SECOND SECTION

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UNDER THE OCEAN

Changes In the Sea Floor From Shore to Shore.

THE BIG MID-ATLANTIC RIDGE.

It Starts at Iceland and Bisects the Ocean Down Almost to Cape Horn. In Places It Rises Above the Surface, Forming Groups of Islands.

A sketch of the "landscape" of the ocean bed is given by Dr. A. E. Shipley in an article in the Edinburgh Review:

"The passengers and the crew of a liner racing over the surface of the Atlantic are apt to imagine that under them is a vast layer of water of varying depth sparsely inhabited by a few fish. As a matter of fact, the whole of this great ocean is teeming with life. If instead of taking ship we could take to the water and walk across the bed of the Atlantic to America, starting from the shores of western Europe, we should in effect be traveling through a succession of new countries. Not only would the surrounding physical conditions vary as we advanced, but the animal and plant life would vary in correlation with the altering physical conditions.

"Walking farther and farther toward the depths of the Atlantic, we should soon lose all sight of the algae, and the shallow water fish—the plaice and sole, whiting, skates, dogfish and others and cod—would give way to the megrim and the hake. The sea floor would gradually change from rock or gravel or stones to sands and ultimately to mud or oozes of various tints, their original colors often modified by the action of the decomposition of organic particles in them and on them. All these finer deposits are derived from the neighboring land and are blown seaward by offshore winds or washed down by rains and streams and carried out to the sea by rivers.

"The distance to which fine matter in suspension may be carried is very great. The Kongo is said to carry its characteristic mud as far out to sea as 600 miles, and the Ganges and the Indus as far as 1,000 miles.

"Except in the neighborhood of such great rivers a subaqueous traveler would soon pass beyond what Sir John Murray has called the 'mud line,' a line that limits the terrigenous deposits everywhere surrounding dry land. Having reached this limit, we must proceed warily, for at the mud line, at an average depth of a hundred fathoms, we shall find ourselves at the edge of the continental shelf, that rim which extends seaward to a varying distance from all land areas, the rim on which Great Britain rests. Beyond lies the continental slope, a precipice more or less abrupt and more or less high, descending by steep declines or terraced cliffs until depths of 2,000 fathoms are reached.

"The Atlantic, compared with the other great oceans, has an unusually large area of comparatively shallow water. Of its total area 27.5 per cent is covered by water less than 1,000 fathoms deep; 18 per cent lies between 1,000 and 2,000 fathoms and 47 per cent between 2,000 and 3,000 fathoms; the remaining 7.5 per cent is still deeper.

"At the foot of the continental slope lies an illimitable plain of a uniform dull, grayish buff color, flat and featureless as the desert, and only diversified by an occasional as yet uncovered rock or wreck or the straight line of a recently laid cable. This plain continues with scarcely a change in scenery or in level until we approach the great mid-Atlantic ridge. As Bruce has shown, this ridge, which roughly bisects the Atlantic, extends from Iceland as far south as fifty-three degrees of south latitude, with a slight and quite inexplicable break just under the equator. The ridge runs almost parallel with the eastern contour of North and South America, which, in turn, as the ordinary map will show, roughly corresponds with the western contour of Europe and Africa. From time to time the ridge rises above the surface of the water, as in the Azores group, St. Paul's rocks, Ascension, Tristan da Cunha and Gough island.

"Having ascended the eastern and descended the western slope of this mid-Atlantic ridge, we should again traverse plains of grayish ooze far more extensive than any level land tract known to geographers, and as we approached the American coast we should gradually pass through, in reverse order, the zones of life traversed when leaving Europe. On the eastern coast of America the slope is much more gradual than on the western coast of southern Europe and Africa."

Told the Truth.

A few days after the new farmer had purchased a horse from a thrifty Scot he returned in an angry mood. "You told me this horse had won half a dozen matches against some of the best horses in the country. He can't trot a mile in six minutes to save himself. You lied to me!" he denounced.

"I didna lie. It was in plowin' matches he took sax prizes," calmly replied Sandy.

As She Saw It.

The Mother—If you grow up to be polite, my dear, and have good taste in dress and marry discreetly I shall be perfectly satisfied. The Daughter (aged twelve)—Then I don't need an education! Isn't that lovely!—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Tears in mortal miseries are vain.—Homer.

SERVANTS OF ROYALTY.

In England They Are Supplied by a Regular Employment Agency.

Even royal palaces have their servant problems. The general opinion seems to be that the servants who attend upon kings and queens are of a race apart, but such is not the impression given by a remarkably frank interview given in London by a registry agent who has frequently had dealings with Buckingham palace.

"We are held responsible for the people we send to the royal household," he said, "and we send no one who has not lived in good houses and has had at least two years' 'character.'

"Only British servants are engaged. The men must be between twenty-two and twenty-eight years old, and the women between eighteen and twenty-two.

"The wages are no better, to begin with, than in other households, but there are better allowances—in liveries and in plain clothes. There is the chance, too, of promotion to something better.

"A head housemaid might get $250 a year, and of course there is a pension for every servant who has served a certain number of years.

"Ten years is generally considered the minimum time for a pension, but when a case of misfortune occurs an application is made to the king, who approves a special grant.

"The servants have plenty of work to do in the palace, but ample leisure and very good quarters and living. The maids are required to dress alike—in the same colored prints. The state porters and marshal men are engaged directly by the king on warrant.

"The ordinary household servants are resident, with the exception of a personal housemaid, who travels with the royal family."—New York Press.

ONE AND ONE MAKE TWO?

Not Always, by Any Means, According to Sir Oliver Lodge.

Sir Oliver Lodge has attracted a tremendous amount of attention by telling scientists (of whom he is one) that he believes in immortality in spite of science. This is not the first time he has locked horns with scientific dogma. In his book, "Modern Problems," he affirms that one and one do not always make two. And this is the "almost frivolous" way he makes his point:

"I would contend that, whereas the proposition that one added to one makes two is abstractedly beneath controversy, it need not be true for the addition of concrete things. It is not true for two globules of mercury, for instance, nor for a couple of colliding stars; not true for a pint of water added to a pint of oil or vitriol, nor for nitric oxide added to oxygen, nor for the ingredients of an explosive mixture; not necessarily true, either, for snakes in a cage, or for capital invested in a business concern, flourishing or otherwise, nor is it true, save in a temporary manner, for a couple of trout added to a pond. Life can make havoc of arithmetic.

"The moral of all which is that propositions can be clear and simple and sure enough, indeed absolutely certain, as long as you deal with abstractions, but that when you come to concrete realities and have all the complexities of the universe behind you—not only behind but in front and among and intermingled with every simplest thing—then we perforce step out of the realm of positive dogmatic security into the region of reasonable and probable inference, the domain of pragmatic conviction, of commonplace intuition, of familiar faith."

Took a Mean Advantage.

Returning from South America, a New York man vouches for the ingenuity of the city officials in Rio de Janerio. The householders on a certain street received notices that the city fathers had heard complaints of the high tax rates along that particular thoroughfare, and in order that justice might be done the residents were asked to submit their own valuation on their property. When the prompt and joyful responses had all been received the lots were condemned and bought for a contemplated public improvement.—New York Tribune.

Grandest of All.

"What is the grandest thing in the universe?" asks Victor Hugo. "A storm at sea," he answers and continues: "And what is grander than a storm at sea?" "The unclouded heavens on a starry, moonless night." "And what is grander than these midnight skies?" "The soul of man"—a spectacular climax such as Hugo loved and still, with all its dramatic effects, the picturesque statement of a vast and sublime and mighty truth.

Unfortunate.

"What are you crying for, Peper1?"

"Because I am so unfortunate."

"How do you mean unfortunate?"

"The teacher told us that there were 1,500,000,000 people in the world, and he said I was the most stupid of them all."—Fliegende Blatter.

Put Out.

"I saw Jinks just now, and he seemed much put out."

"He is. His landlord is just after dispossessing him."—Judge.

Beyond Hope.

Louise—Troubled with loss of appetite, isn't she? Julia—She doesn't even want to eat the things that the doctors forbid—Life.

Many of the misfortunes of life, like hyenas, flee if you courageously meet them.

PONDEROUS SEA ELEPHANTS.

They Have Two Foot Trunks and Flippers Tipped With Claws.

That which is believed to be the last herd of sea elephants known to exist is to be found at Guadalupe island, off the west coast of Mexico. In the herd there are now only about thirty specimens.

The sea elephant is an important link in the chain of evolution and is the largest of all fin footed animals. The adult male is about twenty-two feet in length and is about eight feet high when propped up on his front flippers in a natural position. These great bulls weigh from two to three tons and have a trunk, or proboscis, which, when relaxed, hangs down over the mouth about two feet. In the end of this the nostrils are placed rather wide apart, and when they breathe their whole mass trembles in tiny undulations to the very end.

The flippers are thick and tipped with heavy claws. There is a tail about one foot and a half long, separated horizontally in two divisions. This tail acts as a propeller, to resist the huge creature when he comes in through the breakers. He hoists his back flippers and tail so as to catch the full sweep of the waves, and then allows himself to be washed up on the beach.

Coarse, bristly hair grows sparsely from the back along the body, and a tough protecting crust of flesh reaches like a shield from the lower jaw down over the chest and round to the back of the neck. This biblike affair is nature's provision for protection in time of battle. The male fights viciously in the mating season, and the chest protector prevents much loss of life.

Sea elephants live on various kinds of small fish and use the trunk to seize them with. Afterward the food is transferred to the mouth precisely as elephants manage it.

EGGS BY THE YARD.

Korea Also Produces Oysters That Weigh Ten Pounds Each.

While in the orient a correspondent had occasion to call on friends who lived near Seoul, the principal city of Korea. He tells the following story:

One morning my hostess, while giving orders for the necessary things from the market for the day, mentioned four yards of eggs. I accompanied the steward that day on his marketing trip, and when the eggs were asked for the grocer reached down in a barrel and brought out the end of a large straw rope. He measured off the required length on the counter, just as a dry goods store clerk would measure off cloth, rolled it up and put it in the basket without a smile. The eggs were inside of this hollow straw rope, with a string tied on the outside of it between each egg. This effectually protected the eggs from being broken while handling.

Another day my hostess ordered two "small" oysters for dinner. This order caused me to wonder a little, for I knew that there would be seven to dine, besides the servants, but when the oysters arrived all was explained, for one weighed four and a half pounds, and the other five pounds. On inquiry I was informed that some of the oysters on the northern side of Korea weigh as much as ten pounds.—Christian Science Monitor.

Bathing and Bellowing.

Primitive man boiled his water with hot stones. That was not the only use he made of them, at any rate, if he was a Scythian. The Scythian practice described by Herodotus has been claimed by some as the first recorded case of smoking. Having spoken of a kind of hemp that grew in the country, Herodotus proceeds: "Now, the Scythians, taking the seed of this hemp, go into their tents and then throw the seed upon the stones heated white hot. As it is thrown on it is burnt into smoke, producing so much that no Greek vapor bath could surpass it. And the Scythians, delighting in it, bellow. This takes the place of washing for them." It seems as though they had discovered the Turkish bath and the cigarette.

The Widow's Dower.

It is certain that "dower," the estate for life which the widow acquires at her husband's death, was not known among the early Saxons. In the laws of King Edmund the widow is directed to be supported wholly out of the personal estate. Dower is generally ascribed to the Normans, but it was first introduced into the feudal system by Emperor Frederick II., who was contemporary with the English Henry III., about 1250.

The Usual Way.

"It would never do for the farmers to get into the financial business of the nation."

"Why not?"

"From force of habit they would always be waiting to water their stock."—Baltimore American.

Home Finance.

"Wombat, loan me $5. It's for an investment you are interested in."

"What investment of yours am I interested in?"

"My daughter wants to buy a birthday present for your son."—Pittsburgh Post.

SuperRuous.

Tommy—Pop, what do we mean by superfluous? Tommy's Pop—Superfluous, my son, means—well, it's like a bachelor giving advice to a married man.—Philadelphia Record.

LONG TIME FARM LOANS.

Simple and Easy Credit System That Operates In Europe.

The standard length of time in Europe for a long time farm loan is fifty-four years. For such a loan at the present time the rate is 4.85 per cent divided as follows: Interest 4 per cent, administration .35 per cent and amortization (payment on principal) .50 per cent. This rate will pay both principal and interest and repay all charges due to the bank in fifty-four years. As this will seem almost incredible to some students, I will give a concrete illustration of how it works. It does not depend upon compound interest, but upon the fact that, though the rate of yearly payment remains the same, the charge for interest and administration is constantly decreasing because they are computed on the principal sum which is constantly being repaid; therefore the proportion which is applied toward the repayment of the principal is always increasing.

For illustration, if the debt is $1,000 the debtor will pay $25.25 every six months. Of the first payment, $20 will go for interest, $1.75 belongs to the bank, and $2.50 is applied to the repayment of the principal. When the debt is half discharged, however, this distribution will be greatly changed. The borrower will pay $25.25, as usual. Of this amount only $10 will go for interest, 88 cents will be retained by the bank, while $13.37 will be applied to the discharge of the principal. The final payment will be almost wholly to the payment of principal, as the first one went largely to the payment of interest. In this way one-half of 1 per cent will repay the principal in fifty-four years, provided a constant payment is maintained on the principal for interest during the entire period.—Representative Ralph W. Moss in World's Work.

ORIGIN OF THE HARP.

Evolved From the Lyre of the High Priest of Osiris.

The history of the piano counts as a day compared to the harp. We have authentic records that as early as 1800 B. C. the first lyre was evolved from the mind of the high priest of Osiris, who in one of his daily walks along the banks of the river Nile found an empty tortoise shell spanned with dried ligaments. Happening to strike it, he noticed that it gave forth pleasing sounds, and he at once made an instrument on the plan of the tortoise shell.

From the lyre it was but an easy step to the harp, now the most famous instrument in the world. Milesius, one of the Phoenician priests, carried it with him in his conquest to Ireland and there he planted it among the music loving Celts in 1260 B. C. The royal instrument became a controlling feature in druidical worship, and the harpist or bard ranked with royalty, the prophet and the priest. The druids advanced the harp from eleven to thirty-two strings and crowned their efforts in its improvement by the evolution of the pillar, which has ever since found universal adoption.

Our modern harp consists of forty-five or forty-seven strings, seven pedals—one for each note in the octave—and the wonderful instrument shares with the piano and organ the faculty of being autonomous—that is to say, it needs no accompaniment and furnishes both melody and harmony.—Miss Loretta De Lone in New York Tribune.

Two Ideas.

Uri, a candidate for congress, said to Jonathan, another, during a heated debate: "I think, sir, you have but one idea in your head. It is a very small one, and if it should swell your head would burst."

Jonathan, looking at the bare and venerable head of his opponent, replied: "Well, I think you haven't one in your head and never had. There has been one scratching around the outside, trying to get in, till it has scratched all the hair off your head. But it didn't get in, and it never will." Uri was silent.—Chicago News.

Hindu Confectionery.

Like the American girls, Hindu girls are passionately fond of sweet things. One of their candies, sadu, is very much like our plain sugar candy. It is made of sugar and milk and flavored with attar of roses. Buddhikabal, or hair of Buddha, is one of their most popular sweetmeats. It is so called because it is in fine, long strings like vermicelli. This is made of sugar and cream from buffalo's milk, which is exceedingly rich.

Earth and Moon.

The diameter of the earth is 8,000 miles. The diameter of the moon is 2,162 miles. The nearest approach of the surfaces of the two bodies is 216,477 miles. The mean distance from the earth is 238,850 miles, the maximum distance which may be reached being 252,830 miles. The moon's surface contains about 14,685,000 square miles, or nearly four times the area of Europe.

Still Sadder.

"What could be more sad than a man without a country?" feelingly asked the high school literature teacher of her class.

"A country without a man," responded a pretty girl just as feelingly.—Woman's Home Companion.

A Surgical Operation.

The customer raised his hand, and the barber, pausing in the operation of shaving him, inclined his head. "Sir?" "Give me gas," said the customer.—London Globe.

MOSBY FLED WITH HIS MEN.

An Attack That Wholly Demoralized the Partisan Rangers.

Colonel John S. Mosby, commander of the Partisan rangers, who gave such dashing service in the southern cause, told of an amusing incident in which he figured.

In the summer of 1864 when General Phil Sheridan was in the valley of the Shenandoah he found himself much harassed by Mosby, who was continually cutting off his supply trains. An army cannot fight on an empty stomach, and Mosby knew it. One bright morning Mosby heard that a long supply train was winding its way down the valley. By noon the rangers in their gray uniforms were gathered at the forks of the valley pike, watching for the head of the wagon train to appear.

Presently a cloud of dust was seen rising far up the road, and as the wind blew it aside the Confederates caught sight of a line of men in blue escorting a caravan of lumbering wagons drawn by mules. Instantly Mosby gave the order to run a little howitzer up on the side of a hill and unlimber it. As soon as the gun had opened fire the rest of the men were to make a cavalry charge and throw the train into confusion.

The rangers jerked the gun into position and began to swab it out. Suddenly the man with the swab gave a shrill yell, seized the seat of his pantaloons and fled down the hill and out into the road. Almost in the same moment the other man at the gun abandoned it. He seemed to be fighting at the air as he disappeared over a stone wall.

The sutler's wagons were creeping nearer, and Mosby did not know what to think of such extraordinary conduct. He ordered four more men to the gun, but hardly had they reached it when they, too, yelled, began to beat the air madly with their hats and took to flight.

Spurring his horse over the stone wall, Mosby rode toward the gun, but his stay was short. The howitzer stood just over a hornets' nest, and those busy insects were resenting the intrusion. They had repelled the invaders on foot, and now they swarmed on Mosby's horse till the maddened animal tore off down the pike on a run. Then they turned their attention to the rest of the troop.

Their attack was so vicious that the rangers gave up any idea of standing by the gun. They scattered far and wide, and it was an hour before they returned. When they did the wagon train had safely vanished in the distance. So the hornets saved the day for Sheridan.—Youth's Companion.

Where Science Fails.

Science has wrought many achievements, but it has not cleared up a single elemental mystery, and it has created a thousand lesser mysteries that never were imagined until science came. Science has demonstrated that this oak of a world used to be an acorn, but how that acorn came into existence or whence it obtained the latent elements that now have become an oak science has not suggested. Science has made it possible for a manufacturer to cut down three trees in his forest at 7:35 in the morning, to have them made into paper at 9:34 and to have them selling on the street as newspapers at 10:25, but whether the manufacturer himself is a brain that has a mind or is a mind that has a brain science cannot even guess.—Atlantic Monthly.

Iron Mold Stains.

Iron mold stains spread in any fabric they come in contact with in the wash. To remove them stretch the stained part over a basin nearly full of boiling water, so that the steam may penetrate the fabric, and apply with a feather a teaspoonful of salt dissolved in a dessertspoonful of lemon juice. When the marks disappear dip the material well into the hot water, afterward rinsing very thoroughly in cold water.

Proved It Was Simple.

In a registration booth in San Francisco an old colored woman had just finished registering for the first time.

"Am you shore," she asked the clerk, "dat I's done all I has to do?"

"Quite sure," replied the clerk; "you see, it's very simple."

"I's ought to knowed it," said the old woman. "If those fool men folks been doin' it all dese years I might 'a' knowed it was a powerful simple process."—Life.

He Plagued Him.

The catcher was having an argument with the umpire.

"I'll fix you so you won't be an epidemic any longer!" threatened the umpire, beginning to lose his temper.

"What do you mean by I won't be an epidemic any longer?" asked the catcher.

"I'll send you to the bench," returned the umpire, "and then you won't be ketchin'."—Pittsburg Press.

Welcomed.

"I'll have to arrest you," said the policeman.

The man who was having trouble with his wife threw both arms around the officer and exclaimed:

"This isn't any arrest. This is a rescue."—Washington Star.

A Failure.

First Small Boy—Is your sister any good at playing ball? Second Small Boy—Naw. She can't throw anything but a fit or catch anything but a bean.—New York Times.

Asia contains more than half of the people in the world.

CRAFT ON THE GRIDIRON.

When the Carlisle Indians Outwitted Harvard's Highbrows.

In football a full field run from kick-off to touchdown is a rare play. Once it was made by a Carlisle Indian, who covered the long distance in a game against Harvard, Oct. 31, 1903, and did so by the craftiest, willest stratagem ever perpetrated by a redskin upon his pale faced brother.

The first half had closed with the Indians in the lead five points to none. Harvard opened the battle by sending a long kick to Johnson on Carlisle's five yard line. The Indians quickly ran back to meet Johnson and formed a compact mass around him. Within the recesses of this mass of players Johnson slipped the ball beneath the back of Dillon's jersey, which had been especially made to receive and hold the ball. Then, the ball thus secretly transferred and hidden, Johnson uttered a whoop such as Cambridge had not heard since the days of King Philip's war, and instantly the bunch of Indians scattered in all directions. Some ran to the right and some to the left, some obliquely and some straight up the center of the field, radiating in all directions like the spokes of a wheel.

The crimson players, now upon them, looked in vain for the ball, dumfounded, running from one opponent to another. Meanwhile Dillon was running straight down the field so as to give his opponents the least opportunity for a side or rear view and conspicuously swinging his arms to show that they did not hold the ball. Thus, without being detected, he passed through the entire Harvard team, excepting the captain, Carl B. Marshall, who was covering the deep backfield.

Obeying instructions, Dillon ran straight at Marshall. The latter, assuming that the Indian intended to block him, agilely sidestepped the Carlisle player, and as he did so he caught sight of the enormous and unwonted bulge on the back of Dillon. Instantly divining that here was the lost ball, Marshall turned and sprang at Dillon, but the latter was well on his way and quickly crossed the line for a touchdown.—Parke H. Davis in St. Nicholas.

LARGEST KNOWN ICE CAVE.

Wonders of the Frozen Grotto In the Dachstein Mountains.

A few years ago some members of the Austrian Speleological society discovered in the Dachstein mountains some caverns which are among the largest in Europe. One of these grottoes, the longitudinal axis of which is fully 6,500 feet long, moreover turned out to offer additional interest by its truly enormous ice masses and was found to be the largest known ice cave in the world.

Though a scorching sun may be burning outside on the bare mountain rock, there is always an icy wind blowing through this underworld, freezing everything within its reach. Only sometimes, when the outside temperature ranges between 32 and 41 degrees C. and a comparatively warm rain penetrates through the fissures of the rock, entering right into the cavern, will there be a temporary calm and distinct melting of the ice.

The Dachstein ice cave comprises several domes filled with ice, which communicate with one another through a number of frozen galleries. An ice crevice 89 feet deep and 116 feet in width traverses the floor of the cavern 165 feet from the entrance. Gigantic ice pillars were found to tower on both edges of this chasm, in the depth of which there unfolds a fairy-like ice scenery. Beyond the abyss the cavern widens out into a mighty dome (Tristan dome, as it is called), where a plain ice sheet reaches from one wall to the other, carrying ice stalagmites of the most fantastic shapes.—Scientific American.

A Hopeless Job.

Gordon Le Sueur in his book on South Africa tells an excellent story about Cecil Rhodes.

Rhodes was very careless in the matter of dress. On one occasion an old and favorite coat of his was sent to be cleaned and mended. Soon after it came back just as it had been sent, together with this note from the cleaners:

"Dear Sir—Herewith the Right Hon. C. J. Rhodes' coat, uncleaned and unmended. We regret that all we can do with the garment is to make a new coat to match the buttons."

Wanted the Solids.

Tommy went out to dine at a friend's house one evening. When the soup was brought Tommy did not touch his, and the hostess, looking over, said:

"Why, Tommy, dear, what's the matter? Aren't you hungry tonight?"

"Yes," replied Tommy, "I'm quite hungry, but I'm not thirsty."—Judge.

Subtle Scheme.

First Jeweler—Aren't you afraid to leave those diamonds in a front window at night? Second Jeweler—Not with my scheme. Just before I go home I put in a little sign on them reading, "Anything In This Window 10 Cents."—Chicago News.

Verbal Brand.

"How do you manage to keep such a clean record with so many of your cranky relations?"

"Just use soft soap."—Baltimore American.

Be Slow to Throw.

After a man has thrown a rock he nine times out of ten wishes he had it back in his hand.—Philadelphia Ledger.

BAFFLED THE BEAR

Exciting Domestic Event In the Early Days of Vermont.

TALE OF AN ALL NIGHT SIEGE.

An Ugly Visitor That Gave Herself a Warm Reception In a Settler's Cabin, a Quick Retreat by the Inmates and a Display of Presence of Mind.

Two of the first English settlers in the town of Addison, Vt., were John Strong and Zadok Everest. Early in the fall of 1776 Strong and Everest had to go to Albany for provisions. Pioneer women seldom worried, but for some reason Molly Strong felt uneasy after her husband had gone. She and her sons got in a good supply of fuel and did the chores early.

When they came back to the cabin the baby was crying for his supper, and Mrs. Strong gave him a cup of warm milk and sat him down in front of the fireplace. She had just swung the kettle of samp from the fire when she heard a noise. Looking round, she saw the blanket that served for a door swing aside as a great bear thrust her head into the room. The children screamed, and the bear backed out in haste, but Molly Strong knew that she would return.

"Quick, children!" she said as she caught up the baby. "Climb the ladder. Let sister go up first, now Johnnie, now Frank—hurry, hurry!"

When the others were safe in the loft Mrs. Strong climbed up with the baby and drew the ladder after her. She laid it across the hole, and then she and the children sat down and waited. The floor of the loft was made of round poles laid closely together, but not fastened. It was dangerous to move about on it.

Peering down through the pole floor, they listened and watched for the bear to come back. They could hear her moving round the house, and once a big paw crashed through the oiled paper at the window hole. Finally she came to the door and, after blinking uncertainly at the fire, walked in. Two cubs followed her. The old bear presently upset the pan of milk on the table, and the cubs began to lap it up eagerly.

"I'd like a taste of that myself," Frank whispered.

"So would I," Johnnie replied. "I'm awful hungry."

Next, the bear found the pudding kettle and took a mouthful of the boiling samp. Jumping back with a cry of pain and rage, she broke the pot with a swift blow of her paw, and then sat up on her haunches, growling and whining, and began to dig the pudding out of her mouth. The cubs sat and watched her in grave wonder.

That was too much for the children, who burst into laughter. Instantly the bear gave a loud roar and rushed toward the hole with the ladder across it. Mrs. Strong gave hurried orders:

"Get me a pole, Frank, quick! Now, get another. Punch her if she tries to climb up. Be careful. Don't fall through."

The baby, awakened by the noise, began to wail, and Mrs. Strong soothed him with one hand while with the pole in the other she warded off the bear. The little girl clung crying to her mother's skirts, but the boys each had a long pole and prodded the bear through the rungs of the ladder. The big brute finally shuffled off toward the door. She pulled down the blanket and tore it into shreds; then she went out, followed by her cubs.

"She's gone!" Johnnie said. "Do you think she'll come back, mother?"

"I expect she will, son, but we can manage her—if we keep awake."

"I won't go to sleep!" groaned Johnnie. "I'm too hungry!"

Nevertheless, the silent wait in the dimly lighted loft made them all drowsy, and before the bear returned Mrs. Strong knew by their heavy breathing that the children were asleep. It was near midnight when the bear came in and renewed her efforts to reach the loft. Mrs. Strong rapped her sharply with her pole, and there was a roar that brought the boys to their feet.

Dazed and only half awake, Johnnie ran across the loft. His foot slipped into a gap between the poles, and as he fell other poles spread apart. Down he went into the room with the bear and her cubs. The bear did not see him fall, but she faced about at the noise and started toward him.

Quick as a flash, Mrs. Strong brought her pole down on the nearest cub and pinned him to the floor. The bear turned to rescue her squealing offspring, and Frank drew his brother up into the loft unharmed.

No injury to herself could have weakened the old bear's courage like the attack on her cub, and although at intervals she slouched in and out of the cabin, she made no further attempt to reach the loft. As it grew light, Mrs. Strong, watching through the chinks in the wall, saw her lead her cubs across the clearing into the woods.

As soon as she thought it safe she lowered the ladder and the family came down. They saw no more of the bear, and when Mr. Strong came home he made the cabin secure with a door made from basswood slabs and hung on wooden hinges.—Youth's Companion.

Beware of the man who does not return your blow. He neither forgives you nor allows you to forgive yourself.—George Bernard Shaw.