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LITTLE BROWN HANDS.

They drive home the cows from the pasture
Up through the long, shady lane,
Where the quail whistles loud in the wheat field,
All yellow with ripening grain.
They find in the thick, waving grasses
Where the scarlet-lipped strawberry grows,
They gather the earliest snowdrops
And the first crimson buds of the rose.

They toss the hay in the meadow,
They gather the elder blooms white,
They find where the dusky grapes purple
In the soft-tinted autumn light.
They know where the apples hang ripest,
And are sweeter than Italy's wines;
They know where the fruit is the thickest
On the long, thorny blackberry vines.

They gather the delicate sea weeds,
And build tiny castles of sand;
They pick up the beautiful sea shells—
Fairy barks that have drifted to land.
They wave from the tall, rocking tree tops,
Where the oriole's hammock nest swings,
And at night time are folded in slumber
By a song that a fond mother sings.

Those who toil bravely are strongest;
The humble and poor become great;
And from those brown-handed children
Shall grow mighty rulers of state.
The pen of the author and statesman,
The noble and wise of our land;
The sword and the chisel and palette
Shall be held in the little brown hand.
—Pittsburg Bulletin.

THE GOLD CAVES.

BY LEON EDWARDS.

IT was a good many years ago, but if I should live to be as old as Adam, the incidents I am about to narrate will be as clear and fresh in my memory as if they happened yesterday.

There were three of us, Ned Copley, an old Rocky Mountain hunter, who, when game got scarce or furs unprofitable, took up the equally hazardous calling of gold seeking; Frank Edgerton, a handsome young Kentuckian, who had come out to win a sudden fortune, and myself, who had made one fortune in the gold fields, lost it, and was now out to get another, and with the firm determination to hang on to it, if I struck luck again.

Across the Sierra Madre Mountains in the San Juan region was a mighty dreary, lonely country in those days, with the water flowing down out of sight in the bottoms of the canyons, and the nearest white settlement three hundred miles away in Eastern Colorado.

Ned Copley had hunted all through this country with Kit Carson, and he believed it was rich in gold, and that if we kept our purpose to ourselves we "would make our everlastin' fortunes," to use his own words.

We had enough money to buy an outfit of food for three months and a mule to carry it; also for the tools for prospecting and the rifles and pistols necessary for game, or to protect ourselves from prowling Indians and sneaking whites, we were well provided.

We left Taos in the early spring and while all the encircling mountains were covered low down with snow, looking like glistening marble walls supporting a sky so clear and blue and cloudless, that it looked as if it was hewn out of a globe of turquoise.

But anxiety to see the yellow gold flashing at the bottom of the clear streams in the San Juan, blinded us to the glories of the landscape and the unsurpassed natural splendor scattered so lavishly on every hand.

I think I should say in all honesty to the brave fellow, that Frank Edgerton was an exception to this. To be sure he wanted gold. It was to get this that he left his old Kentucky home and drove an ox team across the sterile, blistering plains. No child's work in the days when the Indians and buffalo were plentiful and the snorting of the iron horse had not yet stirred to new life the echoes of the giant Rockies.

Frank Edgerton had a nobler motive than his partners. We were out to find gold for the sake of the power and the comforts it would give, and it may be with thoughts of the deference that would be paid us by the less fortunate when we were rich men; but our handsome young companion was moved to face the hardships and brave the dangers of the expedition by no such mercenary purpose.

He was not more than five and twenty, with curly brown hair and eyes, and a silky mustache and beard of the same hue, and a mouth full of even white teeth, and his fine face seemed ever the home of good nature and laughter. No matter how long the march or steep the trail, no matter the long miles between the springs, or the indications of Indians in the neighborhood, Frank was always cheery and happy, and his laughter and his songs, for he had an excellent voice, lightened many a long march, and dispelled the gloom from many a lonely camp in the heart of the canyons.

We had not been many days out before Frank Edgerton opened his heart and gave us the secret of his constant happiness. He was in love, not "dead in love," but living in love, the glorious passion possessed him. It bubbled from his lips in laughter and song, and glared from his eyes in exultation.

"Who is she, boys?" he said one day in answer to my question, for I, an old, loveless and perhaps unlovable bachelor, half envied him his possession. "She ain't no ordinary girl, Susie Burns ain't. Heaven cut her out for a first-class angel, and never changed the original plan. Here's her picture, and let me say, you two are the only strangers that ever looked inside the lids since she fastened it round my neck and told me, as she kissed me, that so long as I wore it next my heart I'd remain true to her—just as if I could ever dream of being false to Susie."

By the camp fire he opened his coat and hunting shirt, and brought to light a slender gold chain that hung about his neck, and at the end of which there was a flat golden medallion. He opened it, kissed the picture with the adoration of a pagan for his idol, and then let us look at the face of a beautiful, blue-eyed girl of nineteen or twenty, who seemed so life-like that it looked more like the reflection in a mirror than a colored ivorytype.

"Susie Burns ain't rich, for Heaven couldn't give her all the blessings without being unfair," continued Frank, as he restored the picture to his breast, "but she'll be rich some day, if there's gold to be found in these mountains. Meanwhile, while I'm out here prospecting, Susie's teaching school down by the banks of the Cumberland, and you can bet, if she has any time to spare from her work, she puts it in a-praying for me. That's why I feel so sure, boys, that we are going to win. I tell you an outfit can't fail that has an angel like that a-praying for it."

Frank filled us with his enthusiasm, and Ned Copley and myself felt that we, too, were interested in the girl, as we were very sure she would have been in us, had she known the circumstances.

I don't know the name of the stream, for it was in the days before names were given to every strip of wet ground in the West, but it rose in the avalanches of the Sierra Madre and came down by our camp ice cold, and as it brought flecks of yellow gold with it, we decided to stop there and go to panning out the gravel.

We did fairly well. What we got would have been big wages anywhere else, but to compensate for what we suffered and the dangers we faced, we naturally wanted more.

A hundred dollars a day between three wasn't so bad, but we were in a mood when a thousand dollars a day would not have satisfied us.

My, how hard an l cheerfully Frank did work! Why, he got so deeply interested in that unknown girl, away on the banks of the Cumberland in old Kentucky, that he got into the habit of saying every morning, as we ate breakfast by the light of the camp fire: "Another day's work for Susie, boys!"

Although the strongest of the three, Frank was not used to this sort of rough life, and I soon saw it began to tell on him, and I wanted him to let up, but the brave fellow stuck to it, working in the ice cold water till he was taken down with chills, followed by a burning fever.

We had some quinine and a few simple remedies for cuts and bruises along, and with these and the skill that came of long years in the wilds, we did the best we could for our partner.

Now comes the remarkable part of my story. I've seen men down with the fever, when they got so wild they had to be tied, but while Frank was clear out of his head, he kept just as peaceful as ever, only that he insisted that up the creek were great caves full of gold, and that the specks we had been picking out of the gulch came from there.

He wanted us to start up there, saying we could get all the gold in a day we wanted for a lifetime.

Of course, Ned Copley and I humored Frank, and told him we'd go if he'd hurry up and get well, but he swore that instead of being sick he was as strong as a giant.

The third night after Frank was taken down, he seemed to be resting quietly, so Ned and I, who had been taking turns watching, thought it would be safe to drop off to sleep—a kind of lightly—and we did so.

When we woke up in the early morning, and saw that Frank Edgerton's cot was empty, and his clothes and pick and revolver gone, you may try to imagine, but you can never realize just how we felt.

We cooked a hasty breakfast, then picking up enough provisions from our little store to last three days, we hid the rest, left the mule hid in a little valley where there was lots of grass, and then started off to find our insane friend.

Remembering his ravings about "the gold caves" up near the snow line, we determined to follow the creek. We could read a trail as well as an Indian, but the rocks were too hard to retain the impression of a human foot; yet, now and then we saw signs to encourage us.

The creek branched into a dozen streams further up, and it was only after long consultations that we decided which to take, and then for no reason that would not have applied quite as well to the other stream.

It was a rough, hard road, and now and then as we went on, we stopped to shout Frank's name, or to discharge our rifles, but only the echoes came back for reply.

That night, thoroughly fagged out, we halted close to the snow line; indeed, there were white patches all about us, and not a sign of a shrub to make a fire. With a little alcohol lamp we made coffee, and lay down under our blankets, spoon fashion, to keep warm.

We were up by daylight, and started off again, this time without coffee, for we had only about a gill of alcohol for the lamp, and we reasoned that poor Frank would want something warm, if we found him alive.

Another terrible day and another awful night, and still no sign of Frank Edgerton. We gave him up, and with sad hearts were returning, when Ned, who had eyes like telescopes, said he saw something moving near the snow line across the valley.

There had been an immense snow slide down the valley, not an hour before, but we got across, and there under a ledge of rocks, with a great pile of loose, glittering stones about him, lay Frank Edgerton, looking like a dead man.

While Ned made some coffee, I rubbed Frank with snow till his skin felt warm, then we forced coffee between his teeth, and wrapping one blanket about him, we made a stretcher out of the other and our two rifles, so as to carry him down to camp, no easy job, I can tell you.

Just as we were about to start off, Ned noticed the piles of stones—Frank's pockets were full of them—and those lying about him had evidently been brought there by him. But they were fully one-half solid gold.

Frank Edgerton had discovered the caves of his fevered dreams.

We got him back to camp, and we took turns nursing him and carrying down the gold so mysteriously found with him under that ledge, and the source of which had been concealed by the snow slide.

"To make a long story short," as we used to say when I was a boy, Frank got well. When he was able to travel we started back to Taos, carrying with us about one hundred and thirty pounds of solid gold.

We made a second and a third trip to find "the gold caves," of which Frank remembered nothing, and others have often tried it since, but they were lost quite as mysteriously as they were found.

Frank Edgerton had, however, for his share, enough money to return to Kentucky and marry the fair Susie Burns. That they are as happy as the day is long I can vouch for, for I visited them less than a year ago, and I was highly flattered to find that his oldest son was named after me.

FUN.

Men who preach by the yard generally practice by the inch.

Getting rattled—That tin affair of the baby's.—Boston Courier.

It is always surprising how much deeper a hole is after one gets into it.—Puck.

The things that go without saying must have escaped feminine attention.—Puck.

It is doubtful if culture will ever be able to make a man stop snoring in his sleep.—Ram's Horn.

Jasper—"I—I've c—come after y—your daughter, sir."—Father—"You have! Let me see your coupons!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A long-haired man is more apt to have admirers among women than a short-haired woman will find among the men.—Atchison Globe.

In many parts of Germany the hardest out-door work falls to the women. Well, is not the same true in America? Who does the shopping here?—Boston Transcript.

Judge (to prisoner)—"We are now going to read the list of your former convictions." Prisoner—"In that case, perhaps, your worship will allow me to sit down."—Le Baillage.

A Birmingham school girl wrote, in the course of an examination in geography, that "the interior of Africa is principally used for purposes of exploration."—New York Sun.

"What is this money to be used for that the church is raising?" Howler—"It's to send the minister away and give the congregation a much-needed vacation."—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

"Timmins never has anything more to say about that girl of his, I notice." "No, he has either fallen out with her or fallen in love with her, I don't know which."—Indianapolis Journal.

Millionaire Philanthropist—"How can I make sure that none but the very poor will receive the money I intend to distribute?" Rhymster—"Buy poetry with it."—New York Herald.

Humane Officer—"Why do you pile all your load on the front of the cars?" Lazy Man—"So th' hoss won't have so far t' pull it uv course. Think I ain't got no feelin'?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Journalism's Advance.

The first American newspaper was published in 1690, and in 1890 the total number of periodical publications in Canada and the United States was nearly 18,000, with a combined annual issue of nearly three and a half billions. This wonderful advance shows that the American people are readers. A computation shows that the combined circulation of all publications will give three yearly subscriptions to every family of five persons; that the combined circulations of monthly publications will give nearly twelve numbers a year to each family; that weekly publications are sufficient to give two papers regularly to each family, and that the daily issues would provide more than one-half of the families with a daily newspaper. This is a wonderful stride, and an indication of the growth of the future.—Press and Printer.

The American Press.

According to the American Newspaper Directory for 1894 there are now 20,169 newspapers and periodicals published in the United States and the Canadian provinces. Of this number 19,302 are issued in this country and 867 in the provinces. The United States has 1853 dailies, 29 tri-weeklies, 223 semi-weeklies, 14,077 weeklies, 62 bi-weeklies, 290 semi-monthlies, 2591 monthlies, 70 bi-monthlies and 137 quarterlies. The Canadian provinces have 80 dailies, 585 weeklies and 157 monthlies.

SOFT SHELL CRABS.

MOST TOOTHSOME OF SUMMER TABLE DAINTIES.

The Chief Fishery is at Crisfield on Chesapeake Bay—How They Are Caught and Sent to the Market.

THE soft shell crab is distinctly an Eastern product and one of purely Eastern consumption; because the crab is so delicate that it is impossible to ship him with safety any great distance. It is a chief article of diet in all Eastern cities, however, and particularly at the summer resorts, and one of which Western visitors carry pleasant memories to their homes.

The soft crab occurs on the Atlantic coast all the way from Massachusetts to Mexico and is abundant also in Chesapeake Bay and as far up the tributary streams as the salt water reaches. The chief crab fishery is at Crisfield on Chesapeake Bay, just opposite the mouth of the Potomac River. Here more than 1000 men are engaged in fishing for the crabs from May to October, their total catch being more than 5,000,000 crabs. The value of the industry to the fishermen is more than $100,000 in a season. There are other crab fisheries in the upper Chesapeake, in Indian River, Delaware, and in the Shrewsbury and other rivers in New Jersey. But no one of these at all compares in importance with the Crisfield fishery. In fact, all of them put together are of far less value.

Although the oyster is of more interest in the winter than the soft crab, the crabbing industry would be valuable the year round if the crabs could be had. But from October to May the crab retires to the deeper waters, where he remains half buried in the mud until the return of warmer weather draws him to the shoal waters near the shore.

The soft crab is not always a soft crab. Technically he is the blue or edible crab, and still more technically he is the callinectes hastatus Ordway. The soft crab is a soft crab only when he sheds his shell. When he is very young he sheds it frequently. As he grows older he sheds only once or twice in a year. As he is of commercial value only when he is soft, it is of some importance to the fisherman that he be captured at a time when he has just shed his shell, or is preparing to do so. When the crab is preparing to moult and his shell is loosening, he is known to the fisherman of Crisfield as a "comer," a "long comer," or a "short comer." When his shell has begun to crack, he is called a "peeler," "shedder" or "buster," according to the fancy of the fishermen. The "peeler" is known in other localities, but the "comer" is known by that title only to Crisfield.

Unless the crab is taken in hand immediately after moulting he becomes a hard crab, and the hard crab has not the market value of his soft brother. The experienced fisherman will quickly tell what stage of development the crab is in. As fast as the crabs are brought in from the fishery they are placed in floats and there they remain until they shed their shells. The best time for catching the crabs is just after daybreak. All of the fishing is done in small boats of an average value of perhaps $40. Usually the boat carries but one person, but sometimes it is large enough to have a crew of two or three. The boat chiefly in use is a small sailboat, known in the venacular of the Chesapeake region as a "kunner"—the local corruption of "canoe." The industry is carried on by individuals on their own account. Most of the fishermen use a dredge or scrape, which resembles somewhat the oyster dredge. It is lighter, however, and is provided with a pocket of netting. Some few of the boats use dip nets. The dredges are attached to the sides of the boats by long ropes. If a stiff breeze is blowing the boat is brought well up to the wind or put under reefed sails and the dredge is thrown overboard and allowed to drag along the bottom. At intervals the boat is brought to, when the dredge is drawn up and emptied on board. Then the crabs are separated by hand from the mass of mud and grass which has come up with them. Where the dip net is used the fishermen pole through the shoal water and dip up the crabs one at a time as they are seen.

Each of the small boats will average seventy-five to a hundred crabs in a day. These are sold for cash to the shippers, whose sheds line the shore. As the crabs are brought in the dealers count them, separating the soft crabs, the "short comers" and the "long comers," and paying for them according to the market value. The price received by the fishermen varies from 1½ cents to two cents for each crab.

The soft crabs are separated from those which have yet to shed, and are prepared for immediate shipment. The "shedders" are carried in floats. These floats are made of light planks, and their sides are latticed. Each of them holds about 300 or 400 crabs. These floats are visited three or four times a day and the crabs that have shed are taken out for shipment. The crates in which they are packed for market are provided with trays. In these the crabs are placed between layers of crushed ice and seaweed. The capacity of each crate is about one hundred crabs. The soft crabs can be packed very closely, because when their legs have been folded and their bodies placed obliquely, so that the moisture does not run from their mouths they show little disposition to move. In these crates the crabs are sent as far north as Boston.

A very important element in estimating the value of soft crabs and their market price is the mortality among them. They are very delicate and easily injured in handling. Besides, the shedding process is severe and kills many of them. Therefore the purchase of the crabs by the dealers at Crisfield is something of a lottery. There is a record of a day, some years ago, when out of a total purchase of 3200 crabs taken by one firm, 3000 died before they could be packed for shipping. This mortality is excessive. As a rule, the death rate is less than twenty-five per cent. But even that represents more than $25,000 loss in each season. This falls indirectly on the fishermen, for the shipper takes it into account when making a bid for the fisherman's catch. Comparatively few of the crabs die on the way to the market. Every effort has been made to lessen the mortality among the crabs, but without success. The price received by the dealer for the crabs ranges from thirty-five cents to sixty cents a dozen.—Washington Star.

Defeated by a Condor.

"The enormous strength of the condor is only equalled by his voracity and boldness," said George A. Donovan, of Lima, Peru, who strolled into the corridor of the Lindell Hotel the other night when a St. Louis Globe-Democrat reporter was present. "I have seen a great many of these birds while traveling in the Andes, and, being something of a naturalist, took a great deal of interest in watching their habits.

"This immense bird often pounces upon living animals, but from the shape and bluntness of its claws he is unable to carry off his prey. He contents himself with fixing it against the ground with one of its claws, while with the other and its powerful beak he rends it to pieces. Gorged with food, he becomes incapable of flight, and a man may then approach him; but should the man attempt to seize the bird, he is met with a desperate resistance, and the struggle would probably be a long one, as the bird enjoys an extraordinary tenacity of life.

"I once approached a large condor just after he had finished a hearty banquet on a young sheep. In endeavoring to capture the bird I was struck several times with his huge claws. At length, torn and bleeding from several wounds, I left the field of battle and went to my camp, several miles distant, to get help, so as to capture the bird alive, if possible. In about two hours I returned with three companions. We found the bird in the same place, standing erect and flapping its wings trying to fly away. We tried for some time to secure it, but it made such a fierce struggle that one of the men finally killed it by a blow on the head with a hatchet."

The first war vessel captured by an American ship was the Edward, taken by the Lexington April 17, 1777.