

THE HUSKING BEE.

A country-club member went out to the farm
An old-fashioned husking to see,
And there he met Sue,
Who, without much ado,
Consented his partner to be.

At touch of her fingers the ears all turned red,
A forfeit of course was to pay;
He knew what to do
And so did she, too,
In spite of her innocent way.

That clubman will tell you that huskings are great,
With red ears sufficiently stocked.
It must have been true
The times he kissed Sue;
For the corn was outrageously shocked.

—New York News.

JOSIAH THE CLAIM-JUMPER

JOSIAH GODBOLT was new to the Shasta hills. He was new to any hills, and, of course, he was new to the mines. He was new to everything western, and new to almost everything not relating directly or indirectly to the swamp lands of the Mississippi, where boys grow so fast into human saplings that by the time they are stubby of chin their legs are long enough for them to stride away, or to the locomotion of a St. Louis street car. Godbolt had been a conductor on a street car until that eventful day when his car collided while he was engaged in helping a small girl with her basket, and he was discharged. He had had wages due him sufficient to pay his fare to California, which seemed the place most distant from the scene of his yielding to a weakness. Hither he had come in a hurry. But Josiah knew, or, to be precise, he "allowed" that he wanted a copper mine. As he had no snug fortune with which to buy one, his recourse was to discover a new ledge and plaster his notice of location upon it. These are sidights upon the trail along which Fate led Josiah to Pete Barclay.

Barclay was a tenderfoot—nearly twenty years before Josiah was born. Four decades he had spent in getting into such close and fortunate hunting communion with the "likely spots" of the Sierra Nevadas and the Coast Range, that he had really become a part of the mountains. He was so gray and weathered, and so perfectly attuned to the surroundings, that he could squat among the little bowlders on a Shasta hillside and a jack-rabbit might hop over and scratch its back against a corner of him without noting the difference. Fortune had not always been mean to him, and if he was forever at the ebb it was mainly because, like all chronic prospectors, he knew a good deal more about hunting for mineral than about using it after he found it. Once, at Cherokee, he took out nuggets as large as buzzard's eggs; at Oak Bar he pipped down a bank which washed ten thousand dollars in ten days, and a week later, in a gambling house—but that is not this story.

Josiah Godbolt, tired of mucking at the Iron Mountain, and resolved to make a find for himself, drew his stipend and went to Redding. Pete Barclay, driven away from the high altitudes of Coffee Creek by the flying snow, was in town with the price of four weeks' living used out of his shallow dust-goose when he met Josiah in the Blue Goshawk resort. "You're fresh enough from nowhere to have some greenhorn luck with you," commented Barclay. "You're long enough on the belt to teach me how to find a copper mine," was Josiah's theory. And so the partnership was formed.

Barclay did know of a copper prospect which seemed large enough to meet the ideas of the young Missourian, to say nothing of his own hopes, now modified by experience. He knew where a streak of half worn off red paint ran through a ravine and over a hilltop, back from Copley, within rifle-shot of the great Balaklala. This red gossam meant more than an iron cross, of that he was certain. On the Fourth of July, when every miner of the section had gone to Redding for the celebration, he had improved the unwatched opportunity to pick into the vein where the hill sloughed away, and he had found copper sulphurets. The obstacle which prevented Barclay from taking up the two claims which the red streak crossed was that they already bore the location notices of Henry Flatfoot, half-breed, drunkard and fighter. The half-breed had been keen enough to see that there was value there, but too lazy to get down to it, or even to do his assessment work, required by law. Pete Barclay had waited his opportunity. In another night the year would expire, and with it the location notices of the half-breed. The first man upon the spot after the hour of midnight could re-locate those two valuable claims. The surest way was for a man to be on each of the claims exactly at twelve o'clock to fear down Flatfoot's notices and post new ones of their own. This was what Pete Barclay had in mind in taking a partner.

An old miner and a young one dropped from the caboose of the afternoon freight train at Copley, and slung down their packs while they went in to patronize the bar, which constituted half the town. The older miner was careful to explain to the dispenser of refreshments and the loungers in the place that he and his companion were going to the Balaklala to work. "Seeing you've got jobs, it ain't worth mentioning," said the proprietor, "but Injun Flatfoot, who's a-gambling in

the back room now, says he's willing to pay big for somebody to go up the hill with him to-night and keep some old claim or other from being jumped." The remark was not lost upon Josiah Godbolt, and as he toiled after Barclay along the trail, winding up hillsides and around little peaks, sometimes under trees and usually through dense chemise, he asked: "Will this Flatfoot party try to interfere with us to-night, do you reckon?"

"You'd better save your wind to get up these hills, instead of wasting it asking questions," answered old Pete; "and besides, a pine tree, such as you be, with a six-shooter handy, ought to be able to bluff off a half-breed, anyway." It was while they were cooking supper in a secluded spot in the ravine, just below the first of the claims they had come to operate upon that night, that Josiah learned more of Henry Flatfoot. It would seem that he must be the boss bad citizen of Shasta County. Barclay told Josiah that the half-breed had shot at many men in various fights, had stabbed one or two, and bore the record of his encounters in scars over his body and a long knife mark across his left cheek. "He served a term in San Quentin," went on Barclay, ruminating. "It was after he tried to hold up the Bieber stage, up you way, and was shot in the shoulder. They chased him for five days. He was so near petered out that he even threw away his gun, or some of them wouldn't have been so hot to overtake him. At last they caught him in a deep cave on the McCloud, and how do you s'pose they knew he was back in the dark hole? It was by the shine of his eyes; they were just like an animal's."

It was very dark in the hills at nine o'clock. At that hour, Pete Barclay stationed Josiah Godbolt beside the scrub-oak upon which Henry Flatfoot's location of the claim was posted, with the instruction that when he could feel both hands of his big silver watch, from which the crystal had been removed, pointing straight upward, he was to tear down the half-breed's notice and tuck up their own as noiselessly as possible. Then he was to stand guard beside the sign of their possession until morning. Pete would do the same on the other claim.

"And what if somebody comes snorting around here and wants to clean me out?" asked Josiah.

"Well, the law gives a man the right to defend his property in the certainest way he knows how, and that's my best gun you've got in your belt there," replied Pete, as he felt his way into the little trail which led to the other claim, half a mile away over the hill.

Josiah found his vigil growing tedious rapidly. He feared to move about in the darkness, lest he should lose the tree, and he had been advised not to disclose his presence to chance prowlers by striking a light. For the same reason he checked a half-involuntary impulse to whistle. He slid to the ground, with his back against the tree, and occupied himself with thinking over all he had heard about the half-breed, who would own the very ground upon which he was sitting for more than two hours to come. Supposing Henry Flatfoot should take a notion to visit the claim while it still belonged to him? Who would be the intruder then, and on whose side would the law be? Josiah moved his big foot, and the cracking of a twig beneath it startled him and set his heart to beating.

The darkness was so intense that Josiah could see as little with his eyes open as with them shut. He could not see the hand on his crooked-up knee, and he could not see his right hand, which, somehow, seemed comfortable only when it rested upon the butt of the revolver swung loosely in his leather belt. Many the night when he had followed the dogs at a run in the bottoms along the Mississippi until the 'possum was treed and the axes could be swung to fell the perch, but he had not supposed that a night, when neither snow nor rain was falling, could be as dark as this. Clouds hid every star. In shifting his position he was delighted to discover a glow-worm. He seized the insect, and drawing up his cowhide shoes, smeared phosphorus on the toe of each. He could now follow the motion of his feet when he moved them, and he felt more collected.

With limbs numb from sitting so long in this posture, Josiah pulled out his watch in haste. Surely it was already past midnight. The long hand was undoubtedly pointing straight up, but an angle separated the short hand from it. It was eleven o'clock. If Henry Flatfoot were coming to try to save his claims he would arrive during

the next hour. Josiah tried to keep thoughts of the desperate Indian out of his mind. The night had been very still. Suddenly the brush crackled slightly. Josiah found when all was silent again that he had unconsciously risen to his feet and was supporting himself with one hand against the tree while in the other he gripped his revolver. It was only a rabbit moving in the chemise, of course. He restored the weapon to its place and sank down again. After a time a sound in the brush off to the other side set him a-quiver again, but he convinced himself that only a toad could make such a wee noise, though it had sounded loud enough at first. When a strange night bird cried out he did not move or touch his gun, and he told himself that he had banished his silly fears. The night was cold, but somehow he did not feel the chill.

During the last half-hour before midnight, Josiah held his watch on his palm, and with his fingers followed the long hand as it mounted the dial. Anybody would know that if the half-breed Henry Flatfoot were coming to prevent his location notice from being torn down, he would not have waited until so late to come.

Josiah could feel his palm perspiring beneath the cold case of the watch when at last both hands were squarely upon the figure twelve. In a moment he was upon his feet ripping the half-rotten cloth sign from its place upon the tree. The new piece of cloth a foot square he spread against the trunk, whether right side or wrong side to the bark he neither knew nor thought, and began to drive tacks with his heavy pocket-knife. The sound of the hammering was like the thundering of a stamp-mill to him, and yet his ears caught that cautious sound in the chemise. He dropped his knife and drove the rest of the tacks with the sheer strength of his callous fingers. Then he dropped to the ground upon his knees and waited.

The quiet was absolute. Yet Josiah knew that the sound he had heard was not made by a rabbit or by a toad. Something a good deal larger than either had moved in the brush within a hundred feet of him. He was on his own ground now, but somehow he was more nervous than before. Tense, he waited. At last it came again, just as he knew it would. Something or somebody was moving slowly toward the little clearing, in the midst of which was the tree beneath which he crouched. Two steps, three steps, the thing would stop, wait in silence, and then come on. With his long pistol across his knees and gripped tightly, Josiah bent forward. The sound was most like that which a man would make in crawling. Only one man on earth could have any reason to approach that lonely spot by stealth at that hour of the night, and that man would be Henry Flatfoot, the half-breed desperado, coming to see whether the notice by virtue of which he had held this mining claim had been disturbed. The sounds were repeated, and again ceased. Another sound broke the hush: "Henry Flatfoot, the law is now on my side; you'd better go back—so help you Gawd!"

There was a light commotion in the chemise. Perhaps the unseen had heeded the warning, and was now retreating. But in another ten seconds the steps came on again.

Upon the strained gaze of Josiah there burst two balls of yellow fire. They dazzled him even as his senses told him what they must be. Such eyes as those burning out of the darkness there into his own, Josiah Godbolt had never dreamed existed, and he knew negro superstitions like a book. The hellish eyes were growing into the size of full moons, and they seemed to be coming, coming.

Silence, awful, ominous; then a pistol shot rang out. Two screams succeeded almost on the instant. One shrill cry was from Josiah, who had fired, the other from the spot where the eyes had vanished, and the brush crackled as with a heavy body plunged back into it.

When, just as daylight was chasing away the last shadow, Pete Barclay stepped from the trail into the clearing where he had left his partner, the spectacle which met him caused him to stop and utter a characteristic exclamation. In a heap upon the ground by the tree was Josiah. His face was white and drawn almost past recognition. His eyes were bleared and teary. In both hands his pistol was clutched, and it was held ready for instant use. Barclay moved up to him and gently wrenched away the weapon. "What in the name of all the ghosts has happened to you, Jo?" he asked, with a tenderness of which no one would have suspected him.

"Over there," whispered Josiah, pointing.

"What's over there, the ghosts?"

"The half-breed," piped Josiah.

"Lord Gawd, I had to kill him." He sank his head upon his knees.

Pete Barclay went over to where the brush was beaten down, and peered into the thicket. There, lifeless, lay a gaunt, ugly form. Josiah had shot the panther squarely between the now half-closed eyes.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Gratitude.

"Do you expect your subjects to hold you in any sort of affection or esteem?" said the pearl of the baram.

"I don't know why not," rejoined the Sultan. "It seems to me that the people I have not massacred ought to be right grateful for being overlooked."—Washington Star.

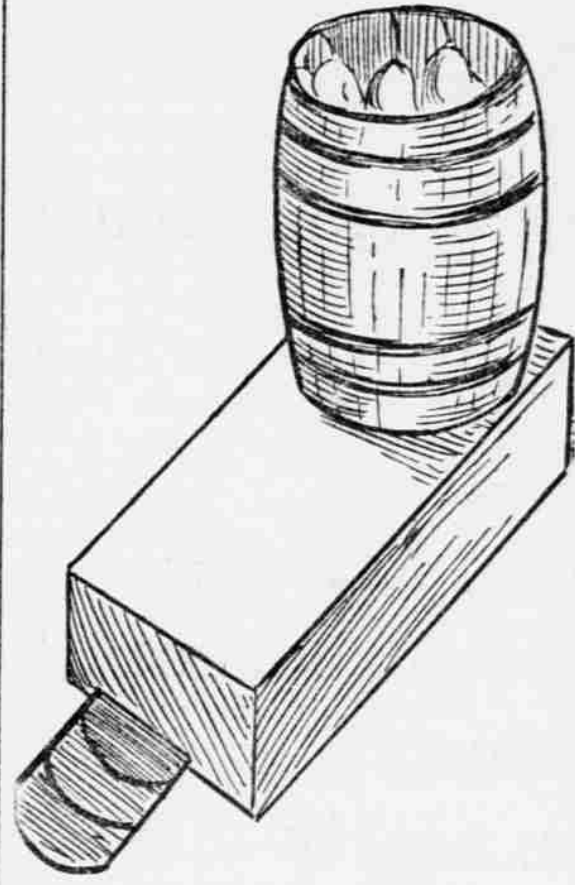
A man who is a gentleman only by the grace of his tailor doesn't count for much.

A full dress suit enables a \$600 clerk to pass himself off for a \$1,000 waiter.



Smoke Your Own Meat.

Many of the farmers in the East cure ham for home use. The quality is much better than the product sent out by the western packing houses. Set a clean sugar barrel on a box 4 ft. long, 1 ft. high and wide enough for the barrel. Bore auger holes through the box under the barrel to let the smoke through. Make a hoie in the ground under the front end of the box, so that the fire made on a piece of tin can be shoved under the box. A half head of a barrel can be crowded down by the end of the box, closing the fire



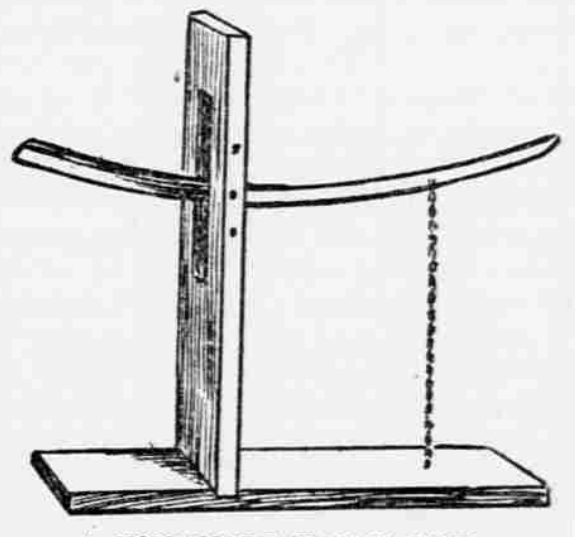
HANDY MEAT SMOKER.

hole. All crevices must be banked with dirt to keep the smoke in. Drive strong wire nails near the top of the barrel to hang the hams on. Place a strong paper or canvas over the top of the barrel and add enough bags or blankets to keep the smoke in.—Cor. Farm and Home.

Home-made Wagon Jack.

While wagon jacks are comparatively low in cost, some of the cheaper ones are not desirable. If one has some leisure during the winter a jack such as is shown in the illustration, can be constructed readily and at very little cost. The lumber used should be of some tough growth and the joints should be well made. Material 2x3 will be strong enough if of good lumber. The upright piece should be about two and one-half feet long and be mortised into the base, although it may be attached in any other desired way. The base is three feet long and the upright piece should go into it one foot from the end.

A long mortise should be cut in the upright as shown, and holes made as shown, so that a pin may be used to



A HOME-MADE WAGON JACK.

place the lever higher or lower to fit the height of the various wagons. One end of the chain is stapled to the base as shown, and in the end of the lever is placed a strong hook. After the wheel is raised to the desired height a link of the chain is slipped over the hook in the lever and holds it in position.—Indianapolis News.

Skim Milk for Cows.

If one has a separator in the dairy there is no objection to feeding the skim milk to the cows, provided it is given them while sweet—that is, when not stale or in any way soured. It is best fed back to the cows mixed with bran, and adds materially to the food ration, generally increasing the milk flow decidedly. The plan of feeding skim milk from the creamery to cows should not be carried on, for such milk is unfit even for swine, unless one is reasonably sure that it is from the milk of the same day. It is probable that the feeding of skim milk will be found most profitable when given to hogs or to the poultry, but where this stock is not kept in sufficient quantity to consume the skim milk it may be safely fed to cows under the conditions named.

New Milk Products.

Casein, dried milk, dried skim milk, milk sugar, condensed milk, albumen (egg powder) are on the market. Milk, butter and cheese are no longer a dairy tried without rivals. A multitude of products and by-products are being made from milk, and the end is not yet. The twentieth-century cow seems fair to be a producer of a hundred rather than three products.

Calves Cheaply Fattened.

Prof. Roberts of the Cornell station claims that to fatten calves successfully on skim milk and grain to supply the butter fat, the calves should first be fed a moderate amount of new

milk for a few days, and then skim milk should be gradually substituted so that at the end of a few weeks the calves would be fed entirely on skim milk. If seven pounds of corn meal is mixed with one pound of linseed meal, old process preferable, he finds it will make a fairly good substitute for the butter fats of the new milk.

Water for Farm Animals.

It is admitted that water is essential to the well-being of humans, and if this is so why should any one presume to think that animals can get along with little or no water? Yet this is the plan on which many farmers work. The cows and horses are, perhaps, properly watered, but the other farm animals are given little water. In a series of experiments carried on by the writer a number of years ago it was found that sheep, swine and poultry gave us nearly 20 per cent. better returns when regularly and carefully watered than when the water was given but occasionally.

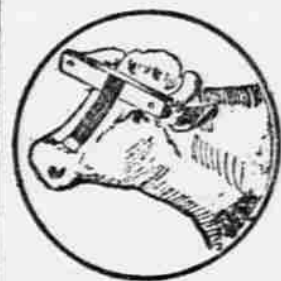
That is, the egg supply was larger from the hens, and the sheep and hogs kept to the desired weight. More than this, we found there was less trouble with diseases, particularly those that had the stomach for their base of attack. It is now a regular practice to give all the animals on the farm regular supplies of clean water. In watering the sheep and swine troughs are provided and kept for the purpose. After the animals have drunk, the troughs are removed so that there is no chance of them being defiled. It will pay every time to water all farm animals regularly and with clean water.—Brookville American.

Crowding the Trees.

When trees become thickly branched and crowded so to space they are not improved by cutting the ends of the shoots, which merely aggravates the evil. They should be judiciously thinned by the complete removal of some of the branches. A skillful operator will remove one-third or more of the branches of a thickly set tree so that the ordinary observer will not perceive that any pruning has been done, the tree looking as natural in its ramifications as if it had not been disturbed, and this should be the aim in all pruning operations as applied to street trees.

For Breachy Cattle.

S. E. Fletcher, of Henry County, Ill., writes to Iowa Homestead, enclosing a sketch showing his plan to prevent cattle from



throwing down fences or opening gates. It is made from a wooden strip two and one-half inches wide and three-fourths of an inch thick, being attached to the horns as shown in the illustration. It is kept to its place by screws. To this is fastened by a small bolt a strip of hard wood three inches wide and a half-inch thick, of sufficient length to reach down to within one inch of the nostrils. In the lower end of the strip may be placed some sharp nails which project about a quarter of an inch. This arrangement when properly attached will give a cow all the trouble necessary when engaged in mischief.

Remedy for Blackleg.

Farmers whose pasture lands are rich in vegetable matter are most familiar with the disease among calves known as blackleg. It is contracted by eating the grass on such pastures and the germs multiply rapidly. There is no known cure for the trouble, but our veterinarian tells us that his profession is familiar with a method of vaccination which renders the calf practically immune. When this method is used it should be in the hands of a skilled worker. The writer has had some trouble with blackleg in the past and has found the following formula a splendid preventive of the trouble but not a cure after the germs have found lodgment in the calf.

If there is danger of the trouble obtain from a reliable druggist a supply of hyposulphite of soda and give it daily to the calf mixed with the food starting with a teaspoonful for the animal three months old or younger and increasing until the calf from six months to a year old is given a table spoonful. After the animal is a year old there is likely to be no trouble. The remedy, or rather preventive, is worth trying.

Farm Notes.

There is an increasing interest being taken in the plan for dipping hogs for lice, says the Winchester Herald. This is something that was scarcely known a decade ago. Nearly all up-to-date swine breeders now engage in the business, while the great army of breeders know nothing about it, either by experience or observation.

A farmer was telling how he succeeded in killing a lot of rats, says the Stenben Republican. It is an old scheme. He took a barrel and put about six inches of water in it. In the center he put a stone large enough that a rat could stand on. On top he put heavy paper and cut it in quarters. Then smear this over with cheese and put a board leading up to it. He catches just scads of rats.

The farmer reduces the value of his own labor by keeping inferior stock or failing to secure larger yields of crops, as the higher the price and the greater the production the better the remuneration for the labor bestowed. There are periods when the farmer cannot perform work in the fields, for which reason he should aim to get his crops under shelter as soon as possible in order to do some kinds of work which can be performed inside the barn.

MONTANA'S SHEEP FLOCKS.

Field of Wool the Last Season was 37,500,000 Pounds.

The State of Montana in the wool season of 1903 produced, according to the estimate prepared by State officials, 37,500,000 pounds of wool from the backs of 12,500,000 sheep. For this wool Eastern buyers paid \$8,000,000, an average of 16 cents a pound. Few people have any conception of what is meant when it is said that there are 2,500,000 sheep within the limits of the State. There is not a single State east of the Mississippi in which this gigantic flock could graze, says the Boston Transcript.

If the 12,500,000 sheep of Montana were to march nose to tail, crowding each other, they would make a line 6,000 miles long, or nearly half way around the earth. This line, in single file, would be about 150 days in passing a given point. These sheep are worth \$100,000,000 as they walk the range, and their flesh would bring \$250,000,000 for food. Their mutton would feed one man 2,500,000 years, or if 1,250 people had started to consume it at the time of the birth of Christ they would have some left.

The mutton would feed 2,500,000 people on meat for a year, or, allowing the average percentage of mutton to each family, it would more than supply this nation a year. The wool yielded by this flock of sheep would make 15,000,000 suits of men's clothes. Made in cloth of ordinary texture it would form a band a quarter of a mile wide and more than long enough to be wound about the earth at the equator. It would make a carpet on which an army might maneuver.

Baled, this wool would fill 3,750 freight cars, or a train nearly forty miles long. The United States navy could not transport it and an army of 50,000 men might fight behind its bales and be safe from the ordinary small arm. The sheep of Montana, if herded shoulder to shoulder one deep, would make a front 5,000 miles long. Herded in loose formation, allowing room to move rapidly, they would cover an area of eight square miles.

Allowed to breed in a favorable climate these sheep would become 50,000,000 in the course of a year, or \$707,200,000,000 at the end of ten years. But man eats many of them annually and disease and blizzards carry off many more. It is estimated that 3,000,000 Montana sheep perished inside of four days in a blizzard which swept the Northwest last winter.

THE FARMER IN WINTER TIME.

Chief Occupations Are Feeding the Stock and Keeping Warm.

The great steady winter jobs on an American farm in the North nowadays are feeding the stock and keeping warm. And keeping warm nowadays means hauling coal. When I lived in the country it meant cutting wood. It meant for our large family constant teaming day after day, from the woods to the woodyard and a wood-pile that must have covered quarter of an acre. It meant, toward spring, the coming of men with a horse-power and buzz saw to cut firewood, and that was almost as interesting an operation as thrashing.

There were other stirring days when the lake had frozen hard and the ice-house was filled, involving ice cutting, and more teaming, and more precarious hitching on behind loads and going back in empties. And early in the winter there was the momentous and gory killing of pigs. Oh, that was indeed a stirring time! They kill a pig every second, no doubt, in Chicago nowadays, but that is mere mechanical routine, with no quality of sport in it.

There was nothing so very slow about the country winter in days as late as the Civil War. I suppose soap-making as a domestic industry is as dead as household spinning. In those times of wood fires and wood ashes all self-respecting families made soap. Our family had an outstanding kitchen expressly for that use, with a big cistern-like hoghead behind it, in which ashes were leached, and convenient tubs for holding the soft soap. A very handsome substance is soft soap of the proper consistency and complexion, and a pleasing exercise it used to be for the young to stir it with a stick and watch its undulations. All the superfluous fat of meat from our kitchen was turned into soft soap in those near-by old times.—E. S. Martin, in Harper's Magazine.

A Ready Wit.

An American and an Englishman were walking down a Dublin street one day, when they espied a native Irishman approaching in the distance.

The Englishman, wishing to have a little "fun" with the son of Erin, walked up to him and said:

"Pat, I hear the devil's dead."

The Irishman said never a word, but put his hand in his pocket and brought forth two pence and handed it to his informant.

"What's this for?" cried the astonished Englishman.

"Oh, nothing," said Pat, "it's only a custom in our country to help poor orphans along when their parents die."

The Real Thing.

Virginia Rosamond Josephine, our pretty colored maid from the South, is the proud possessor of a rhine stone belt buckle which her mistress brought her home from Paris not long since. "Told, asked her the other day:

"Are they real diamonds, 'Ginny?" "No, indeedy," she replied, with a toss of her woolly pompadour. "Dey's real grindstones. Missy fetched 'em to me from Paradise!"

A racing automobile isn't in it with fleeting fame.