

## A SONG OF ALFALFA.

What makes the landscape look so fair,  
What blossoms bright perfume the air,  
What plant repays the farmer's toil,  
And will enrich the worn-out soil?

Alfalfa.

What grows in loam and clay and sand,  
What lifts the mortgage off the land,  
What crop is cut six times a year,  
And no foul weeds in it appear?

Alfalfa.

What makes the swine so healthy feel,  
And never raise a hungry squeal,  
That wholesome food that never fails,  
To put three curls into their tails?

Alfalfa.

What makes all other stock look nice,  
And bring the highest market price,  
What fills the milk pail, feeds the calf,  
And makes the old cow almost laugh?

Alfalfa.

What makes the poultry good as gold,  
When eggs are at a big price sold,  
What makes the happy coits all play,  
While mothers graze throughout the day?

Alfalfa.

What is the crop that always pays,  
And will mature in forty days,  
Resisting drought, the frost, the heat,  
Whose roots reach down one hundred feet?

Alfalfa.

—R. E. Smith, in Farm and Ranch.

## The Magical Bamboo.

By G. R. O'Reilly.

There were three of us—two South American Indians and myself—sitting over our camp-fire one night, in the mountains of Eastern Venezuela, overlooking the Gulf of Paria.

The Indians were hunting for orchids, and I for snakes, but each of us, in his pursuit, had had encounters with various beasts, birds and reptiles. Jaguars, monkeys, electric eels, alligators, boa constrictors and anacondas we talked of.

"I've had many marvelous escapes from snakes," said Saturnino—"poisonous ones, I mean. Boa constrictors and anacondas I don't much mind, unless they are over fifteen feet long; but the snake I dread the most, and by some ill luck encounter oftenest, is 'the sleeper.'"

"The sleeper," said I, "is he about six feet long, a yellow fellow with a big head, a great bitter, aloft in the branches coiled up and sleeping all day?" It was the snake known to scientists as Xiphosoma horridum that I had in mind. He is a true boa with the anal hood—concerning which I had made some important scientific observations during my residence in Trinidad in 1890. These snakes are tree-snakes; they are rarely found on the ground. They go about hunting by night, and feed largely on tree-rats and birds. They are great biters, much dreaded by the people, but really quite innocent of venom.

"Yes, yes," said he, "that's the very one. Many a fine root of orchids I've had to lose on account of those same sleepers. I dread them more than I do the rattlesnake, or even the bushmaster himself."

"O Saturnino," said I, "you needn't fear the sleeper! He's not venomous. The bite of a rat or a mouse would be much more dangerous." "Not venomous!" cried both he and Cipriano together, and they looked at each other and then at me, smiling broadly at my ignorance. Then both of them joined in an earnest endeavor to get me right.

"Don't be unreasonable, señor! Indians, white men and negroes all say that the sleeper is deadly. Why, there was Sebastiano, our uncle—he was bitten, and would have died if Mr. Solis hadn't had a big jar of Carupanum rum in the house."

"They made our uncle drink rum until he couldn't hold any more; and it was four days before he recovered. It cured him completely, and he never swelled a bit, either."

"Well, then, my dear friends," said I, "they can very near to killing your poor uncle—poisoning him with rum. The very fact that the bitten part didn't swell was enough to show that the snake was not venomous at all; because if he were venomous, all the rum in the world would not have prevented the swelling. Nor would it ever cure any man of the bite of any dangerous snake, if he had once got a fatal injection of the venom."

"But, señor, you don't mean to stand against the opinion of the whole world?" "Why, certainly I do," said I. "I stand out against the whole world, when I know for sure the whole world is wrong. Now," I added, "you two boys have over a hundred dollars' worth of orchids already collected and stored away in that cave up the mountain. You can spare the whole day to-morrow to go with me."

"We'll go down by the river. We'll find a sleeper, and I'll let him bite me; and afterward I'll catch hold of him and make him bite the dog; and if neither I nor the dog suffer anything whatsoever from the bite—without applying any remedy at all—will you believe me that the sleeper is harmless?"

"Yes," said they together, "we will. But we don't wish you to take such a risk."

"Risk!" said I, laughing. "There's no risk at all." They shrugged their shoulders and sat gazing into the fire in silence. They both looked sad and worried—blaming themselves, I thought, for having unintentionally pushed me on to make a foolhardy venture.

The next morning at an early hour we set out for the river. The way those two Indians pleaded with me not to let the sleeper bite me was most pathetic, and this great fear of theirs for my sake only made me the more determined to be bitten for their sakes. I confess I don't hanker after a bit from any creature, but I owed a debt of gratitude to these two brothers, who had carefully tended me when I was ill with ague in the mountains; and it was too bad that they should oftentimes lose valuable orchids because one of those harmless snakes lay coiled in the near-by branches.

We soon came to the river, and as we had no canoe, we had to make our way along the bank, which was no easy matter, as there was such a thick growth of vines in some places that for many yards we never touched ground at all. We walked and crept over the matted tangle.

Any moment we might have stumbled on a boa constrictor or anaconda, or laid a hand or a foot on a fern-dance or a bushmaster. All these reptiles frequent the river bank. The two Indians knew the danger along the river bank as well as I did, so we all kept silence and went on slowly, with eyes and ears alert for every sound or motion.

We must have gone on thus for fully two hours without seeing any snakes. Then we came to a long stretch of open ground. About a hundred yards downstream there were tall bamboos waving their feathery tops on the hither as well as on the farther bank. Tired with scrambling through the thicket, we sat down in the shade of those bamboos to rest.

The river tumbled noisily by us. It was in flood; and on its yellow water drifted wood and floating rubbish, went drifting swiftly seaward. And while we sat watching the tossing waters, a great alligator came floating round the bend. We sat quite still while he passed; and he probably never saw us, for he lay there lazily on the billowy surface, and allowed himself to be carried along as if he were enjoying a toboggan ride. If he had seen us he would doubtless have gone under.

"This ought to be a good place to come upon a sleeper," said Cipriano, as he paused and looked about him. "Yes," I replied. "I've often seen them in bamboos—and just look! There's one coiled in the top of that leafy cane stretching out over mid-stream right opposite us, and neither of you ever saw it."

"Yes, I saw it," said Saturnino, "but I wouldn't tell you, because I want you to have nothing to do with it."

"Well," said I, fearing that they might refuse me their assistance in catching the snake, because of their anxiety for my safety, "I want to get that snake, anyway, because he looks different from those I have caught before."

"Why, hombre," said Cipriano, "how are you going to get him? Don't you see that his bamboo reaches out from the farther side, so that he hangs just over mid-stream? 'Tis a long pole that would reach out to where he is. You can't get at him. And unless you can make the snake come over to you, I don't see how you are going to get him."

"Aha!" said I. "You've just reminded me how to do it. I'll make that snake come right over here to me. But both of you will have to help me."

"Senor, I'll help you on one condition, and that is if you promise to catch him without letting him bite you."

"All right!" said I. "I promise!" Now the river was fully sixty feet across, and as the bamboo, in the tip-end branches of which the snake was coiled, hung out over the water to about midstream, that would make the distance between us and the snake about thirty feet.

The plan which I was now about to try I had used before on the Caroni River, in the Island of Trinidad, and I felt sure of success if I could depend on the steadiness of nerve and the strict obedience of my two red-skinned companions.

"Look here!" said I. "I will do what I've said if you will obey me exactly in what I'll tell you to do. There will be no danger whatever to either of you, or to me, either. I'll not allow the snake to get at any time nearer to you than fifteen feet."

"Yes, yes!" said they. "We'll do carefully and exactly all you tell us."

"First of all," said I, "we'll cut two bamboo poles, long, but light and easy to handle."

So, in the bamboo clump behind us, I picked out the poles I needed. Cipriano cut one and I the other. When trimmed of leaves and branches each pole was somewhat over thirty feet long and fairly easy to handle, although, being green, they were not by any means as light as fishing rods.

Sharpening the butt of one of these, I stuck it firmly in the bank near the edge of the water, and then leaned it over till its very tip was just above the snake and among the tops of the leaves and branches in which he lay. From the snake to the water was about ten feet.

Calling the Indians over to me, I got them both to lay hold of the leaning bamboo, and told them to hold it exactly in the same position.

Taking up my own pole, I carefully advanced its tapering top toward the snake. Very gently indeed I advanced it; and I held it more steady and advanced it more gently as I slowly pushed it in among the branches.

With the slightest movement of my wrist I made its top give the snake just the faintest little poke.

He woke up at once and shot out his head to see what was the matter. I held my bamboo perfectly still where it was—almost touching him. When, after a few seconds, I let it touch him again, he shot out his head

somewhat farther, as much as to say, "Yes, something did certainly touch me."

A few seconds more elapsed; and I gave him another little poke; whereupon he seemed to say to himself, "Dear me, now this is really too much. This place isn't comfortable any more. I'll move."

So he stretched up his head and neck to climb higher. He found only leaves and twigs, too thin and yielding to climb on; but among them he found the strong top of the Indian's pole.

"Aha! This is convenient," thought he, and he reached his chin over it. Just then I touched the coiled part of him again, and he drew himself farther up on the pole, for he had nothing else to climb upon. A little touch on his tail made him draw himself yet farther up on it; and soon he lay with his entire body stretched along it. Again I touched his tail, and he began to advance along it, evidently desirous of getting away from whatever was troubling him. He moved very, very slowly.

He was coming down the pole toward the motionless Indians, whose deathlike immobility prevented him from recognizing them for living beings. From time to time he would seem to hesitate, but a very, very light touch on the tail kept him coming. Soon he was half-way.

"Keep just as you are now," said I to the Indians. "I am going to take the pole from you."

So I gently laid down my own pole, and took hold of theirs.

"Now," said I, "both of you move off very slowly up-stream for a few steps. And you, Cipriano, take up my pole and gently touch his tail with it whenever I tell you."

Now the snake, as soon as ever he noticed our movements on the bank, had halted in his approach, and lay perfectly still. He saw the two Indians moving slowly away up the river bank, and he watched them. They drew his attention away from me.

"Touch him on the tail, Cipriano." So Cipriano touched him on the tail, and he came on steadily, while I slowly got the pole between my legs, and with my left hand and knees held it steady, while in the same manner I advanced my right hand up the pole and laid it, resting on the fingers extending to one side and the thumb to the other, as if they were broken-off branch stumps.

To the snake they must have appeared so, for he came on without suspicion. Just as he was a few inches from my hand, I said, "Touch his tail, Cipriano," and the slow-moving sleeper at once ran his head forward between the outstretched fingers and thumb. My hand closed on his throat like the jaws of a trap. He was my snake.

But he meant to fight for his liberty. In an instant he was coiled round my arm, drawing his coils tighter and tighter.

"Magic! Magic!" cried the Indians. "That's a magic bamboo."

"Well," said I, "it's no magic snake, anyway. It's a real sure-thing sleeper, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes," answered they. "He's a real sleeper."

"Look here, Saturnino!" said I. "I've kept my promise. I've caught the snake without letting him bite me. But now I am free, and I'll let him bite me for your sake, as I said I would to prove to you that what I told you is true."

So I let the sleeper nip me twice on the left arm. Little blood-drops appeared on the skin, and the Indians were horrified. They watched me narrowly for some time after, thinking that they would begin to see me suffering some evil effect.

But that night, after supper and much talk, Saturnino said: "Senor, I am going to prove your words on myself."

So he went to the bag, got out the snake by the throat, and made it bite his left arm exactly as I had done.

For a few moments he looked quite grave. Putting the snake back in its bag, he came over and sat down again by the fire.

"I thank you from my heart, señor," said he. "You have given me knowledge that has taken away my fear. The sleeper is never terrible to me any more. For the future I will take the orchids if a hundred sleepers guard them."—Youth's Companion.

**Educated Pig Does Police Duty.** Ever hear of a pig that's a watchdog—or that is, watchdog? Thomas Kerens, of No. 200 Osago avenue, in Kansas City, Kan., has no need for a dog, he asserts, because Fannie, an educated pig, does police duty in his yard. Fannie doesn't allow strangers to enter the yard. Of course she doesn't show displeasure by barking or grunting, even, but she has a certain repulsive expression that makes people hesitate before entering when she runs toward them. Fannie is a clean hog, Mr. Kerens asserts, and doesn't care about wallowing in mud. Instead she prefers a nice, clean bed of autumn leaves.—New York Telegram.

The Japanese system of licensing individual opium smokers has greatly reduced the number of drug bands in Japan, and especially in Formosa.

## Roosevelt's Pathway in Africa

By PETER MACQUEEN, F. R. G. S.

Thus a ride on the Uganda Railway is unique and one of the most interesting in all the world. For we pass through a country where the animal and human life is much the same as it was in Europe 200,000 years ago. And here we see primitive savagery walking hand in hand with modern civilization, retaining nearly all of its picturesque, but divorced from its lust and cruelty.

I took this trip twice during the summer of 1908. The fare is six cents per mile first class, three cents second class and one cent third class. White men cannot go in the third class, and blacks cannot take first or second. Settled comfortably in the train, we drew out from the tropical station of Mombasa, and crossing by the Salisbury Bridge, 1700 feet long, from the island to the mainland, we plunge into the heart of Africa. The engines are Baldwin locomotives from Philadelphia, and twenty-seven of the bridges and viaducts are of American manufacture. When we stop at the first station of Changamwe, we note the natives clothed in light cottons "American." This was formerly all brought from America (hence its name).

Our journey on the railway divides itself into three sections. First, the unhealthy scrubby coast land and interior plateau, extending to Kiu station, 267 miles inland and 4860 feet in elevation. Natives and Indians can live in this part, but the white man withers and dies. At Voi, 103 miles, elevation 1830 feet, there is an excellent dak-bungalow, with a restaurant as fine as any on the New York Central lines. Also at Voi parties of hunters leave the train for a trip to the Kilimanjaro district in German territory, 100 miles away. All this first 267 miles is covered with short, scrubby jungles, and is full of malaria. One begins to see wild zebras and an occasional antelope, until Tsavo is reached, at 133 miles from Mombasa.—Leslie's Weekly.

**On the Suspected List.** One day, after listening to a story particularly offensive with age, Lincoln McConnell, the Georgia evangelist, told this: An old darkey went into a store down in Georgia and asked:

"Say, boss, you got any gunpowder heah?"

"Yes, we have gunpowder."

"Lemme see some of that theah gunpowdah."

The dealer showed him some.

"Pore a little of that powdah in my hand."

The old darkey took the powder near the light, ran his forefinger around and around in it, looked at it critically, and then smelled it two or three times.

"And you say this heah is powdah?"

"Yes," answered the dealer, sharply; "that is powder. What is the matter wit' it?"

"Dunno, boss"—the darkey shook his head doubtfully—"but hit smells to me like hit's been done shot off befoah."—Judge.

**Test For Wrappers.** "The hardest thing to wrap up," said a shipping clerk, "is a violin. A department store will often test a new wrapper by giving him a violin to do up. If he passes that test he is all right."

"There is a parcel wrapping machine now. It threatens to do away with the human wrapper. It can't do up a violin, though."

"Abroad bags and string, being expensive, are rarely used and the young groceryman must be able to wrap potatoes, flour and all sorts of things in sheets of paper alone. He gets a kind of knack. He lays his flour or beans in a square of paper, doubles the paper over and with an end in each hand swings the parcel round and round. Like magic, then, it is done up and you can carry it safely quite a hundred yards or so provided you are careful."—Minneapolis Journal.

**Hedge of Roses.** It is not generally known what a delightful feature a rose hedge may become, even in the villa garden, or such would more often be planted in lieu of the ubiquitous privet.

Where the area of the garden is limited, or where only a moderately high hedge is desired for encircling the rose garden or bordering a tennis lawn, a selection should be made from the China or monthly roses, the Japanese or rugosa roses and the Austrian briars. If the garden is very sheltered some of the stronger growing of the dwarf teas could be utilized, and from the free flowering polyantha group that would grow to a height of three or four feet.—The Gardener.

**Shortage in Chorus Girl Crop.** The famine in chorus girls is not caused by any lack of pretty American girls. Thank heavens that is a crop that will never fail! It is caused, let us hope, simply because of the larger growth of common sense, which has taught our girls that the joys and delights of home and home folk, even though humble, are more to be desired than the brief butterfly existence of the stage; that the bright sunlight and the happy smiles of real friends are worth infinitely more than the garish footlights and the tinsel. Let the chorus girl famine rage; it will not be the homes that hunger for the girls reared in love and for a better fate than the stage!—Washington (D. C.) Herald.

## With the Funny Fellows



**Pan Decadent.** In olden times Pan piped his lay, But in these days of triotles, I fear he's thrown his pipe away And substituted cigarettes. —Life.

**Manful.** When a man neglects a duty, he says: "I was too busy," but usually he was too lazy.—Aitchison Globe.

**Bobby's Amenities.** "Bobby, did you give a piece of your cake to little Sam Green?" "Yessum, but I punched his face first."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

**The Best Messenger.** Sillicus—"I never send a man on a fool's errand." Cynicus—"No; it's a better plan to go yourself."—Philadelphia Record.

**Blindness.** First U. S. Senator—"What is a blind partisan?" Second U. S. Senator—"One who doesn't know the color of money."—Life.

**Natural Cause.** Little Willie—"Pop, why do they call political jobs plums?" Wise Father—"Because, my son, it's generally a grafting process which produces them."

**The Way.** Bobbs—"The sparrow is a nuisance. I wonder how it would be possible to exterminate him?" Slobbs—"Make him fashionable for women's hats."—Philadelphia Record.

**So Are You.** "The professor says my bathing suit is rather exiguous." "Is that a compliment?" "I don't know. I'm going after the dictionary now."—Kansas City Journal.

**Disinterested.** Bacon—"Did you ever notice how disinterested he seems to look when he's talking to himself?" Egbert—"Oh, yes; he's probably giving himself some advice."—Yonkers Statesman.

**Youthful Ingenuity.** "I want another box of pills I got for mother yesterday." "Did your mother say they were good?" "No—but they just fit my argun."—Flegende Blaetter.

**Her Reward.** Professor (to his aged cook)—"You have now been twenty-five years in my service, Regina. As a reward for your fidelity I have determined to name the bug I recently discovered after you."—Flegende Blaetter.

**Pointed.** First Drummer—"My firm made half a million in 1907." Second Drummer—"My firm made more than ten millions." "You must have a very profitable line!" "Pins."—Puck.

**The Household Budget.** He—"I wonder if we can get along all right." She—"Certainly. We can buy the auto with the money father left me and you will surely make enough to pay for running it, don't you think?"—Puck.

**The Bright Side.** Achilles was bemoaning his vulnerable heel. "It isn't as bad as though your Christmas stocking had a hole in it," they assured him. Herewith he cheered up.—New York Sun.

**Timely Supplies.** "Peash ter me, Br'er Simpson, yo' am doin' a pow'ful lot ob joo'blint' oveh one po', measy coon." "Tain't only dat, Br'er Johnsing! Ah done got a fo'-days' job fo' nex' week." "Dat explains hit." "Sho! Now Ah kin 'trow up de job."—Judge.

**On the Safe Side.** Visitor—"Well, son, what will you be when you grow up?" Tommy (aged nine)—"A soldier." Visitor—"But you will be in danger of getting killed." Tommy—"Who'll kill me?" Visitor—"Why, the enemy." Tommy—"Then I'll be the enemy."—Catholic News.

**Grounds For Complaint.** "Any complaints, corporal?" said the colonel, making one morning a personal inspection. "Yes, sir. Taste that, sir," said the corporal promptly. The colonel put the liquid to his lips.

"Why," he said, "that's the best soup I ever tasted!" "Yes, sir," said the corporal, "and the cook wants to call it coffee."—Argonaut.

**A DOUBLE WRITING TABLE.** The furniture makers have put out a very good writing desk for a sitting room. It has an upright centre piece filled with pigeon holes on both sides. There is a lid on each side which is large enough to be fitted out with the usual desk implements. Two people can sit at it comfortably without staring into each other's faces as the centre upright is higher than the head.—New York Times.

Caller—Nellie is your mother in? Nellie—Mother is out shopping. Caller—When will she return, Nellie? Nellie (calling up stairs)—"Mamma, what shall I say now?"—Harper's Bazar.

## CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR NOTES

JANUARY TWENTY-FOURTH.

Topic—Life Lessons for Me from the Book of Genesis.—Gen. 1: 1-8; 26-31.

Temptation. Gen. 3: 1-11. Faith and works. Gen. 6: 13-22. The great surrender. Gen. 12: 1-7. The suburbs of Sodom. Gen. 13: 5-13.

Isaac, the sacrifice. Gen. 22: 1-19. Jacob, the forgotten. Gen. 28: 10-22.

No science or philosophy has gone beyond this statement, "In the beginning—God" (v. 1). God saw that all nature was good; and if He saw it thus, so must we (v. 4).

Man, made in God's image, has marred the likeness, ah how sadly! Therefore we are not to think of God as in man's image (v. 27).

"I have given"—those were God's first words to man; and they are His words all through the Bible (v. 28).

**Twelve Books.** This year we are to enjoy twelve lessons in twelve great books of the Bible. The books were selected as their favorites by a large company of leading pastors and laymen on their way to the International Christian Endeavor Convention at Seattle.

Most of these books are assigned as consecration-meeting topics, since they give the witness of testimony; for the society is not to confine itself to the Scripture passage chosen for public reading, but is to range over the entire book in each instance, commenting on any part of it.

**Lessons on Genesis.** Let us learn from Eve a lesson of contentment; let us not dare even to wish for more than God gives. From Adam let us learn a lesson of manliness; do not dare even to wish for more than God gives.

From Adam let us learn a lesson of manliness; do not lay your sin to the charge of any one else. Cain's lesson is the lesson of obedience. What is not done in God's way would better not be done at all.

Noah shall teach us the great lessons of faith. Every day needs an ark. Well for us if we get from Abraham the lesson of complete surrender to God's will. He was willing to give up even God's promises, knowing that he still had God.

## EPWORTH LEAGUE LESSONS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24.

Light That Cannot Be Hidden.—Matt.

3: 17; 17: 5; 16: 15; Mark 5: 7; 14: 61; 15: 39.

Matt. 3: 17; 17: 5; Mark 5: 7; 15: 39. These passages need no explanation. They tell us what God, demons, and a man could affirm about Jesus. It is a striking coincidence that they all affirmed the same thing: he is the Son of God.

Mark 14: 61. This is the inquiry of the high priest, the representative of God on earth. He was not asking for information; he was cross-examining a prisoner in order to convict him on his own testimony. What Jesus said or might have said made no difference; the high priest had prejudged the case. The echoes from the morning inquest have been flung back the fragments of the question: Christ, the Son of the Blessed—Son of the Blessed—Blessed.

Matt. 16: 15. Here is a verse which for our study, we may take out of its chronological order, and read it last. God is affirming the peculiar relationship and character of Jesus, demons are hailing him as the Son of the Most High, and a multitude of wondering men and women whose names have not come down to us are publishing to one another their convictions concerning him. The company of disciples have talked among themselves but they have made no open acknowledgment of their belief. Jesus will bring them to decision, will force them to the discovery on which his purposes depend; and so he puts the question direct: "But who do ye say that I am? Elijah? One of the prophets? Messiah?" Simon answers with a leap of vision: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Any scheme of State roadmaking and State maintenance will only result in systematized jobbery unless it shall follow upon the adoption of a well-considered and comprehensive plan of procedure. Our present system is a failure, asserts the Philadelphia Record. A uniform method of control and construction is needed, to be carried into execution by trained men of engineering capacity who should remain in charge during good behavior. Politics and political influence should be altogether eschewed. The experiment of political management of public improvements was woefully illustrated in Pennsylvania in the building and wrecking of the State canals. That experience should never be duplicated.

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