

IGNOTUS

Around my couch no friend stands near, No heart beats warmly near; No eye to shed a friendly tear; No word of sympathy.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

The house was haunted. All who saw The frequent sign, "To let," said so, And families did oft withdraw Their goods and chattels. That I know.

THE CRANBERRY SWAMP.

"Of course you know very well, or at least I am certain I have remarked in your bearing time and again, a man has his own fortune to look to," said young Dr. Dedding.

"Dear Judith, you'd be as welcome as the flowers in May." The next day Mrs. Redfield came over in the old farm carriage to claim her guest, and the swamp was left to its dreary desolation and the driving snows of January.

"I have called as a friend," said Dr. Dedding, with dignity. "Oh," said Julius.

"Who said it wasn't?" retorted Julius. "They ain't gone to hear service—they are gone to be married!"

"No time like the present!" hissed Mr. Spoopendyke, jamming the ladder against the wall and mounting one more.

"I don't know," murmured Mrs. Spoopendyke, with her finger to her lips. "Why wouldn't that space between the two windows be a good place?"

"That's all right," smiled Mr. Spoopendyke from his perch. "You just quit roosting on that bottom round like a hen, and I will get on without any further trouble."

"I don't know," he continued, as a brilliant idea occurred to him. "You like that place between the two windows best, don't you? I don't know but what that is a good place for a picture."

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Dr. Dedding plodded home to the village, and as he passed the brilliant windows of the little tavern, he paused, remembering the bitter cold of the winter air, the frosty influence of the breeze.

"I may as well go in and warm myself," thought he. Mine host met him with a cheery air.

"Walk in, doctor, walk in!" said he. "Not that room," Dedding mechanically turned toward the apartment he usually entered. "The railway committee is sitting there."

"The railway committee!" echoed Dedding. "You don't mean that they are taking any steps about the old idea of building a railway between here and Glassville?"

"Yes, I do," said the landlord. "It's a committee of rich capitalists, as it's building factories close to the falls; don't say I mentioned it, doctor, because I only caught a snatch here and there, when I was carrying in the plates; but it's to go right through old Miles Grey's cranberry swamp, the railway is!"

"And the chairman is going to offer Mrs. Judith five thousand dollars in clean, hard cash for her share in it?" Dr. Dedding started.

"Five thousand dollars!" he said slowly. "Could it be true? If so, what a fatal mistake he had made in rejecting a bride who could bring the rich portion of a cranberry swamp as her wedding dower. If he had known this half an hour—one little half hour ago!"

"Don't fret about him, Judith dear, he isn't worth it!" urged honest Marmaduke Redfield, who had stopped on his way to the postoffice to bring a message from his mother. "He was always a pretentious sort of a fellow, all for outward show, with a hard heart and a shallow nature."

Judith glanced up at the clumsy, hard-handed farmer, and wondered that she had never before seen what a true face and what clear, frank eyes he had.

"I loved him—once," she faltered. "Forget him, Judith," pleaded Redfield; and she began seriously to think that she would at least try to do so.

"Come over to our house and stay with mother. It is rather lonesome for you here, for the present, at least. Spring will be time enough for you to come back to the cranberry swamp."

Judith thought of Mrs. Redfield's cosy kitchen, with its bright carpet, its windows lined with geraniums, and its shrill-voiced canary hanging over the work-table.

"Do you think that your mother would be willing to be troubled with such a guest as I?" she asked hesitatingly.

Duke Redfield's face was radiant. "Dear Judith, you'd be as welcome as the flowers in May."

The next day Mrs. Redfield came over in the old farm carriage to claim her guest, and the swamp was left to its dreary desolation and the driving snows of January.

Scarcely three weeks had elapsed when young Dr. Dedding came to Redfield farm in his new gig, with the old roan horse, which really made quite a fine appearance when you did not hurry him, and he was free from a visitation commonly known as the "heaves."

"There ain't nobody sick here," said Julius, the hired man, who was splitting wood at the side of the house.

"No, I know it," said Dr. Dedding; "I want to see Miss Grey."

"Miss Grey ain't no ways aillin' as I know of, persisted Julius, testing the edge of his ax and staring hard at the doctor.

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MR. AND MRS. SPOOPENDYKE.

The Belligerent Head of the Family Attempts to Hang a Picture.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoopendyke, prancing into the sitting-room with every evidence of delight and contentment pictured on his face. "Now, my dear, what do you think I've brought you?"

"I'm sure I have no idea," fluttered Mrs. Spoopendyke. "Please tell me what it is, for I know it is something nice?"

"Look," grinned Mr. Spoopendyke, unwrapping the package and developing a cabinet photograph of himself nicely framed in gilt. "How do you like it?" and Mr. Spoopendyke held it out at arm's length and admired it hugely.

"Isn't it perfectly splendid?" gulped Mrs. Spoopendyke. "It is the best likeness of you I have ever seen. Did you get it for me?"

"Of course," replied Mr. Spoopendyke, still buried in admiration of his counterfeit. "You don't imagine I got it for the rats, do you? Haven't any kind of a notion I brought it home to kill bugs with, have you? Now where shall we hang it?"

"I don't know," murmured Mrs. Spoopendyke, with her finger to her lips. "Why wouldn't that space between the two windows be a good place?"

"Why wouldn't the top shelf of the pantry be better?" growled Mr. Spoopendyke. "If you are looking for a place where the light won't strike it why not put it under the carpet, or stick it between the mattresses! This picture demands some refuge to show it off, and I'm going to put it where the most refuge is calculated to strike it. Now, where can we put it?"

"Isn't that a good place, right over the bed?" suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke, who began to see that her husband was aiming for the chimney, where the painting of her father had hung for years. "If you hang it over the bed, I can see it whenever I come into the room."

"Just so," snarled Spoopendyke, running a cord through the eyes in the back of the frame. "I don't know, though," he continued, as a brilliant idea occurred to him. "You like that place between the two windows best, don't you? I don't know but what that is a good place for a picture."

"Best place in the room," giggled Mrs. Spoopendyke, satisfied that she had carried her point and saved the location sacred to her father.

"Then I'll tell you what we'll do," said Mr. Spoopendyke, with a gleam of speculation in his eyes. "We'll hang your father's picture up there and I will be content to take the subordinate place over the chimney-piece."

Mrs. Spoopendyke saw she had been caught in her own trap, and made no further resistance.

"Where's the step ladder?" asked Spoopendyke, cheerfully. "Bring me the portable Tower of Babel, and I will fresco this wall with the finest of modern artistic efforts."

Mrs. Spoopendyke lugged the step-ladder up-stairs, and Mr. Spoopendyke, having arranged his string, mounted to take down the old gentleman's picture with a view to the proposed removal.

"Look out you don't fall, dear," suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke, forgetting her defeat in her solicitude for her husband.

"That's all right," smiled Mr. Spoopendyke from his perch. "You just quit roosting on that bottom round like a hen, and I will get on without any further trouble."

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step ladders do not break in and corrupt? Going to lift that thing off me, or are you going to use it for a tombstone? Mark it 'Hic Jacet Spoopendyke,' or take it away before I begin to exert my supernatural strength and kick it into the realms of eternal bliss, where the ladder biteth like a—!" and with a prodigious kick, Mr. Spoopendyke sent the ladder to the nethermost part of the room and arose to his feet foaming.

"Never mind the pictures, dear," suggested Mrs. Spoopendyke. "You leave it with me and I'll hang them to-morrow."

"Oh, you'll do it," howled Mr. Spoopendyke, whirling on his heel and coming down hard on his own photograph which he had carefully laid on the floor. "You are the one to hang it! Trust you for a thing of that kind! If you had a wire along your ceiling and a catalogue in your ear, you'd only want a tin-type and a row to be an academy of design!" and with this complicated description of his wife's few failings, Mr. Spoopendyke shot into bed as if he were practicing archery, and nursed his wounds and wrath until he fell asleep.

"I don't care," muttered Mrs. Spoopendyke, trying to untie the knot of her shoelace with her teeth. "I don't care. It will teach him another time to let poor pa's picture alone."

A VISIT TO FRANCE IN 1815 BY AN OCTOGENARIAN.

The schooner Selby, Capt. John Selby, sailed from New York for Nantes, July 2, 1815, and I was on board as supercargo. Our cargo of cotton was to furnish funds for a return cargo of silks and other goods to be purchased in Paris.

The last news from France was that Napoleon was in Paris marshaling his forces to meet the allied armies. We had favorable winds, and in 20 days we were in the Bay of Biscay, which we found swarming with British cruisers. Supposing there might be a blockade, we wished to avoid being spoken. We were chased by three British frigates, and the shot from one of them nearly reached us; but we outslung them. One of the frigates continued the chase until the next morning. When we found ourselves almost as far south as Bordeaux, and near the coast. Sailing north, in sight of land, we were surprised to see the Bourbon flag flying. The mystery was explained by the pilot, who informed us of the battle of Waterloo, which had been fought six weeks before. Napoleon at this time (July 26) was on board the Bellerophon, off the English coast. The day following the Captain and I landed at Painboef, where at our breakfast a crowd of beggars gathered before the door and could be dispersed only by throwing a handful of sous among them. The most rapid traveling then was with the courier, and I rode with him two days and three nights. The road all the way to Paris was guarded by Prussian troops, and wherever my passport had to be shown to the French authorities it was examined also by the Prussian commandants. Paris seems to be alive with officers and soldiers of different nations, and on the 8th of August the Russian Emperor, Alexander I., reviewed his troops on the boulevards. It was said they numbered 50,000. I had a good view of the Czar, an uncommonly fine-looking man. He had fewer decorations on his person than some of his officers, and his horse was not so richly caparisoned as theirs. In the cavalcade there were the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, the Duke of Wellington, the Prince of Orange, and other notables. I saw at another time the veteran Blucher exercising his soldiers. My business in Paris was completed in 12 days, and a ride of three days and two nights with the courier brought me to Nantes. We sailed from Painboef Aug. 21st, and on the 23d of September, when near the Jersey shore, encountered the terrific and memorable gale which did so much damage at sea and along our coast. We were in great peril, but were mercifully preserved. In the afternoon we had a fine, fair wind, and in the evening anchored at Sandy Hook. The next day was the Sabbath. The morning was lovely, and with a fresh southerly breeze we sailed up the beautiful bay and harbor of New York, and I stepped on the wharf just as the bells were ringing for church. The dreadful storm of the day before, "amid the roaring of the sea," and the events of the past 12 weeks—how different from the solemn and delightful services in the house of the Lord! And thus ended my first visit abroad, when I was nearly 21.—[Henry Hill.]

THE PRIVACY THAT ABSORBED WORKERS LIKE.

They tell of one of the Harts, a painter, that when he is in the throes of labor he admits no one to his room. Some one called on him once and knocked. There was no response, but he heard a noise within, and kept the rapping up till the door suddenly opened.

"You'll excuse me," said the artist, through three inches of aperture, "but I am painting on a sky."

And he slammed the door and resumed his work.

It reads like a rudeness, doesn't it? But what man who has ever tried to work under fire of an idle loafer with little or no sympathy for his toil will not recognize it as a justifiable one? A man can no more paint on anything he is seriously interested in under a foreign disturbance than he could write a poem or compose an opera. There never was a painter yet, who, when he did good work, did not forget himself and his surroundings in it, and there never was one who could do good work under any other circumstances. The majority need privacy for their labor, like the portrait painter who, when the mother of a baby sitter said to him: "Mr. X., why don't you talk to me?" "I'm sure it's very dull here."

Replied with more excuse than politeness: "Then take a walk around the block. When I work I think of what I am doing; not of what other people are not doing."—[New York News.]

A middle-aged lady applied to Mr. Barnum for the position of circus manager. When asked about her proficiency she naively replied that she had been married three times, and if any one could explain the word circus she was the person.

RIDING A BLACKFISH.

Uncommon Adventures, as Narrated by One of the Chronicalers.

"You're the man," said one of the listeners, "who killed a whale second-handed, aren't you?" was asked of Capt. Lish Fliker, champion fighter, revivalist and exhorter of all the country about Booth Bay, Me.

"Well," replied the captain, after he had finished whistling a strain of what is familiarly known as the "No. 2 selection," "I am about the last man to talk about his own doings, but since you put a leadin' question I'm 'bleeged to say I'm the identical old man, but it wasn't a whale, only a blackfish—wuss, I calls 'em. Ye see, afore old Grimes was dead he and I used tew do considerable seining, and he'd about all our ready cash salted down in nets. One mornin' we'd jest got 'em aout and old Grimes he'd gone off on some chore, when I see somethin' big and black risin' right in the net. Fust I thought it was a whale, then I see it was a blackfish. I was in the dory and the only thing in it was a bit of broken scythe that we'd used for cleanin' fish, so I shoved off and in a minute was alongside of the critter and him in water not over six foot. Growin' mad I jest hopped aout on tew his back and fetched him a jab and off he went, a-runnin' high and dry ashore. I aout with the scythe agin and fetched him another hit, and when he ran ashore agin I reached down and cut his thro't and I got a knock side o' the head that raised me about ten foot. I landed knee-deep in the blood-red water head first, and when I picked myself up I see the critter a-wallowin' off. Grabbing the scythe I jumped on his back and fetched him another jab, and that settled it."

THE BAD EFFECTS OF UNSUBSIDIZED MILK.

"Yes, I have drunk whale's milk. A cow whale with young kem inter Deer Island a spell ago and a hull party of us tried it jest tew say we had. I was took with a spell that night, and when I was done beavin' ye'd never a known me. The milk was the richest, sweetest creamy stuff ye ever see; good for infant whales, I reckon, but no use ter me if I was starvin'." I have been asked a dozen times by these doctors tew explain my feelin's, and I ain't ever been able tew do it justice. I seems I was seasek on my port side and had a master colic tew starboard, and they was a changin' sides every minute and gittin' mixed. I never think o' the stuff without fallin' from grace.

"I sell a heap of tinkers tew the factory," continued the old deacon, yanking savagely at a desicated sculpin that had been entangled in the net, "but mackerel is gone daown. I hev seen the time when the hull bay was so chock full that the fish'd be pushed aout of the water as ye pulled along. Why," and here he peered around at his listeners as if to gauge their limit. "I was settin' in my bote off Nigger Island one day last August fishin', when I heard a kind o' rushin' sound, and lookin' up I see a black mass o' fish comin' intew the bay, hoppin' and jumpin' jest like they was tryin' to git aout o' the wet. First I knowed, a No. 1, extry, kept intew my lap, another landed on my head and intew the bote they kem, two or three at a time, so I hauled in my jib and commenced to clean 'em. But they kept knockin' agin my hands and kem faster, and about ten minutes the bot was half full and they comin' wuss and wuss. I began tew git scart, so I hauled in the killick, but it got aout in the kelp and fish, and afore I got her clear the bote was full tew the ears, and by the time I got it up the seats was buried aout o' sight, and lookin' round I see her chock tew the gunwales and the fish slidin' overboard, and the next minute she settled never see her since."

"But how did you get ashore?" asked an incredulous listener.

"Why," said the old man, "the bay was solid. I walked ashore on the fish."—[Cor. Philadelphia Times.]

AT THE DOME OF THE CAPITOL.

An unknown man, evidently a stranger and a very daring one, performed a feat one noon recently at Washington which chilled the blood of every one who witnessed it. He ascended to the dome of the Capitol, and, producing a pair of opera-glasses, mounted the railing surrounding the dizzy-highlyed platform hundreds of feet above the ground, and walked deliberately around the narrow footing viewing the city and surrounding country through his glasses. Several persons in the parks below, who witnessed the man spider outlined against the sky like a speck almost in the clouds, rushed in and told Capt. Albaugh, of the Capitol police force, and he immediately dispatched an officer to the dome with instructions to bring the fool-hardy man down. The officer, upon reaching the top, commanded the stranger to get down. The command was obeyed by the aralist, who remarked in a cool manner: "Why, that's nothing; I am used to that sort of business." He refused to give his name, and descended in company with the officer. The dome top is nearly 400 feet from the ground, and to even look down from behind the railings would make the average mortal quite dizzy.—[Louisville Courier-Journal.]

It was a Detroit girl who married at 15 so as to have her golden wedding come when it would do her some good.

STORIES ABOUT ANIMALS.

A HORSE AS A PAPER CARRIER. Anderson Dudson has delivered a route of newspapers through Pleasant Plains, S. I., every morning for twelve years past, and drives a thoroughbred Indian mustang. Three weeks ago Mr. Dudson was taken ill, and sent word to his customers that the horse would come around as usual, and asking the customers if they would go out and take the papers from the bundle in the horse's pack-saddle. Every morning the mustang goes alone over the route, and in three weeks has only missed two of the fifty-four places his master usually supplied.—[New York World.]

EXCITING WHALE HUNT IN SHELTER. At West Voe, Durnrossness, on September 20th, early in the morning, a number of six-oared boats were proceeding to the fishing when they observed a shoal of whales (twenty-eight in number) sporting themselves close to Summerville Head. They immediately gave chase, and succeeded in driving them all ashore. The scene of slaughter was wild in the extreme. Along the head of the Voe were spread the whales, lashing the water into foam in their death struggles, while in the midst of the blood and foam the men, wading waist deep in the water, were going from fish to fish and plunging lances into the monstrous sides. One big fellow, managing to get his head to seaward, went away at a great rate, sometimes below and sometimes on the surface; but he had been wounded mortally, and he was easily brought ashore again.—[Pall Mall Gazette.]

A CAT'S SUICIDE. A well authenticated case of feline suicide occurred at Trumbull one day last week. Early in the week it was noticed by her friends that pussy was not herself. She moped and refused to eat, passed her nearest and dearest without recognition, and manifested a strange persistence in getting into the sink, tubs and bath-tub, from which she would not be driven, even when the water was turned on. One day she was observed to stalk solemnly down to the wharf, when arrived, to gaze long and earnestly into the water. The soldiers watched her closely, but were not prepared for the result. After a while the kitten returned to her accustomed haunts, moped around, mewed nothing to nobody, and kept about until the next day, when she again walked down to the wharf, deliberately leaped overboard, and committed suicide before the eyes of the astonished garrison.—[New London Day.]

A CAT WORTH HAVING. A remarkable cat story is afloat in Somerville. The family which owns the cat have lately put in a new refrigerator. It is a monster in size and has a spring lock. The servant, while washing the refrigerator the other day, had occasion to get inside. Soon after getting in the wind blew the door to and the spring lock instantly fastened. The mistress was up several flights of stairs, and the servant yelled hoarse in trying to make her hear, but could not. The servant was terribly afraid of being suffocated. She tried and tried, but could not open the door anyway. The cat beside the kitchen stove left her kittens and rushed up-stairs, mewing as loudly as she could. The lady left her work and followed the cat down-stairs, wondering what had happened to the kittens. Putting her paws up to the refrigerator door pussy mewed louder than ever. It was opened. Out came Mary, half suffocated, half frightened to death. She swears that the cat saved her life. When she mews now she is listened to as one of the children. The cat is said to have had quite a reputation for intelligence before.—[Boston Globe.]

A CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA WILD CAT. Early on Friday morning last Mr. Hackett, Pennsylvania Railroad Agent at Derry Station, and L. S. Van Dyke, of the same place, started on a squirrel hunt. When about two miles and a half from the village, in the woods, and while they were walking along a road they heard a great commotion in the bushes. Mr. Hackett cautioned his companion to maintain silence, and the two men awaited developments. Presently they observed an animal almost as large as a tiger coming toward them with apparent bloodthirsty purposes. Mr. Hackett promptly greeted the dangerous-looking foe with a load from his gun. The animal received the charge, howled with pain, sprang toward the gunners with terrible violence, but dropped dead in the roadway within two feet of them. An examination proved it to be a cat amount, an animal noted for its cunning and tenacity as well as its ferocity. It measured thirty-seven inches from tip to tip and was twelve inches high. The carcass was skinned and prepared for stuffing.—[Johnston (Penn.) Tribune.]

SNAKES IN NEBRASKA. According to science the number of snakes killed near Falls City, Neb., during the late overflow of the Nebraskan river is almost beyond belief. They were driven by the water from the bottom lands to the higher grounds, and especially to the embankments thrown up for railroads. It is estimated that more than three thousand snakes were killed within a mile of this town. They were chiefly garter snakes, but water moccasins, blue racers and rattlesnakes were also killed. A house was confined in a pasture surrounded by a wire fence in the overflowed district, and when released it was found that several snakes had taken refuge in his name. Since my residence here I have trapped nearly all over this county, yet up to the time of the overflow last June, I had failed to see half a dozen snakes all told. The overflowed district along the Nebraskan would not average over a mile in width, and it is astonishing when so many snakes found hiding places. Nearly all the snakes in this country are confined to the creek and river bottoms.