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AN INQUISITIVE ANIMAL

You Can Find the Prairie Dog in
Work Upon His Curiosity.

"Of all the dang fool animals loose on the plains," said the man with the uncontrollable tobacco habit as he wiped the corner of his mouth, "the prairie dog is the dangedest. At least he is pretty tolerable dang."

"A knowin' little feller in some ways—a dang knowin' little feller! But, like every other knowin' feller, he's got a weak pint in his organization that a keeful, patient chap kin take advantage of an' put th' dots on him."

"Many's the time I've stood clost to a dog hole an' shot at a big, fat old prairie dog settin' up on end lookin' straight at me an' not movin' an eyelash. But did I hit him? Not though I had no more wabble to my mitt in them days than th' rock o' Jibbaltar. All I seen was a twinkl o' heels an' tail, and when th' smoke cleared away they wasn't no prairie dog layin' dead beside th' vestibule of his palayshal abode. Neither was they none layin' dead inside, as I found out if I laid low long enough an' seen 'is sassy nose come pokin' up to daylight ag'in."

"Smart fellers, them prairie dogs, even if they are dang fool animals. The weak pint of a prairie dog is his curiosity. Fight him on any other line, an' you'll keep your respect fer 'im. Quickness, keen smellin', good hearin' an' eyesight—he's got all them; got a diploma from Prairie Dog university in all them branches. But he ain't even in his freshman year when it comes to resistin' that curiosity o' his'n. It's a fright."

"So th' feller that wants a prairie dog an' don't care t' wait a few years till he can shoot one an' git it without diggin' up a whole township has only jist to take advantage of the prairie dog's weak pint an' he's got 'im."

"Take a bar'l an' cut a hole in th' bottom big enough t' set over th' prairie dog's hole an' set it over. Then lay down beside that bar'l an' wait. Th' little feller hears somethin' goin' on around his front stoop, an' he wonders what it is. As soon as he begins t' wonder he's a goner. If he could just keep from startin' t' wonder he'd live free till he died of old age. But he can't. Curiosity ain't no trait with him—it's a disorder."

"No sooner does he hear that bar'l chunkin' an' tunkin' around up there an' no sooner does th' noise stop than he scuttles right up there to see what's doin'. First thing, he scabbles through that hole in th' bottom o' th' bar'l!"

"Th' feller beside th' bar'l hears 'im scuffin' round, an'—zip!—he's shoved that bar'l aside so th' hole in th' bottom ain't over th' hole in th' ground no longer, an' Mr. Dog can't git back, an' he can't climb th' sides o' th' bar'l nor nothin'—jist goes rampagin' round, wonderin' how it happened he got took in that a-way."

"So while the prairie dog, as I said in the beginnin', is right peart an' hard to bamboozle in most ways he's a easy mark fer th' chap that knows 'is weakness an' takes advantage of it."—Chicago News.

Wasp and Its Prey.

As Dr. Darwin was walking one day in his garden he perceived a wasp upon the gravel walk with a large fly nearly as big as itself, which it had caught. Kneeling down, he distinctly saw it cut off the head and then, taking up with its feet the trunk or middle portion of the body, to which the wings remained attached, fly away. But a breeze of wind acting on the wings of the fly turned around the wasp with its burden and impeded its progress. Upon this it alighted again on the gravel walk, deliberately sawed off first one wing and then the other, and, having thus removed the cause of its embarrassment, flew off with its booty.—London Globe.

Not the Gardener.

When in 1883 Professor Freeman was examining Battle abbey he found himself dogged by a person who, as he thought, somewhat officiously obtruded his offers of assistance. After vainly trying to shake him off he broke forth with: "I don't want your assistance. The Duke of Cleveland promised that I should not be interfered with by the gardeners."

"Exactly so," was the reply. "I hope they have obeyed my orders. I am the Duke of Cleveland."

Inconsistent.

"What an inconsistent fellow Jack is?"

"How so?"

"He wrote in Blanche's autograph album that he wished her a life of happiness."

"Wasn't that all right?"

"I suppose it would have been if he hadn't turned around and within three months married her."—Kansas City Independent.

WORKING IN SLATE

How the Material is Quarried, Split, Sawed and Finished.

Slate is used for many things besides school slates and roof coverings. Out of it are made sidewalks, the walls of dwellings, doors, stairways, door and window sills, chimneys, tops, fencibles, bathtubs, managers, mantelpieces, blackboards and many other things.

It can be sawed and worked so accurately that bathtubs and cisterns can be made perfectly water tight simply by joining the edges of the slate blocks.

Slate is got out of the ground by means of blasting, holes being bored into it with steam drills. With derricks and hoisting chains the rough slabs are lifted to the edges of the quarry, and then they are rolled on trucks to the shanty of the splitter. The slate forms naturally in layers, and the splitter, following the grain or "ribbon" with a large chisel, separates the blocks into strips of the proper thickness for roofing slate.

Then the slate passes through a cutting or trimming machine, where by the blows of a heavy knife the irregular pieces are cut into rectangular "shingles." Boys often operate this trimming machine. Afterward the slates are piled up in squares, each pile containing enough to cover 100 square feet of roof.

In the neighborhood of the Pennsylvania quarries one will find houses whose walls are entirely of slate. The blocks of which they are made are smoothly sawed, and the walls are exceedingly substantial.

A Pennsylvania factory where various articles are manufactured from slate contains three horizontal saws twelve feet in length, each of which is furnished with seventy-five cutting diamonds. Probably these are the most expensive saws in the world, for each one costs \$5,300. There are also in the factory diamond jigsaws, a circular saw, four planers and other slate working machinery.

The huge horizontal saw that works on one of the blocks of slate is lowered by a ratchet at the rate of a quarter of an inch a minute. The saw would cut iron or steel at the same rate. Water is played on the saw to keep it cool and wash the slate dust from the cut.

After the sawing the block is planed by being moved back and forth by machinery under a firmly fixed chisel. Then it is polished, much as marble and granite are, by means of a rapidly revolving disk of cast iron, called a rubbing bed, which is kept covered with a sprinkling of fine sand continually saturated with water. The slate is bored by means of diamond pointed drills.

Slate land was once so little valued that the tract on which the famous Chapman quarry in Pennsylvania is situated was sold for a pint of liquor. Its subsequent owners have taken millions from it.—Pittsburg Post.

Women and Umbrellas.

"If the umbrella is for a gentleman I suggest that it be cheap," the clerk said. "For a lady, the costlier the umbrella the better."

"Ladies, you know, never lose umbrellas, never leave them in cars or shops, never carelessly allow them to be swiped. Why, there are gold and silver handled umbrellas, the property of ladies, that have been coming back to us for repairs for forty years."

"But men—dear me! Men are liable to lose an umbrella the first day they take it out."

"For a man, you say, sir? Then I recommend this strong and serviceable article at 74 cents, reduced from 98." — New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Setting the Verdict Right.

Years ago an elderly and brusque jurist from Sandusky used to hold district court in Cleveland, and on one of his visits a beautiful young woman was tried before him and a jury on a charge of stealing \$85 from a man. She was clearly proved guilty, but the jury, impressed by her youth and beauty, found a verdict of not guilty.

"Mr. Clerk," remarked the old judge, "pay the \$85 to the prosecuting witness, it having been clearly proved in this court that the defendant stole it from him, and you may also pay these twelve fools their fees and let them go."

Painting the Town Red.

The expression, "Painting the town red," has been traced to "The Divine Comedy." Dante, led by Virgil, comes to the cavernous depths of the place swept by a mighty wind where those are confined who have been the prey of their passions. Two faces arise from the mist—the faces of Francesca and Paolo. "Who are ye?" cries Dante in alarm, and Francesca replies sadly, "We are those who have painted the world red with our sins."—Argonaut.

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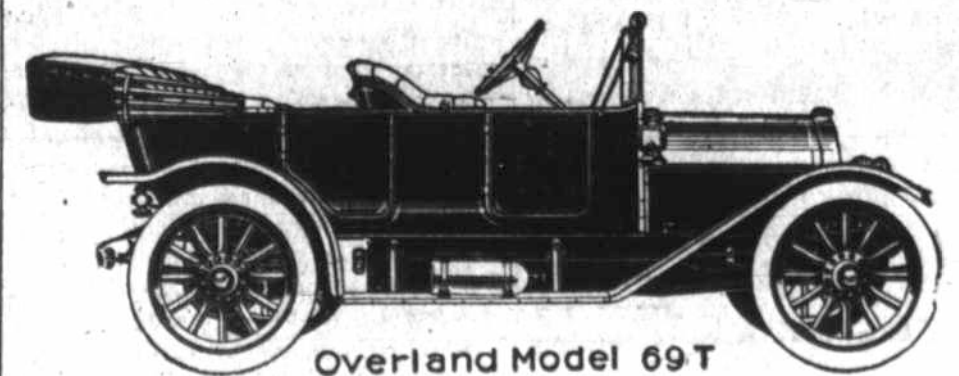
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