

ALL OWING TO THE SOIL.

JOHN MOSSBACK, OF WAYBACK, TELLS SOME TALL STORIES.

Near Logs Grew Into a Frame House in One Night and Everything Else Kept Pace—A Flock of Sheep Grew So Mysteriously That John Had to Leave.

"Why, hello, John," said a man who chanced to be passing along the road to John Mossback, of Wayback, whom he met, "how came you in this section of the country? The last I heard you was in Aroostook county, Me., and here I find you way down here; what caused you to leave that place? I hear that it is the garden of Maine."

"Well, you see, mister, that it got too healthy for me up there, and I had to leave."

"Too healthy! How do you make that out? I did not suppose that you could find a place that was too healthy to live in."

"Well, yer see, mister, 'at it is this way, although I don't hardly like ter tell yer, for fear 'at yer will think 'at I'm a lyin'; but I'll risk it anyway, and tell yer a few facts, and then yer'll diskriver wot I mean by bein' too healthy."

NOT BUILT WITH HANDS. "When I fust went up there I tuck up a farm on wot I supposed was about th' richest soil in the county, and I found arter a while that my judgment was not far out o' th' way. Th' fust day 'at I got there I looked around and selected th' spot where I was goin' to build my house, and as I couldn't find any stones for underpinin' I thought 'at I would build my house, which was a log one, on th' ground, hoping that it would stand until I could build a better one. It was pretty late when I got to work, and I only got the four bottom logs together when I had ter quit, an' I had ter go about a mile ter th' house where I was boardin' until I could get my house ready ter move into. Th' nex' mornin' I started ter go ter my work, an' wot was my surpris ter find th' four logs 'at I had laid for th' foundation for my house had taken root an' grown into a two story frame house, with all and out-buildings attached, all shingled and elapboarded and ready to move into. I mentioned the fact ter my host, an' he said that was nothin'; 'at th' soil allers did that when it was fust broke, but that I'd get used ter it arter a while."

"I sent for my family the next day, which consisted of my wife an' a 10-year-old boy, an' in about two weeks they come up there, an' all went well until I set my boy ter harrowin'; he bein kind o' lazy, lay down and went to sleep on th' fresh ground. In about two hours he come up ter th' house an' we didn't know him. Grown? Well, I guess so. When he went away he was about the size o' any 10-year-old boy, and when he come back he was plump six foot tall and weighed 225 pounds."

"When it come time ter shoot deer my hired man started out ter see if he couldn't get one. Well, sir, he started a drove and drew 'em out inter one o' my fields and shot three o' 'em, an' every one o' 'em fell on a piece of broke up 'at we had plowed that week, an' as he couldn't get 'em ter the house alone he came for help, an' my son and I together with a warden who had just got there ter my house started back ter get them, an' sir, you may believe it or not, but when we got there we found that them three deer had grown into three moose, an' it cost that man \$100 apiece for the two moose which he had, more'n the law allowed him."

GROWTH OF RAILROADS AND MORTGAGES. "Are they goin' to build that railroad, did you say? No, I don't think they will, for just as soon as the sleepers strike the site the blamed things would grow until the whole country would be covered with railroads. I member one o' my neighbors held a mortgage on one o' the farms an' he happened to lose it, and didn't find it for two days, an' when he did find it it had grown until it had given him a mortgage of a whole township, and they sent him down the river for forgery, even if it was all the falt o' the site."

Oh, yes! Aroostook county is a nice farm'n' country; all yer have ter do is ter plant yer crops and they will grow ter beat thunder. Why I have known men to go there without a cent and clear \$300,000 the first year all often potatoes, an' they didn't have only one potato to start with, and that being a small one weighed only 600 pounds."

"Everybody would be rich if the debts didn't grow equal with the profits. I member one man went ter sellin' machinery, an' he didn't pay up for a year, an' by that time the debts had grown so big that he never has been able ter pay it since."

"Wot made me leave? Well, I'll tell yer. I turned my flock o' sheep out one night, and the next mornin' they had grown so 'at I had 'bout fifty morn' n' I turned out th' night afore, and one o' my neighbors had lost his whole flock, which, strange to say, had drowned, as he never found 'em, but he said that I got 'em, and he made it so uncomfortable for me that I had ter leave. Well, good day, mister, I've got ter leave, as I got ter strike the next town afore night, as my time for leaving the state expires then."—Bangor News.

A Wicked Broker. Wall street is not often reverent. As proof, or refutation, of this assertion may be cited the remark made by one of the street's "kings" when asked to cease his attacks on a certain stock. The man who urged the request gave as an argument the fact that the "king's" oldest friend had invested heavily in the stock, and was on the verge of bankruptcy.

"Loaded with it, is he?" said the other. "Well, we're told in the good book to 'bear one another's burdens.' I'm going to bear his till I can get it at twenty."—New York Times.

School Days. Visitor—Do you like going to school, my little man? Little Man—Yes'm, I like goin', but I don't like stayin'.—Good News.

AN ANCIENT FARM HOUSE.

What the French Hostilities Were Like During the Middle Ages.

The houses of the farmers and the country people differed then as now, according to their rank and prosperity, and also according to the district they inhabited. The yeoman farmer, and even the well to do husbandman, dwelt in a solid house of brick or stone, tiled or slated, with a paved yard separating it from the barn and outhouses, the dairy and cattle pens. The farm house—which in England was always constructed with a southern aspect—as invariably faced the east in Aquitaine, while to the rear well open to the west was a long tiled veranda, where in winter afternoons the hemp picking, the wool carding, etc., were done.

Within the vast kitchen glowed in the light of the fire—almost as unextinguishable as the vestal virgin's—peat, coal and wood were each abundantly employed, and for a trifling rent, generally paid in kind, the lord of the manor would permit the farmers on his land to cut their turfs from his bog or their boughs from his forest. Fuel was not only actually but relatively cheaper in the middle ages than today, for the bogs were not drained in those days, the forest covered great expanses, and the cost of carriage made it almost impossible to transport their produce. In almost every shire of France and England the supply of fuel was in excess of the demand.

This hospitable fire flared up a chimney proportioned to its size, lighting the huge brick oven, the iron firepots, the bellows, shovel, gridiron, ladles, caldrons, saucepans, mortar, tin pails and other utensils that stood on the brackets of the hearth, and irradiating the brass and copper pots, the metal candlesticks, the lamp, the lantern, the not infrequent silver beaker, and the glass drinking cups that were ranged on the chests and cupboards round the walls. Near this fire stood a high backed settle, the master's corner, and under the great mantle of the chimney narrower benches were set in the brick.

Within easy reach of the hearth a deep oak chest held the logs for burning. It was generally matched by a handsome wedding chest with carved or painted front, long enough to contain a grown person full length, but more usually filled, it must be admitted, with the best clothes, the trinkets and the savings of the household. The registers of the chatelet record no crime so common as the breaking open of such wedding chests; and it is surprising how many clasps of jewels, girdles of pearls, golden headdresses and rings, and purses full of gold were stolen from quite humble households. Our forefathers invested their capital in cups or trinkets of precious metal, pretty to look at, easy to hide, and readily converted into cash when necessity demanded a sacrifice.—Fortnightly Review.

A Daring Argument. A quick witted and daring western lawyer once saved a guilty client from sure conviction on a charge of poisoning. It was proved that the poisoning had been done by means of certain cakes, a portion of which was produced in court. When the counsel for the prisoner had finished his speech, he said: "And these, gentlemen of the jury, are some of the alleged poisoned cakes. We declare to you, gentlemen of the jury, that they are not poisoned cakes. They are as harmless cakes as ever were made, and in order, gentlemen of the jury, to show you that these cakes are not poisoned, I will eat one of them right here in your presence."

And he did eat one. He took good care, however, to leave the room at the earliest opportunity, and to make a bee line for an adjoining room, where he had an emetic in readiness and an antidote. But the jury never heard about the emetic or the antidote until the lawyer's client had been acquitted.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Our Sun a Star. Most young folks now know that the difference between night and day on this planet of ours arises simply from the fact, that among the innumerable multitude of stars there is one infinitely nearer to us than all the rest; being so much nearer to us that when we see it we have day. When by the earth's movement on its axis the sun has set in the west we have night; at which time we depend for light upon the more distant stars—unless, indeed, the moon is shining.

In the main, it is true that the enormous difference in the intensity of the light that we receive from the sun in the one case, and from all the stars seen at night in the other, depends upon the fact that the sun is the star nearest to us, and the other stars are suns infinitely removed.—J. Norman Lockyer in Youth's Companion.

To Measure the Sea Level. A new apparatus for measuring the mean level of the sea has lately been installed at Marseilles. It is based on the principle that when a liquid wave traverses a capillary tube or a porous partition, its amplitude diminishes and it is retarded in its phases without the mean level of the wave changing. It consists of a glass tube, the lower end of which communicates by a flexible pipe with a plunger which is lowered beneath the lowest water level. There are two cells in the plunger, the lower being filled with sand and open to the sea, the result being that the column of water in the tube rises and falls very little with the tides, and the mean sea level can be read from a graduated scale.—New York Times.

Everything shipshape. Small Boy—Say, dad, why does the leaves fall off the trees every fall? Dad (an old salt)—Bless you, boy, don't you know? The winds is high in winter, an' the trees has to lower sail.—New York Weekly.

A Drop in the Market. He—Darling, this engagement ring is worth \$350. She—The last one I had cost \$400. He—You are older now!—New York Herald.

THE RED MAN IN WINTER

HOW INDIANS EAT AND LIVE DURING THE COLD MONTHS.

Construction of a Teepee—Furnishings of the Tent—How Their Bread is Made. Process of Hunting and Curing the Leather for Leggings and Moccasins.

It is not strange that Indians are short lived nor that there should be so high a rate of mortality among their children. The tribes north of an east and west line coinciding with the northern limit of New Mexico use for dwellings what is known as the tepee. An Indian of wealth in the Ute country sometimes has an opportunity to purchase an A tent, and even a wall tent, at some sale of condemned quartermaster's supplies, but the very best and newest canvas affords poor protection against the snow storms and freezing winds of the plains. The tent is usually staked down, with a shallow gutter dug round it to carry off the rain water, which would otherwise flood its interior, and, beginning in the early autumn, a fire is built in the center of the earth floor, which is seldom allowed to go out. Overhead and hanging in lines suspended from the canvas are the rifles and other weapons of the family, and the floor is covered with about six inches of dead grass or hay, which in time is trodden down and pressed into a fair and tolerably soft mattress. Wrapped up in his blanket, with his head resting on his saddle for a pillow, the Indian sleeps through the night, depending somewhat on the fire to keep him from freezing in extremely cold weather.

LIFE IN A TEEPEE. In dry weather the ventilator at the apex of the tent may be kept open, but during storms, when it is closed, the atmosphere of the tent is stifling and reeking with the odor of the unwashed family and of the many damp and badly cured furs which every buck accumulates. Far from the agencies the Indians lay in a small stock of flour, coffee and sugar sufficient to be used sparingly through the winter, which, with his frozen beef or antelope meat, constitutes his bill of fare.

In a tent ten feet in diameter, a buck, two squaws and five or six small children pass the winter months, and considering their uncleanly habits, it is not difficult to imagine the condition of the habitation in the spring. They themselves probably appreciate this, because rather than clean up they simply move their tent to some clean spot. With a little flour, water and salt the squaws make a thick paste, which is first cooked on hot stones until it becomes stiff, and then each cake is further cooked by standing it on its edge with its flat surface exposed to the flames until it is thoroughly baked into quite palatable bread. Their meat is fried in its own fat or roasted on a spit stuck in the ground, while a small child keeps it turning to equalize the roasting. The bread cakes serve as plates, while their fingers are both knives and forks, so the Indian has no dish washing process to go through with, for when the meal is finished he eats his plate and licks off his knives and forks with his tongue.

MAKING LEGGINGS. The hunting of deer in the Rocky mountains has driven them north into British America, and in a few more years our Indians will have no more buckskins for leggings and moccasins. Only the skin of the heavy hided deer can be used, that of the antelope and white tailed varieties being too tender for long service. The Apaches make their moccasins and leggings in one piece, in the style of hunting boots, while most of the Indians to the north wear slippers and leggings. Whenever a deer is killed and cut up the bladder is carefully cut away, cleaned, and filled with the brain of the animal, and the little bag is most carefully guarded until a stream is reached, where the hide may be cured. The entire skin is then put into running water, and weighted down with stones. In four or five hours the soaking has swelled it and loosened the hair at the roots, when it is taken out and stretched on a frame, while the owner, with the aid of a cleaned rib of the animal, scrapes it down until all the hair is rubbed off, very much in the same manner as overheated horses are scraped to remove the foam and sweat. The skin is then pulled and stretched for three or four hours, and, at the same time, oiled with the brain until it is perfectly dry, soft and pliable, when it is ready for use. When a tan color is desired it is soaked in an infusion of red bark. The sole of the moccasin is always made of the raw hide of beef cattle and sewed to the upper with the sinews of the deer's tendon achilles.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The Attorney's Dog. A Boston lawyer who resides in the suburbs is the owner of a dog that certainly possesses the instincts of an attorney. The other day he saw another dog carrying off a tempting looking bone. A second dog followed at a short distance. The lawyer's dog quickly conceived a plan of action worthy of an eminent legal mind. He immediately brought action against the dog with the bone. The third dog at once quickened his pace, and lost no time in instituting supplementary proceedings in his own behalf. This assistance proved equivalent to a decree for the plaintiff, for the lawyer's dog left the third dog to bear the brunt of the litigation, and seizing the bone fled to his own kennel, where possession was truly nine points of the law.—Boston Traveller.

Thompson Was Strong. On March 28, 1841, Thomas Thompson lifted three barrels of water, weighing together 1,896 pounds. He also put an iron bar on his neck, seized hold of its two ends, and bent it until the latter met. On another occasion he raised with his teeth a table six feet long supporting at its farthest end a weight of 100 pounds. He also tore without serious effort a rope of a diameter of two inches, and lifted a horse over a bar.—Chambers' Journal.

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