

A strong evidence of Western prosperity is shown in the fact that the West is furnishing her own money to move her crops this season.

Sagasta says that the United States and Spain are simply in a state of "suspension." The theory is true in the case of his country. She is holding herself up by her shoe straps.

The United States is now furnishing one-third as much raw cotton to Japan as is furnished by British India. Last year's export of raw cotton from America to Japan was worth nearly \$8,000,000.

Perhaps the Czar of Russia is just as eager for universal peace as he pretends to be, but he will probably continue to build warships and enlarge his battalions as rapidly as ever. The dream of peace will in no way retard the preparations for war.

The latest figures obtainable show that the Philippine Islands import \$9,174,093 worth of goods and export \$19,792,819 worth, leaving, in round numbers, a balance in their favor of \$10,618,726. These figures are for 1897, and it is stated that the average value of the trade of those islands is far in excess of the sums given. Business has been much disturbed by the insurrection.

The practice among nations of exacting money from a conquered foe is, in its present form, somewhat modern. In ancient times the victor despoiled the enemy he had overcome, sacked cities, and took whatever of value he could carry away. Now he respects private property, but he usually makes the conquered nation pay the whole cost of the war. In either case the practice is analogous to that of civil courts, which assess costs upon the defeated party.

The Japanese, it appears, have not a little poetry in their souls, as they give their warships such pretty names as "Daybreak," "Darkening Clouds," "Evening Mist," and "Will o' the Wisp." This is rather more sensible than the English custom of naming their small vessels after insects, while they bestow upon their huge ironclads alarmist names that may be supposed to strike terror into the hearts of their foes. It is a pity that Americans are not more partial to the fine old Indian names that abound in different parts of the country.

According to the Post-Express of Rochester, N. Y., that city is felicitating itself over a remarkable decrease in mortality during the last few years, especially among children, and is pluming itself over being the healthiest city in the state. The official figures show a decrease for the month of July in the mortality of children under five years from 175 in 1887 out of a population of 120,000 to 58 in 1898 out of a population of 180,000. The Post-Express attributes this gratifying exhibit to the liberal appropriations made by the city to maintain the standard quality of milk, and the efforts of the physicians to arrest the havoc of tuberculosis.

John E. Kehl, United States consul at Stettin, tells why the German farmer is prosperous despite the fact that he has poorer land and less land than his American brother, and no labor-saving machinery worth the mention. Co-operation is the secret of his success. He has co-operative credit banks, co-operative dairies, co-operative steam plows, and co-operation in drainage and irrigation, in both of which he is an expert. He is also an intensive farmer, and gets out of the ground pretty much everything which it is capable. Farm laborers get thirty-five cents a day, with a small house to live in and a half-acre of land to cultivate for their own use. In harvest seasons they get fifty cents a day.

In an article written for the Lumberman by B. F. Seymour attention is called to the almost unlimited variety of uses of which the red cypress is susceptible, principally for house work, inside and outside. For natural beauty of appearance, the red cypress of Louisiana is especially notable, and is extensively used by manufacturers for all descriptions of cisterns, tanks, tubs, for brewery, creamery, and similar applications, and for durability and strength, cannot be equalled in the case of large railroad tanks. Car builders and railroad companies have long been partial to this material for siding and roofing on box freight cars. It possesses the advantage of taking and holding paint in a degree equal to white pine, being also free from pitch of gum. When used for outside work, including bevel siding, porch floors and columns, step planks, gutters, etc., it is more durable than any other wood in use.

A JUVENILE OPTIMIST.

My gran' dad says these modern days
Of steam an' electric light
Bout anything that ever was;
An' gran' dad's mostly right,
But I can't help some doubtfulness
When into bed I climb
An' dream about those good old days
Of Once Upon a Time.

I've got to hustle on the farm
When I get big enough,
I wish I knew some fairy spell
To do the work that's rough,
I'd like to make the brownies toll
By saying some queer rhyme
The same as them there wizards did
Of Once Upon a Time.

I wish that polishes' our lamp
A genie would arouse
So I could say, "Go, slave, an' feed
Them pigs an' milk the cows."
I'd make him wear the overalls
An' face the mud an' grime,
But this 'ere oath ain't what it was
In Once Upon a Time.

Yet history repeats itself,
My gran' dad says, an' so
I keep on hopin' as I watch
The seasons come an' go
That I may live to see 'em back—
The brownies in their prime,
The wizards an' them other folks
Of once Upon a Time.

"THE BLUE RAT."

A Klondike Episode.

BY HANLEY GARLAND.

Even in the Klondike life is not altogether simple or always free from guile. Were proof of that nature needed it might be found in the history of our experience with the Blue Rat.

We came to know him through our need of a pony. We had two serviceable pack horses, but we needed a little pony to run along behind and carry the tent and a few little traps like that.

A citizen of Queenelle possessed such a steed. This citizen was a German and had a hairlip and a most seductive gentleness of voice. His name was Dippy, and I gladly made him historical. He sold me the Blue Rat and gave me a chance to study a new type of horse.

Horst Dippy (Dutch Dippy) was not a Washington Irving sort of Dutchman; he conformed rather to the modern New York tradesman. He was small, candid and smooth, very smooth of speech. He said: "Yes, the pony is gentle. He can be rode or packed, but you better lead him for a day or two till he gets quiet."

I did not see the pony till the morning we "hit the long trail" on the west side of the Fraser river, but my side partner had reported him to be a "nice little pony, round and fat and gentle." On that I rested.

In the meantime Mr. Dippy joined us at the ferry. He held a horse by the rope and waited around to finish the trade. I presumed he intended to cross and deliver the pony, which was in a corral on the west side, but he slipped out a hurried excuse. "The ferry is not coming back today and so—"

Well, I paid him the money on the strength of my side partner's report; besides it was Hobson's choice.

Mr. Dippy took the \$25 eagerly and vanished into obscurity. We passed to the wild side of the Fraser and entered upon a long and intimate study of the Blue Rat.

He sneaked out of the log stable a smooth, round, lithe-bodied little cayuse of a blue-gray color. He looked like a child's toy, but seemed sturdy and of good condition.

His forehead was "banged," and he had the air of a mischievous, resolute boy. His eyes were big and black, and he studied us with tranquil but inquiring gaze as we put the pack saddle on him. He was very small.

"He's not large, but he's a gentle little chap," said I to ease my partner of his dismay over the pony's surprising smallness.

"I believe he shrunk during the night," replied my partner. "He seemed two sizes bigger yesterday."

We packed him with a hundred pounds of our food. We put a small bag of oats on top and lashed it all on with rope, while the pony dozed peacefully. Once or twice I thought I saw his ears cross; one laid back, the other set forward—bad signs—but it was done so quickly I could not be sure of it.

We packed the other horses whilst the blue pony stood resting one hind leg, his eyes dreaming.

I flung the canvas cover over the bay pack horse. . . something took place. I heard a bang, a clatter, a rattling of hoofs. I peered around the bay and saw the blue pony performing some of the most finished, vigorous and varied bucking it has ever been given me to witness. He all but threw somersets. He stood on his ears. He humped up his back till he looked like a lean cat on a graveyard fence. He stood on his toe calks and spun like a weather vane on a lively stable, and when the pack exploded and the saddle slipped under him he kicked it to pieces by using both hind hoofs as gently as a man would stroke his beard.

After calming the other horses I faced my partner solemnly.

"O, by the way, partner, where did you get that nice, quiet little blue pony of yours?"

Partner smiled sheepishly. "The little imp, Buffalo Bill ought to have that pony."

"Well, now," said I, restraining my laughter, "the thing to do is to put that pack on so it will stay. That pony will try the same thing again, sure."

We packed him again with great care. His big innocent black eyes shining under his bang were a little more alert, but they showed neither fear nor rage. We roped him in every conceivable way, and at last we dared him to do his prettiest.

the rope and threw him. He came to earth with a thud, his legs whirling uselessly in the air. He resembled a beetle in molasses.

We sat upon his head and discussed him.

"He is a wonder," said my partner. "He is a fiend," I panted.

We packed him again with infinite pains, and when he began bucking we threw him again and tried to kill him. We were getting irritated. We threw him hard and drew his hind legs up to his head until he grunted.

When he was permitted to rise he looked meek and small and tired, and we were both a little remorseful. We rearranged the pack—it was some encouragement to know he had not bucked it entirely off—and by blind-folding him we got him started on the trail behind the train.

"I suppose that simple-hearted Dutchman is looking at us from across the river," said I to partner, "but no matter; we are victorious."

This singular thing I noticed in the Blue Rat. His eye did not roll nor his ears fall back. He was neither scared nor angry. He still looked like a roguish, determined boy. He was alert, watchful, but not vicious. He seemed not to take our stern measures in bad part. He regarded it as a fair contract, apparently, and considered that we had won. True, he had lost both hair and skin by getting tangled in the rope, but he laid up nothing against us, and as he followed meekly along behind, my partner dared to say:

"He's all right now. I presume he has been running out all winter and is a little wild. He's satisfied now. We'll have no more trouble with him."

Every time I looked back at the poor, humbled little chap, my heart tingled with pity and remorse. "We were too rough," I said. "We must be more gentle."

"Yes, he's nervous and scary. We must be careful not to give him a sudden start."

An hour later, as we were going down a steep and slippery hill, the Rat saw his chance. He passed into another spasm, opening and shutting like a self-acting jack-knife. He bounded into the midst of the peaceful pack-horses, scattering them to right and left in terror.

He turned and came up the hill to get another start. Partner took a turn on a stump, and all unmindful of it the Rat whirled and made a mighty spring. He reached the end of the rope and his handspiring became a vaulting somersault. He lay, unable to rise, spitting the wind, breathing heavily. Such annoying energy I have never seen. We were now mad, muddy and very resolute. We held him down till he lay quite still.

Any well-considered, properly bred animal would have been ground to bone dust by such wondrous acrobatic movements. He was skinned in one or two places, his hair was scraped from his nose, his tongue bled, but all these were mere scratches. When we repacked him he walked off comparatively unharmed.

The two days following he went along like a faithful dog. Every time I looked behind I could see the sturdy little chap trotting along. His head hung low, and his actions were meek and loyal. For a week he continued thus. Partner became attached to him and began once more to make excuses for him. "He will never make us trouble again," he said.

Rain came, transforming the trail into a series of bottomless pits and greasy inclines and we were forced to lay in camp two days. The Blue Rat stuffed himself on pea-vine and bunch grass, and on the third day "pitched" with undiminished vigor. This settled his fate.

I made up my mind to sell him. Once I had determined upon his motives I could not afford to bother with him any more. He delayed us with his morning antics, and made us the amusement of the outfit which overtook and passed us by reason of our interesting sessions with the Blue Rat.

He must go and I selected my purchaser. He was a Missourian from Butte. He knew all there was to be known about trails, horses, gold, politics, and a few other things. He considered all the other men on the trail merely tenderfeet out for a picnic. Each time he passed us he had some drawing remark indicating his surprise that we should be still able to move. Him I selected to become the owner of the Rat.

I laid for him. When he had eaten his supper one night I sauntered carelessly over to his tent. I "edged around" by talking of the weather, the trail, and so on, and at last I said: "We'd leave you tonight if it weren't for the blue colt. He delays us."

"How so?"

"O, he pitches."

"Pitches, does he?" He smiled. "I'd mighty soon take that out of him if I had him."

"I suppose an experienced man like you could do it, but we are unused to these wild horses. I'd like to sell him to some man who knows about such animals. He's a fine pony, strong as a lion, but he's a terrible bucker. I never saw his equal."

Hosmified again indulgently. "Let's take a look at him."

The pony had filled his hay basket and looked as innocent as a worsted kitten.

"Nice little feller, shore thing," said the Missourian, as he patted the Rat. "He's young and coltish. What'll you take for him?"

"Now, see here, stranger. I am a fair man, I don't want to deceive any one. That pony is a wonder. He can outback any horse west of Selkirk range."

The old man's eyes were very aggravating. "He needs an old hand, that's all. Why, I could shoulder the little kid whilst he was a-pitchin' his blamedest. What'll you take for him?"

"I'd throw off \$5, and you take the rope; but, stranger, he's the worst—"

He refused to listen. He took the pony. As the Rat followed him off he looked so small, so sleepy, so round and gentle you would have said, "There goes a man with a pony for his little girls."

We laid off a day at Tchicoutic lake. We needed rest anyway, and it was safer to let the man from Butte go on. I had made every provision against complaint on the Missourian's part, but at the same time one can't be too careful.

There are no returning footsteps on the long trail, but a few days later I overtook the man from Indiana, who had been see-sawing back and forth on the trail, now ahead, now behind. He had laid off a half day.

He approached me with a cautious look on his face.

"Stranger, what kind of a beast did you put off on that feller from Butte?"

"A mighty strong, capable little horse. Why?"

"Well, say, I was just a-passing his camp yesterday morning, when the thing took place. I always was lucky about such."

"What happened?" queried I.

"I don't wish any man's barn to burn, stranger, nor his horse to take a fall onto him, but when anything does go on I like to see it. You see, he had just drawn the last knot on the pack and as I came up he said: 'How's this for a \$10 pony?' I said, 'Pretty good. Who'd you get him off of?'"

"A couple of tenderfeet," he says, "who couldn't handle him. Why, he's gentle as a dog; then he slaps the pony on the side. The little fiend lit out both hind feet and took the old man on both knees and knocked him down over a pack-saddle into the mud. Then he turned loose, that pony did, stranger. I have saw horses buck a plenty, Mexican bronks, wild cayuses in Montana, and all kinds 'o' beasts in California, but I never seen the beats of that blue pony. He shored was a bucker from Battle Creek. The Butte man lay there a groinin', his two knees in his fists, whilst a trail of flour an' beans an' sacks an' rubber boots led up the hill, an' at the far end of that trail 'bout thirty yards up the blamed cayuse was a-feedin' like a April lamb."

"What happened to him?"

"Who?"

"The pony."

"Old Butte, as soon as he could crawl a little, he says: 'Gimme my gun, I've been a-packin' on the trails of the Rocky mountains for forty years and I never was done up before. Gimme that gun.' He sighted her, stranger, most vicious, and pulled trigger. The pony gave one big jump and went a-rollin' and a-crashin' into the gulch. 'You'll never kick again,' says the feller from Butte."

Poor little Blue Rat. He had gone to the mystic meadows where no pack-saddle could follow him. — Detroit Free Press.

QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

The strength of two horses equals that of fifteen men.

In Costa Rica canary birds, bullfinches and paroquets are special table dainties.

It is said that an organized system of charity prevailed among the Egyptians 2500 years B. C.

Pet dogs in London, England, wear chamois shoes when in the house, to protect polished floors from scratches.

Over a hundred persons disappear in London, England, every year without leaving the slightest trace behind.

The paper church at Bergen, Norway, is made waterproof by a coating of quicklime, curdled milk and white of egg.

The ancient custom of putting a coin in the hand of the dead is still occasionally followed in the rural districts of France.

At the beginning of a recent thunderstorm, electrified drops were observed that cracked faintly on reaching the ground and emitted sparks.

While the wedding service is proceeding in Japan the bride kindles a torch and the bridegroom lights a fire from it and burns the wife's playthings.

A curious remedy for sleeplessness is used by the inhabitants of the Samoan islands. They confine a snake in a hollow bamboo and the hissing sound emitted by the reptile is said to quickly induce slumber.

Wealth From Fish.

The development of the Irish mackerel fisher has proved a boon to the fisher folk of Cork and Kerry. Forty thousand barrels were cured last year, almost all of which came to America. This industry puts \$500,000 a year into circulation among the people of these two counties.

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

Ten Little Tin Soldiers.
Ten little tin soldiers lay all in a row,
Stretched out on the nursery floor,
Just where they could see with their sharp little eyes,
Through the crack that was under the door.

Their captain had left them all there for the night,
And said, as he crept into bed,
"If any one tries to come into the room,
You must fire and shoot him stone dead."

The hours went by, and the ten little guns
Were aimed at the crack near the door,
When all of a sudden the crack stretched and grew,
And somebody opened the door.

Bang! bang! went the guns—the soldiers all fired,
But nobody seemed to be dead,
Instead they all heard a soft kiss in the dark,
"Good night, dear!" a loving voice said.

Then all the ten soldiers shook badly with fright,
And whispered low one to another:
"How lucky it was that our guns were so small!
What if we had killed Tommy's mother?"
—Youth's Companion.

The Heart's Lifework.

The human heart is so quickly responsive to every touch of feeling in the mind that the people of ancient times thought that it was the abiding place of the soul, and all literature, both ancient and modern, contains many poetic references to this interesting fact.

The amount of work performed during the lifetime of a person living to the limit of human life prescribed by King David—three score and ten years—by this small but powerful engine is almost incredible. It is six inches in length and four in diameter, and beats on the average 70 times a minute, 4200 times an hour, 100,800 times a day and 36,792,000 in the course of a year, so that the heart of a man 70 years old has beaten 2,500,000,000 times.

A Boy of the Philippines.

Charles B. Howard contributes to the St. Nicholas a story of the Philippines under the title of "Juanito and Jefe." Mr. Howard says:

On an obscure little island in the Philippine group stands an obscure little native village, and in this village there stood, a few years ago, a certain hut, built, like the others, entirely of bamboo, and thatched with dried nipa leaves. In this hut dwelt a chocolate-colored family, consisting of Mariano Pelasquez, his wife and a sturdy seven-year-old boy, Juanito by name.

Old Mariano had lived as a boy in one of the large seaports, and there had learned to speak Spanish fluently, and this language he had taught Juanito as he grew up, in hope that some day the boy might become a servant or possibly a clerk to one of the Spanish or English residents—preferably the latter, as the Englishes paid better wages than the Epanoles, and were less liable to throw boots and dishes and things.

Mariano was a species of agriculturist whenever he chose to exert himself, which was seldom. He owned a tiny bit of land, on which stood a commodious hut and a faithful mango tree, but the pride of his heart was his carabao, or water buffalo, which tugged at the plow or rough cart on the rare occasions when Mariano took to farming. These carabaos are huge mouse-colored beasts, amazingly hideous in appearance, and very savage when wild; but they are docile as lambs when once tamed. Moreover, their tremendous strength is of great service, while their very slow gait is quite in accord with the ideas of the Philippine natives, and perfectly suits the laziest of races.

This particular carabao was called "Jefe," (which means "chief"), because he was the largest and strongest in the village, and the Pelasquez family took the same amount of pride in him that an English family would have in a thoroughbred race horse. Therefore the head of the household was greatly exercised in mind one morning to discover that Jefe had broken his tether during the night and left for parts unknown.

"Oh, thou ungrateful one," muttered Mariano, "and I was to plow today. Juanito!" he called.

"Si padre," answered Juanito, appearing in the doorway arrayed in a pair of short trousers, his customary costume.

"Good boy, to answer in Spanish," said the father, smiling, and holding out his hand, which Juanito dutifully kissed, as all good little Filipinos are expected to do every morning, and all bad ones must. "See," went on Mariano, "that pig of a Jefe has broken his rope, and gone probably to the river-bend. Get from thy mother some breakfast and seek him."

Juanito looked thoughtful. "Perhaps the crazy Englishmen who arrived yesterday have stolen him," he suggested.

Two naturalists, who seemed English, had come to the village the evening before and spent the night at the priest's house. Juanito had seen them and had thought of little else ever since.

"Ingleses do not steal carabaos, thou monkey," answered Mariano. "These two particular lunatics seek only bugs and snakes. Thinkest thou that they could put Jefe in their pockets? Haste away, now, and come not back without him."

Juanito secured two plump bananas from his mother and trudged away across the field towards the bend in the river. Carabaos at liberty for the time being always assembled there to sip themselves up to the eyes in the cool water, and to doze in comfort, defying their insect tormentors.

Juanito munched his bananas as he went along in the cool morning air, and soon was pushing his way through the bushes which skirted the river, following the path worn by the buffaloes in their pilgrimages. Coming out on the bank, he saw, apparently floating on the surface, about a dozen huge horned heads, which turned slowly and then fixed as many pairs of big, sleepy eyes on the coming boy.

Juanito studied them carefully. "Aha!" he exclaimed at last, "there thou art—thou with the biggest horns! Come here, Jefe."

But Jefe was too comfortable, and wouldn't come; so Juanito finally took off his trousers and waded in until he could climb up on the great beast's back. "Now get up, big stupid," he shouted, pounding the massive head vigorously with a small fist. Either the insult or the thumps had the desired effect, and, with many sighs and grunts Jefe scrambled laboriously to his feet (almost submerging his companions in the waves created by the process), and splashed shoreward.

Juanito secured his trousers, and mounting again, urged his ponderous steed along the path. As they emerged from the bushes Juanito caught sight of two figures across the field, dressed in white, with huge sun-helmets, apparently examining something closely.

"Hoh!" exclaimed Juanito, "the two English lunatics. Let us go and see what they have found, Jefe."

I may say here that all the ignorant natives of the far East, being unable to understand their ways, came to the conclusion long ago that the English and American races were composed entirely of harmless lunatics.

Jefe, having been at last persuaded to turn his nose in that direction, proceeded, one leg at a time, toward the two white figures.

Now there is a peculiarity about these carabaos of which Juanito was unaware, and that is that, although they can be controlled and led by a six-year-old native, if necessary, at the same time, in those parts of the island where a white man is a rarity the sight of one seems to drive the creatures frantic, and they will often attack with all the fierceness and fury of a wild bull a white person who has not given them the slightest cause; and their attack is really the more dangerous to the victim, for a carabao's horns are each as long and thick as a man's arm. A single carabao has been known to attack and kill a full grown tiger.

Consequently, Juanito was hardly prepared when, about half way across the field, Jefe raised his head aloft, and began to utter strange, nasal grunts, pricking his great ears forward, and was still less so when the hitherto placid beast of burden quickened his steps into a sort of sidle, and then broke into a lumbering elephantine canter.

"Haya! que tiens tu? (What hast thou? what is the matter?)" shouted the amazed Juanito, striving to maintain his balance, but Jefe's sides were still wet and slippery, and in another moment Juanito tumbled ignominiously off. He picked himself up, and gazed open-mouthed at Jefe, who, with his head in the air, his back arched like a bow, and his feet in a bunch, was going across the field in a sort of hopping, see-saw-like gallop. I do not know of any other beast whose movements, when galloping, are like those of a carabao, unless it be a bear.

So, combining this with Jefe's own individual hideousness, it is no wonder that the two naturalists, upon catching sight of what was coming, dropped their specimens and fled at the top of their speed toward the nearest tree.

This, fortunately for them, belonged to a certain species the branches of which grow very low, and are as gnarled and irregular as those of any old apple-tree in New England, affording equally good footholds for climbing.

So, when Juanito arrived breathless on the scene, the two Englishes were perched comfortably aloft, bombarding Jefe with sticks and disagreeable names, while he, regardless of both of these weapons, bit the tree, and grunted angrily.

They threw down two stout belts made of leather and canvas, which Juanito picked up and examined dubiously. He understood better than the Englishmen the tremendous strength of a carabao's neck-muscles. Then a brilliant idea struck him.

"I will fasten his legs together, senores," he said, "so he cannot run."

Juanito took one of the belts, and, kneeling down, proceeded to fasten it around Jefe's hocks, which, in the legs of a carabao, are very close together, bucking it as tight as he could.

To secure his fore legs was more difficult, because Jefe insisted upon being affectionate, and pushed Juanito about with his huge black muzzle; but at last the second belt was made fast around his knees, as tight as Juanito could pull it.

Juanito pulled a big handful of leaves, and thereby kept Jefe's attention distracted while the Englishmen crawled gingerly out on the longest branch, and swung down to the ground as quiet as possible.

Arab Maxims.

Never tell all you know, for he who tells everything he knows often tells more than he knows.

Never attempt all you can do, for he who attempts everything he can do often attempts more than he can do.

Never believe all you may hear, for he who believes all that he hears often believes more than he hears.

Never lay out all you can afford, for he who lays out everything he can afford often lays out more than he can afford.

Never decide upon all you may see, for he who decides upon all he may see often decides upon more than he sees. — Mexican Herald.