

CLAYTON PURDY. THE BOY NATURALIST.

There are few boys who, up to the age of 16, have done more toward their life's work beyond the ordinary routine of home and school duties. In addition, a boy has learned to swim, can play a creditable game of base ball and does not call forth more than an average amount of abuse from the neighbors, any reasonable parent will be satisfied, and might be pardoned for feeling even proud of him.

The subject of this article, Clayton Purdy of Stamford, Conn., is an interesting exception. Though barely 16 years of age, he has devoted himself to the study of natural history for the last four years, and that without neglecting the pleasures so dear to the heart of every red boy. He attends the Merrill college and stands well in his class; plays short stop on the base ball team, goes fishing, skates fairly and handles an ice yacht like a veteran. But besides all this, he has done more work in the study of life out of doors than most people do in their whole lives.



Portrait of Clayton Purdy.

He began by collecting birds' eggs; not from a childish desire to possess pretty things, but for the purpose of studying their forms, colors and markings, and to note their variations. By and by, finding that the Connecticut laws interfered with his hobby, he turned his attention to other states and countries, and with such success that he now has eggs from New York, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Florida, Texas, California, Canada, Africa and Australia. These eggs vary in size from the penlike egg of the humming bird to the gigantic production of the ostrich. He also has a nice collection of shells and many other interesting natural objects such as paper borers' nests, star-fish and birds' nests of various kinds.

After he had been collecting for about a year, he was brought home a dead swainson sparrow, thinking he might be able to stuff it. Young Purdy knew nothing of taxidermy, but he determined to try. When the skin was mounted it little resembled the bird from which it had been taken; indeed he was hardly sure whether it looked most like a fish or a quadruped. He was not to be daunted by a failure, however, and though he received not a little chaff on the subject of his new profession, he took it good-naturedly and tried again. The second attempt showed a decided improvement on the first, and the third was better still. When the parents saw that he not only had a taste for the work, but that he also had the perseverance necessary to perfect himself in it, they engaged a professional taxidermist to instruct him thoroughly in the skinning of birds, in the preparation



Illustration of a boat on water.

of the skins and the mounting of the specimens in reasonably natural positions. He has proved an apt pupil. Every bird he stuffs is better in some respects than the one before it, and with the amount of labor he has already put behind him he bids fair to become one of the leading taxidermists of his day. He has mounted hundreds of birds, among the best of which are black-necked gull, goshawk, screech-owl, black-crowned night heron, great blue heron, sharp-shinned hawk, red-tailed hawk, barred owl, long-eared owl, blue jay, red grobe, red-winged blackbird, old squaw, shrike, spotted thrasher, partridge and ruffed grouse. He has a love for his subject and his continuous observation of things out of doors help him greatly in the work of posing his specimens. And this observation of nature forms, perhaps, the most instructive and certainly the most delightful part of his labor. It draws him out into the fields and woods, beside the brooks and rivers, and along the shores of Long Island sound,

across, so we had to go over in pontoon boats and dislodge the sharpshooters. Our corps took 126 men, we completed the bridge before Captain Cross' men were nearly over, and in an hour after that the whole army crossed the river.

"One of the longest bridges that built across the James river, when Grant crossed with his cattle train."

In crossing ravines and narrow streams too deep to ford, stone anchorages are frequently built in the water and the bridge laid across them. The spile system of bridging is slow but permanent. The spar or trestle (see illustration) is the most suitable for crossing deep ravines. The timber is usually cut nearby, and squads of men join long pieces together with ropes that are drawn around and tied in the most effective manner. Two of the first four main supports are first lashed together at one end, they are rested on solid ground on either side of the ravine, and by means of ropes, are raised to an upright position, and held in place by long ropes. The second two supports are raised in the same manner, a suitable distance away and also held in position by ropes. The four supports are braced together by cross-beams, which are lashed to them, men having to climb to the top, hoist and secure one at a time.

Thoroughly braced together, provision is made for a hanging support in the center. The ropes that hold these spars have to be bound and tied with special skill, as the entire central weight of the bridge is held by them. At the lower end of this support, and at the same height on the main upright, the three beams are secured on which a solid flooring, as is used in the pontoon bridges, is laid. Properly built, these bridges sustain an enormous weight. They are constructed in from two to four hours.

In Cuba the engineers will probably be kept busy in laying corduroy roads over the marshy ground, constructing siege approaches and laying ground mines.

PRATTLE OF THE YOUNGSTERS.

They are telling a good story in Massachusetts at the expense of Governor Wolcott's youngest boy, who was one of a class asked to name the governor of the state. On replying that he did not know, he was told by his teacher to ask his father that night. He returned next morning to report. "Well, papa says he is, but he feels so much I don't know."

"Has your measles gone, Bessie?" shouted a little friend to the tot who was looking wistfully from the window.

"Yes, they've left. I heard the doctor tell mamma that they broke out last night."

Little Clarence (with a rising inflection)—Pa?

Mr. Callipers (wearily)—Uh?

OUTLOOK FOR LITERATURE.

Probability of the Present War Suppressing the War Story.

FRESH EPIDEMIC OF PRIZE STORIES.

Carl Schurz as an Editor—Reviews of Popular Novels—Various Notes on Writers and Books.

One of the editors of a well-known magazine said the other day that the war story does not prove an unmitigated evil, for it must stop, sooner or later, the rage for war stories. That result has not been accomplished yet. The writers who have war stories to offer, offer them before anything else; and you go to publishers seeking news of their coming ventures, they tell you that they are going very slow and that the future is very uncertain. So, if there is any "inglorious Milton" seeking a loan of his friends, in order to come up to New York with the manuscript of a second "Paradise Lost," he will find it difficult to find a publisher.

Retirement of Carl Schurz.

A fact more or less remarked in newspaper and literary circles is the disappearance of the name of Carl Schurz from the editorial columns of Harper's Weekly the moment that Spain became a declared foe. As, for some weeks previous, Mr. Schurz had been writing in the Weekly on the subject of Cuba, and never in a tone friendly to war, and as the conductors of the Weekly, the instant war was assured, dispatched to the field a large and distinguished corps of correspondents and artists and began to advertise their journal as a great "pictorial history" of the conflict, the inevitable inference from Mr. Schurz' sudden silence was that his views were no longer grateful to the conductors. This, however, is in a way denied by them. The moment that they had with Mr. Schurz ran out, they say, and simply was not renewed. It may be so, but we all know that, as a rule, contracts don't expire so aptly without a certain compulsion.

It is likely that Mr. Schurz himself was not unwilling to discontinue his services at this time. He is not a man who likes to be reserved in his expressions of opinion. For one to whom the earnings of his pen are a consideration he has maintained the independence of it rather extraordinarily. He has never been a rich man, and since he resigned the management of one of the transactions that deal with Mr. Schurz ran out, he has resorted to it. He has been distinctly limited. But he has still existed, in an amiable way, all the time that he thought the matter chosen merited, and in the writing, has not slighted his pen, and he has been writing in the Weekly for a good many years. He has been American history, although his writing and speaking are still mainly of current politics. He grows now to be an old man, being within a year of 70; but he does not show it. His carriage is erect and vigorous, his eyes are bright and his step is light. He lives, with his daughters, in a modest apartment in the heart of the city. For some time he occupied an historic old farm house up the Hudson, an hour or two's journey from New York, and accounted it an ideal situation; but he finally wearied of it and came back to town.

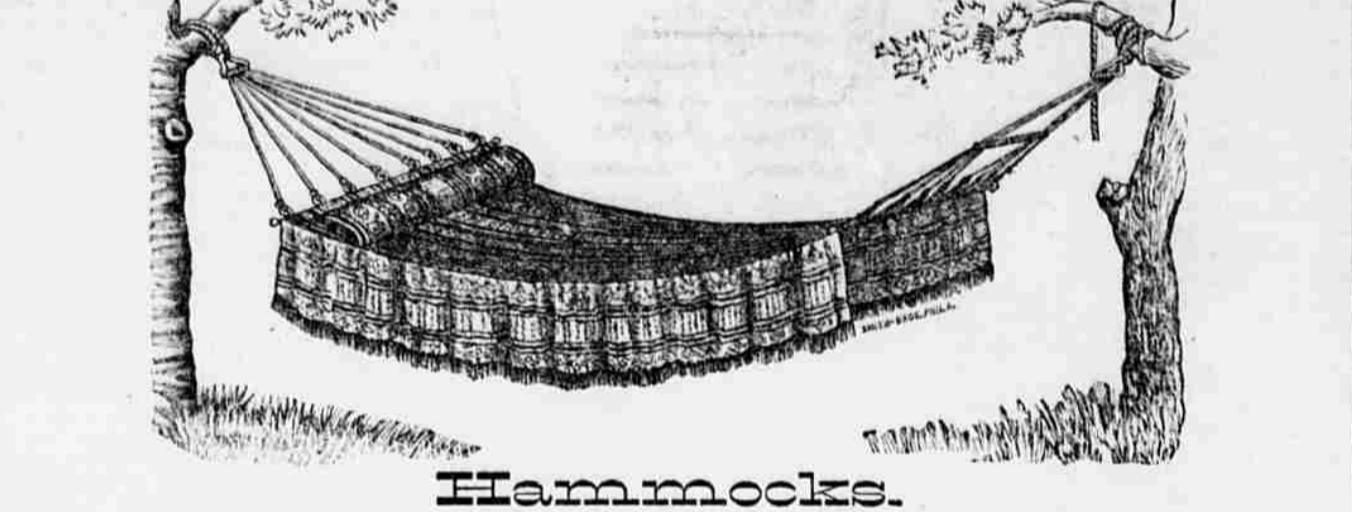
Prize Stories.

It seems to be rather especially in the spring that the prize story contest bursts into bloom. There are several just now in progress, under the auspices of important periodicals. It has fallen to my lot, a number of times, to act as the judge in such contests, and they present to the man on the inside some rather curious and interesting facts. I never knew of one that yielded directly enough to pay for the labor and expense of conducting it. If out of a thousand or two submitted, an editor secures a dozen stories really available for publication, and he pays no less than the ordinary price for the rest of the dozen. Add to this the cost of advertising the contest, the cost of receiving, filing, reading and returning a thousand or two manuscripts, and the expense of conducting correspondence that, in spite of all precautions, such a contest begets—and his prize stories, before he has done with them, become about the most sumptuous literature that the editor puts out. Under such conditions, Mr. Kipling, in his story of 25 cents a word, comes but little higher than the famous girl from Walla Walla. And yet the popular impression is that editors originate prize story contests in order to get a store of "wholesale" good stories very cheap, and the suspicion of "crookedness" and duplicity that has operated in the hearts of the contestants by the time the contest closes would, if gathered into one stream of energy, operate a fleet of first class battleships.

The prize story is apt to be no more of a prize in point of quality than in point of cheapness. In such prize story contests as I myself have had a hand in it was surprising how few perfectly illiterate and crazy manuscripts came in. Most of them were written with fair propriety, and good and were in no respect ludicrous. You wondered, as you went through them, that so many novices should have been able to do so well. Yet the very best among them was only good; it was never great, and I don't remember ever to have seen more than a prize story that struck me as having positive distinction.

CARPET SELLING-- Why buy antiquated auction goods when you can get the new Advance Fall 1898 Patterns of Carpets at these prices—no such offer of carpet values ever made here or elsewhere—new goods bought from the manufacturers and hurried forward for our Exposition selling—all that is new in design—all that is new in coloring—all that is tried in quality we offer at progressive up-to-date business method prices—we are jobbers of carpets—buy them in large quantities and insist on setting the price pace for Omaha—you can always be sure of saving money on carpet purchases here—

- ... Axminster Carpets ... 350 rolls new Fall patterns—every one a gem—only—a yard \$1.00
... Velvet Carpets ... at 85c and \$1.15 a yard.
Tapestry Brussels Carpets 50c, 65c, 75c and 85c.
... Ingrain Carpets ... All wool extra super 2-ply—usually 65c to 75c—here only—a yard 50c
... Union Ingrain Carpets ... 25c and 35c.



Hammocks. This is an elegant display of fancy woven hammocks with pillow attachment—prices—\$1.00, \$1.50, \$2.50, \$3.00 and up to \$6.00. Orchard & Wilhelm Carpet Co. 1414-16-18 Douglas Street

in truth, surprisingly small; for the day of large rewards to popular authors had already dawned. Scott had enjoyed immense returns from his literary work; Byron had found even poetry paying well, and Macaulay had found history as profitable as a bank. When the Century company a year or two ago paid Mr. Humphrey Ward \$20,000 for the serial rights of "Sir George Tressady," the fact was much commented on as almost beyond precedent. But thirty-five years ago the Cornhill Magazine paid George Eliot \$35,000 for the serial rights of "Romola." George Eliot had good prices for all her work. For the first piece of fiction, the short story of "Amos Barton," she received about \$250 from Blackwood's Magazine, and when this and two other short stories were collected into the book called "Clerical Sketches," she received about \$900 for the first edition and about \$1,000 for the second, with retention of the copyright. For her first novel, "Adam Bede," Blackwood paid her \$4,000 for the copyright for four years, but the book did so well that he voluntarily added another \$2,000. For the first edition of "Felix Holt," she received \$10,000 for the first edition and about \$10,000 for the second, and a proportionate sum on subsequent copies, beside \$1,000 from the Harpers for an American edition. For "Felix Holt" Blackwood paid her \$25,000 and the Harpers paid her \$20,000. For the first edition of "Middlemarch," she received \$6,000. What the English edition of "Middlemarch" yielded her I do not know, nor do I know anything of her receipts from "Daniel Deronda," but it must be that in the latter book she had the largest profits for any of her work. It is not surprising that she had followed "Deronda" with another novel which she did not do, her profits would probably have suffered a decline, for "Deronda," despite its greatness, was not a "best-seller" in the sense that "Middlemarch" was. It is not surprising that she had followed "Deronda" with another novel which she did not do, her profits would probably have suffered a decline, for "Deronda," despite its greatness, was not a "best-seller" in the sense that "Middlemarch" was.

Stephen Crane seems to be able to hold his favor with the English critics. It was their hearty admiration of "The Red Badge of Courage" that first set him on his feet. They were not less approving of his novel, "The Third Violet," and his collection of short stories of war and soldiers, and now they are cordial again in their reception of his latest book, "The Open Boat and Other Tales of Adventure." There is no doubt that to some people this heartiness toward Mr. Crane is a good deal of a mystery, but the secret of it, I think, becomes plain in the sentences with which the Academy concludes its review of "The Open Boat." It is the "personal note" that the English reviewers find attractive in Mr. Crane; and it is of this especially that the academy is speaking when it says: "It may or it may not be great art, but we jump to a recognition of it as an expression of truth. And no one has done the thing just that way before. 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