IN THE DOMAIN OF SPORT

Doings of the Week in the Field of Athletics.

CHATS WITH THE PRIZE FIGHT FANS

New Orleans Again in the Ring Business—Talks with Turf Patrons—Wheel Notes—Diamond Dust and the Usual Grist of Athletic Squibs.

There must certainly be something wrong with the Atlantic cable. A whole week has now elapsed and Champion Jim Corbett has failed to telegraph the suffering American public that his theatrical engagement abroad will absolutely preclude the possibility of his meeting Jackson until later in the autumn or early winter, and this inexplicable dereliction of Jim's part should be immediately investigated. If some submarine disturbance has interfered with the perfect working of the wires, a searching party should be sent out at once, from both New York and Liverpool, and with instructions to spare neither expense or pains until the defugelty, whatever it may be, is discovered and remedied. The people of the United States must hear, at least on every other day, that Jim can't meet Peter in June, but that he will later on in the year, and it also must know just why Jim can't do this in the coming month of roses, and he and little Willie must never fail to repeat that it is their stupendous dramatic duties that prevents. The people will never forgive them if they neglect this. They expect these great gobs of wind regularly and methodically, and it will be downright culpability in Jim and Willie if they neglect to send them over as per arrangement with Parson Davies before the sailed. They should remember, too, that every one of these cablegrams is good for an interview with Peter on this side and gives the sable Hercules a chance to again enlighten the poor American suckers that he signed to fight Jim in June, that his theatrical pressure is as great as the champion's, that he will never consent to fight south of Mason and Dixon's line on account of the race prejudice, and that he must know something definite soon about Colonel Corbett's plans or he will pack his little bandbox and follow him across the drink. Are you all on?

At last, thanks to the gracious gods, Joe Choynski and Bob Fitzsimmons are matched to a finish at catch weights. They signed articles on Wednesday last and another dead weight has been lifted from off the world. While the agreement does not fix any specific time for the clash of these rival maulies, I am enabled, through my intimacy with such affairs, to inform my readers just when it will take place, and if they won't let it go any further, I will tell them. I suppose this is unprofessional, but the scoop is such a pulssant one that I am coerced to smother all honor, and tear it off. If Joe and Bob get mad I'll have to stand it, but then I have had prize fighters mad at me before and yet came out unscathed. Now, mind, this is on the dead, and if anybody asks you where you got it tell them a little chippie whispered it to you. Of course, I don't like to do this, but this life would be an elysium, indeed, if we never did anything but what we knew was right, and I get my precepts from such men as Judge Scott, Jere Dunn and the St. Joe Kid, and everybody knows they are on the level. You see, Joe and Bob are to fight when any reputable club hangs up a $15,000 purse for the event—that is one of the minor specifications of the articles—and as this is such a measly sum, there will be such an avalanche of applications for the go that Bob and Joe will be at a loss which to accept. As the club must be a reputable club, however, there is but one choice, the Do-'em-all club of Jacksonville, Fla. They will get the fight beyond the shadow of a ghost, and by a private wire from Chief Skin Bowden I am informed that they have already fixed upon the 31st of next February for the fight.

After young Griffo met and so cleverly bested Johnny Griffin a few weeks ago in Boston, a good many sporting authorities at once picked him out as the man to do George Dixon. They did not take into consideration that this was a limited round exhibition contest, nor that Griffo weighed nearly twenty pounds more than the Braintree boy, nor the fact that Griffin was there at the end of the bout in better shape to go further than he was in the early rounds of the contest. Simply because this bulky little Antipodean tatterdemalion slapped and tapped Johnny almost at will in a few rounds, and run over him from sheer force of weight in others, they settled upon him as a world beater and picked him as the proper party to divest the Haligonian of his robes of glory. But since Griffo and "Nutty" Billy Murphy had it out for ten rounds the other night, and notwithstanding Gentleman Bill Daly gave the award to Griffo, there has been a decided change of sentiment. The cock-sure fellows are now a bit leary, and they are glib to announce that Griffo will have most anything else than a cinch when he meets the doughty colored lad, who has swept everything before him during the past five years. That Murphy gave Griffo as good as he sent all descriptions of the contest conclusively prove, and also that Daly should have made it a dead heat. That he did not, however, is only another illustration of the fact that the fellow coming always gets the best of it in these questionable affairs and the fellow going the other end. Still, because Griffo did not clearly best Murphy is no reason why he should not whip Dixon. There has always been a doubt in my mind whether Dixon could do any better with Murphy than Griffo did. Without any exception Billy Murphy has been one of the greatest featherweights that ever lived, and when he first came to this country four years ago he was a veritable physical tornado. I saw him box Austin Gibbons down at the old People's theater one night, and despite Gibbons' weight, height, reach and strength he wasn't in it. Murphy was a great knockout puncher and no antagonist ever had him licked until the last count of the fatal ten had been tolled off. Murphy's statement that he was never better in his life than at present, though must be taken with a liberal quantity of salt. These be tight times for the pugs and to keep eating they dare miss no opportunity to blow their own bugle. To acknowledge that he has gone back means a promenade with the banner. But all this has but little to do with Griffo's coming fight with Dixon. Can he whip him? that's the question. For one I think not.

For a time I feared my old friend Tommy Ryan had become whelmed in the vortex of giddy life at Bridgeport. I could get no word from, nor find anything in the papers about him or his affairs. The following received last night shows that he is still in the flesh and on the hustle:

HARTFORD, Conn., May 10.—Sandy Griswold, Sporting Editor of The Bee.—My Dear Old Friend: Just made up my mind to drop you a line. Thought maybe you would like to know "where I am at" and what I am doing. Well, in the first place I have just returned from St. Louis, where I boxed Jack Wilkes, my old victim at South Omaha. He is not nearly as good as he was then and I had but little trouble in doing as I pleased. On the 22d of this month I box Jack Falvey of Providence, and as he is duecedly clever I expect a pleasant time. I have started a boxing academy here in Hartford, 245 Main street, and am doing splendidly. I am now working hard to get on another go with Mysterious Billy Smith, and all I insist on is that it must be long enough that a decision will be reached. Who will get this I am well satisfied, but Billy isn't and is holding off. If we fight, no matter where it takes place, I want you there. I will keep you advised. Give my regards to all my Omaha friends, especially "Old Spud" and Bandle. If you think of it send me my scrap book. My pupils are anxious to see it.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I am, of course, always your friend,

TOMMY RYAN,
Brower House, Hartfort, Conn.

True enough, as Tom says, Jack Falvey is duecedly clever. He bested big Owen Zeigler a couple of weeks ago in an artistic way that was said to be Raphaelsan in its effects. It was a sure enough case of science versus strength, and skill won. Falvey has also fought Stanton Abbott a fifteen-round draw, which in itself is sufficient to stamp him as a dangerous man in his class, and Tommy does not want to get too gay with him. Of course I apprehend no likelihood of disaster to Ryan, but Falvey is one of those kind of men that I would advise him to push along fast and do him as quickly and thoroughly as possible. The great secret of Jack Dempsey's early success was that he spared no man until he had him hung up.

On Thursday night next North Platte is to be the scene of a finish contest between Jimmy Lindsay of this city and the Black Pearl of Sacramento. This is not Harris Martin, the Black Pearl of erstwhile local fame, but a new coon equally strong and clever. Lindsay is in superb condition for almost any kind of a scrap and his friends look to find him an easy winner. Of course, they may be mistaken.

SANDY GRISWOLD.

The State Sportsmen's Shoot.

The eighteenth annual shoot of the State Sportsmen's association opens up at Columbus on Tuesday morning next and continues for three days, May 15, 16 and 17. The indications all point to one of the biggest and most successful shoots ever held under the auspices of this time-honored and veteran organization.

The officers of the association for the present year are G. A. Schroeder, president; H. J. Arnold, treasurer, and G. B. Speice, secretary, all of Columbus. These gentlemen are all first class shots and have had much experience in trap shooting tournaments, and will give the state one of the biggest and most enjoyable shoots she has ever had. They are getting together a large number of live birds, and will have a ton or so of Chamberlain's blue rock targets on hand, as well as a complete set of Chamberlain's expert traps, electrical pull, said to be the best in the world. These targets, too, are the most popular in the country, and it will be seen that the Columbus management intends to afford the sportsmen attending the very best of everything in the market.

The program for the three days is appended:

FIRST DAY, MAY 15, LIVE BIRDS.

No. 1. Seven live birds, moneys, three; entrance, $5.
No. 3. Ten live birds, moneys, four; entrance, $7.50.
No. 5. Seven live birds, moneys, three; entrance, $5.
No. 7. Fifteen live birds, C. E. Mayne diamond badge, value, $250, emblematical of the state championship, open to Nebraska sportsmen only; now held by F. S. Parmelee of Omaha. This badge remains the property of the association; $50 added; moneys, five; entrance, $10.

TARGETS.

No. 2. Ten single targets—$10 added; moneys, three; entrance, $1.
No. 4. Twenty single targets; moneys, four; entrance, $2.
No. 6. Fifteen single targets; moneys, four; entrance, $1.50.
No. 8. Twenty single targets—$15 added; moneys, four; entrance, $2.

SECOND DAY, MAY 16, LIVE BIRDS.

No. 9. Seven live birds; moneys, three; entrance, $5.
No. 11. Ten live birds—$15 added; moneys, four; entrance, $7.50.
No. 13. Seven live birds; moneys, three; entrance, $5.
No. 15. State association team-shoot barge, two men to a team. Open to Nebraska sportsmen only. Five live birds, six singles and two doubles to each man. This badge and 50 per cent to first; 30 per cent to second; 20 per cent to third. $50 added. Entrance per team, $10.

TARGETS.

No. 10. Ten single targets; moneys, three; entrance, $1.
No. 12. Twenty single targets—$10 added; moneys, four; entrance, $2.
No. 14. Fifteen single targets; moneys, four; entrance, $1.50.
No. 16. Champion team gold medal. Open to Nebraska sportsmen only. The medal presented by Pforzheimer & Keller company, through E. Hallet, Lincoln, Neb. To remain the property of the Nebraska State Sportsmen's association, but the team winning it may retain it by giving satisfactory guarantee that it will be forthcoming at the next annual tournament, to be shot for as herein provided: The team holding it to be entitled to entrance money the following year. Any club may designate as many teams as they desire in this contest. $50 added, four moneys. Entrance per team, $5.

LAST DAY, MAY 17, LIVE BIRDS.

No. 17. Seven live birds. Novelty shoot, gun below elbow until bird is in the air—$10 added; moneys, three; entrance, $5.
No. 19. Ten live birds; moneys, four; entrance, $7.50.
No. 21. Seven live birds; moneys, three; entrance, $5.
No. 23. Ten live birds—$15 added moneys, four; entrance, $7.50.

TARGETS.

No. 18. Ten single targets; moneys, three; entrance, $1.
No. 20. Twenty single targets—$10 added; moneys, four; entrance, $2.
No. 22. Fifteen single targets; moneys, four; entrance, $1.50.
No. 24. Plattsmouth silver cup. Open to Nebraska sportsmen only. Four members of a club to compose a team. Only one team to be entered by a club. Ten single targets to each man. First, cup and 50 per cent; second, 30 per cent; third, 20 per cent. $50 added if not less than four teams shoot. Entrance per team, $10.

The tourney will be governed by the American association rules, except that 1¼ ounces of shot may be used in 12-guage guns. Shooting will begin at 8:30 sharp each day. Price of birds is included in entrance money. In case of ties each may draw his proportion of purse. Where three moneys are given the division will be 50, 30 and 20 per cent; four moneys, 40, 30, 20 and 10; five moneys, 30, 25, 20, 15 and 10. Added money will not be paid when less than three squads enter the contest, unless otherwise stated in the program. Shooters cannot enter any event after the first squad have finished their score.

For the Protection of Our Fish.

The fishermen of Omaha and Council Bluffs have at last joined hands for the protection of the lakes in this neighborhood and have held several meetings looking to a permanent organization.

The seining will be stopped and lovers of the rod can soon feel assured of reasonable success at Cut-Off and Manawa. Over one hundred of the Omaha fishermen have joined, and about the same number from the Bluffs. The lakes will be re-stocked with the best of game fish and will be protected from unlawful destruction. The law is strong enough in both Nebraska and Iowa and only needs enforcement. There has as yet been no permanent organization but a joint meeting will be held on Thursday next at Cross Gun company's store, this city, for that purpose. The association is backed by the fish commissons of both states, and will effect much good.

The temporary officers at present are William Simeral, chairman, of the Omaha club; Dr. A. P. Ginn, secretary, and J. B. Meikle, attorney. W. H. Schurz, chairman of the Council Bluffs club, and Mr. Graham, secretary.

All that is now wanted is for the South Omaha fishermen to join, and they are invited to come up on Thursday evening next at 8 o'clock and take part in the permanent organization.

September Trotting Session.

The Nebraska Association of Trotting and Pacing Horse Breeders are making most elaborate preparations for their ninth annual meeting, which will be held in this city on the fair grounds course the first week in September. This association, as is well known, is distinctly a local organization and is in a better condition this year than ever before in its history, consequently the best meeting of the series can be safely counted on this fall. There will be a tremendous field of locally bred horses, as well as a large entry list from adjoining states, and the four-days' card will be a most excellent one. A. J. Briggs, so favorably known among Nebraska breeders, is the secretary, with headquarters at Superior, and upon application will gladly furnish interested parties with the fullest information anent the coming autumn session.

Song of the Buzzing Fly.

Fear throws to bases like a Clements or a Zimmer.

The Quinces will be here tomorrow. Shall we kill 'em?

Seery is playing good ball both in the field and at the bat.

We must have this afternoon's game. We need it in our business.

Ladies should remember that they have no admission to pay Thursdays.

Ladies' day at the Charles Street park will be the popular day of the week.

Fred Jevne has been recommended to President Young as a good man for umpire.

Hereafter the south section of the grand stand will be reserved for ladies. No smoking will be allowed here.

George McVey is apt to give any pitcher a touch of heart failure. He is one of the hardest hitters in the profession.

McVey, McMackin and Fear are a trio of first class coachers. Papa Rourke, likewise, frequently takes a hand in the noise.

The reserved section will be partitioned off before the team returns from its first jaunt abroad, and comfortable chairs put in.

Jack Gaffney, "King of Umpires," has been taken out of the damp by Patricio Powers and given a berth in the Eastern league.

Lincoln and Omaha are abreast for second place. Wait until we get the Agriculturists up here. Then we will trot to the front—maybe.

St. Joe has been putting up a rattling good game both in the field and at the bat, and it is St. Joe the Rourke family must take after.

Whitehill has already developed into a really great pitcher. He has the most tantalizing curves and controls them like an expert rifleman.

Tom Ramsey, Denver's old left-handed twirler, is making ninnies of the heavy hitters in the Southern league. Ramsey is with Savannah.

The Milwaukees are minus two young bloods. Those erstwhile Cleveland twirlers—Scheible and William—have both been knocked down.—Times-Star.

Two more games—tomorrow and Tuesday, then the Rourkes go away for a couple of weeks. Returning June 1, they will tackle Lincoln at the Charles street park.

Jack Munyun and Kid Fear are always in the thick of the fray. They never tire and fight just as hard when a long ways in the rear as they do when in the lead.

Harry Wright's opinion of Treadway is that he is the hardest line hitter in the league, and an A1 thrower. And Harry comes pretty near knowing what he is talking about.

The Rourke family opens up at Quincy next Friday for three games; thence they go to Jacksonville, Rock Island and Peoria. Out of the twelve games they want about eight.

Wood should take The Bee's hint and try a pair of smoked glasses. A number of fielders in the big league are using them, and they find them an immense help in the sun's glare.

Paddy Boyle, so a good many of the patrons of the game are inclined to think, is liable to shirk hard hit grounders. This is a fault easily mastered, however, and Paddy is too promising a young player to be handicapped in this way long.

Grand Rapids did the liveliest stick work of the year Tuesday when Phillips of the Hoosiers was pounded for a total of thirty-nine bases, says Ren Mulford. But Ren doesn't read the papers. On the same day Omaha hit young Mr. Burris of Jacksonville for sixty-two totals, including nine home runs, four of which fell off of Jack Munyun's bat.

There is no need of repining over games that are lost, no matter what the cause may be. Almost daily games are lost by a single misplay or a combination of circumstances unforeseen. Mistakes are made, and grievous ones, too. But the next day the losers go in and play, if possible, harder than ever, to win. It is when a team is on the downward road that sympathy and kind words are needed. But how few ever get even a cheering word to help them rise again! Think this over, too.

A gallant Boston crank, who attended the opening game in Brooklyn, says: "The ladies were out in force, and few cities can show such an array of beauty as Brooklyn." The Bostonian should lose no time in visiting New York, when he will learn that this is one of the "few cities" which "can."—New York Evening Telegram. And what's the matter with Philadelphia? Why, she's all right; she's got some of the finest.—Philadelphia Press. And Omaha. You ought to take a squint at the flower garden her grand stand presents, especially on ladies' day.

The Sandy Griswolds, that hot little ball team of which Ambrose Ellington is manager and A. C. Martin captain, has certainly come to stay. After giving a mixed team of strong players from the ranks of the Nonpareils, Athletics and Daisies a few days ago such a close call, they have been unable to make a date for today and will consequently put it in at practice. Their suits, blue knickerbockers, shirts, caps and stockings, with white trimmings, will be on hand in the course of a few days and in their new togs the boys expect to sweep all before them. Manager Ellington intends to give his team a big benefit ball after the season expires, whether they win the city amateur championship or not. Just now he is anxiously waiting for dates and he isn't particular whether they come from in or out of the city, all will be attended to. Communications should be addressed to Ambrose Ellington, Bee Building. The team at present includes such well known local players as Grant Thompson, Fred Arnot, A. C. Martin, Ed Mahoney, Joe Miller, De Witt Burgman, Al Thompson, Billy Kilby, Billy Knopp, W. H. Ryan, Fred Murray and Billy McCoy.

Whisperings of the Wheel.

The scorcher man to the road has gone,
In the thick of the dust you'll find him,
His brother's pants he has buckled on
And his wife he has left behind him.
"Oh, Sunday run," the scorcher cried
"Tho' all the club forsake thee,
One wheel at least thy route shall ride
One scorcher true shall make thee."

The scorcher scorched, but his dusty chain,
Lost its pin and fell asunder,
The driving wheel turned not again
Tho' the rider swore like thunder;
And said, "I'll have to walk to town
Thro' the dust tho' I do smother,
May the d—l take the Sunday run.
I'll never take another."

—The Idler.

The North End Cycling club is a new acquisition to the local firmament.

The association of the local cycling clubs is no nearer an organization than a week ago. No one seems to be willing to start the movement and foster it.

The Young Men's Christian association cyclers and the Tourists held an informal joint run Friday evening of last week to the Bluffs.

Many mail carriers in the large cities have adopted the bicycle as a means of rapid locomotion, and the mail service of Uncle Sam now contains some very expert cyclists.

The Ganymede Wheel club, under command of Captain Williamson and Lieutenant Carothers, passed through the city last Sunday enroute for Bellevue, where the club spent the day.

Each year since its organization the Chicago Cycling Club association has indulged in a club run, which has always been well attended. This year the run was participated in by over 1,000 riders. The route chosen was the Pullman course.

The Tourist Wheelmen have an outing on the Military road today, their destination being Arlington, round trip sixty-two miles. The Fremont club will meet the Tourists at Elk City and run over to Arlington with them, where dinner will be served (and lots of it, too). The Tourists will return home late in the afternoon.

William Martin, a former Omahog and ex-soldier, is winning races in Paree from the "cracks" as he pleases. He has given up long distant races and taken up quick, short distance work, and is showing good head and speed. Lumsden of Chicago is also reeling 'em off just a little bit faster than the "furriners" want to.

The Tourists, fourteen strong, tacked on to the gale last Sunday and let it blow them down to the pretty little county seat of Mills county, Iowa, i. e., Glenwood, where they spent the delightful day. Some of the boys were coaxed into a match game of base ball before they returned, and are now mourning the lack of their customary elasticity. The game? Oh, well, the least said about the matter the better. Glenwood took it by a score of 8 to 2. Lieutenant Melton took his bugle along to practice on, consequently the cattle along the route are all suffering from acute deafness.

Condon is riding like the wind, and the Omaha Wheel club colors will be carried over the tape well in the front this season. Culley, Pegau, Flescher, Proulx, Pixley and Holton are all riding well and gaining speed.

Quite a number of the local wheelmen are riding hard on the country road getting into condition for the great relay ride in August. Captain Williamson is also getting his relay men into shape for the ride.

The Tourists are hunting up their old fishing tackle and have sent out a committee digging bait for their angling excursion next Sunday.

The prizes for the Tourist road mileage this year consist of the club medal for first place, a gold medal for second, a cyclometer for third, a silver cup for fourth, and in addition to this a club century pin for the member who finishes last in the century run this season, yet within the stipulated time, fourteen hours. There is also some talk in regard to a record medal to be put up for the member of the club making the best record to Bellevue, the medal to be known as the Bellevue medal, and the winner to defend it against all challengers in the club. The contestant winning it three different times to hold it as his personal property.

The Omaha Wheel club will pedal down to Glenwood, Ia., today, where they will spend the day. The run is a beautiful one, and by cyclometer measurement from Omaha is forty-nine and three-fifths miles, round trip. The run takes the rider along the base of the bluffs, over a slightly hilly road to the eleven mile bridge, and then bears abruptly to the left into the lovely wooded hills. The coast into Glenwood from the top of the hill is well worth the ride. One thing the run lacks to make it perfect, and that is a fine and tempting dinner. It is pretty hard to get a good dinner at the other end of the route for some reason.

Tyler and Sanger are hard at work training on the Denver tracks. Sanger weighs 200 pounds and is only riding now to reduce flesh. Johnnie Johnson, Murphy, Callahan, and Taylor are training with the Tomec gang down in Dixie, where the magnolia blooms and miles are reeled off in 2:07 1-5. Bliss and Dirnberger are on the coast taking in the Midwinter fair tournament, and the great army of unknowns and fifth-rate men are training just as hard for the little country pot hunts, which will soon begin. Wheelmen will watch with interest the gigantic struggle this year between Sanger, Tyler, Hyslop, Johnson, Dirnberger, Taylor and Bliss for the crown of laurel that Zimmie cast aside. It is dollars to mudpies that Sanger will wear the cast-off emblem of royalty. There are manw wheelmen who think Zimmie showed his good sense when he forsook the amateur ranks and turned professional. Sanger might have divided honors with him this season as an amateur king.

With the Rod and Gun.

Frank Keniston, Charlie Melrose and Bill McCune were at Blue lake after octopus and tarpon Wednesday. They got both.

J. R. Antes and H. T. Lemist made a big basket of black bass at West Point recently, in fact, about the biggest yet reported this season.

A large delegation of local shots including such experts as Parmelee, Hardin, Reed, Peters, Loomis, Brucker, Townsend, Brewer and others, will attend the state shoot at Columbus this week.

Jack Morrison, who by the way has developed into one of the best field shots in this neck o' the woods, and Charlie Lewis shot the last of the Jacks at Calhoun last Tuesday. They also bagged a half-dozen sickle-bill curlew and a fine bag of yellow-legs.

Ed Ingram and J. D. Weaver of the Council Bluffs Nonpareil and Milt Uhl and J. F. Ryan of The Bee spent last Sunday on the lakes near West Point, guests of that prince of sportmen and good fellows, Colonel Fred Sonnenschein. That they returned with a well filled creel of bass and croppies goes without relating, inasmuch as the matchless Frederick was with them.

Questions and Answers.

ST. JOSEPH, Mo., May 5.—To the Sporting Editor of The Bee: Will you please publish in next Sunday's Bee the answer to the following: A, B, C and D are playing pitch, seven points to be a game. A and B each have six points. A buys for two, A plays out high, B plays low and immediately claims out. Is B out or must the game be finished? By answering this you will greatly oblige.—Binswan, 208 Edmond street.

Ans.—If A played high and made either jack or game besides, so that he made his two good, he wins, of course.

COUNCIL BLUFFS, April 8.—To the Sporting Editor of The Bee: To settle a dispute will you please answer the following questions in the Sunday Bee: In what year did Hermit win the English derby? In what year did Blue Gown win, and which year was Lady Elizabeth favorite?—Sportsman.

Ans.—Hermit in 1867; Blue Gown in 1868. Lady Elizabeth was favorite in the latter year.

COUNCIL BLUFFS, May 9.—To the Sporting Editor of The Bee: Will you please state in next Sunday's Bee through what accident Catcher Bennett of the Boston team lost both legs at Topeka, Kan., last winter?—W. C. Westlake.

Ans.—He fell under the wheels in boarding a moving train.

OMAHA, May 10.—To the Sporting Editor of The Bee: Will you kindly state in your next Sunday's issue what are "ladies' days" of the Omaha ball club?—Fan-nie.

Ans.—Thursdays.

HOME OF THE CANVASBACK

What a March Blizzard Means Among the Sand Hills of Western Nebraska.

BETE NOIR OF COWBOY AND RANCHMAN

Caught in the Storm—Narrow Escape of the Old Trapper—A Fearful Tramp—Rex, the King of Dogs.

FEARFUL as the blizzard raged on the afternoon of our first day at Goose lake, it was nothing compared to its furious violence of that night, the next day and the night following While the telegraph told briefly of its extent and destructiveness, it conveyed but a vague idea of its awful character.

A blizzard in the sandhills or on the plains is an entirely different elementary exhibition from a blizzard in town or city. There is a wildness and a horror about it on the desert that is indescribable, and woe is it to man or beast caught in it at any considerable distance from any of the meager shelter that desolate country affords. Cattle perish by the hundreds—by the herd. Their instinct goes for naught when once overwhelmed on those broad plains or in the limitless pasture-lands among the gloomy hills. There is but one hope for the poor beasts and that is to drift with the storm, which they invariably do. Once started nothing seems formidable enough to check or swerve them aside; rugged crag or canon, hill or dale, river, lake or morass offer no impediment to their onward march until absolute exhaustion or death overtakes them. They make no detours, but drift straight ahead, and once the shores of a lake or swamp are reached the leaders, pushed onward by the hosts in the rear, plunge blindly in. If enabled to reach the opposite shore they continue on until the fury of the storm has abated sufficiently to allow them to halt for rest and what scanty nourishment they may be able to paw up from under the snow. If the depth of water or mire precludes this possibility they crowd in and on until they are either stuck fast in the mud or drown, hundreds often meeting this terrible fate in a body of water or mushy slough which in pleasant weather would furnish nothing worse than a haven of refreshment. There are innumerable instances where whole herds have become wedged in, in just such a place, so thickly jammed together that you cross upon their backs, here to remain until completely buried by the drifting snow. When the storm breaks and the disconsolate cowboy or ranchman goes forth in quest of his drifted stock a horn or two glistening in the sun from out a desert of snow often leads him to the mausoleum of his ill-fated bunch. While locomotion is possible, drifting cattle never stop, but keep on their weary way for days and nights, in fact until the storm spends its fury and indications of peace again descend upon the earth.

Truly a blizzard on the western plains is the bete noir of the stockman's life, entailing as it does enormous loss and days and nights of laborious traveling, privation and toil. Many and many a man has been robbed of his all in a single night by one of these tremendous visitations, and no one can appreciate their awful destructiveness until they see it with their own eyes. They are not only dangerous to the lives of stock, but to man himself, and many and many a belated traveler or improvident herder has met a horrible death on their midst.

The lawyer, Hamilton and myself had regaled ourselves upon one of Mrs. H.'s most bounteous dinners—piles of pike, their crusted skin cracking open from the creamy, white flesh; tender slices of bacon, nicely browned, and canvasback, roasted to a turn, and sprinkled with watercress fresh from the swalls of Coyote Run, with Lyonnaise potatoes, light biscuit and a rich mixture of Mocha and Java—and were gathered about the glowing stove—which Clifford kept stuffed full of chips—enjoying our cigars, chatting on the thrilling events of the day and listening to the taunting cries of Boreas' fiends without, when suddenly the door was pushed rudely open, admitting a chilly blast of sleet and wind, and the figure of a man, muffled to the eyes and literally coated with ice and snow.

It was Rudolph, the trapper.

With our ready assistance Gus was quickly stripped of his stiffened garments and into warm, dry ones, and then, after the cravings of hunger and thirst had both been allayed, he threw himself contentedly on a pile of wolf skins before the fire and related his experience in the blizzard.

He had been "following his line" down on Hackberry and Roundup lakes, and elated with a big catch of rat and skunk he had failed to keep track of the time of day and the theatening aspect of the weather, and before he fairly realized it the blast was upon him in all its awful impetuosity, and in a blinding swirl of sleet, rain and drifting snow he found himself struggig to get through the hills.

For a time his efforts were futile and, experienced and indurated old plainsman that he was, he felt that there was imminent danger ahead. Still, of course, he persevered, and after frequently stopping to take his bearings and study the character of the surrounding hills and note the direction of the storm, he would move on again with braver steps and sturdier resolution, but just as ignorant of his exact whereabouts and as blind as ever.

The hills were soon swallowed up in the mazes of the blast and there was no determining the true direction of the storm. It seemed to scream in through the arroyos, shriek over the highlands and across the barrens from all sides at once and converge like a howling cohort of rapacious demons upon his devoted head.

The snow and sleet were now streaming over the whole earth in one continuous sheet, the wind sweeping everything before it with the ravings of a hurricane, first this way and then that, like some evil spirit bent upon the most diabolical ends.

From the nature of the ground and the more regular onrush of the blizard Rudolph at last felt that he had reached the open, but in its horrible fury to tell in just which direction refuge lay, or to find the well worn wagon road, was a task he felt hopeless, indeed. Yet he would never for a moment believe he was lost, and though blinded and baffled by the driving snow, which came down upon him in whirls and eddies, he struggled on. In the very midst of all that wild and fearful din Rudolph told how there were intervals of such a deathlike stillness that was even more appalling than all the horrible uproar. This is one of the mysterious features of such a storm on the broad plains of the west, and all those who have encountered such will recall these tomblike spells, which fall ever and anon upon the rageful rush of the tempest.

On, on, ceaselessly on labored the sturdy trapper. There were times when he seemed to make literally no headway at all, when every landmark known to his practiced senses was lost, and he felt, so he said, as he plodded and stumbled forward, as if he was tramping to his own funeral. Now he plunged into some deepening drift, and the next moment was fairly tearing his way through the matted grass and weeds, which in places defied the power of the blast, while all the time was heard that deep, muffled roar, coming and going like the mystic sounds we hear at the dead of night from the lashing and wrathful ocean, and, in sooth, Rudolph might have well felt that he was alone with death.

And why not? Even though the old trapper was a native of the hills and plains, even though he was versed in all their darksome vagaries as the student is in his books, he was not superhuman. Why not, I repeat, might not he be plodding to his own funeral? Others as learned in such lore, as wise and fearless and courageous as he, had been lost in just such storms—others had been submerged in just such avalanches of sleet and snow, only to be thawed out and found rigid and lifeless in the sunlight of a future day. But Gus wasn't the man to get easily frightened; still an increasing uneasiness was creeping over him. This was about as close a call as he had ever experienced in all his life of privation and exposure and the situation seemed to grow worse with every step he took. He was almost ready to drop from fatigue, but he knew that meant an end to it all sure and speedy, and on, on he pushed. If he could only find shelter somewhere, some wolf's hole in the plain, or some barricade against the face of the storm, he would anyway stop briefly for rest. But the night was settling down upon him blacker than Erebus and he dare not think of rest. His heart began to quicken its pulsations and he began to flounder along more recklessly. A frantic determination seized him. He must get out of that black and howling blast at once or never. Gus was mad, and when he gets mad, well, he is a host within himself upon such occasions.

Hark! He stopped. Surely that was the bark of a dog, or was it but the yawp of some straggling or freebooting coyote, or but another stranger wail of the wind.

Ough-ough-oo-oo-oo. There it is again. There is no coyote or wind about that—it is a dog and no less a dog than King Rex!

Calling the faithful brute at the top of his lungs Rudolph actually broke into a lope and the next moment the dog, with an outburst of joyous barks, was plunging in the snow about him. All thoughts of danger and lonesomeness fled as by magic with Rex's coming, and so did Gus' uncertainty about his exact situation. He had been traveling aright ever since he left the hills and had the dog discovered him or not, in a few more moments he would have actually bumpt up against the sod walls of Hamilton's mansion.

We sat up late that night, tired as we all were, but you see the lawyer had brewed us a bowl of punch, and its exhilarating effects banished all ideas of sleep from our minds, and until nearly 12 we lolled and lounged about the fire, each one endeavoring to outlie the other. After a close race Willie walked off with the pennant, although at one or two stages it looked as if Gus might come in first. Hamilton was left at the post, while I was a bad third.

Just before retiring Rudolph stepped to the door to ascertain what Old Probabilities proposed to do on the morrow and he wasn't long in finding out.

"Whew-ee!" he ejaculated, as the blast swept by wilder and fiercer than ever; "no ducks tomorrow. I am afraid, boys, we are in it for a day or two. It has simply got to wear itself out when it comes this way. I've seen just such storms before."

And the trapper was right. There was no let-up in the fury of the gale until midnight the next night, when it ceased about as suddenly as it began, and a cold blue sky, studded with millions of lustrous stars, overspread a blank and whitened world.

The morning following broke clear and beautiful, but quite cold. The snow, almost on a level with the lodge top, lay like a winding sheet over the whole environing country, yet nature gave freedom to the voices that told that there was yet life and animation beneath all this semblance of death, that her warm heart still beat under the white shroud which entolded her rigid breast.

A timid piping came from the myraid of buntings disporting in the fields on every hand, while from beneath their frozen bosoms the distant lakes bewailed their imprisonment with smothered moans that awakened a mournful chorus from the sleeping hills, whose white glare reflected now no caress of ripple or flash of wave. The gentler winds stirred the stripped cane stalks and hollow reeds into murmurs sweet yet sad, while the April sunshine fell like a soft mantle of tawny gold over the winter-wearied earth.

"I suppose this ends our duck hunting," I remarked to Ed in a disconsolate way, as we stood in the doorway and gazed off over the frozen surface of Lake Hamilton.

"Ends our duck shooting—you don't know the country. It is just getting good. There are plenty of air holes in the big lakes and they will be crowded with birds. Don't you worry—they haven't gone away. I tell you, Sandy, that blizzard was a godsend to us, but the cattle owners, it was — on them. I'll tell you what I'll do, now that you are so doubtful, I'll bet you a quart of soda water to a package of cigarettes that we kill more birds today than you ever killed in one day in your life."

"But there is not a bird in the air, Ed," I rejoined interrogatively.

"Of coruse there isn't and there won't be until we or somebody else jumps them from the airholes. But wait, we'll get grub and be off, and I think you will learn more and faster yourself than I can teach you."

At the breakfast table we agreed to split up for the day, Ed and I, and Rex of course, to go to Goose lake, while the lawyer and the trapper were to try their luck down on the Big Blue. So the meal over and we were off, Ed and I in the spring wagon and Billy and Rudolph in the big road wagon.

The sun shone bright and mellow, but riding the air was a bit too refreshing for comfort, but we forgot all about this when once we reached the shores of the lake, and way off to the north discovered an acre or two of ducks crowded together as close as they could sit in a huge airhole just under the shelter of the rice fields.