

Gossip of the Backwoods

BY ALVIN HORTON.

If you had been with me a few afternoons ago, you would have stood on a high hill and overlooked the quaint land of Egypt that began at your very feet. You would have been entranced by the view. Egypt rose in all the beauty which goes with deep forest, large pastures, and a thousand other suggestions of the proverbial milk and honey—Egypt known wherever Yancey's name is spoken—this Egypt even which for almost half a century has been infamous as a place of criminals who painted its flowers with innocent blood and scorched its pastures with bullets hunting always, and finding sometimes, the ubiquitous deputy marshal. Perhaps you would have been shuddered, as I did, at the hundred and one dark deeds which, rumor says, were done thereabout within a decade; but the quietude which prevailed therein at the precise moment you looked thereon, would have been a most striking contrast to the crowded pastures of the mill, the store, the church, the school house, and the noisy creek, which were the centre thereof, suggested that Egypt had climbed so far into respectability as now to be actually prosaic. Then you would have gone down, as I did.

But Egypt, as one finds on closer examination, is scarcely ordinary yet. Its very finger prints alone are evidence to prove that the Egyptian, whose past has caused him to be wondered at considerably, has not evolved into a commonplace individual whose present gives the lie to his history. His home is a modest cottage standing in the centre of an orchard at the foot of a mountain, but in the most diverse place upon the mountain itself, and one sees here and there faint traces of a crop which he has raised, where rabbits starved, and wolves couldn't travel. Boys and we lasses play among the cliffs, while youths and big lasses paddle down the precipitous cane river and shoot through roughs that would have staggered the expert marksman that ever shot a northern rapt. Nor is Egypt just thimble populated with these extraordinary folk. The mountain sides are all covered of course with the seemingly innocuous homes, and not infrequently does the traveler descry a cloud of smoke hovering over a blue mountain-top and thus giving evidence that, like the systems expounded by astronomers, the settlements of Egypt are never-ending—every peak is claimed to be actually so that their world is yet unmeasured.

Once upon a time this vast stretch was active only in the manufacture of fiery whiskey which made trouble in all of Yancey and part of Tennessee, Shelton Laurel and Egypt being near neighbors, their people became friendly enough to fight together against any enemy threatening the prosperity of either, and, as the Bald separates the two, they were actually in a position easy for the bad fellows to jump out of reach of those penalties overtaking ordinary mortals. The Sheltons, Nortons, and Hensleys of these, fought the Sheltons, Nortons and Hensleys of the other side. Start in the State. They fought too just for the love of conflict, so that men fell in the mountains like quail before trained hunters. If Kentucky had a worse name, it was because Kentucky's deeds were more to be feared than the deeds of the skirmishes in these parts were known only by relatives who buried their dead and said nothing that the world ever heard. So much, however, leaked out that the wary public knew not to meddle in the affairs of those blood-thirsty fellows, and in consequence they fought for years and years before people in the settlements adjoining had ascertained the full import of the tiny war carried on. Those outsiders, ordinary mortals of course, were astounded to discover that blood had stopped flying only because all those big enough to join the battle were either crippled, or had been laid away martyrs to the wishes of a grandfather who had done a trifling in the days preceding the founding of the ill-fated Confederacy.

Eighteen years ago a traveller upon the summit of the Bald. There were perhaps twenty thirty men at work, peacefully enough. It seemed upon the well-known impassable road leading thence from the Tennessee side. Suddenly these divided, and a volley of revolver shots echoed across the grassy plain. Then everything was quiet, the traveller, who was in the moment's observation, however, succeeded to apprise him of the deadly work accomplished. Six were dead, but more wounded, no doubt fatally, and the remainder gone. That night the traveller heard from the straggling women's shouts and now and then a woman's wail, but since the people not concerned were absolutely motionless about the matter, it has not done damage resulting from the skirmish which he saw and the battle which he heard. They were lone Nortons, Sheltons, and so on, were they who fell, and those who survived, knew that the world cared but little for them, and that those adhering to them, on an almost totally slain, that those appearing could boast of no more than three grown survivors, and that though the carnage had been momentarily stopped, because of a lack of fighters, still it would take but a trifling effort to recommence a bigger storm, with a hundred or more soldiers concerned, perhaps a storm which long threatened but has never come.

Another traveller rode his Flag Pond in time to witness the approach of a battle in which the Egyptians and Laurellites had proved vastly too rashly asserted the merits of the wrong political party. Naturally said the traveller was mistaken in this, because he rode an exceptionally fine horse and sat upon a suggestive sort of saddle-bags.

"Stop that, doc," yelled a bewhiskered fellow who leaned upon a rifle. "Here's a man that needs yer attention," and the speaker pointed to a bloody form lying near by. "But I'm no doctor," ventured he upon the fine saddle-bag. "I really couldn't be of the least service to your friend." "Keeful now, doc," you and I remarked the other, handling his rifle with dangerous carelessness the while; "you're a doctor, you needn't deny it, and you may be a fien to other gang, but maybe you can be induced to take a peep at Andy Jack's troubles a ferle bit." The traveller alighting made a careful diagnosis. The man's head having been crushed horribly with a stone, the swelling doctor, after examining his scruples, seized the matted hair and pulled with all his might until the skull had resumed its customary shape. Then with the quantity of brown sugar and countless cloths he bandaged the head properly and started toward another vicinity. "Not yet, doc," called he with the sweetest dream; "thar's sum more fella's in need of your skill. Maybe ye'd

BRIDGE WHIST CHAT

Written by Mrs. E. Allen, of Milwaukee, Wis., Bridge and Whist Writer and Teacher. (All Rights Reserved.) No. 5.—The Opening Lead Against a "No Trump." Against a "No Trump" make your best defense is to lead your longest suit, hoping to find that the weak spot is the maker's hand. Any suit of five cards is better than a suit of but four, even though the four suit may be headed by higher cards. Thus with Diamonds, A. K. 3. 2. S. J. 4. C. J. 10, 7, 6, 5. The club suit should be opened. If your partner has one good club to help you, then, with the aid of your Ace and King of diamonds, you may eventually make one or two small clubs. At any rate, you can scarcely lose your Ace and King. To open the hand with diamonds would insure its being returned to you by your partner, should he gain the lead, and having played the Ace and King, hand in hand, you will never make another trick.

The science of the games lies in making tricks with small cards which do not ordinarily win. Aces and Kings generally change to lead a trick rather than a black-lead, for preference to diamonds, for if the Dealer had a very strong heart hand, he would have dealt a hand which would contain a long suit. In leading your longest suit, remember the third trick is the important one to win-for, if you are long, the third trick will usually exhaust every one save yourself, and being in the lead, you can then make your small cards. So, if you would be obliged to lose the trick, lead it for about you open it with a high card, open it fourth best. Thus, when opening from Ace, King and Queen, should you lead off with your King and Ace, you will win the third trick and unless you have a remainder without any restriction, usually either your partner's cards in your suit and if he later gains the lead he has caught which to put you in. If you open with a low card, your Ace, King and three small ones, your partner may be able to win the first trick, but if he later gains the lead he has caught which to put you in. If you open with a low card, your Ace, King and three small ones, your partner may be able to win the first trick, but if he later gains the lead he has caught which to put you in.

Should you have the Ace, King and Queen at the head of your suit, you are sure of three tricks, so lead the high card without any restriction. Usually either your partner's cards in your suit and if he later gains the lead he has caught which to put you in. If you open with a low card, your Ace, King and three small ones, your partner may be able to win the first trick, but if he later gains the lead he has caught which to put you in. If you open with a low card, your Ace, King and three small ones, your partner may be able to win the first trick, but if he later gains the lead he has caught which to put you in.

Phenomenal Increase of Wealth in the Past Twenty-Five Years. Southern Field. Last year the South, which is less than 15 per cent. of the area of the United States proper, contributed more than 25 per cent. of the country's exports. Cotton was the largest single item, but it was a staple in the long list of exports, which the South did have fair representation, not only in raw materials but in manufactured goods. The commercial growth of the South in the past twenty years has been little short of phenomenal. The figures set forth here, are taken from a speech delivered in Congress on June 20, 1906, by Representative Joseph T. Johnson, of South Carolina. From \$257,000,000 invested in capital for factories in 1880 to \$1,500,000,000 in 1905. From \$457,000,000 yearly value of products of factories to \$1,750,000,000. From \$21,000,000 capital invested in cotton mills to \$225,000,000. From \$13,000,000 annual value of cotton crop to \$480,000,000. From 225,000 bales of cotton used in Southern cotton mills to 2,163,000. From \$39,000,000 yearly lumber product to \$250,000,000. From 397,000 tons of pig iron produced to 3,100,000. From \$1,000,000 yearly value of exports abroad to \$550,000,000. From \$680,000,000 yearly value of farm products to \$1,750,000,000. From 20,600 miles of railroad to 60,000 miles. From 179,000 barrels of petroleum produced to 42,495,000. From 45 cotton oil mills to 790. From \$800,000 capital invested in cotton oil mills to \$54,600,000. From 667,000 spindles in cotton mills to 9,205,000. From 211,377 tons of phosphate mined yearly to 1,087,428. From 39,274 tons of coke produced yearly to 6,244,182. From \$3,051,000,000 assessed property valuation to \$6,679,000,000.

Sea Captain's Home on Ship's Lines. Seattle Correspondence San Francisco Call. Capt. D. J. McKenale, a well-known sea captain, has been granted a permit to build a house at Eleventh avenue and Howell street, in the fashionable Capt. Hill district, which will be fashioned after a ship. It will be the first structure of its kind built here. The house will have a typical bow and regulation stern, with rudder attached, and bowsprit. Smokestacks will be placed in place of funnels, and the roof will be like a ship's deck. The hull is to be set on a concrete foundation. The plans show it to be a typical ship on shore.

MADSTONES

Of Some Use Because Absorbent—Clay Pipe a Good One. Medical Brief. Physicians are often asked whether there really is any virtue in what are called madstones. One of them declares that these stones are of value, and that they would be of more value if these limitations were understood.

"There is no particular variety of stone or substance which may be designated exclusively as the madstone," he says. "I have seen many of them, so called, and no two were of exactly the same composition geologically considered." "Madstones act on the same principle that a blotting paper does when absorbing ink, and there is nothing that makes a better one than baked pipeclay. A new clay pipe, procurable for one cent at nearly any store where tobacco is sold, can not be excelled by any madstone, no matter how great its reputation."

"The action can be clearly demonstrated by placing a common dry red brick in contact with the margin of a puddle of water and noticing what capillary attraction will accomplish. Therefore, if he sufficient, the only necessity is for the stone to be porous and have strong adhesive and absorbent qualities. Nothing mysterious about it."

"I have seen several that appear to be concretions, either of mineral or biliary and were found in the bladder, kidney or liver of some animal—those taken from the deer supposed to be the best." "If a person is bitten by a reptile or dog supposed to be mad and the porous stone applied to the wound the blotting paper action begins, and the blood, saliva from the mouth of the animal and whatever poison these fluids contain will naturally, by capillary attraction, be absorbed by and into the substance applied, no matter what name you may give it."

"For instance, a new red brick will absorb one pint of water. After the venom has been taken into the circulation the madstone is worthless; but as the victim is usually filled with whiskey or alcohol at the same time, the stone is being used the spirits may counter act the effect of the poison." "I know of a stone which has a wide reputation and makes a good living for the family owning it. They never let it go out of their sight, and when the victim cannot be taken to the stone one member of the family can be hired to take the stone to the victim. In addition to traveling expenses they charge \$5 for the application and \$2 extra for each hour that the stone sticks."

"This stone is busy a large part of the time. Not long since the stone held to a man's leg for over 100 hours, yet the man died. His life could have been saved if dependence had not been placed entirely in the stone."

Twice Retired From Navy. Boston Herald. To be twice honorably retired from the country's service, either naval or military, comes to few men. "Capt." George C. Boerum, who celebrated his 79th birthday at Melrose only a few days ago, has had the distinction of being twice honorably retired from the navy, and even now he declares that he will not accept the verdict, but that as soon as he is able he will return to his work at the navy yard. "They want me to retire," says the captain, "but I'll be darned if I do."

NOTES AND NUMBERS

On Reading the Novels of Cooper. In my heart there is fellowship for the boy who has read the novels of Cooper. The boy may be rich or poor, cultured or common, daring or modest; but, if he is a boy of all, and has read those fictions, the indefinable something within him has been touched and aroused. An elemental heroism of his nature has been called into life. Henceforth there is kinship between him and me.

Sometimes as I walk on the streets I see a bootblack or a newsboy, his body bent curiously forward, his footsteps taken with caution and quiet, and his whole nature immersed in a guarded stealth. He is on the war-path, I know. There are enemies about him. They lurk, it may be, in any covert. But their cunning is impotent, and his well-trained faculties (none the less real because they are faithful or borrowed), are more than a match for all dangers. Sometimes a country lad, with his clothing disordered and soiled, his face transfigured with spirit, and a battered hame on his shoulder serving as a fatal rifle, marches boldly before me like a second Leather Stocking. He is not conscious of my presence, for his bashful nature would wilt if his drama and his dream should be seen of other eyes. But before me in blissful guilelessness is the chivalry of the frontier, and I feel a glad throb in my heart and could call that lad to my bosom and bless him and praise him.

"For the novels of Cooper transforming. They bring a fresh breath from the woods, and fresh emotions to the heart. In a blessed hour we read them, thrice fortunate are we if we read them in boyhood. The world will not be seen again in the same unromantic way. We may stride on a paved street, but our thoughts will be threading dark forests. Friends may laugh at our elbow, but in fancy we are alone, or with one sole and trusty companion, where the denizens of the wild may swoop down upon us or maliciously lure us into hardship and struggle. We may sit in cramped rooms or inhabit dingy shops, but our souls are with nature, hearing her waterfalls, scaling her crags, or mute in the wonder of her wide, silent sky. In short, we are rejoicing in solitude or grasping bare-handed with the vigor we respect. We are drinking a vigorous impulse. We are turning from the sordidness and the stir, the weariness and the fever, and the pragmatic sternness of our selfish life, which make our spirits distrustful and our very hearts unglad."

The privilege was mine at an early period to read those tales of Indian adventure. A youthful wanderer on the vast plain of being—prospects inviting on more sides than one, yet few things at hand (save the people I loved) that my childish fingers could cling to—I knew not whither to turn, but drew on my days in innocence and pleasure that were merging through slumber into passiveness and sterility. Then it was that those wonderful narratives infused into me an ardor for struggle, quickened me, made me alert, and set my imagination on fire. Henceforward the poetry of life was to

"That the craftsman might have blundered in the making of his story—no critical sticklers and even the genial Mark Twain have so unparagonically indicated—I was credulously unaware. It never occurred to me that an author could be fallible. The conversations were ponderous at times, but this I took as a necessary evil; may, if the provocation were too great, I committed that horrible sin of skipping to the parts that invited and held. Things dragged and were tedious now and then, but what ample recompense when the warwhoop rang! Rules of grammar were violated recklessly, but I was not studying grammar. The "females" were unaturally drawn; but they couldn't fight anyway, and the less I noticed them the better. The stilted passages through a multitude of critics, I was the happier for it. I saw only what was good and wholesome and elementally strong. Through admiring an honest man I wanted to be honest. Through loving a brave man I longed to be brave. I had not unveiled a puzzle, it is true, but I had gained a friend.

In wandering the other day through the oases-dotted desert of Wordsworth's "Recluse" I stumbled upon the following: "Yea, to this hour I cannot read a Tale Of two brave vessels matched in the deadly fight, And fighting to the death, but I am pleased More than a wise man ought to be; I wish, Fret, burn, and struggle, and in soul am there."

This quality of temperament which the sapient bard thus realized and disliked is fundamental in human nature. All of us lie away, now and then, from the conventional and ordered, and pay our respects to the rude nude power of old-fashioned men. We recognize there a majesty which we lack in our commonplace lives, and which our souls cry for. Perhaps we should go to Cooper. If we mean to be finical, we had better seek one whose shortcomings are fewer. But boyhood, at least lusty, with sinews and ardor for a peep into the fairyland of prowess—can find no superior guide, not even in Sir Walter, to the valiant and straightforward novelist of New York. GARLAND GREEVER.

"THE BRIGHT SPOT" Endowed by Nature With Superiority of Position Geographically GREAT COMMERCIAL CENTER. Already recognized as an indispensable point of supply and distribution, surrounded by abundant varied natural resources, and a rich agricultural country; easy of access to points of other localities, containing adequate banking facilities and all other modern equipments necessary to constitute the foundation for the building of a great Commercial Center. With these conditions existing it is reasonable to invite the public to "Watch Charlotte Grow." For information apply to The Greater Charlotte Club W. T. Corwith, Secretary Charlotte, N. C.