

OLD NEW ENGLAND.

THE FIRST SETTLERS WERE HUMAN, LIKE THEIR DESCENDANTS.

The Puritans Were Not Without Their Pleasures of a Worldly Character—There Was, However, Very Little Drunkenness—Heroes Were Wholly Mortal.

It is not altogether an easy thing for us to realize that the generations who have been before us in life have been just such men and women as we ourselves are, differing in their surroundings, their knowledge and their habits, but possessing all the elements of good and evil, of weakness and strength, which go to make up human nature today.

THE TROPICAL ANT MAN.

A Relentless Destroyer Who Fights the Hardy Insects With Smoke.

To look at the mill, timid ants of our cool climate, which run at the sight or sound of a person, build their humble nests under a stone or the roots of a tree, and content themselves with gently nibbling little bits of seeds or grain, or such small matters—to look at these gentle little fellows you would never imagine that there are some branches of their family, distant cousins, which are ferocious in the pursuit of their human neighbors' goods, so strong and so intelligent that even grown men are afraid of them, and sometimes whole villages turn out to fight them.

The foreign, as this destroyer is called, constructs a tunnel for itself underground, its only communication with the world above being by secret passages. If it can find any woodlice, beetles, or other insects, it captures and carries them home, makes a yard for them—a veritable farmyard—and keeps them content by furnishing a supply of fresh leaves every day, just for all the world as we feed our farm stock. The foreign is a marauder of its own kindred, too, making raids on its weaker cousins and bearing off their eggs, which, in due course of hatching, become the slaves of their captors.

Usually the people of those tropical regions pay little attention to the doings of the foreign. They come and go as they list, running over the rocks, tables, dishes. They are fished out of the butter, tapped out of the bread and cake. It is a matter of course.

But when these sturdy little fellows invade the houses in swarms, and a weak reception—boiling water—fails to diminish the nuisance, then the services of the ant man become necessary, and he is sent for in hot haste. His stock in trade are an enormous bellows and a load of a certain kind of wood found in the neighboring forests. After stopping up all the openings leading under the house, except a central one, he enlarges that and forms it into a furnace that will admit the pipe of the bellows.

Then he lights a fire, and with the aid of the great bellows forces the smoke into the ant tunnels under the surface of the ground. Of course these are very porous, and when the smoke passes through them it goes out into the house above. Then the ant man leaves an assistant to work the bellows, and going into the house stops up every aperture and crack that he can find.

Meanwhile there is a wild commotion among these doomed insects, whose home is being bombarded with smoke. They understand their danger with the very first puff that reaches them and know that their only hope is in flight. They all hasten to the central chamber, where their precious eggs are stored. At a given signal from their chief each one seizes an egg, then all turn in haste into the subterranean passages that lead into the garden, deserting their homes and carefully stored stock of provisions, but holding fast to the treasured eggs.

But there, before them, are the cruel wreaths of blue smoke. They turn and risk to another passage. The same thing then, as a former hope the poor ants—we can't help feeling sorry for them, after all—run into the old deserted galleries, or set to work to make new ones, hoping their enemy will not find them there at last.

But the ant man is patrolling the ground around the house. As the old and new galleries are cleared out by the brave little ants the smoke penetrates them and comes to the surface in a thin wreath. They are thus betrayed as well as smothered, and a stroke of the spade ends their frantic efforts at escape.

All this time fresh quantities of the hot smoke are being forced through their highways and byways, and the frail bodies of the foreign are shriveling and dropping along their line of attempted retreat. Soon they cease to struggle. They cannot breathe the rarefied smoke laden air. The next day, when the soil has cooled off, they are found calcined in their own busy galleries, their roasted eggs at their side. Poor little creatures!

But their human victims call the ant man a blessing.—Philadelphia Times.

Walking Under a Ladder. A well dressed, smart appearing man near the entrance of one of the big Broadway hotels the other day turned out of his way deliberately to walk under a ladder leaning against the wall. He had to crowd close to the wall and climb over a coil of rope to pass under the ladder, but seemed to take great satisfaction in his performance.

"I suppose," said a bystander, "that man feels he is helping to break down superstition and disprove the foolish beliefs people have held for centuries. Maybe he is a member of the Thirteen Club, whose members go out of their way to walk under ladders, assemble 13 at tables, cross their knives, spill salt with each other and do all manner of things like that." "But the superstitions people will tell you such things don't count. They aren't tests. It's only when 13 get together by accident or a person accidentally does any one of the thousand and one 'unlucky things' that bad luck is to be expected. Kismet doesn't belabor you because you spill salt, but when you spill salt it is a sign Kismet has it in for you had."—Philadelphia Press.

The Kaiser's Lack of Tact. While Emperor Francis Joseph, Queen Victoria, Queen Christina of Spain and the queen regent of Holland are renowned for their tact, King Leopold of Belgium, the Portuguese royalties and particularly Emperor William are noted for the absence of this quality. Perhaps the most amusing illustration that can be given of Emperor William's lack of tact was when, in taking leave of the pope on the occasion of a visit to Rome, he exclaimed in French, "Que Dieu vous benedisse" (God bless you). The emperor was probably unconscious of the purport of his remark at the moment, but the idea of bestowing his blessing on the pope, instead of himself, resulting in the hands of the venerable pontiff, must have taken even his hellish by surprise. And yet it is entirely in keeping with the character and attitudes of Emperor William, who considers himself as God's viceregent over the German empire, and not only as the "summus rex," but also as the "summus episcopus."—Boston Herald.

A Historic Elephant. When Alexander the Great conquered Porus, king of India, he captured a huge elephant which had fought very stoutly against him and set it free after having placed round its leg a band of metal recording the fact that he had dedicated it to the sun. Three hundred and fifty years later this elephant was found with the inscription of Alexander intact.—New York News.

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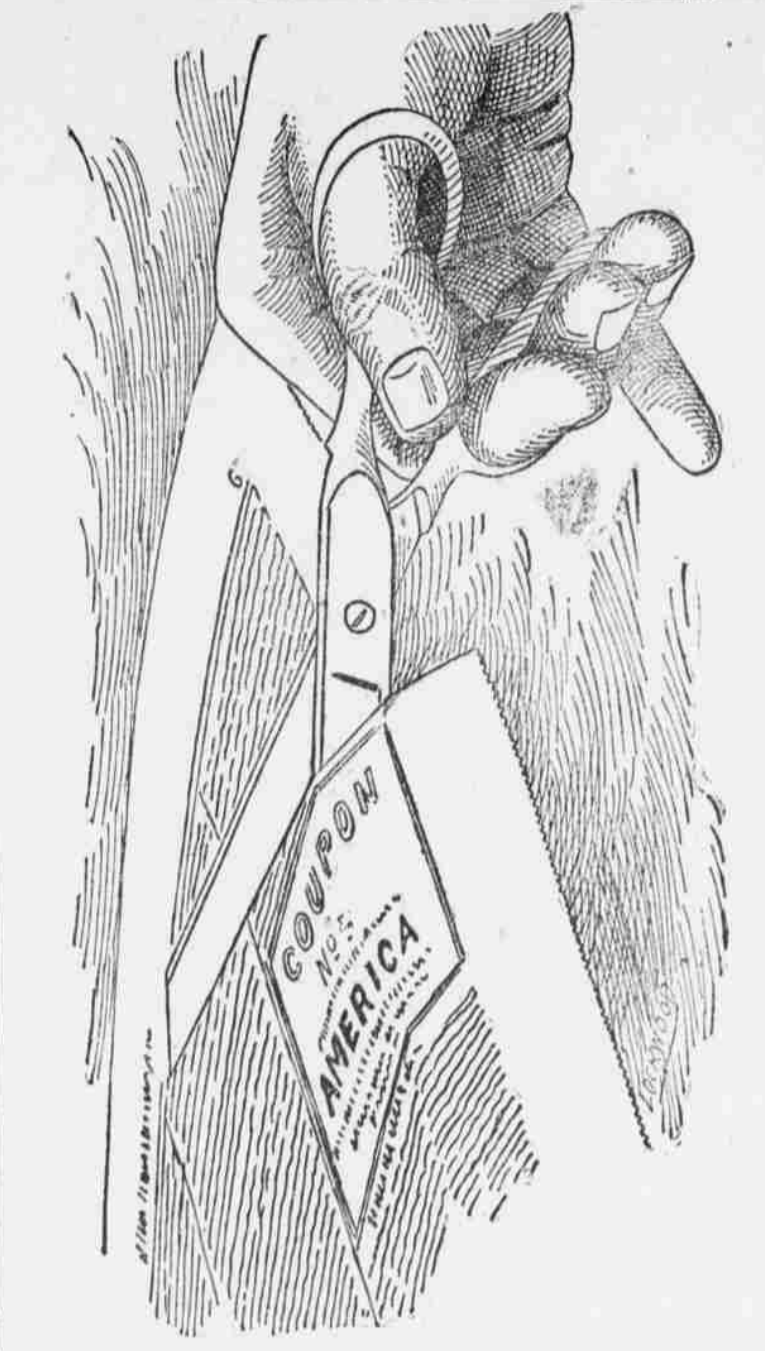
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