

THE RAT KING.

His Method Was Successful, but It Remains a Secret.

In the early sixties of the last century the Smithsonian institution was infested with rats. Nothing in the building seemed to be rat proof. They ate skins cured with arsenical soap or table linen or the contents of Professor Henry's pantry without discrimination. Every one in the city, from Professor Henry to the bootblack, had one subject in common, and that was "rats."

As Professor Henry, who lived in the east end of the building, was listening to an account of the ruin wrought in his home during that day Professor Spencer Baird walked in and said, just as if he had been following every word of the family conversation, "I have just been told that there is a man in Philadelphia who can rid this place of rats."

Professor Henry's eyes expressed interest and incredulity at the same moment.

"I have his address here," went on the assistant secretary. "He calls himself the 'ratten konig' and won't take a cent if a rat remains and has."

"We'll send for him if it takes our last thousand cents to do it!" said Professor Henry and laughingly predicted the repetition of the famous old tale of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.

Several days later the "rat king" appeared in Washington. He was almost as short as he was broad and wore clothes too loose for description; they had no shape. He carried a large oilcloth sack and a covered basket. His penetrating blue eyes were almost covered by shaggy eyebrows, and his blond hair had not been cut, but bagged. His manner was short and brisk, and he went straight to the point, talking to Professor Henry in German.

He declared that not a rat would be in the building three days hence if his directions were obeyed. During that time he would stay in the basement alone; every door was to be locked, and on no account was he to be disturbed until he gave the signal. So they left him in absolute darkness and carried out his directions.

On Sunday morning the queer old man emerged from the darkness so confident of his success that he refused to accept the money which was his due then and there, but insisted that Professor Henry mail the check to him in Philadelphia the following week.

"Now you can leave your food in the basement, and it won't be touched. And I won't take a cent if you are troubled with rats," were his parting words.

Cheese and cake were directly placed about the building to tempt the rats. Morning after morning they were found as they had been left, and from that day to this the Smithsonian institution has never been seriously troubled with rats. And no one has ever found out the secret of the "rat king's" method.—Youth's Companion.

Washington's High Priced Shad.

Washington's steward was a man named Frances, who liked good living and with whom Washington continually quarreled about the marketing. One time he bought a shad in February, and as Washington saw it coming into the dining room he was charmed and asked what fish it was.

"It is a shad," replied the steward, "a very fine shad. It was the only one in the market, and I bought it for you."

"But what did you pay for it?" said Washington sternly.

"It is a very fine shad," continued the steward, "and it is cooked to a turn."

"But I want to know the price—the price!"

"It cost \$3," stammered out Frances. "Take it away," said Washington as he raised his hand; "take it away. It shall never be said that I set such an example of luxury and extravagance."

And with that he drove the steward out of the room, and the shad was eaten in the servants' kitchen.

SAVED BY A PANTHER.

The Fierce Brute Proved a Good Temperance Lecturer.

Governor Jennings of Indiana used to tell a story of his early electioneering days in which he said that a panther may be a good temperance lecturer. Colonel W. M. Cockrum repeats the story in his "Pioneer History of Indiana." The incident happened when Governor Jennings was traveling over the thinly settled hills of Dearborn county, electioneering for congress.

He met a man with whom he was well acquainted, by name Tom Oglesby, who was just getting over a protracted debauch. Jennings began asking Tom about his political views. The half sober fellow looked at him and said:

"Jen, don't you think a man just out of a panther fight ought to be electioneered in a different manner from this? I am just from the grave. I was awakened a little while ago by a panther putting leaves and grass over me. It kept this up until I was entirely covered. I lay still for awhile and then raised up and found the panther gone. I knew I was in danger, so I took my gun and climbed into a tree to see what the panther intended to do."

"In a short time I heard her coming, and she had her kittens with her. Every few steps she would jump as if catching something, and the little ones would go through the same maneuvers. She kept this up until she got near to the bed of leaves she had covered over me and then made a spring on the pile. She looked just as I felt when I found that I was covered up for dead. She then started in to investigate the cause of my disappearance, and before she located me I shot her."

Jennings, after hearing this, said:

"Well, Tom, I believe I should treat you as one from the dead and that you should begin your life from this point. We were schoolboys together. I know you are a capable civil engineer and well educated, and if you cease drinking I will see that you have a good position on the surveying corps."

Tom Oglesby did quit drinking. Jennings was elected and kept his promise to his old friend, who became one of the well known engineers of the United States.

She Liked Silk Hosiery.

Susan B. Anthony was a woman of simple taste in dress, but her close friends knew of one pretty feminine vanity that she always held to. She had a weakness for silk stockings. Being pressed on one occasion for an explanation of what most women at one time regarded as an unnecessary extravagance, she laughingly exclaimed: "Oh, I just love 'em! They are an inspiration. If I have my silk stockings on when I rise to make an address I feel just as if I am walking among the clouds. They help me to soar away on flights of eloquence. I wouldn't be without them."

Just the Thing.

The poet took his silver mounted pistol from the bureau drawer.

"What are you going to do with that?" asked his timid wife.

"I'm going to use it to drive the wolf from the door," he answered.

Ten minutes later the pawnbroker had advanced \$2 on it.—Chicago News.

Headed Him Off.

He—You know, Clara, about the diamond engagement ring I want to give you, diamonds have gone up so— She—Oh, you dear boy! How sweet of you to want to make sacrifices to prove your love.—Baltimore American.

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