

NIGNI, THE DWARF

THE ADVENTURES OF A LITTLE MAN, AS WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

No. V.—Exciting Show Life.

My first exhibition as a living curiosity was given in the capital city of Japan, and I may tell you without boasting that I made a tremendous hit. Not only did the general public come to see me, but many doctors and men of science, and all declared me a wonder. The newspapers had something to say about me every day, and when I had been summoned to the palace, and looked at and talked to by the royal family, it was certain that I was on the road to fame and wealth.

Mr. Yeddo had intended to exhibit me for one week only at the capital, but the people were so anxious to see me two or three times over that it was four weeks before we got away. Mother was nervous and afraid all the time, as she had always lived so quietly, but the life just suited me. At home I used to be put to bed with the chickens, but now it was seldom that I got away from the people before 11 o'clock. One day a very rich man came to see me, and he was so pleased with my singing and dancing that he got to speak with my mother, and said:

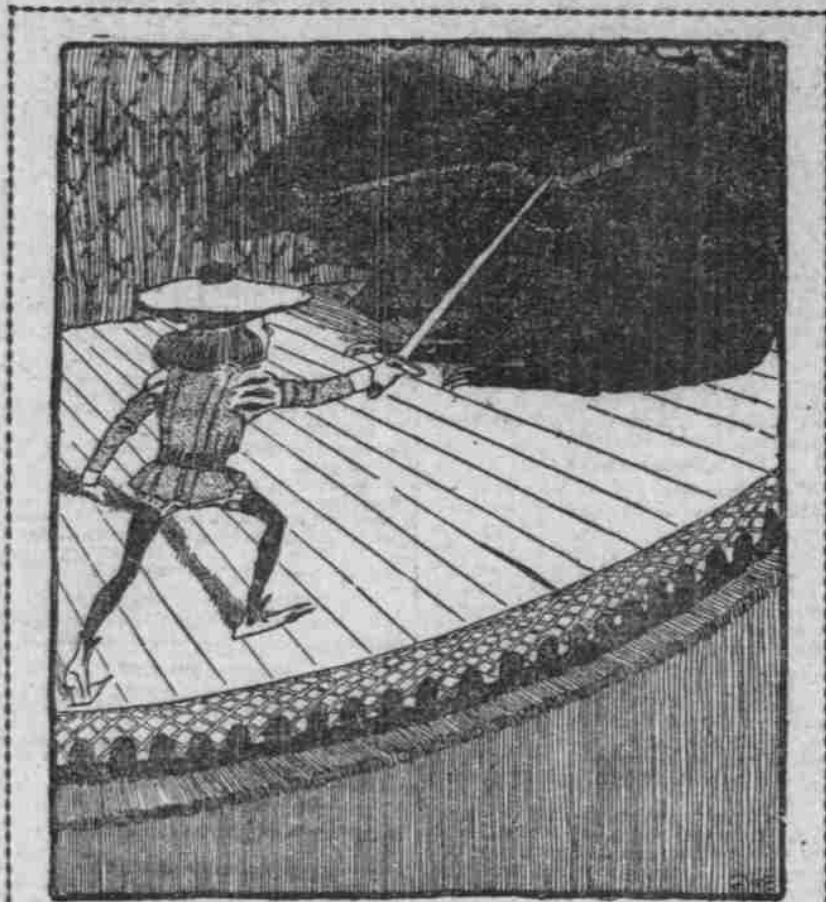
"Madam, I am a man of money, and as your little son pleases me I will buy him. What is your lowest cash price?"

"But what sort of a mother would I be to sell my own offspring?" she asked.

"Woman, do not be foolish," he said. "I can buy a trick monkey for \$25, but as I have taken a liking to Nigni I will give you \$500."

Of course mother refused the offer, and when he made it \$1000 she turned away from him. He was very angry at his failure. He came again, and this time he had a paper box in his pocket, and perhaps intended to put me into it and run away, but mother kept an eye on me and he had no chance. Two rich widows who had no children of their own offered to adopt me and give me an education and plenty of money, but mother turned them away. For a year I was exhibited only in Japan, taking in every town of any size, and you may guess I had many adventures. In one town the hall took fire during the evening exhibition, and the people rushed for the doors in a wild panic. There seemed every chance that I would lose my life, but Mr. Yeddo put me into his overcoat pocket and took me safely out by way of the roof. Mother followed him, but was so frightened that she was in bed for a week afterward.

At another time a man who had been drinking and wanted to do something smart threw a live rat on the stage when I was all alone and singing one of my songs. The rat ran at me at once, and a hundred people cried out that I would be badly bitten, but I drew my sword and planted my foot, and as he came near I gave him such a cut across the neck



"I DREW MY SWORD AND PLANTED MY FOOT."

as to almost take his head off. Everybody had words of praise for me and called me a hero, but I didn't feel vain over it. A little man who had conquered a goat had no need to be afraid of a rat.

Again, a widow who wanted to adopt me, but had been coldly received by my mother, made up her mind to steal me. She hired a man to watch for me on the stairs of the hotel as I went up and down, and one day he grabbed me up and started to run. He held me so tightly that I could not draw my sword, and my shouts were so weak that no one heard me call, and he would have carried me off except for an accident. He fell while running and broke his leg, and though I fell with him, I escaped unhurt.

They gave him 200 strokes of the bamboo stick as a punishment, and the widow had to pay a big fine to get clear of the law.

About the time we had finished touring Japan my mother fell sick and died, and for the next six months I remained at home with father. He had bought a new house and was considered a great man, but mother's death made him an unhappy man for months. One day, as I sat wishing I was on the road again, Mr. Yeddo arrived, and we had only shaken hands when he said:

"Nigni, I am after you again, and this time we are going to England. I promise that you shall see Queen Victoria before you are many months older."

A PARADISE OF SNAKES

THRILLING ADVENTURES WITH MONSTER RATTLES IN GEORGIA BY J. ALDEN LORING

DURING one Spring, in company with two other field naturalists, I spent several weeks in Southern Georgia in the interest of a prominent American museum. I have collected all through Northern Mexico, and in all but three states and territories of the United States, but never have seen such a paradise for snakes as that spot proved to be. The exact locality was Riceboro, Liberty County.

While our work was mainly devoted to collecting birds and mammals, we preserved reptiles and batrachians also. We were stopping with a family of "Georgia crackers," the only white residents in the locality. They gave us accommodations in a large vacant store and placed a double bed in it for all three of us.

To the blacks we were objects of great curiosity from the time they first learned of our business. One of them asked us if we wanted any snakes, and receiving an affirmative answer, he replied: "Lordy massa, dey's shu' nuf snakes beah to fill a barrel in a day, dey shu' is."

While not literally true, we found that his assertion was not far from correct. In fact, every all snakes were poisonous, but in reality the only dangerous species were the moccasins, ground rattlers and diamond-back rattlers.

When walking along the road or passing a clump of bushes, we frequently heard a faint rustle among the leaves and caught sight of a snake disappearing in the thickets. Many of the serpents had an interesting way of warning us of their presence, much after the manner of rattlesnakes, even when they were not provided with rattles. They vibrated the tips of their tails against the dry leaves, thus producing a noise much similar to the warning of a rattlesnake.

Before many days we had a good collection of snakes, perhaps a dozen in all, which we placed in a barrel at the foot of our bed. Among them were king, garter, black and glass snakes. The latter, by the way, while termed "glass snakes," because of the ease with which their tails break off, really are lizards, and form a principal part of the food of the true snakes.

One night we were awakened by a great rumbling in the four barrel Thompson lit the candle and investigated, then shouted to us to "come and see the snake fight." We were out of bed in a second, and discovered that one of the king snakes had tackled a so-called "glass

snake" and was trying to kill it. The "king" had the glass snake in his mouth and was coiled about its body also. The unfortunate glass snake struggled hard to escape, but its antagonist clung like grim death. The other snakes wriggled about the barrel in their effort to elude them. When the glass snake became exhausted the "king" slowly uncoiled, and catching it by the tail, began to swallow it. He had succeeded in swallowing about six inches, when it renewed its struggles and the tail broke off. The body portion wriggled away while the other piece disappeared down Mr. King's throat.

The king snake was not satisfied. He began hunting about the barrel, crawling over his companions without paying the slightest attention to them, but when he came to the glass snake he dived at it, but missed; again he hunted out the object of his search, and this time captured it. Another struggle of a few minutes and the glass snake was so far conquered that it made no resistance, and the "king" resumed his meal. It was evident to us that the glass snake was too large for the "king" to devour, so we watched the unique midnight banquet with intense interest, and commented on what would happen when the "king" discovered that his gluttonous eyes were larger than his stomach.

He was making good headway; every time he worked his jaws the glass snake slowly slid down, until the protruding end of the barrel was all that remained. The two parts had met, and the process of swallowing could not continue. Yet there were about six inches of glass snake to be disposed of. Vainly the "king" strove to gorge the remainder; the two parts refused to telescope. After a short interval the body portion was disgorged and we took the unfortunate glass snake, which was still very much alive, and killed it.

Several negro boys spent much time watching us skin specimens. None of them knew of our "snakery" until I sent one of them to the barrel on the pretense of getting a roll of cotton. He looked in, gave a yell, and dashed out of the building, never to return.

Two of the same crowd volunteered to catch several water moccasins. We gave them a few yards of snare wire, and they started. About sundown they returned, grinning from ear to ear. Each had a large moccasin dangling from a noose at the end of a long pole. As soon as they laid the snakes on the ground we had them in our hands and were busy untwisting the tangled wires. "Lordy! Lordy massa! They'll kill ye shu!" the boys shouted, and they rushed down the

road as fast as their bare feet could carry them. Three days later they returned for their pay, but no amount of persuasion could induce them to enter the house.

Our most exciting experience with snakes happened on the third day after our arrival. We were running out a line of traps for small mammals, such as meadow mice, moles and shrews, near a tall fence. Thompson was new at the business and handled the small wire traps rather clumsily. He had just set a trap near the end of a rail, one end of which had fallen to the ground, and it was sprung several times while he knelt, did it. We ridiculed him for being such a "butter finger." At last he placed it in the tall grass, stepped away and, looking back, remarked: "There, I guess that's all right now."

With the same breath he gasped: "Great Scott! Look at that snake!" We both looked, and there, coiled snugly not two feet from where he had been kneeling for fully two minutes, was an enormous diamond-back rattler. I did not wonder that he turned white. The reptile could easily have buried its fangs in his body; but, instead, it was a calm spectator of the man's clumsiness. Had it struck him, death would have been certain, for we were fully 15 miles from a doctor, and had no medicine but the crude alcohol which we used for preserving specimens.

Thompson took my gun, and, wishing not to ruin the specimen, backed away to the neck close to the head. Up to this time it had made no noise, but as it felt my hand it sent forth a chorus of rattles that made the air ring. It writhed and twisted, and tried to coil about my arm. To prevent this I held it in the air at arm's length, shaking it vigorously. During this time its mouth was wide open, its forked tongue darted in and out, while its double row of long, curved fangs worked back and forth in their sockets, the venom oozing from their points in drops.

Our third companion, who had been some distance away, came up when he saw and heard what was taking place. "Hang to him! Hang to him! If you drop him you're a dead man!" he shouted. It was my first intention to capture the reptile and send it to Washington alive. Dr. Steneger had laughingly said as he bade us good-by: "Boys, I want you to send me a rattler five feet long. And I supposed that I had the five-footer. The way in

which my companions danced about and shouted somewhat rattled me, and I was only too glad to take the advice of one of them and lay the big snake over a rail and allow him to sever its vertebra with a knife.

The snake had 13 rattles, a double set of fangs, and measured four feet 9½ inches, it being the largest specimen of the kind that I have been fortunate to collect in any country.

A BOY WHO RUNS A RESTAURANT

SOME boys aim at heroic things, like commanding a battleship or a foreign hope; but when they dream of these deeds they think generally only of the glory and rarely of the work that goes with the tasks.

Now, there is a boy in the City of New York who is not doing anything glorious like that, but whose deeds are far more effective than those of many a grown man—for this boy, who is only 15 years old, is running a restaurant, and running so well that it is making money fast and gaining and rapidly increasing trade.

To operate a restaurant in a big city is a work that never would appeal to man or boy who has any touch of laziness in him. Almost any one who ever has been in one of these busy, bustling places during meal hours will know without needing to be told that the work of management demands all the nerve, push and go that a man possesses. It is a business that admits no excuse and no half measures. If the meals are not just right, the dishes are not novel and tempting, if the service is poor, the owner of the restaurant will find it little benefit to explain to his mother that this thing or that thing happened to set things awry. His patrons will go away and seek some other restaurant where mistakes do not happen.

So it was no light task that Charles Helm, of New York, set his son when he put him to work conducting a restaurant all by himself, for little Charlie Helm is only 15 years old, and was graduated from public school in only last Summer.

When he first began at once to assist his father in the downtown cafe, which is one of the restaurants owned by the elder Helm. He did so well that his father conceived the idea of testing his mettle by placing him in charge of an uptown place, and the experiment was so successful that now the boy conducts that restaurant entirely.

He not only has a wise head, but his industry is equal to the not entirely delightful work of getting up every morning early enough to be in the restaurant at 8 o'clock. From that time on, he is hard at work until 5 o'clock at night. It is a real sight to see "Charlie," as he is called by guests and waiters, attend to the manifold duties that pertain to his office. His first act is to inspect his force to make sure that they are all on hand. Then he directs the work of cleaning the dining-room and preparing it for the guests. Even before this work has been entirely finished the merchants begin to arrive with supplies. Cans of milk come rattling in, loaves come with a banging and a clattering of tongs, the bakers' carts dash up with a desperate air, as if they were delivering the very last rolls and bread that ever would be desired in this world, the butcher struggles in bearing rounds of beef bigger than himself—for two hours there is nothing but rush and worry and confusion.

Many a grown man would become excited and flustered, Charlie never is. He is as methodical as an adult, and at the same time his cheerfulness and ready smiles are those of a boy, so that his customers are unconsciously wooed to good humor by him. Nobody can resist a happy boy's smile. Charlie's restaurant is becoming popular on account of it.

VERY GOOD FOR A GHOST STORY

In the lovely moonlight a few evenings ago a Mexican lady sat within the embrasure of a window in her country house, looking out on a little square where were trees and shrubs and a fountain that murmured plaintively. The moon began to shine behind the towers of a great church near at hand, forming a picture which kept the lady at her window. She had traveled far, in Italy and in Spain, but she thought, "I have seen nothing more beautiful in any land."

The lady sat, watching the beauty of the scene, the yellow moon had painted for her, a figure emerged from the shrubbery of the little plaza, crossed the street and approached her. It was a man, thin, very pale, dressed wholly in black. His eyes seemed preternaturally bright, and he smiled as he came to the window where sat one who had known him from childhood.

But a shuddering fear fell upon the lady, for the man, though smiling, spoke not. He had come quite near, and was gazing into her eyes intently. She was held as by a spell, an impulse to run from the window seat and hide within the room came upon her, but she bravely resisted.

But the man outside, clasping the window bars with two white hands, made no reply.

Then the lady said: "You are strangely pale. Are you ill? May I bring you a cup of brandy? I have some, very old and choice."

The man tried to speak, failed, tried again, and then said in a low voice, thrilling, unforgettable: "Did you not think that I was dead? I died a week ago, and there is sorrow and weeping still in my heart, and I dare not return there, even to see my loved ones. I felt that I must see old friends and familiar faces, so I came here. I have many visits to make tonight."

The bright eyes of the dead man shone with a mysterious light.

The lady had summoned up her courage and said: "Yes, now I remember that they said you died. I felt sorry, but we had not of late been good friends, and so I did not grieve as once I might have done. We knew each other in youth, and were children together. I am not afraid of you now, and I am sure you will come in. This is a strange pleasure for me. I have always cherished the wish to see one who had passed away. The saguaro door is ajar. Pray enter. Pray enter."

"I do not need to enter by the door; I can pass through here," said the bright-eyed ghost of the night, and he entered as if the window bars existed not.

Taking the lady's hand the dead man wandered out into a corridor, down into a great garden. The air was full of the perfume of flowers. The dead man plucked a red rose, moist with the dew, and gave it to the lady.

"This for old times and dear remembrances of childhood," he said, and he walked away and seemingly through the garden wall.

The lady did not feel alarm; the magic of the moon, the exquisite harmony of the warm Spring night, the rose she held still in her hand in token of "old times and dear remembrances" made a link positive, yet tender and romantic, between the dead man, the old friend, long estranged, and herself.

She called a servant; he locked the saguaro door, the lady went to her bedroom, placed the rose in a vase with water, and soon was sleeping.

In the morning she wondered, on first awakening, if the vision of the night had not been of the fancy, wrought perhaps by the witchery of the moon. But the rose was in the vase, the rose given "for old times and dear remembrances."

MR. CROW CAUGHT MR. WILDCAT

AND THE SURPRISE PARTY THAT FOLLOWED. BY RAYMOND FULLER AYRES

A VERY great many years ago when the Eagle was the king of all birds, Mr. Crow was said to be the most cunning bird that wore feathers. It is true that Judge Owl was so wise that he had forgotten almost everything, but he was not continually playing tricks like Mr. Crow, and so he did not know how smart he was. Mr. Crow did not believe in working very hard and raising fine crops, as did the other birds. He preferred, when he could get anything, to eat at the expense of the others, and without very much trouble on his part.

One day Mr. Crow came in feeling very hungry and told Mrs. Crow to prepare him a large meal. Mrs. Crow replied that she would be more than delighted to do so if there were any food in the house, but she had fed the last of the corn meal to the children, for breakfast and there was nothing left but some cold fried potatoes. Then Mr. Crow became very angry indeed and wanted to know how a man could eat strong enough to work when he could not get anything to eat. No one answered him and he stamped out of the house in a very bad temper.

Finally he came to a place where the road passed near a river and there, sitting on the bank, was Mr. Wildcat, fishing. There were two strings of fish hanging from his back, and when Mr. Crow saw these he grew hungrier than he had ever been

before. He wanted to stop, but Mr. Crow only pulled the harder on the string, for he thought it was a first thing to catch Mr. Wildcat like that, and get even with him for all the birds he had eaten, for Mr. Wildcat would sooner eat birds than almost anything else.

When Mr. Wildcat found that Mr. Crow did not intend to stop, he hung back on the string, and so he had to go along just where Mr. Crow led.

Mr. Crow stopped flying after a while and walked along the road ahead of Mr. Wildcat, leading him carefully by the string, but every little while Mr. Wildcat would make a dash after him, and Mr. Crow would have to fly up into the air to save being torn to pieces. Mr. Wildcat was so angry that his eyes blazed like coals of fire, and every time Mr. Crow would yank on the string or shake the string of large fish in his face, Mr. Wildcat would strain like a fine engine, and bristle up his tail until it looked like a feather duster.

After a great deal of trouble Mr. Crow got Mr. Wildcat safely home and shut him up in an empty chicken coop that he had stolen once when it was not empty. Then he went into the house and told Mrs. Crow to hurry up and cook the string of large fish for supper. He was sorry to lose the string of small fish, but he consoled himself by thinking that if he

be sure and bring a large lunch, for surprise always gave people a large appetite.

The next morning Mr. Crow went out to the chicken coop to look at Mr. Wildcat, and found that he had got the stick out of his throat, and was so hungry at being shut up that way that he could hardly speak. Mr. Crow stirred him up with a stick to make him lively, and went back to the house and in time to see the first guests arrive.

All the best people in the neighborhood came to the surprise party. There were Mr. Robin, Mrs. Red Bird, Mrs. Thrush, Miss Jenny Wren, Mr. Baltimore Oriole, Mr. Blue Jay, Judge Owl, Miss Black Bird, Mr. Quail, Mrs. Partridge, and a great many more; and others kept coming so fast, and all brought so much lunch, that Mrs. Crow had to get tables set out on the lawn, for the house would have been too crowded with them all. Every one was perfectly wild to find out what the surprise was, and Mr. Crow could hardly make the first course wait to be surprised until all the guests had arrived. There was a great crowd, and none of them had ever seen so much to eat in one place before.

At last Mr. Crow slipped away from the company and went around behind the house to the chicken coop, where Mr. Wildcat was shut up. He tied a long string to the top of the chicken coop and then flew up the top of a tree and pulled on the string so as to raise up the chicken coop so Mr. Wildcat could get out.

Mr. Wildcat flew over like a shot, and when he saw he could not get Mr. Crow he tore around the house and ran straight at the surprise party who were waiting to be surprised. They were certainly surprised when they saw Mr. Wildcat coming, for his fur was all out and he was so mad, and his jaws were open so wide that he looked as if he could swallow the whole party at one gulp. The party didn't wait to be swallowed, but flew into the air in a second, and they started home just as quick as their wings could carry them. Mr. Wildcat started home, too, for he didn't like Mr. Crow's neighborhood.

The Mr. Crow flew down out of his tree, and he and Mrs. Crow gathered up all the provisions that the guests had brought. No one had started to eat when Mr. Crow appeared, so there was enough to last the Crows a year.

Mr. Crow said that he was sorry his guests were all in such a hurry, and could only stay such a short time, but he hoped they had a good time while they were there. Some of the guests said that they believed Mr. Crow had turned Mr. Wildcat loose on purpose, but Mr. Crow said that if his friends would talk about him in that way after he had invited them to a surprise party he did not care to associate with them any more.

The Clever Kittens.

"My cat speaks French," said little Jeanne.

"As plainly as can be," said her mother.

"Says 'fif vous plait' (that's 'if you please'), and thanks me with 'merci'!"

I know, because I understand. Each word she says to me."

"And mine speaks German," with a nod, said Lisa from the Rhine.

"Says 'bitte' when she wants a drink, and 'ja,' of course, and 'nein'; I wouldn't have a cat that spoke like a different tongue from mine!"

"That's thrice for you!" sweet Nora said, with merry look demure.

"Me own aphakos Oriol! 'Whin I eat a saucer on the floor, and 'kiss me, kiss me, like some milk, The darlin' tells me 'Shure!'"

I met those kittens afterward, No matter where nor how; I listened well to what they said— Would you believe it?—and I was told they spoke in English, every one. And all they said was "Miaow!"

—Margaret Johnson.

Variety Note.

Professor Wink—Now that we have discussed the entire feathered kingdom, I wish you young ladies would tell us which of all these birds you consider the most important to the welfare of the human race?

The Class (in chorus)—The stork.—Just Smart Set.

An Error of Judgment.—"What caused Puff-bag's failure?" "He was a victim of overconfidence." In "Himself."—Puck.

Haughty One.—Thanks, but I've sworn off Sporty One in love; Haughty One—Indignation.—Harvard Lampoon.

THE DOROTHY BROWN PAINT PICTURES

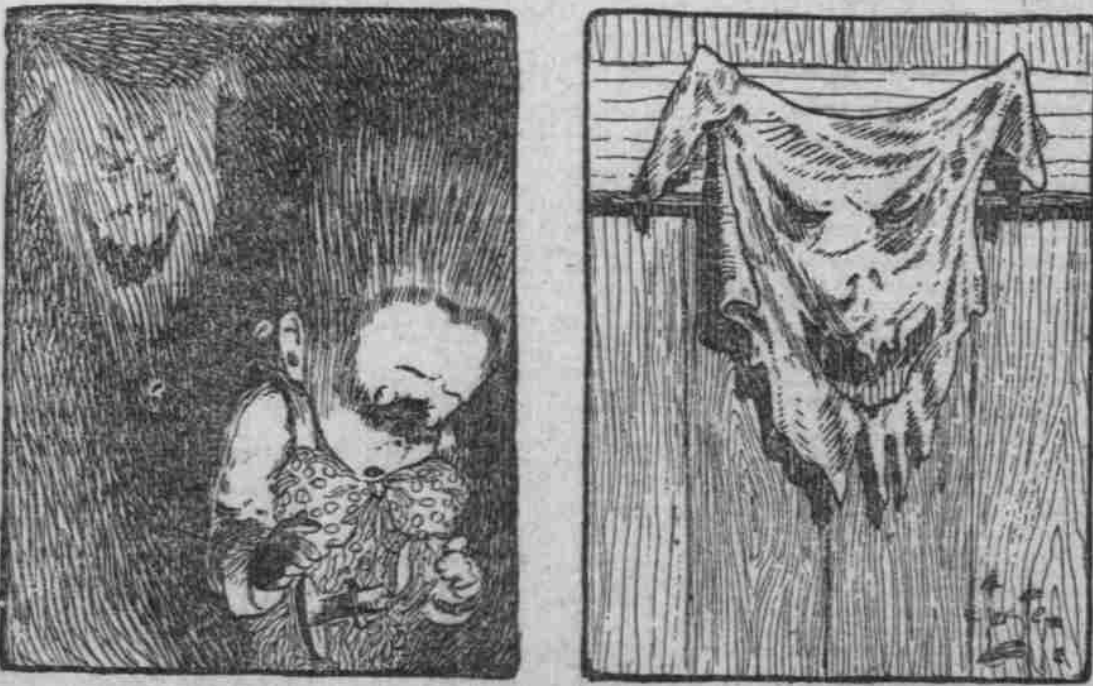


Dorothy Thinks Scotch Boys Wear Kilts till Rather Large

V.—DOROTHY AND REGGIE IN SCOTLAND.

From Castle Hill one can look down and see all Edinburgh town. (Pronounce it "Edinborough," man, for if you don't the lins won't scan.) And all the burghers far below look equate and funny as they go. Then Dorothy and Reggie they thought, "Brave St. Ives looked down this way, And laid his daring plans to fight his way to freedom from this height." Just then two laddies, braw and gay, came by, and bade the two "good day." They looked quite fine, but Dorothy was as amazed as she could be. For they wore kilts. It made her smile, for she forgot "was Scottish style. The Tartan paint gals as you may. The Scotch caps paint in sober gray. Dorothy's cap was a light blue. Her coat was darker in its hue. She wore a skirt of gold and white and stockings that were black as night. White trousers Reggie wore that day. His coat was checked in black and gray.

RUPERT AND THE MONSTER OF THE NIGHT



When Rupert to the closet goes,
By feeble candle light,
He sees a dreadful bogey there,
And quickly takes to flight.

But when once more by daylight
The frightful thing he looks,
He finds a torn old towel
A-hanging on two hooks.