

THE PINE KNOT.

LIGHTED FOR THE ILLUMINATION OF TAR HEELS, BOTH NATIVE AND ADOPTED.

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THE PINE KNOT.

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The success of the new *Scribner's Magazine* is phenomenal. Does the secret lie in the fact of its lower price and the blessed relief from "War Articles" in its columns?

We hope the wonderful popularity of Mr. H. W. Grady will not prove too much for his mental equipoise. The pictures of him that the newspapers are publishing will, no doubt, keep him humble.

Now that the concentrated wisdom of North Carolina is to be found at Raleigh, we who remain at home must make the best use possible of our few and feeble wits to keep the outlying portions of the State from sinking back into barbarism.

Mr. Dodge's letter just below gives a very vivid description of winter travelling in cold New England. But such cold as he experienced is rare even in that section. The winter seems to be unusually severe both North and South.

WHERE MERCURY HIDES.

BANGOR, ME., Jan. 5th, 1887.

Dear Pine Knot:—Pile on the pitch-pine knots and pile them high, and I will give you something in the way of contrast in climate that will almost make you rub your ears and turn up your coat collar.

Thermometer 40° below 0 and going lower if there's room in the glass, without splicing. As I left Boston yesterday on the "Flying Yankee" for this Arctic region the windows were covered with a thick coating of frost; the porter was sitting on the safety valve of the steam heater to keep steam high enough to prevent pipes from freezing, and fur coats, caps, ear-pads and gloves enveloped most of the passengers. I ventured on to the platform, and my eye fell upon one unbroken mantle of as beautiful snow as ever poet sang about. The platform is covered with ice and snow, and every now and then we pass between high drifts of snow, in walls higher than the car top. As we stop for water at Portsmouth, N. H., I wade through snow knee deep to see how fares our motive power. At first I find only a cloud of hissing vapor, which peering through, I see encases our iron horse. Our engineer is busy looking over his engine, with beard one long icicle, while the fireman could better be called an iceman, so enveloped in snow and ashes is his clothing. In front of the engine is a huge mass of more snow, which the train men are busy digging down through to find the snow plow. The warning bell tells me that we are about to start, and I hurry again to my car. We back quite a distance, then go ahead, then come almost to a stop, with a sudden jar, as

we strike the hard snow ahead, then slowly bite our way through the same on toward the North Pole. The tops of the fences and walls mark the probable boundaries of farms in summer, and how forcibly comes to my mind the words of the Sage of Walden Pond: "Frost and snow make all New England common property and obliterate all boundaries to ownership". Here and there farm houses with gable ends and now and then an old fashioned "lean-to" nestle in some sheltered nook, covered up to the window sills with snow. No signs of life about the barns or out-buildings now. As we cross a highway,—you would say "dirt road", but you would find no dirt here, only snow,—a pung glides swiftly along, its driver stamping his feet and thrashing his arms to keep his blood in circulation.

At last we arrive in Bangor, to find more and deeper snow piled fence high and covering everything from house-top to telegraph wires, the latter being as big as cart ropes in their winter covering, through which they flash the frozen truths. I find the whole bay frozen solid from shore to shore, holding in its icy grip, as in a vise, the vessels dismantled for the winter. I ask a bear-robed pedestrian if he has had it colder this year.

"Oh, yes! Yesterday was 46° below 0. It is moderating fast and we shall soon have more snow."

Well, I suppose it is colder than this up in Greenland, and so, relatively, Bangor is warm. Don't I wish I were with you to-day, walking about on the warm, dry sand, among the grand old long leaf pines, down by the lake. I can see now Brother Raymond's cheerful fire. But I must stop or else I shall get real homesick and come straight back to your sunny clime, and then perhaps I should bring cold weather again, as they said I did the last time I was in Yancey county.

Now pile on the pine wood and thank your stars you don't have to sit with me on a steam heater to keep from freezing.

L. A. DODGE.

There should be but one sentiment among North Carolina democrats in regard to the matter of county government. It is of importance to the whole State. It is of vital importance to the east—and the east has its due proportion of tax payers. If the property holding classes of the east are made to yield place in the management of their local affairs to those who will make ducks and drakes of their means, they will be deprived, at the same time, of the ability to pay taxes in any considerable measure. The whole State is therefore interested in the maintenance of the status quo. A part cannot be injured without the effects of the injury being felt by the whole, and a change at this time, it is admitted even by those who seek a repeal for certain counties, would be a serious blow to the people of the east.—*Raleigh News and Observer.*

HOW THE THISTLE TRAVELS.

There is no weed weedier or more ubiquitous than the common thistle. In Paradise, it is true, if we may trust John Milton and the Sunday school books—wise, as usual, beyond what is written—there were no thorns or thistles; the creation and introduction of the noxious tribe upon this once innocent and thornless earth being a direct consequence of the fall of man, and a stern retribution for Adam's delinquency. But since then the thistle has managed so to diffuse itself over the habitable globe that there hardly now remains a spot on earth without its own local representative of that ever intrusive and conquering genus. Wherever civilized man goes, there the thistle accompanies him as a matter of course, in his various wanderings. It adapts itself to all earthly environments. Close up to the Arctic Circle you find it defying the indigenous reindeer with its prickly wings; under an equatorial sky you may observe it accomodating itself most complacently, with a sardonic smile, to tropical existence, and battling with the prickly cactuses and the thorny acacias, to the manner born, for its fair share of the dry and arid uplands. Even nettles are nowhere in competition with it; in spite of its valuable and irritating sting, the nettle has not the plasticity and adaptability of constitution that mark the stout and sturdy thistle tribe. Garnered and harvested yearly with the farmer's corn, its seeds have been gratuitously distributed by its enemy, man, in all climates; and, when once it gains the slightest foothold, its winged down enables it to diffuse itself *ad infinitum* through the virgin soil of yet unconquered and unthistly continents. A field of thistles in England itself is a beautiful sight for the enthusiastic botanist (who has usually a low opinion of the agricultural interest), but in the fresh and fallow earth of New Zealand they attain a yet more prodigious and portentous stature, that might well strike awe and dismay into the stout heart of a Berkshire farmer.

The fact is, the thistle is one of those bellicose plants which specially lay themselves out, in the struggle for existence, for the occupation of soils where they are compelled to defend their leaves and stems from the constant attacks of the larger herbivores. On open plains and wide steppes, much browsed over in the wild state by deer or buffalo, and in the degenerate civilized condition by more prosaic cows and donkeys, one may always note that only the prickliest and most defensive plants have any chance of gaining a livelihood.—*Popular Science Monthly*

It is estimated that upwards of \$12,000,000 of wheat was received in Chicago last year, but \$14,810,000 represents its tobacco trade; \$6,000,000 represents the cigar traffic alone. A wretched waste and worse!