

SPRING IN WINTER.

Surely, surely bees are humming in the mazy tangles sweet;
Spring, with April smiles is coming: There are lilacs at her feet!
Mocking birds in peach-blossoms singing thrill with joy the dreamy air,
And the green is on the meadow, and the wild flowers cluster there!

There's a sense of summer sweetness in the broad fields and the dells
And a chiming—or is it fancy?—of remembered heather-bells!
And the mildest suns are shining, and the skies are bright with blue,
And in gardens Love is twining all his rarest wreaths for you!

—Frank L. Stanton.

An Inland Iron-Clad.

BY C. A. STEPHENS.

Rufus Rundlett is another instance to prove that "the boy is father to the man." When 16 years of age he helped to invent an armor-clad coasting sled, "the Rantum-Scouter," and he alone steered it down Wilkins hill to victory over the "Number Seven" boys; and now he is commander of an armor-clad ship, quite as capable, I doubt not, of routing an enemy.

The schoolhouse in "Number Six," where we underwent a mild form of education together, stood at the forks of the county road, with the cross-town road, which led down Wilkins hill, on one side and Mill hill on the other. The county road extended north and south, along the crest of a fine, broad ridge of land divided into ten fertile farms, owned by as many well-to-do farmers whose families made up our school district.

We young people of Number Six had always been a little inclined to look down on the boys and girls of Number Seven at the Corners, near the foot of Wilkins hill, for the denizens of Number Seven were a somewhat poor and shiftless lot. The larger boys were pugnacious and ill-disposed, and unless a schoolmaster were strong enough to thrash four or five of them, he must suffer the humiliation of being carried out of the schoolhouse.

At Number Six, on the contrary, the pupils were well-advanced, self-respecting and orderly. An able teacher was required, but less to govern than to instruct. Still, I now think that the contempt in which we held the Number Seven boys was rather pharisaical, and I do not wonder they resented it. We nicknamed them "bog-trotters," and they retorted by calling us "hill dogs." The two districts also belonged to two rival political parties, a fact which sharpened the animosity between them.

Wilkins hill was the best coasting place in the county. It consisted of five steep pitches, with intervals of less abrupt descent between them, which made altogether a run of more than a mile, to the foot of the hill beyond the bridge over Longmeadow brook. It had always been, and is to this day, the favorite coast of the Number Six boys. Indeed, we boasted that few, save Number Six boys, dared steer a sled down that hill.

When the road was smooth and icy terrific speed was attained on the lowest pitch, and any error in steering might easily cost the coaster his life. Boys from other places were usually afraid to try the hill, but if a Number Sixboy had not made the "run" at 13 or 14 years of age we deemed him a backward lad.

The coasting sleds most in favor with us were small and narrow. They were shod with half-round steel shoes, which were slightly bowed to make a "spring" space of an inch at the middle of the runner. Our favorite posture for coasting on this hill was face downward, with toes extended behind to aid in steering. Usually in starting at the top of the hill we ran forward, one after another, flung ourselves down on our sleds and thus set off at speed.

On moonlit evenings, when there were girls in the party, trains were often made up of ten or twelve sleds—some of them large hand-sleds, on which four or five could sit at ease. The forward or leading sled was called the "engine" and was steered by one of the oldest, strongest boys. Such a train, humming down that long hill by moonlight, gaining speed at every pitch till it shot past the Corners at Number Seven, going 60 miles an hour, afforded an exhilarating spectacle.

There was an almost uninterrupted view from top to bottom of the long descent; and besides the steerman on the engine there was a "hornman," whose business it was to blow a tin horn if we saw a team or pedestrian coming up. All the others, too, joined in a tremendous shout of "Road! road! road!"

The hill was so long that not more than three or four coasts could be made in an evening and generally not more than one during the noon intermission, when school was in session. A hired man from one of the farms, with a span of horses and a long pung aleigh, saved us the drudgery of pulling our sleds up the hill.

Laws relative to coasting were not then very strict in Maine, and we supposed we had a right to coast down the road at 60 miles an hour. Nobody had ever made any objection. The only drawback to the sport was that we had to run past the schoolhouse in Number Seven, and the bog-trotters were accustomed to rush out and pelt us with snowballs. The place was locally known as Wilkins Corners.

three or four weeks before Rufus Rundlett devised the Rantum-Scouter; the entire hill was smooth as glass. Nearly every morning, noon and night some of us Number Six boys were coasting, and often there were parties of 20 or 30.

The loafers and bog-trotters had jeered at us as we flew past and snow-balled us as in former years, but before long the Number Seven boys actually undertook to stop all Number Six coasters. They rolled great snowballs into the road in front of the schoolhouse and built a high fort clear across the road. Four of our boys who started to coast down were obliged to take to the ditch. The bog-trotters then rushed from their fort and by pelting them with snowballs forced them to run back up the hill. They shouted that no hill dog should pass that schoolhouse.

But as their fort stopped teams as well as coasters, one of the selectmen of the town ordered them to remove it at once, and during the following evening a train of ten sleds from Number Six coasted defiantly by.

But the next noon they played a new and worse trick on us. Eight of ten of us set off to go down singly, one sled a few yards behind another, when, as we drew near Number Seven schoolhouse, Rufus Rundlett, who was ahead, noticed that Matthias Monsen, one of the larger boys at the Corners, was standing on one side of the road and his brother Lem on the other.

"Look out for snowballs!" Rufus shouted back to us. Neither he nor any of the rest of us saw that a new rope lay across the road on the snow till the Monsen boys raised it and caught us. Rufus' sled was capsized, and all the rest of us were piled up in a heap. Some of us were scraped off our sleds, some had their sleds upset; for the Number Seven crowd had three or four boys at each end of the rope, and as fast as a sled came along it was caught by the rope and jerked over. Meantime a dozen other Number Seven boys were raining snowballs upon us. We had to pick ourselves up, recover our sleds and get away as best we could.

"Try it again!" they shouted after us. "If you think you can run by Number Seven try it again!"

For a day or two we had little disposition to try it again; they were too big and too many for us to thrash, as we would, perhaps have been justified in doing, and we did not dare to try the coast; but we chafed under the restraint and beat our brains for a device to break it effectually.

"Dol!" Edmunds, who, after Rufus, was probably the most energetic of our boys, proposed to run a big market pung sleigh down, taking one of the hills under each arm as he lay face downward on his narrow coasting sled between them. This feat had sometimes been performed on the hill by the older boys. Dol's idea was that the pung, loaded with ten or a dozen boys, would break the rope or jerk it away from those who tried to hold it. It was evident, however, that if the rope were so held as to upset his sled the pung thills would drop and the pung come to grief, to say nothing of the danger to Dol himself from being run over by it.

It was then that Rufus Rundlett proposed to take the thills off the pung and steer it down himself, by lying directly beneath it on his own low sled and grasping one pung runner at the forward upward turn in each hand and planting a foot against one of the iron braces of the runners on each side. He declared he could steer the pung in that way and be completely covered by it.

The most of us were afraid, however, that the bog-trotters would scrape us off of the pung with their rope. At this stage of the argument Rufus proposed making the pung into a wooden armor-clad.

Dol and he worked nearly all the following night. They took off the low pung-box and replaced it with one far larger and stronger, made of joist and pine boards. It covered the pung runners entirely, being over eight feet long by four feet wide, and the sides rose to a height of over three feet, quite sufficient to shield all who sat within them. The box was made fast to the runners and had a kind of prow in front, projecting three or four feet in a wedge-shaped triangle.

When they hauled it to the schoolhouse next day everyone who saw it, including our woman teacher, agreed it was the most singular "coaster" ever seen in those parts. Rufus, when lying under it on his little sled to steer, was almost completely hidden from view; and a short trial trip down the first

essary that he should be strapped to the little sled.

Rufus was ready to start at once, but the courage of many of the boys was not quite equal to taking passage in so novel a contrivance. Indeed, some little bravery was required, for if Rufus failed to steer it broken necks might be the result. Then, too, no one knew how strong the bog-trotters' rope would prove to be or what would happen when we ran foul of it.

But next day, after we had eaten our noon lunch, Rufus having sent his father's hired man, with a span of horses, down the hill in advance, placed himself under the pung in position for steering.

"Come on, boys!" he called, "who's afraid?"

Dol Edmunds was the first to climb in, and nine of us followed him. "Shove off!" exclaimed Rufus, and in a moment more we were gliding down the first pitch. Altogether the pung, the heavy box and its load of boys must have weighed a ton. It rapidly gathered speed. Down the second pitch it swept, hummed across the level stretch and took the third pitch, faster and faster.

It was amazing that Rufus steered so well, but he seemed to know how at once. My own sensations swung between terror and a wild elation. Down the long fourth pitch we shot, gaining tremendous headway. The pung was now going so fast that the jar and jolting motion had entirely ceased. It seemed as if the road had been oiled. The keen rush of cold air cut our faces, and brought to my eyes, I remember, was a haze of tears, through which I saw dimly a wild procession of hurrying trees and roadside fences.

The Number Seven boys had seen us coming. As we headed down the fifth and last pitch we heard them shouting, and seven or eight of them ran across the road.

"They're stretching their rope!" Dol exclaimed. Jumping to his feet, he pulled off his red woolen muffler and waved it defiantly, while we all yelled like wild Indians. The bog-trotters yelled back defiance and raised their rope. In their ignorance they probably thought that, with five or six boys at each end of the rope, they would be able to upset us.

But the next moment they received an impressive object-lesson. The momentum of the heavy pung was something prodigious! We scarcely felt the rope when we struck it, and the next instant a dozen Number Seven boys were taking most extravagant leaps as they were jerked into the road behind us! All of them had been gripping the rope hard, and some of them were carried 50 feet before they could let go! They were about the most astonished-looking boys that I ever saw!

As for the pung, it did not stop till it reached the foot of the hill beyond the bridge over Longmeadow brook, where we found the man and horses waiting to haul it back up to Number Six.

The bog-trotter boys had not wholly recovered from their discomfiture when we went by; their school bell was ringing, and when Rufus politely asked them what they thought of our blockade-runner they had little to say.

"Hol!" Lem said, feebly. "What do we care for your old rantum-scooter?" And the name stuck to Rufus' armor-clad. We soon came to call it the Rantum-Scouter ourselves.

The Number Seven boys knew better than to attempt to hold a rope in front of the blockade-runner again; but they still imagined that the rope would stop us, if only the ends could be made fast. Next day at noon, when we coasted down, we found that they had drawn it tight across the road and tied one end to a tree near the schoolhouse and the other to a horse-post in front of the grocery opposite. The rope snapped like twine when we struck it.

A day or two later, as we coasted down, we found that they had collected eight or ten ox chains, but they did not dare to use them; perhaps because they feared to kill some of us, or possibly because the selectmen had threatened to have them punished if they seriously molested us more.

After this they no longer tried to stop us, but they pelted us hard with frozen snowballs. For ordinary snowballs we cared little, since we could draw our heads down into the box as we passed; but soon 'Thias, Lem and some of the others began hurling heavy lumps of ice into the pung.

To set such missiles at defiance, Rufus and Dol rebuilt the box of the pung, making the sides higher, putting a top on it and covering it with sheet iron.

During the following week we made the coast not less than 20 times with this curious contrivance. Lumps of ice and even stones were launched at it; but no violence which the disgruntled bog-trotters could inflict prevented our running their blockade as long as the good coasting weather lasted.—Youth's Companion.

The directors of the poor of Northumberland county, Penn., have decided to abolish salaried physicians in the various districts of the county, and hereafter pay a reasonable fee to the doctors employed outside of the

MARVELOUS CIVIC INDUSTRY.

Shoreditch in London Makes Profitable Use of Street Sweepings.

In a letter from London a year ago last summer, writes William E. Curtis, I described a novel enterprise which had been entered upon by the Shoreditch parish of London to supply electricity for lighting the streets, dwellings and public buildings by using the street sweepings for fuel. Up to that date the parish had paid about \$30,000 per year for carting the refuse to a barge on the river Thames and towing it to a dumping place in the sea, and about \$20,000 annually for gas to light the streets and parish buildings. About \$60,000, or \$10,000 more than these annual charges, which was met by taxing the people, was invested in an electric plant, which has since been run twenty-four hours for six days in the week, and twelve hours on Sunday, furnishing electrical power for small manufacturing purposes at night. The street sweepings have furnished almost all the fuel necessary. The cost of coal in addition was only \$432. The total expenditures for the first year were \$19,070 for wages, stores, supplies, insurance, repairs and other purposes. The interest, sinking fund, rents and the ordinary allowance for the depreciation of the property was \$10,205, making a total of \$29,275. The gross receipts for the sale of light and power including a credit equal to the average charge for street lighting by gas were \$45,105, thus leaving a net profit of \$15,930 for the benefit of the parish treasury, which will be used in enlarging the plant.

Arrangements are now being made to use the escaping steam to heat the water of the public bath, instead of allowing it to go to waste.

Furnaces have been added for burning the garbage collected from the dwellings which could not be used for fuel, and this extra expense, which was, however, comparatively trifling, was more than offset by saving the cost of hauling the garbage to the barges.

The experiment has been so successful that other London parishes are planning to adopt the same method, and it is confidently predicted that in a few years the entire city will be lighted by electricity furnished by the sweepings from its streets. London is paved with wooden blocks and small boys are employed with brooms and dustpans at frequent intervals from daylight till dark to keep them clean. The pans are dumped in large sheet-iron receptacles, which are emptied twice a day into carts. In Shoreditch parish each dwelling is supplied by the vestry with two sheet-iron buckets, one for kitchen slops and the other for paper, dust and other combustible waste from the household. The buckets are emptied once a day into garbage carts. Hitherto a small tax has been collected for this service, but hereafter it will be performed free of cost.

Had the "Buck Fever."

When a hunter sees his first deer there is no telling just what he will do. Sometimes he will try to shoot without having his gun cocked, and then again he will stand and stare at the game without saying a word.

A good story is told on Frank Hughes and Oden Eskill, who returned last night from a hunting trip near Bad Water. While patiently looking for a shot Saturday, having had no opportunity so far, they saw a deer's tail sticking out of the brush. Every once in a while the deer would wiggle its tail as if to invite them to come on. They moved up cautiously, when the deer ran out into a clearing. The boys followed and, to their surprise, they saw five fine deer. Oden stood paralyzed for a moment, and although he had his gun in his hand ready to shoot, he tremblingly said:

"Oh, Frank, if I only had my gun!"

Frank then tried to raise his gun, but his muscles would not work, and he stood there like a sphinx until the herd ran away. The boys, however, fired a shot after the deer to let them know that they were alive and well.—Iron Mountain Tribune.

Sterne's Destitution.

Lawrence Sterne, the writer, was the victim of the intensest poverty. A little time before his death, being in a state of destitution, he went one evening borrow \$25 from his friend Garrick. Upon arriving he heard music and knew that a party was going on. He heard the merry laughter, and gently replacing his up-lifted knocker, retraced his steps.

We never feel our miseries so keenly as when contrasted with the joys of others, and it is only then that we realize Wordsworth's picture:

"And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined for food."

Another story of this writer does not evoke so much sympathy. It was known that Sterne used his wife very ill, and in talking with Garrick one day in fine sentimental style of conjugal love and fidelity, said, "The husband who behaves unkindly to his wife deserves to have his house burn down over his head."

"If you think so," said Garrick, quietly, "I hope yours is well in-

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

SUNDAY'S DISCOURSE BY THE NOTED DIVINE.

Subject: "The Housewife's Perplexities"—Lessons Drawn From the Episode of Martha and Mary—Daily Trials Prepare One For Future Blessings.

TEXT: "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me."—Luke x., 40.

Yonder is a beautiful village homestead. The man of the house is dead and his widow has charge of the premises. It is Widow Martha, of Bethany. Yes, I will show you also the pet of the household. It is Mary, the younger sister, with a book under her arm, and in her face no sign of care or anxiety about anything. Company has come. Christ's appearing at the outside of the door makes some excitement inside the door. The sisters set back the disarranged furniture, arrange their hair, and in a flash prepare to open the door. They do not keep Christ waiting outside until they have newly appareled themselves or elaborately arranged their tresses, and then with affected surprise come out and, pretending not to have heard the two or three previous knockings, say, "Why is this to you?" No, they were ladies, and always presentable, although perhaps they had not on their best. None of us always have on our best. Otherwise very soon our best would not be worth having on. They throw open the door and greet Christ. They say: "Good morning, Master. Come in and be seated." Christ brought a company of friends with Him, and the influx of so many city visitors, you do not wonder, threw the country home into some perturbation. I suppose the talk from the city had been a keen appetizer. The kitchen department, that was Mary's important department, and I think as soon as Martha had greeted her guests she went to that room. Mary had no anxiety about the dinner. She had full confidence that her sister Martha could get up the best dinner in Bethany, and she practically said, "Now, let us have a division of labor. Martha, you cook and I'll sit down and learn."

The same difference you now sometimes see between sisters. There is Martha, industrious, painstaking, a good manager, ever inventive of some new plan, discipline, or trial, in a household affairs. Here is Mary, fond of conversation, literary, so full of questions of ethics she has no time to discuss questions of household welfare. It is noon. Mary is in the parlor. Martha is in the kitchen. It would have been better for them to have divided the toil, and then they could have divided the opportunity of listening to Christ. But Mary monopolizes Christ, while Martha sweaters before the fire. It was very important that they have a good dinner that day, for Christ was hungry, and He did not often have luxurious entertainment. I dare say, if all the responsibility of that entertainment had rested with Mary! What a repast they would have had! But something went wrong in the kitchen. Either the fire would not burn or the bread would not bake or something was done wrong. And then, as the dinner hour drew near, Martha, who had been so full of questions of ethics she had no time to discuss questions of household welfare, she would have been very important that they have a good dinner that day, for Christ was hungry, and He did not often have luxurious entertainment. I dare say, if all the responsibility of that entertainment had rested with Mary! What a repast they would have had! But something went wrong in the kitchen. Either the fire would not burn or the bread would not bake or something was done wrong. And then, as the dinner hour drew near, Martha, who had been so full of questions of ethics she had no time to discuss questions of household welfare, she would have been very important that they have a good dinner that day, for Christ was hungry, and He did not often have luxurious entertainment. I dare say, if all the responsibility of that entertainment had rested with Mary! What a repast they would have had! 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