

NATURE STUDY.

Down in th' swamp lives ole Mr. Skeeter. Bad an' wicked as he can be! When he finds Little Girls he'll eat her. Don't matter where 'bout she is, you see, Nice little girls like you an' me!

OLD FERGYS FINE PULL.

"Old Fergy" was a gigantic Texas steer that belonged on Ferguson's ranch, but spent most of his time in roaming about other ranches.

In bulk his equal was not to be found among the ranches; his great breadth of neck and massive head made him look majestic; and his mighty horns, measuring seven feet from tip to tip, ran out and up in beautiful curves.

These unusual attractions saved his life during the two years of his sojourn in that neighborhood. Colonel Ferguson wished to hold so fine a specimen of his other cattle. And the same qualities which fascinated the colonel saved Fergy from the ill usage to which any common steer of so impudent a nature would have been subjected.

As no one would shoot Fergy his evil habits grew on him so that he became a confirmed pest. He would visit any place that pleased him, since the different kinds of fencing were no obstacle to him. A rail fence nine feet in height he would simply brush aside with his enormous horns.

His prodigious strength enabled him to put down any interfering barbed wire. When the obstruction was of this kind he would calmly place his forehead against a supporter, push two or three spans of fence to one side, and then step carefully over the other side. Clearly he had some brains, certainly enough to be thorough in his mischief.

As Ferguson's ranch adjoined the "Cross S," Fergy found our corral quite convenient to visit, and put us to annoyance more than the "Cross S" brand, was running loose in the valley of Deer Creek, and causing a great deal of trouble to the ranchmen of that vicinity.

"If you will call to see me I will tell you how to recover the stock," wrote Buck's friend. Buck was delighted. One month earlier just fifty head had in some way avoided the fall round-up, and he had believed them stolen. He was, therefore, glad to learn that not only were they still roaming that range, but that their brands remained unaltered.

Buck was quick in action at all times, he saw no reason against starting at once to Fort Reno. Although the message reached him just before nightfall and a suggested blackness was spreading overhead, he ordered Pete to his saddle, and hurriedly sought his own.

They lay down to sleep in what seemed to them rather a comfortable position. They were slumbering within ten minutes of having finished their supper, and during the entire night they were wholly unconscious of the heaviest rain-storm known in the history of that country. Indeed, they were probably soothing to sleep and kept in slumber by the monotonous swish of the rain.

Settlers along Trail Creek remember the remarkable local flood which fell during the fall of 1890, and probably many other people in the history of the country. Indeed, they were probably soothing to sleep and kept in slumber by the monotonous swish of the rain.

"What wakened me," Jennings afterward said, "was a dream of stampeding cattle. They seemed a long way off, but it was as if there were millions of them, and all of them bellowing and the earth shaking as they came. I sat up wondering, listened a few seconds, and got wide-awake, and guessed what had happened. Pete was still asleep. As I jumped up I wakened him, and together we went to the door of the hut.

"It was daylight, but the sun wasn't up, or if it was, we couldn't see it for the thickness of the air. It wasn't what you'd call a fog, but the air was thick-looking from the rain of the night. And such a rain! I don't see how we managed to sleep through it—it must have poured in sheets for hours. It had drowned the creek. There wasn't any creek left—what we saw in place of it was a roaring river with two branches, and one of them about twenty yards wide was between us and our horses.

"The water had jumped up more than fifty feet in the night. It had made our knoll an island. A wide rapid that must have been sixty feet deep was on this side of us where the creek had been, away down below the hut. And on the other side rushed a narrow rapid that must have been ten or fifteen feet deep already.

"The water was climbing fast, though the rain had stopped. It was plain that a little more rise would sweep away the cabin. The flood was within a foot of the door-sill already; and it was plain as day that the hut must soon go whirling away as rapidly as the brush and small stuff that went tearing past us.

"The worst noise was not close to us. From down the canyon we could hear a most frightful roaring, and well we knew what it meant. There, where the deep ravine turned sharp to the north, its bottom jumped down about ninety feet in a hundred yards or so, and at that place there was, in any sort of high water, a most tremendous fall. We knew that, with the creek higher than it had ever been before, there must be a plunge down there that would scare any living thing, for the fall would be tearing in our place through a regular forest of big cottonwoods on the side of the canyon.

"There was no escape that we could see. Swimming across the twenty yards to the bluff was out of the question, though we agreed we could do it if it wasn't for the way the bank was made. Opposite us it sloped up pretty easy, and so it did for maybe thirty yards toward the falls. But at about thirty yards down-stream the slope stopped and a cliff began. There would be no clutching any hold there, and it was certain that the current would sweep swimmers far down stream before they could reach the shore. In fact, to try to swim would be to go over the big falls sure.

"There wasn't a thing to do but just to wait. Now I tell you it is the hardest thing ever a man did—that wait for death. But it was the only sensible thing to do. There was a bare chance that the water might not rise enough to sweep away the cabin; and it was good business to wait and see. But as the stream kept coming up and up, until there wasn't three yards of ground in breadth, or six inches of ground in depth, between us and the flood, Pete and I began to wish for the end of the waiting and the beginning of the swimming—for then we should at least be fighting for our lives.

"Over the top of the sloping bank opposite us we could see the wet heads of our picketed broncos. I remember Pete grinning as he said, 'I never wished I was a bronco before.' Just then we saw another head near the broncos. It was the big head of Old Fergy; nobody could mistake those tremendous curving horns.

"Fergy was out early to inspect the damage done by the rain, I guess. Any other time he'd have tried to start a row with the broncos. Instead of that he came slowly on staring straight at the cabin, walked down the slope solemn as a funeral, and stood close by the howling water. It was up within three inches of our cabin then.

penings in that fury. Once a mass of brush came against us; it did not stop Fergy's stride in the least, but it almost broke my grip on the rawhide. Then, suddenly, it went down under us, and lifted us almost clear of the water; and as it went rolling down beneath our legs, we were plunged head first again.

"If a big slab or a log had struck us we should have been done for, of course; but they were few in that channel. Most of the big drift-stuff was going down the main stream, but that was a good thing. I was just thinking that my strength was gone and that the lariat must be pulled through my fingers, when my chest struck hard against something. With a last desperate impulse I clung to the lariat, and the next instant had to let go. But that was because I had been hauled almost completely out of water. Our shoulders were on the slope. All that Pete and I had to do was get up and walk to our broncos.

"As for Fergy, he started for his own ranch as fast as his legs would carry him, and we had to follow him a good distance before Pete could stop him and get his lariat.

"While we were taking the noose from the big steer's horns we told him he would be a 'boss' performer in a tug of war, and asked him that we were grateful to his help and would always be his friends. He didn't seem to be pleased one bit at the time, but I've often thought since that he understood us perfectly, as he has constantly been imposing on our friendship from that day to this.—Youth's Companion.

Centuries have rolled by since our Saviour rode into Jerusalem with the multitudes going on before him, cutting down "branches from the trees" and strewn them in the way. "And the multitude that went before and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." He rode thitherward over the western end of the now greatly improved road which travelers traverse in his city, his center was Jericho to Jerusalem, a long way after the Good Samaritan Inn has been passed, and, later, Bethany, where lived Mary and Martha, and where the tomb of Lazarus is visited to this day.

While some have held that Bethphage was within the walls of Jerusalem, it seems more sensible to conclude that a house, a quarter or street which led out to Bethphage was thus named, and that the real Bethphage was at the foot of the Mount of Olives, which is a mile east of Jerusalem, across the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

And it even is not known for certain that Bethphage was a village. It means House of Figs, meaning either a house where this fruit was sold or the garden in which the figs were cultivated. If there was no rest village, there were probably shelters for the gardeners who cultivated the fruit; and date palm trees were as plentiful as figs. Palm branches, ever emblematic of victory, were no doubt chosen for such purposes because of their great beauty and from their remarkable uprightness and their magnificent height, many of them towering 100 feet upward.

Smooth as the stalks look, they are usually full of rugged knots, which mark the places whence leaves, long since decayed, once sprang. The trunk of the palm, by the way, is not solid, like other trees. Its center is filled with pith, and around this is a tough bark, which is full of strong fibres when young, but which harden as the tree grows old and become lignous. By the time this palm reaches the fruit-bearing stage the leaves are very broad and six to eight feet in length. Gibbets for the natives have celebrated in verse and prose the 360 uses to which the trunk, branches, leaves and fruit have been put.

Judea is typified on several coins of the time of Vespasian by a disconsolate woman sitting under a palm tree. Other coins which bear the figure of a woman have used the palm tree as a symbol.

As a matter of fact, Jerusalem and the land thereabout does not abound in palm, or any other trees. Jericho, down near the Jordan and the Dead Sea, is known as the City of Palm Trees. And, desolate though it is, as an oasis in the surrounding desert.

Not all the palms which are taken reverently home from churches today will be the date-palm of the Scriptures. All sorts of palms are utilized, especially the palmetto of the Southern States. Before the year was out he got the dollar back. Four times in six years the dollar came back to him for produce, and three times he heard of it in the pockets of his neighbors. The last time he got it back was four years ago. He sent it to a mail-order house. He has never seen that dollar since and never will. That dollar bill will never pay any more school or road tax for him, will never build or brighten any of the homes of the community. He sent it entirely out of the usefulness to himself and to his neighbors when he sent it to the mail-order house.

Capitol is 'Comic,' Says Mr. Pennell.

Many felt that much of the discussion that attended the completion of the State Capitol at Harrisburg was atoned for when the great structure was completed and turned over to the State. They declared the work a gem of decorative art. They will read the criticism of Joseph Pennell, who is himself a great artist and a noted authority on matters of architecture, with surprise.

Mr. Pennell, an American, has done much to further the aims of American art and was the friend of Abbey and the close associate and literary executor of Whistler.

In his frankly expressed opinion the State Capitol when viewed as a great representative building is merely comic, and the sweeping Barnard groups that have such a conspicuous place on the main facade are things that might reasonably have emerged from a confectionery.

Mr. Pennell when in the city was accompanied by his wife, who was Miss Robins, sister of Edward Robins, secretary of the Board of Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania. His criticism followed an inspection of the Capitol made after his return from Panama.

In summing up his impressions of the building Mr. Pennell said he had seen only one example of worse decoration. That, he said, was the court house at Wilkes-Barre, where the mural decorations seem to have been done by a man who received his training in "beautifying" ice cream parlors.

In the opinion of this celebrated American authority the architects, with Barnard and Abbey, all failed utterly to take advantage of a splendid opportunity to evolve something that might be fittingly representative of the State of Pennsylvania or of any other American State, for that matter. The Barnard groups which occasioned so much discussion he considers meaningless and the arrangements for the mural decoration were so bungled, he says, that whatever of splendor Abbey may have put into his work is hidden by projecting pediments and almost invisible.

And the building as a whole is marred by architectural tricks and fads and the impressiveness that should be a part of it is wholly lacking. Particularly did this impression assail Mr. Pennell at the main entrance where, he said, the vast space is cut up and divided in an incredible manner and marred by arrangements that look like "the hiding places of shower baths."

Mr. Pennell attributed what he considers a sorry failure throughout largely to the present weak imitation of the classics that is the aim of American art and the failure of artists and architects alike to evolve native standards as the best of the European artists are doing.

"I studied Mr. Barnard's groups carefully," said Mr. Pennell, "because I know something of the stir they created, and I am well aware that he is an able man. If these have any hidden symbolism—if they may mean anything to the people who view them studiously—I failed to see it. To me they were the conventional ladies and gentlemen without clothes, leaning against an ice cream mountain and escorted in one instance by peacocks. I cannot feel that things of this sort may fittingly represent, help or teach a State like Pennsylvania."

In this connection and for the sake of illustration let me mention the work of certain Europeans—Constantin Meunier, for instance. You see there are some artists who have seen that industry is the great and potent influence of the time and the people of his time. He was not constantly regretting that they were not Greeks. The keynote of the thing is there. In this country we always are painting Greeks. Barnard's groups are impressive because of their size alone—otherwise they are ice creamish, they mean nothing.

Abbey painted his mural decorations without having ever visited the building and he never saw the places where they were to go. I do not know why he never came over here. I know they sent him a model of the building—a small one. But someone bungled and the work is virtually invisible.

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN

So be my passing! My task accomplished and the long day done. My wages taken, and in my heart Some late lark singing. Let me be gathered to the quiet West. The sundown splendid and serene. Death.

The elderly woman of today dresses in practically the same style of clothes as her daughter of 25 or 30 years ago, and yet few women over sixty look well in this youthful costume. In reality the age which they are trying so hard to hide only stands out the more prominently in consequence.

Colors, too, seem to be chosen with a disregard to the harsh lines which they accentuate, and after all it seems strange that the elderly woman should want to dress in this unbecoming and undignified style when there are so many fashions and colors, too, which will bring out all the beauties of these years of battle with the world, its joys and sorrows which cannot but change the countenance of a woman whether she would have it or no.

A woman of sixty or over should find all black, soft gray and lavender the most becoming colors, and these shades should be worn both summer and winter, with the exception of white, which is very becoming to some old ladies, dare we say the word.

There is no color so effective for the silver-haired woman as lavender, with touches of lace, real lace if possible, at the throat and at the wrist. Gray over lavender is another combination which looks well on most elderly women, be their hair silver white or merely threaded with white.

The style of dress worn by a woman past middle age ought to be in accordance with her years, and so short walking skirts should be avoided, and those which are limited and that an extensive wardrobe is distracting. She remembers the four trunks her roommate shipped westward after a conference with the preceptress. Therefore, knowing just what she needs, she sets about the choosing of her models, and makes her selection of materials as individual as possible.

The Amateur Packer.—For the girl who is going away for the first time the problem is more perplexing. Undoubtedly she must have a tailored suit. This will serve for traveling, and if the school is located in the country, as so many are nowadays, its principal use will be for visits to town.

A separate, all-covering coat is a necessity for boarding-school. This roomy, comfortable garment is used to slip on over school frocks for the prescribed constitutional and for traveling in cold and stormy weather.

The Suggested Wardrobe.—The lounging robe is a matter of importance. Something more formal than the bathrobe is required.

Of blouses there are two distinct types—the mannish tailored model so much adopted by the school girl, and the formal separate blouse for the tailor suit.

As for frocks, the school girl needs three distinct types. The simple, one-piece frock for the schoolroom, the afternoon dress for formal occasions and to serve as a dinner dress, and last, the evening gown for the dances which form so large a part of boarding-school life.

FARM NOTES.

—Never punish a horse for something he cannot help. —If possible get rid of all hibernating and hibernated weevils. —Badly-constructed stable floors have injured more horses than hard work. —Cocoons and the like of pestiferous insects found on fruit and shade trees should be destroyed.

—In the matter of plant food it stands to reason that each species would have its own characteristic way of attacking soil ingredients even though the supply required to produce a crop may be almost the same with a number of species. —Lime-sulphur cannot be safely used to replace Bordeaux mixture in spraying potatoes. In tests made at the State Experiment station, Geneva, N. Y., the plants sprayed with lime sulphur were dwarfed by the spraying, died as soon or sooner than the check plants, and yielded 40 bushels less to the acre. Bordeaux mixture in the same test increased the yield 100 bushels to the acre.

—A test repeated for four years at the New York Agricultural Experiment station, Geneva, shows a decided gain in yield by growing tomato plants from seed produced by crossing two varieties. The first generation of crossed plants out-yielded the parents in every case, the average gain being about three and a half tons of tomatoes to the acre. The advantage was greatly less in plants of the second generation and disappeared entirely in subsequent generations. The station horticulturalists believe that the growing of this first generation crossed seed is a commercially profitable undertaking.

—There is a great improvement in the general character of the type of agriculture practiced almost universally as the years go by. This, without question, is the result of enlightened forethought. The subject of diversifying crops is an important one that is being considered, and there are three principal reasons for it. Every crop has its enemies, and these are apt to multiply if the land is continually planted to the same crop.

As a rule the enemies of one crop are not the enemies of another; but they are sometimes. The special enemies of each crop can be held in check by changing the crop each year, even if they are not starved out altogether. Professor Carver says, according to one theory in addition to the known enemies of the different crops, such as insect pests and the like, there is a tendency of plants as well as of animals to throw off excreta which are poisonous to themselves. Therefore, after dense crops of the same plant have been grown continuously for several years the soil becomes unhealthy for that plant, just as the conditions become unwholesome for animals which live in crowded quarters for a long time.

—According to Bulletin 97, of the United States Department of Agriculture, all soils are made up of varying amounts of materials having the three fundamental soil colors—white, black and red. Grayish colors are considered to be composed of mixtures of black and white; yellowish, mixtures of white and red; brownish, mixtures of red and black. Yellowish gray soils are not generally of much agricultural value. They usually lack organic matter and iron, and have a high content of silica and alumina. But light-colored clayey soils are generally fairly rich in potash. Yellow soils owe their richness to small amounts of ferric oxide, more or less hydrated. Black soils are rich in organic matter, and frequently in lime. The color is thought to be due to black humus bodies being formed from decaying organic matter and lime. Black soils are universally esteemed highly. Of course, mechanical condition must also be considered. Red soils owe their color to ferric oxide. The color indicates good drainage, as stagnant water would dissolve away the coloring ferric oxide. Red soils are generally older, in a geological sense, than yellow ones, and the drainage is better.

—The use of commercial fertilizers has prevented the falling off in the averages of staple crops in the East, the yields of which were decreasing every year. It is almost impossible to produce sufficient manure on a large farm to retain its fertility, and more fertilizers should be used. —Plowing cannot be done too early, as it will be time to get the land ready for wheat. A good wheat crop largely depends upon the condition of the ground. The better it is prepared the less liability to damage from drought.

Many farmers fail to realize how much easier and cheaper it would be to do more of the required cultivation before the crop is planted. Begin your preparations early enough so that when you have your land all ready to plant you can just leave it alone for a week or more, and then harrow and cultivate the surface all over again. One crop of weeds will thus be destroyed at a light expense, and the surface will be brought into finer tilth and better prepared to receive the seed. On lands liable to suffer from drought this process may be profitably extended for weeks or months before planting the crop.

—Another reason for diversification is that different crops extract the different elements of plant food from the soil in different proportions. A wide diversification of crops will tend, therefore, to exhaust the soil less rapidly, or rather to retain for a longer period a proper balance of the various elements which go to make up the soil fertility. A third reason for the diversification, and one which, though no more important in itself, appeals to the average farmer more strongly, is that different crops require labor and attention at different times of the year.

All of these reasons given against growing the same crop on the land continually will stand the test. For example, take the case of growing corn on the same ground year after year. In the very necessity of the case there is an increase in at least one species of insect, notably the root worm. Much of the lodging of the corn crop is due to this cause, though it is frequently attributed to storms and other causes. The list of enemies of any crop includes weeds as well as insects, and even the opposition from this source alone is often sufficient to justify rotation.

It is surprising, yet nevertheless so, that there is a tendency of plants to throw off excreta which are poisonous to themselves. One of the most striking examples of this is found in the growing of flax, a crop that will not successfully succeed itself more than once on the same ground. All crops have a like tendency, though in a lesser degree.