

THE MAGIC TREE.

A True Story Illustrating the Great Intelligence of Bees.

On a certain plantation, which it will be well not to locate, there was a very large, hollow orange tree which, according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, had never borne any fruit, although it blossomed regularly every spring. After blossoming the blossoms would all gradually disappear and a small orifice on the end of the twig would be all that was left for the balance of the year. This went on for a great many years, until one day the place was sold to a man from the North, who determined to cut down the tree and solve the mystery if possible. He accordingly cut the tree cut down, and instead of finding a solid trunk he found nothing but a large outside shell of a tree, while the inside was perfectly hollow, and was occupied by a large family of squirrels and a colony of bees. The bees and squirrels were very light in color and did not appear to have any eyes, and the oranges were elongated instead of round, although very sweet tasting, and otherwise appeared to be excellent fruit. The man was puzzled to account for the phenomenon, as there was no opening in the tree by which even the bees could get inside it, but the mystery was explained by an old colored man, who had been on the place many, many years. He told the following story:

When the orange tree was very small it was found to be growing hollow, and after it got to be about a foot thick the hole near the center of the trunk was made larger and a limb grafted into it; the tree then died, apparently, but had never borne fruit. It is thought that the bees and squirrels had gotten into the tree and made it their home, and when the limb was grafted in their means of egress were stopped up and they made prisoners. As bees are known to be very industrious the following will readily be believed: The bees would go out to the end of the twigs, which were also hollow, every spring and pull the blossoms inside, and thus get the honey by turning the flowers inside out, the oranges would then grow inside, and the twigs being small account for the elongated shape of the fruit; the bees would live on the honey and the squirrels on the fruit, and thus a colony of each was established, and lived in comfort and plenty on the inside of the orange tree.

WHY THEY RACE SLOW.

A Dakota Conductor Gives Some New Points on Railroad Financing.

A man was one day making a trip on a "mixed train" on a Dakota road, says Texas *Sitting*. Passage on these trains is never taken except for journeys of considerable length: walking is as easy and much faster for short distances. On this occasion the movement was even more deliberate than usual, and the passenger called the conductor to his seat and said:

"Isn't this motion pretty slow?"

"Well, we ain't flying, I'll admit."

"Sure every thing is all right!"

"I think so."

"Wheels all greased!"

"Yes, I greased them myself."

"Tires all on!"

"Yes. We run through the creek back here and soaked up the wheels so that they would stay."

"Any spokes loose?"

"No."

"You are certain the wheels are all on the rails!"

"They was when I come in."

"Couldn't be possible that any of them are off and the train dragging, could it?"

"I guess not."

"Are we going up-hill?"

"No, this is pretty muddin' level."

"Do you always run at this gait?"

"No, we generally hump along a little faster'n this."

"May I ask what is the trouble, then?"

"Certainly. We found a two-year-old steer stuck in a trestle back here, before you got on, and stopped and helped it out. You know the rules of the road are that in such cases the animal belongs to the company."

"But I don't see why that should make you run so thundering slow."

"Why, you blame fool, we're takin' that steer along to headquarters; got it tied on behind, and it ain't used to leadin' and don't walk up very well. I'm doing all I can; got the brakeman prudling it up with an umbrella, and an ear of corn tied to the bell-rope. If you think I'm goin' to start up and go howlin' along and yell the horn off, as good a steer as there is in the territory, why you're mistaken, that's all. Us train men can't expect our pay unless we bring in some stock once in awhile."

FELINE STRATEGY.

The Courage with Which the Cat Meets Her Cousins Examples.

The master of herself which a cat shows when, having been caught in a position from which there is no escape, she calmly sits down to face out the threats of a dog, is a marvelous thing, says a writer in the Boston *Transcript*. Every body has seen a kitten on the street door-step attacked by adog ten times her size, as apparently self-possessed as if she were in her mistress' lap.

"But I dare not touch me and you know it's what her position tells the dog. But she is intensely on her guard, in spite of her air of perfect content. Her legs, concealed under her, are ready for a spring; her jaws are unshut, her eyes never move for an instant from the dog; so he bounds wildly from side to side, barking with continual fury, those glittering eyes of hers follow him with the keenest scrutiny. If he plucks at his courage to grab her tail is ready; she will kill her life dearly. She is watching his chance, and she does not miss it. The dog tries frantic tactics, and withdraws a few feet, settling down upon his forepaws, growling furiously as he does so.

Just then the sound of a dog's bark in the next street attracts her eyes and ears for a moment, and when he looks back the kitten is gone! He looks down the street and starts wildly in that direction, and reaches a high board fence just as a cat's tail disappears over the top of it. He is beaten; but she showed not only more courage than he had but a great deal more generosity.

NOTES TO SHOOTERS.

About the middle of April last we observed a young lamb suspended among trees. It had seemingly struggled to the earth until it was quite exhausted. Its mother was absent, surrounded with her herd and fast to disentangle it. After having attempted to walk for a long time to effect this purpose, she left it and ran away, leaving with all her might. We fancied there was something peculiar about its voice. Then she proceeded across three fields, and through four stony hedgerows, until she came to a flock of sheep. From the flock she came to the lamb, and when we reached it she lay down beside it, and the mother lamb came to it and lay beside it. After having attempted to walk for a long time to effect this purpose, she left it and ran away, leaving with all her might. We fancied there was something peculiar about its voice.

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