

THE RED CLOUD CHIEF
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A. B. McARTHUR PUBLISHER

THE ONLY DEMOCRATIC PAPER IN WEBSTER COUNTY

It almost is Christmas. We hardly can wait to hang up the stockings alongside the grate. A bustle and sparkle pervades all around; the fir trees are out and there's snow on the ground. The children, excited and thrilled with delight, are dreaming of Santa Claus all through the night. They wake up and listen to sounds on the roof which is to their fancies a reindeer's wee hoof. The old folks more eager than even the tots, are burning with secrets and brimming with plots. Mince pies in the pantries delicious and sweet of mother's own making are ready to eat. It almost is Christmas; St. Nick in his sleigh all loaded with treasures is coming this way. His reindeer are flying a day or two more and down through the chimney he'll bound to the floor. And then if the stockings are not in their place, in sorrow he'll vanish and leave not a trace. So hang up the stockings by chimneys with care the night before Christmas; St. Nick will be there.

Between forty and fifty sacks of mail left this city on No. 14 Tuesday night. This is the largest shipment of mail ever to leave this city and is evidence that we are still growing.

The fall of six inches of snow was a most welcome event owing to the lack of the usual fall rains. This will put the winter wheat in fine condition and allay the fear that no crops will be raised next year.

This issue closes the first year under the present management of the Chief and we take this opportunity to thank our many friends for their liberal patronage during the past twelve months. We have endeavored to give our readers fifty two news issues. Some times, perhaps, we have not fully succeeded, but that may have been largely due to the lack of something going on. During the coming year we shall make improvements as fast as we can, and we invite those outside the fold to become members of the Chief's reading circle. Wishing you one and all a Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year, we again thank you for your past favors.

Profit in Alfalfa at \$37 Per Ton

A dairyman with a farm within 40 miles of Boston bought a second of alfalfa hay the other day in Nebraska and told a University farm professor that he expects to feed it with profit in Massachusetts at a total cost of \$27 a ton. Allowing for perhaps a higher price for milk in Boston than in the average Nebraska town, the professor thinks that the good dairymen could surely make a liberal profit on it at \$12 a ton.



THE ALARM is a dreadful thing for the man without insurance. Every time he sees the engines racing along his heart comes up in his throat if the fire is anywhere near his place. What folly, what mistaken economy.

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LYING IN AMBUSH

By CARL JENKINS.

There were eight tame rabbits—just eight.

When a girl, nineteen years old insists on keeping even two tame rabbits around the family country home, that family is in for trouble.

A family cat can be "scat-ter'd"; a family dog can be hit with the broomstick; a family goat can be brained with the ax and then argued with. But what can be done with tame rabbits?

They are in the kitchen under the cook's feet. They are to be found upstairs under or on the beds. They gnaw the tender bark from young trees. Their presence attracts passing dogs, and then there is a wild skurry and a squealing.

Those rabbits must be guarded and fed.

They must be hunted up at sundown and cooped. When they get to fighting among themselves at midnight and wake up the family and cause the man of the house to swear by the whiskers of his father and the girl-owner to scream to them from her window—when the rabbit named Caesar fights with the rabbit named Tom, and causes a succession of shrieks, no one can blame the man of the house from calling out to his daughter through the darkness:

"By thunder, young lady, this is the last night those varmints will raise a row around this house!"

"They are not varmints!" comes the reply.

"They are worse, and I'll wring their blamed necks the first thing in the morning!"

And the girl steals softly down stairs and tells Caesar that he must amend his conduct or be turned loose to shift for himself, and after a time the row is quieted, and the moon goes back to her job of sailing around the earth. When morning comes there is no wringing of necks. It's a mean man that will twist a rabbit's head off.

And so the incident is forgotten until next time, and Miss Viola keeps right on with the nuisance, and devotes more time to those eight rabbits than would make 16 young men very happy.

There was a change on the way, however. Miss Viola Rathbone got up one morning to discover that two of her rabbits had escaped. No, they had not escaped. They had been taken from the hutch by human hands and the door carefully closed again. She ran into the house to give the alarm and to add in a hysterical voice:

"Father, I want that negro Sam arrested!"

"For what?"

"Because he took the rabbits."

"Um!"

"When he was working here he was always telling how nice rabbit stew was."

"Did he leave his old hat behind to show that he was the thief?"

"Of course not, but he got the rabbits."

"Perhaps so."

"Perhaps it is so, and I want you to telephone the constable to come over here right away."

"I never mix up in rabbit cases."

"Dat I do," and away she went to the telephone and ordered the officer to appear forthwith.

"He came and listened."

"Why do you think it was Sam?" he asked.

"Because he know about the rabbits."

"But so do I."

"And he just loves rabbit soup."

"Dat!"

"But if you arrest him you can scare him into confessing."

"Dat I can't arrest him. He is working a hundred miles away."

"Then, if he didn't take the rabbits, who did?" demanded the indignant girl.

"Tramps, I guess."

"Yes, you guess, and that is to be the end of it!"

"I guess it is. There he was when I came down the road last night. This morning I saw a rabbit's bit, and I found fur and bones."

"And you didn't make an arrest?"

"Can you swear that they were the fur and bones of your rabbits?"

"Of course, I can!"

"All right, then. You go before the justice of the peace and swear out a warrant and I'll see about the fellow before noon."

Miss Viola didn't go. She decided that other creatures had fur and bones besides her rabbits, and that the justice would so hold. She reasoned, however, that if one gang of tramps had come along and stolen two of her rabbits a better case might be looked for any time who would steal four, and maybe the wools of the flock. Her father had no interest nor care, and her mother to words of condolence but she was old enough and big enough to protect her own. Her brother was away at college, but he had left his shotgun behind.

The rabbit hutch was below and not far from her bedroom window. If any one came spooking around she would fill them with bird shot and aches and pains. From eleven o'clock till two for four successive nights she was on guard at her window, and then she reaped her reward.

Before relating what that reward was, it is stated that about a mile below the Rathbone place lived a wife-

et named Danforth. He had a son named Robert who had a place in a bank in the city, and usually came down to stay over Sunday. Old Danforth, as he was usually referred to, was rich and eccentric. He was also domineering and stubborn.

The fourth night of Miss Viola's watch was a Saturday night and the son did not get down until hours after the usual time. The father was grumpy over this, and about nine o'clock in the evening discovered that his old dog was missing. It wasn't much of a dog, but his master went out and took a long hunt for him, and then came back to say to his son:

"You sit here as if it was of no interest to you whether that dog is living or dead!"

"Why, father, nothing has happened to old Buck," was the reply.

"You don't know, you don't care!"

"But I do care, father. If the old dog isn't home in an hour I'll go out and look for him."

At ten o'clock the canine had not returned. Mr. Danforth was stewing about it as much as if he had lost a horse, and he finally said:

"Robert, you go down the road and I'll go up. I shouldn't wonder if 'Buck' had gone up as far as Rathbone's. That girl of theirs has got some skunks or coons or rabbits for pets, and he may have gone sniffing around."

Miss Viola Rathbone and Mr. Robert Danforth had never met socially. Accident might have brought about an introduction, but there had been no accident as yet. When the young man went out to look for the dog it was far from his mind that there would be an accident that would affect his future years.

When Miss Viola took her seat at the window at eleven o'clock she had slight hopes of firing a handful of bird-shot over a tramp's head and running him into the next county, but nothing beyond that.

Old Danforth walked up the dusty highway, whistling and muttering, and halting now and then to say:

"If I find the old dog up there I'll boot him all the way home, and I'll go there tomorrow and tell that girl what I think of her! No girl has any business to keep pets around that will encourage a dog to run away from home. By hokey, this world is getting wuss and wuss all the time!"

The rabbit hutch was in sight over the fence from the street.

Mr. Danforth thought he saw his old dog spooking around, and he whistled.

"Ah, it's a tramp's signal!" exclaimed Miss Viola as she started up.

"Darn that dog! I'll go in there and see what's holding on to him!" muttered the owner.

Step! Step! Step!

The gun was softly poked out of the window.

No dog in sight, but the old man approached the hutch to see if he could make out what sort of pets were inside.

In the window above the girl drew a long breath, hoped she might go to heaven when she died, shut her eyes and pulled trigger.

Viola had never seen an old man—an eccentric man—an inflexible man receive a charge of birdshot while bending over a rabbit hutch or any other old hatch!

He gasped! He roared!

He gaped about in a circle and turned headprings.

Twenty seconds after the discharge of the gun Mr. Danforth was in his daughter's room and demanding:

"What in the name of Tophet have you been doing now?"

"Oh, father, I have killed a tramp!"

"The devil you have! Let me see!"

"He was after my rabbits. Will they electrocute me for killing him?"

"I don't believe that's a tramp! I'm going down to see."

Three minutes later he was bending over the victim and flashing the light of a lantern in his face.

"Say," he said, as he turned to his daughter, who stood fearful and trembling. "You have shot old Danforth!"

"Oh-h-h-h!"

"Yes, she has!" came from the hutch on the grass, "and she'll go to state prison for the rest of her life!"

Of course, he was wrong, it got up to bed and of course the doctor was called.

It was Miss Viola herself who had to ring up young Robert Danforth and announce:

"Hurry right over here! I have shot your father!"

Has a school and holds any thing by it with holding in legal? It certainly had in this case. By the time the old man could be moved home the young folks were in love, and stranger yet the victim of the gun was dead of it.

Miss Viola will not keep rabbits after the wedding.

"Buck" the best dog came home all right. He had been over to help the constable see. There were 42 birdshot in the gun.

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Familiar With Melodrama.

The principal of an academy in Providence had been in the habit of re-enacting the boys in his Shakespearean class to give appropriate titles for the scenes in the different plays. After reading "The Merchant of Venice" he asked one of the boys to suggest a good title for the scene in which Jessica steals away from her father's house with Lorenzo.

The boy, after a few minutes thoughtful silence, showed his familiarity with melodrama as well as his Shakespeare, by answering:

"No Mother to Guido Her."

Dr. Nicholson

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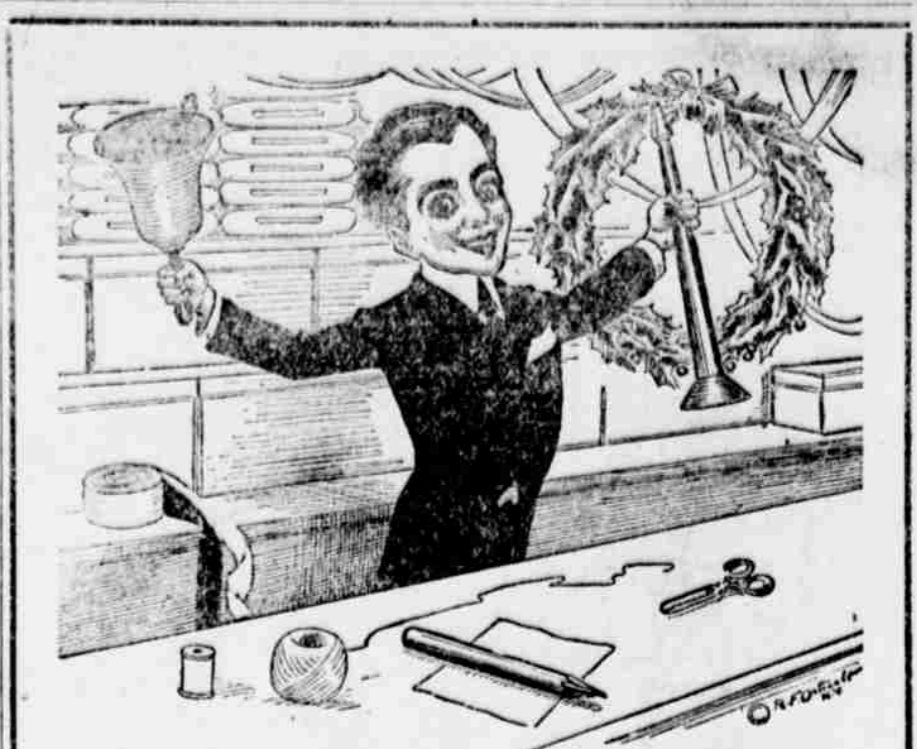
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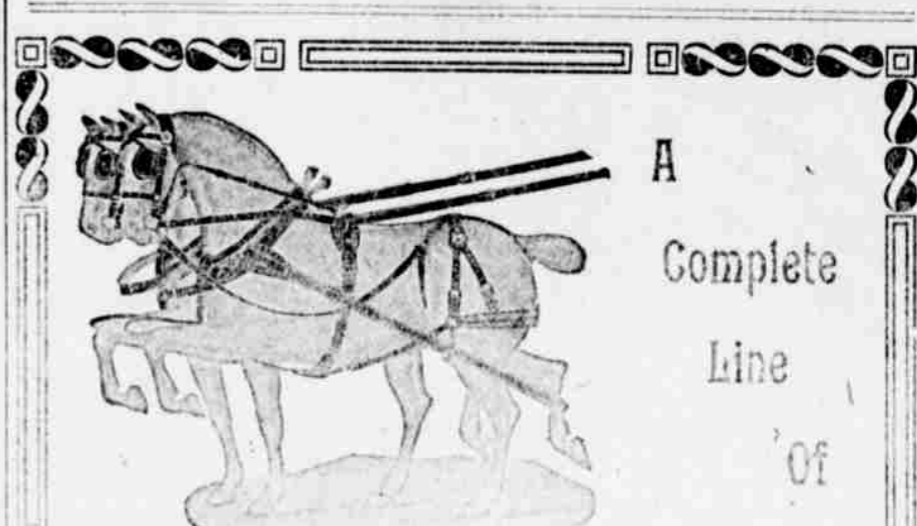
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