

MAJ. WATTS SAID SO.

(Ben Wyle in Chicago News.)

One day a man with a white shirt and silk hat stepped out of the stage and began peering off distances and making entries in a book. First he went down the road, then out across the widow Eagan's farm kitty-corner, and back by the base-line road. The Tamarack folks had never seen a man act like that, and pretty soon the whole village was in a subdued uproar of excitement, if you know what a subdued uproar is. The villagers stopped all work and nosed over to the store to see what it all meant. When school let out for recess all the boys and some of the girls came running over to see what the gathering of citizens was about. One villager—Dan Tobias—followed Maj. Watts, the stage driver, over to the stable and asked him who the stranger was. The major never admits his ignorance on any question, so he merely shut one eye and drew one corner of his mouth down till he thought he looked about as wise as they make 'em, and replied:

"Never you mind. He knows his biz, an' he's goin' to 'tend to it, don't you furgit it. He's a smart 'un, and you'd better jes' let him alone, ef ye know what's good fur ye all."

The villager returned to the crowd and said he knew all about it; that the major had told him.

"Who is he?" asked many.

"Never you mind," said the villager, shutting one eye and imitating the major's wise look as nearly as possible, "he's the smartest man that ever struck these parts. If you knowed 'im you'd say so, too. He's goin' to do wonders here fore he gets through, you hear me?"

"So the major knows 'im, eh?" asked Deacon Bibbs.

"Know 'im? I sh'd say he did. Knows 'im like a book. Told me not to tell who 'e is, though."

This was the recommendation, enough, for was not the major himself a government officer, intrusted with the responsible duty of carrying the mail twice a week from Aurora to Tamarack? And had he not often told the Tamarack folks that he was familiarly acquainted with the president, whom he called by a contraction of his first name, and all the other government officials that were worth knowing? The stranger might be one of the greatest men in the country; might be even the president himself, though this was doubtful, since Uncle Billy Wagner stood in front of the stage and called the major "driver," whereas the major had often assured everybody the president always addressed him as "major," and usually accompanying it with a slap on the shoulder.

No, the strange gentleman in the silk hat probably wasn't the president. But that he was some big man who had a great deal to say about the affairs of the government became the settled belief of the Tamarack folks.

"Mebby he's goin' to build suthin'," said Josh Reynolds.

"Mebby."

"Or," put in Zeke Berry, "p'raps he's goin' to dig fur suthin' or ruther."

"P'raps."

"Bet that's it. Bet he's lookin' fur gold."

"Gosh! what of 'e wuz? Them science fellers is gittin' so's they knows right w'r to look fur them things, you know."

"Mebby he's thinkin' o' layin' out a place to keep Indians in."

"No, I don't reckon that, 'cause Indians, you know, has to be kep' w'r they's plenty o' buffalo an' deer."

So the guessing and the reckoning and the calculating went on until the stranger came back and sat down on the steps in front of the store.

"Nice day," said he as the knot of villagers stood at a respectful distance and looked at him from behind each other.

Everybody was anxious to agree with him and half a dozen of the villagers looked up in the air and allowed it was a good clean day.

"You have a very pretty little town here, but I should think you would have a railroad so that you could ship your grain to New York and get big prices for it, and have cars stop right at your doors and take you anywhere you want to go. Why, if you had a railroad here every foot of this land would be worth dollars where acres of it aren't worth cents now."

The villagers looked at each other with big, round eyes, and two or three of them nodded their heads at each other as much to say:

"That's it; a railroad is just the thing we've been wanting all this time."

"This town is located just right for a railroad center," continued the stranger.

"It's a dead level, with plenty of room to grow; and when it became a big city with nice long streets of brick and stone buildings and a big exposition building over there to the west, and mammoth car-shops over here to the east, and all the nicest residences off to the south there, with the gas-works and water-works back here to the north out of the way, don't you see how handy this level country would be for street-cars connecting all parts of the city? I tell you this level country is a godsend to Tamarack. If you'll stop to think of it you'll see that every city that amounts to anything in the world is built on level ground. Look at New York and Chicago and London and Yeddo and Paris—all on a dead level."

"Ain't Rome built on seven hills?" asked Elder Pussey, who is a member of the school board.

"Yes, and what is it? A total wreck. Made up of beggars and thieves. Perhaps some of you have read Gibbon's 'Decline of Rome.' Why did it decline? Because it was built on hills."

"Waal, that's so," said the elder, uterly vanquished and sorry that he had tried to show so much learning.

"Gee whittaker, but he is a smart 'un, ain't he?" whispered Josh Reynolds to Dan Tobias.

"You bet; an' he's right, too, 'bout the railroad business. Railroads make a town."

"Yes, siree."

"How much is land worth around here?" The stranger addressed his question to Mr. Sperry, the store-keeper, who was sitting on a mackerel kit in his doorway.

"Waal, I dunno. There hain't been

no land sold here since—lemme see—Bill Simpson sold the last, but he took it out in—no, hole on! Daddy Sims' darter—she thet's now Mrs. Somebody over in Iowa—she sole her pa's ole farm to Ben Gordon three year ago come fall.

"What did she get for it?"

"That's what I was tryin' to think; whether it was—say, Dan, what'd Ben Gordon give Sally Sims fur the ole farm?"

"Give 'er \$85 'n acre. Skun 'er, too, like thunder. She might 'a got a hundred fur it jes' 's easy 's sixty-five. Ef she'd been smart, an' put it right up to auction. Tom Judkins 'd 'a gin 'er any amount to keep Ben Gordon 'um git 'in' it."

"What's the trouble between Mr. Gordon and Mr. Judkins?" asked the stranger.

"Waal, ye see, eight years ago they was some talk o' having a noo Methodist church, an' Tom an' Ben is both big men in the church, an' Tom lives over yer 'bout a mile 'n the west and Ben lives on 't'other side over yer east 'bout three-quarters, and they both wanted the church on their sides o' the town, so the church folks thought it 'd make bad blood if they built it in either place, so they didn't build none at all, an' Tom an' Ben has fit it ever since."

After dinner the stranger lighted a cigar and started on up the base-line road. When he reached Mr. Gordon's farm he found that gentleman doin' back of the barn nailing a board to the pig-yard fence.

"Is this Mr. Gordon?"

"That's my name."

The stranger handed him a neat little card which told that he was Francis E. Huntley, general agent of the American Overland Railroad company.

"Probably you have heard of our company, Mr. Gordon."

"Waal, no, can't say I hev."

"Why, we are the company that is building that big consolidated system of railway from New York to San Francisco."

Benjamin Gordon is a man who doesn't like new-fangled nicknames, and has no love for men in tail, silk hats. Mr. Huntley observed this.

"I came to you for advice, Mr. Gordon."

"I hain't much on the advice," said Gordon, shortly, without looking up from his work.

"It is not exactly advice, either, that I want. It is more like information. I may have some business with a Mr. Judkins, who lives somewhere about here—"

Mr. Gordon stopped work.

"And as I never met the gentleman, but had heard of you as an honorable man and one of my brother Methodists, I thought I would learn something of Mr. Judkins. Is he responsible?"

"Responsible for what?" asked Mr. Gordon, laying his hammer and a handful of nails on a fence-post.

"Well, suppose he should agree to give our company a certain amount of land if we would locate our depot and vast car shops on a part of his farm, would he fulfill his promise?"

Mr. Gordon wiped his boots on the grass and said:

"Come into the house and take a seat."

They went in and Mr. Gordon whispered something through the kitchen-door. Presently Mrs. Gordon brought in a pitcher of cider and some glasses and a pan of doughnuts.

"Air you really goin' to build a railroad through Tamarack?" said Mr. Gordon.

"Well, we've got to go through somewhere. Tamarack is right on our line, but Plainfield, over here to the south, would probably give a good deal to have us come there. Of course it would make property boom right up in price."

"I sh'd think you wouldn't like to go out uv a straight line, though."

"So we don't, and that's why I came over to see what Mr. Judkins would do. Of course if he will make it an object for us to locate all our buildings and side-tracks, and all that on his farm we'd rather go through Tamarack. Certainly he can afford to do it, because it would make the rest of his land worth hundreds where it isn't worth dollars now, but—"

"Why don't you put your depots and shops over yere on this side?"

"We would like to, but what's the odds? Judkins owns all the land, and—"

"All o' what land?"

"Why all this land. Doesn't Mr. Judkins own this farm you're working?"

"Who said he did?" asked Mr. Gordon in red-faced rage.

"Why, I thought he did. A man in Chicago told me he did, and I believe he said Judkins himself told him so."

"Yes, sir; I thought so," said Mr. Gordon, storming about the room and kicking the cat against the clothes-har, upsetting every thing. "That's jes' like the ornery critter 'o go tellin' them kind o' lies. I knowed he was a schemin' fur suthin' dishonest when I seed 'im put a hull dollar in the plate las' Sunday."

"I'm sorry I didn't understand this matter, Mr. Gordon, before; but it's none too late yet. If he is a dishonorable man and has sought to injure you, I can and I will help you to punish him for his rascality."

"Can ye, though? An' will ye? Say, how can ye do it?"

"Well, sir, easy enough; and in the meantime you can help me a little, and we'll get on the nicest kind together."

"Waal, sir, I'd give half my farm to beat Tom Judkins in this 'ere business."

"Very well, you help me get a bonus from this town, and I'll fix it so you can have a chance to bid against old Judkins for the depot and enormous shops and side-tracks and general offices and everything."

The upshot of this whole thing was, Mr. Huntley went over to see Thomas Judkins and told him that if he would help him to get a bonus from the town he would tell him how to get half of Gordon's farm and make a bushel of money out of it.

"How's that?" asked Mr. Judkins, without attempting to conceal his joy.

"Gordon's farm is worth \$100 an acre, isn't it, just as it stands?"

"Yes, jest about."

"Well, the great American Overland railroad is coming through it, and goin' to build its big depot and its tre-

mondous shops and side-tracks and general offices and all that right there on Gordon's farm. Now, I'll go and buy eighty acres as if I were getting it for the road, and I'll sell it to you at most if you'll help me get the bonus from the town."

Mr. Judkins was pleased with the arrangement. To own half of Gordon's farm was glory enough if he didn't make a dollar out of it. So the bargain was struck, and everybody was satisfied. Gordon gladly gave eighty acres of land to get the depot and shops away from Judkins; Judkins gladly gave \$100 an acre for half of Gordon's farm; he gladly helped Huntley to get a bonus of \$10,000 from the township, and Huntley gladly went away with a small fortune in his pocket, and has never been seen since.

When it was pretty definitely settled that Huntley was a bold, bad man, and that the American Overland Railroad company existed only in his bold, bad mind, the Tamarack folks called on Maj. Watts to explain his acquaintance with the stranger in the white shirt and silk hat.

"W'y, confound it," said the major, "didn't I tell you I knowed 'im. Didn't I tell ye he was a smart 'un, an' you'd better let 'im alone? An' then you went and didn't let 'im alone, an' it serves ye right fur not takin' my word. Hain't that what I tole you, Dan Tobias?"

And Dan had to admit that those were exactly the major's words.

Electricity as a Brute-Tamer.
(Fall Mall Gazette.)

The latest application of electricity is an invention made in the interests of lion-tamers, which consists of an apparatus of great power, shaped like a stick, about three feet and a half in length. Mr. Rauspach, the inventor, is a lion-tamer himself, who has been "a good deal worried" during a long and successful professional career. He has already experimented with it upon the denizens of the cages in his menagerie, and relates the different effects upon the brutes. Three of his lions receiving the shock immediately showed signs of the greatest terror. They were seized with trembling, and growled fitfully. The tiger was more quickly subdued, became stupefied, and crouched in a corner of the cage. Bruin was more refractory to electricity, which seemed scarcely to affect him. He would growl and show his teeth, and was subdued after repeated discharges.

The most astonishing effects, however, were perceptible in the boa constrictor. On receiving the discharge the specimen from Cayenne, nearly twenty feet in length, became at once paralyzed and remained motionless for six hours afterward. When he recovered he showed signs of numbness for three whole days. Finally, the elephant, who is being electrified by a touch of the stick upon the tip of his trunk set up a series of wild cries and became so strange that the tamer feared the brute would break his heavy iron chain. M. Rauspach is said to intend addressing a paper upon the experiment to the Academy of Sciences.

The Extinction of Plants.
(Science.)

The imminent danger of extinction which threatens many of the rare plants of the Swiss Alps has led to the formation of a society for their preservation. On reading the account of this society the question arises. Are any of our rarer species likewise in danger of extermination? With the exception of the extensive raids which are annually made upon some of our native plants by herb collectors (and it must be understood that this has assumed very considerable proportions, especially at the south), there are no very large drafts made which imperil the existence of the less common species.

To be sure, in a few localities the mayflower and the climbing fern have been extirpated by the greed of collectors for the market; but it can hardly be said that these beautiful species are yet in peril. The same is true of the medicinal plants, ginseng and mandrake. It is fortunate that most species collected for medicinal purposes are reasonably prolific, and will doubtless hold out until those now in fashion have been discarded by other aspirants for popular and professional favor.

Tobacco Manufacturers.
(Chicago Herald.)

Of the 600,000,000 pounds of tobacco grown in this country this season 300,000,000 will be manufactured into chewing and smoking tobacco and snuff. The tobacco manufacturers proper are about 1,000, but of cigar manufacturers the number reaches more than 16,000. New York and Pennsylvania have each about 4,000, Illinois and Ohio about 1,500 each, none of the other states reaching in number as high as 1,000. These cigar manufacturers made over 3,000,000,000 cigars in the fiscal year just ended, and about 750,000,000 cigars.

From Men to Monkeys.
(Dr. F. A. Hasler.)

The Bedouins will not eat the flesh of the monkeys that are found upon Mount Kara, because of the supposed evil influence such an act would have upon their lives. They believe that these monkeys were once men who went to see Mohammed and he put both water and milk before them, but they from perverseness washed in the milk and drank the water, so they were turned into monkeys.

Hard to Pull Up.
(Boston Times.)

It was in the country and little Nellie was pulling sassafras root with her sister Susie, just over the family tomb. Finally Susie had great difficulty in pulling up a root, and, turning to Nellie, she said: "I wonder what makes this come so hard?"

"Oh, I duns Aunt Lizzie is holdin' on to de end inside o' de tomb," was the quick reply.

What a Convict Has Done.
(The Churchman.)

It is not, perhaps, creditable to the Christianity of New Yorkers that the one refuge of discharged convicts in this (New York) city was started by a man who had spent thirty-five years in prisons in all parts of the world. What ought to have been done over and over again, perhaps, by Christian people was done by a supposed outcast.

Hall's Journal of Health: Great workers must be great resters.

THE DEAR PUBLIC.

[Charles Mackley.]
You prefer a buffoon to a scholar,
A harlequin to a teacher,
A jester to a statesman,
An anonymous flatterer on horseback
To a modest and spotless woman—
Brute of a public!

You think that to sneer shows wisdom
That a gibe outvalues a reason;
That slang, such as thieves delight in,
Is fit for the lips of the gentle,
And rather a grace than a blemish.
Thick-headed public!

You think that if merit's exalted
Tis excellent sport to decri it,
And trail its good name in the gutter;
And that cynics, white-gloved or cravat-ed,
Are the cream and quintessence of all things,
Ass of a public!

You think that success must be merit,
That honor and virtue and courage
Are all very well in their places,
But that money's a thousand times better;
Detestable, stupid, degraded
Pig of a public!

Surgical Aid to Attain the Beautiful.
(Philadelphia Press.)
The competition between dudes in the matter of small feet has become so intense that they are visiting the consulting-rooms of prominent surgeons and asking to have their big toes amputated, so that they be able to get into boots of the smallest compass possible. Professor William H. Pancoast, of the Jefferson medical college, has, during the past month, been called upon by three men and one woman, all of them making the singular request. In every instance he refused to perform the operation, and the would-be patients went away disgusted.

The idea of the surgeon's knife aiding them in their efforts to attain the beautiful seems to have occurred to hundreds of people simultaneously, like an epidemic.

"I can't account for this remarkable desire for being mutilated for the sake of appearance," said Dr. Pancoast to a Press reporter, "but I can say that it has, like all fashionable crazes, sprung up in a very short time. It must be due to the pointed shoes. Ey-and-by the pointed shoe will go out and then these people who are having their big toes sliced off will be sorry."

"Would the slicing off of his big toe hurt a dude?" asked the reporter.

"Not materially," answered the physician. "In fact, people whose toes have had to be amputated through disease seem to get along all right. I have had lots of patients whose toes have been removed, and they have always been consoled when told of the dainty little boots they will be able to wear. And I really don't think they miss the toes. It is a curious fact that most of the applicants are men. Popular prejudice would at once conclude that none but a woman could be so vain. One of my visitants was a farmer, though what on earth he wanted with small feet I can't imagine."

"It is a common thing for surgeons to have patients who want meeting eye-brows eradicated," Professor Pancoast continued. "In these cases we remove the hair by the roots and then apply electricity, which gives the person a sharp, stinging pain. After this treatment the undesirable eyebrows never return. Ladies who are so unfortunate as to have mustaches are treated in the same way, but it is so painful that they can only have half a mustache removed in a day. They go away looking very funny. It is getting quite common to do away with defects in the ear or nose. All these items are part of a physician's regular routine; that is, all excepting the big-toe treatment, which I would never perform for any one."

A Drouth in India.
(Globe-Democrat.)

A drouth in India, where the thermometer often goes to 140 degrees in the shade at this season of the year, means first, the entire failure of the year's crop and impending starvation for millions. It means also the drying up of the water courses, the disappearance of the ponds and lakes, the emptying of the reservoirs all over the country, and the consequent temporary abandonment of excellent farming land, the former occupants being driven to the neighborhood of the larger streams. It means the expenditure of huge sums of money by the Indian government in relieving the necessities of the starving people, and the resumption of vast systems of relief works comprising the grading of railroads, the digging of canals, the excavation of reservoirs, undertaken mainly for the purpose of furnishing work to the populations, and thus keeping them alive till the next crop could be grown.

But even with all this significance, though a drouth in India is no insignificant affair, it is by no means what it was before the days of the English occupation. Then, when one district suffered from famine, another, only a few miles away, might be in plenty; but there were no roads, no means of transportation, and, consequently, no relief. The railroad and the telegraph have prevented the possibility of many deaths from starvation, save in the outlying districts; but still, even now, a general drouth is an exceedingly serious matter for all concerned, and often taxes the sources of the Indian government to the utmost to prevent much real suffering.

Ozone Generated by Plants.
(Chicago Journal.)

The tests made by Dr. Andrews, at Christ hospital, Philadelphia, show that plants in sleeping or sick rooms fulfill two functions, namely, that of the generation of ozone and exhalation of vapor, by which the atmosphere of the room is kept in a healthful condition of humidity. It is stated that in two rooms alike in all respects except that one contained some flowers and the other none, that containing the flowers was cooler by 1 1/2 degrees than the other. The ozone thus generated by budding and flowering plants has been found to have great sanitary value, in that it purifies the air, ridding it of disease-breeding germs and of the vapors of decomposition, and, in case of consumption, the benefit of the ozone is shown in its arresting the course of the malady. Foliage plants, it appears, produce no ozone.

The Discovery of "Pepsin."
It is said that the aid to digestion called "pepsin" was discovered by a crank in Chautaugus county, New York, in 1855. The original discoverer claimed that the remedy was revealed to him in answer to a prayer.

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