

TO A WATERFOWL.

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last
steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost
thou pursue
Thy solitary way?
Vainly the Fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee
wrong,
As, darkly painted in the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.
Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and
sink
On the chafed ocean-side?
There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless
coast,—
The desert and illimitable air,—
Gone wandering, but not lost.

A Pair of Prospectors.

A NARRATIVE WHICH INVOLVES SOME UNWRITTEN LAWS.

By WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT.

The tale of how a gold rush started up Mammoth Canyon, came back to Palo Pinto, where it began, in fragments, much the same as a herd of cattle is rounded up on the home range after a stampede. It was pieced together and calmed into a reasonable narrative by Nip Fowler, who is the Palo Pinto correspondent for all existing newspapers. Here are the facts:

There was Ditsey Fornocrook, prospector; there was "Fire-pox," a stranger burdened with many devils; and there was Frek Muldoon, the second, a master of men, guns and trials. These three carried out a drama of few words.

Ditsey was down to the rinds and gristle of his last stake and looking for a "pardon" to go up the Mammoth with him for the gold cure. No one offered until "Fire-pox" drifted into Palo Pinto. Following is Nip Fowler's description of the stranger:

"He had no word to say about who or what he was, but he looked bad to us—had and twitchy and suspicious. A quick step behind and he'd leap about like a cat caught snooping' which knows better. He was pocked. Oh, yes, he was pocked—deep and red like harvest moons. So we named him. His eyes were busy and small and shiny black, and the whites were yellow. His ears were pointed like his teeth, and his lips were paper-thin. We saw he had left something behind that did not lay easy, but Ditsey was looking for a pardon and didn't stipulate a sky-blue past. He wanted a man to do his half, and when 'Fire-pox' said he'd go, Ditsey said 'buen.' Two days after they pulled up the canyon with three burros."

The stranger didn't prove entertaining, but he could work and travel and handle packs. He used a bivouac for eating and sleeping purposes only; but he knew all about the creepings and hidings of the yellow virgin who makes the harlequins of the many. Ditsey was pleased. He figured that their joint capacity would start a rush up the canyon. And he was right.

One dawn when Palo Pinto was three weeks behind, Ditsey opened his eyes to find that his pardon was beyond the camp circle and that no breakfast was in progress. A few minutes afterward, "Fire-pox" crawled in. His eyes were as big as walnuts, bright as fire and mad as poison. He jerked up when he saw that the other was awake.

"Couldn't sleep," he croaked. "Sun must a-whacked me, yesterday. Take the packs on. I'll rest a spell an' ketch up long towards nightfall."

Ditsey believed in letting a good man have his little peculiarities. He swallowed some crackers and jerked beef and set out with the burros, asking no questions. He may have determined upon a peeped-eye policy in connection with "Fire-pox." He may have deemed it peculiar that a sun-mad budle should have turned up in the gray morning with his pick in his hands, limestone dust upon his boots, sweat upon his face, and an unholly light in his eyes. But this is conjecture and the facts are not yet spent.

It was the middle of the afternoon and Ditsey was pushing on alone. There had been no sound from behind for nine solid hours. The sun struck the east wall of the canyon and showered down, hot as clinders. The man and the burros clattered around a swerve of the gorge, and all beheld ahead an untethered buckskin pony and a little man sitting upon a rock, placidly smoking a cigarette. It was Frek Muldoon, II.

His real name is forgotten. He called himself after the greatest trailer of them all, the man who stopped the lone war of Crooked Knife, Apache. Like the first Muldoon, he worked alone, shot from the hip, brought back his man and drank himself still in dull seasons. Moreover, he was of the same jockey-build, and, like the first Frek, could bide his thirst, camel-fashion. In short, a man would be just as safe running with a can of nitro-glycerine through a jammed freight house in the dark as to please the second Frek in his trails.

"Hallo, sheriff," Ditsey called pleasantly. "Say," Muldoon questioned, squinting up at the other, "who're you hitched to this trip?"

Ditsey grew wise, looking at the little, scarred, grizzled face below. He scrutinized the canyon and the sky,

remember how "Fire-pox" had come in covered with sweat and stone dust and carrying his pick, he remembered the look in "Fire-pox's" eyes," and what the sheriff had said about his man being "clean loco when there's money in sight," he recalled the sheriff's word picture of "Fire-pox" coming around the swerve in the darkening canyon. A little search, and yet a little more search, and Ditsey came to a spot low down on the canyon wall which was covered with artificial plaster and dry shrubs.

He scraped away the artificial coating and beheld a golden promise which "Fire-pox" had schemed to develop alone. And Ditsey was humiliated most of all because it was proven that another man's eyes were keener for "signs" than his own.

He lingered there alone for many days enthralled in study. It was no belated outcropping, but one of nature's great caches. When there remained but provisions to see him back to the Palo Pinto he staked out exactly the claim he wanted and left the spot, jealous of the sun above and the water beneath.

He was surprised to find that the hunted "Fire-pox" had not left the canyon at the Mutton Trail crossing. At least the tracks of Muldoon's pony continued beyond, and that was enough. It was the fourth of midday; Ditsey saw a black moving dot on the river bank 200 yards ahead. The burros jerked up often as the blotch was neared and sniffed the sudden oppressions of the air. The man strained forward, chilled, yet sweating. A vulture arose with a roar that shocked the canyon—then others! Ditsey's understanding was all but complete. Which had fallen—the sheriff or his man?

Ditsey passed by, brushing the far wall of the canyon, choked by the hot blasts of tainted air. A boot protruded. The sole was broad and flat—in no way akin to the sheriff's. Frek Muldoon was likely spending his money with this time back in Campinas. Evidently "Fire-pox" had squirmed.

Back in Palo Pinto at length, Ditsey Fornocrook told a tale that touched upon the finish of "Fire-pox" and turned half the town up the canyon for claims.—New York Evening Post.

SCARCITY OF WHALEBONE.

Monster of the Deep Which Furnished the Article Nearly Extinct.

Experts say there is only about six tons of whalebone left in the world. That means that the Greenland whale that carries about half a ton of the "bone" in its cavern of a mouth, is well nigh extinct, says London Modern Society. Ten or 12 of these gigantic whales yet roam the Arctic seas, and when these are killed there are none to take their place. There are other species of whales that yield baleen, or whalebone, but it is coarse and small, and in no way to be compared to the great shining plates, eight or ten feet long, which are taken from the mouth of the Greenland whale. The cachet, or sperm whale, is hunted for its oil and its spermaceti; it possesses no baleen, having instead a row of stout white teeth yielding excellent ivory.

Whalebone is curious stuff, being light, flexible, tough, and elastic to a degree that renders it unique for many purposes. Steel has taken its place in the umbrella trade and in corset manufacture, but whalebone holds its own in the best dressmaking establishments. There are mechanical brushes, too, which must be made of whalebone until, indeed, some "other" substance is invented or discovered equally durable and springy. An old law, never yet repealed, gives the whalebone of any derelict whale found on the coasts of Britain, to the queen consort "for her own use and behoof, and the busking of the bodices of her dames and maids."

Queen Caroline, consort of George III, claimed this perquisite when a Greenland whale came ashore on the Norfolk coast. It was the time of hooped petticoats and long stiff bodices, and the queen's delight, in receiving such an unexpected supply of stiffening is chronicled in a letter from pretty Mary Bellenden to Lady Suffolk: "And I, too, have my share," the maid of honor finished triumphantly.

QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

Forty-five only of the crew of the liner Kaiser William II, are ordinary sailors, the remaining 555 being mechanics, etc.

A man who lives at Belfast, Me., claims to have the record for railroad accidents, having recently been in six within forty-eight hours.

On the German Emperor's birthday the inhabitants of Cologne are allowed to cross the Rhine bridge free, provided they go on foot. Carriages pay as usual.

Penobscot county claims the oldest horse in Maine, if not in the country. His name is Tommy Fostlett. He is forty-two years old, and there is no question about his age.

Expert mountaineers who require three hours or more to ascend the snowy slope of the Mexican volcano Popocatepetl can slide down the same slope safely in ten minutes.

Mr. H. C. Robinson, who has spent two years in scientific investigation in the Malay peninsula, recently exhibited to the zoological section of the British association a specimen of a fish known as the "mud hopper," which by means of strong fins under its body is able to move about on land for distances of at least twenty yards from its watery nests in the swamps.

KEYSTONE STATE CULLINGS

CRYTZER EXONERATED.

Coroner's Jury Finds That He did Not Maliciously Give His Friend Poison for Whiskey.

As the result of drinking poison, given him as a practical joke by a friend who was not aware of the nature of the fluid, John N. Henry, a well-known citizen of Kittanning, died in terrible agony. It is said that George Crytzer, a constant companion of Henry, had taken a bottle at the residence of Thomas Steffy with the intention of playing a joke on Henry. From a slight test he judged it to be harmless, but harmless. He met Henry from the street about 6:30 o'clock in the morning as he was going to work. Henry asked Crytzer if he had anything to drink, as the morning was chilly. Crytzer replied in the affirmative and handed the bottle of poison to Henry, who took a long pull at it. In less than five minutes Henry collapsed in the street and had to be carried home.

The coroner's jury in the investigation of the death of John N. Henry, of Kittanning, who took poison for whiskey a few days ago, has returned a verdict finding that George Crytzer, who gave Henry the bottle which he thought contained whiskey, did not do so with any malicious intent, and exonerated Crytzer from any blame in connection with Henry's death. Crytzer, who has been in the county jail awaiting the result of the inquest, has been released from custody.

HOOR GLASS HOUSES.

Peculiar Structures Seen in the Kamchatka Peninsula.

All through the northwestern portion of the peninsula of Kamchatka there are villages of houses shaped like huge hour-glasses. Mr. W. B. Vanderlip, in his book, "In Search of a Siberian Klondike," describes his first view of these peculiar structures.

As we drew near the village came swarming out with a pack of mongrel curs at their heels; and over the edge of each hour-glass house appeared the heads of the women and children, all eager to get a glimpse of such a novel sight as a foreign face.

As I tumbled out of my sledge, I was surrounded by the filthiest lot of natives I had yet seen. The people were kind and pleasant, and seemed bent on shaking hands with me. I was pressed on all sides with invitations to enter one and another of the curious houses.

As I stood there, debating what I should do, the chief of the village allowed his war through the crowd, took me by the hand, and led me to the largest of the huts. In order to enter we had to go up a ladder to the height of ten feet or more. This ladder was a log of driftwood, split down the centre, and provided with little holes in which to put the toes. The natives have very small feet, and I found the holes in the ladder too small to insert my toes, but I managed to scramble to the top.

I was now standing on the edge of an inverted octagonal cone, made of logs lashed together. The inside or crater of the affair, which was about 18 feet across, sloped down at an angle of about fifteen degrees to the centre, where there was a hole leading down to the interior of the house. The hole also sufficed for a chimney, and to enter the house one had to go down a ladder through the smoke. Santa Claus is said to come from the north, and it might well be among this people that he originated, for here everybody enters his house by way of the chimney.

The flaring circle of logs protects the opening of the house from being covered up with drifting snow. Moreover, the high scaffolding thus provided is an excellent storehouse, upon which all sorts of things can be placed without fear of molestation from wild animals.

I followed the chief down the ladder through the smoke. The hole was two feet wide and three feet long. I found myself in a semi-subterranean apartment, 30 feet in diameter and 15 feet high. As we stood on the floor, our heads were about level with the general surface of the ground. The frame was strongly built of timbers, evidently driftwood.

In these rooms one would naturally expect the worst in the matter of ventilation, and I was surprised to find that it was exceptionally good. An air shaft is so arranged that it enters the room near the floor on one side. The draft, made by the heat of the fire rising through the smoke hole, causes pure air to be drawn through this ventilating shaft.

What Mile Posts Are For.

"Will you explain just the practical benefit of mile posts along a railroad track?" asked an inquisitive traveler of Superintendent Schaff of the Peoria & Eastern as they flew past one of the white painted posts.

"So far as the general public is concerned," replied the superintendent, "I don't suppose that mile posts are of any particular benefit. The traveler can tell by looking out the car window how far he is from terminal points, but in that he is not greatly interested.

"Some people like to figure out from the mile posts how far they have traveled or how far they have to go, and there are not a few who like to time the speed of trains by the mile posts. But that is not what the posts are for. In the office of the division superintendent is a profile, or diagram, showing the location of every one of these posts.

"If an accident occurs, a rail breaks, a car lets down, or anything out of the ordinary happens between stations, the superintendent is notified of the proximity of the mishap to some particular mile post and thus the spot can be located and men are sent there at once, and they can go in a hurry, for they know where the place is. Otherwise they would have to move slowly between stations until the 'spot was found, and this means a loss of time much more valuable than the price of the mile posts, and it would be pretty hard to railroad successfully without them."

A Salvini Incident.

The late Alexander Salvini was once playing Hamlet in a small Wisconsin town. The theatre was the crudest of structures, and the stage had been contrived for the occasion by the simple device of elevating a platform on four posts. When the gravedigging scene was reached a draft of cold air blew up through the aperture in the stage, and not only caused the gravediggers' teeth to chatter, but played freaks with their garments.

Salvini, entering with Horatio, heard from the grave only a strange jumble of words bitten in pieces by the first clown's clicking teeth. But when he saw the loose garments of the workmen flapping ludicrously in the breeze the irrelevant sight was too much for him, and he checked his speech. He tried to say, "Has this fellow no feeling of his business that he sings at gravemaking?" but he had to turn his face away from the audience and laugh, while the gravediggers carried the scene along with much fuss of occupation with pick and spade till Hamlet had recovered his gravity.

Grain Corners and Joseph's Dream.

Sir William Willcock, an irrigation expert, explaining Joseph's famous forecast of the famine in Egypt by the theory that he somehow, while in prison, got on to the fact that the King of Upper Egypt was about to get possession of Hanar, a fortified island at the head of the dike by which the reservoir of Lake Moeris was controlled. Lower Egypt was dependent upon the waters of Lake Moeris for irrigation, and it was easy to see that if the rival King at Thebes got Hanar crops would be had in Northern Egypt, which was then ruled by the invading Hyksos. Joseph's advice to the Hyksos King—based, perhaps, on inside information from Theban prisoners incarcerated with him—was to the effect that the immense fleet being constructed by the Thebans might capture Hanar, in which case it would be politic to have accumulated supplies of grain to tide over the coming period of scarcity. The King saw the force of Joseph's businesslike suggestion and gave him charge of the entire enterprise of acquiring and warehousing the crops.

Joseph's predictions were verified by the event, according to Sir William. Hanar was taken by the Thebans, a protracted famine ensued and the King's corner in grain was a great success, as the people had to pay any price the Pharaoh demanded. But after a time the Hyksos King recaptured control of Lake Moeris, where upon the land, which had long remained fallow, was again irrigated, and produced enormous crops. Such is the explanation given by the British savant of Joseph's wonderful dream and promotion. It is not explained, however, how Joseph knew just how many years the famine would last. If the story is correct, the first corner in grain will have to be dated back some thousands of years.

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