

SOMEWHAT STRANGE.

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS OF EVERY-DAY LIFE.

Funny Episodes and Thrilling Adventures Which Show That Truth is Stranger Than Fiction.



ARAT and a cat may be seen playing together almost any day at De Witt's livery stable in Louisville. The cat is a big black Tom, with long whiskers, a short tail, and yellow eyes. The rat is a sleek and fat specimen of the genus *Rattus*, and has a cunning but prosperous and contented look. The cat is fierceness and savagery itself, and bears the scars of innumerable battles, not alone with rats and other felines, but with dogs as well, and he has never been known to decline a fight. The rat was caught in a wire trap one night last week. He was so uncommonly large and looked so ugly as he stood up on his hind legs and rattled the wires of his cage that his captors resolved to have some sport with him and Tom. The cat and he were accordingly taken over to a neighboring saloon, the doors closed, holes stopped up, and a select few gathered to witness the fight. When the rat was turned loose from the cage Tom was ready and pounced upon him instantly. To the surprise of all, however, he did not hurt him. His claws were sheathed and he plainly invited a romp. The rat did not understand his advances at first, but was soon reassured, and would finally run from the men to the cat for protection. In a short time they became fast friends. They now play together constantly, and seem to understand each other perfectly. The rat climbs all over Tom's back, pulls his ears and tail, and treats his big friend with the utmost freedom. Both spend the greater part of their time under the stove in the stable office and large numbers of visitors go there to witness the unusual friendship between such natural enemies.

W. C. STOKES, of Grass Valley, Cal., a member of the Society of California Pioneers, keeps a snug saloon where the old settlers congregate. The other evening a San Francisco newspaper man was toasting his toes at the stove, an old-fashioned cooking affair, when Stokes called his attention to one of the lids, saying: "Look at that. You are an old-timer—what do you see?" It was a picture of David C. Broderick. "You are right," Stokes went on. "That is a picture of Broderick, and it is a better likeness of him than are the engravings often seen. That picture has been there for years. I do not now recollect when I first noticed it; but one day I spilled some water on the lid when it was hot, the water sizzled, and there was the picture of Broderick. I instantly recognized it, and so have all who knew him and who have seen the picture. Rubbing and scrubbing that stovetop does not diminish the plainness and distinctiveness of the likeness." The old-timers who frequent Stokes' place have been discussing whether the pictures made on these stovetops are of spiritual origin or caused by accidental stains on the iron. All admire the likeness of Broderick.

In the *Forest and Stream* a hunter tells a good story of an otter and a duck: "One day as I was standing on the shore of Cranberry Bog Pond I saw a large flock of ducks near the middle of the pond, and soon after discovered three otters in front of me, but not near enough to shoot. While watching the manoeuvres of the otters, they started down the pond in a straight line for the ducks. The old leader struck out lively, leaving the mates far behind, and as he neared the ducks he dived, and presently I saw one of the ducks disappear beneath the surface after a considerable struggle, the remainder of the flock rising and flying away in great commotion. The otter had gone under the flock and selected a certain duck and pulled him under. A few minutes later the otter made his appearance near the south shore of the pond with the duck in his mouth."

The little daughter of Mrs. Mary A. Goodwin, of Savannah, up to a recent Saturday morning owned a pet dog and cat. The two pets entertained for each other more than the usual affection known to exist between such animals, and of course there was a happy family all around, which was broken into by the sudden death of the dog. The singular thing in connection with the death of the dog was the uncontrollable grief exhibited by pussy, and in ten minutes after the dog's spirit had fled the cat began to stagger, and finally fell prostrate between the fore paws of the dead dog and there died.

SOME not altogether favorable comment has been caused in London by an exhibition lately opened in the New Gallery, on Regent street. It is made up of pictures and other relics of the past. Included are a large number of portraits of the Stuart family which are of great interest. But the feature which has attracted attention and comment is the display made of the linen worn by Charles I. at the time of his decapitation, together with locks of his hair and beard removed at the same time. The good taste of this ghastly display is seriously questioned.

DIANA DOUTY has just celebrated the 100th anniversary of her birth at the home of her son, Bainbridge Douty, in Charlton, Mass. Scores of visitors were present during the day, the gathering including children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grand-

children, with every one of whom the old lady chatted pleasantly. Although her sight and hearing are failing gradually, she is in good physical and mental condition.

HENRY FISCHER sold his farm near St. Cloud, Minn., for \$3,700. He gave the money to his daughter, who sewed \$900 up in a quilt and put the remainder in the bottom of a lard pail, running lard on top of it. The family started for Washington Territory. On the way the girl went crazy and the quilt and lard pail were lost. The family is destitute, the mother has died of grief, and the daughter is in the insane asylum.

The other day the wife of George Platky, a merchant of Grand Forks, Dak., purchased a pickerel from a fish vender, and out of curiosity thought she would clean it herself. Nothing singular occurred until she espied a morocco purse in the stomach. The purse contained several old coins, that appeared none the worse for their engulment. The fish was caught in the Red River there.

A CURIOUS weather prophet is being shown in a St. Louis store window. It is a tree load confined in a glass tube. There is a little ladder for it to climb up and down, and so susceptible is the little prisoner to changes that it ascends to the top of the tube when the air grows moist in advance of rain and descends when clear weather is near at hand.

JOHN WILSON, living near Astor, Fla., cut a big cypress tree in the swamp north of the town, and found therein a live alligator about seven feet long. As the opening in the tree was not half large enough for the gator to get through, the presumption is that it crawled in when quite young and lived on other animals and reptiles that sought shelter in the same tree.

The San Francisco Celestials turned out en masse to attend the funeral of an almond-eyed nabob, who at his special request was buried in his gala dress, clean-shaven, with his eyes wide open, and with the following assortment of traveling outfit to the far beyond: Two silk shawls, a bottle of cosmetics, canned meats and preserves, nuts, figs, two pistols and a long dirk-knife.

In Ware, N. H., a big six-pound cat saw an owl in a tree and decided to eat it. So it scrambled up the tree, and, after a short, sharp fight, fell to the ground dead. The owl's big claws had been too much for it. The bird was captured and was found to measure six feet from tip to tip of its extended wings.

Two English servants, Ann Warde and Eliza Wylde, went to a Salvation Army meeting on a Sunday evening, overstayed the time when they should have been home, and for fear of a scolding, tied themselves together with a woollen scarf and drowned themselves in a canal.

It is told in Indiana that in 1880 a dinner was given in Madison county, and thirteen men sat at the table. Governor Williams, who was one of the thirteen, called attention to the fatal number, and there was considerable fun made of the superstitions. To-day but three of the thirteen are alive.

The Empress of Austria carries a traveling basket fitted up so that she is able to make soup on the cars. It has silver sauce pans with gold handles, and the Empress declares that she can make in it better broth than any chief can concoct.

A PONY is being daily sent up in a balloon, and being let down by a parachute, in London, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is being agitated by anxiety to know whether the pony is scared or not.

An oyster dredged up in English waters measured 7 inches in length, the same in breadth, and 20 1-2 inches around the outside edge, and weighed 3 1-2 pounds.

Myths About the Moon.

A maiden was accustomed to spin late on Saturday in the moonlight. At one time the new moon on the eve of Sunday drew her up to itself, and now she sits in the moon and spins and spins. And now, when the "gossamer days" set in late in the summer, the white threads float around in the air. These threads are the spinning of the lunar spinner, says Dr. F. S. Crauss in the *Popular Science*.

The moon is especially a ghostly avenger of human arrogance, and has its humors, according to which things go well or ill with it. In its increase it has a special force and certain good will for the earth and its inhabitants, while in its decrease it is friendly to no one. The good woman must not do any sewing in the decrease of the moon, for the stitches will not hold; farming tools must not be left in the field, because, it is believed, if they are, crops will not again thrive there. If an unbaptized child is exposed to the moonlight it will lose its luck for its whole life. If one points at the moon with his finger he will suffer from swelling around the nail; and whoever spits at the moon will lose all his teeth.

These beliefs, too, are international. The same is the case with the religious notions about the moon. Sorceries of every kind, to be successful, must be performed on Sunday night of the new moon. The hair must be cut only in the increase of the moon, otherwise there is danger of getting headache. If a person returning home in the evening sees the full moon, he ought to take some money out of his purse and utter an incantation that will make it increase a hundred times during the month.

The moon is also supposed to have an influence over animals and plants.

LAST OF THE BUFFALO.

A MAGNIFICENT ANIMAL NOW ALMOST EXTINCT.

The Indian and the White Man Joined Hands in the Slaughter of the Buffalo.

Dr. William F. Carver is probably responsible for the death of more bison than any other one man. For a number of years he hunted them on the plains, and in shooting them he developed that wonderful skill in handling firearms which has made him the best all-round shot in the world. To a Kansas City *Times* representative he told the following story of the bison, and how they were formerly hunted by the Indians, then by the whites:

"Before the invasion of civilization the Indian relied almost entirely upon the bison for his subsistence. The red man, although daring in his attempts to kill game, was yet the complete slave of the 'medicine man.' How did he rule them? I will tell you. When the Indian's supply of buffalo meat began to give out, or the season came to lay in the winter rations, the medicine man was notified, and he ordered a buffalo dance. If the tribe was a large one the festivities would often last for weeks, and all sorts of can-cans would be indulged in. At the close of the feast the medicine man would gather all kinds of herbs, roots, leaves and grasses and retire to his tent. Exactly what his process of preparing the medicine was no white man has ever found out; but the faith in him was so strong that even the most powerful chief would not be followed by a dozen braves if the medicine was wrong. From time to time the medicine man would come to the door of the tent and announce to the waiting chiefs what the mixture indicated.

"Upon the final announcement that the medicine was right, the whole camp would be broken up and the tribe would start in full force upon the hunt. A few sharp-sighted old scouts would be in the van and keep the tribe posted as to the location and number of bison by riding in circles of different sizes and points of intersection. When a suitable herd was found, the warriors would stop, mount their favorite hunting horses and prepare for the slaughter. The bow was made of hickory wood, about four feet long, covered with a paste made of the boiled sinews of a bison, and stiff enough to serve as a jumping pole. Notwithstanding this strength, the Indian would bend the bow almost double before sending the arrow to the winds. It was strung with the cord which runs from the top of a bison's hump to his tail, this cord being first wrapped with small strings of sinews. The arrow was from thirty to thirty-six inches in length, almost the size of a lead pencil, tipped with several feathers and having the familiar flint head tied on the front end. From the head grooves are cut in the arrow, so as to let the blood flow freely. The great warriors sometimes had arrows made of bone, and in later days the white men taught the Indians to use steel arrow heads.

"Having killed as many bison as possible the hunters seek some cool place for rest and the squaws take charge of the game. They skin the animals, cut the flesh into strips and hang them in the sun to dry. When the meat became crisp enough to break it was placed in a rawhide pouch, covered all over with tallow and put away for winter use. In that condition the meat is very good to eat, but when boiled for a short time it absorbs the water and returns to its former size and tastes almost like fresh meat. The squaws also tan the hides or dress them up to be traded. The fur dealers would get them for a few pieces of common jewelry worth possibly 50 cents.

"As the Indians hunted them, the race of bison would probably have lasted forever, but about 1866 the white men turned their attention to the shaggy monsters of the plains. Large Eastern firms organized hunting parties and paid the shooters \$2.50 for each bison where he lay dead on the plains. I then went to Southern Nebraska and became a professional hunter. The bison consisted of two large divisions, the one living in the south and the other in the north. Their only common feeding ground was along the Republican River and its branches in Nebraska. The Indians were well aware of that fact and hostile tribes have had many a fight for that territory. It was not until 1873 that the Government put an end to this by sending the Pawnees south and the Sioux to their northern reservations. Prior to that time we had to do all of our hunting at the risk of being scalped at any time.

"Our favorite gun was an army model of the Springfield rifle, 45-caliber and loaded with ninety grains of powder. The whites patterned after the Indians and hunted on horseback. Having wagons to haul our game, we did not care to 'circle' them as the Indians did. When a herd was located we would mount our best horses and as quietly as possible approach the herd from the leeward side. As soon as they saw us the fun would begin. Although of a low build, the bison will make a very interesting race with a horse for ten miles. We would press up on the right flank of the herd and ride so close to the animals that our guns would touch the side when fired. The most deadly shot was to fire quartering through the lung so that the animal would bleed to death. In this way we would follow the herd as long as our horses could stand it. On one of these runs I killed 113 bison, none of which were more than 100 yards apart. In riding back an awful sight was presented to the eye. The trail was marked by dead and dying animals. An occasional big bull would have a broken

back so that he could only get up on his fore legs, and nothing could look more furious than his shaking head with coal black eyes glaring in a death stare from his shaggy front. We received our pay for the animals dead on the plains and wagons followed us up, quartered the animals and shipped the saddle and tallow to Eastern markets.

"About 1871 the hide hunting began. Prior to this time little or no attention was paid to the skins, but when the demand for them created a high price the meat was allowed to rot upon the plains, and this magnificent race was extinguished simply that extravagant tastes might be satisfied. With the improvements in firearms an entirely different mode of hunting was adopted. The Springfield army gun was superseded by a Sharp 50-caliber and loaded with 110 grains of powder. The hunter used his horse only in finding a herd. This done, we would go to the leeward side so that the scent of the powder and report would not reach the animals, and find a suitable shelter about 1,000 yards distant from them. I have killed them at a distance of a mile. Hunting in this way we had to be very particular and watch the herd closely. Like a herd of cattle, the bison are always on the go and are apt to walk out of rifle range in a short time. In moving, however, they always have a leader, and the trick was to kill any one that started to lead the others off. By thus killing the leaders we could often shoot for an hour from behind one clump of grass. When they had moved out of range the skinner would come up, cut the hide in the ordinary way for skinning, tie the animal's head to a stake, hitch a team of horses to the hide and jerk it off. No one will ever know what immense numbers of bison were killed by these hide hunters, but to my certain knowledge 3,000,000 hides were shipped from the banks of the Frenchman River in one winter. The hide hunters, by a system of fires, kept the bison from the streams until many of them perished and thousands of others were easily killed. At the close of that winter a man could go along the banks of the Frenchman for fifty miles by simply jumping from the carcass of one bison to that of another. Considering facts of this kind, it is not surprising that a small tame herd and a few old circus animals represent the great herds which, less than a quarter of a century ago, blackened miles of prairies as a thunder cloud darkens the sky."

The Lord and the Nimble Gossoon.

Here is a scene which I witnessed, says a writer in the *Brooklyn Citizen*, when I was a boy, in Phenix Park, Dublin. There was a grand review, and Lord Cardigan and his dragoons were there. In those days the old musket known as Brown Bess was in use, and it used to kick so that it was a very common practice for the soldiers at a review not to fire. They pretended to load, but instead of doing so, dropped the cartridges on the grass. After the review was over the young fellows went round and gathered up the cartridges. On the day I refer to the review was partly over, and Lord Cardigan was walking up and down, lashing his boot with a riding whip. The brother of the old lady you have just seen was then a stalwart young chap, and he was hunting for cartridges. Walking along with his head down, looking for the cartridges, he went unwittingly in the direction from which Lord Cardigan was approaching. He saw a cartridge on the grass. At the same moment Lord Cardigan espied it, made a quick step toward it, and picked it up with his left hand just as the young fellow was preparing to grab it. Lord Cardigan smiled. The boy was somewhat taken aback, but when Lord Cardigan held out the cartridge toward him his countenance brightened, and he reached out his hand to take it. At that moment Lord Cardigan brought his whip down upon the hand of the boy, who doubled himself up and howled with pain. Lord Cardigan passed on. Vengeance was burning in the boy's soul, and, quickly turning, he raised his foot and administered a terrific kick to his lordship. Utterly astonished, Lord Cardigan wheeled round, but the boy was a dozen yards away, with his thumb to his nose. His lordship started in pursuit, but the boy was ready, and yelling out, "who stole the lady?" he started on a gallop. Lord Cardigan called a dragoon and bade him follow and capture the offender. The dragoon put spurs to his horse, but the boy nimbly scaled a fence, and, before disappearing from view, again placed his thumb to his nose and twirled his fingers insultingly at the dragoon as he drew rein at the fence.

A Sheep-Raising People.

In the social condition of the Australian people, in the absence of hereditary rank, and the opportunities afforded of acquiring such positions as can be gained by wealth, intelligence or general ability, there is a close similarity with the people of the United States. They have also the same industry and persistency, the same readiness to take advantage of opportunities presented, whereby wealth can be produced with the least amount of labor. Perhaps no better illustration can be given of this than the great success that has attended the raising of sheep in these colonies, particularly in that of New South Wales. That one colony has a larger number of sheep than all of the United States, and the sheep-growers, although they pay to those in their employ as high wages as are given to those in the employ of sheep-raisers in the United States, find not the least difficulty in getting wool, sending it to London, and selling it at prices which would be considered ruinous by those in this country who are engaged in a similar business.

Insurance For Babies.

"Life insurance has been brought down to such a fine point nowadays that I am told," says John Preston Beecher, in the *New York News*, "a company is being organized to insure the lives of babies. A baby's life is a very precarious thing, and I should think there would be quite as much risk attached to it as there would be in insuring a big piece of plate glass, and yet they insure plate glass against breakage just as they do one's arm or leg. As far as babies are concerned, I should fancy that the rates of insurance would have to be graded on a very high basis. They are susceptible to colds and diphtheria in the winter time, and to cholera infantum in the summer, to say nothing of measles, chicken pox, whooping cough and scarlet fever all the year round. However, the charges on a thousand dollars' insurance on a baby's life might be scaled in this way. For a \$1,000 policy for a one-day old baby a premium of \$999 might be charged. Then the insurance company should agree to return one dollar a day as long as the baby lived until the premium was reduced to \$10. At the age of two and a half years the result would be still \$1,000 insurance on the baby's life at an annual cost of but \$10. If the child should die when it was but a week old, though, you would be \$992 out. Still you can't reasonably expect to insure an infant's life for nothing. It would be possible to avoid this heavy percentage by waiting until the child was two years of age before buying a policy. That is the only solution of the problem that I can see.

If the wealth of the Vanderbilts be not overstated, it amounts to nearly \$200,000,000. With this sum they could purchase 312 tons of gold and have something left over, but they couldn't buy two tons of gallium, that rare metal being worth \$3,250 an ounce. With this metal the highest price is reached, and it may well be called the rarest and most precious of metals.

Gallium is worth \$250 per ounce; indium \$158; iridium \$658 a pound; lanthanum, \$175, and lithium \$160 per ounce. Niobium costs \$128 per ounce; osmium, palladium, platinum, potassium, and rhodium bring respectively \$540, \$400, \$130, \$82, and \$512 per pound. Strontium costs \$128 an ounce; tantalum, \$144; tellurium, \$9; thorium, \$272; vanadium, \$320; yttrium, \$144, and zirconium \$250 an ounce.

Thus we see that the commonly received opinion as to what are the most precious metals is quite erroneous. Barium is more than four times as valuable as gold, and gallium more than 162 times as costly, while many of the metals are thrice as valuable. Aluminum, which now costs \$8 or \$9 a pound, will eventually be produced as cheaply as steel. When this can be done it will push the latter metal out of a great many of its present uses, as it possesses great strength, toughness, and elasticity, with extreme lightness of weight. Its sources of supply are inexhaustible, and its present high cost arises from the difficulty of its extraction in a metallic form. Indium seems to be chiefly used for pointing gold pens, and many of the metals mentioned have but a limited sphere of usefulness.—*Globe Democrat*.

Shooting Ptarmigan.

About half way up we fell in with a large flock of ptarmigan. In rising they took us by surprise while struggling through a heavy squall, accompanied by fine, hard snow, which stung our faces unpleasantly. In the midst of this we were suddenly conscious that the air was full also of white wings; for the plumage of the birds was at this season nearly as pure as the snow itself. It soon became evident that owing to the stormy weather and the birds, being packed, they were far wilder than we had supposed they ever could be, and that there was little chance of doing much by pursuing them in ordinary fashion. So we agreed to separate and work singly about the mountain, varying our direction and elevation on the terraces as each judged best for himself. These tactics succeeded admirably. The ptarmigan, when flushed by one wandering gun, swept round the buttresses of their rocky citadel, which they naturally never left, and were sure before long to encounter another, swinging past him, or over his head, or lighting within view, only to be flushed again and passed on once more. While this state of things lasted the shooting was as wild and sporting as a man could desire, but it was bitterly cold work. Earthly enjoyment consists a good deal in the absence or cessation of discomfort, as one fully realized on that day when, stretched in positive luxury, under the lee of a big boulder, and not feeling a breath of the biting wind, one gnawed greedily chunks of cold ryeer and black bread, washed down with ardent spirits. In the afternoon, however, the squalls abated and there were transient gleams of sunshine, when, as the packs were partly broken and disorganized, some few birds took to croning tamely and fell easy victims. I cannot say how many we lost of those which dropped over steep, slippery places, where for our lives we durst not follow them. Some indeed, were eventually retrieved by making long circuits, but a considerable number were never gathered. Our united bags, when turned out, produced twenty-nine brace, which, under the circumstances, represented, I think, an excellent bit of wild shooting.—*Fortnightly Review*.

JACOB PERCH, tax collector of Mt. Pleasant, Penn., was taken with a fit of sneezing one day a short time since. He sneezed violently at short intervals of fifteen minutes. When the paroxysms were finally quieted it was found that four of Perch's ribs had been broken, so violently was the shock to his frame from the convulsions.