



The Home-Corner

A BOY'S SPRING.

Say, when the spring's a-comin' in,
Oh, ain't it awful sweet?
There's singin' most on every breeze
An' sunshine in the street—
And when the lazy clouds are hung
Across the sky, why, all among
Them goes the wind a-laughin' out
To think of all the joy that's round about.

Say, when the dam's a-roarin' loud,
Oh, ain't it fine to hear?
I know a man who went away,
But comes back every year
Just in the spring to stand and see
The waters tumble—Hully gee!
I guess he feels just like us boys,
There's something makes us kind of still in
that big noise.

And, say, something at dusk, when all
The sky is colored red,
An' when the air's just full of spring,
An' I just can't go home to bed—
Say, I've just stood and listened while
The river roared, an' most a 'nile
I'd see the foam go streakin' down
A-swingin' past, beyond the town.

An' something in me'd kind of stir
An' I'd be there all standin' still—
An' then—an' then—I'd almost choke.
For, somewhere near, a whip-poor-will
Would start and call like anything.
An' then—an' then—some way the spring
An' river, an' soft air, an' sky
Would be too sweet, like tenderness—
I'd be like that man comin' back, I guess—
I'd stand an' love, 'most everything.
Say, ain't it funny in the spring?
—Toronto Globe.

THE DEAD SEA OF THE NEW WORLD.

The most novel and remarkable sight to a traveler crossing this wide continent, over the Union Pacific Railroad, is that broad, shallow sheet of water in the northeastern corner of Utah known as the Great Salt Lake. After passing some distance west from the City of Ogden, the train glides along just above the indigo waves, either over a low trestle or upon a solid ballasted roadbed, with scarcely anything to be seen on both sides save the blue waters of the broad lake.

I was told that in the construction of the railroad across this great basin the builders came to a point in the current that appeared to be bottomless. In this the engineers sunk huge railroad ties, which had been linked together in the form of a long ladder and laden with heavy stones. Upon the top of these others were lowered; and still others heavily weighted, until finally the surface was reached, on which a solid foundation was made for the steel rails. The entire distance—which is many miles—through the big pond, the roadway is said to be gradually sinking in the soft sand, requiring almost constant labor to keep the track raised to the proper level.

It is a curious fact that timbers buried in that briny water do not decay, but after a long period begin to petrify, and will in time become as heavy as stone. Another peculiar feature is that at certain times the water may be seen rushing through a channel straight north; and then after a few hours will be observed running equally as swift in a southward direction.

This great body of salt water lies just eleven hundred miles west of the Mississippi River, six hundred and fifty east of the Pacific Ocean, and twelve miles from Salt Lake City, the capital of Utah, and the central seat of what was once the Mormon power. It is situated in what is known as the "Great Fremont Basin," a fertile valley of the Rocky Mountains more than one hundred and twenty miles in extent.

The big lake is seventy miles long by about forty-five broad at its greatest expansion, and covers an area of about nineteen hundred square miles. Its bottom is over forty-two hundred feet above the sea level and is said to be slowly rising higher and higher.

The water of Salt Lake is remarkable for its compactness and pungent bitterness, containing as it does six and one-half times more salt than ordinary sea-water, or nearly one-quarter of solid matter, and next to its rival, the far-famed Dead Sea, is the saltiest and densest water in the world.

Numerous rocky islands bob up to the surface here and there, a half-dozen of which are of considerable size. Stansbury Island, the second largest, is a huge ovate mass, with a high central ridge rising dome-shaped, and peaks that tower nearly three thousand feet in the air. It measures about twenty-seven miles in circumference. Antelope Island, the largest in the group, is still higher above the water, is fifteen miles long, and affords pasture for big flocks of sheep. Some years ago a wild antelope pursued by dogs and hunters, swam from its shore to the mainland over twenty-five miles away, and clambered safely upon the dry banks. This probably gave the island its name.

The lake is now navigated by a line of small steamers between points along its southern border. The water supply is received from four small rivers; the Bear, the Ogden, the Weber and Jordan all empty into it, draining the entire western surface of the Wasatch and

most of that of the Oquirrh Mountain range. Strange as it may appear, this great lake has no outlet whatever; the water either sinks or is carried off by evaporation.

In many places the lake is no more than three feet to the bottom, yet its maximum depth is said to be sixty feet, with a mean depth of about twelve. The color of its water is clear, changing blue, according to the angle of the sun's rays.

The spring rains sometimes flood the rivers, causing the lake to rise several feet and spread over immense tracts of level saline plains, from which it again recedes as the summer advances. Its blue and excessively salt water forms one of the purest and most concentrated brines known. It is so dense that it is said a human body will float on its surface like a cork; the water is so buoyant that a man, stretched at full length upon his back, can swim with both head and feet above the surface. If the swimmer cares to assume a sitting position with arms outstretched, his shoulders will bob up above the water as if he were seated in an arm-chair, and as it is impossible to sink, all he need do is to keep his feet down and his head up.

Swimming in that water is rendered difficult only from the tendency of the feet and lower limbs to rise above the surface, while the head and shoulders seem inclined to seek a lower plane. It is absolutely necessary for a bather to keep his head above the water, for the brine is so very strong it cannot be swallowed without danger of strangling, and a single drop in the eyes will cause instant and severe pain. A bath in this lake is very invigorating; however, the body must afterward be washed with fresh water and soap to remove the clammy stickiness of the salt from the skin. Should this be neglected the bather would within an hour present a replica of Lot's wife.

Fish brought down by the rivers perish at once in the concentrated brine. No living creature, save the myriads of brine shrimp, has ever been found in those salt waters, although immense flocks of beautiful gulls, wild ducks, pelicans, geese and swans frequent its shores and islands, affording fine hunting grounds for sportsmen. Just thirty-eight miles southeast lies Utah Lake, a body of fresh water over thirty miles long, and one hundred feet higher than Great Salt Lake, into which it flows through the little River Jordan. Utah Lake abounds with fish of many varieties.

Much of the country for miles around this inland briny sea is desolate and barren, no vegetation being visible—only great stretches of white salt plains. The lands in the immediate vicinity are flat, rising almost imperceptibly to a base of crusty salt-flakes and sand. Vast fields of crystallized salt can be found on these barren deserts, whose white surface in the sunlight reflects a brilliance almost too dazzling for the eyes. Salt, to some extent, has been gathered from these shores since 1848, and ten years ago there were nearly half a million barrels harvested in one season, formed solely by solar evaporation. Salt works at that point now manufacture annually about sixty million pounds, for which they realize \$300,000.

This great lake, in geologic ages, is supposed to have occupied an area whose length was fully five hundred miles, and breadth over three hundred. By the gradual upheaval of the land in the bottom, the waters have by slow degrees declined into the lowest part of the great basin. It is claimed by geologists that the lake has already lost nineteen-twentieths of its ancient dimensions, and is now six hundred feet lower than it once was.

Opinions have been expressed that the process of moisture exhaustion is going on at a rate of one mile in twenty years. Its gradual rise was first noticed about sixty years ago, and as it is still rising, it is believed that in the course of time this wonderful lake will have entirely dried up, and its broad bottom be converted into an extensive ranch.

Baron La Hontan, in 1689, gathered a vague idea of this marvelous body of water from western Indian tribes, though the weird accounts they imparted and the strange and exaggerated stories related about the briny sea and its sun-baked desert, gave a very indefinite conception of just where and what it really was. Many years elapsed before a true knowledge of the place was learned. It first bore the name of Lake Timpanagos, and was for long supposed to have an outlet into the Pacific.

In 1843, after Colonel Fremont had explored the Rocky Mountains, he visited that part of the western

country, and it is said he was the first white man to navigate those salt waters. Six years later a survey was made of the Great Lake and surrounding country by Capt. Howard Stansbury of the United States Army, and a full report was published in 1852.

Brigham Young with one hundred and forty-four Mormon followers reached that uninhabited valley in July, 1847. At the western base of the great Wasatch range of mountains now stands Salt Lake City, whose Temple, Tabernacle and Assembly Hall, the home of the "President" and other high officials of the Mormon Church, are objects of interest to all visitors.—Kind Words.

"STRIKING FIRE."

"Wonder who first thought out a match in his head?" asked Billy, who always liked to start at the beginning of things. "It's interesting to me to find out who did it first, or who made 'em first."

The professor beamed. "That is something that most thinkers find interesting, Billy," said he. "And you'll find that the early history of 'making, or striking fire,' is a right remarkable one. Away back in very early times fire was obtained by rubbing two pieces of a stick together very rapidly. This took time and patience, too, let me tell you, for a very few tiny sparks meant acting el- bows!"

"The next thing was the use of steel and flint, with a little tinder box to help the sparks along. This, too, was a long performance, and I will tell you the origin of that slang expression so often used when people pay a very short call, 'You must have come for a chunk of fire.' In the early times in this country people often walked a mile or more to get a few hot coals to start a fire with, finding that way much more speedy than to patiently rub away on the steel and flint, or on two sticks.

"The first matches were not much better than the tinder box and flint and steel, for they were made to use with that primitive fire outfit. They were really nothing but little sticks dipped in sulphur, and would light more quickly than ordinary wood when applied to the spark in the tinder box. These were called brimstone sticks.

"In 1829, or about then, one John Walker, a chemist in Stockton-on-Tees, made a wonderful discovery. He found that sticks would ignite if drawn over a rough surface after having previously been dipped in a mixture of phosphorus and chlorate of potash. Many queer things for striking a light came in vogue about this time, one of them being a bottle containing an acid of some sort. Into this mixture slim pieces of pine wood were dipped and at once ignited.

"It was not until about 1833 that matches were manufactured on a large scale. They have grown at a rate that is astonishing, for from the few made by John Walker, less than a century ago, has come the remarkable record of a match factory in the United States which claims to turn out one thousand gross boxes each day, while another firm claims to make eighteen million matches in the same length of time."

"I tell you what, that's going some!" said Billy, his eyes bulging. "I think they'd better buy a forest and be done with it."

The professor chuckled. "The match factories use an amount of wood that is beyond belief," he said, "for they have to cut all the matches the way the grain of the wood runs, you know, otherwise they would break all to pieces and be of no use at all."

"But what becomes of them?" demanded practical Billy. "I don't see what happens to so many of the things."

Again the professor chuckled.

COUGHS AND CONSUMPTION.

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"Queer, isn't it?" mused Billy. "But everything we run across, no matter how little it is, is interesting when we begin to study it up."

"Just so," answered the professor. "Just so, my boy."—Harriett Hobson Dougherty, in Baptist Boys and Girls.

Eli Perkins used to relate this anecdote of President Lincoln: One day an old negro, clad in rags and carrying a burden on his head, ambled into the Executive Mansion and dropped his load on the floor. Stepping toward President Lincoln, he said:

"Am you de President, sah?"

"I am," said Mr. Lincoln. "If dat am a fac', I'se glad to meet yer. Yer see, I lives away up dar in de back o' Virginia and I'se a poor man, sah. I hear der is some pervisions in de Con'stutution for de culled man, and I'm here to get some ob 'em, sah."

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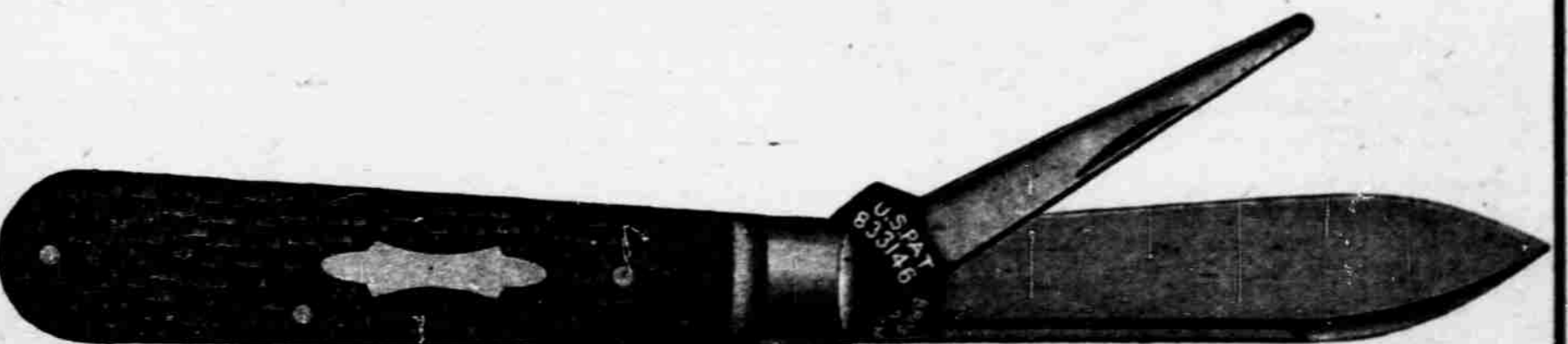
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