

## WEST SHORE BOYS AND GIRLS

### A VEGETABLE TRAMP.

Probably very few of the boys and girls of the Pacific coast states have ever heard of the tumble weed. Still fewer have ever seen it. It is a native of the prairie states of the middle west, and if it grows in any locality west of the Rocky mountains, I have never chanced to meet it. Yes, *meet* it; for it is to the vegetable kingdom what the human tramp is to the animal kingdom—when once it has forsaken its birthplace it is an inveterate wanderer. On the broad prairies of Kansas and Nebraska I have met hundreds of its species, and in my childhood I liked nothing better in the way of sport than a windy day and a race with the tumble weeds. Both the wind and the tumble weeds are plentiful in Kansas and from the middle of August to the fall of the first snow there was never any dearth of my favorite sport.

There are several species of the plant in North and South America. That which is commonest and grows largest in Kansas and adjoining states comes up quite early in the spring, a little, wiry bunch of green, nestling in the prairie grass, and grows so rapidly that by the first of July it has attained its full growth, and the ripening process begins. The full grown plants vary in size from three to nine feet in circumference. They are composed of thousands of little, tough, wiry branches, so systematically formed and disposed that the weed is almost a perfect sphere. The frail stalk by which it is attached to its roots is so short that the plant has the appearance of a huge, transparent ball, resting upon the ground, and rare indeed is the boy or girl who can resist the temptation to loosen its slender moorings and start it rolling. However, when the hot sun of July and August has ripened and lightened it, it waits for no human hand to set it free. Like the youth or maiden, grown impatient of home restraints, it yields to the persuasive kiss of the wind, and, snapping asunder the ties that have held it so long in safety, allows itself to drift out into the wide world, at the will of any vagrant breeze. Oh, how joyously it bounds away across the plain, scorning pursuit as long as the fickle wind is constant, and leaping lightly over many an obstacle. But, like the human wanderer, its career is not long, and its end is not a happy one. Sooner or later there comes a day when it finds itself piled up in a crush with scores of its fellows, against some stubborn fence or hay rick, and its faithless friend, the wind, sails on and leaves it. It is powerless to extricate itself, and languishes there until the heavens take pity on it and drop down a mantle of snow to cover and conceal its misery. When the snow melts in the spring sunshine, all that is left of the unfortunate vegetable tramp is his blackened skeleton crushed flat to the earth to rise no more. Like his counterpart, his pranks are not always harmless. In the full flush of his early freedom he delights in frightening horses, and is the cause of frequent runaways. In fact, there is something uncanny about a weed that comes to meet you, or races before you on the plain. Your first meeting with him is apt to be marked with a queer little half-superstitious thrill, and you are not surprised to learn that one variety of him is known, in some localities, by the suggestive name of "witch weed."

How would you like to live in Iceland? Summer there is very, very short; but when it is summer, O, how the sun shines and how long the days are! For ten days in July the sun circles around and around the sky, never sinking below the horizon. But the winter more than makes up for this. It lasts through more than half the year, and the nights are very long. One night in December lasts for twenty days. During these 480 hours old Sol never peeps his head above the horizon. I believe that if I had a lazy boy, who was never ready to get up in the morning, I would take him to Iceland to spend the winter, with the agreement that he should stay in bed every night till the sun rose. Fancy him crying to get up long before night was half gone. I think I would have him at a disadvantage, and could make my own terms with him as to his future rising hour. What would you, WEST SHORE boys, say to snow from nine to eleven feet deep all winter? Fine opportunity that for making snow forts and having snow fights, if it were not so desperately cold. But where mercury freezes in the thermometer even young blood will get chilled and small noses be nipped. The tedious winters and long nights have their compensation, for these wise Icelanders improve them well by study and reading. Scarcely a person can be found who is not able to read and write. It is only a few years since Iceland celebrated the one thou-

sandth anniversary of the foundation of its government. This was called the millennial. It is a nation long established and highly civilized. Long before America was discovered there were Icelandic poets and authors of renown. But it is prophesied by wise and thoughtful men that it may not exist as a nation much longer, for if emigration to other lands continues during the next century as it has during the past this marvelous island of lava beds, volcanoes and geysers will become depopulated.

I know a little girl two years old whom I will call Grace. She is a beautiful child, with dark eyes and gold curls, and she is always clad in white. But she is rather self-willed; and the instant she finishes her dinner, she puts up her little raspberry-red hands and lustily announces, "I'se foo!"—which is equivalent to a demand to be set upon the floor. In the home of which she is the light and sunshine, "I'se foo" has become a household phrase. But one day Grace was very bad, and her mother said, "Grace I shall have to whip you." Scarcely had the punishment begun, however—and, by the way, it was the merest pretense of a whipping—when Grace burst into tears, and lifting her lovely brown eyes and quivering, red lips, cried out piteously: "Oh, mamma, I'se foo! I'se foo!" "Well, I'm not," responded her mother, grimly; but nevertheless, the punishment was abruptly concluded.

Take all the sleep you need, growing boys and girls, and you need a great deal; but don't cheat the breakfast hour for it. That is the time when all the family should be together, and your prompt and cheerful appearance there argues well for your good conduct through the day. If you find yourself too sleepy in the morning, start your night's sleep earlier. Increase its length at that end until you have all the sleep you can use. England's wise king, Alfred the great, divided the twenty-four hours of the day into three equal parts—eight for work, eight for recreation (including meals) and eight for sleep. No one since his day has been wise enough to devise any better plan. Plenty of sleep will help you to grow healthy and ruddy and sweet tempered, and then every one will be glad to live in the house with you.

## PUZZLEWITS

No. 21.

A WHEEL.

The wheel has twelve spokes, each spoke containing four letters including the hub, which is the initial letter of each word. The letters at the end of the spokes, when connected by a line, form the perimeter of the wheel and make a phrase describing the rim of the wheel.

- Spoke 1—A genus of trees.
- Spoke 2—To leave out.
- Spoke 3—A prefix denoting all.
- Spoke 4—A Hebrew measure.
- Spoke 5—An imaginary monster.
- Spoke 6—Having unpleasant odor.
- Spoke 7—Name of a king spoken of in Longfellow's "Tales of a Wayside Inn."
- Spoke 8—Soft mud.
- Spoke 9—A precious stone.
- Spoke 10—Uttered by the mouth.
- Spoke 11—A mixture, a medley.
- Spoke 12—An earthenware vase without a handle.

East Portland, Oregon.

C. B. M.

No. 22.

DIAGONALS.

- 1—Exposures to injury.
- 2—Notched on the edge.
- 3—An Italian four-wheeled carriage.
- 4—A level space.
- 5—Military bodies.
- 6—A limiting element.
- 7—A follower.
- Diagonals—A city and village of Michigan.

Sehome, Wash.

V. A. N. GUARD.