TALE OF THE RUBBER COW

Result of a Dietetic Experiment with Rubber Plants.

By Strickland W. Gillilan.

"I 'SPOSE," said my friend The Liar, reflectively, "that if Neighbor Art Nichols hadn't invested in those salted gold mines in Mexico, it wouldn't ever have happened."

A longish pause ensued, in which no one asked him a thing about it or betrayed the slightest interest, so The Liar went cheerfully on.

"Art Nichols had had a fad for a good many years. It was a fad not one farmer in fourteen or fifteen million would ever have thought of, and that no one else on earth but Art would have taken up, even after thinking it over. It was not a case of Art for Art's what? Well, then I won't.

"I was just going to say that Art had been to Indianapolis a time or two, and had seen some of those 'rubber plants,' as they call 'em, in a private conservatory, and admired 'em a heap. You never know just where a bug is going to hit a man. Art had lived quiet and unenthusiastic all his life and would probably have gone on in sort of a restless rest if he hadn't stumbled on to those 'rubber plants.' When he did a change came over him. He stopped and looked at those plants for an hour, and before he went home that night he bought one.

"Later on he bought others, much to the disgust of his wife, who was a leetle fur dress and had been cramped a good deal in her wardrobe accommodations on account of poverty. So to see good money going into something there wasn't even a hope of revenue from, put her to like bad, as to her temper, and she gave Art the dickens.

"But Art—well, it's a question if he ever heard her. He watered and fooled around those plants far more tenderly than he had around his children, though he wasn't ever the bad sort. It was in the spring he started to collect 'em, and and before fall he had collected nearly one acre of the dumb things, also a lot of Mexican mining stock that looked good to him, principally because he got it cheap and because he heard that rubber trees grew wild in Mexico.

"Though the mining stock was cheap, the amount Art spent on it broke him, and when he found out the mines were abundantly salted he was all in. He admitted it.

"Then came the hardest thing he had ever had to do. He must dispose of the rubber plants. Winter was coming on, and he didn't have enough to clothe his children decently on and keep them in school, let alone establish some sort of a greenhouse arrangement for keeping those rubber plants from perishing during the cold weather. Father didn't have any more use for the blamed things than Nichols had, and he hadn't any fad in that line, but Art offered 'em cheap and managed to look so plagued-naked pitiful that father bought 'em first finding out that rubber plants were edible for cows.

"Funny thing, though, about cows. They're just as finicky and notionate as other and better looking females when it comes to diet. Though we had nine cows, only one of 'em would take that rubber-plant fodder inwardly. But the way she did go after it—m-m-m-b! So greedy was she with it that the supply didn't last more than three weeks, though there was supposed to be enough for at least a month and a half. She ate it eagerly whenever she could get at it, and between times she stood around and bawled for it so we hardly got a wink of sleep.

"But we began to notice something was wrong with the milk. Mother looked after the dairy, and one morning when she stepped in a drop that had fallen from a pail in straining, it stuck to her feet, and made a gossamer like rope that reached from the cave house to the cellar, fifty feet away. Then the butter wouldn't come right. It was sticky stuff and wouldn't work up properly at all for market. We were mystified, until one day, when we were finishing milking, mother noticed that before old Heffy's milk was strained into the milk, the batch was all right.

"A great light dawned upon us. We separated the milk after that, and there was no further trouble with the dairy products.

"But Oh, the fun we had experimenting with old Heffy's milk! We boys would collect a lot of it and churn it to make gutta percha. Hardly a day passed but that one of us would have a new rubber ball, and the other boys in the neighborhood couldn't understand where the supply came from We weren't allowed to tell, for father said it would sound like a lie, and we we were always taught to avoid anything that sounded unreasonable. Father argued that a person might almost as well be a liar as to have the reputation, and—what?

"Well, we were having a good time with old Heffy's milk. We fed her sugar and pepsin on the sly and churned the finest chewing gum you ever saw or tasted. Diluted with a little hot water her fresh milk made the dandiest mucilage you ever used, and for repairing broken glass or china nothing was better than to tie the cracked vessel together and let a little of old Heffy's milk stand in it for an hour or so. One day she didn't come home to be milked. We worried a lot about her. We went in search— two of the other boys and I—and heard her bawling piteously, but could not for quite a while locate her. We found her stuck to a tree in a corner of the wod lot. She had leaned against it to scratch aoff a fly when she was perspiring, and couldn't pull loose to save her.

"I don't know how the matter would have ended, only, after awhile, of course the rubber plants were exhausted, and we had to put the old girl on some other kind of feed. She cried real tears of sorrow—sticky, water-proof tears—when she had to give up the feed of her heart, but it had to be. She refused so long to eat that she became famished and ravenous, and when Brother Bill carelessly turned her into a young clover patch, she went at it tooth and nail, stuffing herself in the most unlady-like manner.

"I suppose for what happened after that for what happened was largely supposition — that she got a case of clover bloat. Nothing is more probable under the conditions. One can readily understand the results of the generation of clover gas in a cow that was practically made of rubber. I went after the cows that night, and saw floating above my head, what appeared to be a balloon. But legs stuck out from it and a tasselated tail floated in the breeze. I think that was Heffy. At any rate she never came home.

"That night we were all awakened by a muffled explosion. And the next morning Brother Harry found in the woods close by an old sharp-pointed snag, a lot of elastic material from which mother made every one of us a mackintosh. Poor old Heffy. She had solved the aerial navigation problem, but the fact that she, like other experimenters, struck a snag and was punctured, proves that she also was not dirigible."

DEMOCRATIC DIVERGENCIES.

NEW YORK, Oct. 10.—The Democracy of New York tonight nominated a judiciary ticket seemingly intended to be a compromise between the adherents of the Old Line Democrats and of the candidates favored by the Independence League. The ticket, however, has not proved entirely satisfactory to Hearst's followers and the statement issued by the League tonight intimates that the Tammany ticket may not be endorsed in full.

ANOTHER NEW PLANT.

TOPEKA, Oct. 12.—A million dollar beet sugar factory of the United States Sugar & Land company was put in operation at Garden City, Kans., today.

HUNDRED MILLION HEIRESS.

Bertha Krupp Wealthiest Bride in the World.

BERLIN, Oct. 13.—Miss BerthaKrupp who is to be married on Monday to Lieutenant Gustav von Bohlen und Halbach, has possessions valued somewhere beyond a hundrer million of dollars and a position in Germany that is more than that of the richest subject. The institution she owns is almost a department of the government, supplying as it does the artillery for the German army, all the armor and guns for the navy and some of the ships. The semi-political agents of Krupps are persons of importance in Constantinople and the Balkan Capitols. Intelligence of most departments of military and naval affairs in any part of the world reach the Krupp management and thence the general staffs of the army and of the navy. In time of war the government would probably take over the control of the works.

The government has kept out a solicitous watch on the Krupp net of enterprises which include, steel gun works at Essen, Shipyards at Kiel, gun and armor works at Magdeburg and a number of coal and iron mines. The employees aggregate 63.000. The sole inheriter of these undertakings on th death of her father in 1902 was Bertha Krupp. Mrs. Krupp and Barbara, the second daughter, received investments in bonds and stocks.

Bertha was 20 years old last March.

Dr. von Bohlen, as he is generally known, was first secretary of the legation which Russia maintains at the vatican, distinct from the German embassy at the quirinal. He was born 36 years ago at the Hague, where his father, Dr. Gustav Bohlen und Halbach was minister for the grand duchess of Baden in the days before the Empire took over the representation of the German States.

WE ALL HAVE OUR TROUBLES

By Franklin Hichborn.

A CROWDED street car the other day crashed into a bakery wagon. The driver of the wagon insisted that the accident was unnecessary, that the motorman deliberately ran him down. The motorman might have as vehemently insisted that the driver was exasperatingly slow in geting out of the way. That is what the crowd—to a man indignant at the motorman—saw. But there was a whole lot that the crowd didn't see.

The motorman was human. In spite of his stolid attitude at the controller, he was made of flesh and blood, just the same as his passengers, and, like them, he had nerves. For six hours, he had, through crowded streets, been picking a way for his car loaded with anxious, hurrying, jostling humanity, of which each individual had a different aim, different purpose—and a different question. He had a dozen times barely escaped running into teams; an automobile had just missed running into him. Once his heart had almost stopped beating as an urchin dodged in front of the car and apparently went under the wheels. The motorman's face stiffened white as he waited to hear a death shriek from under him, and a yell of wrath and horror from the crowd. But neither came, the youngster had escaped—and disappeared. It was then that a woman "kicked" because she had been carried two blocks beyond her destination. Half a block further on a live wire across the track held his car for fifteen minutes. Ten minutes later a fuse blew out. and through it all he had to "make time." Tie-ups were good excuses to be sure, but every move that he made, he knew well was being noted at headquarters. And on his observance of regulations, his judgment, and his self control, hung the bread and butter of little ones at home.

It was a few minutes after the fuse blew out that he encountered the bakery wagon.

Like the motorman the driver of the wagon was a man, and like all men, made up of flesh and blood and nerves. He had had his troubles that morning as well as the motorman, and he had been working a good many hours more. His temper—or the state of his nerves had not been improved in the least by a report that he had been sent to the manager of the corporation for which he worked that he had the day before been uncivil to a customer. He told himself that he didn't care, but in his heart of hearts he did care, for he knew at that very moment his fate was being considered by the manager. If he were "fired," the consequences of it caused him to gulp down something that came into his throat. There were others who would suffer with him. A wagon loaded with lumber delayed him for five minute—like the motorman he had to "make time." And then the car came along and found his rear wheels squarely across the track. The motorman rang his bell impatiently. The imperative note of it brought all the driver's resentment to the surface. "I'll just make him wait a minute," he decided, and slowed up his team. His eyes met those of the motorman, already behind running schedule, and flashed the message of his decision. The motorman saw and understood. The driver's rebellion against the inevitable brought out in a flash the rebellion in the heart of the motorman. The next instant the car crashed

Now it was very wrong for the motorman to lose his temper, for the run-incident to that most deplorable event. By his act, the motorman endangered the lives and limb of the passengers entrusted to his care, to say nothing of the damage he might do to the wagon and his car. Men who lose their temper's are not safe men in the car's front end But I, who happened to be a chance observer of it all found myself in the crowd that gathered, a minority of the one sympatizing with the motorman. As for the driver, everybody sympathized with him, including myself.

As has been said, the sympathy of the crowd was with the driver, principally because the motorman represented a corporation that was plainly out in the open. A dozen cards were handed the driver, that he might call their owners as witneses, if necessary. Denunciation of the motorman and the motorman's company was hard and bitter. The motorman recovered from his flash of rebellion, stood pale-faced and patient enduring it all, heavy-hearted and regretful, but saying not a word.

It was easy to see what would happen to the motorman. Behind him was superintendent, charged with the employment of safe and reliable men, and held accountable for their work. Many such accidents meant a new superintendent, for behind the superintendent was a manager charged with the choice of the safe and reliable. And behind the manager was that indefinite soulless thing, the corporation, that held the manager accountable for reliable service and good dividends. Oh, it was easy to see what would happen to the motorman!

And the same was true of the driver On top of his reputed discourtesy to a customer, the smashed wagon—although the railroad company might be made to pay for it—would cast the deciding weight against him, and convince the manager that another driver was desirable. For the manager was held accountable by the president of the corporation for the men whom he employed, and the president was held accountable by the corporation, soulless and indefinite, which acted like a machine.

And when we think of it, practically all of us in the modern industrial world be we a magnate responsible to his stockholders or a motorman responsible to his superintendent, are up against pretty much the same game. Being in the game, the wise man plays it as he finds it, however it may tax his self control. He knows that a moment's impotent rebellion, without in the least accomplishing reform, may bring a world of misery upon himself and those whom he holds dear. The exasperating course of the driver gave him no real satisfaction, it accomplished no reform, the motorman could gain nothing by running down the wagon. But each yielded to an impulse which, when nerves are taxed to the breaking point, comes upon us all.

The other fellow's troubles need not be made our troubles, but to avoid unnecessarily adding to our own load, it is just as well to remember that his troubles ars as burdensome as our own.

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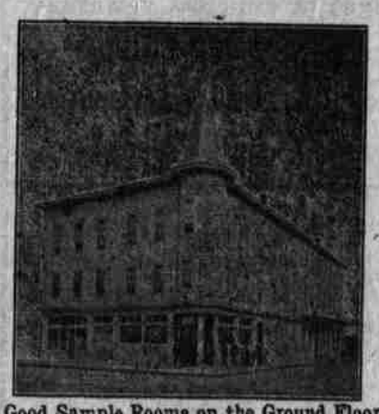

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