

## A MINNESOTA "LITTLE BREECHES"

The Grand Rapids, Minn., correspondent for the St. Paul Dispatch sends to his paper, under date of May 18, an interesting story about a Minnesota "Little Breeches." Here it is:

Of course you have read John Hay's "Pike County Ballads." "That understands itself," as the French put it. Equally, of course, you have smiled at the simple faith of the rough Pike county farmer in the ballad of "Little Breeches," as shown in his explanation of how Little Gabe reached the sheepfold through the blinding snowstorm. Thus, as you remember, went the words:

"How did he git thar? Angels!  
He could never have walked in that storm!  
They jest stooped down an' toted him  
To where it was safe an' warm."

And as you read them you will remember that, at the back of your mind, there was always a lurking fancy that mayhap the Pike's faith had a firmer foundation than you wotted of. That, in such peril as the ballad describes, a stronger arm than any arm of flesh might be stretched out to aid, and that, after all, as Hamlet hath it:

"There are more things in heaven and earth,  
Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Whether Mr. Hay's ballad had any foundation of fact or not, 'tis hard to say; likely no more than most poetical edifices. But a happening 'way out in the wilds of Minnesota this spring had furnished a very substantial one had a poet been at hand to embalm it in verse.

In that section of the country where the ax and saw of the lumberman are emitting their final notes even now, the settler is crowding in, and the land, once tenanted only by Indians, wild beasts and "lumberjacks," is fast being converted into farms, a sturdy descendant of the Vikings had "taken up" a homestead, broken land and set to work at raising crops, at the same time raising an equally sturdy brood of children. Among the latter was a fine little boy of about three years of age, as fearless and investigative as the average male animal of like maturity, who succeeded in evading his mother's eyes one afternoon and disappeared in the forest surrounding his father's clearing. An hour or two elapsed before his mother missed him; his father was away from home; and darkness had nearly set in before a search for the missing child was fairly on foot.

The present has been one of the coldest springs on record, even in Minnesota; a heavy frost fell during the night; yet when the child was found, but a little before noon of the next day, he had received no harm beyond an abnormal increase of appetite—if that may be considered any under the circumstances. The few neighbors, of course, joined in the search, as did a crew of lumbermen engaged in driving logs nearby, and one of the latter—who found the boy—told the story so graphically that he may well be allowed to finish it.

"When the old men sent the hurry-up call fer us to drop drivin' 'n' hike over to the Norsk's 't'd los' his kid, we broke fer the little farm mighty quick, now I tell you. We knowed the woods 'bout there was full o' wolves, 'n' 'f they didn't git the kid the night was due to be colder'n h—l, 'n' 'n' h'd freeze to death sure 'f he warn't found 'fore the frost fell. We jest stopped at the wanagan long enough to fill our lunch sacks with grub 'n' git plenty matches, 'n' then we put right into the woods affyin'. We made torches of birch bark, 'sides havin' all the lanterns they was on the drive, 'n' the old man spread the whole fifty of us out, 'n' we fair fine-tooth-combed that country all night. But we couldn't find hide 'r' hair o' the kid 'n' when mornin' come, I sez to myself, 'thet kid's a goner, sure, 'n' about ev'rybody else thought the same way, 'cept the old man, who wouldn't give up tryin' to do anything he started out to do before he was dead. Well, we eat a lunch and at it again, 'n' 'long 'bount noon I foun' the kid. He was lyin' asleep in a big holler log, 'n' 'f a bear hadn't denned up in that same logs las' winter you may kick me. The kid was lyin' on the grass 'n' leaves 'n' moss the bear 'd used fer a bed, 'n' ter stop up the end of the log when he crawled inter it, 'n' hed pushed out when he clim' out this spring 'n' 'f his little cap hadn't a fell off 'n' onto the ground front o' the log I'd a went by 'n' never seen him. But my eyes lit on the cap, 'n' then o' course I rubbed 'round till I seen the kid. I took him out, 'n' the first thing the game little devil did was to say that he's awful hungry, 'n' if he

didn't git away with ev'ry crum' o' grub in my lunchsack, 'n' still be good fer more 'f he could a got it, you can call me a liar. 'Course, bein' such a little kid, he couldn't tell me much 'bout it, as he tried to after I'd raised the long yell, 'n' was waitin' fer the boys to come in, 'n' he'd et all the grub I had, but he did make out to tell me that he played 'bout in the woods till he got tired, 'n' then tried to go home, but couldn't git there. 'N' then it got dark, 'n' he was awful scairt, 'n' then he come on a big black doggie 'n' two little doggies layin' down, 'n' he laid down with 'em, 'n' slep' warm all night. 'N' he was so tired when it come mornin' he couldn't keep up with the doggies, 'n' they runned 'way 'n' lef' him. 'N' then he tried to git home, but couldn't make it, 'n' foun' the holler log, 'n' crawled in, 'n' wanted his mother, 'n' that's 'bout all I could make out o' his talk 'fore he went asleep agin in my lap 'fore the boys come up. Jehovly Flat Rock! 'F that kid didn't sleep 'longside a she ber'n 'er two cubs 'n' keep from freezin' that night, but how a she bear 'ith cubs, the dangerouses thing that walks, ever 'lowed him to do it, 'thout killin' him, I'm d—d 'f I kin git through my head."

And many a wiser Jack of the Woods could not "git it through his head"—but the Pike's Angel theory, might apply in the case, if it would apply at all.

## WARRING ON OKLAHOMA

The Springfield, Mass., Republican prints an editorial, which ought to be seriously considered by republican readers. The Republican says:

"It was reported some days ago that Speaker Cannon and other republican leaders were engaged in an effort to hold up the Oklahoma statehood movement until after the presidential election of next year. Whether this be true or not, it is now certain that the republicans of the Oklahoma and Indian territories are working for some such result, and may succeed at least in bringing about serious complications if not partisan riots and bloodshed.

"As is well known, congress adopted an enabling act and the two territories held a constitutional convention, which has finished its work and dissolved. This convention was heavily democratic and indicated the success of the democrats in the elections of state officers and congressmen, to be held next August, the vote on ratification of the constitution to be taken at the same time. The republicans are now in possession of the territorial governments, and if the statehood movement should be tied up they would remain in possession indefinitely. Furthermore, elections for state officers and congressmen at this time would not only result probably in turning the state government over to the democrats, but in adding seven votes to the electoral college, which would most likely prove to be democratic next year and might turn the scale in the presidential election. Nevertheless, the republicans, while disliking the proposed constitution because of its radicalism, concluded at first to go ahead and make the most of the situation.

"Now all this is changed. The republicans of the two territories, acting through their joint committee, which met last week, exhibit a determination to 'welch' and block the statehood game into which they had entered. If they hold a state convention at all next month, it will be, according to present plans, not to nominate a ticket but to protest against the validity of the whole election proceeding. The republican governor of Oklahoma has declared that he will not proclaim an election day, and that without such proclamation no valid election can be held—this in spite of the fact that the constitution framed by the convention itself proclaims a day of election and makes other provisions in relation thereto. Meantime several counties, whose boundaries have been changed, have sued out injunctions against the going into effect of the constitution, and the republicans declare that they will take no part in any election until at least these suits have been settled. Meantime the democrats are going right ahead and purpose to nominate full tickets at primary elections held early next month, as well as to vote in election on the tickets on August 6.

"It is a queer mix-up and suggests the question whether the republican blockading movement in Oklahoma is being worked up independently of any word from the White House or from the republican national committee. In any event republican persistence in the course now planned would result in rump elections on August 6, and the appearance of two sets of governments in the proposed state of Oklahoma—a democratic state government under a state

constitution, and a republican territorial government claiming the protection of federal law and a republican national administration. And the consequence of that would be interminable litigation if not something worse. Meantime, in what way do the Oklahoma republicans, or the republican party leaders outside of Oklahoma, expect that such a course of conduct will be helpful to the party either there or elsewhere?"



## A HOT TALE FOR MR. ROOSEVELT

So long as Mr. Roosevelt confined his controversies to those circles where politicians most do congregate, his task was comparatively easy, but since he engaged in disputes with the "nature experts" Mr. Roosevelt has discovered that the head that wears a crown is not at all times entirely at its ease.

It will be remembered that Mr. Roosevelt hotly denounced Rev. Dr. Long because that "nature expert" undertook to show that a common wolf had killed a deer by biting the deer's chest; but that was a simple proposition compared with the one presented by Francis Aubrey of New York. Writing to the New York World, Mr. Aubrey says:

"As an Englishman I respect the presidential office too much to enter into a controversy with the president, and I trust I will not be roped into the Society of the Deliberate and Unqualified if, as an eye-witness, I vouch for the following:

"In or about the month of June, 1880, Lord Randolph Churchill and I were together hunting big game in the central part of South Africa. Toward the close of a disheartening day during which we met nothing save a hot wind blowing across the sandy wastes we traversed, we suddenly came across the tracks of a huge elephant, apparently a rogue elephant, as we noticed from the spoor he was traveling alone. Following the spoor we came to the sloping shore of a sweet-water lagoon and there 200 yards from the banks we saw a regular Jumbo enjoying a big drink to his heart's content. My companion and I had hardly time to exchange ideas as to how we should tackle the monster when, the elephant trumpeting an alarm, we saw the open jaws of a crocodile suddenly arise from the water in front of the elephant and with a hard, metallic click close down tight upon the elephant's trunk. The elephant immediately began to withdraw shoreward, drawing the crocodile with him, but had not receded thirty feet when another crocodile appeared and seizing the tail of his amphibious friend materially helped in checking the elephant's retreat from the water. Strength and weight, however, were on the elephant's side, and with measured backward stride he was gradually making the banks, where we expected to see him with one of his mighty feet crush any further presumption out of Mr. Crocodile; but at this moment three other crocodiles came on the scene and each falling into line and taking hold of another's tail formed one side of the grandest tug-o-war that mortal man ever witnessed. The hindmost crocodile acting as a sort of stroke-oar in this remarkable aquatic team, began to back-paddle with his foremost paws, and the strain upon his proboscis must have been terrible for the elephant. Amid the lashed and foam-covered waters it was almost impossible to form an opinion as to the ultimate result of this gigantic struggle.

"'It's even money on either side!' exclaimed Randy. 'I'll take your lordship's five to four against the elephant!' shouted I, and no sooner was the wager effected than the sagacity of the elephant landed me the money as well as himself the victor. The elephant simply blew through his trunk the many gallons of water he had just previously imbibed, and the foremost crocodile, feeling a great and forceful swirl of waters uprooting his back teeth and threatening to almost wash his very tongue down his throat, had to release I's hold, and the entire crew of five crocodiles fell back into the depths of the lagoon defeated and disgraced.

"No doubt some writers of stories of wild animals such as mountain lions or Killkenny cats have misinterpreted some of the things they have witnessed, and others have unconsciously permitted their imagination to color their observations, but truth will prevail for the simple reason that truth is stronger as well as stranger than fiction. Those, therefore, not disposed to believe my authentic tale can do the other thing. I'm no mollycoddle."

What will Mr. Roosevelt say of Francis Aubrey? Breathlessly the world—not the New York World, but the real article—awaits Mr. Roosevelt's action in this emergency.