

AS TO SPRING.

I love the Spring, it is so free From sorrow and activity. It predisposes man to shrink All but inexecutable 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 back the tree."

"Very well, let's go," said Jim hoarsely. Nick Mar, Big Jim and Mr. Higgins arrived at the Tower of Babel early in the afternoon.

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

Ralph rushed in. Mr. North stood in the centre of the room beside a young lady. She was looking with pleasure at a picture on the wall, of which Mr. North was evidently speaking.

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 centre! Hit 'em! Hit 'em hard, Jim, and never stop!"

Nick sprang up and leaped into the under-cut. He raised his axe, and at the majestic top of the Tower was looking down upon the boys who were showering upon the wedges on the other side.

Suddenly a deep, hollow, stunning crack sounded as the wood broke. Nick Mar, tugging as if with an electric shock, threw up his hand.

He had time for only one cry, for then the descending mass struck the largest tree of the clump above squarely. It bent far back, but perceptibly checked the momentum of the fall; and the recoil whirled the great butt of the Tower off the stump and projected it down the steep declivity, filling the air with flying rocks and earth.

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. Lanterns were brought, and after a time Ralph and the dwarf found poor Jim, hurled down the hill, with the pallor of death on his face.

The men bore him down to Mr. North's house, and at the door they met the aged lady whom Ralph had seen. Her face turned white, and she threw herself down beside him with a moaning cry, "Jamie!"

Jim opened his eyes, and his face lighted up with a smile. "Mother," he sighed, faintly. She kissed him and wept, and smoothed his damp hair, and spoke to him tenderly as she had when he was a little boy.

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

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.

The Poland-China hog originated in Southern Ohio in the Western and Butler counties, in the year 1827, and was established breed in 1840. They are produced from four pure and distinct breeds, three of which are imported, viz.: Poland, Big China, Big Irish and Bayfield.

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.

Peculiar 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."

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Earth Odor. 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.

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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.

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