KENNY'S ROYAL FLUSH

It Was a Long Time Coming, but It Paid Him When It Came—Old Man Greenhut's Story to Show the Value of Persistence—A Bartender Who Stuck to His Theory of Poker Through Many Discouragements and Won Out at Last.

"IT'S a most surprisin' thing," said old man Greenhut as he set the bottles away behind the bar, "that folks don't seem to 'preciate the importance o' bein' persistent. Now, there Si Walker, 't just came in here an' took a drink an' went out 'thout stayin' a word to no one, is a bright an' shinin' example: never doin' nothin' worth while, 'cause he don't never stick to it. Gits discouraged like, an sets down an' thinks about it, when if he'd only spit on his hands an' take a fresh grip he mought come out a four-time winner. Why, I tell you that man might 'a' been a justice o' the peace an' married the Widow Baker with four hundred acres o' good farm land, no end o' stock an' farmin' utensils an' money in the bank, only fer that fatal habit o' his o' not stickin' to it. Just give up, he did, 'cause he got beat out in two 'lections an' wouldn't run fer office no more, an' when the widow said no three or four times he 'lowed she didn't want him an' got out o' the game, when the blame fool daughter knowed that all she wanted was a man with gumption enough to keep on courtin'."

The old man turned his back for a moment while he slyly poured a little water into a whisky bottle in which the liquor was running low, and then placing it with the other bottles he came out to his favorite seat by the window and sat smoking for some minutes.

"Beats all," he said after a while, "how folks lets go like that. Don't seem to have no sense o' religion. The Good Book says, 'Go to the ant, you sluggers. Consider her ways and be wise.' Now, there ain't no p'ints about an ant that's worth considerin, 'cept their almighty stick-to-it-iveness. Stands to reason, it means fer us to keen peggin' away till we git there. If Si Walker'd only pegged like the ants does he mought 'a' been rich an' respected.

"There was Pete Kenney that dropped off'n a boat here some thirty year ago an' just stayed. There didn't seem to be no reason why he should 'a' come here in the first place or why he should 'a' stayed after he arrove, but he did. Some said he must 'a' dropped onto the boat by accident somewheres up the river, an' the captain put him off at the first landin', him not havin' the regulation fare in his jeans. However 'twas, he come, an' he remained. More'n that, he's well fixed now an' pays taxes.

"There warn't no reason fer it, fur as anybody could see, 'ceptin' Pete's all-fired persistency. He was a bright enough sort o' man an' might o' settled down in business fer himself, fer he got a job as bartender down to the hotel an' made money. They do say as how a steady, industrious bartender in a hotel where there's a good run o' business an' a boss that drinks some himself can have a saloon of his own in a few years, an' I reckon it's pretty near true. I kept bar in a hotel myself when I was young.

"That wasn't Pete's lay, though. Pete used to say that there was one way o' establishing yourself in life that laid over any other, an' that was to hold a royal flush in a good stiff game o' draw poker. Then, he says, it's on'y a question o' how much the others has got to inspire their confidence an' how much they has to bet with that fixes the amount to be gathered in, on which a man can retire an' be respectable fer the rest o' his natural life.

"Some o' us reasoned with Pete at times about this. We told him that royal flushes was sca'ce game, and that four o' a kind was good enough fer a careful player to git rich on, but Pete 'lowed that a royal flush was the on'y thing a man could be dead *sure* of. Seems he'd had four queens beat when he was young, an' he'd learned consid'able caution from th' experience.

"'As to a royal flush bein' sca'ce,' Pete says. 'It stands to reason that a man's goin' to git it some time, if he plays long enough. Stick to it,' he says, 'an' sooner or later yer goin' to get a royal flush. The on'y thing needed is to stick to it.'

"Consequences was that Pete, havin' found his theory of business success, devoted himself to the workin' on it out, with a persistency that would a' growed wool on a nigger's heel 'f he'd devoted hisself to that particular form of effort. Talk about Si Walker an' the widow. Ef Si had stuck to the widow with one forty-'leventh part o' Pete's persistency, the widow'd 'a' melted like butter in a blast furnace. Why, Pete'd give his nights an' days to poker. He never allowed business to interfere with a game 'slong's he'd money to play with.

"Just naturally his theory of the game interfered with his general success. Mostly it does interfere, I've noticed, when a man gets theories in his head an' plays the game different f'm the ordinary run o' people. These here sharps that figgers out some particular thing in the game as bein' a dead certainty, always loses money on it, for you can say what you like about the great American game, but it certainly does beat anything else for the preponderance of uncertainty that has to be calculated on, whenever you have a dead sure thing in your mind—all excepting a royal flush, as Pete used to say with ondeniable wisdom.

"Pete's mind bein' fixed, so to speak, on that royal flush, you can see for yourself that it warped his judgment on the question o' drawin' cards. Many a time I've seen him split a pair o' aces, an' draw three cards to a ace an' queen, or ace an' ten o' the same suit. Once I even seen him split two pairs, aces an' queens, an' draw two cards to the ace, queen an' jack o' diamonds, an' Joe Hooker says he seen the blamed ijjit split three kings to draw to three hearts just because they was all court cards o' the same suit. An' the first card he picked up in the draw was the fourth king. Shows how a man'll overlook the blessin's o' Providence right in his fist reachin' out after things he hain't no reason to hope for in the natural course of events. Stands to reason a man'll lose money defyin' fate with such monkey shines as them.

"'Twasn't no use to argue with Pete, though. He were as obstinate as a mule an' stuck to his notion o' gettin' a royal flush like a sick nigger sticks to the Methodist church. You couldn't persuade him. One day I says to him, 'Look a' here, Pete, a royal flush is most onquestionably a good piece o' property, but what show hev you got o' gettin' one? You put me out o' patience. Look at the pots you might 'a' scooped with two pairs an' three of a kind if you'd only drawed like a Christian, says I, 'instead o' puttin' your trust in strange gods, an' sacrificin' your good chips an' the principles o' the game in a strange an' foolis' endeavor. It's flyin' in the face o' Providence,' I says to him, 'an' you'll go down to your grave unhonored, unwept an' unhung if you persist in it. More'n that,' I says, 'you'll be dead broke all the days o' your life.'

"But you couldn't convince him. 'There's four royal flushes in the deck, aint there?' says he, 'an' them five cards is just as likely to come as any other five, aint they? An' if there's anything certain in this here world o' trouble an' oncertainty, 'tis that a man'll get 'em sometime, if he keeps on tryin'. An' say! When I do get 'em' if the Lord spares me till that happy day, I wont do anything but swat the gang.'

"'The Lord can spare you easy enough,' says I, disgusted, 'an' so can the community if you go on tryin' to break up our national institutions by propagatin' sich revolutionary ideas. It's worse'n socialism,' I says. 'It's ridiculous.'

"But there wasn't no movin' of him, an' we just had to leave him to the error of his ways, an' what we thought was the inevitable vengeance of heaven. An' the boys calculated that bein' as how he was a self-appointed vessel o' wrath, an' bound to be skinned in the game as long as he continued to play it, it was a sort o' missionary work to assist in the skinnin'. Most of 'em devoted themselves to the missionary work, too, with such holy zeal that Pete was broke most of the time.

"He was good grit though. Nobody never heard him complain, for he seemed to be sustained by a calm confidence in that royal flush, an' every time he went broke he'd go back to work as chipper as a catfish an' stick to it till he had a stake to sit in the game with.

"That was another thing I used to talk to him about while I was trying to show him the error of his ways. 'Supposin' you do get a royal flush sometime,' I says, 'how can you expect to get a legitimate profit out of it if you go broke all the time tryin' to get it? You won't have no money to bet with,' I says.

"But all he ever said to that was, 'Oh, the Lord will provide! You don't suppose thing is goin' to be so ordered, do you, that heaven's richest blessin' would come to a man, an' him not have the means to back it up?' Which was the next door to blasphemy, as I told him frequent, but he only smiled. An' when the time come, as it did finally, when his faith was justified, an' he reaped the reward of persistency, it were developed that he had good reason to smile, for he had provided for that contingency with a wisdom compared to which the guile o' the sarpent was as the babblings o' babes an' sucklings. Oh! Pete was a polished article even if we did size him up for a deluded fanatic all them years.

"It went on for a matter o' fifteen year or more an' Pete's royal flush come to be a standin' joke in town. Fellers would laugh about it every time he set into a game, an' it were esteemed a great piece o' wit for some feller to say, 'I'll bet a thousand to one in town lots that Pete won't get a royal flush to-night.' Course nobody ever took it up, but everybody'd laugh, an' Pete would blush, an' he'd say, 'I'll get it some time, boys, if I don't to-night.'

"An' he did. If ever a man won success by long-continued, persistent struggle for it, Pete Kennedy did, an' things fell out about as he'd always said they would. It was a pretty good game from the first, for there was a couple o' crossroads gamblers who had come to town lookin' for blood, an' it happened that there was two planters just back from New Orleans with their money in their pockets, an' they was lookin' for excitement. One of 'em knowed Pete an' liked him an' asked him to join in the game that was started just about the time they got off at Arkansas City here, an' Pete havin' a hundred in his clothes, just naturally did.

"He played lucky from the start. It happened fortunately that he didn't get a chance to make one of his fool draws more'n once in half an hour or so, an' his play outside o' that was fairly good pots on flushes an' fulls, besides two or three that he took in on deuces and nerve, or some sich hand.

"Anyhow, he had near a thousand in front of him when there come a big jack pot with fifty in it before it was opened. Pete sat next to the dealer an' he passed, havin' on'y a king, jack an' ten o' clubs, not bein' permitted to open under the rules. The next man opened it for fifty, the next three come in, an' Pete raised it a hundred. That was his fool play. Whenever he'd see a show for a royal flush he used to play as if he had it, for fear he wouldn't get the good of it when it did come.

"Well, it worked pretty well. One of the crossroads professionals dropped out, but the other one had a seven full, pat, an' after the two planters had come in, he raised Pete another hundred. Pete came back at him with another and one of the planters dropped. The other had a four flush and he stayed. The gambler, for some reason, didn't raise again, but simply saw the raise, and there was $1,300 in the pot.

"In the draw Pete got the ace an' queen o' clubs. I suppose if I'd a caught them cards under the circumstances, I'd a dropped dead with surprise, but Pete never turned a hair. There was a kind of a drop to the left side of his face an' it looked a little droopier than usual, for a minute, but he gave no other sign, and the dthers thought he had three of a kind at the most. The planter filled his flush, an' so Pete had two good hands to play against, which was as much as anybody could expect. He had about six hundred on the table to bet with, besides, and more'n that, he had resources that nobody at the table knew about.

"The planter sat next to the opener, who had dropped out, and as it was his first bet and he had a flush, he pushed up a hundred, not carin' to go too heavy against the gambler who had stood pat and who stood the third raise before the draw. The gambler raised, of course, pushin' up three-fifty.

"Things was agoin' Pete's way, but he never grinned. What he had to do was to make the others think he was bluffing, so he studies his cards careful for a while an' then says, sort o' desperate like an' sudden, 'I'll see that, an' I'll go you two-fifty better,' an' he pushes his pile to the middle of the table, barrin' fifteen or twenty dollars he had in loose change.

"The planter's flush was king high, so he saw it, but didn't raise, an' the gambler raised it five hundred, thinking that Pete would drop out. 'That's more than your threes are worth, I reckon,' he said with a sneer, but Pete never answered him. He studied his cards a while longer and then said, pretty slow, 'I haven't got the cash to see you, but I've got the deeds to some property here that's pretty valuable, an' if you'll take that for security, I'll raise you a thousand.'

"He pulled some law papers out of his pocket as he spoke and laid them on the table, but the gambler spoke up, very nasty, an' says: 'I ain't buyin' no property without looking at it, an' money is the only thing that talks in this game.'

"Pete looked at the planter, but he shook his head, 'I wouldn't mind as far as I am concerned,' he said, 'but there is an objection made. I don't see how I can help you.'

"'Very well,' says Pete, pertending to look troubled, 'then I'll have to ask for a few minutes time till I can get some money to play with. Sam,' he says to the nigger that was bringing them drinks, 'take these papers over to Mr. Stevens an' ask him if he will loan me $10,000 on them.'

"Then there was a little wrangle. The other gambler who had dropped out objected to the delay, but the two planters spoke up for Pete and the gambler who held the full house said he was willin' to wait while the gentleman got some more money as he was goin' to win it anyhow, so Sam went over to Mr. Stevens's house. Stevens bein' the president of our bank an' a gentleman with proper sporting habits.

"Some of us that was lookin' on was guessin' for fair. We never knowed o' Pete havin' no property, an' we thought he was bluffin, but we couldn't see just how he reckoned he could work it, or what he expected to do. I says to myself 'I reckon he's caught that royal flush, but what this move means is more than I know.' Anyhow, there warn't nothin' to do but wait, an' I waited as all the others did, for it looked as if there'd be some fun.

"Pretty soon Mr. Stevens came back with the nigger, an' says, 'What's this mean, Pete? The nigger says you want to borrow $10,000.'

"'Yes, I do,' says Pete.

"'Well,' says Stevens, 'you can have the money on there deeds, of course, if you'll come to the bank to-morrow, but you'—

"'I want it now,' says Pete, interruptin', an' as he spoke he picked up his cards from the table where they had been lying, an' held 'em kind o' careless, just so that Stevens could see 'em, but pretendin' not to notice that they could be seen.

"'Oh!' says Stevens, 'you want the money to play with, do you? But certainly you ain't goin' to bet on that hand?'

"'You'll oblige me,' says Pete, pretendin' to get in a terrible rage, 'by sayin' nothin' about my hand. It may not be the strongest hand in the deck, but its the best one out. Besides, it's my own business what I do with the money. The question is whether you'll let me have it?'

"'Oh, yes,' says Stevens, 'I'll let you have it all right. That is, I'll give you my personal check.'

"'I reckon that's good,' says Pete, an' so it was, for everybody on the river knowed Stevens.

"It was the neatest play I ever expect to see, for them papers wan't worth the ink that was on 'em. It seems that Stevens had come to know about Pete always playin' for a royal flush, an' had joked him about it, knowin' him pretty well an' likin' him as a man gets to like a bartender that treats him right, an' Pete had got him to promise to lend him all the money he needed to play with whenever he got the royal flush. Then when Stevens came over to lend him the money if he really had the cards, him knowin' that the deeds was a bluff, he was sport enough and liked Pete well enough to help him along with his little remark about bettin' on that hand.

"Of course, when they heard that the other players thought sure he was bluffing, an' Pete jollied them along till he cleaned up $18,000. Then he quit playing poker for good an' as I said became a respectable taxpayer. It all shows what a man can do by stickin' to his ideas of what to do in this world."—New York Sun.

LEFT ALONE.

It's the lonesomest house I ever saw,
This big gray house where I stay—
I don't call it livin' at all, at all—
Since my mother went away.

Four long weeks ago, an' it seems a year;
"Gone home," so the preacher said,
An' I ache in my breast with wantin' her,
An' my eyes are alwaye red.

I stay out-of-doors till I'm almost froze,
'Cause every corner an' room
Seems empty enough to frighten a boy,
An' filled to the doors with gloom.

I hate them to call me in to my meals,
Sometimes I think I can't bear
To swallow a mouthful of anythin'
An' her not sittin' up there

A-pourin' the tea, an' passin' the things,
An' laughin' to see me take
Two big lumps of sugar instead of one,
An' more than my share of cake.

There's no one to go to when things go wrong;
She was always so safe an' sure,
Why, not a trouble could tackle a boy
That she couldn't up an' cure.

"I'm too big to be kissed," I used to say,
But somehow I don't feel right,
Crawlin' into bed as still as a mouse—
Nobody sayin' good night,

An' tuckin' the clothes up under my chin,
An' pushin' my hair back, so;
Things a boy makes fun of before his chums,
But things that he likes, you know.

I can't make out for the life of me
Why she should have to go
An' her boy left here in this old gray house,
A-needin' an' wantin' her so.

There are lots of women, it seems to me,
That wouldn't be missed so much—
Women whose boys are about all grown up
An' old maid aunties, an' such.

I tell you the very lonesomest thing
In this great big world to-day,
Is a boy of ten whose heart is broke
'Cause his mother is gone away.

—Toronto Globe

Life is not one grand, sweet song at Cape Nome. A Wichita man writing home from there says: "Here lies the rolling sea. Towering above the sea are the ice mountains, and towering above them is the price of grub."

Husband—I don't see why you have accounts in so many dry good stores. Wife—Because, my dear, it makes the bills so much smaller—Bazar.

FISH TALES, IF NO FISH

Fergy the Guide Talks While the Bass Decline to Bite—Catch of the Red Flannel Shirt—Punishment of Aleck Hume, the Mean Scotchman—Target Shooting of the Porcupines—The Death Song of the Loon—Forest Romance.

FERGUSON the guide, called Fergy for short, squat, muscular and brown, with small, dark eyes peering from under a drooping brim, sat on the middle thwart of the boat. In the summer sun Round lake lay placid. Not a ripple crinkled it. Three great pines and hemlocks which grew to the water's edge, were motionless in the noon heat. Over the wide and mirror-like expanse the quavering, wailing cry of the loon sounded. A blue heron stood gaunt upon a wooded point, waiting for his luncheon to swim by and at the other end of the lake a mother teal led her brown brood of seven by devious ways in and out among the rushes. While usually the water rippled, as if against a beach, upon the lips of the lily-pads, on this day not a murmur came from them. Under their shelter the huge black bass reposed, not might any form of lure, live frog or minnow, phantom minnow or spoon, fly or white salt pork, tempt him to come forth.

The other man in the boat listened while Fergy talked. He pays Fergy $2 a day to haul him about into secret places where the fish are known to be, and to handle the craft as only a master can handle it when that shooting wolf of the Western waters, the muskallonge, strikes the spoon and the battle for life begins. In addition to services as a guide, he obtained from Fergy a wealth of romance of the forest and field, for this boatman is certainly the most gifted and ornate liar to be found between Green Bay and the Mississippi river. When pike, pickerel, bass and "musky" refuse to strike, it is worth the money to hear him, in modulated voice, drone on of the way in which they have bitten in the past, and doubtless will bite again. His language is simple and direct, unadorned with the graces of rhetoric, unmarred by the crimpings of grammar, the unfettered, free, expressive tongue of the wilderness, the birch bark shack and the logging camp.

"Talking about fishing," said Fergy, the other man not having spoken for half an hour, "talking about fishing and the funny things a man sees sometimes when his eyes ain't shut, reminds me of a time when I got tired of loafing 'round Boyd's hotel, and wanted to do a do on my own reel. I go down to Long lake and dump myself into a pirogue, and I go across and pike along into the woods. I pike for 550 yards, straight as a teal flies when it means business, and I run bang against a little lake I had never seen before in my life. It lay there among the trees and the alder bushes like a looking glass, not more'n an acre, and I wanter say it was broke from end to end with ripples made by the small-mouthed bass.

"They was two million of 'em, or maybe they was three million, an' it was pretty enough to make a man keep away from whisky and the gals forever and ever amen. I dug my hands into my pockets, and I didn't have no more bait than would catch a starving minnow in a wash bowl. I thought hard for three and a quarter minutes, and then I out with the tail of my red flannel shirt and tore off a hunk big enough to wrap a penknife in. I didn't need that much, but I wanted fish, and the other guides had plenty of shirts and we all bunked in the same cabin. Now, a little piece of red flannel ain't the most eatful thing in the world, but, say, them fish was crazy for it. It hadn't touched the water when twenty-three of 'em made a dash for it, and one of 'em that weighed four and a quarter pounds got it right in the left gill. Then begin the dadbingedest hurroosh what ever.

"The line was in the air most of the time, going in or coming out, and many a time a fish would meet the flannel two and a half feet above the water. I'd reef it into him the second he struck; he'd be hooked by the time his tail touched the lake, and I jerked that old quadruple multiplying so fast that he'd come in standing on his flukes, with maybe his hind fin just tipping the water now and again. I never see such fish. Nobody never did.

"I catched sixty-one red-eyed bass in sixty minutes flat. Then my right arm was so tired that I had to lift on the string with my left hand, and paddle home with that hand, too. I ain't certain but what they was sixty-two, but Antoine Garleshay come down to the boat to meet me at the hotel lading, and he was the worst fish-thief that ever made a track big enough for two fair-sized men. He was drowned last year, logging on the Flambeau, and I ain't much doubt that some meat was on his bones made by one of them red-eyes. That catch weighed 152 pounds 11 ounces, and they want a big-mouth in the bunch."

Fergy had never read Dean Swift, and is unaware of the great doctor's habit of embellishing his yarns by the use of minutae, measuring a wash bowl of the Brobdingnagians by the dome of St. Paul's, and so forth; but he has the genius for detail that marks the accomplished prevaricator, and backs his statements with such wealth of little things that the listener is forced into mute acquiescence if not into outspoken belief.

"The meanest guide I ever bumped agin," he went on, "was Aleck Hume. He was a Scotchman, with French blood in him and a dash of Leech Lake Indian. I don't know where you'd go to find a meaner cross than that. It was his grandmother on the mother's side that give him the Indian tinge, and he got the French from his father's grandmother. He smoked my tobacker and broke my pipe, and told the guests at the hotel that I w'n't no good. One day on Pickerel lake me an' my man was out of bait, an' Aleck an' his man was down the shore 200 yards from us. Aleck had the big bucket hale full of frogs, sitting behind him, and the man was in the stern. I can outswim any fish that ever jumped a lily-pad to reach a June bug, when I try, and I said nothing to my man. I just went over the side without a splash and slipped under the water. The distance was 195 yards, and there was a big ruffle on from the wind. I got a good start about eight feet under, and I came up just behind Aleck, as true as a hair. Say, you couldn't hear a ripple. I put my hand over the gunwale, lifted the frog bucket, went under again, and the next thing I saw, I was on the far side of my own boat, holding up the frogs for my man to see. Say, I thought he'd roll off the seat.

"Coming back was a little harder than going. I was afraid to take too deep a breath; Aleck might hear me. In a little while his man lost the frog off his hook. They said it was a weedless hook, but it got caught in the pads, just the same. They ain't no weedless hook, sure enough, except one I made, and I'm trying to get a patent on it. Well, the langwidge that went over that lake when that man asked that guide for them frogs was just wonderful. Aleck swore they was behind him aminute afore. His man asked sarkastic al what brand of licker he was drinking. Then Aleck he said he was as sober as any dude that ever come out of Chicago, and his man said that Aleck was a liar. Then Aleck got sulky and turned the boat round and made for the portage back into Mason Lake, and so on to the hotel, and next day the hotel man that gave him his grub to hang aroundand guide for the guests, fired him over two counties. A tree 110 feet high and 6 feet 2 inches thick fell on him last winter, up in Rube Smith's camp, and mashed him flatter than a ladybug; but that don't gimme back my tobacker.

"They's a funny tree right back of us up on the hill there. You couldn't find it unless I took you to it, but it's a wonder. It stands 325 rods from where we are sitting, northwest by north. I run against it one day when I was out hunting for wasps' nests. They ain't no bait for bass like young wasps some times of the year. The tree is a silver birch, and it ain't mor'n three inches through. I noticed it, because about a foot and a half from the ground there was a blaze on it two inches square, like some feller had done it with an axe. I didn't see what a blaze was doing there, and so low down, because there weren't no trail anywhere near, and I went up to have a look at it. Maybe you won't believe me when I tell you that it had thirty-three porkypine quills sticking in it, just like little arrers. I never see anything like that before, and I hung around for an hour waiting to see some more. I knowed the porkys was up to something. Bimeby I see two come out of the woods, waddle up to the tree and then waddle away from it about two yards. I measured the distance afterward, and it was six feet two inches.

"They looked at one another a minute and seemed to be arguing about something. They were just plain black porkypines, and I see that their quills was thinner than they oughter be. Finally one of 'em switches hisself around until he was broadside to the tree, give hisself a little jerk and a quill went flying and stuck in the tree, a half inch above the blaze and a quarter inch to the left. The other one sorter snickered, took his posish and landed inside the blaze, an inch below the center. They was shooting at a mark—that's what they was doing—but what they had bet on it I don't know, and if I knew I would not tell, as the song says.

"The first one, which was the biggest, looked sorter mad and tried another shot. He got pretty close to the center, but the other one beat him with a bull'seye. They tried another shot apiece, but the little one won again. He sorter danced about on two legs for a minute or two, and then the big one gathered him. Say, you never see any leaves fly like them leaves flew. There was a cloud of 'em whirling about and in the center of the cloud was the two porkys. The little one wasn't so strong as the big one, but he was science for keeps. I never see a little feller fight like he did. Three times the big one got him down, and three times he broke away, and the way they slung the quills into each other was orful. You could a-heard 'em rattle a quarter-mile away.

"At last the little one give a half-whirl, jumped a foot high, passed over the big one's back, lit six inches from him, half-turned and socked his teeth into his throat where no quills don't grow. Say, it was Katy bar the door then. The big one let out a squeal like a young pig, and in half a minute he keeled over on his side and lay still. He didn't have life enough left in him to roll up into a ball. He just died dead. The little one looked at him for a while, then he went over and looked at the mark they had been shooting at. He sorter sized up the posish of the quills sticking in it, and then he went away.

"I could a-killed him with a club, but I didn't have the heart to do it. He sure was a game little fighter. When that fight ended them two porkys didn't have a dozen quills apiece on 'em that growed there. They had used up most of their ammunition reefing the sharp ploints into each other. The one that lived looked like he had been in a wind that blowed his quills the wrong way, and the other one what was dead just bristled with 'em. It ain't no use for people to tell me a porky can't throw his quills, because I see 'em do it and do it mighty accurate. Ef I could shoot as straight according to my size, I wouldn't have to guide nobody for a living. The dead one weighed five pounds and three ounces.

"And talking about bass and porkypines, I see some loons do a funny trick once. I was over on Little Price lake trying for some California trout the fool gover'ment put in there to feed the muskies 'bout five years ago. They's lots of loons on Little Price because of the small fish in it. I was late starting back, and twilight had got plumb into moonlight afore I took up my anchor. Just then I heard a splash, and about a hundred and ten yards away I see a loon come swooshing down and hit the water kerblop. He gave the signal cry, and another and another came in until I counted eighteen of 'em swimming around in a circle.

Then the first one raised his head and made a long cry, and the others took it up in chorus. They swum slowly round and round and kept up their crying. It sounded like a sorter loon squalling match to me at first, but pretty soon I began to pick out the different notes. One feller'd squall 'way down deep, and another 'way up high, and another sorter in the middle, and the others joined in first here and then there, and I see that it was a singing bee. That's what it was, as sure as the Lord made little apples. The first loon was teacher and the others was learning from him.

"Well, say, that noise got to be pretty agreeable after a little while. It had a sorter tune to it. Bimeby the tune got to be strong and plain. I never heard no tune like it, and I'd been hitting the fiddle for twenty year, but it was a tune all right. Then the leader waved his head three times, and one of 'em came swimming slow out of the bunch and took a station five yards and one foot away. He raised his head, and his voice came out sorter sweet and clear and thin, like the note you make on the little string when the pitch is high and you draw the bow soft and even. Then the big feller that had more white on him than he oughter, rolled in with a bass, that was like the wind booming in the pine trees of winter nights. Two of 'em, with middling high voices, chimed in, and the others kept as mum as mice and swum round and round. It was a loon quartet, and the music was beautiful.

"They sung and sung ,and the old one in the center looked like he was going to faint. His bill would drop down until it rested on the water ,and then he'd bring it back with a jerk, just like a man sitting before a fire after a hard day with the logs, and nodding. He'd roll from side to side and drop his bill, and pull it back, and wave his tail backward and forward, quick or slow, in time to the music, and every now and then he d rise almost clear of the water and stretch his wings like he was yawning and the music was so good it made him lazy. Finally I noticed that when his bill went down each time it'd stay a little longer, and seemed heavier when it come up.

"Then, toward the last, all of the loons joined in the leading of the quartette. I never heard a slower or more sadsome tune. It almost made me cry, because I begin to see what this was all about. Once a feller told me about the song of the dying swan. I see a many swans die; I shot a many of 'em myself, but I never hear 'em sing none. Here, though, was a loon deathbed, and this was the loon hymn they sing when one of 'em gotter go. The music got slower and more sadlike, and the old loon in the middle finally couldn't get his bill up at all. Then he gave a last kind wiggle with his tail, sorter turned to one side and gave up his sperret. The others sing a stave or two, and then give it to me loud and gladsome for a bit, then they raise all at once and fly away, just as noiseless and swift as spooks. I counted 'em ag'in when they left, and they was just seventeen of 'em.

"The dead one floated for a minute or two, but when I started toward him to pick him up and see what was the matter with him, a big musky rose under him, with his bull head pointed straight up. I see his jaws open, and that was the last of Mr. Loon. That musky took him down like he wern't no bigger'n a half-growed teal. I wanter say I was mighty shivery, and going home I took the boat clear out of the water every snatch of the oars."

The man in the stern of the boat said he did not think the bass would bite at all that day, and Fergy said they never bit when the water was still and the sun was shining, unless a fellow could get a piece of young fawn for bait—a piece weighing three and a quarter ounces for preference. The man in the stern filled his pipe with plug cut, lit it, looked at his guide and asked him if he had heard any wheels going round when in bed the night before. Fergy said promptly that he had; that it was the windmill used for pumping water at the little woods hotel, and that the windmill was five feet eight inches in diameter. Then they went slowly homeward.—Fifield (Wis.) Correspondence New York Sun.

AIDING OUR COMPETITORS.

American Inventions Building Up Foreign Agriculture.

American invention has been almost as helpful to agriculture as to manufacturing enterprises. It has made practicable the cultivation of much larger areas of land than would else have been possible. It has increased the output and decreased the cost of food products. This has been the case especially as regards the cereals and cotton. But while our inventors have been adding to the profits of our farmers and simultaneously giving all consumers cheaper food, they have also been building up, in other countries, a strong competition with our wheat-growers. American agricultural machinery has been a vast benefaction to universal humanity.

Argentine is steadily increasing her export of wheat, as a result of the use of American inventions. In 1892 she exported only 23,000,000 bushels, but her exports for this year will, it is reported, aggregate 75,000,000. Our wheat area cannot be greatly increased, except by the costly means of irrigation, but Argentina has immense areas of rich soil admirably adapted to this crop, which have not yet been brought under cultivation. She has a mild climate, low wages, and cheap subsistence. Most of the laborers are Italians, and a majority of them get but 50 cents a day—not an eight, or nine, or ten hour day, but from sunrise to sunset. Thus it is easy for Argentina to increase her wheat export, even against the heavy handicap of high freights—three times as high for trans-Atlantic transportation as our shippers pay. But that is not a permanent feature of the situation. There will eventually be a great reduction of freight rates from South American ports to Europe.

But we need not be greatly disturbed over this competition, for the time is not far off—probably less than fifty years—when we shall need all our wheat for home consumption. Meanwhile, will it not be practicable to so develop our corn trade as to fill the impending void?—Washington Post.

CANNOT OVERRUN CHINA.

Russia's Hands Are Full in Developing the Vast Resources of Siberia.

The military strength of Russia in Manchuria and on the Pacific coast cannot be estimated, but it is doubtful if she could muster, at the maximum figure, 100,000 troops. That such a force can cope with restlessness in China, especially when communication is by road only, is impossible. Russia has her hands full in the development of the vast resources of Siberia; here millions of colonists must be absorbed before anything can be attended to in China. Meanwhile, notwithstanding fierce reaction, progress must inevitably go on in China, solidifying the masses of the people. It is a problem whether the national spirit of the Chinese will not soon be unified to such an extent as to be able successfully to resist Russia, when she is ready to begin her "Russianization."

It is argued that because Russia has been able to absorb and "Russianize" the semi-nomadic tribes of Central and Northern Asia that she will be equally successful in dealing with Chinese. But the handling of immense masses of population that have a grand past from which to gain individuality, is quite different from overawing weak and scattered tribes.—National Geographical Magazine.

Miss Pinkie's Forethought.

Jane—That Mr. Shallowpate is at the the door. Shall I tell him you are engaged?

Miss Pinkie—Show him into the parlor, Jane.

"Yes, miss."

"And Jane, after he has laid his box of chocolates on the mantlepiece tell him I am out.—Exchange.

Some fools seem too soft to do a foolhardy thing.