

Saved by a Sparrow

HERE is an absolutely true story of a little bird, just a common sparrow of the mountain foothills, but, possibly, no stranger case of bird instinct has ever been chronicled.

One raw, rainy October day, while the engine of an express train was standing at a water tank on a lonely side track in eastern Colorado, the engine driver was surprised to see a sparrow fly in the cab window and perch upon the throttle at the boiler head. The little fellow made himself at home there and set to making his toilet, for his feathers were very wet.

Not wishing to drive the tiny visitor away, and with a desire to see how long he would remain after the train began to move, the engine driver reached carefully for the throttle and succeeded in putting the big machine in motion without frightening the bird.

After having thoroughly dried himself the sparrow hopped down from his strange perch and sat for several moments in a corner on the engine driver's cushion, evidently enjoying his ride, after which, with a chirp, he flew out of the window and away.

The engine men forgot the incident as they dashed on over the foothills and through the village. Two days passed; the engine had returned, and was again east bound, with the same engine driver. It drew up for water at the same tank, and the driver was astonished to receive another visit from the little bird. Then they named him Mike, and at the same place Mike flew in the cab window whenever that particular engine passed on its east-bound trips. It mattered not whether the train was on time or late, funny

he said to the fireman: "never stayed so long. This means something." The fireman shook his head ominously.

The train approached a portion of the road where the track wound for several miles along a narrow bed on the side of a canyon, where there were numerous trestles and small bridges. The engine driver on the right and the fireman on the left side of the cab leaned far out of the windows peering ahead as the dizzy height was being passed over. Suddenly Mike flew to the engine driver's hand which rested on the throttle, chirped fast and loud for several seconds and darted from the engine. The occurrence so startled the engine driver that he nervously shut off the steam and applied the brakes. As he did so the fireman gave a cry of alarm, and in another instant a great mass of rocks and dirt and trees crashed down the mountain side and on to the track, carrying with it a bridge. With a deafening roar the mass rolled on into the chasm below, missing the engine by only a few yards. Had the train not been stopped where it was the landslide must have swept it into the awful depths.

Mike was never seen afterward. What became of him, of course, nobody knows.

You may call it instinct chance or what you wish, but the fact remains that the little sparrow saved the train with its burden of human freight from destruction.—Chicago Chronicle.

Bob Burdette to Young Men. Remember, son, that the world is older than you are by several years; that for thousands of years it has been so



MIKE APPEARED AS USUAL, PERCHED UPON THE THROTTLE.

little Mike knew in some way. He never made a mistake in engines and never boarded any other.

You must know that trainmen are a very superstitious lot; nearly as much so as the men at sea; so it came about that the engine driver friend of the bird looked upon him as a mascot. He brought little seeds and cracker crumbs on each trip, and, strange as it may seem, the little fellow soon became so tame that he would perch upon the man's hand and eat the dainties. Here was a sparrow, wild and free to go where he wished, yet tame and happy for a half hour or more every few days in the cab of a great, throbbing, roaring, screeching locomotive, for neither the shrill blast of the whistle nor the clank of the great bell nor the popping of the safety valve caused him to evince the slightest fear.

The season grew late; frost had come and autumn had put her last tints on vine and tree and shrub. No longer were heard along the streams the mournful cries of the "knee deep." The woods had grown still and one day the engine driver carried the seed and the crumbs in his vest pocket past the tank and on to the end of the run, for no Mike came to receive his dinner. He was greatly missed, but the engine men knew that their friend must have taken flight to the sunny southland for the winter, and he was not forgotten through all the dreary trips that were made across the bleak country. With the breaking up of cold weather Mike's coming was eagerly watched for.

Would he come again? Had he forgotten his grime-stained friends of the engine cab? Could a little bird not much larger than a man's thumb think long enough at a time to find his way back to the vicinity of that water tank?

The grass came again; the trees took on their summer garb; here and there could be seen an occasional bird.

And Mike? He came one day. For some time the engine driver had carried food for his friend in his pocket, to make sure that there would be no disappointment. So when with a peep, peep, the little sparrow flew in the window of the big, peeping machine, with as much confidence as if he had never missed a trip, he found his regular repast.

A cold, sobbing rain was soaking the brown fields of autumn. The streams were swollen and the railroad track was soft. At the tank Mike appeared as usual and perched upon the throttle of the engine; minutes passed into a half hour, an hour, an hour and a half, yet the bird showed no sign of leaving. So he had stayed down below, and the engine driver grew uneasy.

"The engine is hoarse," at last

full of smarter and better young men than yourself that their feet stuck out of the dormer windows; that when they died the old globe went whirling on, and not one man in ten millions went to the funeral. Don't be too sorry for your father because he knows so much less than you do. Remember the reply of Dr. Wayland to the students of Brown University, who said it was an easy enough thing to make proverbs such as Solomon wrote. "Make a few," tersely replied the old man. The world has great need of young men, but no greater need than the young men have for it. Your clothes fit better than your father's fit him; they cost more money and they are more stylish; your mustache is better; the cut of your hair is better. But, young man, the old gentleman gets the biggest salary, and his homely, scrambling signature on the business end of a check will draw more money out of the bank in five minutes than you could get out with a ream of paper and a copper-plate signature in six months.

Pay of Turkish Ministers. A Turkish ministerial portfolio is a sort of gold-mine to the holder. It is not the Vizier, however, who holds the richest claim, though his salary is \$68,000 a year, which is also that of the War Minister. The "plum" of Turkish officials is the admiralty, which is worth \$84,000 a year, and the present holder is stated to have amassed a fortune of \$12,000,000. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has \$44,000, and finance comes next with a thousand lower, financial ability being apparently esteemed in inverse ratio to the need for it. The lowest salary is that of the Minister of Mines, though it is rather higher than that of the Premier of Great Britain. The sum is \$27,800.

A Human Candle. Candidate for Mayor—I have found something beside a candle that will answer "at old riddle." "The longer it stands the shorter it grows."

Friend—What is it? Candidate for Mayor—A candidate. The longer he stands for office the shorter he grows financially.—Baltimore American.

Japanese Calendars for America. One of the prettiest calendars of the year hails from Japan. It is bound with quaint Oriental jingles in a small book which is illustrated by Japanese artists and printed on the delicate rice paper.

Electricity and Vital Action. Dr. Loeb says electricity is the underlying cause of vital action, but he has not as yet made a fair demonstration of it.

Nothing succeeds like the officeholder who is his own successor.

PRAIRIE CAVERN IN OKLAHOMA.

Interesting Hole Where Such Freaks of Nature Wouldn't Be Suspected.

At a spot eleven miles south of this place in the level prairie upland is an opening about forty feet in diameter and sixty in depth, says the Oklahoma State Capitol. By clinging to its rocky and precipitous walls a person may descend to the bottom and there find the openings to two caves, one leading westward and the other to the east. For years this cave has been known as Rock Prairie cave. It is one of the most striking natural curiosities in the Chickasaw nation. The caves are of unknown length and through one rushes a subterranean stream of great depth in places and icy coldness. Exploring parties have ventured into these labyrinth for hundreds of yards, but the danger of becoming lost has prevented a thorough examination of the underground passages.

The cave leading westward is easiest of access and contains a number of spacious chambers. The room is about 70 feet square and 50 feet from floor to the ceiling. The floor is obstructed with huge boulders. The darkness and stillness are intense. Picnic parties sometimes go there, and with a large boulder for a table, eat their lunches in the glare of torches that cast uncanny shadows along the massive walls.

Timid persons hesitate in venturing into the depths of the eastern cave. The passage starts downward at an angle that compels the explorer to crawl and slip and slide for nearly 100 feet before reaching a spot where a person may stand upright and walk safely. From the darkness echoes the sound of rushing water, which later is found to be a stream which runs from 8 to 30 feet in width and from 6 inches to many feet in depth. Men have waded in the stream until the water reached their chins and then gone in a boat to points where they were unable to touch bottom with the longest oars. A farmer carried his boat into the cave several years ago to follow the stream to the end. At a depth estimated to be 200 feet below the surface of the ground is a natural bridge formed by a huge stone that fell across the stream. The water plunges underneath this bridge like a mill race. A boat can be pulled over the bridge, however, and launched on the other side. About 100 feet below the bridge the stream widens into a broad, deep pool, with a high, vaulted roof. Beautiful stalagmites and stalactites adorn this chamber. Two hundred feet below this pool the passage is difficult. It is claimed that this cave has been explored for a mile.

The stream is believed to find its outlet at a spring about three miles from the entrance to the cave. The spring is of great size and volume and flows with remarkable swiftness. In the rainy season the spring boils and gushes as if choked with a flood of water that pours from its mouth. The stream in Rock Prairie cave rises when there is a heavy rainfall in the surrounding country and the increased flow of both springs and stream at such times is taken as evidence that they are connected.

ESAU THE CHIMPANZEE.

Apes May Gain Brain Power by Associating with Human Beings.

Esau, I believe, is appearing at a London music hall as a member of the company, and goes through various antics by way of showing the high degree of intelligence he possesses. Those of us who know something of chimpanzee ways and of the high brain type the animal exhibits are not surprised that an individual ape, here and there, will go far ahead of his fellows under domestication.

Only I take leave to remark that a music hall is hardly the sphere in which the educational development of the animal can be duly carried out. To my mind there is something pathetic and calling for pity in the sight of an ape being made to "perform" for the amusement of the crowd. The scientific side of the matter would be represented by the further training of the chimpanzee in private and the careful watching of his ways. A story has been circulated that Esau is to be taken to Germany to undergo an operation on his tongue, in the hope, presumably, of loosening that member and of giving him a chance of speech.

Anything more ridiculous than this idea could hardly have been conceived. Esau has his own language ready made. People who expect him to talk forget that language is a matter of brain, not of tongue or muscles only, writes Dr. Andrew Wilson in the London Chronicle. Imitative acts might be cultivated in the chimpanzee to a surprising extent. If the dog, with a much lower brain, has benefited by his long association with man, one may well speculate on the development of brain power which would be possible in a chimpanzee had that race had the advantage of human companionship for many centuries.

Personal Observation. "Do you think that riches bring happiness?" said the philosopher.

"Beyond a doubt," answered Senator Borghum. "I can point out a number of members of the legislature who have been made happy by my money."—Washington Star.

One Thing Left. "And liquid air," said the girl behind the counter on Lexington street, "has been proved after all to be of no use."

"Tie sad, ain't it?" agreed the girl in the blue waist, "but hot air is still effective, dear."—Baltimore News.

When a man thinks he knows it all, he is seldom able to get his neighbors to endorse his thoughts.

OLD FAVORITES

Little Orphant Annie.

Little Orphant Annie come to our house to stay,
An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' brush the crumbs away,
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth an' sweep,
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board an' keep;
An' all us other children, when the supper things is done,
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A' listenin' to the witch tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the gobble-uns 'at gits you

If you

Don't

Watch

Out!

Once they was a little boy wouldn't say his prayers,
An' when he went to bed at night, away upstairs,

His Mammy heerd him holler, an' his Daddy heerd him bawl,
An' when they turnt the kivers down, he wasn't there at all!

An' they seeked him in the raster room, an' cubbyhole an' press,
An' seeked him up the chimney-flag, an' ever'where, I guess;

But all they ever found was thist his pants an' roundabout,
An' the gobble-uns 'il git you

If you

Don't

Watch

Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh an' grin,
An' make fun of ever'one an' all her blood an' kin;

An' once, when they was "company," an' ole folks was there,
She mockt 'em an' shockt 'em, an' turnt to run an' hide.

They was two great big Black Things a-standin' by her side,
An' they snatcht her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed what she's about.

An' the gobble-uns 'il git you

If you

Don't

Watch

Out!

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,
An' the lamp wick splutters, an' the wind goes woo-oo!

An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,
An' the lightnin' bugs in dew is all quenched away,

You better mind yer parents, an' yer teachers, fond an' dear,
An' church them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,

An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
Er the gobble-uns 'il git you

If you

Don't

Watch

Out!

—James Whitcomb Riley.

One Day Nearer Home.

O'er the hills the sun is setting,
And the eve is drawing on;
Slowly drops the gentle twilight,
For another day is gone.

Gone for aye—its race is over,
Soon the darker shades will come;
Still, 'tis sweet to know at even,
We are one day nearer home.

"One day nearer," sings the seaman,
As he glides the waters o'er,
While the light is softly dying,
On his distant native shore.

Thus the Christian on life's ocean,
As his light boat cuts the foam,
In the evening cries with rapture,
"I am one day nearer home."

Worn and weary, oft the pilgrim
Hails the setting of the sun;
For the goal is one day nearer,
And his journey nearly done.

Thus we feel when, o'er life's desert,
Heart and soul are sore we roam,
As the twilight gathers o'er us,
We are one day nearer home.

Nearer home! Yes, one day nearer
To our Father's house on high—
To the green fields and the fountains
Of the lands beyond the sky.

For the heavens grow brighter o'er us,
And the lamps hang in the dome,
And the tents are pitched all closer,
For we're one day nearer home.

—Rev. Benj. H. Hunt.

IDENTITY OF DICKENS' SQUEERS.

Quest Renewed by Reprint of Old "Ad" in London Times.

The quest for the identity of Mr. Wackford Squeers has been revived by the reprint by the Times of an advertisement from its issue of Jan. 7, 1836, says the London Chronicle. A Mr. Simpson, of Woden Croft, near Barnard Castle, thereby announced his attendance at the Saracen's Head, Snowhill, to receive "young gentlemen," and a contemporary jumps to the conclusion that this person was the prototype of the infamous Squeers. As a matter of fact, Dickens had only too many originals for his pitiful story, and an extraordinary parallel to the tale told in "Nicholas Nickleby" may be found in the biography of James Abernethy, the father of marine engineering. This work was published by his son in 1897, and reviewed in the Chronicle of Dec. 28, of that year, the facts as to the miserable school life being reproduced from the late engineer's diary, this portion of which was written in 1834, or about four years before the novel made its appearance in monthly parts.

The reviewer thus tells the story, and draws the parallel: "The school to which James and his brother George were sent was kept by a ruffian named Smith, at Cotherstone, near Barnard Castle, in North Yorkshire, and there is something quite remarkable in the facts that there was a Mrs. Smith, who appears to have been the counterpart of Mrs. Squeers; that the arrangements

for placing the boys were made while Smith was advertising his attendance at a well-known coaching house in London; and that the amount to be paid for the two lads was £20 a year each, the exact sum in consideration of which Mr. Squeers made over his two wretched little stepsons to the oily Squeers. . . . The description of the awful den at Cotherstone, with its wolf-eyed "pupils" starving on putrid meat, and clad in workhouse clothing, with wooden clogs; the tyranny and ill-usage, the utter absence of moral control—all this is pathetic in the extreme." The brothers, after spending two years in this hopeless misery, were rescued owing to the casual visit of an uncle. It is interesting to recall that James, who was taken as pupil by his father, who was then resident engineer at the London dock works, and had as a new companion Bidder, the Calculating Boy, became president of the institution of civil engineers in 1881.

GREATNESS OF INVENTIONS.

True Measure Their Service to Society in Influence on Civilization.

The greatness of inventions is measured not by their ingenuity nor by the fortunes they make for their originators or others, for that is a small matter, but by the service which they render to society and by their influence on civilization. I had intended, therefore, to interpret briefly some of the great inventions, to show how the most destructive weapons of war are life-savers and peace-preservers; how the telephone will affect morals and elevate the standard of honor; how the arc light serves as good police; how the elevator is affecting social problems by piling one city on top of another; how the ocean cables, the telegraph and wireless telegraphy are creating new world-conditions which are producing a new world-life, and how the bicycle and the automobile, by securing for us better roads, will not only increase the wealth, but also improve the intellectual and moral life of the country, but the limits of this article forbid.

If inventions are to be measured by their effects, by far the greatest in the history of the world was the invention of the steam engine. In 1769, the same year in which the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon Bonaparte were born, James Watt patented his steam engine, which was destined to exert more influence in shaping the world's future than both of these great captains put together. From the beginning, man has had to struggle with nature for his life. She scorched him; she frosted him; she starved him; she smote him with disease; she overawed and terrorized him; her winds buffeted him; her waters drowned him. Before her lightnings, her floods, her cataracts, her avalanches, her tempestuous seas, he was powerless. Against the measureless forces of nature he could oppose only his puny arm. On that arm he must rely to wrest from her his food, fuel, raiment, and shelter. Such was the unequal contest for long thousands of years. But to-day nature is man's servant; her mighty forces do his bidding, and run his errands.—Dr. Josiah Strong in Success.

Two Ways. There is a good deal of comfort to be found with the people who are, as the phrase goes, "like our folks." The Congregationalist furnishes an instance in point, relative to the old and new way of giving out church notices:

The old-fashioned clergyman had been in the habit of making the announcements in his most punctilious manner. Each one was couched in some such language as this: "If it be in accordance with the will of Divine Providence, there will be a meeting in this house this evening; the subject will be, 'Scripture Promises,' and there will be a short address by the pastor, no unforeseen accident preventing."

When his successor arrived every one supposed that the old order of things would probably continue unbroken; but the congregation involuntarily drew a breath of relief when the pastor remarked, in a pleasant, conversational tone:

"I haven't yet decided whether or not it's advisable to continue the evening meetings during the coming month. 'Tany rate, we'll hold one to-night; and let's all try to be there."

The Amateur Actor. "A few of us are going to have private theatricals," the aspirant said to an old actor the other day, "and I am cast to pose as the dying gladiator. Would you mind giving me a few wrinkles?"

"Oh, no. You are the dying gladiator, eh? Well, to begin with, what are you dying for?"

"I—I don't understand."

"But you must understand. I want to know whether you are dying for a glass of beer or being carried off by galloping consumption. It will make a heap of difference in the pose."

According to later information, the young man was wildly searching a volume of Shakespeare to see what the gladiator died for.

Woman Doctor at Inquest. For the first time in the history of Wolverhampton a woman doctor recently gave evidence at an inquest. At the request of the coroner the post-mortem, which was on a woman's body, was made by two women doctors.

The One Thing Needed. "Don't be despondent, Henry; there are plenty of good things in this life besides money."

"I know it, Martha, but you can't have them without money."—New York Sun.

Men are too much inclined to accept a pretty woman at her face value.

Science AND INVENTION

In the dry soil of Egypt Prof. G. Elliot Smith finds the brains of most non-mummified bodies of the cemeteries have been naturally preserved even from prehistoric times. The convolutions may be mapped, and an account is soon to be given of the brain structure of Egyptians of different periods.

A file specially designed for working on gun metal is being used in French machine shops. It has shallow diagonal channels, at intervals of half an inch, the teeth being on the raised portions between the channels. It is claimed that these files, clogging much less rapidly than others, increase the work done by about fifty per cent.

No white pigments have been found in feathers, and the whiteness of white feathers is ascribed to total reflection of light from their exposed surfaces. Some have supposed the reflection to be from air spaces, or bubbles, in the feather structure, but R. M. Strong, of Haverford College, says that the white effect is powdered glass, upon the small size of the structural elements. These have a large number of surfaces so placed for any position of the eye that there is a maximum reflection to the eye, and almost no absorption by the unpigmented feather substance.

To get the eggs of a new species of mosquito inhabiting a South Carolina swamp, Dr. W. C. Coker, of the University of North Carolina, had to borrow the aid of a horse. The horse was driven into the low ground haunted by the mosquitoes, and when he came out the insects were found drilling through his skin. They were carefully removed, put in a tin bucket, fed daily with blood from the hand, and after about five days, to the doctor's great delight, they laid their eggs in the water. It was to procure and study these eggs that he had taken all his trouble. In such homely ways science sometimes makes its advances.

Astonishing effects as a tonic and blood-former are claimed by Dr. Naugler, of Paris, for balloon ascensions. He states that an air trip of two hours gives a marked increase in the red corpuscles of the blood, this increase continuing to be noticeable for at least ten days afterward, and that five ascensions within six or seven weeks impart more benefit to an anemic person than three months in the mountains. The good results begin almost immediately, prolonged stay in the upper air being of no advantage and possibly harmful. He urges that the city should give poor people the benefits of a change of climate by providing a large balloon capable of taking fifty patients daily on an aerial outing.

A remarkable example of the power of mimicry possessed by some persons, but altogether lacking in others, was furnished by the late Professor Roberts-Austen, of England. His friend, Prof. T. E. Thorpe, recalls many interesting instances of Roberts-Austen's singular gift, which was purposely exercised only occasionally for the entertainment of his scientific conferees at a club meeting. But what lends special interest to the case was the fact that Roberts-Austen frequently exercised his power without being aware of it. "I have heard him, to my terror," says Professor Thorpe, "in the course of a conversation gradually copy the tones and inflections of a man's voice, and have seen him reproduce his manner to his very face." In such cases there was no consciousness of what was being done in the mind of the mimic, or on the part of the person imitated, and Professor Thorpe believes the origin of the unintended mimicry was sympathy alone.

Cold Water Absorbs Poison.

In connection with the subject of water there is one peculiar property of that liquid with which everyone should be made acquainted, and that is its capacity for absorbing impurities, which increases proportionately the colder it gets. Hence water that has stood in an insufficiently ventilated sleeping chamber all night is not only unpleasant, but positively injurious to drink, since it readily absorbs the poisonous gases given off by respiration and action of the skin. An ordinary pitcher of water, under such conditions, at a temperature of sixty degrees will be found to have absorbed during the night from a pint to a pint and a half of carbonic acid gas, and an increase of ammonia. Ice water is an objectionable drink at all times, but if it is indulged in, the vessel containing it should never be left uncovered in sleeping or sitting rooms, because at freezing point its capacity for absorbing these deleterious substances is nearly doubled.

The Beating of the Heart.

A person who has lived seventy years has had passed through his heart about 675,920 tons of blood, the whole of the blood in the body passing through the heart in about thirty-two beats. The heart beats on an average seventy times a minute, or 36,792,000 times in the course of a year, so that the heart of an ordinary man, 50 years of age, has beaten 3,000,000,000 times. The heart beats ten strokes a minute less when one is lying down than when one is in an upright position.

If a fool possesses tact and assurance he will distance the wise guy who possesses neither.

The man who laughs last fails to see the joke first.