boston feller pondered a little, but he seen the wisdom o' my son's speech, an' paid up the hundred. He slep' kinder restless that night, I took notice.

"But next mornin' he was feelin' purty good. He was goin' to take the deer-skin home. It was a tro-phy, he said. So we hitched up an' drove down to ketch the early train, with that there deer-skin in the back o' the wagon.

"'My dear young friend,' says I, consolin'-like, when he commenced a-grumblin' a little about his payin' so high for his glory, 'you're mighty lucky you ain't in Novy Scoshy, for there's quite a fine there for attemptin' to export wild critter's hides.' So the young feller felt quite cheerf' again.

"But after we got to the station, an' I'd ... out of the way, along come my second son. 'That's a fine hide you've got in the wagon there,' says he, 'must 'a' been a pretty big calf.'

"'Calf!' said the Boston feller. 'It's a deer! I shot it yesterday.'

“‘A deer, is it?’ says my son, appealin’ to the station master ‘What d’ye say to that, Ned?’

“Well, Ned just roared. ‘It’s a calf all right, sir,’ says he to the Boston feller, an’ some of the other fellers in the station backed him up in it.

“‘An’ so you’ve been a-shootin’ a poor defenceless little calf, have you, you mis’able coward?’ says my son. ‘An more’n that you must ‘a’ set your dog on it. It’s tail’s chewed clean off. Oh, you inhuman wretch! Well, sir,’ he goes on, winkin’ to the station master an’ the other fellers, ‘I’m the president of the S. P. C. A., an’ there’s a pretty heavy fine here for cruelty to dumb critters. I’ll have to trouble you for twenty-five dollars right off, unless you’re a-mind to go to jail.’

“Well, sir, that Boston feller just let himself out. He was madder’n a wet hen. He raved an’ he cussed, but it was no use, an’ he wanted to leave on that train. So he coughs up the twenty-five dollars, be he didn’t do it anyways obligin’-like, now I tell you.

“Just as the train was puttin’ out, with him on the hind platform, I comes out from the station and yells, ‘Hi! mister! You left your deer-skin behind. Don’t you want your tro-phy?’

“Well, sir, I’ve allus heard it said that Boston people had a great flow of language, but I never dreamt it was as bad as it was. I never heard a man use more language in my life, an’ I was mighty relieved when the train was out o’ sight, for I’m sup’intendent of the Sunday-school, an’ it pained me consider’ble.

“So that’s the way that onery, bob-tailed calf lifted the mortgage. Twenty-five for gettin’ him the deer, fifty for license, a hundred for huntin’ in the close season, an’ twenty-five for cruelty to animals—that makes a good two hundred. An’ that mighty hunter’s board-bill paid the interest.”

W.

