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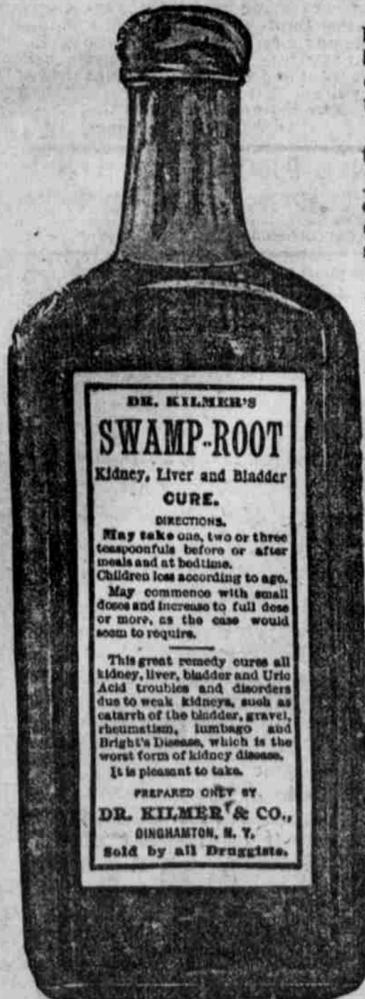
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Whether Common or Not.

IF OL' HICK'RY WUS ALIVE.

I see Nick Ridgeley's grandson is a-cuttin' quite a swell Down at th' seat o' government, an' makin' free t' tell What he knows 'bout finances, an' what he thinks is th' best F'r t' keep our circulation a workin' without rest. Says he thinks like his grandpa, Nick Biddle's right-hand man, A bank o' th' United States is jus' th' proper plan; An' that he'd institoot it an' he'd warant it to thrive— But I bet he couldn't do if if Ol' Hick'ry wus alive.

They've got the people locoed with their system o' finance. The banks git all th' money and they never miss a chance. They buy some bonds an' put 'em in our Uncle Sammy's vault, An' th' int'rest keeps a-comin' with na'ry hitch or halt. Then th' banks git notes upon 'em, which notes are always lent T' 'commodate th' people—at th' rate o' ten per cent. Th' banks git double int'rest, an' lawmakers all connive— But I bet they couldn't do if Ol' Hick'ry wus alive.

They tax us till our money is piled up in Washington, An' Gage, he tells th' papers that some action must be done. Then he loans th' banks th' money an' no int'rest he'll assess, But th' people pay ten f'r it—which, of course, relieves distress. When th' people git th' money from th' banks they straightaway Hunt up th' tax collector an' once more their taxes pay. It's a never endin' circle, goin' 'round from year t' year— But I bet 'twould soon be busted if Ol' Hick'ry wus here.

The Bildads.

"I wish you would give me a dollar, dear," remarked Mrs. Bildad as she poured the evening coffee and sweetened it to the exact taste of her husband.

"A dollar!" exclaimed Mr. Bildad, pausing in his work of carving off the choicest bit of the porterhouse for himself. "A dollar! What on earth do you want with a dollar? I gave you 75 cents day before yesterday. What did you do with that?"

"Spent it," replied Mrs. Bildad.

"Of course you spent it! You can't keep money. I wager you spent it foolishly, too."

"Perhaps I did, dear. I bought six yards of 3-cent calico to make me a wrapper, and two pairs of 10-cent stockings for little Henry, and a ball of darning twine and a spool of thread, and a paper of needles, and a postage stamp to write to mother, and a 5-cent handkerchief for Susan, and a pad of note paper to write letters on, and a bunch of envelopes. It took 10 cents for car fare and I dropped a penny in the box of a poor blind man on the corner."

"Um-m-m! Well, I guess that's all right, but it seems to me that one pair of stockings would have been enough for Henry."

"But what would he do while I was washing that—?"

"Please don't argue, Mrs. Bildad. What do you want with a dollar?"

"Well, we received notice today that our subscription to the Family Messenger has expired, and I do so want to keep it. It is—"

"Well, we'll have to let it drop. Times are too hard to pay out a dollar a year for a paper."

"But it is such a good paper. It keeps us posted on all the events of the world, and the children read it and learn so much about government and politics and etiquette an—"

"Let 'em learn all that from me. I can't afford to spend a dollar for newspapers now. Times are too hard. I don't take no stock in teaching children politics and government and all that sort of thing. Let 'em read the Evening Whooper and the Morning Yell."

"But the Family Messenger is such a clean paper and it is so instructive that I do want the children to read it. Besides I enjoy it so much and it is so full of instruction that—"

"There ain't no use talking, Mrs.

Bildad. I can't afford it. We'll have to let it drop. That's the end of the matter now."

Mrs. Bildad sighed and remained silent during the rest of the evening repast.

Presently Mr. Bildad folded his napkin, shoved his chair back from the table and arose. Reaching into his pocket he pulled out a 10-cent cigar and calmly lighted it. It was his sixth for the day. Then he reached for his hat.

"Where are you going, dear?" asked Mrs. Bildad.

"Down town a little while. I'll be back early. Don't sit up for me."

Then Mr. Bildad rode down town and spent five hours and \$1.75 playing billiards.

But, really, times were so hard he could not afford to take a paper that was interesting and instructive and a benefit to his family.

A Political Fable.

Once upon a time a Strenuous Man arose before a Multitude and proceeded to Exhort. He laid Especial Stress upon the existence of certain combinations in the Business World and advocated their control by the National Government.

"Demagogue!" exclaimed the Managers of the Combinations.

But the Strenuous Man paid no Heed and continued to Exhort mightily, saying that the Trusts and Combinations should be made to Toe the Mark.

His Remarks were listened to with Marked Appreciation, and certain Organs insisted that he had Struck the Keynote.

A few weeks later the Strenuous Man was in a position to Make Good, but he started off by retaining as an Advisor a man known to be Hand in Glove with the Trusts.

"Why is this Thus?" inquired a few Impudent Men. "Did you not say so-and-so?"

"True," replied the Strenuous Man, "but do you happen to notice any Scenic Properties, Red Fire and Stage Effects now?"

Moral: It all Depends on the Point of View.

A Solemn Reality.

Quit writing jokes on buying coal, For there's no joke about it. That's true—just buy a ton or two, And you'll no longer doubt it.

—Will M. Maupin.