

AS TO SPRING.

I love the Spring, it is so free From sorrow and activity. It predisposes man to shrink All but inexcusable work.

THE "TOWER OF BABEL."

Half a mile from the little town of Kelton, California, the steep hillside rose with rugged abruptness from the valley of the San Lorenzo into a high ridge.

Among these stumps the monarch of all the trees upon the hillside remained untouched. On a bold point, twenty rods up the steep slope, stood a gigantic redwood tree.

More than one hundred feet from the ground the first great limbs were extended, and above loomed the drooping branches of the vast top, not shapely and graceful, but irregular and contorted, and clothed in sooty, dark-green foliage.

The pinnacle was a gnarled spire of dead wood, bleached to a gray whiteness, and punctured in a thousand places by the bills of many generations of woodpeckers.

Some imaginative person, listening to this discordant chorus of the woodpeckers, had called the great tree the "Tower of Babel," and by that name it was known in the country round about.

The Tower of Babel had not been spared from sentimental motives. The ground was so rough and broken that it seemed impossible to fell it without breaking it into fragments, so it was left unmolested until a more favorable time.

Edward North, who had come to California to engage in ranching and fruit-growing, had admired the Tower of Babel from afar when he first stepped from the train at Kelton.

Ralph Kepler, a poor boy who lived with his mother in a shanty on the road to Higgins & Foley's mill, never forgot North's arrival in Kelton.

A deformed man, employed at the sawmill, occasionally passed his mother's house. He was a hunchback, with long powerful arms, and swartly features deeply pitted with smallpox.

The boy tried to escape, but the man clutched his collar, and he was dragged into the road and shaken violently.

It was impossible to cut it and wedge it so as to cause it to fall uphill. In any case, it would be shattered to fragments on the rough ground.

But each one of the men said, in conclusion, "You go and see Nick Mar, at Higgins & Foley's. He can do it if any man can."

Ralph went to see Mar as they advised, but was overwhelmed with confusion when he recognized in him the dwarf whom he had insulted.

"Well, young fellow, you're down in the mouth now, I guess," said the dwarf, looking up at Nick Mar.

"Let's go, Jim," he said, turning to his companion, "and we'll get Higgins to go over, too; but I'm afraid he won't let us cut the tree."

Nick Mar, Big Jim and Mr. Higgins arrived at the Tower of Babel early in the afternoon. Higgins pretended to scoff at the idea of imminent danger from the tree, and refused to allow it to be cut unless Nick Mar could save at least ninety feet of the trunk unbroken.

He was about to give up the plan when the dwarf said, kindly: "Haint you got the money, my boy? Never mind. I'll put up what you can't."

Ralph gladly accepted the proposition, and having deposited his thirty dollars with Mr. Higgins, Nick Mar became responsible for the rest, and the work of felling the Tower of Babel began.

In felling a large redwood tree, a deep notch, called the under-cut, is chopped in the trunk, facing the direction in which it is to fall.

Then they reversed the usual order, and began the saw-cut before chopping the under-cut on the uphill side.

Big Jim, with ponderous blows, drove twenty long steel wedges into the saw-cut. This was to wedge the tree up firmly, so that when the under-cut was made it would not swing.

Then Nick Mar chopped the under-cut. Standing first on the staging, and afterward in the cut itself, he swung his axe for two days, till the great, yawning notch was completed.

An interested crowd watched the work from day to day. Some workmen suggested to Nick Mar that he was aiming the tree so that it would strike the clump of trees on the hill.

beautiful dream. Then he flung Ralph to one side and was gone.

Meanwhile Jim had hurried to the tree Nick appealed to him hurriedly: "Jim! Brace up! She's trying to go back! Jump up and hit the wedges while I cut out the center! Hit 'em! Hit 'em hard, Jim, and never stop!"

He sprang out upon the staging and then to the ground, ran swiftly two or three rods to one side, and looked up.

This was the successful consummation of the dwarf's plan, for the Tower of Babel lay with the butt forty feet below the stump, and one hundred and fifteen feet of the trunk unbroken.

Nick Mar was not thinking of his triumph. He called for Jim, but there was no answer in the stillness that followed the downfall.

Mr. North came and knelt beside her, and said, "We have found him at last, mother."—Youth's Companion.

Some Census Curiosities.

The English National Review has collected some amusing curiosities in an article on the "Census of the Century."

It is said that the Duke of Wellington, then eighty-two years of age, returned himself as deaf—a touching trait of his truthfulness, though, of course, deafness, as an infirmity of old age, did not come within the scope of census inquiries.

"In Devonshire a middle-aged man refused to make out his schedule, saying that he did not know either his name or his place of birth, and he would not perform himself by making a false entry."

The Poland-China Hog.

The Poland-China hog originated in Southern Ohio in the Western and Butler counties, in the year 1827, and was established breed in 1840.

The time came when the saw-cut was to be completed, and the great tree wavered over. In the early morning Nick Mar sat in the staging and Ralph stood below, waiting for Big Jim.

He did not come. Nick Mar sent Ralph to Kelton to search for him. He found Jim in a saloon, intoxicated and worthless, declaiming in hoarse tones to a crowd of loafers.

Two French chemists, Messrs. Berthelot and Andre, have investigated the cause of the powerful odor that rises from vegetable mould after a fall of rain.

ETHER DRINKING.

A HABIT FAST SPREADING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

Feccular Way of Drinking Ether and Its Deplorable Effects Upon Its Victims—A Dangerous Drug.

A very striking example of the human tendency to resort to artificial stimulation is furnished by the rapid growth and enormous extent of the practice of ether drinking in the north of Ireland more especially.

The suppression of alcoholic intemperance in that district was very effectual, but the yearning for stimulation was not removed. Whiskey drinking was driven out, but a far cheaper and more potent means of producing intoxication was found in ether, or more particularly, what is known as methylated ether.

The process of ether drinking is peculiar and elaborate. To begin with, the drinker washes out his mouth with cold water, or, as the local phrase is, "renches his gums."

In beginning the practice one dose is enough to intoxicate; but the confirmed drunkards require three or even four, and cases are on record where as much as a wineglassful has been taken at once.

The effect is produced very rapidly and passes away very rapidly. An ether drinker may be drunk and sober again half a dozen times a day.

The vice, therefore, has a strong tendency to spread beyond the particular region where it has become so prevalent. Emigration has carried it to a distance, and of course has brought it to this country, for everywhere the demand for artificial stimulants is ever greater than it is now.

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The ruin of the California Missions. The ruin of the Missions was completed by the American conquest. The few remaining Indians were speedily driven or enticed away, for the rough frontiersmen who came over the plains knew nothing of missionary friars or civilized Indians; they came here to squat on public land and respected no possession beyond 160 acres, and that only in the hands of one familiar with the English language and modern weapons.

Where population has grown up around the site, as at Santa Clara, San Francisco, and San Rafael, they became parish churches. At other places squatters took possession of them, excluding priests and mayor-domo impartially, and in more than one case even the churches were sacrilegiously degraded to the use of stables and the like.

When Pa. May 12—Louis Baudry of Cortland, N. Y., was instantly killed by falling out of a third-story window of the Reed House about 9 p. m.

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