

SOME OF ITS QUEER FEATS IN PENNSYLVANIA AND OHIO

A Lancaster Man Run Across Some Experiences in the Hurricane State That Beat Anything He Had Seen at Home—Horse Among the Sheep—in Big Oil Valley.

I was once driving over the Marble hills, in the lower part of this county, with my wife and baby, flying from a thunderstorm that was coming up rapidly in the valley, but I only did not escape from the storm, but ran right into another one equally heavy on the very summit of the ridge. When the two storms traveling in opposite directions met directly over our heads, streaks and balls of fire began playing around like the spitting and exploding of shots of a miscellaneous collection of Fourth of July pyrotechnics. Lightning danced and flashed on every bit of metal there was in my horse's harness, whirled around with the tires on all four wheels and ran about and zigzagged everywhere about the buggy frame, until we were literally sitting in a fiery chariot drawn by a horse incensed in flaming harness.

Neither myself, my wife nor child suffered the slightest physical injury or inconvenience from that awful play of electricity about us, and the horse seemed to be improved by it, but the nervous strain on us all was terrible. That extraordinary electrical disturbance lasted at least a quarter of an hour.

Well, I thought that a little the queerest sort of an experience with lightning that any one ever had or was likely to have, but I have just come back from a visit to Ohio, and I want to say that that experience of mine might have been the boss queer one up to this summer, but it isn't any more. I ran across some others in Ohio that can beat it.

Take the one, for instance, at Ballyville. A thunderstorm had just passed over that locality, and the clouds had nearly all broken away or rolled to the southwest. The sun had come out and all uneasiness on account of the storm had passed away—for thunderstorms in that region are nearly always attended by more or less damage—when the most terrific thunderclap ever heard there or elsewhere, so close to the earth that the earth trembled as if from an earthquake, and preceded not more than a second by a flash of lightning of blinding sharpness, broke from the cloudless noonday sky. The sudden appearance and terrible nature of the startling phenomenon paralyzed the farming community with alarm, and it was several minutes before any one ventured forth to see what damage had been done by the thunderbolt.

Some very amazing things were discovered. In a field on the edge of the village a large flock of sheep were pasturing. The sheep had all huddled together as sheep will during a thunderstorm, and were still huddled when the surprising clap came. When the owner of the sheep went to the field to see if anything had befallen his flock, he found every sheep standing just as they had huddled in the storm, but out of the 40 in the flock 18 were dead. Not one of the dead sheep had fallen to the ground. That was strange enough, but the 18 dead sheep were black sheep, all the others being white and unharmed. Each dead sheep had a hole in the back of its neck around which the wool was burned away.

On a farm a short distance from the village a big flock of sheep had gathered in a circular bunch during the storm, and every outside sheep was killed, 20 in all, and all white fleeced. On that same farm, but in another field, was a small flock of sheep, all white except one, which was a big black ram. The ewes all huddled about the ram while the storm raged, and when the thunderclap came the ram was killed, no harm befalling one of the other sheep. More than that, the ram's fleece had been turned by the shock as white as that of any other sheep in the flock. That was all the damage that was reported during the hour I was in Ballyville, but it was enough to convince me that Ohio lightning knew a few tricks that Pennsylvania lightning hadn't learned yet.

My friend Simon Frey lives at Big Oil Valley with his wife and 7-weeks-old baby. One day Simon was hurrying home from the valley trying to get there before a big thunderstorm that was coming up caught him. The rain began falling before he got there, and was coming down for certain when he drove into his barn. Simon stood in the barn door waiting for the rain to slack up, when his horse was struck by lightning. It seemed to hit both chimneys at once, and a streak of fire ran from one chimney along the peak of the roof, and midway between the two chimneys it met another streak of fire that was flashing along the peak from the other chimney, or, rather, where the chimney had been, for both chimneys had been knocked into brick dust by the lightning. When the two fiery currents met in the center of the ridge pole, there was an explosion like the discharge of a cannon, and a fountain of bluish flame, that threw off snapping and zigzagging sparks and jets of fire, shot up into the air at least 10 feet. Then all was over, the whole exhibition lasting not more than three seconds.

Simon was only three rods away from the house, but felt not the slightest effects of the terrible shock. He ran to the house, not knowing what horrifying sight might await him there, as it seemed impossible that his wife and baby could have escaped death beneath that terrible electrical bombardment. But they had, and after the first shock of his fright was over Simon couldn't do anything else but lie down and almost burst with laughter, the lightning had brought about so ludicrous a situation in the house. Mrs. Frey was sitting on the kitchen table, her head resting against the wall. In one hand she held a rolling pin, while the other was buried to the wrist in a roll of dough. She was covered with flour from head to foot. The baby lay in a basket of newly washed clothes in a far corner of the kitchen, yelling at the top of its lungs. The baby's cradle was turned upside down in the center of the room, aside from a severe nausea that troubled Mrs. Frey all the rest of the day, neither she nor the baby suffered any ill effects from their extraordinary experience.—Lancaster (Pa.) Letter in New York Sun.

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The First Test of the Air Pump. The first public test of the air pump was in 1654 by its inventor, Otto von Guericke, in the presence of Emperor Ferdinand of Germany. Guericke applied the carefully ground edges of metallic hemispheres, 2 feet in diameter, to each other. After exhausting the air by his apparatus he attached 15 horses to each hemisphere. In vain did they attempt to separate them, because of the enormous pressure of the atmosphere. The experiment was a great success.—Exchange.

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"I didn't know you were ever in that state," replied a man from Wilkinsburg. "Oh, yes, I was. At the time I speak of I had a house in Wyandotte with quite a wide lawn in front. I watched the grass grow with painful misgivings, for I was opposed to working the lawn mower. You know how that is yourself," he said to the man from Wilkinsburg.

With a silent nod the latter acknowledged that he did. "Well, the grass kept getting taller and taller, and every day my wife would make some remark about how our lawn looked compared with the neighbors'. One day the neighbors who lived opposite me asked me what I'd take for my crop, and then I concluded that something had to be done. I sat on the front porch trying to work up enough courage to tackle that grass, when along came that tornado. We all rushed for the cyclone cellar. When we ventured forth, we expected to find the house gone into the next county, but it was there all right. But the grass! You won't believe me, but the grass was trimmed as close as a brand new mower could have taken it off, and the cyclone had even carried away the cuttings. I suppose the reason the house wasn't touched was the end of the lawn. But tornadoes are queer critters. You can never tell how they're going to strike."—Pittsburg Telegraph.

The First Posts. The first posts are said to have originated in the regular couriers established by Cyrus about 550 B. C., who erected post-houses throughout the kingdom of Persia. Augustus was the first to introduce this institution among the Romans, 31 B. C., and he was imitated by Charlemagne about 800 A. D. Louis XI was the first sovereign to establish post-houses in France owing to his eagerness for news, and they were also the first institution of this nature in Europe. This was in 1470, or about 2,000 years after they were started in Persia.

In England in the reign of Edward IV (1461) riders on post-horses went stages of the distance of 30 miles from each other in order to procure the king the earliest intelligence of the events that passed in the course of the war that had arisen with the Scots. A proclamation was issued by Charles I in 1631 that "whenever to this time there hath been no certain intercourse between the kingdoms of England and Scotland, the king now commands his postmaster of England for foreign parts to settle a running post or two between Edinburgh and London to go thither and come back again in six days."—Chambers' Journal.

Breaking Up the German Army. A story is told of a certain young New York woman who was recently abroad. While walking out in Dresden one day the stolidity of the soldier sentinels pacing back and forth like automata attracted her notice. A sudden impulse seized her to test this cast iron rigidity, and waiting till one had passed she slipped into his little sentry box. When he reached it on his return, marching with measured precision, she suddenly jumped out before him, crying "Boo!" in his very face.

The soldier was completely upset at this unexpected performance and actually dropped his musket and ran away, while the young woman, having thus routed a portion of the German army, walked on and demurely rejoined her friends. The incident, it is said, came to the ears of the emperor himself, who expressed a wish to meet this extraordinary young woman, but Miss — admitted that her desire did not equal his, as she was not sure in quite what light her jesting impulse would be officially regarded.—New York Times.

A Bit of Iron in a Tree. A year or two ago a vicious fellow near Bangor drove a spike into a sawlog and in this way smashed up a mill saw to splite the owner. But a recent happening at Welland, Ont., shows that such substances may get into logs without being put there for spite. A mill saw struck an osxhoe imbedded in a timber about four inches from the surface. How it came there is a puzzle, for it had grown into the wood. An owner of the land where the tree grows remembers that way back in the thirties some lumbering was done there in which oxen shod with iron were used, but none since then. It is believed the shoe was laid up on a limb close to the trunk and the tree in growing took it in.—Lewiston Journal.