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STARTLING PHENOMENON.

A Mexican Tree that Devours Chickens.

I have taken much interest in the study of botany during my sojourn in this country, the flora of which presents one of the richest fields for scientific investigation, and have wandered some distance from the town of Chihuahua on several occasions in my search for specimens. On one of these expeditions I noticed a dark object on one of the outlying spurs of the Sierra Madre Mountains, which object excited my curiosity so much that I examined it carefully through my field glass. This revealed that the object was a tree or shrub of such an unusual appearance that I resolved to visit the spot. I rode to the mountain, the sides of which sloped sufficiently for me to make my way on horseback to within a few rods of the summit. But here I was stopped by an abrupt rise so steep that I despaired of reaching it even on foot. I went around it several times, seeking for some way to climb up, but the jagged, beetling rocks afforded not the slightest foothold. On the top of this knob stands the tree I had seen. From the spot on which I now stood I could see that it somewhat resembled in form the weeping willow, but the long, drooping whip-like limbs were of a dark and apparently slimy appearance, and seemed possessed of a horrible life-like power of coiling and uncoiling. Occasionally the whole tree would seem a writhing, squirming mass. My desire to investigate this strange vegetable produced increased on each of the many expeditions I made to the spot, and at last I saw a night one day which made me believe I had certainly discovered an unheard-of thing. A bird which I had watched circling about for some time finally settled on the top of the tree, when the branches began to awaken, as it were, and to curl upward. They twined and twisted like snakes about the bird, which began to scream, and draw it down in its fearful embrace until I lost sight of it. Horror-stricken, I seized the nearest rock in an attempt to climb the knob. I had so often seen the tree when I fell back, but the rock was loosened and fell also. I narrowly missed me, but I sprang up unhurt, and saw that the fallen rock had left a considerable cavity. I put my face to it and looked in. Something like a cavern, the floor of which had an upward tendency, met my sight, and I felt a current of fresh air blowing on me, with a dry, earthy smell. Evidently there was another opening somewhere, undoubtedly at the summit. Using my trowel, which I always carried on my botanizing expeditions, I enlarged the hole, and then pushed my way up through the passage. When I had nearly reached the top I looked within reach of that diabolical tree. But I found it nowhere near the aperture, so I sprang out. I was just in time to see the flattened carcass of the bird drop to the ground, which was covered with bones and feathers. I approached as closely as I dared and examined the tree. It was low in size, not more than twenty feet high, but covering a great area. Its trunk was of prodigious thickness, knotted and scaly. From the top of this trunk, a few feet from the ground, its slimy branches curved upward and downward, nearly touching the ground with their tapering tips. Its appearance was that of a gigantic tarantula awaiting its prey. On my venturing to lightly touch one of the limbs, it closed upon my hand with such force that when I tore it loose the skin came with it. I descended then, and closing the passage returned home. I went back next day carrying half a dozen chickens with which to feed the tree. The moment I tossed it the fowls a violent agitation shook its branches, which swayed to and fro with a sinuous, shakily motion. After devouring the fowls, these branches, fully gorged, dropped to the former position, and the tree giving no sign of animation, I dared approach it and take the limbs in my hand. They were covered with suckers, resembling the tentacles of an octopus. The blood of the fowls had been absorbed by these suckers, leaving crimson stains on the dark surface. There was no foliage, of course, of any kind. Without speaking of my discovery to any one about, I wrote an account of it to the world-famous botanist, Prof. Wendenham, of the University of Heidelberg. His reply states that my tree is the Arbor Diaboli, only two specimens of which have ever been known—one on a peak of the Himalayas and the other on the Island of Sumatra. Mine is the third. Prof. Wendenham says that the Arbor Diaboli and the plant known as Venus fly-trap, are the only known specimens, growing on the land, of those forms of life which partake of the nature of both the animal and vegetable kingdoms, although there are instances too numerous to mention, found of this class in the sea. The Portuguese man-of-war may be mentioned, however, as one, and the sponge as the best known specimens.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The Jay Abroad.

Signs of the jay abroad: He has a quarrel with the ticket agent before getting his ticket; he says good-by to every one in hailing distance before getting on the train, and then says the same things through the car window; he leaves his final instructions with the solemnity and importance of making a will; he asks the conductor and all the passengers around him twenty different times if they are sure he is on the right train; he puts up the window, only to put it down again, and then to hoist it up again; he finds out all about his neighbor's business; he piles his valises around him like a barricade; he prepares to take a nap, but can't go to sleep for fear some one will rob him; he begins to collect his baggage and sits nervously on the edge of the seat, for fear he will not have time to get out, half an hour before the train reaches his station, and, finally, at the end of an hour's journey, when he reaches his destination and gets out, he rushes back after the train has started to pick up something he had forgotten. The jay is a great traveller.—*Atchison Globe.*

Why They Waited and Watched.

Friend from Pike County—Why are all those people watching that man? New Yorker—He is an electric light company lineman and they are waiting to see him killed.

THE WIZARD OF THE NORTH.

Something About His Tricks—Sad Story of His Favorite Daughter.

There was a wretched woman singing for pence in the slums recently who had a history. She was none other than the favorite daughter of Professor Anderson, the Wizard of the North, who used to mystify the last generation with the wonders of elementary electricity. Many people who marveled at the professor's show—and who did not mar the professor's daughter?—will remember his velvet at it in those days? She used to have hand some daughter. She played the piano, and she was always on view, and she was always seen about with her father. He left a good deal of money behind him, and she had her share, but by this time she had married a New York professional man, and he quickly made ducks and drakes of it. She left him and sought to make a living on the stage.

A good musician and a fair singer, she managed to get pretty well for a time, and came to England; but a run of ill luck came and her engagements failed her. She parted with her wardrobe and came down at last to singing in the streets. Later came worse still. Her strength gave way, her voice failed and even this wretched means of subsistence was lost.

For two days she had nothing at all to eat and for two nights she slept in the park. Then, and not till then, she overcame her pride, and called to see a gentleman who in the old days knew her and her father very well. She is being cared for now and is being put in the way to earn a livelihood.

The wizard was a remarkable man in many ways. He was a cook by trade and practiced his profession as chef at a hotel in Aberdeen. He left his hotel to become a wizard. The tricks by which he made his fame would hardly puzzle a schoolboy nowadays. But those were the early days of electricity, and when people saw candles suddenly light up without a match being put to them and heard rapping and bell ringings and drum beatings coming in the most mysterious manner from all parts of the hall they were a little frightened as well as being astonished. Some of what were accounted the professor's most marvellous tricks were accomplished by convulsions underneath the carpet on the stage a copper plate communicating with an electric battery. In the heels of his boots were fixed spurs in such a manner that whenever he liked he could drive them through the carpet and make electrical connection with the copper plate underneath. When people did not know of the ingenious little arrangement the easily produced electrical phenomena was sufficiently marvellous. He used to give his audiences shocks and do a little in the electric faith healing line by way of varying the performance. The wizard was a born mechanic, and used to manufacture his own apparatus as far as possible. He possessed also a large measure of that great quality of the successful inventor, the power of appropriating other people's ideas.

If any one brought him a new piece of trick apparatus that showed ingenuity he would contrive in examining it to break it. Then the artful wizard would send for the inventor to repair it, and if he showed any cleverness would keep him hanging about till he had found out what ingenious ideas the unsuspecting inventor had got floating about in his head. The professor always had his own workshop in every town he visited, and to that he would retire with such ideas as he had managed to pick up and work them out as his own inventions. He was very cunning, was Professor Anderson, and apart from the merits of his performance he is accounted one of the cleverest showmen that ever lived.

Professor Anderson had another daughter beside the unfortunately lady referred to above. She used to take a prominent part in the performance, and regularly accompanied some really marvellous maeomonipled feats. Every day she used to learn off by heart the contents of three newspapers. At night her father would blindfold her and invite people in the audience to indicate any paragraph in either of the young papers which they would like the young lady to read by second sight. She would repeat it word for word without ever making a mistake. This, perhaps, the most remarkable feat of memory on record. She is a middle aged woman now, and is engaged in literary work in Leeds.—*Glasgow Mail.*

How to Sell Goods.

How to sell goods. It depends upon the man. That is the whole secret. Like the old parody on Victor Hugo, "If you want to be a good salesman you must educate your grandmother." A good salesman is born, not made. In the first place you must be able to "size up" your purchaser all through. If you tell a racy story to a church deacon, or if you offer a prohibition candidate for justice a drink out of your private bottle, or if you try to get the village freethinker to direct you to prayer meeting you will make an expensive mistake. You must, like St. Paul, be all things to all men, and more than that, the right things to the right men. You can't sell to two men in the same way. You must attack each man differently. You must catch a man when he is not busy and when he is not tired. When you do go for a man go for him horse, foot and dragons. Don't give him a chance to get away from you, but hold on to him until you land him. You have got to know your own goods like you know your prayers to do this, and you have got to know what your competitors are doing, too. You must be prepared for every possible objection, and for every possible and impossible objection, and suddenly you find you have sold a big bill, and you have to go over the thing slowly afterward to find out how you did it.—*New York Star.*

After the Festivities.

Marian—What do you think of Mr. Doby Gladys? Gladys—He seems to be a very agreeable young man. Marian—Well, I didn't like him a bit. Gladys—Why not? Marian—Why, we stood under the mistletoe together for full five minutes this evening and he didn't—well, he didn't that's all.—*Harper's Bazar.*

A woman is never so badly in love that she does not try to find out the cost of her engagement ring.

A QUAKER'S WILL.

Which Made the Heirs Refuse to Attend the Funeral.

A STRANGE STORY.

In the accounts of the great fire at Lynn, Mass., readers must have noticed that among the heaviest losers are many persons of the name of Breed. It would be untrue to say that they belong to the leading family of the place, because there is no one leading family there, but they are among those who are most conspicuous by their wealth and social position.

In the next generation, however, there will be some millionaires among them, owing to the peculiar character of old Mr. Breed's will, which many years ago sent a thrill through all the Quakers of New England and New York State. It was the sensation of the time, but like other sensations, gradually ceased to be the one absorbing topic of conversation. Old Mr. Breed, who made this famous will, hailed from Boston, and settled in Lynn before it was the great centre of the shoe trade, and before its rich men had built their cottages on Nahant neck. He prospered exceedingly, and became a leading merchant in Lynn and a prominent man among the Friends.

He had an amiable wife, sons who were settled in business and prosperous, and daughters who were well married, one of them to William Bradford, the famous painter of arctic scenes.

THE HUSBAND'S WILL.

Everything was going along as pleasantly as possible, when one morning when Mrs. Breed was shopping in Lynn she was stopped by a banker of the name of Buffum, a friend, who said to her: Sister Breed, these know, I guess, that these husband has made his will? "Why, no," she replied, "I did not know it. What of it?" "Doesn't these know these husband's mind in this matter? If these does, and if these and he are of one mind, I have naught to say. But if these know naught of it, I think for the sake of these self and thy children, these had better find out."

GET OFF HIS FAMILY.

The frightened wife consented her sons and sons-in-law, and it was there and then agreed that she should question her husband, and to make him tell these, and here he grasped her hand and gave it a most significant shake. "I tell thee, Sister Breed, all is not right, not right," and so he passed on and went his way, leaving her overwhelmed with anxiety, for it was plain that there was something which had disturbed him, the quiet banker, so greatly that he had become quite emphatic.

THE TRICK HE PLAYED.

And so he did, but he kept the word of promise to these to break it to the sense. One of his sons-in-law always mistrusted him after that he would play them a trick, which proved to be the case. When he died the will was examined before he was buried, and it was found that he had indeed left every cent to his family, but in such a cunning way that they could not profit by it. He seemed to have studied for their especial benefit the fable of Tantalus, and he added insult to injury by the explanation that he had done this thing to rebuke them for their persistence in thwarting his pious intentions, and to punish them for hanker after his money. He left his whole fortune in trust for the benefit of his family, the wife to receive \$350 a year, each child to receive \$350 a year, and each grandchild to receive \$350 a year, the state to remain undivided until all his next heirs should be dead, and the youngest grandchild that might be born should be 21 years old.

AT THE FUNERAL.

The news of this will spread through Lynn like wildfire, and the house, large as it was, couldn't contain the people who docked to the funeral ceremonies. Being Friends there was no formal service, but as usual one of the friends, an old Quaker, arose to say a few words about the deceased, when he was sternly checked by a son-in-law, who cried "Stop!" in a tone that terrified all the women present. "If," said the son-in-law, "these means to condole with this widow, these may speak. But if these intends to say something in praise of this old villain"—and here his face grew white with passion, and he shook his fist at the coffin—"I will not suffer it. He has outraged that dear lady, his wife, he has outraged his whole family, and he has made his will a means of hurting us through our own children, which wickedness I hope the Lord will turn away from them. Speak praises of him, then, these shall not, if I have to close thy mouth with my own hand." After this extraordinary address he sat down. The friend who had posed to speak looked pleadingly at the sons, but they turned away from him, and

BEN CONSULTED.

Ben Butler was consulted, but he said the will could not be broken, and therefore no attempt was made to break it. The property was in a great measure in land in Missouri, Kansas and Iowa, and has increased so greatly in value that the estate must now amount to more than \$12,000,000. The time of division is still far off. All of the children are in sound health, and one of the sons has made a second marriage with a young wife which will extend the time very considerably, as no one can now foresee who will be the youngest grandchild. The oldest grandchild will certainly be past middle age when the time of division comes, and the millions are apportioned among the grandchildren. There is no out among what amount the estate may have grown at that time, for every year there is some new development either in the property or in locations adjoining. This incident in real life offers some analogy to the story by Eugene Sue called "The Wandering Jew," which turns up an estate left in mortmain, as the lawyers term it.

THE LEAN, LITHE GIRL.

The Prevailing Style of Dress Just Suit Her Figure.

The lean and lithe girl is favored by the styles of dress now in vogue. They say that Astrakhan is going out of favor in Paris. But it is not here. The Figaro jacket is a thing of the past. The Celio and Moorish jackets have taken its place.

Surplice draperies, sash belts and buckles have developed into proportions too immense for fat girls. Both high and low coiffures are worn, but the most fashionable girls dress their locks low and band them with fillets of ribbon or silver or gold a la Grecque.

The red hunting coat opening over a white or gray corduroy waistcoat, and worn with any kind of skirt, blue, gray, green or black, is the correct hunt habit.

The red jacket cap is the correct head-gear for the girl who follows the hounds in the hunt habit, made up of a scarlet coat, a dark skirt and a corduroy waistcoat.

Minervine of fine gray squirrel fur is again worn fashionably in Paris. But the gray hairs are all slightly tipped with ruddy brown, which makes this old favorite of forty years ago a very becoming fur.

In the art needlework stores are found fine and artistic embroidery patterns on articles suitable for Christmas presents, the work partly done to show the purchaser the stitches and materials, and how to use the same in finishing the piece.

Blackish net makes an excellent underskirt for a black tulle ball gown, composed of many skirts of black tulle falling one over the other, the topmost one illuminated with silver or steel tinsel, or with gold or copper tinsel if the wearer is a dark brunette.

Notes from Scotland.

The contracts entered into last month by Clyde shipbuilders were the largest on record. Mr. Andrew Young, retired teacher, Edinburgh, author of "There is a Happy Land," one of the most popular hymns ever sung by children, died on the 30th ult.

A bust, in bronze, of Thomas Carlyle was on the 4th instant presented by the subscribers to the citizens of Glasgow. It has been placed in the Corporation Galleries.

On the 10th instant, in consequence of ill health, Mr. Donald McPhee, Procurator Fiscal for the City Police Courts, tendered his resignation to the Glasgow Town Council.

The Very Rev. John Moir, formerly Dean of Brechin, and from 1873 till this year Dean of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway, died on the 6th instant at Newport, Fife, in his 76th year.

The freedom of the city of Dundee was on the 4th inst. presented to Mr. William Arrol, the builder of the Forth and Tay bridges. Provost Hunter, who presided, paid a high tribute to the engineering skill displayed by Mr. Arrol in the erection of the Tay Bridge, and said the public were perfectly satisfied as to its stability, and all felt a sense of absolute security.

The death is announced at Bothwell of Mr. Donald R. Macgregor, formerly member of Parliament for Leith. During recent years Mr. Macgregor occupied an important position in the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company.

The hearing of two appeals arising out of the disputed sale of the estates of Murthly, Grantully, Strathbrann, and others, in Perthshire, by Sir A. Douglas Stewart to Mr. John S. Kennedy, banker, New York, was commenced in the House of Lords on the 6th inst.

One Kind of Journalism.

Modern Editor—How many answers have you received to our question, "Which would you rather be, a bootjack or a cow?" Assistant—Five hundred; make seven teen pages. Modern Editor—Are they all in type? Assistant—Yes, sir. Modern Editor—Did you write a ten column article about our new building? Assistant—Yes, sir; makes ten and a half. Modern Editor—Did McGinnis get the 1,000 "want" ads I sent him to beg, borrow or steal? Assistant—All of them. Modern Editor—Very good. Now write a few columns about our increasing circulation, and we will go to press.—*New York Weekly.*

A Philanthropist.

Trump—Thank you, very much, for the lunch, mum; but could you spare me 25 cents? Woman—Mercy! What do you want with 25 cents? Trump—Well, I don't want it for myself, mum. I'm just collecting a little money here and there, the same as the rest of the profession, and when we get enough we're going to found a home for destitute tramps.

The Questions of the Hour.

PHYLIS, LOU:

Should tariff now be high or low? Was Hamlet mad or was he sane? Did Bonaparte live or die or no? Is Shakespeare ready on the wane? How long will kings and princes reign? These problems mind I not at all. But really I cannot refrain From wondering what to wear this fall.

Who dealt B. Patterson the blow? Who can that mystery explain? Why is this world so full of woe? And what's the use of tears and pain? Was it the tiger or the Jane? These problems mind I not at all. But really I cannot refrain From wondering what to wear this fall.

What makes the glittering glowworm glow? What has become of wandering Cain? Why's rapid transit always slow? Why do all pretty maids grow plain, While homely ones their looks retain? These problems mind I not at all. But really I cannot refrain From wondering what to wear this fall.

ENVOY.

Avoid ye questions empty, vain! These problems mind I not at all, But really I cannot refrain From wondering what to wear this fall.

—John Kendrick Bangs in Harper's Bazar.

My First Pair of Boots.

How dear to my heart were the boots of my boyhood. My first pair of boots with the bright copper toes. I prized them as highly as ever a boy could, And boldly I ventured through floods and through snow, though I was a little too bold. The tops were illumined with pretty red leather. Whose exquisite beauty I cherished with joy. I kept them a-going in all sorts of weather. The first pair of boots that I wore when a boy. The copper-toed treasures, the bright red-topped treasures—The man-making boots that I wore when a boy. I've gems from the land of the Emerald Mountain. I've pearls from the coral caves under the wave, And sapphires found by far India's fountain, And rubies that came from a Pharaoh's grave. I've diamonds of prize and rich jewels I treasure, I've silver and gold free from dross and alloy. But nothing I hold so dear as the pleasure The first pair of boots that I wore when a boy. The copper-toed beauties, the bright red-topped beauties—The first pair of boots that I wore when a boy. —Chicago Herald.

Where Does It Rise?

Where does the River St. Lawrence rise? How many readers of the Companion can answer this question in geography? Some will probably say in Lake Ontario; others, in Lake Superior. Neither answer is quite correct. Like the Amazon, this river has a different name for each part of its course. The lower part of the great South American river is called by the natives the Amazonas, the middle part is the Solimoes, and the upper the Marañon.

So the St. Lawrence, between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, is called the Niagara, between Lake Erie and Lake Huron the St. Clair and Detroit rivers, and between Lake Huron and Lake Superior the St. Mary's River. Yet are these all one and the same river, the lakes being but so many expansions of its waters.

Beyond Lake Superior, to the northward, there is still another portion of its course, called the Nepigon, a noble stream of clear, azure-tinted water nearly as large as the Hudson in volume, which flows down from the great Lake Nepigon in the heart of the Canadian wilderness.

Until recently Lake Nepigon has been but little known. On our maps it is figured as a smaller lake than it really is. Its actual dimensions are about seventy-three miles in length by fifty-one in breadth. These figures give but an inadequate idea of its size, for there are five great bays varying from twenty to ten miles in length. The actual coast line of the lake is not much less than six hundred miles.

Twelve rivers of considerable size, four of them rising far up on the "divide" towards James Bay flow into it, and its waters rival those of Lake George in purity and clearness. It literally swarms with whitefish and trout.

The Nepigon river—the outlet of the lake—may be fairly termed the northerly and upper course of the St. Lawrence, not only from its size, exceeding greatly all other rivers flowing into Lake Superior, but from the clearness and color of its water, and other general characteristics.

Whereas the other smaller rivers of Lake Superior are "black water" rivers, that is to say, having turbid or stained water, the Nepigon is a clear and beautiful river of the same azure, sea-green and marine-blue water which one sees at Niagara and in the St. Lawrence.—*Youth's Companion.*

That Was Different.

"Can I—I have a word with you in private?" stammered the young man, as he stood at the door of the private office. "Come in!" replied the head of the firm. "Now, what is it?" "You—you are aware of the fact that I—I—"

"That you have been with this house for four years. Yes, sir, I am aware of that fact. Want to leave?" "Oh, no."

"Didn't know but you had had a better offer. If so, you can go." "That's not it, sir."

"Oh, it isn't? Want an increase of salary, do you? Well, you won't get it. We are now paying you all you are worth and a little more."

"It isn't that, sir." "It isn't? Then what are you driving at?"

"I want your daughter Molly." "Humph! That's different. Go and take her and be hanged to you! I thought you were fighting for a raise of salary!" —*Detroit Free Press.*

She Was a Freak.

"How did you like me as a living statue?" asked Mrs. Schmidt of her husband, on their return from an entertainment at which she had figured conspicuously. "To tell the truth, I was dumfounded," he replied. "As my statuesque appearance?" "No, my dear, at your being able to keep your mouth shut so long." Every man ought to be as good as his word. Nothing is expected of those who never have a good word for anybody.

Six Months After Marriage.

Loving Wife—Why didn't you come home last night, my dear? I sat up and waited for you. Husband—So I imagined; that's why I didn't come.