

HE WAS HARD TO BEAT

A SLY OLD WOODCHUCK AND HIS PERSISTENT ENEMY.

A Long Island Farmer Relates His Experience With a Chuck That Had Become Very Smart Through Close Touch With Civilization.

"Speakin' of woodchucks," said an old Long Island farmer the other day, "reminds me of some curious incidents with 'em. Twarn't more'n 50 years ago when they was thick as flies on this island, an we ate them instead of rabbits an made mittens and mittens out of their skins. They was mighty warm, too, those old woodchuck mittens an mufflers. When a man wanted a big follow, he only had to walk down into the nearest field an take his pick out of two or three. They was so plentiful that it was no trouble to kill 'em. But there ain't many more now. One in awhile a big fellow brings up a litter into the lower clover lot an we have to root 'em out.

"Ever hunt woodchucks? Waal, it ain't much if they be young ones. If you wait long enough, you'll catch them runnin' across the lot in broad daylight. If you are a good shot, you can bring one down. They're tough, an a big fellow will carry away a big load of shot. But if you get hold of a big fellow, an old veteran, so to speak, you'll find it no easy job to dislodge him. He's too knowin' a cuss to live. He'll only eat your clover at night, an, Lord, how much he can get away with in one night! In the daytime he keeps close into his hole an laughs at you. Dig him out? Waal, yes, you can try it, but he'll dig a good deal faster on the other end than you will an take it easy at that. Mind you, I'm talkin' of old ones—those know all the tricks of the business. The woodchucks that you find on Long Island are wiser than those most anywhere else 'cause they have to be cunning an shrewd not to get killed. They're so close to civilization that they learn new tricks all the time.

"A few years ago a cunning old fellow took up his home in that clover field just off the lower meadows, an we had the hardest time to kill him that you can imagine. I guess afore we got through with him he cost us 'bout \$100—that is, for clover destroyed an labor at \$1.50 per day lost in trying to capture him. Twarn't any use layin' in wait fur him with a shotgun. He was too wise to poke his nose out of the hole. But every night he'd come out an eat clover fast enough. He brought up seven litters of young chucks in that field, but we killed 'em all except the old one. He'd bring a new mate with him to his home every season, but she'd be shot in tryin' to save her young ones. But we could never get a shot at the prime mover of the whole trouble. We waited fur him on moonlight nights an did get a shot at him once. But I guess we only crippled him, an he never ventured out again except on dark nights. We had no chance then. We tried to dig him out, but after three days of steady work we got tired. Then we started to burn an smoke him out, but it ain't no easy matter to make smoke go down hill an get into all of the holes that a woodchuck can make. Finally we decided to drown the old critter out. We got together all the old pork an oil barrels that we could find an filled them full of water. Then when everything was ready Si an Jake, my two sons, stood ready with a pitchfork an a shotgun while I poured the water into the hole.

"Waal, sir, that hole held more water than any millpond. It took the hull ten barrelsful to bring it up to the surface, an then, just as I put in the last barrel, that pesky old chuck showed his nose. Si jabbed at him with the pitchfork, an Jake shot the handle to pieces as he banged away at the critter. But it warn't no use. The water soaked away rapidly, an the woodchuck went down again, grinnin' at our failure.

"But we warn't so easily discouraged. Next day we added five more barrels an all the tubs an pails round the house. Then we began to flood that hole again. This time we had plenty of water, but there was no woodchuck to appear. The water came up to the surface an flowed out of the hole, but no woodchuck. We thought he had left his home for good after his first duckin'. But no. He came out again that night, an ate more clover than usual just as if to spite us. Waal, we found out in time that the critter was so wise that he had dug his hole way up toward a hill so that he could sit up there an watch us pourin' water in at the other end. This put a stop to any attempt to drown him out.

"It was Si that rigged up the trap that finally caught the old fellow. He took a big stone weight 'bout 50 pounds an suspended it right over the hole. Then he fixed a little stick down below just as he would set a rabbit trap. The old muskrat couldn't get out of the hole noway without hitting that stick, an—well, the thing happened two nights later. The first night the critter didn't venture out, but the second mornin' the stone was down, an the old fellow was crushed beneath it. We ain't had none in the fields since then."—New York Post.

Great Courtesy.

Mme. Calve had an experience with the courtesy of the Spanish thieves once while she was in Madrid. Two well dressed strangers stole her satchel, which contained some money and a number of luck pieces and talismans, including a bunch of dried flowers from her father's grave. The loss worried the artist, but when the newspapers reported the theft the thieves sent her the precious relics neatly inclosed in a packet, in which was a polite note begging that the "finder" of the relic might be permitted to keep the money as a souvenir of so charming a vocalist. —New York World.

TOWER HILL.

The Most Important Eminence and Most Notable Spot in All London.

Tower Hill is perhaps both the most important eminence and the most notable spot in all the metropolis. Few of us, as we pass it on a steamer or cross it on our route to the Ankerwerkes Package, at the commencement of our autumnal holiday, think what great persons have quietly lived there, and what others, equally great, have wept and died upon it. To it, or rather to Great Tower street, came Rochester to pursue his trade as an Italian fortune teller, while the bedizened Buckingham often walked thither in order to consult a conjurer, a shrewd, farseeing rogne, who, when Felton bought at the cutler's shop on the summit of the hill for a shilling the knife with which he killed the duke's father, may have known for what purpose it was required.

William Penn was born on this hill in a house close to London wall. Forty-four years later—that is, in A. D. 1685—a post lay dead, choked by a crust which starvation had urged him to devour too greedily, in an upper room of the Bull tavern. This was the ill fated Otway. At the time when the son of the muses lay dead, Betterton, the celebrating founder of the stage after the restoration, was wringing tears from the eyes of the public, not for the famished dead, but at his own fictitious sorrows in "Venice Preserved."

It was in Great Tower street that Peter the Great used to pass his evenings drinking hot pepper and brandy with his boon companion, Lord Carnarthen. In the neighborhood of Little Tower street, which can scarcely be supposed to have been inspiring, Thomson composed his "Summer." In Grub street, the supposed lurking place of many a mute, inglorious Milton, much haek literary work was effected, none of which has survived the touch of time's destroying hand.—Gentleman's Magazine.

That Troublesome Meringue.

The secret of making the meringue for lemon pies so that it stands tall and thick is in the baking. Whip the whites of the eggs to a froth that will not fall out of the bowl when turned upside down. Put in about a tablespoonful of granulated sugar for each white, stir very little, spread it on the pies when they are just done and still baking hot without taking them out of the oven and let them bake with the oven open. If made hot enough to brown, the meringue will surely fall and become worse than nothing. Five to ten minutes is enough to bake the meringue dry and straw colored. Sift granulated sugar on the top of the meringue as soon as spread on the pie before baking.—Philadelphia Times.

Liable to Be Misunderstood.

Liable to misunderstanding an such interesting adornments of shop windows as, "Superior butter, 1 shilling per pound. Nobody can touch it!"—probably not—or the tempting notice of the dealer in cheap shirts, "They won't last long at this price!" Worse still was the admonition which appeared in the window of a cheap restaurant, "Dine here, and you will never dine anywhere else." The viands of this restaurateur must have been almost as deadly and unerring in their effect as the whisky known in the western states as "forty rod," because that was the distance beyond which no drinker could walk after its imbibition.—Cornhill Magazine.

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MYSTIFIED AUTHORS.

Father Prout Made It His Business to Hoax Notable Characters.

Authors have often mystified the public, but a man who made a business of mystifying professional writers is a notable character. Such a one, however, was the Rev. Francis Mahony, better known as "Father Prout." His favorite trick was to take a well known and popular poem, translate it into another language, boldly assert that in its new form it possessed great antiquity and charge the author with having stolen it. This trick he played on more than one noted author during the early days of the present century, and each was sorely puzzled to explain the identity of the poem which he knew to be his own with that in a foreign language.

Prout translated Moore's "Go Where Glory Waits Thee" into excellent French verse, attributed it to Mme. La Comtesse de Chateaubriand and charged Moore with having stolen it bodily. The song, "Leobia Hath a Beaming Eye," he rendered into choice Latin and claimed it as a youthful production of his own, which he had once shown to Moore. Another of Prout's achievements was the translation of Wolfe's "Burial of Sir John Moore" into French, claiming, at the same time, that the lines were written by Colonel de Beaumanois, who was killed at Pondicherry in 1749.

Not satisfied with this, he proceeded farther and translated the lines into German verse and stoutly declared that, while Wolfe had stolen from the French poet, the latter had in turn pilfered from the German, the latter poem having, as he stated, been written to commemorate the death and burial of the Swedish General Tolstenson, who was killed at the siege of Dantzic. Poor Wolfe was dumfounded and was not much comforted when the hoax was discovered.—Philadelphia Press.

Useful Parrots.

It has hitherto been customary to friter over the intellectual force of parrots by merely teaching them to say "Pretty Polly" and things of that sort, but the municipal authorities of a French town have instituted what it is to be hoped will become a general reform.

The poor box at the town hall, it seems, had for a long time been in a condition discreditable to the more prosperous of the inhabitants. To remind them of their duty toward their poorer neighbors a parrot was purchased, which was installed close to the box and trained to cry, "For the poor, if you please!" The result, it appears, has been highly satisfactory, peace and silver coin having been freely given in response to the bird's appeal.

The idea is capable of being applied in a variety of ways. Parrots might be used, for example, to warn passersby of the proximity of wet paint on fences or shop fronts, or to remind people on entering a house to wipe their feet.

In fact, parrots might be made really useful members of society.—Youth's Companion.

Electric Freak in a Church.

Recently there was an eclipse of the electric light at Elm Road Baptist chapel, Southsea, and, curiously enough, the pastor had chosen for his texts, Proverbs lxxiv, 20, "The candle of the wicked shall be put out," and Psalm xvii, 28, "For thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness," a combination rather cruel to the electric light, for when the lights went out some of the congregation went out also and obtained candles and lamps, whereupon service proceeded. The pastor could not conveniently change his texts in consequence of what had happened, and he may have been prepared for the general titter which followed their announcement. Lately a somewhat similar case occurred in an American church, and the amusement was heightened by the action of a deacon who absentmindedly lighted a match and applied it to one of the electric lights.—London Lightning.

A long Greek lance, such as the men of the phalanx carried, cost about \$1.50.

A Wife's "At Home."
Blinks—Wonder where I can find Winks.
Jinks—Let's see. This is Thursday, and Thursday is his wife's day for being "at home." Guess you'll find him at the club.—New York Weekly.

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