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THE ORDER OF "MULES."

Peculiar Anti-Crime Organization of Kentucky and West Virginia.

It Has Become a Terror to Murderers and Cattle Thieves and Evil-Doers of Every Description—Its Origin and Conduct.

Unquestionably the most unique order in the United States is the "Mules," a secret organization of farmers in this county and the several adjoining counties of this state and West Virginia. Organized just after the close of the war, and on somewhat the same plan as the regulators of the far west, or perhaps more after the fashion of the rangers of the Texas plains, the order has constantly grown in favor until now the membership is estimated to reach well on toward 3,000.

Following the close of the war there was for a number of years in the immediate neighborhood an alarming run of lawlessness. The principal occupation of a great majority of the back country communities appeared to be horse stealing and general thievery. Something had to be done to stop it, as the authorities were wholly unable to cope with the offenders. In this extremity the resourceful mind of one of the best known physicians in the county evolved the idea of an organization for the mutual protection of the farmers. The result was soon felt in the presence of the Mutual Protective Society, of which only the most responsible farmers and citizens, regardless of occupation, were eligible to membership.

The first proclamation of the new order was a candid statement of its purposes and conditions, and a warning tersely worded for the benefit of all transgressors of the laws of the county and state. A promise of the early breaking up of the several bands of horse thieves then operating in this and the Big Sandy country was also made. This latter provision was the source of considerable sarcasm on the part of the gangs named, who resorted to the white cap manner of placarding their answers of defiance. When the first raid was made on the farmers' stock it was of a more general character than had ever before been attempted, and was intended to show the small esteem in which the officers, and the lodge as well, were held.

The members of the order turned out en masse and speedily ran down several of the gangs and so closely chased the leaders that they were compelled to flee to the mountains. Convictions soon followed, and the order became recognized as an important factor in the county government. Similar experiences followed, and the membership of the order increased at a rapid rate. New lodges sprang up in adjoining counties, and each community had a branch, with an organization and a code of signals sufficient to enable the members of the entire membership to be in the shortest possible order.

Whenever a case of horse stealing was reported this order would turn out 400 or 500 strong and scour the whole region until the animals were recovered or the thief captured.

Other and similar offenses were given attention equally substantial. Under these conditions the gangs soon became scattered, their work most hazardous and the morals in general of the county as good as could be asked. Throughout the past 20 years the increasing wealth and energy of the order have maintained the same effect in the mountainous country. Only recently the "Mules" turned out nearly 800 strong in Lawrence county to investigate the supposed murder of an Arab peddler from Cincinnati. They soon resolved the case into one of pure spite-work, in which the victim was an innocent sheep, and the object the desire to exact a ransom upon one of the natives as would cause him to leave the country. A warning was left publicly posted for the benefit of the conspirators. Down in Greenup they are still working on the mysterious case of the murder of one of their members whose body was found nearly two years ago in a creek with a rope around his neck and unmistakable evidence of violence. They will never leave the trail until something tangible is developed. Here in this county but a few months ago the order sent a representative almost to the Atlantic coast to bring back a man wanted for breaking the law. The man was produced for trial at the time originally appointed. Over in Wayne county, W. Va., two convictions were made at a recent term of court as a result of the order's work.

While the work of the order has been most acceptable, and most of the members are sincere in their intentions at their joining, it has also been made the tool of politics to some extent. Numerous men have become members simply to wield a little political influence over the order, to their personal benefit, or in the interest of their friends. Still, it is steadily growing, and surprisingly so in the towns along the river, where their hold formerly was very insignificant. The peculiar designation, "Mules," comes through the adoption some years ago of the outline of an attenuated mule as the emblem of the order.

Once a year the "Mules" hold a meeting of their grand lodge, and this will be held this year at Greenup, early in the coming month. Last year the meeting was held at Leckwood, in Lawrence county, and it was estimated that 10,000 people were present during the two days' session. The order yearly adopting more revised rules, and it will probably eventually emerge into a full-fledged secret society of the old-fashioned order. Though they still turn out en masse and rule over the country in the fashion generally accredited, the moonshiners of the south, they are unalterably opposed to violence in any fashion and strictly adhere to the enforcement of the law along the ordinary lines.—Ashland (Ky.) Cor. Louisville Courier-Journal.

MINE ACCIDENTS.

How Disasters in Coal Mines Are Brought About.

The Miners "Rob the Pillars" or Support and Substitute Timbers Which Cannot Stand the Tremendous Strain.

It is time that the truth about these accidents in the anthracite mining regions should be told. Year after year they have been occurring with appalling regularity. The list of the dead and crippled, the widowed and the orphaned, grows from month to month, while the public, intent upon its own pursuits, learns but little about it until some frightful accident like that which lately plunged the town of Pittston into mourning concentrates attention upon it, and then there is a universal outcry. It is felt instinctively that there must be something wrong with the conditions under which the mining of coal is carried on when disasters of this kind can occur in a state which has given the world the best methods of ventilation of mines and the conditions under which the coal itself can be taken out. But what is the evil and what the remedy? Common sense as well as common humanity prompts the discovery of the one and the application of the remedy.

The law under which the present system of inspection is carried on has worked many reforms. It has done away with many of the evils which operated so disastrously in the early days of anthracite mining. It has given to one of the hardest working classes of labor in the state comparatively pure air where previously no one could breathe any but vitiated atmosphere. It has done even more than this, important as this achievement has been. Under its provisions no shaft, slope or other mine can be worked without having at least two avenues of exit—the usual entrance and the air shaft, the latter for use in case of disaster in gangways near the mouth of the mine. Nor do its beneficiaries stop even here. Inspectors authorized by law to enforce the law's provisions are regularly appointed and paid to do nothing else. How, then, does it come that even after it is in operation there can be such a disaster as that which recently horrified every resident of Pennsylvania?

The answer to this question has already been hinted at in these columns. When a mine is opened all the coal in the veins is not taken out. Portions of it, which are called pillars, are left standing to support the tremendous weight of the ground above. As mining becomes more extensive, however, and the supply of coal diminishes, the owners frequently order the "robbing of the pillars"—that is, the removal of the natural supports which were originally left standing. They know from past experience that this is a dangerous proceeding. Thousands of victims lie in premature graves as the result of its adoption. But competition is fierce and to compete successfully some chances must be taken. So one by one the pillars come down, until, if any, remain to support the mountains of earth above. Rough timbers placed at irregular distances apart are expected to uphold what in the wise provision of nature solid masses of coal had held in place—an absurd proposition upon its face. Once the mine starts to "work," as we have frequently seen, the number of the dead is to be reckoned usually by the number of men employed at the time the crash occurs.

So much for the primary cause. The secondary cause is that which grows out of a faulty system of inspection. The average case in fact does not occur in a day or a night. Nature, as if to display her kindness to those who have rudely injured her, gives repeated warnings before she asserts her mastery. There are ominous sounds throughout the gangways and breaks. The timbers creak and groan under their increasing weight. The rats desert the dangerous places before the timbers give way altogether. These indications of the strain are often perceptible for weeks beforehand, and then the duty of the inspector is to intervene. If he performs his duty with an eye single to the purpose for which his office was created he will either compel the owner of the mine to make it safe or empty it of those whose lives are imperiled. If he is the creature of the operators, as some of the inspectors are to be, he may be indifferent to the condition of the mines or willing that operations shall be carried on after they are unsafe. His reapportionment depends upon his ability to please the owners of the mines, not the men whose lives he is supposed to guard. There are districts in the state in which the corporation operating the collieries dictate the nomination of every inspector.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Fish in Deep Water.

A highly original observation upon the behavior of fish in deep water, so remarkable as to deserve special notice, is attributed to a long-experienced captain of a steam-fishing smack. The fishing boats belonging to the southern portions of the North sea found in their catch lately a disproportionately small quantity of cod-fish. The captain maintained that he had forever lost the fish on that day, because most of the fish caught had sand in their stomachs. He claims to have observed that, just before the fish left the shallow water of the southern banks, they took sand into their stomachs, and soon after fish caught in deeper northern waters showed the same peculiarity. Then, when the time for migrating from the deep waters comes again, the fish dispose of the sand. The theory has been advanced that the sand is taken in as ballast, and is rejected when shallow water is returned to. The sand often differs in color and grain from that of the bottom where the fish are found. It is claimed that this sand may supply a guide for the fishermen.—N. Y. Ledger.

Used Bottled Breath.

Mountain climbers will be interested to learn of the successful experiments of Dr. Benson of Switzerland, who by means of "bottled breath" has been enabled to ascend to great heights, both on land and in a balloon. The doctor, when endeavoring to get further above the level of the sea than anyone else has ever climbed or flown, carries along a cylinder of compressed oxygen, fitted with a tube for breathing. Whenever he experiences discomfort on account of the rarity of the atmosphere a few whiffs from the cylinder suffice to restore him.

Royal Retics.

A cambrie shirt worn by Louis XVI. on the day before his death realized \$370, and the napkin used at noon on the morning of his execution \$300, at a recent London sale.

When Marshal Berthier was in Egypt with Napoleon he was usually in love with Mme. Vicenti, and committed no more absurdities than among his intimates he was known as Chief de la Faction des Amoureux. Among his other follies was the erection of a seat, next to his own; he converted it into a temple to the madame; erected an altar to her picture, before which he burned incense every morning.

Fondness of Mice for Music.

A nice little animal story is given in this month's Nature Notes, which raises the interesting question whether mice have a fondness for music. It is contributed by a musician, who says: "One evening I was somewhat startled at hearing my piano suddenly giving forth sweet sounds, apparently of its own accord. A mouse, so it proved, had got inside the instrument, and was making music on the wires. Whether this was intentional on mouse's part or not I cannot say; perhaps he was trying to make a nest for himself there. Some years ago, however, while a piano was being played in the dining-room of my old home, several mice came out upon the hearthrug and began to jump about, apparently with delight at the sound of the music, and one was either so absorbed or overcome by it that he allowed himself to be carried away in a tongs by the housemaid." After this, ladies indeed, we may soon expect some humanitarian dance to commence musical parties for their delectation. It would be amusing to see them dance, and would form a really humane method of catching them.—London News.

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Sensitive About His Age.

When a distinguished man like M. Grevy refuses to tell his age, surely ordinary women may be excused for so purely feminine weakness. By this subterfuge the president misled his countrymen into believing him to be six years younger than he was, according to an anecdote as follows: "M. Grevy was always very reluctant to tell his age and openly admitted his reluctance. At a dinner party given by one of his friends in 1872, the future president of the republic said, with a smile: 'People may try as much as they like, they will never know my real age.' And, in fact, when M. Herold, who was some time a minister of the third republic, endeavored to obtain definite particulars of M. Grevy's age for a new edition of 'Napoleon,' M. Grevy persistently refused to supply them. 'The archives of Montmorency-Vaudrey were burnt in 1813,' he said, 'and you must do the best you can. You'll get no information from me.' As a consequence, all M. Grevy's biographers gave the year 1813 as that of his birth, while in reality he was born in 1807."

DISEASES OF THE SKIN.

The intense itching and smarting incident to eczema, tetter, salt-rheum, and other diseases of the skin is instantly allayed by applying Chamberlain's Eye and Skin Ointment. Many very bad cases have been permanently cured by it. It is equally efficient for itching piles and a favorite remedy for sore nipples; chapped hands, chilblains, frost bites, and chronic sore eyes. For sale by druggists at 25 cents per box.

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Curious Old Tree in G. Orgis.

A resident of Augusta, Ga., has an oak tree growing upon his place which is not unlike other trees of that species in general appearance. Instead of producing the regular acorn, however, it is annually loaded with peculiar formations as unlike the natural production of such trees as one could imagine. As a general rule the cup of an acorn is as large or larger than a thimble, covering at least half of the acorn proper, but in this case the tiny receptacle is not larger than a pea, and, instead of being constructed so as to hold but a single nut or kernel, contains from three to five small ones, the number seeming to vary with the distance from the ground, the cups on the lower limbs being uniformly filled with three of the tiny acorns. Botanists of national repute have pondered this sylvan oddity and old settlers, noted hunters and woodmen in general have visited the wonder and left without even attempting to name the variety of oak to which it belongs.

Piles! Piles! Itching Piles.

Symptoms: Moisture; intense itching and stinging; most at night; worse by scratching. If allowed to continue tumors form, which often bleed and ulcerate, becoming very sore. Swayne's Ointment stops the itching and bleeding, heals ulceration, and in most cases removes the tumors. At druggists, or by mail, for 50 cents. Dr. Swayne & Son, Philadelphia.

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Fireproof wood will form an important item in the building of future non-of-war and other vessels. The process consists in forcing sulphate and phosphate in the pores of the wood by hydraulic pressure, and it is said that the most gratifying results have been obtained from woods treated by it, they having been subjected to high temperatures without igniting, the only effect being a slight carbonizing on account of the intense heat. With a steel jacket, to protect it from the offensive attentions of the enemy and non-inflammable inside wear, the modern warship will be a reasonably safe craft in which to put the public money and the lives of the squally-inclined portion of its population.—Chicago Times-Herald.

The Only Chair Car Line.

To the east is the Union Pacific. Eastern cities are reached via this line with fewer changes of cars than via other lines—Rates always the lowest. Tickets to and from points in the United States, Canada, or Europe for sale by R. W. Baxter, Gen. Agt., 126 3rd St., Portland.

BOMBHELL, AN ARTILLERY DOG

He Saved Two Little Children from Serious Danger.

While a gun was being loaded, Bombshell would sit on the parapet and watch the operation. That finished, he would jump up and look out to sea over the range, and then scamper down from the parapet and follow us into the bomb-proof.

As usual, Bombshell was on hand to see the test of the new big gun. He superintended the loading, and, while I was aiming the gun, he looked over the range as carefully as any dog could; and from his air of responsibility one might have supposed that to him had been intrusted the duty of seeing that the range was clear.

But when we started for the bomb-proof, instead of following us, as was his custom, Bombshell remained on the parapet, looking out to sea and sniffing the air. In a moment he dashed off through the bushes which covered the narrow beach between the parapet and the sea.

Though thinking his actions peculiar, I was sure that he would not remain in front of the gun, because he had done so once, when quite young and inexperienced, and the burning grains of powder—which are always thrown out by the blast of a gun—had buried themselves in his skin, burning him badly. He had never forgotten this.

Certain that he would take care of himself, I paid no further attention to him, but went with the others into the bomb-proof, and took my place by the electric key, ready to fire at the command of the captain.

Just as the command "Fire" was about to be given, Bombshell reappeared on the parapet and began to bark furiously into the very muzzle of the gun. He called to him, but he would not come. Annoyed at the delay of the test, I tried to catch him, but could not do so. As I approached he retreated, still barking and apparently urging me to follow him.

Finally, convinced from the dog's actions that something was wrong, the electric wire was disconnected from the gun, and I followed Bombshell. Wagging his tail with joy at having accomplished his object, he led me through the underbrush to the beach.

There, concealed behind a clump of bushes, were two little children quietly digging in the sand and entirely unconscious of the danger in which they had been.—Lieut. John C. W. Brooks, in St. Nicholas.

Consumption

AND ITS CURE

TO THE EDITOR—I have an absolute remedy for Consumption. By its timely use thousands of hopeless cases have already been permanently cured. Proof-positive am I of its power that I consider it my duty to send two bottles free to those of your readers who have Consumption, Throat, Bronchial or Lung Trouble, if they will write me their names and postoffice address. Sincerely, T. A. SLOCUM, M. C., 183 Pearl St., New York.

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