THE ITEMS

SATURDAY APRIL 4, 1903.

SUCKER ALWAYS WITH US.

Why not let the sucker look out for himself? He must do it, any way, or come to grief. Law cann t protect a greedy fool or clumsy knave, and these are the two varieties of the sucker species. Law is always trying to shield the sucker by removing temptation from his path; but temptation is protean. Abolish one form of it by law and you get another by a lightning change. The sucker is the natural food of the sport, and it is his destiny to be devoured. He flits like a butter-fly from gaming-house to pool room, from policy to bucket shop; from one get-rich-quick enterprise to another, and from these to the innumerable company of professional, commercial and religious quacks who feed on human folly and greed like parasites on diseased bodies.

Why not leave him to fulfill his natural destiny? He was created to be skinned, and the sooner it is decently done the more completely will the purpose of nature be carried out. The only law that has the least hold on the sucker is the natural law of the survival of the fittest. Better give this free play. When he is thoroughly skinned, he will disappear, and not breed more suckers. The sports who get his money do not keep it long. The same law of nature punishes them for unthrift, and the money finally circulates around to those clever enough to keep as well as to get it. The race is weeded of fools and knaves together, like a wellkept garden, and the fittest have room to grow.

Lawmakers are always trying to save the sucker from the sports. The collapse of a whole brood of get rich-quick enterprises, all along the line from New York to St. Louis, has stirred this well meaning effort to new life. The history of the collapse proves how tutile it is. There is law enough now, in every state, to make skin games impossible, if law could do it. No law can reach these games until they have run their course and the suckers have been skinned, any more than law can save the perennial new crop from poolrooms, policy and bucket shops. You can't protect the sucker whose money is gone, and the sucker with money still to lose doesn't want to be protected, because he thinks he is clever enough to get the money of some one else.

Why worry about the sucker anyway? He is not a nice sort of person. He is fully as dishonest as the sports who sink him, only he is mistaken in thinking himself more clever. He goes into skin games, all along the line from the stock exchange to green goods, in order to get the better of somebody else and get money without working for it or giving any value in exchange. Why should virtuous and highminded lawmakers bother their heads about such a wretch, anyway? Nature will take care of him, if he is left to the operation of her wholesome law.—Minneapolis Tribune.

THE VINDICATION OF BARBED WIRE.

Downward the course of luxuries takes it away. Today the millionaire runs over us with his automobile; in a few years the junkman will be making his hetrogeneous collection in such a vehicle, with a string of bronze Japanese gongs instead of the present assemblage of cow bells.

An already realized example of this may be found in the telephone; if you and your neighbor have a barbed-wire fence you may have a telephone. Instruments are installed in the farmers' houses and connections made with the top wire of the fence. The barbs seem in no way to interfere with the passage of the message, which is probably the only thing in the world with the passage of which they do not interfere. Indeed the young man who has tried to get a summer girl through a barbed wire fence will probably be disposed to doubt if even a telephone message can pass without getting torn to shreds and coming out in Russian for example. The barbed wire fence is perhaps the most abused of American institutions unless it is the plumber. It is certainly gratifying to learn that a humane use has at last been found for the barbed wire. Perhaps a way to utilize the plumber may yet be found—say as a storage battery. In this welcoming the utilization of the barbed-wire fence, however, we cannot, in justice, overlook that modest and truth-loving individual who lives somewhere in the Missouri river bottom. It will be remembered that last summer he reported in all the newspapers that just before the June rise he baited the barbs on several miles of fence, some eight or nine thousand in number, and when the water receded, removed a large fish from every barb except three, which trio the hired man had neglected to properly bait. The ingenious fisherman sold his catch for something like $4000 and discharged the careless agricultural helper, after docking him 90 cents for the lost fish.—Saturday Evening Post.

ESTRAY.

Lost one two-year old cow with calf. Brand, on ribs OO, and 7 on one hip and 72 on the other. I will pay $5 reward for her recovery.

Fred Mosier.

Izee, Oregon.

THOUGHT GUN BEWITCHED.

Why the Old Negro Threw It Away and Would Not Touch It Again.

A story is told of Uncle Washington Harris, one of "Marse Clay's niggers afore de war," who remained on the plantation after he was set free. He was considered a power among the negroes, being somewhat of a local preacher, says the New York Tribune, but he said: "I'se jist a exhortioner 'mong de congregation."

Once when Uncle "Wash" was "exhortioning 'mong de congregation," the Ku Klux came after him, and, as the old man hurriedly beat an exit through a window, one of the Ku Klux got the tail of his Prince Albert coat, that "Marse Clay" had given him, and which the old darkey was very proud of. From that time Uncle "Wash" always carried an old long-barreled shotgun.

The neighbors were in the habit of meeting at night at "Bob" Clay's country store to tell yarns and talk about the crops. Uncle "Wash" and several other old colored men, were always present, sitting on nail kegs a respectable distance behind "de white folks to hear de yarns." On these occasions Uncle "Wash" always left his gun in the rear of the store.

One night "Buck" Allen, who never was tired of playing jokes on the old man, got his gun, and, after drawing the shot from it, loaded it with powder and phosphorous wood as wadding, then another load of powder and more phosphorous wood, repeating this till there were several loads of powder and wood in the gun, ramming down the last charge of powder with an extra long piece of wood. "Buck" dropped a coal on it and went back to his seat.

If phosphorous wood is lighted, the fire will eat very slowly through it, and act as a fuse. Uncle "Wash" took up his gun and started home, and was several hundred yards from the store when the spark reached the first charge of powder and exploded it, which greatly perplexed the old man, but he attributed it to an accident. When the second explosion occurred he fell on his knees and prayed, but when the third came he threw the gun from him into the bushes and ran for dear life. As Uncle "Wash" burst in the front door to the consternation of his wife, and fell sprawling on the floor, hysterically praying, he heard the last charge explode.

Uncle "Wash" never went back for his gun, and could never be convinced "speerets" were not in that "ole turkee gun," and that it was not bewitched.

The Blacksmith and the King.

Some time ago, while holding court in the royal palace, overlooking the Danube, Francis Joseph received a Hungarian blacksmith, who desired to thank the king for the decoration conferred on him in recognition of his having invented an agricultural machine. During the audience the blacksmith drew from his pocket two photographs representing the king and queen, and said, handing them to his majesty: "May I ask your majesty, and also the queen, for your signatures?" "And why?" demanded the king, smilingly. "Well, when I die the cross of merit which your majesty has given me will have to be returned and my children will at least have your majesties' portraits and signatures in remembrance of this audience." "The queen is absent from Hungary," said the king, "and I cannot give you my signature at the present moment, for I have neither pen nor pencil within reach." "I have brought a pencil with me," said the smith, handing it to the monarch. The king thereupon attached his signature to the photograph, and dismissed the smith with a smile. The smith did not retire, however, but stood his ground. "Is there anything else I can do for you?" asked Francis Joseph. "Yes, your majesty, I am waiting for my pencil." The king had mechanically pocketed it, and he returned it with a hearty laugh.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Babu Tricks the Gnours.

Peas are proverbially alike, but not more so than "nigger" law students. And when each wears astrachan hair, gold spectacles and a Stewart tartan necktie, Dze Manik Lal is as like Dadabhoy Jamshedji as any two men in iron masks. This fact is not lost on a wily Hindoo law student. This bright young mind has, it is said, taken several scholarships at Lincoln's Inn under his own name. He, now, for a consideration, is willing to temporarily adopt the series of consonants which form the name of any gentleman with a similar color scheme, and in his improper person goes up for and successfully passes the examinations of the council of the bar.—Phoenix.

The Way of the Frontier.

The way of civilization in a new land passes comprehension. Its motto seems to be: ruin first; there is time afterward to save. Civilization is a good deal like a wild, full-blooded boy: it must first sow wild oats, waste its patrimony, disgrace its antecedents; then it is ready to begin the serious work of life. That has been the history of the range country: swift ruin for 30 or 40 years, with a resulting wreck that it will require a century of hard work, perseverance and self-control to save.—Century.

THE ORIGIN OF GOLF.

Game Was First Played by a Scotch Shepherd with His Crook and a Pebble.

The man or woman who has become interested in golf must needs know something of its origin over in Scotland. In his book, "The Art of Golf," Sir W. G. Simpson tells the following pretty story as to how the game had its beginning:

"A shepherd leading his sheep would often chance upon a round pebble, and, having his crook in his hand, would strike it away; for it is as inevitable that a man with a stick in his hand should aim a blow at any loose object lying in his path as that he should breathe. Over pastures green this led to nothing; but once upon a time a certain shepherd, feeding his sheep on a links, perhaps that of St. Andrews, rolled one of these stones into a rabbit scrape.

"'Mary,' quoth he, 'I could not do that if I tried,' a thought which nerved him to the attempt. But a man cannot long persevere alone in any arduous undertaking, so Mr. Shepherd hailed another, who was hard by, to witness the endeavor. 'That is easy,' said the friend, and, trying, failed. They now searched the grass for the roundest stones, and having deepened the rabbit scrape, so that the stones might not jump out of it, they set themselves to practice putting.

"The stronger but less skillful shepherd, finding himself worsted at the amusement, protested that it was a fairer test of skill to play for the hole from a considerable distance. With this arranged, the game was found to be much more varied and interesting. The sheep having meanwhile strayed, the shepherds had to go after them.

"This proving an exceedingly irksome interruption, they hit upon the ingenious device of nailing a circular course of holes, which enabled them to play and herd at the same time. These holes being now many and far apart, it became necessary to mark their whereabouts, which was easily done by means of a tag of wool from a sheep attached to a stick, a primitive kind of flag still used on many greens, almost in its original form. Since these early days the essentials of the game have altered but little."

Scotsman's Precise Folly.

Maj. James B. Pond, of world-wide repute as a pilot of celebrities of the concert stage and the "lyceum," tells of a waiter, a Scotsman, of whom he once inquired the exact time to leave to catch the morning boat plying between the river town where he was visiting and the next stopping place on his itinerary.

"Weel, I canna' tell ye jist whit time 'twill be; but if ye'll leave five minutes afore ye see the steamer comin' roon the p'int, ye'll jist be in time to cotch it, sir."—Philadelphia Times.

Had the Most Science.

In responding to the toast "Science" at a banquet in New York recently President Pritchett, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, told this story: "In a Boston school the other day a teacher said to a small boy: 'Who won the battle of New Orleans?' 'Why Jim Corbett, of course,' was the answer. 'How did that happen?' asked the teacher, thinking to set the boy right. 'He won,' was the prompt reply, 'because he had more science than the other guy.'"—Chicago Chronicle.

Wrung from His Soul.

"O come off!"

It was the appealing, horror-struck, heart-broken outcry of a strong man in agony.

Mr. Kajones had seen his daughter, Laura, for the first time riding her bicycle in red bloomers.—Chicago Tribune.

Love's Silent Interchange.

Friend—How did the count propose to you, and you accept, if he could not understand your language nor you his?

American Heiress—It was very simple. He showed me his family tree and I showed him my bankbook.—N. Y. Weekly.

Foiled Again.

"Where are you going, my pretty maid?"
"Digging for clams, kind sir," she said.
"Can I go with you, my pretty maid?"
"But you're already dug," she said.
—Puck.

Makes a Big Difference.

Mr. Timmidd—How would a girl feel if she received a proposal by letter?

Friend—If she didn't care for you, she'd feel insulted.

"Um—well—er—suppose she did care for me?"

"She'd say 'yes' by telegraph."—N. Y. Weekly.

Not While He Knew It.

Doctor—You say your husband has been in this delirious state for the last hour? Why did you not send for me sooner?

Patient's Wife—Sure, sor, as long as he wor in his roight moind he said he wouldn't hav' wono' thim dom docthers in the house!—Puck.

Private and Public Business.

Boy—Why do you hire that man by the job?

Father (a congressman)—Because if I paid him by the day he'd dawdle along all summer.

"Does the government pay you by the job?"

"N—o; by the day."—Good News.

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