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Comprehensive Report

A western politician had appointed as a smoke inspector a cousin of his from a rural district. The new official was given an assignment without any definite instructions; and this is the report he turned in at the end of his first week:

"This is to certify that I have inspected the smoke of my district for the week ending May 31. I find plenty of said smoke, all apparently of good quality."

Too Easy

Cole Black had fallen foul of the law and was having a preliminary conference with his counsel.

"Can you prove an alibi?" asked the latter.

"Al—what's that, boss?"

"Alibi. Can you prove where you were at the time the offense was committed?"

"Lawdy, boss, dat's jes' what ah's skeered dey's gwine ter find out!"

Tiger Snake Most Deadly

The tiger snake of Australia is the most deadly poisonous of all snakes, says the Sydney Bulletin. Scientific tests have shown that, compared with the Indian cobra, the deadly properties of the tiger snake's poison are, having regard for weight and size, as five is to three, and with the American rattlesnake as four is to three. The tiger snake's venom is slower in action than that of either of the other two. The death adder's poison is swifter than any of them.

Needn't Have Asked

A motorist, approaching a village, was surprised to see an elderly native running down the road at full speed.

"What are you running for?" the motorist inquired.

"There's a wild beast show down there, and a lion's broke loose," was the gasping reply.

"Which way did he go?"

"Well, you don't suppose I'm chasing him, do you?" said the villager.

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The Girl on Smoky Top

By H. LOUIS RAYBOLD

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SHE was a source of great interest to the people in the valley below—that unknown girl who had taken possession of the old Clark farm set aslant on old Smoky Top's slope. Farmers harvesting their crops would pause and glance curiously at the thin spiral of smoke traveling skyward above the treetops and wonder why she was there.

Especially young John Hayes who had recently inherited his father's broad acres on which he and his mother lived alone.

"Your turn will come," his mother frequently prophesied. "And I daresay Kitty Weatherby will suit me as well as anybody."

At which her son would clumsily shift the subject. Oh, he supposed he'd marry Kitty ultimately, but for the present he had no wish to settle his fate too definitely. Had his mother known that, since the day he drove to town and parked next a dusty little runabout, his mind had been filled with visions of a slender, brown-eyed girl with sun gold curls clustering under her felt hat, she herself would not have felt so sure of being mother-in-law to Kitty.

As fall drew near, one might indeed have been pardoned for leaning on the pasture bars and gazing at Smoky Top, whose sides were a colorful mass of reds and greens and browns, set off by the more somber evergreens. And, as the season progressed, without rain, John would so lean on the bars. But sometimes he would frown and think of fire.

"Just a spark and she'd be set off like slit shingles," he muttered one day.

Then one evening, out driving with Kitty Weatherby at his side, he suddenly swung off from the main highway onto a hard-packed dirt road that wound in sharp, foliage-hidden curves up the mountain.

"This is exciting," giggled Kitty. "Haven't been up there since I was a kid. Besides, I'd like to catch a sight of that old girl. Jim Lawrence—" she paused, catching John's quick look, then continued defiantly—"well, he's been working for her, although why she should, with her big farm—anyhow, he says she's poor as Job's turkey. That her uncle left her the place, and it's the only home she's got, and she's got to make it pay, but Jim says it wouldn't grow enough to feed a starving cat."

His companion's thoughts were a jumble of suppositions. So the stranger girl wasn't a rich young lady riding a hobby. So Kitty was still seeing Jim. He felt cheated.

"What Jim says seems to carry considerable weight with you," he remarked coldly, "but, when—" he paused abruptly. "What's that?" he cried. "Smoke!"

The car leaped beneath the pressure of his foot, while Kitty clutched his arm in terror, both at the wild recklessness with which they rounded curves and at the thought of fire.

"Can't you turn?" she managed to gasp.

John shook his head. He hadn't thought of anything only of going forward to find out just where that fire might be. If it were well above the farm, the wind might carry it by, or a well-planned back fire or trench repel it. At the least he could get the girl and bring her down to safety. His heart glowed within him and he was not conscious of Kitty's grasp on his arm.

"Oh, where are you going? See how smoky everything is and—oh, as you keep this," she fairly screamed.

Sounds of crackling came to them through the gold, darkening atmosphere.

Then as they swung around the bend they saw the fire. It was the farmhouse itself, and John's expert eye saw at once that, set as the old house was in the very center of the clearing, there was little likelihood of the surrounding forest catching.

Two horrified figures were moving to a safe distance what few pieces of furniture they had evidently been able to take from within the building.

John, followed by Kitty, leaped to the ground.

"No use trying to save the house," yelled Lawrence. "Let 'er burn. My wife here—"

"Your wife!" both Kitty and John cried the word.

"Married only this afternoon," shouted Jim, still busy lugging chairs and tables. "Chimney must have caught while we were gone. Sparks on the roof did the rest. Makes no real difference. Going to live at my place, of course." He threw a tender, protective glance at the girl who seemed lovelier and even more desirable than John remembered her. "The old tinder box might as well go one time as another."

And so it did, burning clear to the ground until only the blackened, smoldering embers were left. And it seemed to John as if, hidden in the debris, were the ashes of his idle dreams. Idle because he had made no effort to bring them to fruition.

"You seem dreadfully quiet," complained Kitty as they drove homeward.

For answer, John resolutely put his arm about her plump waist. Then, "It's about time you and I thought of our own wedding," he said. "Mother's been expecting it this long while."

After all, realities are better than a dream. Perhaps.

Rooseveltian Wit

Chavis Kaye sends in a story of Colonel Roosevelt's ready wit. The colonel was visiting Tuskegee institute in company with Booker T. Washington, and wished to meet all of the staff. Finally the assistant librarian and her little daughter were presented to him. "Mrs. River," he acknowledged, smiling his well-known smile, and extending his hand. Then, glancing down at the little girl, he said: "And this, I suppose, is Miss Rivulet."—The Outlook.

"Find" Made Possible Longed-for Taxi Ride

One of the rarest books in the world is the first edition of Edgar Allan Poe's "Tamerlane." When it was printed, he had only a few copies struck off and his name did not appear on the title page. Few copies were printed, because he could not pay his printer. So rare are these books now that, when they come up in the auction rooms, they command from $10,000 upward.

Not long ago a frail little woman well over sixty appeared at the shop of a well-known Boston dealer in rare books with a bundle wrapped up in brown paper.

"I understand this is quite a valuable book," said she, as she unwrapped it before the eyes of the interested dealer. To his amazement a perfect copy of "Tamerlane" was disclosed which she said had been in her attic ever since she could remember. Having heard that it was valuable, she wanted to know what he would give her for it.

"I should rather sell it for you on commission," said he—to which she agreed.

Later, when he sold it for $25,000 and turned the proceeds, less the commission, over to her, she said as she left his place of business: "I am going to have a ride in a taxi now. I have never had one in my life."—The Market for Exchange.

Single Error Fatal in Diamond Cutting

Great skill is required to produce the little flat surfaces popularly called facets, but technically known as tables, of cut diamonds. The work is exacting and entails much strain on the cutter's patience and on his eyes, a strain intensified by the knowledge that one false cut may ruin the size and structure of a valuable gem. The rough diamond that is to be cut to a jewel is first worked in rubbing it with another diamond until the stone is roughly round. Next it is set in a composition of lead and tin to keep it from slipping during the cutting of the first facet. Mounted, it is placed in a lathe, which works at a speed of 2,800 revolutions a minute. When the facet is large enough and stands out at the proper angle to the axis of the lathe, it is polished till its characteristic radiance is displayed to the best advantage. It is then removed from the setting and the process is repeated for the subsequent facets. The number of facets depends on the size of the stone. Large stones have 58 facets, smaller ones, 42, 34 or 18. Even the smallest diamonds, so small they can hardly be seen, have 18 facets.—London Daily Express.

Mole's Food Supply

The mole has the digging instinct well developed. It requires an enormous amount of food to keep it going, for every 24 hours it will devour about its own weight of food. Large stores of worms are sometimes found in a mole's run, and these appear to have been deprived of their power of traveling in some way, although they remain alive. Thus the mole has a supply of food close at hand, which is very serviceable in dry weather when its favorite article of diet is difficult to find.

Player-Piano Rolls

When it used to take weeks to make the 65-note roll for a player-piece it now takes but a very few minutes for a good player to make the modern player-piano roll. On this roll only the tempo is played by hand. The orchestra and jazz notes are inserted by a mechanical process. The paper on which these rolls are made is 85 1-3 per cent rag or fiber. The perforated paper roll was invented in 1887 and the perforated music sheet appeared as early as 1842, when a Frenchman patented it in France.

Domestic Economy

"What's this?" inquired the young husband, referring to the memorandum his wife had given him.

"One dozen eggs, a pound of raisins, a bottle of lemon extract, a tin of ground cinnamon and half a pound of sugar."

"What the merry spring do you want with all these things, Doris?"

"I've got a stone boat," replied the young wife, "which I am going to save by working it up into a bread pudding. I never let anything go to waste, Robbie, and you know it."

Society's Warp and Woof

During a prolonged study of the lives of various men both great and small, I came upon this thought: In the web of the world the one may well be regarded as the warp, the other as the woof. It is the little men, after all, who give breadth to the web, and the great men firmness and solidity; perhaps, also the addition of some sort of pattern. But the scissors of the Fates determine its length, and to that all the rest must join in submitting itself.—Goethe.

Road Made of Glass

What is probably the only glass road in the world is to be found at Obsidian cliff, near Mammoth Hot Springs, in Yellowstone National park. The construction of this roadway was accomplished by building great fires around the blocks of volcanic glass which compose the sides of the cliffs. When heated the rocks were suddenly cooled by dashing water upon them, thus shattering them into small fragments. In so unique a manner the roadway was formed.

Totem Poles Significant

Alaskan Indian mythology forms an interesting study. There were four large tribes and each had several animals for symbols. No matter whom they married they retained and clung to these symbols and the crests have continued to mark the offspring of the original founder of each family. An Indian visiting in an Indian village need be at no loss for shelter; he at once goes to the house belonging to one of his crest which he can tell from the totem in front of it. When a pole can be purchased, which is seldom, about $2,000 is the price—Exchange.

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