

Once knew all the birds that came
And nested in our orchard trees;
For every flower I had a name—
My friends were woodchucks, toads and
bees,
I knew where thrived in yonder glen
What plants would soothe a stone-bruised
toe,
O, I was very learned then,
But that was very long ago.

And playing for the joy of youth,
I tread the old familiar spot,
Only to learn this solemn truth:
I have forgotten, am forgot,
Yet, here's this youngster at my knee
Knows all the things I used to know;
To think I once was wise as he—
But that was very long ago.

I know it's folly to complain
Of whatsoever the Fates decree;
Yet were not wishes all in vain,
I tell you what my wish would be:
I'd wish to be a boy again,
Back with the friends I used to know;
For I was, Oh! so happy then—
But that was very long ago.
—Eugene Field.

A Cat and Dog Life for Two.

Aunts are often odiously eccentric persons. The idea had occurred to me even while Aunt Maria Markham was alive. After her death I was convinced of it.

So was poor, dear Julia, though circumstances (thanks to Aunt Markham) withheld her from informing me of the fact.

By Aunt Maria's will I was to have the brute of a bulldog and Julia the cat. The conditions were that with each quadruped the legatees was to receive \$500 per annum. This sum to be paid as long as the cat and dog respectively enjoyed life in this terrestrial sphere, and afterwards also for our respective lives (Julia's and mine) if the said quadrupeds eventually died natural deaths.

It was simply iniquitous—for several reasons.

To begin with, Strong, as the bulldog was called, had frightful teeth and a yet more frightful temper. I should think aunt had paid hundreds of dollars in hush-money to folks whose flesh and blood the brute had tasted—to say nothing of trousers, dress skirts and hose.

Sweet, as the cat was named, was an enormous object, with enormous claws. Its temper was really not bad. But once aroused, Sweet was a demon; nothing less. In aunt's time I had seen the great tiger of a cat stroll carelessly into the yard where Strong was chained and there lay itself down to rest just three feet from the limit of Strong's tether. The sight of the dog when it happened was pathetic. But it didn't trouble Sweet. The cat lay half curled, with its green eyes on Strong, and I would not have put odds on the bulldog if they could have had a straight set-to without any favor.

Visitors loathed Sweet. She possessed a lazy, cool way of clawing up a fellow's legs and yawning while she hung on to the skin. And no lady was safe from her. Be the dress material what it might—from cambrie to satin—Sweet was bound to assault it on the sly.

But all this was comparatively nothing to the great hardship of all.

In just I had more than once told Julia that I had told Aunt Maria that she (Julia) was the only person fit to take charge of such a dear treasure as Sweet in case of sad happenings. Really, I had done no such thing, but Julia now disbelieved my solemn asseverations.

"I will accept Aunt Markham's charge," she said, "but we must never see each other again, you and I."

We were cousins, you know, and rather better than engaged, I imagined. I could (previous to aunt's demise) have conceived the collapse of the heavens, but not Julia's repudiation of our joint future.

And so she fetched Sweet and installed the slick demon in her dear studio, and I was left to console myself with that more than demon, Strong, the bulldog.

It was under stress of this treatment by Julia that I did a thing that now seems to me superhuman.

"Please, sir," said my aunt's housekeeper, when I contemplated the dog that was mine, "I don't know how you'll get him to your rooms, nor what you'll do with him when you get him there. Since the poor missus' death he has been something awful."

"Oh, he has, has he?" said I, staring like one fascinated at his awkward, broad chest.

I walked off there and then—driven by rage and the thought of Julia—and came to an old curiosity shop. Here there was a complete suit of rusty armor, not too heavy for an athlete of my build. I arranged to borrow that armor, put it on in aunt's own parlor and then with my rhinoceros hide stick walked up to the lair of the dog. Mean it may have been. I care not.

For a moment I smote Strong full in the face. He left in him marks and wounds that didn't disappear for several minutes. I was angry, but I didn't know what to do.

"Good old dog," I said, as I patted him on the head. And he wagged his ugly tail and straightway proved his goodness by swallowing a British guinea stamp of 1855 worth \$5 and snapping to morsels its fellow worth only one cent.

"Night I dreamed many dreams
Of aha, Mrs. Green, the dog
And the cat Sweet were strange—
But I awoke I dreamed,
For I was full of love,

Nor had I any compunctions, for I felt that the happiness of two human souls was better than the happiness of a couple of demoniac quadrupeds.

In the morning an insurance agent called and, speaking in a high voice that seemed menacing (though of course was not), got mauled at the ankle.

"The law, my friend, will give me my revenge," said this gentleman, when I had escorted him in safety downstairs. You see, I had not wanted to insure my life.

But at half past three I arose and, taking Strong by the chain, led him into the street.

Thus to the studio. Here Mrs. Green received me with a pale face.

"Miss Julia is not in," she said, and I, dissembling, remarked that it was a pity.

"If I might rest awhile," I proceeded.

"Oh, certainly, sir," replied the astute creature. "Perhaps you would like to leave the dog in the kitchen?"

The good soul opened the door. Then I slipped Strong's chain, pushed him in and shut the door.

Immediately afterwards I invaded Julia's studio and Mrs. Green with me. We shut ourselves in and discussed the weather, the last cure for colds (Julia having one) and much else. We talked without ceasing, indeed, for many minutes.

But in spite of everything the riot in the kitchen reached our ears. Terrific at times it was, with fateful lulls, followed afresh by piercing cries, now of a cat and now of a dog. I opened the door an inch and peeped in.

At length, by half-past four, utter peace reigned. Mrs. Green and I looked at each other and started for the kitchen.

On the landing, however, whom should we meet but Julia.

"James!" she exclaimed, blushing divinely.

"I—brought the dog with me," I murmured. "I am going now. I only wanted to know that you were well. He is in the kitchen."

Her eyes brightened when I mentioned Strong. Hatred of Sweet possessed her—she said so afterwards.

Then I opened the door, and in a moment I saw that we were saved.

"Oh, Miss Julia!" cried Mrs. Green, running to the lifeless body of Sweet. "Strong, what have you been doing?"

"I expected no answer, for side by side with the cat lay the lifeless dog.

For many seconds we contemplated the dead warriors. Then I turned to Julia. Tears were in her eyes, Mrs. Green considerably vent away.

"Dearest," I said, "there is nothing new between us," and I opened my arms to her.

She hesitated for a moment, then came to me, and I kissed away her tears.

The death of Strong and Sweet was, after due legal debate, reckoned exceedingly natural.

The quadrupeds slumber in one grave.—St. Louis Star.

MASTERFUL MRS. SLIMS.

The Seafarer and Despatch with Which She Broke Up a Dog Fight.

The man who was doing the talking had endured a good many hard knocks while making a very successful way through the world, and, like most persons who have survived such experience, has very decided opinions of his own. "I have always regarded woman as the weaker vessel," he said, "but want to say right here that Mrs. Slims is a very remarkable person. I don't believe she could tell a Percheron from a Kentucky thoroughbred, yet I saw her start a balky horse the other day after twenty men and boys had been beating, kicking and cursing the poor brute for half an hour. The persuasion she used was a couple of lumps of sugar and a few kind words.

"But it was just yesterday that she convinced me of her great superiority. You can gauge her knowledge of dogs from the fact that she paid \$5 for a long-haired mongrel puppy, under the impression that she was buying an aristocratic pug. Slims has a bull terrier that's a professional fighter, and Torton, who lives next door, owns a big St. Bernard. The two dogs began an argument through the fence, and the larger one simplified matters by crashing through a board into Slims' yard. The whole neighborhood was soon engaged in an effort to part them. Strong hands tugged at tails, legs and ears. Clubs were freely used, water was dashed upon the belligerents, and the stern orders for them to 'break away' could be heard blocks off. When Mrs. Slims appeared on the scene she seemed to grasp the situation in one terrified glance. She flew into the house, dashed out again, and inside of a minute had the savage fighters slinking away from each other."

"How did she do it?"

"Bottle of ammonia. Surest thing on earth to break up a dog fight, and it's original with her. Why, those two terrible beasts quit like pet sheep, and the joke of it is that each dog thinks the other administered the awful dose. They never see each other now that they do not curl their nose as though sniffing ammonia, and trot briskly in opposite directions."—Detroit Free Press.

The skeleton of an average whale weighs about twenty-five tons.

GOOD ROAD OF AMERICA.

STRIKING SCHEME FOR A GRAND TRANSCONTINENTAL HIGHWAY.

General Roy L. Stone, Chief of the Good Roads Bureau in the Department of Agriculture, suggests how such a National Thoroughfare might be built.

A good many incomplete references, some of them misleading, have been made to the suggestion of General Stone of the department of agriculture concerning a grand highway to cross the continent. What he actually suggested was that:

"A great national highway might be constructed, called, perhaps, 'The Great Road of America,' which should first join together the states along the Atlantic seaboard; then strike across the country on a central line, say from Washington to San Francisco, joining there another line which connects the states on the Pacific coast; this road to be built, not by the general government alone, but by the states, under such arrangements as they may make within their own borders, and by the government through the territories and its own lands and reservations; built not by taxation of the states or the people, but practically out of its own benefits. I have seen so much of the benefits of good roads, and of the advance in the value of property along their lines, that I see the possibility of building even a great national thoroughfare, costing ten or twenty thousand dollars a mile, and building it ultimately out of its own benefits, by a temporary use of the government or state credit, to tide over until those benefits can be realized.

"There is no question but that such a road would benefit property to the extent of five miles on either side of it. Suppose that property were to be assessed with a long term of payments in instalments running up to ten or fifteen or twenty years, and suppose the property actually adjoining the road were to be assessed two dollars an acre, for instance, and the next half mile back a little less, and the next a little less, and so on, but always giving the party owning the property the privilege of selling out his land at a valuation if he did not choose to pay the assessment, and of buying it back again by paying the interest, if he found he had made a mistake. The government could well afford to make that liberal proposition, and it would result in nearly all the present property owners getting the actual benefit of the increase of the value of their property, and paying the assessment entirely out of such increase of value.

"I have merely outlined this, not as a perfect scheme, but as something that has suggested itself to me out of my experience in road building, which, I think, with proper study and care, might be applied on a grand scale. Such a scheme would arouse great interest among the whole people of the United States; it would be something worthy of the beginning of the twentieth century. The mere location of such a road would have great historic value and importance. The line along the Atlantic coast would be the old post road in the time of the Revolution. The route across the Alleghenies might be the line that the early settlers of this region followed when Daniel Boone and his comrades came over the mountains to settle these beautiful plains. The line across the Rocky mountains might be the line of Lewis and Clark and Fremont, and when we struck the Pacific coast we would strike the oldest road in all our history, the Camino Real, the great Spanish royal highway which joined together the Catholic missions of the Pacific coast. The whole scheme would carry with it something that would inspire the entire nation. It is not any new scheme; it is not any new idea. It was the idea of Jefferson and Madison and Gallatin and many other great men who helped to start the national road which led through Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana, and reached as far as the Mississippi river."

GOOSE-PLUCKING.

Odd Scene in a New York Basement Where Women Are the Workers.

An important business function of the east side is the weekly goose-plucking, carried on sometimes by a private individual and his family, sometimes by a poultry-dealer, who pays his assistants so much a bird. The pluckers are invariably women and young girls, and some are experts at the trade. The plucking begins about three o'clock on Thursdays, in anticipation of the early buyers on Friday morning, which is market-day in that section. The plucking continues until Friday afternoon, and ambitious fingers, spry at the task, strip off great quantities of feathers in that time, and reap quite a harvest of nickels. Five cents a goose is the highest price paid by any dealer.

The scene of the goose-plucking is odd enough to unaccustomed eyes. A basement, down to which a stepladder gives entrance, is the workshop. The big, bin-like compartments, barrels and boxes for stowing away the feathers, and the benches on which the pluckers sit are the chief features of furnishing. The air in this under-house plucking place is misty with

the drifting down that adheres to the ceiling and settles over the clothing of the workers. The hair of the girls and the wigs of the older women are decorated with tiny white feathers. The geese are killed according to the Jewish method, and are plucked as soon after as may be, as the feathers quit the skin more easily when the flesh is warm.

"It's a pity that one coating of feathers is all we can get," said the manager of a Ridge street goose-plucking. "If them birds could have been plucked when livin' and then turned loose, they'd give us as many pounds a pound later. We get 40 cents a pound for these breast-feathers," he added, plunging his hands down into the yielding mass of curlicues. "This quality don't need any curing. Those in the other bins are the inferior grade. I am careful to keep them separate."

Geese half-plucked, wholly plucked, and those yet to be plucked hang head-downward from the walls or are scattered on the stools and boxes. The pluckers all wear big, coarse aprons, and the yellow breasts of the birds gleam bare and pimply in the straggling daylight as they are divested of their covering. "Rip! rip! rip!" is the only sound in the place; the pluckers are too busy to talk; besides, the eye of the manager is on them; some are not working at so much a bird, but by the hour,—or to pay off some past obligation. Only the younger women can speak English. A country goose-plucker, where the squeaking goose has her long neck twisted round under the plucker's arm, and is robbed of her glory under the very eyes of the hissing, rebellious gander, is far more spirited, particularly when, after the ordeal, the plucked victims find themselves free, and waddle off in loud conclave, making indignant ado over their treatment. The east-side goose-plucking in the basement is tame in comparison.

The orthodox Jews use goose-grease in the preparation of all their food, lard being prohibited, and even butter is prescribed in the cooking of certain dishes. This obligation makes necessary the consumption of many geese. The flesh of the geese is liked also, not only by the Jews of that populous neighborhood, but by the Germans as well, so the weekly killing and plucking of the long-billed cracklers assumes important place in the doings of that particular vicinity.—New York Post.

The Antiquity of Gold.

Gold was probably the first 'metal' observed and collected, because of the instinctive understanding of its intrinsic value. About its superstitious uses, religious and ceremonious rites, and strange crimes were committed for its possession in the days when it was believed that it was of such stuff that the sun itself was made and the halls of Valhalla paved. Rock paintings and carvings of Egyptian tombs earlier than the days of Joseph indicate the operation of washing auriferous sand, and a subsequent melting in furnaces by the aid of blow-pipes. Less than twenty years ago the old mines of Nubia, so graphically described by Diodorus, were rediscovered on the shores of the Red sea, together with a line of ancient wells across the desert; the underground workings where ore veins had been followed by the pick, the rude cupelling furnace for assaying, picks, oil lamps, stone mills, mortars and pestles, inclined warming tables of stone, crucibles and retorting furnaces of burned tile, by which the entire process could be traced.

Here slaves and hapless prisoners of war exchanged their life blood for glittering dust to fill the treasuries of their captors. In India and Asia Minor the powdered ore was washed down over smooth, sloping rocks and caught gold in the fleeces of sheepskins sunk in the stream. It was literally a golden fleece that Jason brought back from the Caucasus. Further north, and following the eastern foothills of Mount Ararat to the southern slope of the Ural mountains in Russian Siberia, where last year millions were taken out of the old mines, the ancient Scythians broke up rock and gravel with copper implements, scraped off the glittering dust and nuggets with the fangs of wild boars, and carried their gain away in bags of leather.—Modern Machinery.

Wild Geese Came Aboard.

On her down trip on Green river, recently, near Cromwell, the steamer Gayoso ran into a flock of wild geese, and the electric light dazzled them that they flew toward the boat, striking the fore-castle and chimneys, and getting tangled in the guy ropes. There was great excitement among the passengers and crew, each trying his best to "catch a goose." In the exciting struggle, which lasted but a few moments, they succeeded in capturing three out of the number. They were placed in a coop and the next day the passengers were treated to a sumptuous wild goose dinner.—Louisville Post.

At Beccles, Suffolk, England, there is a young man, a nephew of a former rector of the parish, who, though blind, is a skater, dancer and bicycle rider.

SCIENTIFIC SCRAPS.

The baked banana is the ideal food for nervous and anaemic brain workers. On an average, man's physical strength begins to decay at the age of thirty-six.

A curious present for a deaf person in Germany is a fan, deftly concealing a tiny ear trumpet in its stick.

The temperature of the cucumber has been found to be one degree below that of the surrounding atmosphere.

According to French figures, a man adds eleven years to his theoretical and statistical life by marrying at age of thirty.

The most powerful microscope ever invented has just been perfected by Professor E. L. Gates of Washington, D. C. Its magnifying power is 3,000,000 diameters.

Lighthouses in Denmark are supplied with oil, which is pumped on the waves during a storm. This explains the fact that two or three vessels are always to be seen round each lighthouse in rough weather.

At present the world's production of nickel is considerably in excess of the consumption, but as there are but four or five districts in the world where it is worked the price is maintained by controlling the actual production. The world's total output last year was about 4803 metric tons.

Of the candidates for the British army who fail to pass the tests four out of five are rejected because of defective vision. The "eyesight" test consists of being able to count correctly with both eyes, as well as each eye separately, a number of small black dots exhibited on a card ten feet from the candidate.

According to the statement of the Engineer and Mining Journal, an authority on mining matters, the new Klondike placers may be expected to produce about \$60,000,000 in gold. This statement is admittedly limited by the fact that there has been no systematic examination of the alluvial deposits to admit of an exact determination.

A strongly phosphorescent strontium sulphide has been investigated by Professor Monrolo of Madrid. The pure compound shows no phosphorescence, the presence of a small quantity of alkali seeming to be necessary and a trace of subnitrate of bismuth an advantage. After cooling from a high temperature slowly, the substance is made strongly phosphorescent by even a very little light. Pulverization destroys this property, which may be restored by long heating with starch.

Mexico has now become a producer of sulphur, aside from that which is obtained from the crater of Popocatepetl for local consumption, a trial consignment having been received recently at Yuma from the mines in Lower California, which are being exploited by an American company. Arrangements for the construction of an aerial tramway to bring sulphur on a large scale from the summit of Popocatepetl to the foot of the mountain have been discussed for a long time, and surveys have been made.

The Trade in Locusts.

Locusts are regularly shipped from Algeria to London, where they are worked up by manufacturers of guano. This information is of unusual interest now, owing to the report of a purchase for the English markets of Argentine locusts, which may compete with the African article. In this connection a report of the British consul-general in Algiers is of importance. Algeria had two flights of locusts last year. That the visitations in that country are of magnitude is shown when it is stated that the area over which the eggs were laid last year was 424,500 acres, while 270,120 bushels of young locusts were destroyed, and these are said to be below the real figures. The barriers or lines of defence, made of the "Cyprus apparatus," or of zinc, extended over 322 miles, while 27,113 ditches were dug at the foot of these to catch the young locusts. The damage for the year is estimated at about \$250,000.—Boston Transcript.

An Aluminium House.

A. F. Howes of Weymouth, Mass., has recently secured patents in this country and in Canada on a portable aluminium house, which when packed for transportation is in three compact bundles and weighs but 130 pounds, including the stove and sundry cooking utensils that go with it. The Klondike home, as it is called, will comfortably house four people, and besides being built in such a way that its inmates are well protected from the coldest weather, it is fireproof, a feature which is of no small importance when one considers the strong inclination of prospectors to overheat their stoves in order to keep one half comfortable.—Washington Star.

A specimen of German architectural and business solidity is afforded by the fact that in Nuremberg there are houses still in good order which were erected in 1890, and that in the same town a firm has been engaged in manufacturing harmonicas since 1560, sixty years before the settlement in New England.