

DECORATION DAY.



JERUD'S RHEUMATIZ.

WICH-I-TA!" This was the name that the brakeman screamed, as our train steamed slowly up to a low, unpainted freight house, at the terminus of the railroad. One car conveyed the passengers, three in number, to this wilderness station.

We took up our bags and walked out on the platform. There was no waiting-room; nor was there even a solitary hackman to whom we might appeal for transportation. If hackmen there had been, we could not have given him orders where to drive us.

The sun was setting. There was no shadow of a hill or tree. Slowly the prairie changed from green and brown to pale yellow, and there were no outlines of irregularity to mark its outer circumference.

A few blanketed Indians stood about, watching their "supplies" with evident anxiety. An occasional oath, borrowed from the vocabulary of the white men about them, was all the English which they uttered or knew.

No other building was in sight, save a one-storied red structure just across what is now, I suppose, the main street in the city of Wichita, Kansas. In the doorway of this red structure, above which was a sign in black letters, "Tavern," a woman suddenly appeared.

She beckoned to us in the twilight, and seconded her motions by a shrill cry of "Come over here!"

We obeyed, and entered the tavern. Supper was soon provided at a long board table, where we ate with the cowboys and the freight hands. We had corn bread, white bread, canned vegetables and fresh pork, roasted and fried. Black coffee was served in cracked cups without saucers.

We were government employes, on our way to Fort Sill. At Wichita the railroad gave place to the stage line.

Before daylight we were aroused for breakfast, which was what was left of supper, made into hash. We paid our bill to the landlady, who wrapped our greenbacks in a piece of buckskin and deposited them in a long, home-knit stocking which hung from her apron band.

The stage-coach was drawn up to the door by four horses, as gay and prancing steeds as one could wish to see. The vehicle itself, a stage-coach of the true overland style, was large and strong, with three seats beside the driver's. The canopy, sides and cushioned seats were of genuine brown leather.

We started off at high speed. The curly spring buffalo-grass seemed as soft as wool. The ground was unbroken save by the settlements of the prairie-dogs, whose towns made almost a continuous city on each side of the trail for many miles. The saucy inhabitants were out early, probably in the interests of farming, standing straight up and talking to one another, darting out of sight down their doorways, and peeping out again as suddenly.

The morning sun appeared, without shadows, as he had set the night before. There were now and then little farms planted with small peach-trees.

born. By much flogging from a raw-hide instrument, whose like I have never seen, they were induced to plod along. They were thin in flesh, and lame.

Now and then we saw early wild crocuses and canterbury-bells, and the soft, trailing sensitive plant, with its silken balls spattered with golden dust. There were no more houses—only level, unbroken plain, with an occasional steep-banked stream, on whose margins grew a sparse fringe of cottonwood-trees.

A gray wolf trotted out of the timber and stared at us. Deer in the distance bounded away, while one solitary "prairie schooner" crossed our path, with its jingling kettles hung low underneath the wagon, grazing the tips of the grass.

"Twenty-five miles before another relay," said the driver, "and it will take us all day."

If the driver had been communicative the hours might have passed quickly; but he was taciturn. Such pay as he drew from the stage company was well earned, for between the stubborn mules and the sometimes bad road he had a hard time of it.

Toward evening we drew up to a little shanty, the first building we had seen for twenty miles, and alighted for supper and to change mules.

An old woman and her son kept the house. She was "glad to see me," she said, "for women don't come this way much, and I get lonesome."

We had expected to move on after supper, but the driver came in to say that the relay mule had strayed away, and we should have to wait till morning.

The old woman was delighted, nor were we sorry. "Staging" was losing its fascination, and we felt much obliged to the relay mule for running away.

"He'll be back bright and early in the morning," said the old woman. "Elnathan, he tied the big dinner-bell onto his neck so's to be sure to find him. To-morrow's Decoration day; did you know it?" she asked, as we sat by the corn-cob fire.

We had almost forgotten it. Our hostess went on:

"We always decorate, Elnathan and me. There ain't any graveyards around here, only just one single solitary grave." She wiped her eyes, which had filled with tears. "See it out there, that bit of white loomin' up close to the oarn?"

We could distinguish in the gloaming what looked like a headstone, and told her so.

"Yes," she went on, "that's a grave. It's my old man, Jerud; Elnathan's father. He died three years ago, and



A FEW INDIANS STOOD ABOUT. We buried him out there. That headstone you see ain't marble—it's a platter that Elnathan bought up to Wichita. We couldn't find no headstones proper, so he got the name and date painted on this and set it up at the head. Like to look at it?"

We answered that we certainly should like to see it, and followed her. In the barn-yard were our mules, some prairie hay, a bunch of last year's corn-stalks and a Texas cow with wide branching horns, a look of defiance in her bony, repulsive shape. The fence was made of cotton-wood rails, and to the south of it, on the outside, was the grave.

At the head was a very large Queen's-ware platter, with "Jerud Whitehead" painted across it in black letters. It stood straight up, like any headstone, and though, as the old woman said, "it sometimes topples over, especially in the spring when the ground thaws," it was little trouble to right it again.

"I'm going to decorate Jerud's grave to-morrow," she said, on our way back to the house.

"Was your husband a soldier?" we asked, sadly and respectfully.

"No," she answered, "not exactly; but he would 'a' been. They was going to draft 'em in our town one time, and Jerud he was took with rheumatiz so he was confined to his bed for a month. He was awful sorry, for he did want to fight for his country; and he said he'd just as soon be drafted as to volunteer—it showed how bad they wanted him.

"Then another time," she went on, "Squire Smith offered him five hundred dollars to go as his substitute; and I was willing, for we needed the money bad enough. Jerud got all ready to start, as part as could be, but the very last thing he was took down with the rheumatiz again. Jerud was as good as could be, and as brave; and I've seen him stand in the door leaning on his cane and cheering the boys when they marched away, and saying how he did wish he could go, too.

"Well, Jerud, I would say, 'suppose you start in one of your good spells?' And he'd answer, 'All right.' Half a dozen times I'd pack up his things and get him ready to go, when all of a sudden his rheumatiz would come back, and he'd have to stay at home. So the war passed, and poor Jerud, he sighed when the boys came home, and pretty near almost cried.

"Jerud wasn't given to work very much, on account of his rheumatiz; but I never laid that up against him. We come out here for the stage company five year ago, and done pretty well. Elnathan and I done most of the work.

"It always seemed to weigh on Jerud that he hadn't been a soldier. He would sit out on a bench at the door for hours, watching Elnathan and me plant the corn, and having that far-



SEATED ON THE QUILT.

away look in his eyes you hear talked about. And one time he died. We've decorated his grave ever since, just as if he'd been a soldier."

"Do you have many flowers around here?" we asked.

"Oh, no, there ain't no flowers, so to speak. I don't care much for them little wild things, and I ain't never planted any poppy seeds and hollyhocks and geraniums and pinets. I've got something in that trunk over there that's better than flowers to decorate graves with."

We looked at the trunk. It was covered with calfskin, tanned with the hair on, the fur side out, and studded with brass nails. We wanted to ask what was in it which was "better than flowers to decorate graves with," but we restrained our curiosity.

That night we went to sleep to dream of grassy mounds and shining concave headstones.

It was late in the morning when the relay mule was found; but the driver himself had then disappeared, and our starting was postponed. After the breakfast dishes were washed the old woman dressed herself in her old-fashioned best clothes, put on a bonnet which had been hers "before the war," and sat down by the ancient trunk. We did not talk, for she seemed sad and absent-minded.

She unlocked the receptacle which held something better than flowers to decorate graves with, and drew carefully forth a neatly-folded patch-work quilt. Then she walked slowly out to the grave.

After standing for a few minutes talking with Elnathan, the two took the quilt by each of its four corners and spread it evenly about the grave. Then the old woman sat down on one corner of the "decoration," while Elnathan went away to his work.

The quilt was set in diamond pieces—grass-green and yellow and blue and black and purple. It was the gayest of its kind that I had ever seen. The warm spring sunshine lighted up the bright tints into a kaleidoscope of beauty.

The Texas cow peered through the not too substantial fence at the amazing brightness, astonished into a betrayal of unusual emotions. Presently she whisked around the yard in a freedom of movement which startled me.

The old woman, after sitting for an hour with her head bent low upon her loyal breast, rose and folded the quilt. My companion was sure that she had been asleep, but I saw traces of tears as she laid the quilt away in the old trunk, remarking, as if to herself:

"Yes, I shall always decorate Jerud's grave. He would 'a' been a soldier if it hadn't been for his rheumatiz."—Elizabeth Grinnell in Youth's Companion

Of the fifty-one thousand breweries estimated to be in the world, twenty-six thousand are in Germany.

FINNY BIRD-CATCHERS.

C. F. Holden, in New York Ledger.

The extent to which birds prey upon the small fry and denizens of the sea is not appreciated except by those who are constantly afloat and in position to make continued observations.

In the channel of Santa Catalina—a deep, blue body of water that lies between the island of that name and the mainland of Southern California—an opportunity frequently offers to witness the depredations of ocean birds. Certain gulls and their allies are found here in great numbers, ten or fifteen miles from land, eagerly watching for schools of small fry. The tell-tale in almost every instance is the large tuna, or horse mackerel, and the albicore, which drive schools of smaller fishes hither and yon and sometimes cover the sea with foam for miles, the air seemingly at times being filled with leaping fishes. This unusual disturbance is noticed by the birds, which flock from far and near and attack the small fish on the surface, while the big fish dash at them from below. These birds often so gorge themselves with food that they with difficulty avoid the steamer that plies between the mainland and the island.

In shore the big, brown pelican plies his vocation, and on the lakes and streams of the mainland, and even along the shore of the island, we find the kingfisher, a voracious fish-catcher.

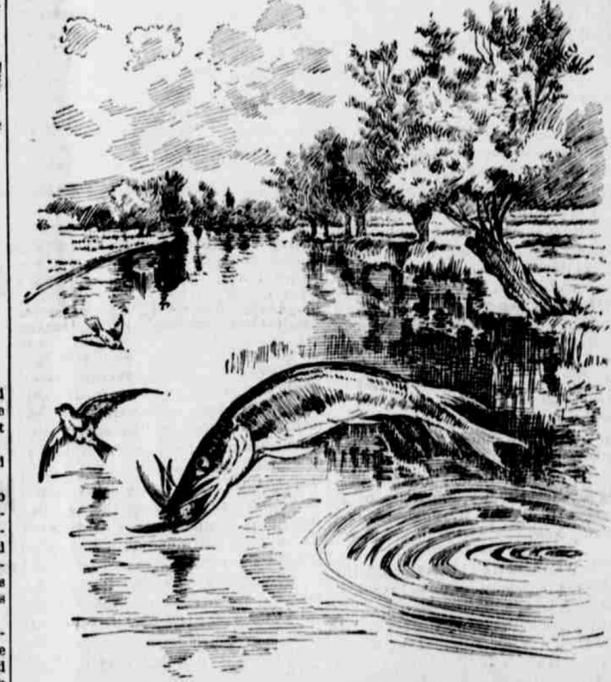
Some of the birds chase their prey beneath the water, as the loons and gannets; these birds having been caught on hooks at great depths, while the little water ouzel walk along on the bottom and catch fish spawn and various objects. In these attacks upon the fishes the birds often expose themselves to many dangers, and numerous instances could be chronicled where birds have fallen victims to voracious fishes.

In the harbor of Santa Catalina Is-

Another observer, sitting on some ledges, saw some young birds sitting on a branch that extended over the stream, and as he watched the attempts of the mother to induce them to fly, a long, sharp-nosed fish came gracefully out of the water and carried off a bird. The parents uttered loud cries, but were evidently utterly defenseless to prevent it. In a few moments the fish returned to the attack, and in all carried off three of the little family. To accomplish this the pike had to leap two feet out of water and grasp its prey in the air in crossing the limb—an extraordinary performance at best.

The little bird previously mentioned that enters rivers and wades about upon the bottom is often caught by the pickerel. This bird has a remarkable method of progression, literally walking under the water clinging to pebbles and stones and hunting out worms insects and fishspawn that are found there.

Birds are not the only land animals that fishes prey upon. Several years ago the proprietor of a well-known fish hatchery found that some depredator was preying upon the spawn, and finally it was discovered that mice were the guilty parties. The little creatures not only entered the tanks, but dived to the bottom and ate the eggs. This led to further investigation, and it was found that this habit was a common occurrence among the mice of the locality, and that they were in the habit of entering the water and feeding upon fish eggs that had been deposited along shore. In this somewhat unusual and adventurous proceeding they often fell victims to the predatory fishes, as was afterwards shown; not only did large pickerel lie in wait for them, but the trout showed a partiality to mice, and caught them as they swam to the bottom.



A LONG, SHARP-NOSED FISH CAME OUT OF THE WATER AND CARRIED OFF A BIRD.

land, which forms an attractive crescent-shaped beach, flocks of little sandpipers are seen in September every year, swimming about and feeding upon the eggs of various fishes, which float on the surface. These birds, which are attractively colored black and white, fairly cover the water at times, swimming leisurely along, dipping their delicate bills into the water and uttering a not unmusical note.

While watching these birds upon an occasion, one somewhat separated from the rest was seen to flutter its wings, then disappear, a great swirl of water marking the spot; then another bird disappeared, and the head of a sharp-nosed fish shot out of the blue water in the midst of the flock, which rose in a body and flew away. The incident showed that the tables were turned, and, instead of birds going a-fishing, we had fish going a-birding, as beneath the flock of little web-footed sandpipers swam inconceivable numbers of sharp-nosed barracudas, which, attracted by the moving feet of the birds, dashed upward and carried them off.

That various kinds of birds fall victims to the voracity of fishes is well known. A goose-fish, or angler, was caught, having in its enormous mouth a loon, which it was endeavoring to swallow, and probably would have done so had it not been caught.

Many tragedies in bird life occur that are not suspected, especially among the birds that descend deep into the water in pursuit of game, as do many of the loons, divers and penguins. The shark and fierce orca are pitiless foes to every living thing, and many birds leave the surface never to return. Some fishes do not rely upon birds that enter the water, but follow them into the air. Such an instance was noticed in an English stream where swallows were darting along near the surface. Suddenly something dashed out of the water, and, with a splash, a bird disappeared, then came to the surface, fluttering to escape, to be seized again. The marauder was a ferce pike that had been watching the little birds.

Some years ago some sealers were following their avocation on the rocky shore of a Pacific island, when they observed a commotion among the seals. Running in that direction, they saw several large killers—a small whale about as large as a black-fish—attempting to seize the seals from the rocks. The big fish-like animals would dash up the sides of the rocks in their eagerness and founder about upon the kelp, gradually falling back again—a singular instance in the struggle for existence.

FROGS AT MUSKOKA.

A Fertile-Brain Gentleman's Musical Yarn from the Wilds of Canada.

President George R. McKee was in a talkative mood a night or two ago. Some one said the frogs had entirely disappeared from Muskoka lake in Canada, and after removing the toby from his mouth, Mr. McKee began, according to the New Castle Courant Guardian: "I remember when I was at Muskoka with the first fishing party that ever visited that spot. Why, do you know that frogs were our principal article of diet? We used to get out in a boat after them, and as true as I tell you the frogs used to run after us. It was no uncommon thing for us to capture forty pounds of frogs' legs in one evening. They'd bite at the bare hook. I've seen them there fully as big as a young pug dog, and we had a dozen that were selected for the difference in their tone of voices. I was enabled by the aid of a small stick to make those frogs sing a kind of a tune. We had a bass, a double bass, a tenor, a contralto, and, in fact, every known voice in that choir. Many's the night I've been lulled to sleep by the music from that bullfrog chorus. Why, I have seen—" but he never finished, for every member of the symposium had escaped through the back door.

The city of Liverpool is about to copy Glasgow and take over the whole of the street railroads. The price to be paid is about \$2,803,500.

ELECTRICITY ON CANALS.

Towing Vessels by Means of Motors on the Banks.

Americans have good grounds for thinking that they have evolved in the system which has been adopted for the Erie canal the best method of propelling boats electrically yet known, says the Pittsburg Dispatch. In this method, it will be remembered, the motor travels on a cable running along the tow-path, and it is under the control of a man seated upon it. While in speed attained and general efficiency this mode of canal propulsion is far ahead of the best European developments, some experiments in this direction, which are reported as having taken place on the Bourgogne canal in France are not without interest. Two methods were tried, one of which was called the "rudder motor." The motor was contained in a light detachable metal box forming part of the boat's helm, and working a screw attached to the shaft, running at about 300 revolutions a minute. The entire outfit—mounted complete—weighed about 1,800 pounds. In the second method there was employed a three-wheeled electric motor car running on the bank of the canal on a fixed track and towing the boats along in the usual way by means of a rope. A motorman was carried on the car, which weighed about two tons. Current in both cases was conveyed to the motors from an overhead wire. Both systems gave a speed of about two and one-half miles an hour in towing single barges, and the motor car towed three barges in a string weighing 418 tons, at a speed of one and one-fourth miles an hour. In reporting on these results a government commission expressed itself as pleased with the ready way in which the barges equipped with the rudder motors answered their helms, and also stated that the towing car ran perfectly well on the bank without excessive strain. On the whole, the preference was given to the latter method, although the fact that it required the services of an attendant who would be of no use on the barge was regarded as a decided disadvantage. No trouble was experienced with the canal banks from any wash of the rudder motor, and its use leaves the bank free for animal traction or other purposes, but still the tow car, it was concluded, gave the best results all around.

PAPER OF THE OXFORD BIBLES.

Only Three Persons Who Know the Secret of Its Making.

The papermaking for Oxford Bibles is a specially important and interesting part of the work. At Wolvercote, a mile or two out of Oxford, the university has a large mill for the supply of its own requirements, says Chambers' Journal. A good deal of the paper they turn out there is made out of old ships' sails, the material of which, after battling with storms in all quarters of the world, come here for the purpose of being made into paper, printed in almost every language under heaven and bound up into volumes to be again scattered far and wide into all the uttermost ends of the earth. This Wolvercote paper mill has much to do with the great reputation that Oxford has acquired in the production of Bibles and other devotional books. Twenty years ago and more the management here hit on a valuable invention in papermaking, and ever since their "India paper" has been the envy and the puzzle of manufacturers all over the kingdom. There are said to be only three persons living who know the secret of its make, and, though the process has never been legally protected, and all the world is free to imitate the extremely thin but thoroughly opaque and wonderfully strong and durable paper of the best Oxford Bibles if they only knew how, all the world has, hitherto quite failed to do so. It is thin as tissue, but perfectly opaque, and so strong that a strip of it three inches wide has proved to be capable of sustaining a quarter of a hundredweight. Over 160 works and editions are now printed on this paper. This special advantage has very largely helped Oxford to retain the leading position which it originally gained by being nearly the first if not quite the first printer of books in the kingdom, and by the prestige of its name.

Overcoats Not Needed.

A medical paper says: "If, instead of wearing overcoats people would wear coats of different thicknesses, according to the weather and conditions generally, they would avoid the danger of cooling by evaporation; the garments saturated with moisture would be removed and dry off the body, instead of on it. We believe that no considerable proportion of the 'colds,' attacks of lumbago, and even more formidable results of what are popularly called 'chills' may be traced to the practice of wearing overcoats."

Teething at 88.

Henry Garrett of Punxsutawney, Pa., who will be 88 years of age next May, has just recovered from an attack of the grip. Mr. Garrett is getting a new set of teeth. He lost his second set of teeth some twelve years ago. Recently his gums became sore and swollen and he consulted a dentist about it. The dentist examined his gums and informed him that he was getting a new set of teeth.

Fig 112 Days Under Snow.

Charles Davis of Cummings, N. E., who lost several pigs during the snow storm last Thanksgiving and found four of them about two months ago, now tells a stranger story still. To his own amazement he found another of his pigs which was alive and still lives after being buried 112 days. It was found only by the thawing of the snow a few days ago.