

FROM THE FRONT.

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It was a two story frame house, painted white and with green blinds, and it stood a little way back from the road that wound through a narrow valley between low hills of second growth timber. In front of the house was a big, heavily fruited cherry tree. A boy was perched upon a ladder among the branches, filling a tin pail with the ruby fruit, his fingers flying as if he were competing with the birds, who seemed to think they had a mortgage on all the cherries in the neighborhood. But his haste had another cause. His mother had but a moment before told him that when he had filled the pail three times he might go to the postoffice, a mile farther down the valley, and inquire for the mail.

The boy knew his mother to be quite as anxious as he that the trip should be made to the postoffice. For more than a week his daily visit after the mail had been fruitless, and he was certain she was worrying, in spite of her usual air of cheerfulness, for the head of the little family was at the front, wearing a blue uniform, and vague rumors were afloat of a bloody battle in Pennsylvania.

Singularly enough, the mail had lately failed to bring newspapers, as well as letters, and it had not been possible to borrow from the neighbors as usual. The boy and his mother had not talked much on the matter; but, whatever his mother thought, he suspected had news in the papers—news that would explain why there were no letters. He was impatient to go to the postoffice, but he dreaded the visit, too, and this made him climb down the ladder slowly when at last the pail was filled for the third time.

As his feet touched the earth he heard the rattle of wheels, and looking around he saw Deacon Nelson's big bay horse and decent black democrat wagon, driven by the deacon himself, draw near. The deacon's countenance, which was generally smiling and jolly, was very solemn now, and the face of the deacon's wife, who sat on the back seat under a



DRIVEN BY THE DEACON HIMSELF.

gingham parasol, was tear stained. As the deacon slowly got out of the wagon and tethered the horse he asked, with a fine show of cheerfulness:

"Has your mother heard from the elder in a day or two, John? No? Well, Marthy and me was just driving by, and we thought we'd make a little visit, you see, just to ask how your corn crop was getting on, you know." Then, to his wife in an undertone, he said: "Now, be careful, Marthy. It's all right; it's all right. It must be all right, I tell you."

The deacon was one of the chief pillars in the church of which the boy's father, before going to the front, had been pastor, and, like all in that neighborhood and similar neighborhoods, the deacon always spoke of his minister as "the elder." This minister had been outspoken in his patriotism during the first year of the war. During the second he had induced many of the neighborhood's able-bodied men to enlist. Early in the third he had himself marched away as their captain, with the young men from his own congregation who had offered themselves to their country. If the boy was doubtful about his father's safety before the deacon spoke, he was not afterward. It seemed to his young mind as if the deacon has said between his audible words:

"The elder is killed, boy! Do you hear? Killed!"

John hurried into the house with his pail of cherries, kissed his mother and started on a run for the postoffice. It was a hot day, but he did not mind the heat. It is doubtful if he knew it was hot. He thought only of the bare possibility that he might get a letter addressed to his mother or himself in his father's dear handwriting, and he ran like a madman, with the young men from his own congregation who had offered themselves to their country. If the boy was doubtful about his father's safety before the deacon spoke, he was not afterward. It seemed to his young mind as if the deacon has said between his audible words:

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tramp through the dust and under the burning rays of the sun he thought only of how he should tell his mother there was still no mail.



"NO, THERE IS NO LETTER."

preacher. As the boy entered the yard one of the men hastily struck a newspaper, from which he had been reading to the others, into his pocket.

In the little parlor of the white house there were several women younger than Deacon Nelson's wife. Their husbands were soldiers, too, and at the front with the preacher. The boy's mother was sitting in the center of a circle of kneeling women, her eyes set and tearless, but there was a sound of subdued sobbing from some of the others. The deacon was just beginning a prayer.

"Dear Lord, our heavenly Father," quavered the deacon in tender and reverent tones. Then he stopped. What was that?

The boy's ear was not the only one that caught the sound of file and drum, the file playing merrily, "Rally Round the Flag, Boys, Rally Once Again"—you know how it sounds, reader—while the drumsticks were beating out the time in lively measure.

A moment more, and the rattle of a wagon coming down a stony slope in the road was heard. Then there was a cheer, and the file and drum changed to "Yankee Doodle." Presently the wagon, in which sat the postmaster himself, the blacksmith, the cooper and the boys who were playing the file and drum drove noisily up. The old postmaster almost fell out of the wagon and stumbled up the path to the door. He was quite breathless, but he held aloft in his hand a big yellow envelope.

"It's from the elder, brethren! It's from the elder!" he gasped. "I know his handwriting, and the postmark is since the battle. Open it, ma'am," he said to the boy's mother, "and read it out."

Everybody gathered around her as she took the missive, but it wasn't opened just yet, for she faints before she could cut the envelope. It was not long, it said:

"DEAR WIFE AND SON JOHN—I have been hurt a little and lay on the field all night, but it is not serious, and I shall not even have to go to the hospital. So do not be worried. We have won a great victory, and our God will keep me safely to the end and bring us all together again."

"Let us sing the Doxology, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,'" said Deacon Nelson, while his eyes streamed. Then they all sang with the spirit and the understanding also. When the singing was over, the newspaper that had been hidden from the boy was brought out. It told of the battle of Gettysburg, and the name of the elder was in the list of the missing.

The elder did live to come home again, and on every Decoration day since the establishment of that beautiful holiday he has made a talk over the soldiers' graves in the little cemetery back of the church in the valley, of which he is still pastor.

I. D. MARSHALL.

O my country, my country! Heart of my heart and life of my life! O ye dead who died in our defense, whose eagle eye gleamed dim in the smoke of battle, and whose brave hearts stopped beating at the cannon's mouth! The sons and daughters of America will not forget thee! You, my comrades, have two immortalities. One you will take with you beyond the stars. The other will live forever in the deans you have done, in the glorious flag and government you have done so much to honor and preserve!

Soldiers, who freely for our country's glory Upheld our flag on southern hill and plain, Long may your deeds be told in grateful story, Ye have not lived in vain.

Brothers, who fought for more than empty honor That all our land united might be free, May shine forevermore upon our banner Each star for liberty.

Heroes, who toiled through all the dusty marches And life surrendered on those shot plowed fields, To ye who led where the blue sky o'erarches Tribute a nation yields.

Bring flowers to strew again With fragrant purple rain Of lilacs and of roses white and red The dwellings of our dead, our glorious dead, Let the bells ring a solemn funeral chime And wild war music bring anew the time When they who sleep beneath Were full of vigorous breath And in their lusty manhood called forth, Holding in strong right hand The fortunes of the land, The pride and power and safety of the north.

Strew the fair garlands where slumber the dead, Ring out the strains like the swell of the sea, Heartfelt the tribute we lay on each bed, Sound o'er the brave the refrain of the free, Sound the refrain of the loyal and free, Visit each sleeper and hallow each bed, Wave the starred banner from season to sea, Grateful the living and honored the dead.

During the boy's weary homeward

EARTHQUAKE INDICATOR

Telephone to Be Used in Mexico for That Purpose.

An Original Plan Devised Whereby the People of the Volcanic Zone May Be Warned of Approaching Peril.

Senor Francisco Estrada, professor of physics in the state college of San Luis Potosi, Mexico, has submitted an original plan to the government for foretelling earthquakes in the volcanic zone of Mexico, by means of the telephone, says the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. Since the strong earthquake which visited the Valley of Mexico on November 2 last, killing eighteen persons, he has made a special study of this class of disturbances and their preceding signs. He has been making a long study of means of prediction for these destructive disturbances, and is sure he has made a discovery of value, which value can only be appreciated by the inhabitants of the volcanic regions. In the course of his very interesting report the author says:

"With the telephone and the more recent invention, the microphone, and with daily simultaneous observations, taken in the volcanic zone, which comprises Vera Cruz, Puebla, Mexico and Guadaluajara, I believe it possible to definitely prognosticate earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, as the result of the great interior changes of the earth, which change the geological construction of our land. The noises that trouble our long-distance telephones that use the earth to complete the circuits, noises hitherto unexplained, I believe from my repeated observations are originated from two principal causes, atmospheric electricity and underground electrical currents, which come from depths more or less great. In the first case they are easily distinguished by exterior signs, such as storms, thunder, lightning, etc., but there are times when the air being perfectly still, singular noises like murmurs, sand storms, blows or the rubbing of a rough body upon the instrument are heard at the telephone. As this instrument is the most sensitive known, I judge it is suitable for the recognition of the approaching seismic phenomena, which cause such great terror to the inhabitant of volcanic zones. I propose the rational study of these phenomena by the following plan:

"Construction of various telephone lines: let one connect the central government meteorological observatory with the base of the volcano Popocatepetl, being grounded in one of the deepest cracks or crevasses, selecting among them one containing a thermal spring, connecting the other end of the line at the observatory with the metallic tube of one of the deepest artesian wells in the city. Another line should run from Puebla to the same mountain, and then connect Guadaluajara with the volcano of Colima, and later lines should be run to the peak of Orizaba, the Cofra de Perote, and the Joratic volcano. I would place at least two telephones and one vertical galvanometer at some convenient spot midway in the telegraph lines from Vera Cruz to Guadaluajara, and Guadaluajara to San Blas, or some other Pacific port that has a telegraph office to take daily observations with the telephone. In each one of these branches or sections, and with all the lines connected as often as possible without interfering with this service of the wires, the placing in the observatories at Mexico, Puebla and Guadaluajara of a simple microphone composed of a carbon pendulum suspended on a tin spiral wire so arranged that it will close an electric circuit at the slightest motion, and set an electric bell to ringing, in order to record the slightest movement of the earth. If properly handled by these means the eruption of any volcano and earthquake might be foretold many days in advance."

DOG THAT WORMS TOBACCO.

Kentucky Canine That Is Hired Out as a Field Hand.

Speaking of funny things, did you ever hear of a wonderful dog that is owned by John A. Durr, who lives at Vanarsdall, a little settlement down in Mercer county, Ky.? asks the Chicago Times. This dog beats Dick Bruce's and Tom Quintin's dogs all hollow. He is worth his weight in gold. He worms tobacco. He begins at the end of the row and goes down the line at a lively gait, and no worm is left to tell the tale of the desolation wrought. The dog learned this trick by following Durr's little boys. When the boys would start down the row the dog would follow along.

After watching the youngsters for several days the dog caught on to the work himself and took a great liking to it. One day Durr went out to his tobacco patch and found his boys playing in the shade, which was not a strange thing for boys to do. "Why the devil ain't you worming tobacco?" he yelled. "Ned's doing it," they yelled back. Durr went to the patch and found the big pointer dog busily engaged in worming the plants, and he was doing it faster than both the boys could have done. Durr was tickled to death. After his own patch had been wormed he hired the dog out to his neighbors at one dollar a day. All this can be proved by two or three revenue men who never lie.

QUEER STREET NAMES.

The French have peculiar notions on the naming of streets, and some curious examples have come to my notice during the last month. When at Chateaubain viewing the president of the republic and his men at the recent maneuvers I noticed the following names of streets: The Drunken Butcher, the Sow-That-Cuts-Along, All Devils, Love's alley and the street Ah! Ah! Some of these names also exist at Mans, and I am told that at Boulogne-sur-Mer there is a street with the name of Listen if it Rains. In this latter town there is also Tin Pot street, Arm of Gold street and even the Fleas market.

SURE SIGN OF EARLY DECAY.

Premature Development in Children Generally Results in Imbecility.

The public prints have lately been mentioning the circumstance of an Alabama woman who has reached the age of nineteen years without increase of stature beyond that of a babe of eight months. The case is indeed curious, and all the more so from the fact that she remains in good health and in possession of her physical powers. In discussing this *lusus naturæ* a well-known investigator into matters anthropological related to a reporter for the Cincinnati Enquirer some cases in direct contrast with this, and two or three are worth reproducing.

"The French Academy of Sciences," said he, "has given much attention to matters like this. They have on record the description of a lad who at the age of seven years measured four feet nine inches without his shoes. He lifted with ease two hundred pounds and was able to do as much heavy work as a perfectly developed man. But his understanding was no greater than is usual with children of his age, and their playthings were his favorite toys.

"Another boy, a native of Bouzanquet, though of strong constitution, appeared to be stiff jointed till four and a half years old. During this time nothing further was remarkable about him except an extraordinary appetite. Before reaching the age of five his limbs became supple and his body began to expand rapidly. At six years of age his height was five feet and his bulk in proportion. His growth was so rapid that every month his clothes required to be made longer and wider, yet he had neither sickness nor pain. He could lift upon his shoulders a weight of one hundred and fifty pounds and carry it with ease. At the age of five his voice changed and his beard began to appear, and at six his beard was remarkably heavy and all the unquestionable marks of maturity were visible in him. It was thought he would certainly grow to gigantic proportions, but such prospects were suddenly vanished. Before he reached the age of eight his legs crooked, body shrank, strength diminished, voice became weak, and he sank into total imbecility.

"His rapid maturity was followed by an even swifter decay, and in his tenth year he wasted away to a mere skeleton and died.

"The same authority vouches for the account of a girl child, who, when four years old, was four feet six inches in height, with head and limbs well proportioned and breasts fully expanded, like those of a young lady of eighteen. She was mentally advanced for her years, and at the age of six attracted the notice of a young man who desired to pay court to her. Her parents objected, very naturally, to this proposal, and when the childish years of the girl were given as a reason they were compelled to exhibit the public register of births to prove the truth of their representation. At fifteen this girl began to show indications of decrepitude; at eighteen she gave all the signs of old age, and in two or three years thereafter sank into that mental state known as second childhood. She died in her twenty-second year, apparently of extreme age.

"We frequently hear of similar prodigies in our own country, but they are short-lived. Phenomenal maturity always promises early decay, and we may be sure that in no case will nature be cheated of her rights."

A PETRIFIED WOMAN.

An Awful Gash on Her Forehead Indicates a Violent Death.

Sixty years ago, so the story goes, there lived at Walkerville, Greene county, Ill., a man and wife by the name of Lovess and near by a family of Bridgewater. They were intimate, as all new settlers were, says a correspondent of the St. Louis Republic. About that time land seekers came to Walkerville and began surveying and locating lands. Mrs. Lovess was a beautiful woman and attracted the attention of one of the land buyers, and he paid her a great deal of attention, so much so that Lovess became jealous and in a fit of rage left his wife and country.

About that time the Lovess log cabin was burned to ashes and there was no trace of the Lovess woman to be found. It was generally supposed that she was cremated in the burning cabin. The land buyer, too, was missing.

A few weeks ago, near the spot of the old cabin, was found the body of a petrified woman. The neighbors assembled to take the body out of the limestone formation in the ravine, where it was discovered. Mrs. Bridgewater, as soon as the body was presented to view, recognized it as the body of her old friend and neighbor, Mrs. Lovess. There was the trace of a ghastly wound on the forehead made by a sharp instrument, cleaving the skull, and which must have produced death. It is supposed that the Lovess woman was murdered and buried in the ravine where found and the cabin burned to avoid detection or suspicion.

It is thought that the limestone water trickling down into the grave petrified the body, and that the ravine washing out exposed the body to the view of the man who found it.

The petrified woman has been exhibited to large crowds of curious people.

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