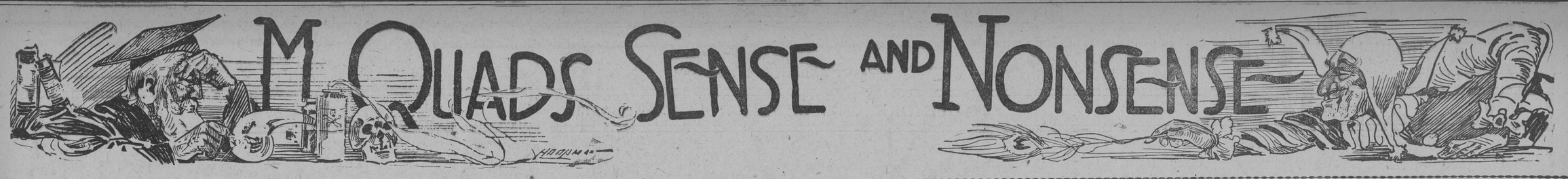

Bowser's Red-Hot Time---He Makes An Invention and An Experiment

"I'VE given up any personal ambition to reach the North Pole," said Mr. Bowser, as he laid aside his paper the other evening.

"I'm glad to hear it," replied Mrs. Bowser.

"But I stand ready to assist anyone else."

"You'd better not fool away your time."

"I don't propose to. But for the awful temperature around the Pole men could easily overcome the other difficulties. When the thermometer registers 100 degrees below zero, the lifeblood of the strongest man congeals. He must either retreat or die."

"Well, what of it!" she asked.

"What of it!" he repeated, with a chuckle. "If you overcome the cold, you discover the Pole, don't you?"

"And you have found a way of overcoming the cold, I suppose? It is two weeks since you had a fad, and I was wondering what would come next. If you are going to visit the North Pole with a lot of hot water bags strapped around your body to keep your temperature at summer heat, let's hear about it."

"Being as you are a woman, and being as every woman is about half-idiot, I can overlook your sarcasm. Your way of encouraging a husband to seek for fame is to belittle every plan he originates. Had Columbus had a wife like you this American continent would have continued to be a paradise for woodchucks. Expecting nothing but ridicule and sarcasm in reply, I will, however, ask you a question or two. Suppose that a man going out in a temperature of 20 degrees below zero raises the temperature of his body 30 or 40 degrees?"

"That would offset the cold," replied Mrs. Bowser.

"Your head is not filled with sawdust after all. Yes, it would work that way, and don't you see my plan? To meet the cold of the North Pole we simply keep on raising the temperature. It's the simplest thing in the world, and yet nobody seems to have thought of it. Mrs. Bowser, consider the North Pole as rediscovered. Consider it discovered by Mr. Bowser!"

He stepped back and bowed before her, and the cat came out from under the lounge and squinted at both, and wondered whether it was a question of science or mousetraps.

"Yes, but how are you going to raise the temperature of the body a hundred degrees or more?" queried Mrs. Bowser.

"Just as easy as lifting up your foot. Do you see these lozenges? They contain no less than six different redhot ingredients, including cayenne pepper. Two of them are warranted to make the blood fairly boil and cause the temperature around the pole to seem like an August day in America. I shall at once consult the government about sending out an expedition. The government provides the ship, and Bowser's lozenges do the rest."

"But you haven't tried them yet."

"No, but I am glad to do so. I wonder if our cook wouldn't eat one and then sit on a snowbank in the back yard and see how it worked?"

"Of course she wouldn't!"

"Well, there are others. I'll find a couple of tramps who'll sit out all night for a quarter apiece. I'll run a pair of them in at once and get the experiment under way."

"You'd—you'd better wait!" she faltered as he started for the door.

"Why wait?" he asked. "It's a cold night, with snow and tramps at hand for experiment. If an expedition is to be sent out, it will have to start in the spring."

"But it will end in a row."

"It will end in making the name of Bowser better known than that of Columbus. You must keep quiet and let me run this thing."

He put on his hat and overcoat, and it did not take him five minutes to find a couple of tramps who were sloshing about between the house and the corner. When he explained what he wanted and his willingness to pay, they both cheerfully accompanied him. As they stood with their backs to the range in the kitchen and hungrily eyed the remains of dinner he took their temperature and pronounced it normal, and then escorted them to the back yard. There were snowbanks against the fence, and he selected positions and sat them down. It was a keen, cold night, one made to order for such an experiment.

"Now then," said Mr. Bowser as all was ready, "I take it that you feel cold?"

"W-e d-o!" replied the men in chorus through their chattering teeth.

"That is splendid! I estimate that there is a difference of at least 40 degrees between your temperature and that of the weather. You will now each of you take a lozenge in your mouth and let it slowly dissolve. In two minutes your blood ought to be the same temperature as the weather. In five you ought to imagine that robins are singing and daisies blooming around you."

As Mr. Bowser wasn't experimenting on himself, he discreetly retired to the warm atmosphere of the kitchen and took his stand at a window. He had scarcely begun his observations when one of the tramps rolled over and began to kick like a horse tangled up in his harness, while the other sprang to his feet and spat and sputtered and coughed and crammed his mouth full of snow.

"What are you fellows up to?" shouted Mr. Bowser, as he rushed out.

They gave him no heed. They seemed to be acrobats let loose, and they went through more antics than as if they had picked up a dozen hot horseshoes. It was five minutes before either of them could speak, and then one cooled his mouth with an icicle hanging to the clothesline and stuttered:

"B-b-boss, what s-s-sort of a g-g-game is this?"

"Yes, what sort of a g-g-game?" added the other, as a snowball melted in his mouth.

"It's no game at all. It's an experiment, as I told you. What have you done with those lozenges?"

"S-s-spit 'em out, durn ye!"

"Yes; sp-spit 'em out!"

"But you mustn't do it. These are to raise the temperature of your blood until it equals the temperature of the atmosphere. If you'd kept sucking the lozenges you'd have been perspiring by this time. Sit down and try it again."

"Bill," said the first, as he continued to eat snow and draw in long breaths of the frosty air, "does it look like a cold-blooded attempt to burn up the vitals of two respectable gents?"

"It do, Sam, it do!"

"And by burnin' up vitals, take away our appetites?"

"That's the game!"

"If I was playing any game, would I promise you a quarter apiece?" asked Mr. Bowser.

"It's my solemn opinyun that ye would!"

"That's our solemn opinyun!"

Mr. Bowser was about to protest and increase his cash offers when the two gentlemen with burned vitals fell upon him. The three went down together, and Mrs. Bowser, looking from a back window, and the cook and the cat looking from a back door, could see nothing for the next two minutes for the cloud of snow in the air. Then the two tramps detached themselves from the circus and climbed the yard fence, and the household went out to look for Mr. Bowser. There were thousands of traces of him at hand, but it took three minutes to discover his actual presence and dig it out from under the snow. He had been thumped and kicked and choked, but life had not departed. He soon rallied and sat up, and after being helped to his feet he made his woozy way to the kitchen and thence up stairs. He did not ask what had happened, and Mrs. Bowser gave him a rest of 15 minutes on the lounge before she said:

"I suppose the government ought to be notified at once, and if you don't feel well I can do it myself."

An ugly glare, followed by a gritting of his teeth, and it was 10 minutes before she observed:

"I've told the cook to heat some witch hazel to wash off the blood. Do you wish for any temperature?"

But Mr. Bowser had grown weary of North Pole weather and fallen asleep.

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Paradise Flats

"AND how you vhas today, Mr. Sprocket?" asked the German grocer, as the janitor of McMurphy's new flats lounged in the other afternoon and cast covetous eyes on a pyramid of shredded codfish boxes.

"All right, Mr. Wasserman, except for my asthma, thank you," was the reply.

"Und don't you be cured of some asthma?"

"I haven't been so far, but I think I'll quit doctoring for it. I have about come to the conclusion that asthma is a good thing for a flathouse janitor. It prevents him from running upstairs too fast when some of the tenants think they want something. It also acts as a check on the speed of the dumb-waiter. Have you heard the news yet?"

"Vhas it about Cuba or somepody?"

"No; I came in to tell you our flat was full. Yes, sir, McMurphy got in two new families yesterday, and, of course, I shall recommend them to trade with you. Your goods are fresh, your prices low, and you guarantee prompt delivery."

"Dot vhas good news, Mr. Sprocket, good news!" chuckled the grocer, as he rubbed his hands. "So der flats vhas full at last and der families vhas all right. Allow me to present you mit a box of codfish ash some tokens of my esteem."

"Thanks. Codfish is my favorite. Yes, the flat is full, and you'll get new customers, but don't you make no mistake on what's going to happen over there."

"How can something happen, Mr. Sprocket?"

"You wait a week and you'll see. McMurphy just grabbed at the first customers who came along and what d'you suppose he's done? He's got an Irishman, a dago and a darky one above the other, each with five or six children, and the rumpus has already begun."

"Do you mean somebody vhas quarreling?"

"That's it, and it will be hair-pulling before the week is out. The Irishman moved in first. The family has about $50 worth of furniture, and the children sleep five in a bed, but after they had got their goods slung in the wife came sailing up to me with her nose in the air and said:

"'Janitor, me name is Bridget O'Sullivan, and me husband is Timothy O'Sullivan, and when either wan of us spake to ye or I sinds word out by the children ye wants to jump like a cat or ye'll be after losing yer position. Jest put it in yer pipe that I'm a dascindant of the O'Shanes, while Tim O'Sullivan is a man wid a pull.'"

"How vhas you to shump like some cats mit your asthma?" indignantly demanded the grocer.

"I can't, and I won't," replied the janitor. "You bet the bluff didn't work on me. I told her to get off her high horse and run her old billygoat out of the hall, and I gave it to her plain that she couldn't work the royal racket on me. I think both of us know a plebeian from an aristocrat, eh, Mr. Wasserman?"

"I vhas sure we do, Mr. Sprocket. Some plebeians owe me a bill of $2 und den mofe avhay in her night-time."

"Well, the dago family moved in next," continued the janitor, "and, of course, the O'Sullivans, all except Tim, were looking out from doors and windows. The furniture came by backloads and pushcarts, and as it was handed in Mrs. O'Sullivan pointed her nose to heaven and called out:

"'Do they take this place for a stable or a pig pen? Och, hone, but look at the old rat traps and the decayed oranges and think of me associatin' wid such people! I'll send Mr. McMurphy word that out we go before night.'"

"'Whata you wanta of me, eh?' shouted the dago woman as she felt that she was being picked on; and she walked in and shook her fist under Mrs. O'Sullivan's nose. It looked like a scrap for a minute, but the young O'Sullivans and the young dagoes were in a row down the hall, and so the mothers held off. It'll come, though—bound to come. You can't put Irish and dagoes in the same pen, can you?"

"If people vhas mad nobody can be happy," replied the grocer as he rubbed his chin and looked wise.

"Them is true words, Mr. Wasserman, no matter what cucumbers sell for," said the janitor. "But I haven't told you about the darky yet. The family just moved in this afternoon. The goods came on a wheelbarrow, and Mrs. O'Sullivan and Mrs. Divito was parading up and down the halls and waiting to get off something mean. When an old cornhusk mattress was heaved through the front door, followed by the female head of the family and four children Mrs. O'Sullivan lifted up her hands and her brogue and called out:

"'By me soul, but we've got a naygur among us! Did the O'Shanes ever dream of the likes when they figgered out that I had a barrel of royal blood in me veins?'

"'Whata dat nigger wanta here?' queried the dago, as she swept up and down the hall like an insulted queen.

"'We've got to protest!' screamed Mrs. O'Sullivan, banging on the wall with her fist. 'Think of me man Tim comin' home tonight after a hard day's work on the coal cart and findin' naygurs in the hall! Where's the janitor who called this an aristocratic flat? Where's the man Teddy McMurphy, who told me Tim that livin' here wid a dumb waiter in the house would add 50 per cent. to his pull!'

"Of course, the new family heard it all," said the janitor, "and the woman ceased throwing pots and pans and old shoes into the hall for a minute and walked up to the two ladies and said:

"'What's de racket yere? I'd have yo' to know dat my husband runs a barber shop an' a crap j'int, an' dat we's movin' into dis flat to gib it tone. Don't shoot off no mousetraps at me, or I'll set up a conservatory of music an' thump de hull gang out of de flat!'"

"Und it vhas awful times?" queried the grocer, as the janitor paused for breath and helped himself to a prune from a box.

"It was red-hot for a sendoff, but they haven't got started yet. You wait a few days and you'll see things sizzle. A darky who owns a barber shop and a crap joint feels himself away up in G, you know, and he isn't going to take sass off anybody. He's got the top floor and by tomorrow his kids will be rolling the wash boiler down stairs and the wife will be emptying tubs of water on the floor to leak through the ceiling. Last night as I was dragging my asthma up the third floor, the colored woman jumped out at me and said.

"'Am dis de hireling dat runs de flats?'

"'I'm the janitor, ma'am,' said I.

"'Dat's what I mean,' said she, 'an I want yo' to know dat I am Mrs. Gawge De Koven Torrington! I'm yere to make a chick flathouse of dis place, an' dar'll be high steppin' from roof to cellar. When I rattle de dumb waiter, you fly, an' when I drop stovelids down stairs you drop all other wok fo' me!'

"That's what she said and a lot more with it, and you grasp the situation, don't you?"

"I believe I do," solemnly replied the grocer. "Und nottings can be done about her?"

"No, nothing."

"Shust keep right on ahead und suffer?"

"That's all."

"Py golly! Py golly! All of us vhas glad vhen we goes to heafen."

And he went to wait on a woman who wanted some onions and three eggs, and the janitor sighed hopelessly and went his weary way with his box of codfish.

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His Troubles O'er.

"If I have been sat and gloomy and not like myself this evening, I have a very good excuse for it," replied the hardware drummer, when rallied on his low spirits. "I had a brother, Bill, and Brother Bill is no more."

"Anything peculiar about your Brother Bill?" was asked.

"There was. Bill was a football player. He was champion. He held more medals than any other living kicker. He had more broken backs and legs and arms than any 10 wrestlers. He had a standing contract with an undertaker and a hospital, and he had burial plots in four different cemeteries. There is no mistake that Brother Bill played the game for all it was worth."

"And he is no more?"

"As I said, his kicking is o'er, but what saddens me is the way he suffered before the end came. He got married about a year ago, and the inevitable came. He dreamed of a game and kicked his wife out of bed and she got a divorce. He had retired from football, but he couldn't pass a dog without kicking him. He kicked his bedstead to pieces at least once a week. He kicked open doors and gates, and he kicked in the heads of barrels. He kicked the grocers and butcher and baker, and it got to that pass where something had to be done."

"And he was restrained?"

"Yes, you might call it that. Someone whom he had kicked filled an old peach can with dynamite and put it in his way. Bill saw it, and was a halfback once more. He took a run and a kick to send that can to the North Pole, and there was an explosion that shook the earth for a mile around."

"And then they gathered up the fragments?"

"Oh, no. There were no fragments. The explosion lamed Bill's right leg so that he could kick no more, and he had to go on suffering for six months before death finally came. None of us will ever know his feelings when a dog would come up and smell of his leg, or a mule would come along and challenge him to a match. I am sad, sad, and the consolation is in knowing that if Bill was shunted off to the wrong place when he died he wasn't 15 minutes kicking himself into the right one."

Wrong Name.

The young undergraduate was haled before the tutor. He had exceeded his leave of absence by no less than two days.

"Well," said the professor, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"I'm awfully sorry," replied the undergrad. "I really couldn't get back before. I was detained by most important business."

The professor looked at him sternly. "So you wanted two more days of grace, did you?" he asked.

"No, sir," answered the young man, off his guard for the moment; "of Marjorie."—Minnesota Minne-Ha-Ha.

Just Jeems---He Assumes a New Role and Makes a Hit

I HAD sold a farmer a gold brick, and he was raising a fuss about it. A gold brick in the house is something that every farmer needs and should have, but they no sooner get one than they turn around and kick.

"If they had given me time and a little encouragement, I could have proved that the brick was pure gold and worth more than I received for it, but the county sheriffs are impatient and impetuous men. Rather than have any trouble with the law, I got a tramp's outfit and set my alarm clock to waken me at midnight.

"The next day, as I am ambling along the highway and wondering why all men were not good, a farmer came out of his house and halted me. He must have seen at once that I was hard up, but he also saw that I was the remains of a gentleman. Even my ambling walk betrayed the fact that I had once worn white shirts and eaten Welsh rabbits. A gentleman may become dilapidated, sir—he may come down to rags and patches and raw turnips—but traces of his former greatness will still cling to him.

"'Hello!' says the farmer, as he looks me over. 'Mebbe you wouldn't mind doin' me a little favor.'

"'Anything in my power,' says I, as I make him the remains of a bow which was once considered good enough for Fifth avenue.

"'It's this way,' he goes on, as he steps on his feet. 'My hired man died of colic two days ago; went and filled himself up with a peck of turnips, and a death was the consequence. He's lyin' there in the house as stiff as a crowbar. We was goin' to hev the funeral this mornin', but the preacher hain't showed up. He wasn't much of a critter, this hired man, but I don't want to plant him without someone sayin' a few words over him. You don't happen to be a preacher, do you?'

"No; I'm simply a dilapidated gentleman, footing it around the country, but I think I might fill in. What was the religious belief of the late deceased?'

"I dunno. At any rate, it took two men to wake him up in the mornin', and he'd eat more'n a horse.'

"Well, I think I can put him through all right. It'll be a dollar, however, and C. O. D., of course.'

"'That's purty darned steep for plantin' a hired man,' says the farmer, 'but I want to git him outer the way and hev it over with. Come along in. If you hev to mention religion in your remarks, don't pitch into the Adventists. My old woman belongs to 'em, and she won't hear nothin' said ag'in 'em. As fur myself, I sort of lean toward the Methodists, but if you want to bang at 'em a few times I shan't raise a row. There's three or four neighbors in, but you needn't mind their feelin's. Come in.'

"I found about a dozen people sitting around a cheap coffin, and I didn't see any particular evidences of sorrow. The farmer introduced me as 'a sort of preacher who's goin' to give Bill a hist,' and they all seemed satisfied with that. I presently stood up and looked around and said:

"'Behold how I am laid low! Today we are full of ginger and ambition; tomorrow we depart from earth and are heard of no more.'

"'That's mighty true,' says the farmer as I paused for breath. 'Bill was steppin' high and full of ginger when he got the kerflop; jest went and stuffed hisself with raw turnips t'other day, and now whar is he? Durn this pictur', but what did he want to make a cow of hisself fur? Go ahead, stranger, and don't furgit that a dollar pays the bill. I'm also in a hurry to git this thing over and go to diggin' taters.'

"'Man that is born of woman always carries a chunk of trouble in hs hind pocket,' says I in my deepest bass.

"'He's hit it ag'in,' replies the farmer as he slaps his leg 'Yes, sir, you jest let a man be born of woman, and he's got to go through with everything from whoopin' cough to broken legs. That was the case with Bill Perdue. He was allus hevin biles and stiff necks and backaches, and if he went to a circus to cheer hisself up a bit the elephant was sure to swaller his hat and the clown to borrow his jackknife and keep it. When he couldn't find trouble no other way, he'd fall over a fence and stick hisself full of slivers. Stranger, ain't that about enough? You know we've got to drive two miles to the buryin' ground yit.'

"'Let this be a great moral lesson to the rest of you,' says I as I looks around—'that is, don't bring on heart disease by overwork.'

"'I ain't sayin' fur Bill,' says the farmer as he rises up—'I ain't sayin' that he was good or bad. He was betwixt and between. He'd lie to a tin peddler and tell the truth to me. He'd loaf on me when he got down in a back field, but if he was set to shellin' corn in the barn he'd make the kernels fly all over the county. They won't rush him into heaven fur his goodness, and they won't slambang him into t'other place for his badness. We ought to hev a little song, hadn't we, stranger?'

"I picked the tune of Weary Souls and led it, and when it was finished they lifted up the coffin of the late deceased and bore him hence. As we got outdoors the farmer handed me my dollar and said:

"'I'm satisfied, stranger. My mother-in-law is alfin', and if you happen this way ag'in drop in to see if she's dead. If she is, I'll pay you another dollar fur another orashun.'"

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A Booming Family.

The only occupant of the Nebraska cabin was a girl about 12 years old, and when the colonel rode up and asked her the way to Scottsville she replied:

"Dad might tell you if he was here, stranger, but dad's off over there layin' out a new town to boom."

"And your mother?"

"Marm might tell you if she was here, but marm's off down this way layin' out another new town to boom."

"Any brothers?"

"One, and that's Bill. Bill might tell you if he was here, but he's over the river layin' a third new town."

"And how about you? Can't you direct me?"

"I might, stranger, if this wasn't my busy day. You see, I'm layin' out a hundred acres of this claim for a new town, and I've just made Mary Jane avenue run from here to the creek. Want to speculate, stranger?"

"No, I guess not."

"'Cause if you do I'll give you the first pick of lots along Mary Jane avenue for $10 apiece and take half of it in store pay at that."

"You seem to be a booming family," I observed as I got ready to ride on.

"You bet!" she heartily exclaimed. "Dad booms, marm booms, Bill booms, and I'm either going to boom or tear down the shanty! Don't want any corner lots in the new town of Primrose, eh? All right, stranger. Selling for $10 now, but six months hence you can't buy 'em for $50. So long to you! Good-by!"

A Case of Gratitude

THAR' ar' folks as will contend that the mewl has no gratitude in his soul," said the old possum-hunter, as we walked through the chestnut forest on the side of the Cumberland Mountains, "but them ar' folks is wrong."

He halted to rub his itching back against a tree, and then continued:

"Every critter is again the mewl and ready to wollop him, and why should he be grateful? Why shouldn't he be onery and cantankerous? I'd be meaner'n pizen if I was a mewl. Howsumever, I'm goin' to tell you about gratitude.

"Soon after the wah some fellers come along yere with a drove of mewls, and one of the critters fell sick, and they gin him to me. He was about the meanest-looking mewl I ever did see, but I kinder hoped he'd make up fur it in bein' good. He didn't, however, doggone his hide, but when he got well he was meaner'n skunks. He'd bite and kick at anybody who come within 10 feet of him, and if I hitched him to the cart he wouldn't pull a pound. I was keepin' him around in the hopes to trade him off, when along came a stranger one day from Arkansaw. The old woman was gone to a naybur's, and I was sittin' on the doorstep, when this stranger halted and said:

"'Kin I everlastin'ly and eternally flatter myself that I am addressin' the celebrated and notorious Zeb White?'

"'That's me,' said I.

"'The critter who has killed 9,000 possums, 3,000 woodchucks, 4,200 coons and 50 b'ars?'

"'Them's about the figgers, stranger.'

"'The man who crowded a circus elephant into the ditch, flung a bull over the fence and licked three wildcats barehanded?'

"'That's mostly me.'

"'The man who has outrun, outjumped, outwrassled and outfit every critter in Tennessee who would tackle him?'

"'Kinder that.'

"'Waal, now,' goes on the man as we shakes hands, 'yo' seems to be some pumpkins, and I hope yo' are, fur I walked over from Arkansaw to gin yo' a trial. I'm gwine to do my best, Zeb White, to lick yo' outen yo'r butes!'

"'What fur?' said I.

"'Jest to take yo' down a peg and let yo' know that thar are two or three other folks on airth. Yes, I'm either gwine to make yo' holler or else live on roots all the rest of my days!'

"I don't want no quarrel with anybody," said Zeb, "but I soon diskivered that the critter from Arkansaw was bound to hev a fuss. He bragged and crowed and had so much to say that I had no other way but to tackle him. We peeled off coats and jackets out thar on the level spot, and I noticed the old mule standin' with his hind quarters out of the wood shed doah.

"I'll tell yo' what I'm gwine to do," said the stranger as he made ready. "I'm gwine to bite off yo'r right ear and carry it back to Arkansaw with me as a sort of certificate, and I hope yo'll write the date on it with pen and ink before I leave!'

"Then he crowded and flapped his arms and jumped up and knocked his heels together. I hadn't got skeart of him, however. I reckoned it might be a touch fout, but I was bound to win it. What made it better for me was that me'n the old woman had had a jaw that day, and I was feelin' onery and mean and anxious to whop somebody. Waal, we finally got to work, and I soon found that critter all I could manage. He was peart in his feelings and a hard hitter, and as he danced around he said:

"'Yo' might as well begin to holler right now, Zeb White, fur I've got yo' licked. I reckoned a heap of this talk about yo' was all wind!'

"Jest about that time I fetched him a swat that keeled him head over heels and broke my thumb. He got up as peart as yo' please, and, seein' my thumb was broke and my right useless he put on mo' steam. It did seem to me that fur the fust time in my life I was gwine to be licked, and I had a feelin' of goneness clear down to my butes. Broken bones don't count in a fout down in this kentry, yo' know. The man who comes out on top gits the credit and the other fellow hosn't a word to say. Yes, sah, I jest dun reckon I was hevin' a powerful clus shave of it when Providence interfered. I was bein' banged all around when I happened to see my old mewl backin' up on us from the shed. He'd heard that row and wanted a hand in. T'other feller's back was to'ard the mewl, and I played to keep it thar. He never had no warnin' of what was comin'. Then fust thing he knew the mewl backed up to within kickin' distance and then let go both feet, and old Arkansaw went rollin' most down to the bresh fence. His breath was gone when he stopped, and I was also sittin' on his stomach. In three or four minits he opened his eyes and looked around and said:

"Are I back in Arkansaw ag'in?"

"Not skassly," said I.

"Was I hevin' a fout with a critter named Zeb White?"

"Yo' was."

"And did I whop him and make him holler?"

"Yo' didn't. Yo' kin look upon yo'rself as a licked man!"

"And I didn't git his right ear to take back to Arkansaw with me?"

"Nary a ear."

With that he began to cry, and I let him up. He went over and sot down on the stump and cried like a boy, and after he had wept away his tears he said to me:

"Zeb, I acknowledge to bein' a licked man, but I'd like the consolashun of knowin' how 'twas done."

"It war a fa'r fout."

"I reckon it was, but I was gittin' the best of it when yo' fastened a couple of horse-shoes to yo'r hands and reached over my shoulders and hit me in the back and sent me tumblin'. Was that what licked me?"

"Reckon it was."

"And was it allowable under foutin' rules?"

"Allus has bin."

"Then I hain't got nuthin' mo' to say," said he. "I cum, I saw, and I got licked, and I'm goin' back to Arkansaw to tell 'em that yo' are the rooster of the flock. Shake hands, Zeb White, and bid me goodby!"

And he shouldered his bundle and went off whistlin', and to this day he don't know why that fout went ag'in him. I heard that he went back to Arkansaw and tried to fight with hoss-shoes tied to his hands, but the other critter evened up by shootin' fo' bullets into him."

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Persian Tales

ONE day the king of Persia and ruler of the earth took it into his head to wander out into the country alone and have a chat with some of his honest subjects. Coming across a peasant at work in his field, the king halted to say:

"I have heard a traveler to say that in the fields where the grass is thick and tall there dwelt a species of bird which made and stored up honey. Hath seen a flock of such birds around here?"

"I don't think I have," replied the peasant. "The tale of a traveler may be true, but the birds are evidently coy and shy."

"He described them as about the size of my thumb."

"Haven't seen any."

"With yellow lines across their backs and many feet."

"Haven't heard 'em singing around here."

"But they singeth not," protested the king. "Instead of a song they made a noise as of 'up-m-m-m!'"

"And do they sometimes light down on a log?"

"Truly they do."

"And the man who sits down on one imagines he has a bradawl for a cushion?"

"Now you are hitting it. Even so did the traveler relate. Let me see those birds at once."

"You'll find a nest of them over by the gooseberry bush," said the peasant as a grin spread over his face, "but I'd leave a few young ones for seed if I was you. A nest of 'em makes the place seem homelike, you know, and their bites keep the boys from getting lazy."

The king climbed the fence and waded through the grass to the spot, and his yells and antics soon proved that he had found the birds. After galloping three times around the meadow and rolling over it once he got rid of their company, and, limping up to the peasant, he said:

"Hath a name for these birds?"

"They are called bumblebees."

"And how long are their teeth?"

"About the length of a crowbar."

"And, knowing this, you still let your king place his life in peril! Caitiff, the ax of my executioner awaits thee."

"I let thee go forward, O king, not knowing that thou wert king, but instead of deserving the ax thou shouldst reward me with a bag of gold."

"S'death! But how so?"

"Because, O king, thou hast never had a circus within thy realm, though often longing for one. Here is one ready made. Let thy suite of a hundred follow thee out here tomorrow, and when all are assembled send them into the meadow to find the nestlings."

"B'gosh, if I don't do it!" exclaimed the king as his frown disappeared and a balmy smile stole over his face, and next day the performance came off as advertised and was reported as an unprecedented success.

One day, as the ruler of all Persia and a large slice of the rest of the world was riding out with his courtiers, he came across a peasant who was pulling hard at a rope attached to the neck of an ass. The ass was sagging back on his haunches and it was a question whether he would be pulled ahead or have his neck pulled off.

"By the corns of my grandfather, but what a fool that man is!" exclaimed the king as he came to a halt. "Ho! thou idiot! I would speak to thee!"

The peasant let fall the rope and came forward and rubbed his nose on the earth to prove his humility, and the king continued:

"Do my eyes deceive me, when I see a man of 50 pulling to get an ass along? In all these years haven't you learned that the way to treat an obstinate beast is to push from behind?"

"I dare not push on account of his heels, O ruler," replied the man.

"But what have heels to do with it?"

"They are on springs, O wise and beneficent, and are apt to fly upward at a touch."

"I never heard of such a thing. Ho, Abraham, grand secretary of agriculture, what is this about asses? Isn't it the proper way to push 'em along?"

"It might work, O king, but I have been too busy with onions and turnips to try it."

"Did you ever hear of springs on the heels of an ass?"

"In a dim, undefined way, O mighty."

"Well, I never did, and here goes to find out about it. I want to know what I'm running in this country."

It was in vain that the grand secretary of war, high chamberlain and the rest of the crowd protested. The king was a determined man when he got his dander up, and he swung out of his saddle and approached the ass.

"O king, but I am afraid of a jar," said the peasant, with alarm on his face. "Please poke him with a fence rail when you look for springs."

"Not by the hat of Sardanapalus! Here, you old beast, get along with you! Now, then, heave, oh, heave!"

Twenty minutes later the mighty ruler opened his eyes to find ammonia at his nose and ice on his stomach, and when he asked if the earthquake had killed anyone, his grand secretary replied:

"O high and mighty, but the heels of the ass were on springs, and the springs worked!"

"In other words," said the king, "I've been kicked into the middle of next week by an ass?"

"That's about it, O king."

"I see. As I pushed he kicked. Well, I can't let things go this way. Grand secretary, for not knowing more about asses, you are bounced from your position; peasant, for not knowing all about 'em, you shall receive 50 lashes!"

"But we ask for justice!" cried both men together.

"Then you shall exchange places!"

"But it was the ass that did it!" they chorused again.

"Then he shall die!"

"O ruler," said the peasant, "if you had kept away from the ass' heels, you wouldn't have been kicked."

"Ah, that's something like!" replied the king, as he rose up. "As it now transpires that there were two asses instead of one, and as it is hard to tell which ass was most to blame, we'll call the whole thing off and go over and look at those pumpkins. I want to know how the seeds get inside 'em."

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Several Poles.

"A month ago," said the patent washing machine man, "I struck into a little town in a New England state, and I had hardly got my name down on the register of the inn when the landlord beckoned me out on the back veranda and said:

"'You have probably come here to do business, and I will willingly give you a hint to help you along. This town has taken a great interest in the North Pole dispute. Do you favor Cook or Peary?'

"'I stand neutral,' I replied.

"'That's a good thing for you. This is a Cook tavern. I won't hear a word agin him from anybody. I've got it that he discovered the North Pole.

"'I see.'

"'Over at Smith's dry goods store they've got it that Peary discovered the South Pole. Don't dispute with that crowd if you want to do business.'

"'Thanks.'

"'At Sheldon's grocery there is a crowd contending that somebody has discovered the East Pole. Mebbe you never heard of that pole, but don't be fool enough to say so.'

"'No, I won't.'

"'Then there is Deacon Baxter. He about runs the village. As soon as he heard about the North, South and East Poles he got up a West Pole, and if you go to claiming there is no such thing you won't sell a blamed machine in the place.

"'And is that all there is to look out for?' I asked.

"'Yes, about all except that we differ here as to the distance to the sun. We put it all the way from three miles to 93,000,000, and you just keep quiet and let us have our way. We hain't hurting anybody, and we don't want strangers to be butting in.'"

A Double Strike.

"I had a colored man working for me in a warehouse at $20 per month," said the Pittsburgh man, "and a few weeks ago he came to me and said:

"'Mars Phillips, I ain't dun satisfied, and I'ze gwine to strike for higher wages. I want $30 a month, or out I goes.'

"'Look here, George,' I said in reply, 'I am also dissatisfied, and I am going to strike. I don't think you are worth $20 a month, and if you won't take $15 you can go.'

"He went away and thought it over for a while and then returned to say:

"'Look here, Mars Phillips. Mebbe I hain't got dis yere business right.'

"'As to how?' I asked.

"'Bout de strikin'.'

"'That was all right. You struck for $30 a month.'

"'Sartin I did, but you turned right around and struck for $15.'

"'Yes, and that was all right, too. Didn't you know that there were two sides to a strike?'

"'I neber, nebber did, sah. Just thought dere was one side, and it was mine. 'Pears like I haf to do somethin'.'

"'Well, what is it?'

"'I want to call my strike off, and I want you to call your strike off, and I want to go to work ag'in for $20 a month and jest break my ole back floppin' dem bar'ls ov lime around de warehouse.'

"I agreed to the proposal, and he is working for me at the old wages and whistling in contentment."

True.

"Most of us have to be careful what we say about others."

"That's right."

"Yes; few of us are sufficiently prominent to claim we were misquoted and get away with it."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Qualifying.

"Young Ravenyelp is taking a correspondence course in elocution."

"Does he expect to become a lyceum lecturer?"

"No; he expects to become a barber."—Youngstown Telegram.

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