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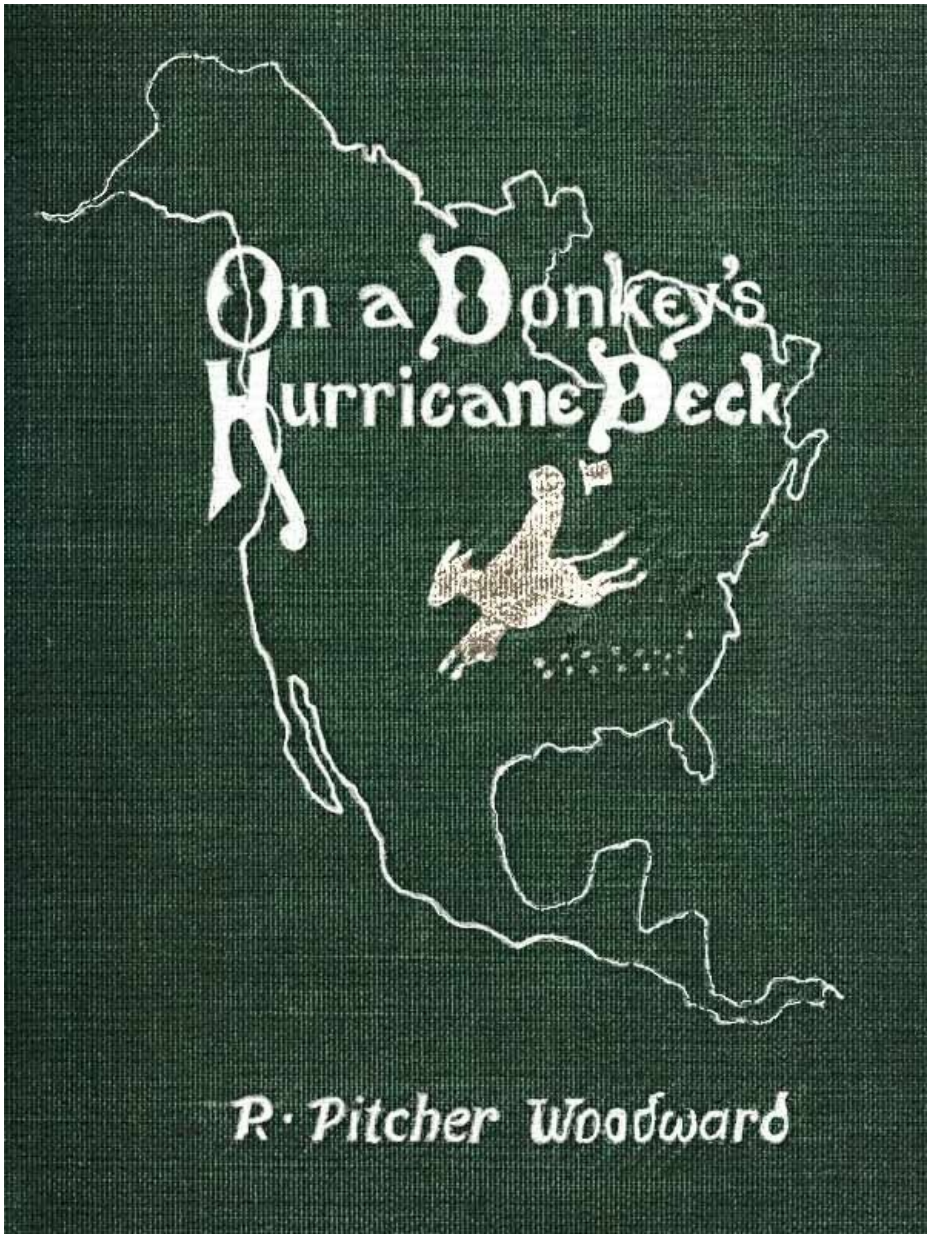
Original spelling and grammar has been mostly retained, with some exceptions. The use of hyphenation and quotation marks in the book is a bit haphazard. A few corrections have been made.

Chapter titles—taken from the Table of Contents—have been inserted into the chapter headings. These titles served as headers on alternate pages in the original. A link to the Epilogue was inserted into the Table of Contents.

More details about corrections and changes are provided in the TRANSCRIBER ENDNOTE.


On a Donkey's Hurricane Deck
R. Pitcher Woodward

On a Donkey's Hurricane Deck, by R. Pitcher Woodward

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R. Pitcher Woodward at his journey's end.

On a Donkey's Hurricane Deck

A Tempestuous Voyage of Four Thousand and Ninety-Six Miles Across the American Continent on a Burro, in 340 Days and 2 Hours

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STARTING WITHOUT A DOLLAR AND EARNING MY WAY

BY

R. PITCHER WOODWARD
(PYTHAGORAS POD)

AUTHOR OF
"TRAINS THAT MET IN THE BLIZZARD"

Containing Thirty-nine Pictures from Photographs Taken "en Voyage".

1902
I. H. Blanchard Co., Publishers
NEW YORK

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BY PYE POD AND MAC A'RONY.

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PROLOGUE.

This is as true a story of my "voyage" as I am capable of writing. Besides the newspaper accounts, two magazine articles, illustrated on this subject have been published, the only ones contributed by me, and they hardly outlined the trip. I have left out a hundred interesting incidents and culled and edited until I am tired, in order to condense this volume to convenient size. On the other hand, notable adventures only recalled by my photographs have been cheated of a mention, because the donkey ate my notes—he ate everything in sight, and did not discriminate between a comic circus poster and a tragic diary.

Ever since completing the trip, I have promised this book "next month," but owing to the checkered career of the MS. with ninety-seven publishers (all of whom declared that the book should be brought out at once, but they lacked the nerve to publish it), I am only now able to fulfil my promises. This is no romance. When I did not walk with the donkey or carry him, he carried me the whole four thousand and ninety-six miles, which includes the distance traveled when he balked and backed.

With my two cameras I secured six hundred pictures descriptive of the journey across eleven states, through the four seasons, during that long, long year; only by them and my diary am I brought to realize it is not a wild, weird dream. Now it is over, I sometimes smile over things recalled which, when they happened, found me as serious as the donk—grave in the superlative degree—and thoughtless people and those who never even crossed the plains by train may style my experience a mere outing or "picnic." General Fremont and other distinguished pioneers emphasize in their writings the pleasures of their overland trips. They, as did the emigrants of the '40s and '50s, set out in spring time from the Missouri or the Mississippi in companies, with money, wagons, cattle and supplies, and with one-third of the continent already behind them. The Indians and big game of the prairies provided excitement that lent a charm to the undertaking; it is dull monotony that kills.

I started four days before winter, practically without money, to support, from earnings only, myself and dumb partner from New York city to San Francisco.

It required twelve weeks to traverse the Empire State, through a severe season when and where I suffered the most. The delightful part of the journey was while crossing the Rockies. Instead of taking the shortest cut, I had to consider the towns where I might best make expenses, to look for the best roads and desert trails by springs. Three times when lost I traveled far out of my course, once twenty miles into a mountain forest.

It is only five days across by rail. Have you traveled it—in summer? How monotonous grew those seas of alkali, sand (rock waste), cacti and sage as the hours lengthened into days! Yet with comfortable beds, shade, meals served, cool drinks, and books to read, at times feeling yourself speeding through the air a mile to the minute, you wearied of the "voyage." Five days! Multiply them into weeks, then into months, double and add five weeks—forty-nine weeks! Fancy yourself for such a period on a slow burro which walks half your natural pace, and so small that if you wear roller skates while in the saddle you may ease the animal; ride one mile astride; when you feel about to split, ride the second mile side-ways; when your back feels ready to break, ride the third mile Turkish fashion; by this time your legs are benumbed and your feet asleep, so walk a mile and carry the jackass; you will thereby quiet your nerves, rest your bones, and make better time.

If ever you are tempted to ride a donkey overland, *refrain*. Rather creep across backwards on your hands and knees, or circumnavigate the globe in a washtub. If you still persist, why, ride a donkey twenty miles in a pouring rain, then follow your own judgment. If you wish my donkey's advice, I will introduce him. His head is longer than his ears, which was not the case when he set out with me.

R. P. W.

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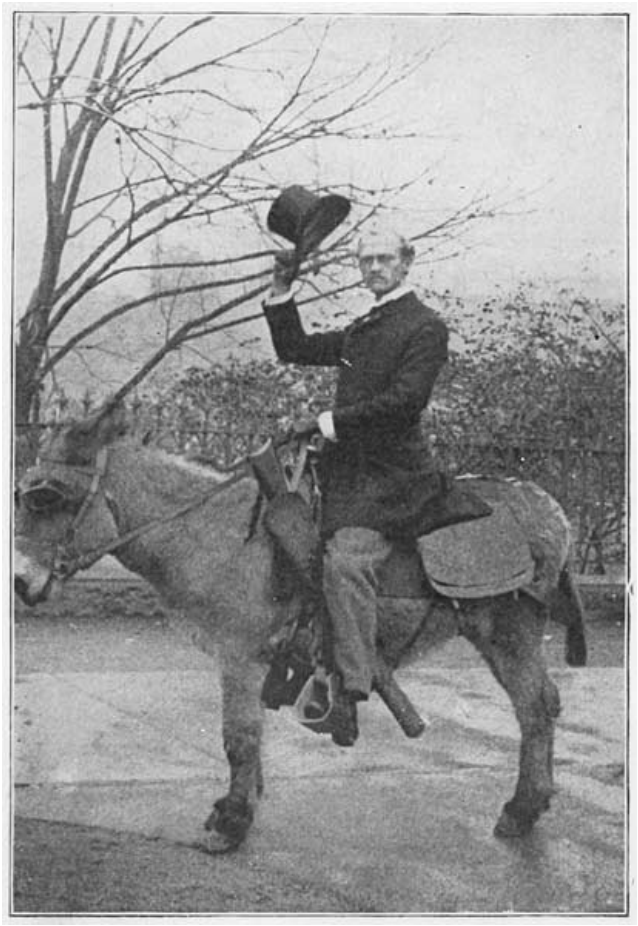


"I bade my friends farewell."

PART 1.

On a Donkey's Hurricane Deck

CHAPTER I.
Madison Square to Yonkers

TOC

> By this hand, thou think'st me as far in the devil's book as thou and Falstaff, for obduracy and persistency. Let the end try the man.
>
> —*Shakespeare.*

A noisy, curious, gaping multitude was crowded about the Bartholdi Hotel, New York. It was just after the noon hour on Friday, November 27, 1896, the day on which I was to start on my long and memorable journey across the continent on a donkey. The corridors were filled with interested guests, the reception room held about a hundred of my friends who had come to bid me God-speed, and less than a hundred thousand people choked Madison Square and the streets leading into it.

I had agreed with a friend to forfeit to him five thousand dollars, in case I should fail to make a donkey trip from New York to San Francisco in three hundred and forty-one days, under the following conditions:

Start from New York City, without a dollar in pocket and without begging, borrowing, or stealing, procure a donkey, and, riding or leading the beast, earn my way across the continent to San Francisco, and register at its leading hotel within the schedule time. I must cover the whole distance with a donkey by road or trail only; announce in a prominent newspaper of New York my start, at least twenty-four hours in advance, and mention the hour, day, and starting point. Seated on a donkey, I must parade on portions of Broadway, Fourteenth and Twenty-third Streets, Fifth, Madison, and West End Avenues; both the donkey and I must wear spectacles, and I a frock-coat and "plug" hat, but, the latter to be discarded at pleasure when once across the Mississippi River, the coat to be worn to San Francisco.

I slyly suggested the two most absurd conditions, believing it would be easier to earn my way in the rôle of a comedian than in the garb of a serious-thinking, imposed-upon mortal. I reasoned that I should have to live on sensation and notoriety, and, perhaps, keep from starving by employing my wits. These reflections I kept to myself. My "friend" chuckled amusedly, doubtless picturing in his mind the circus I was about to provide.

Without delay I began the preparations for the asinine journey. After much troublesome searching, I managed with the help of Hennessy, a stable-keeper, and Dr. Moore, a veterinary surgeon, to secure an option on a small donkey at James Flanagan's sale stables. Macaroni was the animal's name, and the price to be paid was $25. Then I got our coachman to go among his friends to see if he could get hold of a coat—a Prince Albert—and stove-pipe hat. He succeeded admirably, and when I had ordered spectacles for myself and the donkey, I was ready for the trip. I reached the hotel on the appointed day at one o'clock, borrowed the donkey for my official start, sent him back to the stables, then went to the Reception Room. Among my friends awaiting were my "friend," the landlord of the hotel, a photographer who had taken a picture of me seated on the donkey a few days before, and had come to deliver the photos; and my attorney, for the Chief of Police had refused me a permit to parade on the streets, and threatened my arrest if I proved to be a public nuisance. I borrowed a pen and bottle of ink, and, after bowing a greeting to my friends assembled, set to work putting my autograph on the pictures, which I offered for sale at twenty-five cents.

Bless my suspenders, and how they went! I made up my mind that we "two donkeys" would many times have greater difficulty in obtaining quarters before I reached my destination. For an hour the fist of Pye Pod swung a powerful quill and inscribed on each photograph a name that would go into his-story. Silver jingled on the table; the anxious hands of the crowding patrons got mixed in the shuffle, and some got two pictures and others got none; the ink flew about recklessly, and there were no blotters at hand; my heart thumped, and I was so excited that I kissed by mistake an indignant girl friend in place of my sister; and finally stole my sister's lace handkerchief, instead of that of a sweetheart, but which, however, I failed to discover till six months afterward; and still I lacked the requisite sum.

I now had twenty-four dollars, but I needed at least forty-one. Although I had made a five-dollar payment to Flanagan, that money came from my private purse and must be redeemed and returned; besides, I must pay $12 to the photographer for the 200 photos delivered to me, and $4 more to the blacksmith's representative for shoeing the donkey.

"I will lend you all the money you want," said the president of one of my clubs; and my "friend's" ears and eyes were directed upon me.

"I cannot beg, borrow, or accept gratuities," I exclaimed, firmly; "I propose to fulfill the terms of my wager to the letter, and when I accomplish it, be able to make a sworn statement to that effect."

Just then I heard a newsboy calling, "EXTRA—ALL ABOUT THE GREAT

DONKEY RIDE."

At once I dispatched a friend with money to purchase the papers, while I followed him to the hotel exit, where I stationed myself in full view of the crowd and drew from my pocket a blue lead pencil, ready for a new task. The papers secured and brought to me, I scribbled my name on them and offered them for a dime apiece.

"I have no time to make change, so give me the amount you wish to pay," I said to the eager purchasers. In fifteen minutes I had enough dimes and quarters and fifty-cent pieces to enable me to square my accounts and send for my donkey.

In the course of a half hour, Macaroni was induced by sundry persuasions to invade the noisy precinct of Madison Square and come up to the hotel door; and, with a small surplus of cash in pocket, I bade my friends farewell and got into the saddle.

Amid a deafening "tiger" from the multitude, the "lion" of the hour majestically proceeded down Broadway to Fourteenth Street; and the most sensational parade New York had ever witnessed had begun.

My lazy steed barely crawled; he stopped every rod or two, and generally in front of a car or other vehicle. It was an event for the street gamins, and, had they not trailed close behind us through the city and given Mac occasional goads and twists of the tail, I doubt if I could have reached Harlem by midnight. It was a terrible ride, and I often have wondered since how I escaped with my neck.

Passing down Fourteenth Street, we turned up Fifth Avenue, crossed Madison Square, paraded Madison Avenue to Thirty-third Street, turned to the left over to Fifth Avenue and passed the Waldorf-Astoria, followed Forty-second Street to the Boulevard, and up the avenue to Seventy-second Street, and then up West End Avenue, past my "friend's" residence. There I was stopped by a member of the mounted police, and, to my surprise, was tendered a Loving-cup Reception by my "friend's" pretty daughter, who, with a number of our mutual friends, welcomed me while her father was at his office expecting a telegram that Pye Pod had given up his trip.

All drank to the pilgrim's progress. Wines, flowers and ice cream, tears, and best wishes, all contributed to the happy function, while out of doors, an incident happened that caused me to rush to my donkey's side. It seems that, in looking through his green glasses, he mistook the iron picket screen that guarded a young and hopeful shade tree for some kind of verdant fodder, and destroyed a couple of teeth. The incident threw a damper on the reception, so I made my adieux, and resumed my fated journey with a heart still hopeful, yet heavier than it ever felt before.

It was 7 P. M. when Mac and I stopped at the Minot Hotel, Harlem, and registered for the night. Among my several callers that evening was a Professor of a Riding Academy who claimed to have ridden horseback from ocean to ocean a few years previous and within several feet of his death after losing several horses; and he described to me the perils of my prospective trip, the boundless, waterless deserts and snow-covered mountains, the tornadoes and tarantulas, and the untamed Indians, and ferocious prairie dogs, and begged me to give up the journey. Dear old Professor, how often on that voyage on the hurricane deck of my donkey, did I indulge in grievous meditation on the wisdom of your advice!

I simply thanked the gentleman for his tender concern about my welfare, and sold him a chromo for a quarter.

After a bath, I enjoyed a delicate sleep, and next day set out in a dripping rain for Yonkers, over twenty miles away, with less than a dollar in pocket. I had only sold enough pictures on the way to Harlem to defray my hotel bill, as a stringent city ordinance prohibited it without a license, and I had difficulty in avoiding the vigilant police.

But, although fortune and the weather frowned on me, I ground my teeth and headed for the Golden Gate.

Trailing up Seventh Avenue, I gradually left the busy metropolis to my rear and entered a more open country. Some urchins of the suburbs tagged behind us meddlesomely, and finally a Dutch vixen hit Macaroni with a potato, almost causing me to leave the saddle. That paradox of asininity chased the potato, and ate it. He, doubtlessly, feared lest the missile might strike him again, and decided it best to put it out of the way.

At 2 P. M. I had crossed McComb's Dam Bridge, and at five I crossed another of the same description. It was low and narrow, and Mac was so afraid of the water that I had to blindfold him to get him across. Shortly after occurred our first disaster.

On nearing a little hamlet that had reached the horse-car stage of progress a counterfeit breeze sprang up which soon developed into a howling hurricane, as a huge beer wagon filled with dragons, or flagons of vile spirits wheeled down upon us. They wanted to scare the jackass, and they did. The wagon wheels got into the car tracks, and when the wagon turned out for us the wheels slid, and hit my partner in the vicinity of his tail, sprinkling us

broadcast over a quarter acre of ground. I carried out a friend's prediction by traveling some distance on my face; I say this without vanity. When I sat upright, I saw Macaroni still turning headsprings. My repeating rifle stuck in the soft earth erect, dressed in my long-tail coat and plug hat, a veritable scarecrow, while the soil was well sown with rifle cartridges.

It took us a half hour to get again under way. With a degree of patience that would have overtaxed Job himself, I collected my belongings, dragged my beast of burden to Yonkers, and anchored him in front of a hotel. It was only eight; I had thought it nearly morning.

The genial landlord received me kindly, but said I had arrived at a bad season. The town was financially dead, the factories had shut down, and a thousand stomachs were empty. I corrected him; there were a thousand and one, and, ascertaining the shortest route to the dining-room, I gave him proof that I was right.

After supper I felt in good spirits. I had sold sufficient chromos on the way from Harlem to land here with five dollars in pocket, and soon after my arrival, one man bought all the pictures I had left, seven of them, for which he paid two dollars. So, although weary in body, I retired that Saturday night with some sense of relief in knowing I possessed the funds to keep myself and partner over the Sabbath.

A general inspection of my donkey next morning revealed the fact that he was badly "stove up," and the probability that I would be detained in consequence several days. If I ever had the blues, I had them then. A veterinary, Dr. Skitt, was summoned; he bandaged two legs, covered twenty square inches of donkey with court-plaster, and strapped a new boot on the animal's off fore leg. On returning to the hotel, I notified the landlord that I should be his guest very likely several days on account of my steed's crippled condition; I said I proposed to give a lecture Tuesday evening to defray my extra expense, and asked him if I could have the dining room for the purpose.

"Can you fill the hall?" asked the proprietor.

"Full as a kit of mackerel."

"But I have only a hundred chairs," he apologized.

"Hire two hundred of an undertaker," I suggested, "and I will defray all other expenses of the funeral."

It was a go. I then worded a handbill and hurried with it to a printer.

CHAPTER II.
Donkey's many ailments

TOC

> I sow all sorts of seeds, and get no great harvest from any of them. I'm cursed with susceptibility in every direction, and effective faculty in none.
>
> —*Mill on the Floss.*

A shower of paper flakes fell upon the amazed citizens of Yonkers like an unseasonable snow-storm, and every flake contained the announcement:

TO=NIGHT! TO=NIGHT! TO=NIGHT!

G—— HOUSE DINING=HALL

Only chance to hear

The Greatest of Modern Travelers

PYTHAGORAS POD

Who left New York without a dollar, to eat his way to San Francisco, within one year,
WILL RELATE 100 HAIR=BREADTH ESCAPES
Lassoing elephants in India; hunting chamois with sling-shots in the Alps; perils of an ostrich ride through the great African desert; and a kangaroo hop across Australia—THE BIGGEST HOP ON RECORD.

Gleanings from the Press.

"His stories will make a hyena laugh."—*New York Bombast.*

"Pye Pod is nothing more than a cake of sugar boiled down from the syrup of Lawrence Stearne, Dean Swift, Cervantes, Artemus Ward, and Josh Billings."—*Chicago Tornado.*

EVERY MAN AND WOMAN
who has Thirty cents to throw away, should put one in a Yonkers Bank and Twenty-nine in the pocket of the donkey traveler.

TICKETS, $0.29. **TICKETS, TWENTY=NINE CENTS**

YONKERS APPEAL POWER PRINT

Even Macaroni lent a hoof, and was led by a boy through the streets, bearing a pasteboard sandwich which reached from ears to tail. The residents of Mistletoe Avenue gazed at the ridiculous spectacle, indignantly at first; but on the return trip they crowded in open door-ways and regarded the procession of beast and tagging boys, as much as to say, "We must go and hear the donkey lecture."

Macaroni had quite recovered; his exercise did him good. My lecture promised to be a huge success. The Tuesday Morning Squib and the Evening Sunrise contained alluring advertisements of the event sure to puncture an epoch in my life.

When the hour arrived, the populace, I was secretly informed, with twenty-nine cents in one hand and their lives in the other crowded about the hotel and called loudly for admittance.

My hands trembled, my hair throbbed, and my heart leaped in the ecstacy that comes with one's first great triumph, while I stood in the butler's pantry waiting for a friend to introduce me—to bid me enter the stage—the first stage of lunacy. When I issued forth, I was so excited I could not distinguish the audience from so many chairs. Having agreed to divide the receipts with my host for the use of his house, my visions of wealth got confused with my words, and I talked for an hour with all the eloquence and enthusiasm I could muster,—though I should have said less to a smaller house,—and with a sore throat retired to the refreshment room, followed by my press agent from Brooklyn. The "Doctor" handed me just twenty-nine cents. My audience had consisted of three persons: the landlord, the head-waiter, and the Dago printer whom I owed three dollars.

Reverses are like children's diseases. If they come too late in life, they go hard with us; and if too early, they may visit us again.

I was not totally bankrupt. Not willing to begin a "three ball" business at the very outset, I resolved to rise at dawn and sell enough chromos to that unappreciative community to pay my bills, if I had to sell them at cost. I set to work. By one o'clock I had visited every shop, store and Chinese laundry, and was talking hoarsely to a corner grocer who, seated on a keg of mackerel, sampling limburger cheese, grinned with satisfaction at his fortified position and swore like a skipper. I offered a picture for fifteen cents, but the reduction in price did not disturb his physical equilibrium.

"I vant not a peakture at any price," he affirmed.

"I lack fifteen cents of the amount of my hotel bill," I urged; "I am in dire straits."

His reply was weak, but the cheese was strong enough to help him out. My

mental magazine had but a single charge left, and I fired it. "Isn't it worth fifteen cents to know a fool when you see one?"

"Ye-e-es, I dink it ess," answered Sweitzer Edam, "and eef you vill write it on the peakture I'll buy it." I made the sale.

Then after calling on the Mayor, who received me cordially, swapped autographs, and asked to see my partner, I saddled my animal and led him to the hotel for my traps.

"You aren't going before dinner?" the proprietor asked; "it's ready now."

"I'm flat broke—can't afford to eat," I returned sadly.

"Then come in and have a meal on me," said he. "A man who has worked as you have to square with his landlord shan't leave my hotel hungry." I yielded.

My trip to Tarrytown was accomplished on my own legs. Macaroni refused to budge unless somebody led him. The whole town turned out to see us; it was an event for the hotel. That evening I was asked to McCarty's Show, at the Theatre, paying thirty-five cents admission; I learned that the "Dutch treat" was in vogue when too late for my pride to let me decline the invitation. Next day, at noon, I set out for Sing Sing, now called Ossining, about seven miles away.

My steed, that was really not half a steed, seemed to be gradually recovering from the doubt that an endless journey had been mapped out for him, and kept me watching and prodding him constantly. On one occasion he drove through a gap in a fence; on another, he scraped through a hedge and relieved himself of my Winchester, coat and saddle-bags, for which he immediately expressed regret. At length, he balked; and I sat down by the road-side a half hour before he showed readiness to go.

While there meditating upon my trials, a pedestrian stopped and listened to my sixteen complaints. He seemed much amused, and suggested that if I would hang a penny before the donkey's nose he might follow the cent. A practical idea at once came to mind, and when, soon afterward, we reached a farm house, I put my idea to the test. I purchased some apples, and suspended one from a bough secured to the saddle and reaching over the donkey's head. The scheme worked admirably. Mac pursued the bobbing, swinging fruit at such a speed that he was nearly winded when we reached town, having manipulated his short legs to the velocity of two and one-third miles an hour.

We reached town shortly after five. The village is nicely situated high on the banks of the Hudson, and some of its residents have a beautiful view of the river, while others see nothing more picturesque than a stone wall. Sing Sing, to use the more familiar name, is the seat of an extensive prison, patronized by sojourners from all parts of the world and heavily endowed, being backed by the wealth of the State.

A local organization, the Sing Sing Steamer Company, invited me to its monthly dinner that evening, and, to my surprise and gratitude, purchased with a sealed envelope one of "our" pictures for the club rooms. I don't think it a good custom to buy a pig in a poke, but this time the pig was fat and healthy, and I found myself several dollars richer.

Next morning I bought a revolver, for, as I had to employ the larger part of the day in making sales and working my wits in a multitude of ways to keep my ship from stranding and the crew from starving, I was often compelled to travel long into the night and required some more handy weapon than a rifle for defence against pirates.

The newspapers generally heralded my coming, often greatly magnifying my successes, and I felt that the hard times, which the country at large was suffering, made such a thing as a hold-up not only possible but imminent any night.

Having received an invitation to visit the State Prison, I set out in the forenoon to find it, and a policeman (a very proper person, by the way), guided me to that famous hostelry. Macaroni also was invited, but the affrighted animal declined to enter the prison gates. Whether he thought he saw a drove of zebras, or was repelled by a guilty conscience, I know not, but, falling back in a sitting posture, he threw his ears forward and brayed loudly.

On entering the office, the secretary rose from his chair and seized me. "Professor," he said, "you are my prisoner for an hour; come this way and I will present you to the warden."

We left the room and walked over to that official's desk.

"Mr. Warden," said the secretary, "Allow me to introduce Professor Pythagoras Pod, the illustrious donkey-traveler, who is eating his way across the continent."

"Show the gentleman to the dining-room, and give him a plate of soup," said the warden hospitably; then, squeezing my fingers, he waived me to the chief keeper of the prison. The warden noted my hesitancy in leaving, and asked if there was anything in particular he could do for me.

"Will you allow me to sit in the electric chair?" I asked.

"Ye-e-es," he replied politely, but apparently startled, "although I consider you are already having capital punishment for your asinine undertaking;" and

turning to the keeper, he said, "Give him fifty thousand volts; nothing less will phase a man of his nerve." I thanked him.

With faltering step I entered the solemncholy chamber. A colored prisoner was to follow me a day later. Little he knew that he would sit in the same chair Pod sat in the previous day. The keeper said everything was in readiness for turning on the current that has the power to drift a soul from this world to another in the twinkling of an eye. The battery had been thoroughly tested,—and detested, too. In less than thirty seconds from the time an ordinary prisoner enters a door of this world he enters the door of another; but, Pod, being a man of extraordinary nerve, walked out the door he entered. When I climbed into that terrible chair, I held my breath. The keeper said it required only a certain number of volts to kill a man; that fifty thousand, such as the warden had suggested for my pleasure, would not so much as singe a hair of my head. If I survived the first shock, I would have something to boast; as it would be abusing a confidence to describe the sensations of electrocution, I must not do so.

On returning to the office the warden congratulated me, and said I had earned my freedom. He even presented me a plaster of Paris ornament,—made by a prisoner who had never seen Paris,—and a package of prison-made tobacco, which I might chew, or eschew, as I liked. While I appreciated these gifts, how much more I should have valued a battery of electrical currents to administer to my donkey.

Crowds assembled to view our exit from town at two o'clock. We reached Croton, some six miles beyond, about dusk. As we approached the bridge crossing of the Croton River, I saw a duck and thought I would test my marksmanship with a revolver. My drowsy steed had nearly reached the center of the bridge when I banged at the innocent hell-diver. A compound disaster followed the shot as the frightened jackass shied to the left and dashed through the iron frame-work, tail over ears into the river, scraping me out of the saddle, but dropping me, fortunately, on the bridge. I managed, however, to get the duck; the donk got the ducking. It was a marvel that he didn't drown; from the way he brayed, I judged he was of the same opinion.

Long after dark we arrived in Peekskill. Throughout the day the weather was threatening, and I tramped the last three miles in the rain. I had donned my mackintosh and slung my overcoat across the saddle, and was pacing ahead of Mac, with reins in hand, coaxing the stubborn beast on, when suddenly he jumped. I turned just in time to discover in the darkness two men, one of whom was suspiciously near to the donkey. I told them civilly to walk ahead, as they excited my animal.

"That's none of our business," one of them remarked; "we'll walk where we d—d please."

"Not this time," I said, as I got the drop on them with my new shooting-iron; and I marched the ruffians into town. The sneaks probably wanted my overcoat. Before we were fairly in town I dismissed them, and advised them thereafter to cultivate civility toward travelers.

It was Friday night. I called upon the Mayor, and engaged the Town Hall for a lecture, resolved to try my luck again in that line. Alas! my second reverse! This time it was a too impromptu affair.

Sunday I rested, but Monday, when everything augured bright for the week, I was shocked to find Macaroni ill. At once I summoned a doctor, a dentist, and a veterinary surgeon for a consultation, and breathlessly awaited the verdict.

"Your jackass has a complication of diseases," said the vet; "among them influenza, bots, and hives."

"He has the measles," pronounced the doctor.

"He is teething," insisted the dentist.

This was too much; with a troubled brow and an empty stomach I went to breakfast, and left the doctors to fight it out.

CHAPTER III.
Polishing shoes at Vassar

TOC

Little drops of water,
  Little grains of dirt,
Make the roads so muddy
  Donk won't take a spurt.

—Dogeared Doggerels—Pod.

Never before had I encountered such a disagreeable road. While I tramped over the highlands from Peekskill to Fishkill Landing, Macaroni barely crawled. He kept me constantly in the fear that he would lie down and roll, and finally he did so, selecting a mud puddle. I was told donkeys fairly dote on dust, and that a roll will invigorate them more than will a measure of grain. But mine was different to other donkeys.

Before leaving Peekskill, Dr. Shook said Mac showed symptoms of mud fever, although the tendency lay strongly toward phlebitus, farcy, and poll-evil. He even warned me that I might expect epizootic to set in any day.

To urge Mac on to Newburgh in one day necessitated my start, at day-break. We reached the Fishkill ferry at half-past eight, covering the twenty-mile journey in fifteen hours. The highland road was rough where the mud had dried. Steep and rocky summits stood out, bold and barren, save where occasional bunches of young cedars huddled among the denuded trees.

Finally I saw a small structure, through whose open windows could be heard a chorus of youthful voices intoning. "The—dog—caught—the—pig—by—the—yer." It was a school house. I remembered that song of my boyhood; I thought it would be interesting to drop in, and forthwith rapped on the door. Meanwhile, Mac stuck his head in the window, causing a deafening chime of cries within. A painful silence followed. I waited patiently for admittance; then I opened the door. The room was deserted, the exit at the opposite end wide open, I crossed the floor and looked out to discover the teacher and two dozen young ones scurrying up the mountain through the scant woods. I called to them, but they ran the faster. Wonder what they thought they saw?

With every mile's advance we penetrated more deeply the mountain wilderness. Before long Macaroni began to slow up. Again I had recourse to the scheme of suspending an apple over his head. The beast increased his speed at once, making a lunge at the unobtainable, and chasing it with rapid stride. He evidently had never read the story about the boy who pursued a rainbow, and unlike that boy, was stupid enough to be fooled twice. A few miles beyond I answered some inquiries of a woman out driving, and sold her a photo. I had no sooner stopped with the article in hand than I was startled with the sound of gagging behind, and turning, I beheld the donkey wrenching in the throes of strangulation. Having lowered the apple to the ground, he had swallowed it, together with the string and half the bough. I withdrew the "intrusions" with difficulty, and returned to the woman who had fainted. I had no restoratives; but I had once resuscitated a Jew with a novel expedient, and determined to try the same plan in this case.

"These pictures are fifteen cents each, although I sometimes get twenty-five for one," I said somewhat forcibly; "don't trouble yourself, madam, trust me with your pocket-book, I will—." At once the woman awoke, and counting out the lesser amount mentioned, pulled on the reins and drove away. Let me grasp the hand of that man who can beat a woman at a bargain!

When passing through Cold Spring, I was startled by the booming of cannon at West Point, just across the river. I had not expected such honors. So overawed was I by the salute that I forgot to count the guns, but presume there were twenty-one. Far above and behind the group of academic buildings still frowned old Fort Putnam, deploring its shameful neglect, and casting envious glances at the modern Observatory below and the newer buildings lower down. Every mile of the beautiful Hudson recalled to mind happy memories of my own school days, which made my present ordeal doubly distressing.

When night lowered her sombre shades, my thoughts took flight to more distant scenes. My heart and brain grew weary, and I forgot for a time that my bones were lame and my feet sore from walking, walking, walking on an endless journey, with no perceptible evidence of approaching nearer to the goal. At length, the Albany night boat steamed past us, its myriad lights dancing on the ruffled waters, or revealing a jolly group of passengers on deck. The air was painfully quiet; and when the song, "Oh, Where is My Wandering Boy To-night," floated over to me in answer to Macaroni's bray, I found consolation in the thought that perhaps some of the tourists recognized my outfit in the dark, and pitied me.

I had by this time discovered mountain climbing to be a donkey's leading card. He may loiter on the flat, but he will make you hump when it comes to steep ascents. The night was mild for that season of the year, and becoming

considerably heated, I doffed my overcoat and spread it over the saddle on my mackintosh. When we were descending the hill on the other side, I dismounted and led Mac with the bridle reins, but kept a good watch on the coats. After a while, however, I became so absorbed in thought that I neglected my duty, and, finally, when I did turn to inspect them they were missing. It gave me the worst fright I had experienced since leaving New York.

Staking Mac to a gooseberry bush, I immediately retraced my steps a mile or more through an Egyptian darkness before I found the garments lying securely in the mud. On my return to the bush I was alarmed not to find the donkey. That "phenomenon" had eaten that prickly shrub to the roots and fled either down the road to Fishkill or through the woods. I started out for town on a run. Imagine my astonishment to find Mac patiently standing in front of the ferry. The boat had landed her passengers; and had the donkey not taken the precaution to anticipate me, we should have had to remain on that side of the river for the night. As it was, the ferry waited for Mac's rider—thanks to the considerate pilot.

Newburgh! I recognized her by her streets at an angle of 45 degrees. Mac took to the place hugely. I stopped at a small combination hotel and restaurant, where roast turkey and pumpkin pie decorated the windows, and made arrangements for the night.

When about to leave, I was visited by a delegation from the local militia who, for a fair consideration, induced us both to remain over and referee a game of basket ball that evening at the armory. Mac did not accept very gracefully, and had to be coerced. What I knew about the game wouldn't tax a baby's mind, but that didn't matter. It proved to be an event for the regiment, for Pod, and for Macaroni.

Next day I found my donkey's maladies increasing. They had already tripled in number since leaving Peekskill; and, to think, I had arrived at Newburg just two days too late to secure a sound animal.

I pushed on to Poughkeepsie.

Upon arriving at that university city I was pleased to find the inhabitants not quite so slow as the appearance of the place would indicate. The city has of late years become the Henley of America. It is the seat of Eastman's business college, as well as a very progressive college for girls—Vassar. The residents generally drop three letters in spelling the name of their proud city, and make it Po'keepsie. There were four good points I liked about the place, and that was one of them; the other three were, the Mayor, the Vassar girls, and a newspaper reporter who, for a consideration, engaged Mac and me to appear at the theatre in an amateur play.

It was to be a new stage in our travels. The urchin who led the donkey about the streets proudly bore in one hand a standard inscribed: "KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE DONKEY;" and those who obeyed saw printed on a canvas blanket gracefully draped over Mac's back the startling announcement: "WILL APPEAR TO-NIGHT IN HOGAN'S ALLEY, AT KIRCHNER'S HALL." I believe Mac paraded the city utterly oblivious of the interest he created.

I had promised to have my donkey at the Hall at five sharp. There were two staircases for him to climb, and I had not contemplated the enormity of the task before me. We tugged on his halter; we set three dogs barking at his heels; but the only time he stirred was when he removed the dogs. He just braced himself well against the curb, and brayed until he had called the audience to the show two hours ahead of time. After a while two strong policemen took a hand with me in a three-handed game, and turned over a jack. Finally, four more men assisting, the beast was carried upstairs and into the theatre, where he was forced to walk a plank on to the stage. Then I fed and watered him, and combing his fur the right way, left him to the melancholy contemplation of his position.

When we returned an hour later, he was still as immovable as a statue. The stage manager directed me to ride the donkey out from behind the scenery at a given signal; so I began to practice with him. I cannot describe all that happened the next hour. By seven o'clock Mac was fairly broken, and everything looked promising.

The house was crowded; only a portion of the attendance of the fair held in connection with the play, down stairs, could find seats; and the performance was to be repeated. One part of the play, however, not on the program, could not be reproduced. Apparently no attempts had ever been made to convert Mac to religion, for when the Salvation Army entered the scene, banging drums and clashing cymbals, the terrified jack began to back toward the footlights. The stage manager, fearing lest the beast might back off the stage, dropped the curtain. But that didn't check Mac; he backed against the curtain and under it, and dropped plumb into the audience, making five "laps" in a second, his best time to date. One fat man, over-burdened, crashed through his chair. Fortunately nobody was seriously injured, but several had spasms, and more than one girl crawled over the backs of the seats in terror. "Such doings," as a paper stated next day, "were never known before in this town in

the annals of donkeys—four-legged or two-legged either."

As soon as the excitement was over, Mac was assisted on to the stage, and the play was twice repeated, all three performances before crowded houses.

While returning Mac to his stable I heard the bray of a donkey, and resolved next day to look him up. Then I sent a message to a young lady friend at Vassar, and wrote my weekly story for the papers.

I frequently refer to my Vassar friends, but I doubt if they ever mention me. I had written one that I would polish two dozen pairs of Vassar shoes at the rate of fifty cents a pair, either on, or off. Allowing me two minutes for each pair and half a minute for making change, I believed I could polish to the queen's taste some forty-eight pairs in two hours. My proposal was accepted. The hour set was 5:00 A. M., while the teachers would be dreaming about the binomial formula, blue light, and turnips. And I was expected to polish the shoes on the foot.

Accordingly, I was aroused from slumber at four, and practiced on the stove legs for a full half-hour, to get polishing down to a science. Then I took the trolley car to the hedge fence, stole in through the stately gate, and took the time of the huge clock above the entrance. Then I took my own time. I had four minutes to spare, and knew Vassar girls were anything but slow.

"The days of chivalry are not gone," says George Eliot, "notwithstanding Burke's grand dirge over them; they live still in that far-off worship paid by many a youth and man to the woman of whom he never dreams that he shall touch so much as her little finger or the hem of her robe." I had no sooner placed my chair at the right marble staircase than I heard the rustle of skirts, immediately followed by a bevy of charming girls stealing down the steps on tip-toe, all a-giggle and a-smile, balancing their supple forms with outstretched arms, and enlivening the early dawn with the mischief beaming from their eyes. "Good morning," they said, as each in turn shook hands with me. I was inspired to hug every one of them, but dared not show the lack of polish.

Raising my hat, I said softly, "Shine," and number one mounted the throne, soon to be "daubed" a queen. Bless me! wasn't she pretty! As she gaily lifted her skirts to give my brushes a free swing, a perfect pair of ankles burst into view, daintily imprisoned in black silk hose, and—well, I naturally was excited. Blacking flew like the mud did when the beer wagon bumped against Mac, and a brush flopped out of my hand through a colored window, letting in more light, for it was still quite dusky. It seemed to be impossible for the young lady to keep her feet in place on the block, and not until she suggested I should hold her boot in place did I begin to polish to my credit. After that no girl could keep her feet stationary unless I held her foot with one hand and polished with the other. "Next," and another winsome creature took the chair, and poured fifty pennies into my hand. I took it for granted that she was some copper king's daughter.

I worked so hard that I was soon perspiring. After finishing a dozen pair, when about to polish the second shoe on number thirteen, someone claimed she heard a professor reading Volapuk. At once there was a scurry, and a rustle of skirts. Number thirteen kicked over the blacking accidental, and fled with one shoe unpolished; but that odd shoe did just as good service as any of the rest. The whole bevy of girls vanished before I had time to collect my senses, my chair, and my brushes, and chase myself away. When once started, I ran to beat the cars, and reached the hotel in time for breakfast, the richer by six dollars and a lace handkerchief.

Come to think of it, what an extr'ordinary adventure that was for a modest and dignified traveler with a donkey! I wondered, as I sipped my coffee, what the Principal said when she discovered so many neat-looking shoes.

CHAPTER IV.
An even trade no robbery

TOC

> Shame on the world! said I to myself. Did we but love each other as this poor soul loved his ass, 'twould be something.
>
> —*Sentimental Journey—Stearne.*

An empty heart is like an empty barrel conveniently located; nobody will dare to gamble on the first thing to be thrown into it: and a full heart, like a barrel of fruit, must be sorted frequently, lest a bit of blemish corrupt the whole.

My heart was as full of Macaroni from New York to Po'keepsie as my stomach once had been from Milan to Naples. I first fancied my donkey, next admired him, suddenly became conscious of a growing contempt for him, and finally pity, now that the time for parting with him had come. Having depended entirely upon the stupid beast for companionship, he really had become a pet. Often he had offended and vexed me beyond seeming pardon; on the other hand, he had afforded me amusement during my lonesome hours, often causing me to laugh outright at his antics. But, in order to complete my journey on time, I felt I must avail myself of the first opportunity to exchange him for a livelier steed. It was my Vassar friend who told me about Dr. Jackson and his precocious donkey; she claimed the animal often displayed human intelligence.

With some difficulty I found the doctor's residence; when, introducing myself and acquainting him with my errand, he put on his hat and took me to the barn. Behold! the cutest little donkey I ever saw. He was a sleek, slender creature of blush color, with an intelligent but roguish countenance, and with cropped ears which gave him a semblance to a deer. The doctor said the animal was hardly three years old. His hoofs were very small, so tiny that he might have stepped into an after-dinner cup and not damaged more than your appetite for coffee.

"What do you call the little fellow?" I asked.

"Mac A'Rony," said the doctor.

The coincidence made me smile. "That, too, is my donkey's name," I declared, somewhat to his astonishment. He then spelled his animal's name, showing that there was as much difference between the names as between the donkeys, between patrician and plebeian. He said that Mac A'Rony was the lineal descendant of an ancient and honorable family of Irish asses; whereas, I believed Macaroni could boast of no more distinguished heritage than that of Italian peasantry. The doctor even harbored the suspicion that his donkey must be a descendant of Balaam's famous ass.

"His bluish coat is a reflection of the blue blood in his veins," observed the doctor; and I was made to feel of the same opinion.

I coveted that donkey, but had little hope of securing it, as my means were so limited. Imagine my astonishment when the doctor proposed that we make an even exchange of animals.

"If your overland journey continues to be as notable as it is thus far," said he, "I should like to possess the first donkey you used."

I dared not believe my ears.

"But you have not seen my donkey," I reminded him.

"I will accept your representation of the animal," he replied. The bargain made, we parted. An hour later Macaroni was in the doctor's barn, and Mac A'Rony in the livery stable. The greatest objection I had to my new companion was his youth. The fastidious appetite of this Irish gentleman demanded bread, and other table fare; he actually stuck up his nose at oats and hay. What would he do should we get stranded! I might live a whole day on three milk punches which I could pay for with photos, but experience had taught me it required many punches to keep a donkey moving.

When about to depart, I was disconcerted to discover the doctor's boy riding his new possession down the street toward the hotel. Macaroni seemed to realize we were to part forever. There was a sad, depressed look in his eyes; his brows knitted, and his nose wept, as he brayed "When shall we three meet again." I felt a pang in my heart, and turning my eyes from him, headed Mac A'Rony for the West.

Shortly afterward, I was stopped by a blacksmith who recognized Mac and asked to shoe him, saying he would do it for a picture, seeing it was I. Of course, I was delighted, and leaving the donkey in his custody, dropped in a restaurant and lunched; after which I bought Mac a loaf of graham bread.

The kind-hearted blacksmith had several horses waiting to be shod, and it was nearly night when Mac A'Rony ceased to be a "bare-foot boy." I remained in Po'keepsie over night, and early next day, Friday, set out for Kingston. But that quadruped traveled so fast that he tired out after going a few miles, and I had to put up at a little inn at Staatsburg for the night. Had it not been that I

sold next day a number of photos at princely villas on the way, I should have had trouble to keep from starving. No remittance had come from the papers as yet, and lecturing was out of the question at that time. I had written to several soap, sarsaparilla, tobacco and pill companies for a contract to advertise their stuffs by distributing circulars, or samples, or displaying a sign from my donkey's back, but thus far had received no favorable replies.

At length the blue summits of the Catskills loomed against an azure sky in the west, and I caught occasional glimpses of Kingston and Rondout, the twin cities, nestling in the foothills by the Hudson.

At three o'clock we crossed the ferry, and soon afterward arrived at the Mansion House, Kingston. The landlord received us with gracious hospitality, but I, having lost so much time by accident and other misfortune, only tarried for the night, and hastened on up the valley.

The days were perceptibly shorter while we traveled in the shadow of the Catskills. The roads were so heavy, and the recent cold I had contracted so stiff and uncomfortable, that I decided at seven o'clock to spend the night at a German road-house. Landlord Schoentag gave us soft beds, in spite of his hard name, and his spouse was kind enough to make me a hot brandy and a foot bath. I drank the one; Mac cheated me of the other. I retired early under a pile of bedding as thick as it was short, and soon found myself in a terrible sweat. This was not due alone to the comfortables, but to a party of convivial young people, who thrummed on a discordant piano, and sang, and danced till daylight, their hilarity causing Mac in the stable sundry vocal selections, such as should have disturbed the spirit of Rip Van Winkle, eight miles away.

Monday we pushed on toward Saugerties. But for a delay at Soaper's Creek Bridge, we should have reached Catskill before dark. Mac A'Rony stopped stock still at the bridge approach, and neither the eloquence of gad nor gab moved him an inch. I petted him and patted him; I stroked his ears and I rubbed his nose; and then I asked him point blank what ailed him.

"You big fool, can't you see that sign up there?" he retorted, as he eyed me squarely. It was fully sixty seconds before I realized that the animal had actually spoken; then I looked up and read the sign hanging from the iron girder overhead, "Ten dollars fine for riding or driving over this bridge faster than a walk." I must say I greatly appreciated Mac's consideration for my pocket-book, but his obduracy struck me as being not a little absurd, since he had not yet demonstrated to me that he could go faster than a walk, even on a level and unimpeded road. All I could do was to sit down on a stone and, like Macawber, wait for something to turn up. It seemed ages before a farmer came along with a ton of hay; he was kind enough to slide off the load and assist me to carry the donkey across the bridge.

The night was spent in Catskill. Smith's Hotel was swarming with busy grangers, generally good-hearted, garrulous characters, whose society lightened the tedium of two days, while I nursed my cold and weaned Mac. We reached Athens, a village eight miles to the north, Wednesday noon, but being somewhat rusty in Greek, I ferried the river to Hudson. A light snow had fallen; the wind was sharp shod, and traveled forty miles an hour.

A small German hotel opened its doors to us, and I persuaded Mac to ascend the low stoop and venture half his length indoors; the landlord aided me at the helm and we managed to anchor my "craft" out of range of the storm, though we couldn't get it across the bar. Mac lay down in a heap, and I called for port, to find none in stock. Suddenly, a man in shirt sleeves hastily entered with a pitcher in hand, and before he could check himself, went sprawling over the frightened beast, smashing the pitcher and setting Mac to braying. The man hurriedly collected himself, glanced at the strange-looking quadruped, and not stopping for beer, fled in dismay. When the storm had abated somewhat, we started for Kinderhook.

Late in the afternoon we trailed into a thrifty little town where I found stock port in Stockport. Here the cheery aspect of the Brookside Hotel tempted me to remain over night, and doctor the severe cold in my chest. This tavern, the pride of the village, was said to be the oldest on the old "post road" from New York to Albany. So comfortable was the hotel that I hesitated long before accepting a cordial invitation, extended to me through his coachman, to be the guest of the wealthiest resident of the town. I was driven over to the home of Mr. Van ——, and the affable gentleman introduced me to his family, before driving me to his father's residence. The old gentleman was enthusiastic in his reception of the donkey traveler, and after doping me with some delicious cider, reluctantly allowed his son to keep me for the night.

After a month of "roughing it," my happy affiliation with those refined and cultured people acted like a healing balm to my wearied heart. Many and many a time thereafter on the tiresome, lonesome trail did my memory recall that pleasant evening. The daughters entertained me with music and song, the parents brought out refreshments, and, at last, with a hot foot-bath, and a hotter mustard leaf on my chest, I retired.

Next morning, Georgie, the little son, rushed into my chamber calling, "Get up, you people, the pancakes are getting cold!"

"All right," I answered meekly.

"Oh!" the little fellow gasped with astonishment, as he beheld Pod tucked neck-deep in eider-down. "I—I—I thought you was the girls."

larger

"We consumed a half hour in the gigantic task."

larger

"I found the captive drinking with other jackasses."

The boy had retired early the evening before, quite ignorant of the fact that the eccentric traveler was delegated to snooze in his sisters' bedroom.

Through the happy agency of conversation Mr. Van —— and I discovered a mutual friendship. The family, somewhat to my embarrassment, insisted upon purchasing pictures galore, and after breakfast and a little music in the glow of a blazing fireplace, I donned my overcoat and made my adieux.

How chill and heartless that December morning was! The wind blew my plug hat off to begin with, and, as I was driven to the Brookside Inn, had the courage to try to freeze my face. A half hour later Mac and Pod were marching to Kinderhook.

CHAPTER V.
The donkey on skates

TOC

> Of all conceivable journeys, this promised to be the most tedious. I tried to tell myself it was a lovely day; I tried to charm my foreboding spirit with tobacco; but I had a vision ever present to me of the long, long roads, up hill and down dale, and a pair of figures ever infinitesimally moving, foot by foot, a yard to the minute, and, like things enchanted in a nightmare, approaching no nearer to the goal.
>
> *—Travels with a Donkey—R. L. Stevenson.*

Kinderhook! I promised myself to visit the seminary, so popular in the early '60's, and commune with the spirits of those charming old-fashioned girls of whom mother had often spoken.

After dining at the Kinderhook Hotel, I looked it up, and found it to be then the village academy.

The cold in my chest pained more than ever; I began to fear pneumonia. The landlord's wife said she would be a mother to me. Whew! If she made it as warm for her "old man" as she did for me, I pity and congratulate him in one breath. She prepared a mustard sitz-bath (my feet had suffered two already) powerful enough, she declared, to force cold-blisters on my hair; she slapped mustard leaves on my chest and back; she gave me spirits of camphor for my lips, witch-hazel for my eyes, a pork bandage for my neck, and liberal doses of aconite, quinine, whiskey and rum. Then she innocently asked if I could think of any other place my cold, when fairly on the run, would be likely to settle. Being unable to answer, I called on a physician.

"The landlady has fixed you up admirably," said he; "I cannot benefit you further, unless I advise you to shave off your hair when the blisters have settled on it, to prevent the cold's return."

I expressed my gratitude for his kind assurances, and to my surprise, though he had an electric battery in his room, he refused to charge me.

Without loss of time, I set out and walked two miles to the old homestead of President Martin Van Buren, that stood back from the road behind a group of ancient pines which sighed dolefully as I passed.

The family living there received me kindly, and showed me the library, parlors and hall; the old Dutch wall-paper, picturing ancient hunts, watch-towers, and pastoral scenes, recalled a pleasant sojourn in Holland. A Wagoner family living in the next house asked me to dinner, and I "et" with them.

"I once knew a Van Wagoner," I said; "they were fine people."

"Our family were originally of that name," Mr. Wagoner replied. "They dropped the Van some time ago."

Mac A'Rony said he had never heard of Vans being dropped from Wagoners, but had often seen wagoners dropped from vans.

I next crossed the bridge spanning the creek just out of town, where, it is said, Washington Irving conceived the story of the headless horseman.

President Van Buren gave a ball to some statesmen, and Irving was invited. Some wag among the guests rigged up a dummy on a horse, and let the animal loose to give the author a scare. Wash never lost an opportunity to make a good story, and he made use of the idea.

Mary Ann and Lucretia Van Buren, two aged spinsters, were all who remained of the illustrious family. I called on Mary Ann when Lucretia was absent, and won her favor so quickly that she presented me with a little oil painting which had been in the family over a hundred years.

Close by stood the old brick house, formerly a fort, built with brick brought from Holland. One brick was carved "1623." I saw the house where General Burgoyne is said to have dined, after which I visited Van Buren's grave.

We slept that night in North Chatham, traveling out of the direct route to give the weak-kneed donkey as level a road as possible. We had now been boon companions one week; it seemed a month.

Next day, we passed a rickety barn in which two horses were engaged at a huge tread-wheel, with the dual object of threshing corn-stalks and of keeping their ears warm. My ears were almost frozen; whereas Mac claimed his were as warm as toast. My comrade had the advantage over me in being able, as he expressed it, to wiggle his ears and keep the blood circulating.

I stopped at a shanty near, and asked leave to warm myself, and begged a newspaper to put in my breast. A poverty-stricken but hospitable man welcomed me, and politely took my hat and stuck it on a pitcher of milk. The humble habitation contained two rooms, one store room, the other the living room. The latter was furnished with a square table, now set for the mid-day

meal, two beds, a stove which was exerting every effort to boil some ancient pork and frozen cabbage to a state of "doneness," four chairs, and a wash-tub. The housewife was washing clothes while her "old man" acted as cook. A dog reclined on the store-room floor watching a saw-horse. There was not such bric-a-brac visible; a five-year-old calendar and two or three unframed chromos hung on the walls, and when I arose to go I discovered behind me a cracked mirror and a comb that needed dentistry. I was surprised when the woman handed me the desired paper; I should not have accused any of them of being able to read.

"Wall, yer kin see haow all classes of folks lives eny haow," the matron observed, as she screwed her face out of shape in her anxiety to wring the last drop of suds out of a twisted garment.

"Yes," I returned, rising and reaching for my hat, "but how my donkey and I can manage to live to reach 'Frisco interests me more." And politely declining a hunk of pork rind and black bread offered me for a pocket lunch, much to the gratification of the house cat, I sallied forth into the biting blast, knocked several icicles from Mac A'Rony's whiskers, and headed for the state capital.

Further on we tarried a few moments to exchange a word or two with an inquisitive hayseed, who planted himself in the road before us, and stretched forth a brawny hand for both of us to shake.

"Yer th' feller what's goin' to Fran Sanfrisco, hain't yer?" the old man questioned, bracing himself against the boisterous gale.

"Yep," I replied laconically. And at once Mac, yielding to a mighty gust of wind, dashed past the animate obstruction, dragging his master with him.

"Whar be th' biggest crops this year?" he called after us; and Mac, assuming the question was put to him, shouted, "In ostriches. Some of them weigh several stone." As I looked back from the hill, I saw the statuesque figure still gaping at us behind a long, frost-colored beard.

The roads to fame and to the capitol are hilly. Fame seemed to be more easily reached in slippery weather than the capitol in dry. Albany had just experienced a heavy rain, and the roads had frozen. We set out Monday morning to pay our respects to the Governor, the Mayor and other shining lights. When half way up the ascent to the capitol, Mac A'Rony slipped off his feet and slid to the bottom of the hill. Of course, I stayed with him; in a moment we had won fame. The excited populace thronged about us, and the reporters hauled out their paper and pencils. One toboggan slide satisfied Mac, and I was compelled to return him to the stable and go alone.

The Governor was in his chair of state when I arrived at the Executive Chamber. The rumor that the odd traveler, Pye Pod, was in the ante-chamber brought a smile to his lips, which he still wore when he rose to grasp my hand, relishing the humor which I had failed to taste.

"Don't you find it pretty cold traveling these days?" the Governor inquired, as he sat down to write in my autograph album.

"Rather," said I. The Governor chuckled, wished me good luck on my journey and commended me for my pluck. Then I was ushered through the magnificent capitol.

After lunching with an aunt, I visited the Mayor. He, like other notable men, received me graciously and wished me joy, prosperity and health.

Tuesday I hustled early and late to earn a dollar above the expenses of my sojourn in the up-hill city. Wednesday morning I received a small check, the first remittance from the papers. It was only two days before Christmas. The Holiday season seemed to have absorbed all the money in circulation. The snow now lay six inches deep on the level; it had snowed all night and was snowing still. I greatly needed a pair of felt boots with rubber overshoes, but couldn't afford the outlay. So I wrapped strips of gunnysacks round my shoes and trouser legs, bought a pair of earlaps, and saddling my donkey, started for Schenectady, seventeen miles away.

People had cautioned me that donkeys were afraid of snow. I was most agreeably surprised to find Mac A'Rony an exception to the rule; but in another respect, he puzzled me very much. For five days he had not been known to drink, and I concluded that, like an orchid, he slaked his thirst by sucking the juice out of the atmosphere. When I ushered him into the snow, he rubbed his nose in it, and tasted it to satisfy himself that it wasn't sugar, and then majestically waded through, as if it were so much dust.

And so, with less than two dollars in pocket and some fifty photos in my saddle-bags, I urged my donkey through the blinding gale to a road-house, four miles out of Albany, where tethering him to a huge icicle under a low-roofed shed, I went into the tavern to toast my hands and feet, and to warm my inner self.

A few moments later found us fighting the elements again. And though we stopped at fully a dozen houses on that day's journey, we reached Schenectady soon after dark, with my face black and blue from the snowballs Mac rolled with his hoofs and slung at me (he claimed, unintentionally). Both of us were in prime condition to appreciate a hot supper and a soft, warm bed. After seeing my comrade safely sheltered in the hotel barn and leaving

instructions with the stable-keeper to lock the door, I spent a pleasant hour with the other hotel guests, who gathered about to hear my story, and to give me all kinds of valuable and worthless advice on traveling with a donkey.

What happened that night may be better understood by reading the following page from my diary:

"It is midnight, halfway between Christmas eve and Christmas morning. For the last three hours I have been looking all over town for Mac. I went to the stable at nine o'clock to fill his stockings, and lo! he was missing. Where he can possibly be and how he got there is beyond my power of conception. I found the lock in the barn door unbroken, but scratched about the keyhole, as if it had been picked. The landlord and the stableman are of the opinion that Union College boys have stolen the donkey and hidden him, just for mischief. In my rambles I failed to detect a sign of any student. A squad of volunteers from among the hotel guests, armed to the teeth and carrying lanterns, were kind enough to go with me donkey hunting, but nothing more than a few ominous traces of Mac's stubborn resistance did we discover. A tuft of donkey hair and a gory human tooth were picked off the barn floor, and also, just outside, a section of the seat of a man's trousers, all of which indicates that the donkey is the unwilling prisoner of a band of wags.

"Going down Fifth Street to Union, we detected Mac's little foot-prints and a college society pin. Just beyond, I found another lock of hair, this time human, indicating some football fiend had parted with a portion of his mane. A torn cravat, a finger of a kid glove, and a piece of human flesh resembling part of a nose, were noted by different members of the posse. Thence on, we traced with much difficulty my donkey's hoof-marks a mile or more into the suburbs, where we lost them. It was then 11:30 P. M. A concensus of opinion resulted in the verdict that at that point the animal had been put in a sleigh and drawn to some hiding place and that further search that night was useless. I am now going to retire, and trust to luck for Mac A'Rony's safe return to-morrow."

When I went to breakfast Christmas morning, I amused myself while my order was being filled by perusing the Schenectady "Daily Tantrims." You may imagine my astonishment upon reading the following:

GRAND OPENING
Of the Canal Skating Rink.
Greatest Social Function of the Season.
COLLEGE BOYS AND SOCIETY THERE.
A Donkey on Skates.

"Those who were not 'let in' to the private ball given at the new Canal Ice Rink on Christmas Eve by the Union boys who remained here over night to enjoy the Holidays, missed a rare and novel entertainment. It proved to be a side-splitting as well as an ice-breaking affair. Carefully laid plans were successfully carried out, and the diminutive donkey belonging to the quixotic traveler, Prof. Pythagoras Pod, became the guest of honor at the first rink party of the season. The jackass seemed to relish the sport immensely. Two pairs of skates were securely buckled on his feet and, declining the proffered assistance, at once the precocious tyro struck out in four several directions at once, coming down on the not over thick ice kothump! on his Antartic pole, deluging four propositions of Euclid, seven principles of unnatural philosophy, and three dozen young men and women.

All would have gone well had the jack not been so conceited. He, just like an ass, thought he knew it all. If he ever cut any ice in his life he did it then. Being of a generous disposition, he made ample accommodations for a crowd who, like his asinine self, came out for a skate and were hardly prepared for a baptism.

Pandemonium reigned. There were several narrow escapes from drowning; even Mac A'Rony barely averted a sublime decease, and bellowed like a freight engine. However, as he was the only donkey of the whole party that piloted himself to terra firma without assistance, he deserves much more praise than the fools that were so unwarrantably thoughtless as to imperil a hundred precious lives in their selfishness to have a good time at the expense of an humble beast.

As soon as the panic had subsided, a new rink was cleared further down the canal, where the Christmas fete was prolonged to a late hour. The terrified animal was here supported on two parallel bars held by strong men; and he promised to remain upright henceforth. To say the least, his frantic efforts to do the "pigeon wing" on the star-spangled firmament nearly capsized his pall-bearers. Guards had been posted at various points to apprise the practical jokers, if the donkey's master should come uninvited on the scene, but it seems that, by crafty, foxy methods, the Professor had been led by false scent to the suburbs. So the fun continued.

After the ball was over, Mac A'Rony was returned in safety to his stall.

The little fellow appeared to be the nimbler from his cold-water plunge, and was so elated over his extraordinary exploits that he brayed all the way to his quarters."

As soon as I heard Mac I rushed out to the barn bare-headed, and threw my arms round his neck. I found the little fellow joyously rummaging in four huge stockings filled with corn bread, molasses cake, mince pie, carrots, and apple-sauce. "I had a h—l of a time last night," was all he said.

CHAPTER VI.
Mac held for ransom

TOC

Christmas day is a merry day
  For all good lads and lassies,
But dull and lorn for th' fellow born
  To ride or drive jackasses.

—Old Song.

Yuletide afforded me few pleasures. How I was to bridge the gulf of penury and want of the Holiday season caused me much concern. Lacking the funds to pay my hotel and stable bills, I canvassed the town and sold a few pictures before church time. I wished to attend Christmas service, but lacked the nerve. My grotesque attire might have inspired the preacher.

I had worn holes in all my socks, and not having the price of a new pair, retired to my room to darn them. It was the first darning of that sort I ever did; when I had finished, I darned my luck, the hard times, and many things not down on the calendar. I pictured to my mind's eye the pleasures of Christmastide, of which I had cheated myself; but it was no time to brood over might-have-beens. I would start for the next town that morning. I felt a constant anxiety for Mac A'Rony's safety, and shouldn't feel easy until we were out of the college district.

We reached Amsterdam in time for Christmas dinner. I will not give the bill of fare; it wouldn't whet your appetite. The following day was almost as dull as Christmas. In the morning I was fortunate enough to receive in advance two dollars for distributing calendars to the farmers on my way to the next town, and employed the afternoon repairing saddle-bags.

The snow lay deep, the weather was windy and chill, and my donkey slower than axle grease; so I tarried over night and heard Sabbath bells.

Sunday evening saw us comfortably quartered in the little village of Fonda, a few miles' journey. While supping I learned that a German newspaper reporter, who claimed to be walking across the continent on a $750 wager, was a guest at another hotel. He came into town shortly after dark, and, unable to pay for a bed, was permitted to sleep on a bench, where my informant saw him. By the terms of his bet, the fellow was not allowed to beg, but could accept the earth, if offered him.

My sympathies were aroused, and I called on him after supper. He told his story, showed me papers, and a book signed by the railroad station agents on his route—for he had "hit the ties" all the way—and expressed much anxiety about covering the remaining 184 miles to New York in six days.

The young man looked emaciated, his shoes were literally worn out. His one meal that day had been a cup of coffee and a roll. He hadn't slept in a bed since leaving Detroit, where he earned his last money, five dollars. Pod's tender heart was touched. Although the more affluent donkey traveler possessed but a dollar and sixty cents, he gave his brother globe-trotter a dollar, a hot supper and bed, and would have paid for a stimulating drink had not the hotel-keeper been inspired to treat the two.

Next morning some commercial travelers, having learned of Pod's generosity, purchased a pair of shoes for the pedestrian. The delighted fellow departed at an early hour, expressing his sanguine belief that he would win his wager.

I had to hustle that morning to settle accounts, and it was eleven o'clock before Mac and I departed. I had only a nickel in pocket. That day we both went without lunch. It was long after dark and past supper time when we arrived in Fort Plain, and a half hour later before we reached the hotel. The town was illuminated with electric arc lights, which always throw vivid shadows, and Mac A'Rony had a desperate encounter with another donkey in the snow. He reared, and pitched, and cavorted, and bolted; he wound me up in the reins, and then bunked into me—I was in his way all the time—and finally rushed down a side street, dragging me after him. I had to lead the rampant animal through several unlighted streets round the village to get him to the stable. It was the first time I had presented myself at a strange hotel without my asinine credentials. When I registered, the incredulous proprietor went to the barn for Mac's own statement before believing me the famous man I claimed to be.

That evening a committee from the Bohemian Club invited me to a concert given under the auspices of the Fort Plain Band. I went, and enjoyed it. At its conclusion, I was asked to talk to a phonograph, the invention of the president of the Club. Having once addressed an audience of chairs, I could not object to talk to a funnel. I addressed the emptiness thereof with all the eloquence I could muster, then listened while the phonograph tried to repeat my words. It was simply awful. Had the machine been togged out in night shirt, mask and lighted candle, and shot off such a lingo in a dark alley, I should have thought it my own spook and fled in terror.

When I reached Little Falls my stock of photos was exhausted, and, but for a stroke of good luck, I fear I could not have paid my bills. Mac A'Rony agreed to carry a sign extolling the virtues of a one-price clothier, and that brought us a few dollars, which we divided.

It was late when we started for Herkimer, a town twelve miles away. The mud greatly impeded our progress and, suddenly, just before dark, when five miles to town, we came to a long, covered, wooden bridge. Then there was trouble. Mac obstinately refused to enter the dark tunnel. I coaxed him with an apple to follow me; I prodded him; I turned him about and tried to back him through; but he would not budge. I went behind and pushed him; and vexed beyond reason, I finally whipped him; all without avail. What could I do? I sat down and thought. No sound of an approaching vehicle greeted my ear, but I saw a house down the road. I decided to hitch my obdurate beast to the fence and seek assistance. As I approached the house the seductive aroma of frying steak told me it was supper hour. In response to my knock a rural-looking man came out and eyed me curiously, while chewing vigorously. Indoors I could hear somebody drinking out of a saucer.

"Excuse me for interrupting," I said politely; "but my jackass——"

"Yer what?"

"My jackass! I am bound for California with one, and am stuck out there by the bridge. I came to ask your assistance." The man swallowed.

"In a hole, eh? Wall, I reckon you've come ter th' right place fer help."

"No, I'm not in a hole exactly—that's just the trouble. My animal abhors holes; he refuses to enter the covered bridge."

"Wall, I swan! can't yer lick him through?" the farmer asked.

"As impossible," said I, "as to lick a camel through the eye of a needle."

"I want ter know. Come in," he said; and turning to the hired man, added, "John, let's give th' feller a lift."

The men donned wraps and boots, and, with an old wheelbarrow, followed me down the slushy road to the beastly eye-sore of my existence.

To describe our efforts to get that donkey through the bridge would tire you as much as those efforts tired me. Mac squirmed and kicked and bit; he would not be carried by hand; so the wheelbarrow was employed. He was too large for the vehicle, and lapped over the edges. We consumed a half hour in the gigantic task of wheeling Mac across that bridge.

"By gum, young feller!" exclaimed the exhausted farmer, as he dropped the heavy live weight. "Do yer haster go through this kind of business every bridge yer come ter?" I explained that I usually met with difficulties at bridges, but had never encountered a covered one before. Then I thanked the good Samaritans for their kindness, and prodded Mac to town.

We arrived in Herkimer late. Directly after supper I canvassed the stores, and worked till ten o'clock selling pictures.

We seemed to create quite a sensation. When about to retire, I learned that my donkey was stolen; I was told local bandits held him for ransom. I was greatly provoked, and rushed about the streets, making inquiries until, at length, a street loafer whispered that he would tell me where my animal was, if I "would blow him to a drink." I agreed. Then the man "in the know" piloted me to a bar-room several blocks away, where I was astonished to find the captive drinking with several other jackasses. He was the only one not disconcerted by my appearance, and even had the audacity to stick his nose up at the bar-keeper and bray.

I engaged men to assist me convey the inebriate to the stable as quickly as possible, and ordered an extra padlock to be snapped on the door. Next morning I found my partner in a surprisingly sober condition.

Resuming my pilgrimage, I made brief stops at Ilion and Frankfort, and arrived in Utica shortly after dark on the last day of the leap year. The hotel corridors swarmed with inquisitive guests who had been apprised of my coming. The jovial proprietor gave us a hearty welcome, and, ordering several porters to lead Mac into the office, called loudly, to the amusement of all, "Front! Give the donkeys the best double room in the house."

"Slow traveling for a *leap* year," I remarked to the clerk.

"Oh, that reminds me, Mr. Pod," said he; "here's a letter for you—just came a few minutes ago."

I settled my weary frame in a rocker and read it. It was actually an invitation to a Leap Year Ball, given under the auspices of the society girls of Manicure Hall. The card was printed, but on its margin were inscribed in a purely feminine hand a few choice words urging me to come in my traveling habit. It struck me that it might be my only chance to get engaged for eight long years, so I washed and brushed and polished, and turned up at the ball-room at a late but nevertheless fashionable hour.

larger

"We tramped tired and footsore into the village."

The ball was the most brilliant function it had been my pleasure to attend since the days of my freedom. Caesar! what charming girls! Were they really charming! or was it because I had been a recluse so long that most anybody wearing dresses fascinated my starved optics? Before advancing a rod into the hall, I received a proposal; within an hour I had a dozen. The dance, the supper, the defective lights, and the kisses in the dark, the midnight alarm, and the New Year's bells, all fulfilled their offices delightfully in turn—all, except the leave-taking of the old year, which groaned over the effects of bad salad, and gave up the ghost.

I devoted the afternoon to a delightful nap; I was worn out. Saturday I called upon the genial Mayor, who paid me liberally for a photo and subscribed to my donkey book. Sunday I set out with Mac for Rome.

I was told all the roads were in bad condition, and was advised to take the tow-path of the Erie Canal. After two hours of tramping and groping in the darkness, we came to a suburban street; soon after I was directed to a tavern, and quartered myself for the night.

A number of commercial men had prophesied I would not make my expenses in Rome, but I did. It was an all-day job, however, and another night was fairly upon me before I started for Oneida, sixteen miles away.

We had not gone far, when we came to an old-fashioned toll-gate, where I expected to be made to contribute to the county's good-road fund. I felt loath to do so, for nowhere else on my journey had we found the highway in such a disreputable condition. I told Mac to keep his mouth shut, and we stealthily walked through the gate, hoping not to be observed; but no sooner done than the keeper issued from his shanty and welcomed me back. He wished to talk with me, he said. His boy had preceded me from town and given his father glowing accounts of the donkey traveler. So interested were the toll-gate keeper and his family in the welfare of Pod and Mac that they not only waived the toll, but gave us a pressing invitation to remain with them over night. The generosity of that man's big, honest heart stood out in such happy contrast with the miserly county administration and my own penury that I gratified the man's desire, in a measure, and hitching Mac A'Rony, followed my host into his dwelling, where I allowed myself to share his frugal board. It was certainly such a home where either a Don Quixote or a Pythagoras Pod might feel himself a distinguished guest. The wife brewed tea, and spread the table with black bread and doubtfully wholesome cakes, while the children climbed on my knees and heard with rapture my tales of adventure.

When it was time to go the keeper, having learned from his son that I sold the pictures "to live on," begged me with tears to accept a quarter for the one I gave him, saying that he had a fair-sized garden besides the pittance he received for performing the duties of his humble office, whereas I had to depend on Providence for the keeping of myself and comrade on our long trip "round the world."

So Mac and I, thanking the good people for their kindnesses—for Mac's ever-acute appetite had not been overlooked by the thoughtful hostess—strode on in mud and darkness, slipping, spattering, and mumbling unintelligible and impolite words, and hoping against hope soon to arrive at some comfortable haven of rest.

A mile beyond we were greeted with loud applause issuing from a huge building to our left, which I took to be a girl's seminary, but which Mac insisted was a slaughter house. To be distinguished in the dark and tendered such an ovation quite tickled my vanity; but my less-conceited partner only brayed and trembled in the fear of being chased by a mad pig with its throat cut. When we had passed to a safe distance, I met a farmer in a wagon, and asked him the name of the illuminated building.

"The Rome State Insane Asylum," said the man.

At length, a dense mist gathered; then it began to sprinkle. I could scarcely distinguish Mac in the darkness. The road was tortuous, one vast river bed of mud, as untenable as quicksand. We first ran against a barbed-wire fence on one side, and a rail fence on the other, and finally, I plunged over boot-tops in a sluice, and might have drowned had I not held the reins and been pulled out by my unintentionally heroic comrade. My boots were new and didn't leak, and the mud and water remained in them.

If ever there was a moment on that overland "voyage" when I felt in prime condition to give it up, it was there and then. Still we struggled onward, and a few hundred yards ahead I discovered the faint light of a farm house, where I stopped to ask the distance to the next place we could secure shelter.

"'Bout four mile, I should jedge," said the farmer. I guessed as much, but it gave me a chance to sigh.

"Mercy! None nearer?" Just then Mac coughed, and approached.

"Nope. But wait! Be you the gentleman bound fer 'Frisco with a mule?"

"Verily so," I returned, while my partner brayed indignantly at being called a mule.

"Wall, what's it wuth to take you both in fer the night and feed ye?" the man asked, avariciously.

"Oh, about seventy-five cents."

"Come back," said he; "I just walked from the railroad station a mile and a half in the mud, and lost my overshoes, and kin sympathize with ye."

My donkey was comfortably stabled, watered and fed, and I ushered into a cozy room, where my host brought me dry garments and slippers, and gave me a hot supper. Truly, I thought, the darkest hour is just before dawn.

CHAPTER VII.
I mop the hotel floor

TOC

I pass like night from land to land,
  I have strange power of speech;
So soon as e'er his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me,
  To him my tale I teach.

—Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

Having the funds to tide over a couple of days, I set out early next morning for Syracuse. At 11:00 P. M. we tramped tired and foot-sore into the village of Fayetteville, having traveled twenty miles, the longest day's journey yet made.

My donkey was fagged out. The stable men could hardly get him into his stall; but Mac had great recuperative power, and was so frisky in the morning that we resumed the march to the Salt City. It was still some distance to the city when an incident happened to mar the pleasure of our peaceful walk. In passing a large dairy farm, Mac's grotesque figure excited either the admiration or the contempt of an ugly-looking bull, which left a small bunch of cattle in the field and trotted along the dilapidated fence. His actions were frightfully menacing, and I urged Mac to a faster gait. Suddenly the bull broke through the fence, bellowing, and made for us, head down.

My first thought was to save Mac's life. The leather-rimmed goggles he wore placed him at a disadvantage, aside from the fact that the road was icy and denied us a secure footing. Then, too, Mac carried seventy-five pounds burden, including my grip, the saddle and rifle. I was wholly unprepared for the bull; my revolver was unloaded, I having made it a rule to withdraw the cartridges every morning. As the brute lunged at my donkey, I struck Mac with my whip and wheeled him about with the reins in time to dodge the enemy. Recovering himself, the enraged bull made another lunge at my spry partner, and still another, the third time scraping off a tuft of hair with one of his horns. I could only assist Mac with the reins while striking the bull over the face with the cutting rawhide. I yelled for help. A quarter mile away stood a farm house, and in front of it two men gawking at our "circus," indifferent to our peril.

I never was more active than during those awful moments; Mac afterward said he never was so busy in all his life. So rapidly did we three pirouette, the bull after Mac, the donkey after me, and I after the bull, that the two human statues in the distance must have taxed their optics to distinguish which was which. So dizzy did I become that I wheeled Mac round and started in the opposite direction, the enemy bellowing, I calling, and the donkey braying to beat a fire-boat whistle. Finally, I heard the glad sound of approaching wheels from up the road, and at a glance saw a horse and buggy. As it came nearer, I distinguished a woman driving, and my heart sank. Surely she would not have the courage to venture into our very midst; she must soon turn round. A man might drive to our aid.

Still we three kept busy, until the rig wheeled down upon us, the prancing horse so distracting the bull that he shied to the opposite side, and, forgetting us, set out on a trot after the receding vehicle, lowing vexatiously. I held my breath. Soon we collected our senses and hustled on until the enemy was lost to view. There are many who would call our rescue a marvel; Mac said it was just our "luck;" but I thought it miraculous.

A prominent hotel in Syracuse welcomed me as its honored guest, and crowds cheered us to the door. I had consumed six weeks traveling from New York, a distance of 340 miles, although by rail the mileage shrinks to 303.

It was Friday, January 8. I was tendered a private box at the theatre that evening, and the following day Mac and I appeared on the stage between acts, at both the matinee and evening performances, I receiving five dollars for each appearance. Saturday I devoted to business; and was invited to the Elks' entertainment in the evening. At noon on Monday we headed for Auburn.

A heavy snow accompanied a fall of the mercury. Great drifts had formed during the night, reaching anywhere from inches to feet, and from yard to yard. My spirits were low. The first eight miles to Camillus were covered in four hours. After a good rest and poor fodder, we strode on over the white and solitary road seven more miles to Elbridge, where, at eight o'clock, I registered at a cozy hostelry, and ordered that Mac be cared for and my supper at once be prepared. Then I hastened to canvass the stores, disposing of three photos at fifteen cents apiece. My over-night expenses would be a dollar and a half; I lacked forty-five cents of the amount. But that did not disconcert me. The hotel was composed of bricks, and its proprietor was one of them: a jovial Grand Army man who wore a big soft hat, and a blue coat with brass buttons. His cranium was chock full of entertaining reminiscence, too.

At that time, men were engaged with mule-teams hauling stone for

repairing the canal, and the hotel was filled with an incongruous lot of teamsters and laborers. Judging by their roguish remarks, it would be wise of me to place my donkey under lock and key; but when I hinted it to my host, he assured me my fears were unwarranted.

I was assigned a large chamber on the main floor, next to the dining room. There was no lock to the door; I complained about it. "Nobody will molest you," said my host. I soon fell to sleep. Long before daylight I was awakened by the juggling of plates and cutlery, and the racking of a stove. It was impossible to sleep during such a hubub, so I proposed to smoke. Rising from bed and groping in darkness, I hunted for the electric light button hanging from the ceiling, but had proceeded only a few steps when, suddenly, I fell headlong over a huge, hairy substance, which moved and yawned.

Hamlet's ghost! Was this really midwinter's night dream? I sat on the floor for a moment to set my dislocated big toe on the off foot, then staggered timorously to my feet, found the cord, and turned on the light. Could I believe my eyes? There lay Mac A'Rony. He gazed at me in mute bewilderment and blinked like an owl, then presently rose to the occasion, brayed, and charged at the donkey in the mirror. It was enough to awaken the whole village when the excited animal rushed around the room with the mirror frame for a collar, vaulting chairs, bed, and table, and exerting his best efforts to kick holes in the walls and ceiling.

"What in damnation is the racket!" yelled the proprietor, as he came running to my room. I thought to disarm him by being the first to complain, for I expected some harsh invectives to be hurled my way.

"You said I should not be molested!" I said indignantly, standing on a mantle shelf in my night shirt.

"Well! It's the first time my house was ever turned into a stable," retorted the erstwhile jovial Grand Army man.

"And it's the first time I ever was made to room with a jackass," I returned, in a rage.

By this time Mac had stuck a foot in the frame-collar in trying to clear the stove, and had fallen. I quickly leaped from my perch, and my now more conciliating host helped to disengage the beast from his wooden harness, and give him a forcible exit. Then we dressed, and set to work clearing the room. Of course, the cook rushed in to have her say; otherwise, that hotel was suspiciously quiet, considering what had happened.

When I went to breakfast the landlord met me with a smile; it surprised and pleased me. I concluded that the practical jokers had settled everything to his satisfaction. My table mates were unusually uncommunicative; their conversation hung mournfully on the weather. My breakfast finished, I went to my host and informed him of the state of my finances.

"Two mule-drivers were discharged last night," he observed. "I could have got you a job if you had told me in time."

Right here an aged townsman came in, stamping the snow off his boots, unwound a great tippet from his neck, and regarding the clay-besmeared floor, delivered his opinion to the landlord.

"Gol blast me! If I run a house a lookin' like this, I'd close up and go out of the business," the granger remarked, with a critical eye to the floor and a wink at me.

"I agree with you," said I; "Price ought to pay a quarter to have the floor cleaned.

"It would be worth twice that sum to me to see you clean it," he returned, humorously.

"It's a bargain!" so saying, I pulled off my coat, and called for a mop and a pail of hot water.

The landlord seemed to regard the incident as a good joke; so did Pye Pod. Rolling up my trousers and shirt sleeves, I fell to work. The old man fled to spread the news, as soon as he saw I was in earnest. My first sweep with the old mop shattered it; the landlord lost no time procuring a new one. Then I went at it as though it were my special line of trade, and so deeply absorbed was I in the novel undertaking that less than half of the population of the village filed into the room without my comment. There were men and women, young and old and middling, and children bound for school; all around, backing against the walls and windows, commenting, laughing, and joking; while I just mopped, and with new jokes helped make merry, for I felt that was an experience of a lifetime for all of us.

A pretty girl snapped a kodak at me; she took fifteen orders for pictures within a minute. I was gratified to see all enjoy themselves. Still I kept mopping, and watched the clock to see how much time was left before school. *My* time was coming; I wanted everybody to hear my story. They didn't know a thing about me or Mac A'Rony, except through newspaper reports, which are not always reliable. Finally, I dropped my mop and straightened up to rest my lame back.

"Does that suit you?" I asked the landlord.

"A handsomer job was never done this floor," said he; "you have earned

your money."

Every one evidently wished to see me paid. As I received the cash, I whispered to my host to hand me the key to the door, expressing my purpose with a sly wink, which he hardly interpreted. The silver jingled with the brass in my hands, and I went to the door and locked it. Then walking to the desk, I turned, faced my audience without a blush, bowed low, and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, and children of Elbridge;" then gave a brief account of my travels from New York. My words pleased, and were greeted with laughter. But they had not heard my peroration.

"We rarely appreciate anything that costs us nothing," I began my conclusion. "In New York, a show such as I have just provided would cost at least a dollar and a half for orchestra chairs and fifty cents for the family circle; this seems to be the family circle. Now, to save the bother of printing tickets and posters, we admitted you to the show without delaying you at the door in the frosty air, and one and all, old and young, must pay me five cents before you leave this room. The door is locked, and I hold the key. Those of you ladies who left your purses on the piano can borrow of your gentlemen friends, who, doubtless, will be ready to help you out of your dilemma. Some of you may demur, and complain of hard times, but said excuses will not hold with me; I carry hard times with me whither I go on my long journey, whereas you have yours only in one place. As soon as all have paid me, the door will be unlocked, and not until. I thank you for your unsolicited audience, and trust that the next time we meet the circumstances will be as happy for us all as they have been this January morning."

My speech must have been forceful, for the nickels poured into my hat. As each individual paid I motioned him or her to the opposite side of the room, to guard against humbugging. The landlord had to come to the financial relief of a few, but the door was opened in time for school, and everybody departed with evident good feeling.

My host was the most astonished of all, and, with a hearty grip of the hand, predicted that I would reach my destination. Without delay I settled my account with him, saddled Mac A'Rony, and with $2.80 to the good started for Auburn. The last denizen of the village to bid me God-speed was the philanthropist who unwittingly procured me my "bill" for the hotel show, and then filled my purse for me.

CHAPTER VIII.
Footpads fire upon us

TOC

> An attempted assassination! I cried in excited tones. One of the boldest ever heard of, and right here, too, in the shadow of this palace devoted to commerce and peace.
>
> *—A Soldier of Manhattan.*

Soon after reaching Auburn, I received a theatre manager who called to engage Mac and me to appear at the Opera House. We signed with him, and the first evening we made such a decided hit that we were engaged for a re-appearance; I received ten dollars for both performances and the privilege to sell photos at the door, which netted me a considerable sum.

Auburn is the seat of a State Prison and a Theological Seminary. Avoiding the former, I set out to visit the seminary. The students were cordial, and showed me about the buildings, among them being Willard Chapel, which they called the handsomest in America.

I was unable to leave until just before noon. Tramping without dinner went against the donkey's grain even more literally than it did mine. About 2 o'clock I was passing through Aurelius, when a farmer invited me to take lunch with him. I accepted, and enjoyed the repast and the visit with the hospitable agriculturist and his wife. He gave me a card to a California friend, and hoped I would visit him and present his regards. This pleasant delay upset my calculations; I did not reach Cayuga until dusk.

The lake was frozen, but the sun had somewhat melted the ice during the past two days. I was cautioned not to venture across with the donkey, for, if he should slip, both of us would go through the ice. This was a great disappointment, for it compelled me to follow the tow-path some five miles round the edge of the lake through the dreaded Montezuma Swamp, in order to reach Seneca Falls. It was long after dark when we left the swamp and entered the shadow of a rocky ridge. A half mile further, I discerned the distant electric lights of the town. To our left was the canal, and to the right, the rocky barrier, while ahead, beside the tow-path, shone an arc light suspended from one of several poles which extended in a line to town.

I was tramping along at Mac's head when, suddenly, a man stepped from behind the pole and ordered me to throw up my hands. Although excited, I still had the presence of mind to jump behind my donkey. Instantly the highwayman fired at me. Then I fired to show I was armed and ready to defend myself; and at once a shot came from the rocks, a little to my rear. Turning my head, I saw what appeared to be a cave, where presumably the second man was hiding. But just as I turned my head, a second shot from the man in front knocked off my plug hat; and then came a shot from the rocks. Now, fully realizing my peril between two fires, I aimed my revolver at the man in the road some thirty feet away, and fired to cripple him. I apparently succeeded, for the fellow cried, "God! I'm hit!" and fell in the snow-covered road, resting on one elbow, and pressing his hand to his right breast.

Not sure, however, that the man was not feigning, I shot into the cave, from which at once issued the other footpad, who ran down the tow-path. Then I picked up my hat and passed by the prostrate man, keeping my revolver trained upon him, and hurried on toward Seneca Falls.

A quarter of a mile beyond I came to Lock House No. 6. My story greatly excited the quiet household. Hibbard, the keeper, with a lantern helped me examine Mac to see if he was wounded; then we were generously cared for. After drinking a cup of tea and toasting my feet awhile at the fire, I made my departure.

On reaching Seneca Falls, I called on the chief of police; he being absent, I saw the Mayor, who told me that I did only my duty by shooting in self-defense. Then I went back to the hotel where, in the crowd of excited people anxious to hear my story, were reporters eager to gather the facts of the affair.

Next day Hibbard reported that at 2 o'clock in the morning he had heard a buggy pass his house toward the scene of the shooting, and, although he laid awake until daylight, did not hear it return. He said it was the first vehicle in years to traverse the tow-path at such a late hour, and believed the injured footpad had been rescued by his confederate and driven away.

After lunch I left for Waterloo, where I found its main thoroughfare so choked with people to see me that I could not get Mac through. They hailed me as a hero, and shouted my name and Mac's until they were hoarse, and purchased all my photographs at twice the regular price. Finally, we resumed our journey, and arrived in Geneva long after dark.

Geneva is the seat of Hobart College. One of the societies invited me to a spread at its fraternity house; and, while I was there, Mac was stolen from the stable, of which I was not informed until evening. In view of the fact that a

cow had recently been lodged in the college library, I shouldered my Winchester and set out on the war-path after breakfast, accompanied by the Chief of the Fire Department.

We had searched the dormitories and cellars of the college buildings and were going to the gymnasium, when I discovered Mac standing in the snow, eating thistles. It had been a cold and stormy night; he was covered with snow, and icicles hung from his under jaw. Yet the donkey uttered no complaint, merely saying, "The boys didn't do a thing to me last night." I learned from a professor that Mac had been found in a recitation room describing impossible theorems and eating chalk, and that the janitor and two professors had their hands full carrying the donkey down two staircases and out of doors.

Although it was biting cold and the mercury had fallen to the zero point, I could not afford to tarry longer. After lunch we set out in a blinding snow-storm and tramped on to Phelps, where we stopped for supper and an hour's rest. At first Mac had shown no ill-effects of his recent exposure, but now he coughed. Having made but eight miles that day, I resolved to brave the storm four miles further, and reached Clifton Springs at ten o'clock. There I obtained comfortable lodgings for myself and partner.

Next day the venerable director of the Sanitarium invited me to be his guest, and kindly permitted me to lecture to the patients of his fashionable hostelry for a silver offering. Of course, I accepted. My "heart to heart" talk seemed to tickle the large audience, but when the porter brought back my hat with only two dollars in it I was disappointed. I had expected a contribution commensurate with the encores. When I paid the porter 25 cents for his services, I dropped my spectacles and broke the glasses. A new pair would cost me $1.75. That made accounts even.

"Reminds me of the colored preacher," observed the director with good humor; "somebody passed his hat to the congregation and returned it empty. 'Well,' said the parson, 'I'm thankful to de Lawd to get my hat back." The story was apt, but it did not console me.

While at the Sanitarium I sold many photographs, and judging the patients to be affluent, doubled the regular price. Before our departure, Mac showed symptoms of rheumatism. A doctor suggested that an electri-thermal bath would make a new animal of him. "It won't cost you a cent," said he. I arranged for the treatment at once. It required several attendants to get the fellow in the electric chair, where they secured him with straps; and then the doctor administered the electricity. While the electric wand was rubbed over his legs and body, the frightened donkey brayed and twisted and squirmed, and threatened to upset the chair, causing much merriment.

Well, Mac's professional treatment made him a new donkey. He traveled more quickly than ever before, and almost out-tramped his master.

Near the Springs is a farm-house where resided, at that time, a sister of Stephen A. Douglas. I called to see her, and was cordially received. She was 86 years of age, her left arm paralyzed, and her eyesight very dim.

Tramping on, we came to Shortsville, where we stopped for dinner. Supper was eaten at Victor, and at eight, Mac and I set out for Pittsford, the wind and snow blowing furiously in our faces. The night was intensely dark. Somewhere past ten, I passed two tramps on the highway, but only they and the passing trains broke the monotony of the journey.

It must have been eleven when the road joined another at right angles; I was puzzled then whether to turn to the left or to the right. I stamped my half frozen feet, as we halted in the biting wind until, presently, through the falling snow, I saw a distant light, and hurried for it. Farmers usually retired early; but on arriving at the cozy house, I found a party of young people dancing, playing cards, and eating refreshments. A kind-faced woman greeted me at the door, and asked me in. When I introduced myself, and inquired my way, the astonishment of the whole party told me plainly I was considered an honored guest, transient indeed though I was.

"Well, I declare, we've read about you lots;" said the hostess. "Won't you sit down and have some ice cream and cake?"

"I smell coffee," I remarked, frankly; "if I may be treated to a little of that, I shall be grateful; but as for ice cream, I feel it a little unseasonable this evening. And as I rubbed my ears vigorously, the girls laughed and said, Ain't he plucky!"

It was hard, indeed, to break away from this jolly party; I don't know how long I should have tarried if Mac had not called to me. His bray was the signal for a stampede to the porch; all forgot refreshments and dancing in their eagerness to see the famous donkey. They simply lionized him. The girls carried cake and pie and ice cream to him, and one offered him a fried egg, which he declined. When we said our adieux the shivering group gave us a hearty cheer and God-speed, then rushed indoors, leaving the dejected pilgrims to the cold consolation of the snow, wind and darkness of a winter's night.

CHAPTER IX.
In a haymow below zero

TOC

> In the first lighted house there was a woman who would not open to me. . . .
>
> Modestine was led away by a layman to the stables, and I and my pack were received into our Lady of the Snows.
>
> —*Travels with a Donkey.*

Having been directed on the road to Pittsford, a town seven miles beyond, we tramped wearily on, battling with the elements as best we could until midnight, when almost numb with cold, I resolved to seek refuge in a small hamlet we were nearing, called Bushnell Basin. I was told it contained a tavern which would accommodate us, in an emergency. But it was so dark when we reached Bushnell that I could not see the Basin. Its dozen dusky-looking shanties seemed to be deserted, and when I saw a boy crossing the road I was too surprised to hail him. Mac brayed, and the lad stopped. I asked him where the hotel was. He directed me toward a dim light, and disappeared. We pushed on, but the light was extinguished before we could reach the house. I called loudly to the landlord to let me in; I rapped on the door desperately, and repeated my yells. A dog in the house barked savagely; then Mac began to bray, and I wondered that nobody entered a protest against such a disturbance. At length, a squeaky female voice called from an upstairs window:

"Who be ye?"

"A man," I answered, civilly.

"What kind of a man?"

"A gentleman," I said, with emphasis.

"What's that thing yer got with ye?"

I was afraid she'd catch cold in the opened window, if she was in her nightdress, but I replied in a voice of a siren, "A jackass."

"Can't let ye in—no room for shows here—next town," fell the frozen words on my benumbed ears.

Then the woman sneezed, and closed the window. Mac A'Rony seemed to comprehend the situation, but offered no remedy. I would have covered the three miles to Pittsford, but the donkey was fagged out, and could barely drag his legs. Where were we to find shelter at such a time and place?

Retracing our steps a short distance, I caught the sound of pounding, as of a hammer. Soon I heard the sawing of a board, and the saw's enraged voice when it struck a knot. Saved! I thought, as I walked in the direction whence the sound emanated. The snow lay ten inches deep; old Boreas shook the trees, and whistled round the quivering hovels; and I was so chilled and vexed that, if another person had dared to ask me what kind of a man I was, I would have measured somebody for a coffin.

Finally, I came to the house, through whose window I discerned a lighted candle in a back room. I rapped on the door. The sawing continued; so did my rapping. Then the sawing ceased, and the door was opened by a swarthy, heavy bearded man who extended me a kindly "Good evenin'." I introduced myself, and pleaded my case.

"Come in where it's warm," he said; and following him to the stove, I explained my situation.

"We ain't got much accommodation for ye," he apologized, "but I can't leave ye and yer pet out in the cold. This is my wife," and the man introduced me. Then he censured the landlady of the tavern for not admitting me, saying she ought to have her license revoked, "If you'd been a loafing vagabond and drunkard, she'd taken ye in quick enough," said my sympathetic host; "but as ye was a gentleman she was embarrassed to know how to treat ye." From which I gathered that he did know how, and would prove it. He explained that the front part of the building was a store; the rear portion was divided into two small rooms,—a kitchen and a sleeping room. The second floor was utilized as a hay-loft, wherein was stored Hungarian hay for his horse, which he said he kept "in a shed 'cross the road yonder."

"Now, if ye'll lend me a hand," he suggested, "we'll make room for yer mule in the shed, and my wife'll get ye something to eat. Then we'll see where we kin tuck ye comfortable till mornin'."

I pulled on my mittens and followed the man into the biting wind with a warmer and cheerier heart, and, acquainting Mac with the good news, proceeded to assist my host to transfer a huge woodpile in order to obtain the side of a hen roost lying underneath it, with which to construct a partition in the shed to preserve peace between horse and donkey.

By one o'clock Mac was stabled and I in prime condition to enjoy any kind of a meal. The good wife had fried me three eggs, and brewed me a pot of tea,

and sawed off several slices of home-made bread, for which I blessed her in my heart and paid her a compliment by eating it all.

The repast over, I chatted a while with my friends and smoked; then said if they were ready to retire, I was. A roughly made staircase reached from the kitchen floor over the cook-stove to a trap-door in the ceiling, and up those stairs I followed my host, he with candle in hand, I with a quilt which I feared the kind people had robbed from their own bed. Great gaps yawned in the roof and sides of the loft, through which the wind whistled coldly. The hay was covered with snow in places and the thermometer must have been far below zero. But I stuck my legs in the hay, and pulled a woolen nightshirt over my traveling clothes, and tucked the quilt round my body, and put on my hat and earlaps, and soon was as snug as a bug in a rug, and slept soundly.

I arose early with the family, joined them at breakfast, paid my host liberally, and started with Mac for Pittsford. There we were welcomed by a party of young men who had expected to give us a fitting reception the evening before. They claimed that, had they known where we were, they would have rescued us with a bob-sleigh. I did not tarry with them, but tramped on to Rochester, and arrived there at 3:30 P. M., having covered thirty-five miles since the previous morning.

We spent two days in the Flour City. An old business acquaintance arranged for Mac A'Rony to pose in the show window of a clothing store, for which I received five dollars. Although it was dreadfully cold and the wind blew a gale, Mac attracted every pedestrian on the street.

I called on "Rattlesnake Pete," the proprietor of a well-known curiosity shop, who wanted to buy my bullet-riddled hat, but I declined to part with it at any reasonable price; then I called on the Mayor. He received me cordially, laughed when I related my adventures, and subscribed to my book.

Rochester is the seat of a Theological Seminary, and several breweries. Near by is the celebrated Genesee Falls, where Sam Patch leaped to his death. Many old friends called on me during my sojourn, among them a physician, who gave me a neat little case of medicines, such as he believed would be most needed in emergency on such a journey; and while being entertained at a club, I was presented with a fine sombrero.

In spite of the frigid gale which had been raging three days, and of the dire predictions of the Western Union bulletins, I started with Mac for Spencerport at 12:30, right after lunch. The village lay twelve miles distant. The biting wind swept across the level meadows, laden with icy dust from the frozen crust of the snow, and cut into our faces. Five times were Mac and I welcomed into houses to warm, but we reached the village an hour and a half after dark with only my ears frost-bitten, and soon were comfortably quartered for the night. Next morning we started for Brockport, eight miles further on, by the tow-path, which we followed.

The wind was blowing forty miles an hour, and the mercury fell below zero. Every now and then we had to turn our backs to the gale to catch our breath. Mac's face was literally encased in ice; I rubbed my ears and cheeks constantly to prevent their freezing. Only two or three sleighs were out, and the drivers of these were wrapped so thoroughly in robes and mufflers that I could not distinguish male from female. Still determined not to retreat to town, I urged my little thoroughbred on, and soon we were called into a house and permitted to thaw out.

On this occasion Mac, to his own astonishment, as well as that of the kind lady of the house, stuck his frosted snoot into a pot of boiling beans on the stove, for which unprecedented behavior I duly apologized.

Eight more times both of us were taken into hospitable homes and inns to warm before reaching Brockport at eight in the evening, more dead than alive. My nose and ears were now frost-bitten. The towns-people, hearing of our arrival, flocked into the hotel to chat with me, or went to the stable to see Mac A'Rony.

Wednesday I resumed the journey, resolved that nothing save physical incapacity should deter me; now was the time to harden myself to exposure, and prepare me for greater trials later on. But before leaving, I purchased a small hand-sled, and improvised rope-traces by which Mac could draw my luggage instead of carrying it. Besides, this novel sort of vehicle would attract attention; I realized that we must depend for a living more upon sensation than upon our virtues. The next thing essential was a collar for the donkey, and I had to make it. But to make the stubborn beast understand I wished him to draw the sled, that he wasn't hitched to stand, was the greatest difficulty I had. Finally, he caught on, and marched along through the streets quite respectably.

Beyond the town we met with some deep snowdrifts lying across the road, and Mac's little legs would get stuck, or he would pretend they were, and I would have to dig the fellow out with my rifle. Again, while leading the stubborn animal in order to make better time in the opposing wind, I would suddenly hear a grating, scraping sound to the rear, and looking around would find the sled overturned with its burden. After several such upsets, I

cut a bough from a tree, whittled a toothpick point to it, and prodded Mac to proper speed, while I walked behind and with a string steadied the top-heavy load of freight. Then, this difficulty remedied, Mac, with seeming rascality, would cross and recross the ridge of ice and snow in the center of the road, as if he couldn't make up his mind which of the beaten tracks to follow, or disliked the monotony of a single trail, every time upsetting the sled. During that long and frigid day's tramp but one human being passed me, and he was in a sleigh. He recognized my outfit, for he called to me encouragingly, "Stick to it, Pod; you'll win yet!"

Late in the afternoon a man hailed me from the door of a farm-house, "Come in and warm, and have a drink of cider." Now, if there was one thing in the world that tickled my palate, it was sweet cider, and I accepted a glass.

"Wouldn't your pard have a drink?" asked the generous man.

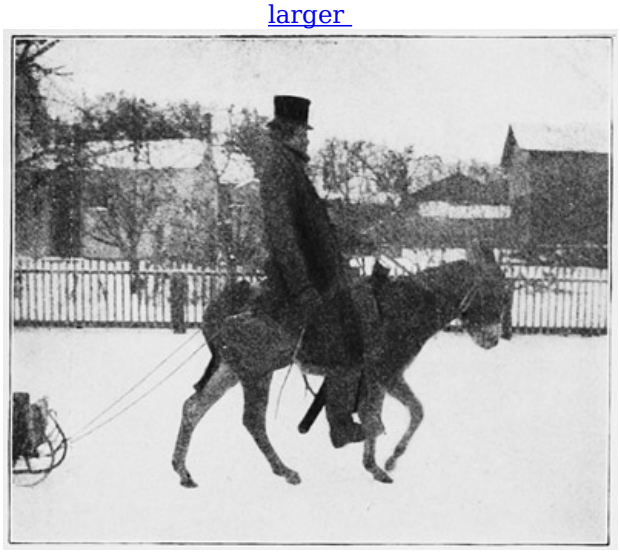
"Presume he would, if you offered it," I replied. "I never knew him to refuse any kind of a beverage, though this cider is pretty hard."

The farmer brought out a milk-pan; and that donkey drained the pan.

"Shall I give him some more?" asked the big-hearted soul. Mac stuck out his nose in mute response, so I said yes, provided he would not be robbing himself; it would probably put new vigor in the fatigued animal, and super-induce more speed.

"Got barrels of it, friend, barrels of it," said the Good Samaritan, who refilled the pan which Mac again drained. Then thanking the farmer, I steered my donkey on over the ice-bound highway.

larger



"Mac could draw my luggage instead of carrying it."

larger

"Mac's little legs would get stuck."

We had not proceeded a mile when I observed that Mac did not walk as firmly as he had; his course was decidedly zig-zag. Finally I left my station at the sled and guided him by the bit. Now he staggered more than ever; then it dawned on me that the cider had gone to his head. In less than five minutes more I regretted having met that liberal-hearted farmer, possessing barrels of hard cider. Suddenly the drunken donkey fell down in the snow, and, instead of attempting to rise, he tried to stand on his head. Not succeeding in that, he made an effort to sit up, and toppled over backwards. All this time he brayed

ecstatically, as if in the seventh heaven. Next he began to roll, and tangled himself in the rope traces, and tumbled the sled and gladstone bag about the snow as though it were rubbish. Fearing lest he would break my rifle and cameras, I tried to unbuckle them from the saddle while the scapegrace was in the throes of delirium tremens, and got tangled up with him in the ropes. In trying to free myself, I was accidentally kicked over in the snow. And in that ridiculous and awkward fix I was found by a jovial farmer, who drove up in a sleigh. He soon helped me out of my scrape, and laughed me into good humor, kindly consenting to take charge of my luggage and send a bob-sleigh after the drunkard as soon as he reached his house, a mile beyond.

There I waited for the relief committee and the wrecking sleigh to arrive. To say I was the maddest of mortals doesn't half express it. At length two strong men with my help succeeded in depositing Mac on the bob; and he was conveyed to the barn and there placed behind the bars, bedded and fed, and left to sober up, while I, his outraged master, was hospitably entertained over night by my charitable benefactor.

We were now at Rich's Corners, some four miles from Albion. My good host provided me with such warm apparel as I hadn't with me, and when bed-time came, I was trundled into a downy bed where I dreamed all night about drunken jackasses.

By breakfast time I had recovered my good spirits. I insisted on baking the buckwheat cakes, and not until all the family were apparently filled with the flapjacks which I tossed in the air to their amusement did I sit down to the table to eat.

Breakfast over, I joined my host in a smoke, then donned my wraps for the day's journey. When we men returned from the barn with the reformed donkey, a number of the neighboring farmers had assembled with their families on the porch to see the overland pilgrims. I snapped my camera on the group, said "Go on, Mac," to my remorseful partner, and soon was plodding toward Albion.

CHAPTER X.
An asinine snowball

TOC

> Strange to see what delight we married people have to see these poor fools decoyed into our condition, every man and woman gazing and smiling at them.
>
> —*Samuel Pepys' Diary.*

We did not reach Albion until noon. So numerous were the snow-drifts that we made only a mile an hour. Old Boreas might have been a little more considerate and brushed the snow along the fences instead of piling it across our path. That morning I dug Mac out of a dozen snow-drifts.

Albion looked to be a pretty place. Besides many attractive homes, it possesses the celebrated Pullman Memorial Church, a High School, and a woman's reformatory. But I did not visit those interesting places. Being a high churchman, the church was too low for me; not being up in the classics, the high school was too high for me; and believing women to be terrestrial angels, I did not wish to be convinced that my judgment was wrong by investigating a female reformatory. I put up at a comfortable hotel, where I was told that the relentless storm would likely imprison me several days, and found cozy quarters for Mac A'Rony. The day after my arrival, a neighboring farmer took me sleigh-riding into the country to dine with him and his mother, his fleet horse having once conveyed him and his father from Dakota to Albion, 1,600 miles, in thirty-six days. When I told Mac about it, he turned a deaf ear, lay down, and groaned a groan of incredulity. Ex-Consul Dean Currie invited me to spend an evening with him and his family, and took me to call on the Mayor, who received me cordially and offered me the use of the Town Hall for a lecture. I accepted, and addressed a well-filled house; my receipts far exceeding my expenses in town.

The coziest place during these three stormy days, I found to be an easy chair by the great stove in the hotel office, where I whiled away most of my time. There, throughout the wintry days and evenings, assembled the guests of the house and many convivial spirits from town, to hear the biggest lie, or to relate the most ridiculous yarn.

At one of those gatherings, I met an interesting character Sylvenus Reynolds. Although he was eighty-four years old, he appeared as young and agile as most men of half his years. He attributed his longevity to active out-of-door life. Judging from his talk, one would have thought him to be the greatest traveler living; but, because he was denied the gift of a scribe, he would probably die like the heroes of the country churchyard, "unknown to fortune and to fame." He had tramped and lived by his rifle from Puget Sound to Terra Del Fuego, and was the first white man to cross the Andes from Chili to Brazil.

Once in the jungles of India he and a lion and a tiger all met unexpectedly, and, while the three were determining which two should become partners, the tiger made a spring at Sylvenus, and just when his gun missed fire and he thought it all up with him, the lion leaped in the air, caught the tiger by the neck, and killed it. He said after that he never could be induced to take the life of a lion, "the kindest and gentlest of wild beasts."

But I must tell about his famous jump across the Lock at Lockport, at that time 14½ feet wide. The event was well advertised. Temporary toll-gates were established, and ten cents levied on such individual passing through to the "show." Over eight hundred and eighty-eight dollars were collected for the jumper. The jump was successful, and Syl got the pot. The narrative closed with a discussion—and another jump.

"That wasn't such a mighty big jump," remarked a listener. "I know several fellows who can jump to beat 14½ feet."

"I'll bet a dollar with any or all the men present," said I, "that not one of you can stand still on this floor and jump 7 feet."

I had ten takers. The money was deposited with the proprietor; the house was thrown into great excitement. The ten jumps were made. But the judges agreed with Pod that the jumpers failed to *stand still* and jump, and so handed me the money. Naturally, the jumpers, being in a jumping mood, wanted to jump on me next, but they finally conciliated, and regarded me thereafter with suspicion.

Although the roads were reported impassable, we departed for Medina on Sunday morning, and, the day following, hastened on toward Lockport. When yet two miles to town, after traveling sixteen miles, a boy ran after us in the darkness and persuaded me to return to his house, as his Pa wished me to be his guest over night; so we did not reach Lockport until eleven next morning. I no sooner stabled Mac than I boarded the train for Buffalo in quest of a theatre engagement; failing in that, I returned to enjoy a stroke of good luck in the form of an engagement for Mac and me to appear on a vaudeville stage

in Lockport, which netted me a few honest dollars.

At six o'clock Thursday morning we were off for Buffalo, a twenty-six mile journey. Only once did we stop, when I unsaddled for our mid-day meal at Stormville, Mammoth snow-drifts were piled against the fences and across the roads which, melting, gave way under my donkey's weight, frequently imprisoning his slim legs.

We reached a school-house near the village of Williamsville just as the scholars were dismissed for their nooning, and were immediately set upon by a laughing, shouting, questioning bevy of frolicsome children, who made merry sport of my partner's predicament; he was stuck in a snow-drift. If Mac had exerted himself a little, he might have climbed out, but he was tired, unusually obstinate, and naturally lazy, and so preferred to await developments.

One precocious genius in the crowd suggested rolling the donkey into a snowball, and rolling him to town. That was the signal for a general hurrah. I shook my head disapprovingly, but, on thinking it over, decided to try the novel plan.

"Come on, boys," I said. And then with peals of merriment and youthful energy which I never saw equalled, the whole lot soon packed the snow about the patient animal, until only his head and tail were left exposed; then I gave the word "heave to," and the asinine snowball began to turn slowly on its axis, and made a complete revolution. The donkey brayed with laughter; but before he had rolled a dozen times he stopped braying and began kicking, or rather made futile efforts to kick. A dozen more revolutions and he complained of dizziness, but the children only pushed and rolled with renewed energy. Larger and larger the snowball grew, until finally we had to stop and scale off sufficient snow to enable the good work to go on. And presently it did go on, and we rolled the asinine snowball into town amid the cheers and laughter of the children, the frightful brays of protestation from the imprisoned donkey, and the dumb consternation of the villagers.

Mac, when liberated, rose at once, only to topple over on his head. He claimed the earth was turning around, which was true enough, although not the way the donkey meant. He was too dizzy to stand for some time; each effort resulted in a comical physical collapse, that set the villagers shrieking with laughter. This was a good time for me to profit by Mac's generous entertainment, and while telling the assembled crowd all about our travels, I sold photos by the dozen. The people opened their pockets liberally, and before they could recover from the effects of the sensation Mac had caused, we pilgrims were hurrying out of town, over an easier road to Buffalo.

In consequence of the snowball affair and several other delays, we did not reach the city until after dark. Having traveled seventeen miles since lunch, we were ravenously hungry. Buffalo presented a beautiful sight, with her myriad lights gleaming on the snow. Down Main street, I espied a patent night-lunch wagon standing by the curb, and hitching Mac to the hind axle, I went in for a bite. Suddenly I became conscious that the vehicle was moving, and made a hasty exit, to discover I had traveled several blocks in the lunch wagon.

The hard travel Mac had been subjected to for the past week necessitated his having a long rest before resuming the journey. The morning after our arrival in Buffalo, my aristocratic donkey was made the honored guest of the Palace Stables, a large and handsome brick building. Mac's box stall was on the third floor, and could be reached either by an inclined run-way, or an elevator. The donkey being unaccustomed to such extravaganzas as elevators, chose the inclined plane, and even then he put on such airs that it required the united efforts of a half dozen stablemen to escort him to his apartment. Once there, he was feted like a nobleman.

I, too, was lavishly entertained. But of all the courtesies extended me the most interesting was the invitation to stand up with a young Italian wedding party in the City Hall, where the Mayor, who sent for me, tied the knot. His Honor did the sacred office bravely—until the conclusion, when he flunked completely. I'll explain.

Casimo Mazzette and Rosino Lodico were dago peasants, born in Palermo, Sicily. The groom was tall and proud and embarrassed, although ten years the senior of his eighteen-year-old bride, who was too coy to meet his gaze. She at first took Pod for a preacher, engaged to prompt the Mayor. According to the custom of their native heath, they simply joined hands, instead of using a wedding-ring,—a very sensible idea, for hard times. The pretty ceremony over, the bewitching female benedict looked at the Mayor, and moved toward him, and raised her face, but the embarrassed Mayor withdrew, to the astonishment of everyone, explaining that he was married to a jealous woman, and asked me to kiss the bride for him. He preferred to do the honors by proxy. So, without comment or hesitation, I stepped up to the pretty dago, placed my arm around her to avoid danger of making a bungle of the first kiss I ever gave a woman, drew her face to mine, and kissed her squarely on her ruby lips. She looked so happy that I was about to repeat the act, but her

husband stepped between us. The pair shook hands with the Mayor and his clerical-looking assistant, who wished them lots of luck and "dagoettes," and then the blushing bride fled with her devoted swain out of the hall.

Next day I accepted for Mac an invitation to a phonograph exhibition in the Ellicott Building. We both attended and were richer for it. The room was well-filled with men and women who eagerly awaited the advertised show. When the manager courteously asked what was the donkey's favorite style of music I explained that, as he was a slow animal, he probably preferred lively music. At once the "yellow kid" held the tubes to the donkey's ears; those sensitive organs indicated his delight by each alternatively flapping forward and backward; but, suddenly, as they were thrown forward together, the jackass kicked an incandescent light globe above into flying fragments. Women screamed and fell into the arms of the men for protection.

"You said the donkey was gentle," said the manager, angrily.

"So he is," I returned.

"Then how do you account for such high kicking?"

"Struck a discord, I presume," I said. "What music is in that machine?"

The clerk answered. "The first p-p-piece was the "Darkey's Dream," said he, with slight impediment of speech, "but the s-s-second was "Schneider's Band."

"Who wouldn't kick!" I exclaimed. Due apologies were in order, and confidence was restored, and an hour later we two departed with the donkey's earnings and the well wishes of all.

CHAPTER XI.
One bore is enough

TOC

ASININE TABLE OF MEASUREMENT.

Nine square inches make one foot,
Four all-around feet make one jackass,
One cross jackass makes three kicks,
Two hard kicks make one corpse;
Corpse, kicks, jackass, feet—
How many doggies do we meet?

—Dogeared Doggerels.

From which table we may safely conclude there is one dog less in the world, and that, estimating him by his kicks, Mac is a jackass and a half.

If I had kept a complete record of the breeds, sorts, colors, and conditions of the canines, the pups and curs we met with on the road from New York, I might have compiled a book larger than Trow's New York City Directory, which still would exclude the mongrels and all unclassified "wags" and "barks" of the country sausage-districts.

From a financial point of view, I was disappointed with our four-days' sojourn in Buffalo, but Mac and I were rested, and the weather was milder. The winds from Lake Erie had swept the snow off the roads against the fences where it didn't belong, so that my partner had to drag the sled out of Buffalo over a dry and rutty highway. There were, however, several places where the elements had shown a grudge against the farmers by piling huge snow drifts across the road to impede their travel and maliciously blowing the white spread from the fields of winter wheat which required its protecting warmth.

Directly on reaching Hamburg, we were taken in charge by a Mr. Kopp (Mac had predicted a cop would have us before long), and given a warm reception. On the way to Eaton's Corners, six miles beyond, I undertook to earn fifty cents in an extraordinary manner; some might call it a hoggish manner. A farmer hailed me from a barnyard, and asked if he could sell me a boar.

"Boar!" I exclaimed, almost losing my breath; and I added: "No, sir; one boar is enough."

"Well, then, do yer want to make a half dollar?" he called.

"Course I do—more than anxious," I answered.

"Then jes' help me drag this 'ere hog ter town most; Squire Birge has bought it, and I've agreed ter deliver it or bust."

"Let's see it," I said. "Don't know much about hogs, but I'll know more, I guess, when I see yours."

I followed the man, Mac tagging close behind. Behold! A docile looking hog of mastodon dimensions was conveying the contents of a corn crib to its inner self. I walked around the beast several times to count his good points, and closed the bargain.

An end of a rope was fastened to the hog's hind foot, and the other end wound round the pommel of the saddle. Then I gave the infuriated donkey the whip. A tug of war followed; presently the rope snapped, and donkey and hog were hurled in opposite directions, both turning somersaults. Luckily my rifle escaped injury. The hog lost the kink in his tail; he looked mad, and with his vicious stares, frightened Mac half to death. Finally the rope was again adjusted, and an exciting scene ensued. The velocity of the vibrations of that hog's roped foot, trying to kick loose, put electricity to shame. When the donkey eased up a little, the boar showed its true character by starting for the barn, pulling Mac after him; while, on the other hand, when the hog stopped for wind, the donkey would make a dive for town and drag him until he also had to pause for breath. So those obdurate beasts worked rather than played at cross-purposes for half an hour before I forfeited my contract and proceeded on over the frozen road.

We reached Angola by seven, and Farnham at ten o'clock. There we were comfortably quartered; Mac was rubbed with liniment, fed and watered, while I, too late for supper, retired with an empty stomach.

The Lake Shore road threads some thrifty-looking towns. The country was dotted with neatly painted barns and cozy houses, surrounded by energetic windmills and inert live-stock, while denuded vineyards laced the frosted shores for miles about. We lunched at Silver Creek, where a burly denizen tried to sell me a big dog, which, he claimed, would tear an ox into pieces. The price named was $5. Neither man nor dog made an impression on me.

When I finally drew rein in Dunkirk, at 7:30 P. M., the hotel was alive with commercial men who quickly surrounded us. In ten minutes I sold enough chromos to pay our expenses over night and purchase a new breast-band for Mac.

Prior to February 12, Lincoln's Birthday, I traveled so rapidly (even with a donkey), that events somewhat confused me; following the shore of Lake Erie,

I visited a dozen towns or more, sometimes several in a single day.

I had no sooner disfigured the guest register of the New Hotel, Fredonia, with my odd signature than I discovered the illustrious name of Geo. W. Cable on the line above mine. It seemed a strange coincidence that two such famous men as Cable and Pod should be so unexpectedly crowded together in that little book, in a little inn, in that town. Natural enough and pursuant to the Law of Affinities, I immediately sent my card to the celebrated author, who at once invited the eccentric traveler to his room. Mr. Cable had been reclining, having just arrived by train. He gave me a complimentary ticket to his lecture, that evening, which I placed in my pocket, and later gave to the hotel clerk for discounting my bill.

"What a pretty place this must be in summer," was the author's initiatory remark, while twisting a yawn into a smile.

"Yes, indeed," I answered, and stretched my legs.

"And how do you stand the journey."

"Oh, fairly well; getting in better condition every day."

"You are a slender man, Professor, but I assume, very wiry, like the cables."

The conversation continued until I felt the strain, and I presently shook hands, and wishing him a full house, departed. The author-lecturer is a little under stature; he wore a genial smile and frock coat; his eyes were as bright as duplex burners; and he shook hands just as other people do.

It was long after dark when we travelers ambled into Brockton and put up for the night.

Mac and I had passed the day in the village of Ripley. The Raines Law did not seem to have a salutary effect on that section of the State. I met on the road that afternoon a tall, lank, tipsy fellow, carrying a long muzzle-loader gun. He stopped me, and said he was a Westerner, a half-breed, and fifty years old. "Been out shootin' mavericks," he said importantly. "Same gun (hic) had in th' Rockies. I'm gentle, though—gentle as a kitten." I was charmed to know he was not hostile, said "So long," and hurried on.

Sunday was Valentine's Day. I received a few doubtfully appropriate souvenirs, but did not discover the name of a single friend in the batch. Before leaving Ripley I was presented with a large and handsome dog, a cross between the bloodhound and the mastiff, a pup weighing 98 pounds, which I named Donkeyota. The generous donor was a Mr. W. W. Rickenbrode, who accompanied me some distance to assist me in handling the huge animal, in case of emergency. He had no sooner bade me good-bye than I feared lest I should not be able to make another mile that day. The wind blew a hurricane. While passing a cemetery, I took a snap-shot of square grave-stones, which photograph shows them rolling in that driving gale. It was the most wonderful demonstration of the wind's power I ever witnessed.

Shortly afterward, in descending a steep and icy road into a gully the sled with its burden ran against my donkey's heels, upset him, and carried him half way down the hill. In my anxiety and haste to assist Mac, and hold on to my hat, I dropped the dog's chain, and away he went kiting down hill after the sled; and I needed four hands. To my surprise, the dog, Don, seemed to enjoy the entertainment, and instead of fleeing back to Ripley, rolled in the snow and barked in glee.

We reached the Half Way House, Harbor Creek, after dark. Next morning after breakfast the landlord's little daughter came rushing into the house to impart the thrilling news that John, their horse, had a little colt; and, enthusiastically leading us to the stable, she pointed to my donkey and said, "There! see?" Mac A'Rony turned his head and regarded the little one with a comical expression on his countenance, as much as to say, "If I brayed, you'd think me a Colt's revolver."

Upon entering the city of Erie, Pa., the Transfer Company sent an invitation to Mac A'Rony and Donkeyota to be its guests; I sought a leading hotel, and busied myself with my newspaper article. Tuesday, late in the day, we started for Fairview, twelve miles beyond. We passed many jolly sleighing parties, some of whom stopped to chat with me, and share with me refreshments, and purchase my chromos; and one sleigh load promised to entertain me royally at the hotel. They kept their word, and after refreshments and an hour's rest, we resumed the journey in the light of the full moon, arriving at Girard by 9:30. Next morning, the village constable arrested my attention and persuaded me to act as auctioneer at a vendue; by which deal I made some money. I worded the hand-bill as follows:

AUCTION SALE.
Monday, February 15th, 1897.
The farm of Jeremy Shimm, its buildings, live-stock,
farming utensils and implements, its crops
and its woodland, its weals and its woes, including the
following named articles and belongings, will
be sold under hammer this day at 10 a. m.:
Barns and sheds, and other stable articles,
pens and pig-pens, hen-roosts, dog-kennels,
house and smoke-house, step-ladders, dove-cotes,
buggies, wagons, traps and rat-traps, plows,
sows, cows, bow-wows, hay-mows, sleds, beds, sheds, drills,
wills and mills, wagon-jacks and boot-jacks,
yoke of oxen, yolk of eggs, horse-clippers,
sheep-shears, horse-rakes, garden-rakes, cradles,
corn-cribs and baby-cribs, cultivators, lawn
mowers, corn-shellers, chickens and coops, roosters
and weathercocks, swine, wine, harrows, wheel-
barrows, bows-and-arrows, stoves, work horses, sawhorses,
axles and axle-grease, axes, cider, carpets,
tables, chairs, wares, trees, bees, cheese, etc.
By orders of the TOWN CONSTABLE,
Hank Kilheffer,
Pythagoras Pod, Auctioneer.

The dodgers were speedily printed and circulated in all directions—sown broadcast, as it were—and, it being a windy day, they flew like scudding snow-flakes over every farm for miles around.

A great throng assembled to witness the extraordinary event, and to take advantage of bargains with the traveler-auctioneer, who, mounted on a pile of wood, with plug hat in hand, yelled at the top of his voice and finally disposed of the rubbish. The art of auctioneering seemed to come to me by inspiration, and the enthusiastic farmers and towns-people swarmed around me, eager to secure a trophy of the notable sale.

"Three superb harrows are now to be sold, and will be sold, if I have to buy them myself—seventy-two tooth, thirty-six tooth and false tooth harrows; harrows with wisdom teeth, eye teeth and grinders, will grind up the soil and corn-stubble in a harrowing manner, and cultivate the acquaintance of the earth better than any other kinds made. How much am I offered?" As I yelled, I felt that I had strained my voice.

"One dollar," called a granger to set the ball rolling.

"One dollar, one dollar, one dollar—going one dollar—gone one dollar—to the bow-legged gentleman over there, with albino eyebrows"—"*This way, sir*!" I shouted. "Constable, please take his name, and chain him to the wood pile."

In this manner it didn't take me long to dispose of the farm, including the soil four thousand miles deep, and the air forty-five miles high. I finished the ordeal by noon, was paid my fee, and then discourteously told that I had realized several hundred dollars less from the sale than the constable himself could have done. Still every purchaser admitted he was more than satisfied with my generous conduct, shook my hand, bought a chromo and expressed the desire to meet me again. And that was a thing that does not happen always in connection with vendues.

CHAPTER XII.
At a country dance

TOC

I do love these ancient ruins.
We never tread upon them but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history.

—Duchess of Malfy.

I did not tarry long in Girard, but spent the night in West Springfield. Thursday morning I escaped from the Keystone into the Buckeye State, eating dinner in Conneaut. As the sleighing had disappeared, I shipped my little sled home, as a relic of the trip, and packed my grip in the saddle, as of old.

After a short rest in Ashtabula, we climbed a hill by the South Ridge road, where I got a fine view of the city, and soon lost ourselves in the darkness.

Presently a farmer drove up in a rickety wagon and began to coax me to accept of his hospitality for the night. He deftly explained that he would care for me and my animals until after breakfast for fifty cents.

I decided to avail myself of the invitation, and Mac congratulated me on my display of good sense. I, too, slapped myself on the shoulder; I was ready to sup and go right to bed. In a short time both donk and dog were comfortably stabled, and I was introduced to the family. The noises from the lighted kitchen had faintly intimated to me the sort of den into which I was allured. It contained the noisiest lot of children that ever blessed a household.

"Are these all yours?" I inquired, politely.

"Nope," answered Mr. Cornbin. "Ye see, this 'ere's sort of a half-way house;" the man smiled, and poked some cheap tobacco into his corn-cob pipe. "There's goin' to be a dance down to Plimton's to-night and all our friends from around 've fetched in their babies for George Buck—he's our hired man—to take care of. Like to dance, eh? Better go 'long—fine women going ter be there—here's plug, if ye want a chew—no? That's smokin' terbaccer on the table by yer. We're plain folks, but you're welcome to the best we've got."

Mrs. C. prepared me a supper which went right to the spot. She advised me to go to the dance, by all means. I had made up my mind to that as soon as the word "dance" was mentioned; the "kids" would have driven me crazy in short order, had I remained with Buck.

One by one the mothers of the hilarious "brats" came in; then we all got our wraps on. I expected, of course, we were going to ride, but no, the whole party walked. My hostess took her own babe with her. She would leave the hired man in charge of her neighbors' children, but was too wise to entrust her own child with him and the lamp.

When we reached our destination I was introduced to four grangers playing "seven up," and told to make myself comfortable. "Choose your woman, Professor," said Mr. Cornbin, "an' show 'em how you kin manage yer feet on a waxed floor."

Sure enough, the floor was waxed. The garret was converted into a veritable ball-room. Two rows of upright scantling crossed in the center of the room and propped the snow-laden roof, and through these uprights, some twenty inches apart, glided the blue jeans and overalls, calico and cambric skirts, with as much energy and pride as might be squeezed out of a city cotillion. The fiddlers and caller were mounted on a board platform at one end of the "hall." They sawed away and shouted, and wore out more enthusiasm, catgut and shoe-leather than I ever saw wasted in the same length of time.

There were all sorts of dances and dancers. I myself tackled the Virginia reel, Lancers, Quadrille, Caledonia, Polka, Hornpipe, Mazourka, a Spanish dance, the Irish Washwoman, and several others. The favorite music was "Pussy in the Rainbarrel;" it served for a half dozen different dances. I never liked the music—a sort of windpipe or bagpipe which allowed no breathing-spell from start to finish. In my second dance I went off my feet, my head caught under the sloping roof, and the floor master had to knock my "pins" from under me to get me loose.

There was one pretty girl there, and I tried to engage her for a dance, but every time I approached her she shied away; at last, she got used to my odd appearance, and allowed me to clasp her to my bosom in a waltz. Just as we got started, the dance closed, and the caller shouted to choose partners for a square dance. My pretty partner agreed to dance it with me; I could see several of her admirers looking "daggers" at me.

"Forward; right and left!" sounded the call. "Lead yer partners round the outside!"

I thought the caller meant the outside of the house, and started down stairs, but was soon stopped, and the call explained to me.

"Alaman left!—grand right and left!—half way and back—change partners, and four ladies salute!—balance again and swing the opposite lady!"

That succession of calls completely demoralized me. I got all mixed up, and

soon found myself clasping an upright instead of somebody's partner, and concluded my part by violently sitting on the floor. After that I contented myself with looking on.

Although the two prettiest features of the ball—the Minuette and the St. Vitus Dance—had not yet taken place, I felt more than satisfied, and bidding my friends good morning, set out for the Cornbin domicile.

After a late breakfast of tea, bread, salt pork and fried potatoes, I started for Geneva.

All through New York State people had supposed on seeing me that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had "busted," and that Marks, the lawyer, was homeward bound with his mule. In Ohio, the curious countrymen inquired if I was on my way to join Maine's Circus, at its winter quarters, Geneva. Mac, as well as I, was quite sensitive over these inquiries. Through the driving snow-storm we managed to reach a hotel where, after a noon meal, I led my animals on to Madison.

When a half mile yet to the village we passed the Old Woman's Home, which I visited the following morning, Sunday. The man who planned it was a genius. The rooms of the commodious building were fitted up to suit the whims of the most fastidious fossils of second childhood. Paintings and plaster bas-reliefs of old women knitting, washing false teeth, and sewing, decorated the walls. Sewing baskets, crazy quilts, dolls, and paper soldiers were strewn about the rooms. The most novel of all departments was the dental and hirsute Check Room, where the old ladies checked their false teeth, wigs, cork legs, etc., when they happened in disuse. A little brass ring containing a number is given the owner of the article to be checked, so that it may be preserved in good condition, and not get lost. Incidents are cited where very old women, during intervals of temporary aberration, have got their checks mixed and tried to wear an extra set of teeth, or an additional wig; and it is said that once a woman with two normal legs endeavored to hook on a cork leg. But when we consider the great age of the inmates, such cases are quite pardonable.

From the next town, Painesville, we went to the home of President Garfield. Mr. R——, who had the care of the handsome residence, invited me in to rest, and sup. I was shown all of the beautiful and interesting rooms. In the spacious hall hung a large photograph of Milan Cathedral, and in the upstairs hall, a portrait of Washington and an engraving of Lincoln. In the General's favorite study, I was permitted to sit in the large easy chairs where he had found comfort after his mental labors and inspiration for his speeches and debates, and regarded the bric-a-brac and furniture with more awe and reverence than I had ever felt upon visiting the homes of the great.

Two miles beyond Mentor is Kirtland, once a thriving Mormon camp. It is situated at considerable distance from the direct route to Cleveland, and it took us over a distressingly muddy road, and through such intense darkness that I soon lost my bearings. Seeing the gleam of a lamp in a window, I went up to the house to inquire the way to the tavern. The owner insisted on our being his guests, and I felt very grateful. My animals were assigned to a shed, and I was invited to a hot supper, which my good hostess hastily prepared.

I soon discovered that I was among spiritualists, as well as Latter Day Saints. My Host, Mr. J——, was an elderly man, and well informed. He said much about Joseph Smith. He himself was born in Kirtland some eighty years back, and had often listened to the preachings of the founder of Mormonism. In those days Kirtland contained about 2,000 inhabitants; but all that remained of the town are two stores, a shop, and a dozen or so little houses, half of which I found to be occupied by itinerant preachers of the "Latter Day Saints."

My host said he firmly believed in Spiritualism, and dwelt at length on communication between the material and spiritual world. Finally he strode to my chair and felt of my cranium.

"Why Prof.," said he enthusiastically, "you are a medium yourself. All you require is a little study of the science. Spiritualism is merely the science of materialism." I shivered audibly.

"And do you mean to tell me," I said, "that you believe honestly you can see the ghost, or the spirit of the departed?"

"I know it," Mr. J—— returned, emphatically. "I have *felt* the spirit of the departed. One night at a seance I saw my little step-daughter who had been dead many years. I heard her call to me "papa." She put her arms round my neck, and kissed me on the lips. Then she disappeared. Of course, I know it! I saw her, I heard her, I felt her; isn't that proof enough?"

I told my host that he was certainly convinced, but I wasn't. I then bade him and his wife good night, and was ushered to my chamber. There I pulled the clothes over my head, and tried to attribute my shivers to the cold.

When I awoke next morning and searched in my grip for my razor and found in place of it a "Toledo Blade," I began to suspect some supernatural being had robbed me.

Before leaving Kirtland my host persuaded me to be shown the famous

Temple and the house in which the Prophet, Joseph Smith, lived. The Temple of the Latter Day Saints there standing, is probably the only church of three stories in the country. I climbed to the tower that surmounts it, and got a fine view of the spot where once stood the house of Brigham Young. The arrangement of the inner temple was quite novel. At both extremities of the main hall, or nave, was a series of four rows of white-painted seats, lettered in gilt to represent the several orders of the Priests of Melchizedek. Long rows of rings hung from the ceiling, crossing each other in places, from which were once suspended curtains to divide the nave into rooms for the sessions of the different orders, and in the white square pillars might still be seen the rollers and pulleys with which the curtains were drawn.

Said Mr. J——, "I have heard Joseph Smith shout from that pulpit and tell how the Mormons would yet build a temple still larger, to answer their future needs, and some day in the future another one a mile square; that they were the chosen people, and would send missionaries to convert all Europe, after which they proposed to sweep in America to a man. Soon after that proclamation he moved West with a large following. There they reorganized, and the new order assumed the title of 'The Latter Day Saints.'"

Traveling that day was most disheartening in more ways than one. The roads were awful, my exchequer extremely low. Fortunately, on the way to Willoughby a farmer offered to feed me and my partner, provided we would help him saw some wood.

Mac supervised the work. After we sawed off a section of a log, the farmer handed me the axe, but soon took it from me, saying that I couldn't chop any better than I could saw. Then we ate.

larger

"Mac supervised the work."

larger

"Only time I got ahead of him."

CHAPTER XIII.
A peculiar, cold day

TOC

As Bud bestrode the donkey the cheers of the throng rose, but above the tumult he could hear the North End jeering at him.

—Much Pomp and Several Circumstances.

From Willoughby we went to Cleveland. My route through the beautiful city lay along one of the finest residence streets in America—the famous Euclid avenue.

From there we marched to Superior street, where cheers greeted us on every hand. The papers had heralded my advent, and as in the other towns and cities, the newspaper artists had taxed their imaginations to picture Pod and Mac.

We two were engaged to appear at the Star Theatre Wednesday evening, and when I rode out on to the stage the house shook with laughter and cheers. I made a short address and announced that I would sell photos of Mac A'Rony and his master at the door.

That theatre put me way ahead financially. Thursday morning I called on the Mayor, Mark Hanna and Senator Garfield, and added the autographs of all three to my album. Mr. Garfield invited me to attend the weekly dinner and reception of the "Beer and Skittles Club," that evening. I went and enjoyed myself.

Next day I reached the village of Bedford by 7:00 P. M., only making thirteen miles; and the following night I put up at a cozy inn at Cuyahoga Falls. We three had covered eighteen miles that day; it seemed twice the distance. I was almost frozen. All day I held my once frost-bitten nose in my woolen mittens, and my ears were wrapped in a silk muffler. In the morning a man hailed me: "Cold day!"

"Yes, pretty chilly," I returned, politely.

A half mile on a farmer opened the door and yelled:

"Pretty cold, hain't it, Professor?"

"You bet," said Pod, icily.

Some distance further a fat German drove by in a gig and said: "It vash cold—don't it?"

"'Course it's cold!" I answered, acridly.

A mile beyond two men reminded me it was a very wintry day.

Then a woman drove past and tossed me the comforting reminder: "Don't you find it awfully cold?" I did not reply to the last two.

Twenty minutes later a boy, from a cozy home, yelled to me. I had passed to some distance, and did not understand. It sounded like, "Won't you come in and warm, and have lunch," I hesitated a moment in the biting wind, then retraced my steps and called to the lad: "What's that you said?"

"It's a cold day!" yelled the scamp.

I was mad enough to unload my Winchester. But I didn't; I only tucked my half-frozen nose in my mits, rubbed my ears, and continued my journey, like an ice-covered volcano. A mile beyond a wagon with a family in it passed me, and the man said, "Cold, my friend." At dusk a farmer inquired, "Hasn't it been a pretty frigid day?" The human volcano was now ready to burst. So when a man and woman warmly clad drove by in a buggy, with top up, I resolved to get even. I shouted several times before the rig stopped. A fur-clad head stuck out to one side, and a male voice called: "Can't hear ye; come nearer." I ambled up, put a foot on the hub of a wheel, and said, "I simply want to say, it's a cold day."

"You—!——!!———!!!————!!!!"

As soon as he had finished, I said, by way of civil explanation: "My dear sir, do you know, a hundred people have stopped me to-day and told me it is cold. I have tramped nearly twenty miles without stopping to warm or eat; and I resolved to let the next fellow have the same dose I have been taking half-hourly all day. Now, if you are satisfied that it is a cold day, I will bid you good night."

With this I returned to my companions, somewhat warmer physically, but cooler in spirit.

The hotel in Cuyahoga Falls received us most hospitably; I never shall forget the kindnesses of its landlady. The village dates back to pioneer days. It is built on the hunting grounds of the old Cuyahoga Indians.

Monday, March 1st, at 12:30 P. M., we arrived in Canton.

The citizens expected my arrival, and Market street teemed with excitement. In front of two hotels, a block apart, stood their proprietors waving hats and arms, and calling to me to be their guest. I was puzzled to know which invitation to accept. While deliberating, one of the landlords approached, and taking my arm, led me to his comfortable hostelry, where he royally entertained me and my animals.

The pageant that celebrated the departure of William McKinley to the seat of Government was a fair estimate of the regard in which his fellow-citizens

held him. Canton did him honor. I witnessed the leave-taking at his house, his ride to the train in the coach drawn by four greys under escort of a band, and heard him deliver his farewell address from the rear platform of his private car.

I spent Wednesday night in Massillon, and next morning returned to Canton, to take some interior photographs of McKinley's home. I was successful, beyond my hopes and expectations, securing fine pictures of his study and parlor. The President's inauguration at Washington called forth a deafening demonstration. Cannon boomed, steam whistles shrieked, and the citizens shouted and hurrahed, and I was glad Mac was not with me to add his salute.

I returned to Massillon, and at 4:00 P. M., set out for Dalton over the muddiest, stickiest red-clay roads I ever encountered. I saw a meadow-lark on the first of March; this day I heard blue-birds and robins singing gaily. It looked as though spring had come to stay.

I expected that day to reach Dalton, only eight miles distant, but the mud prevented me. I put my foot in it—the genuine red and yellow mixture of real Ohio clay. It was so deep, and sticky, and liberally diluted with thawed frost that once I was compelled to crawl along the top of a rail fence two hundred feet and more, and drag my jackass. At dusk I had covered only three miles. Then I sought lodgings. A store loomed into view shortly; I was elated. According to the sign over the entrance, the younger generation was the ruling power. It read: "Hezekiah Brimley and Father." I made for Hez. He said the town hadn't reached the hotel stage of development yet, but that he would gladly take me in, provided I'd sleep with his clerk in the garret.

I found the store full of loungers, who patronized the chairs, soap and starch boxes, mackerel kits and counter, forming a silent circle round a towering stove in the center. The village treasurer wore a "boiled shirt" and brass collar-buttons, but no collar or coat. His companions were generally attired in flannel shirts of different hues and patterns, plush caps, which might be formed into several shapes and styles, and felt boots encased in heavy overshoes. These rural men eyed me with suspicion until I mentioned Mac A'Rony. Then there was a rush to the door. As it swung open, in leaped my great dog; at once the crowd surged back to the stove.

"Does yer dorg bite?" came several queries in a bunch.

"No," I said. "He has killed a bull, chewed up a ram, made Thanks-giving mince-meat of several dogs, chased a pig up a tree, and only this morning ate two chickens and a duck and chased a farmer into his hay loft. But he doesn't bite."

My statement had a sensational effect on the assembly, who, one by one, sneaked out of the door, leaving Hez and his odd guest alone. As soon as the junior member, Hez's father, came in, Hez took my animals to the shed and fed them, and told me to help myself to the best in the store. "Ye know what ye want; I don't."

Hez said he was sorry he was just out of butter and bread. I was sorry, too. Wishing a light supper, I selected one yeast cake (warranted 104 per cent. pure), a pint of corned oysters (light weight), some crackers, and leaf lard, to take the place of butter, and a cake of bitter chocolate. I left a few things unmolested; such as soap, cornstarch, cloves, baking-powder and stove-polish.

My assorted supper went down all right until I tackled the chocolate. Chocolate is a favorite beverage of mine; besides, I wanted a hot drink. To be good, chocolate must be well dissolved. No pot was to be had, save a flower-pot with a hole in the bottom. A great idea popped into my head. I would drink chocolate on the instalment plan. Did you ever try it? If not, don't let your curiosity get the better of you.

Chocolate belongs to the bean family, and the bean is a very treacherous thing—chocolate bean, castor-oil bean, pork-bean, and all kinds. I first ate the cake of chocolate, then some sugar, and drank two dippersful of hot water,—then shook myself. That mixture might suit my stomach, I thought, but it doesn't delight my palate. I felt I had eaten a heavy meal unwittingly, and sat down to digest it. I hadn't sat long before I felt myself swelling. Something within was sizzling and brewing and steaming; gas and steam choked me. I was sure there was going to be a demonstration in my honor that I had not bargained for. The yeast cake came to mind; then I knew the cause. My body grew warm, and finally I was so hot that I had to go to the garret and take a cold bath; after which I excused myself to the clerk, and went to bed, and dreamed I was being cremated alive.

Next morning, on invitation of the superintendent, I visited the Pocock Coal Mine, situated close by, and had an enjoyable trip through its subterranean passages.

CHAPTER XIV.
I bargain for eggs

TOC

This day Dame Nature seemed in love:
The lusty sap began to move;
Fresh juice did stir th' embracing Vines,
And birds had drawn their Valentines.

—*The Complete Angler.*

It was noon when I started for Dalton, three miles away, and night before we arrived there. The mud oozed into my overshoes, and I made Mac carry me and my grip. I delivered a lecture, whose receipts about defrayed my expenses, and was presented a pair of rubber boots by a man frank enough to admit the boots didn't fit him.

We spent the Sabbath in Wooster. While strolling down its main street with my dog, I suddenly came upon a captive coyote, which defied Don, who ran off in a fright. That monster canine fell considerably in my estimation. I wondered what he would do when our camps on the plains were surrounded with a hundred of these yelping beasts.

Wooster, rather a pretty town, is the seat of a university. The word "seat" reminds me that I needed a pair of trousers. The rainy season had set in, and I wanted a reserve pair. Otherwise, when my only pair got soaked I must go to bed until they dried. I walked into a Jewish clothier's, and, selecting a pair of corduroys, inquired, "How much?"

"Two dollahs ond a hollaf," said the merchant. He informed me that in Mansfield the same "pants" would cost $3, in Fort Wayne $5, in Chicago $7, etc. I said that according to his way of reckoning I could have purchased the same kind of trousers in Dalton for $2, in Massillon for $1, and in Canton for a song. My argument staggered him, but he soon recovered, and showed me a great colored picture, representing a pair of corduroys, one leg chained to an elephant, the other hooked to a locomotive, and both powers working in opposite directions to part those wonderful trousers.

"Just vot you vant vor riding a jockoss; can't bull abart; vy, my dear sir, it's a bargain." That was a strong argument; I bought the "pants."

Passing on through Jeromeville and Mifflin, we reached Mansfield, the home of Senator Sherman; and sixteen miles beyond Galion. That lovely spring day, with the birds chirping merrily in the trees, my pilgrimage seemed unusually irksome. Next day was my birthday, and I resolved to make it a holiday.

I enjoyed a day of recreation, so did my donkey and dog, and in the evening delivered a lecture on my travels before a campaign league at its club house.

On Friday morning I started for the town of Marion, twenty-six miles away. Many citizens of Galion assembled to see us off. Mac and Don were impatient for the journey, and amused the crowd by pulling each other's whiskers. I had boasted of having trained Mac A'Rony to follow me. When I set out with a wave of my hat and a beckon to my partner, he responded promptly, and for some distance verified my boasts. He never before had acted so tractable. Suddenly, a cheer sounded in the distance, and, turning, I beheld that asinine rascal making back to town on a hop-skip-and-jump. How the crowd did yell! It was a circus for them. Mac certainly had rested too long and eaten too many oats. The only time I got ahead of him was when I photographed him. I did not upbraid him, but when I readjusted my scattered belongings and whirled the whip over his head, he moved forward with utmost humility.

At Caledonia, I took advantage of the farmers' market day and sold a large number of photos at a good price. I could not appear anywhere on the street without some rural stranger stopping me to shake hands and purchase a chromo. Saturday evening I lectured to a crowded house.

It was 4:30 P. M. Sunday before I started to Kenton, twenty-seven miles beyond. When nearly there, I passed a small farm whose rural incumbent came to the fence to question me.

"Goin' ter show to-night?" he inquired.

"Nope," I answered, and kept Mac A'Rony moving.

"Hold a minute!—Be ye travelin' er goin' somewhere?" the man persisted, as he leaned over the fence-rail. He interested me.

"When you see people walking," I returned, bringing my donkey to halt, "you can take it for granted, they are going somewhere."

The lonesome-looking farmer was the first I had met who was neither busy at work nor whittling. Gray locks fell wantonly over his ears. His faded coat, blue overalls and felt boots exhibited signs of a persistent conflict with farm implements, hooking cows, kicking horses, and a rich clayey soil. A cow and two hogs eyed my donkey and dog with contempt through the bars of the barnyard fence. I observed that all the buildings, including the house, were of logs. The man, judging from his property, didn't have a dollar in the world, but had great expectations. He asked if I had any books to sell. I had one, a

copy of a volume I had published, several of which I had sold on my journey at a good price. I had lost fifteen valuable minutes talking with the man, and resolved to get even. While wondering what I could take in exchange for the book, a hen cackled.

"Certainly. I have a book to sell," I said.

"How much is it?"

"Dollar and a half."

"I'd buy it," said the farmer, longingly, "but I hain't got the price."

"Have you got any eggs?" I asked.

"Dozens of 'em. How many kin ye suck at a sittin'?"

"I don't wish to suck them; I want them to sell," I replied. "How much do you ask a dozen?"

"Six cents," he answered.

"Well," I said, "I will trade the book for ten dozen. Is that a bargain? It looks like a cinch for you."

"I meant a book about yer travels t' San Francisco," he explained, as he looked far away.

"Well, that's just what it is," I returned, bound to make a sale, or die in the attempt. "Tells all about them: how robbers shot at me in York State, bull chased me down a well in Pennsylvania, dog worried me up a tree in Illinois, cowboys rescued me from Indians in the Rocky Mountains, grizzly bear hugged—"

"Whew," ejaculated the man. "Thet's what I want. Ye got yer book aout purty soon. Wait till I go and fetch th' eggs." And the apparently ignorant man disappeared, soon to re-appear with a paper sack full of hen fruit.

"Fresh?" I inquired, as I tied the fragile bundle to the saddle-horn.

"Couldn't be fresher," was the positive answer. "Some laid terday, some yisterday, but most on 'em ter-morrer." Then observing my arched brows, he added, "Yaas—yer thunk I was a know-nuthin', and I let yer think so, 'cause yer need 'couragement. And I say agin, most on 'em was laid ter-morrer, and th' best on 'em is rooster eggs."

I delivered the book, feeling the farmer had somewhat the better of me after all, and came to the conclusion that because a man looks primitive, and lives in primitive style, he is not necessarily of primitive intellect.

Mac joined in a pleasant adieu to Mr. Bosh, and we sauntered on, I, behind, deeply absorbed in thought. We hadn't proceeded a half mile, however, before Mac shied at a bunch of hay, and ran plumb against a rail-fence; in a jiffy that jackass looked like an egg-nog. There is no word coined to express my eggs-ass-peration.

When I caught the scapegrace, it required a half hour to make him and the saddle look the least respectable. I stopped at the next farm house, where a windmill supplied me with the water to wash the outfit, and I signed a pledge never to have anything to do with shell games of any kind. They always get the better of you.

CHAPTER XV.
Gypsy girl tells fortune

TOC

Every one who has petted a favorite donkey will remember many traits of its mental capacities; for, as in the case of the domestic fool, there is far more knavery than folly about the creature.—*Wood's Natural History.*

It was a sunny spring day when I arrived in Kenton. After supper with a young physician, on his invitation, I retired, and next day set out for Ada, a village sixteen miles away. Toward evening, being tired and almost without funds, I sat down to converse with a farmer who was husking corn. He soon became interested in my trip, and said if I would help him husk awhile he would feed me and my animals. I gladly consented; Mac A'Rony and Don lent their assistance, the donkey soon losing his appetite. After a delicious supper with the farmer's family, I hastened on, reaching Ada long after dark.

Ada is the seat of a Normal School, which is the seat of a large number of other seats. Everybody seemed to be much concerned about the great fistic bout to take place in Carson City that day; the 17th of March. It was "St. Patrick's Day in the morning," with the weather threatening, when I started for Lima. My coat was decorated with cabbage and lettuce leaves and paper imitations of shamrock, and I looked like an animated vegetable garden. Finally it rained; and the road became a mire.

I had just finished a heated argument on the Carson fight, and began to question the story of how St. Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland, when I suddenly found myself on the ground. And I saw the streak of daylight Mac threatened to kick into my brain.

An old man tried to drive a colt past my strange-looking outfit. I called to him to hold his horse by the bit until I could lead my donkey into the field. But no, he could handle the colt, or any other horse, and I should mind my own business. On the rig came a few yards nearer, when in the twinkling of an eye the colt whirled and upset the buggy with its boastful driver. The man was not hurt; but somewhat dazed. Several farmers soon arrived and were loud in their abuse, saying Mac and I had no right on the highway. It was an effort for the donkey to keep his mouth shut. I replied, civilly, that I was sorry the thing occurred, and explained how I had warned the stranger.

Then I whipped up my unjustly abused partner, and left the old man pulling his beard thoughtfully in the midst of the sympathetic group. All day I strode far in advance of my donkey and led untrained, untamed, and frightened horses past.

Next day being stormy, I devoted the morning to writing my newspaper article and answering some urgent letters; then, failing to arrange for a lecture, I left Lima for Delphos, and tramped fifteen miles in mud and rain without lunch.

We spent Saturday night in Van Wert, and Sunday afternoon resumed the journey in sunshine, people crowding their front windows and doorways to see us leave town. We had not proceeded far when I met an odd trio who had run half a mile across lots to speak to me. One boy had a twisted foot; another, a hand minus five or six fingers; and the third acknowledged that as soon as he caught sight of us he lost his head. Considering their crippled condition, I thought they deserved credit for such activity.

It was eight miles to Convoy. There was no bottom to the road. Seeking a footing along the fence, I ground innumerable land crabs into the mud, while the peepers in the swampy clearings piped their dismal music. At dusk we waded into the village where a curious throng awaited the sensation of the day. And there we spent the night.

The nearer I approached the Indiana border, the more impoverished appeared the farms and their struggling proprietors. Every other farm-house was the primitive log-cabin, and the barns and outbuildings generally tallied with the house.

A thunderstorm awoke me at day-break; the prospect for my day's tramp was most dismal. After walking six miles, I stopped to talk with a party of gypsies, in camp. Presently a black-eyed gypsy girl issued from a heap of bedding under a tree, and inquired if Mac A'Rony was an ostrich. Her heavy jet-black hair fell in a mass over her shoulders, and her sparkling eyes did their level best to enchant me, as she asked to tell my fortune.

"How much?" I asked.

Her grizzled sire said fifty cents; the daughter corrected him, saying one dollar. That was too steep for me. I gave Mac the rein and proceeded some distance when the girl called to me, "Twenty-five cents! Come back!" This was an alluring proposition, and I returned. At once dismissing the bystanders, she reached over the fence for my hand, told me to place a quarter in it, then to close and open it. I no sooner obeyed than the coin disappeared, and the gypsy began in a charming manner, as follows:

"That line shows you will live to a good old age. You are to enjoy your best days in the future. Understand me? If your pocket was as big as your heart

you would make many others happy. Understand me?" She surely must mean creditors, I thought. "Yes," I answered.

"Shows it in your face," said she. "You have for a long time disliked your business" (that was no lie), "and want to change it. Understand me? You make friends easily, and wherever you go you are invited to come again. Understand me?" I nodded. "Shows it in your face." I began to think she was reading my countenance instead of my hand.

"Are you married?" she asked. "No, but want to be," I replied.

"Shows it in your face," said she. "A widow lady is in love with you. She has written you, and you will get her letter soon. Her name is Sarah. Understand me?"

"I do not," said I; "I know but one woman named Sarah. Heaven help me if she is after me!"

"Shut your hand now, and make a wish," said the girl.

I did as she bade, and wished long and hard.

"Now open," said she. Her black eyes seemed to pierce my very soul. "You wish to make fame and fortune. Understand me?"

"True, I do," I said to her; that's just what every man wishes, I said to myself. Then she continued:

"You will make fame and fortune in the business you are now in. Shows it in your face." I wasn't satisfied with that prediction; I preferred the fortune to be in my pocket.

"A kiss is awaiting you from a black-haired girl within two weeks' time. She loves you. A lot of girls want you, but they can't have you. Understand me?"

"I confess that I don't quite," I answered. "But I wish those poor girls did." And I looked real serious.

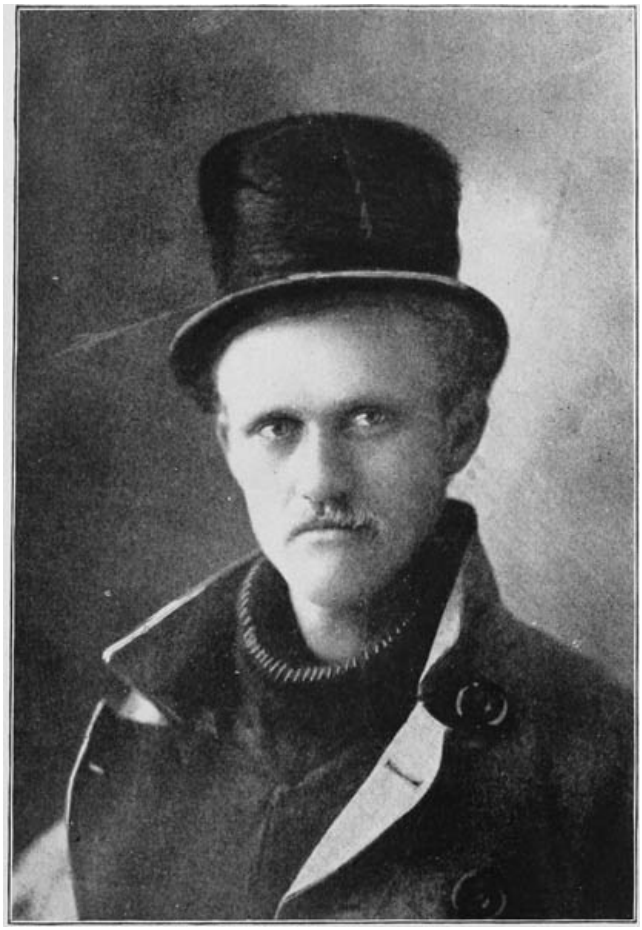
"Shows it in your face," she repeated. That fortune teller puzzled me. The quarter's worth of seance at an end, I plodded on toward the Hoosier country with my mute comrades, wondering how much of the fortune would come true.

Soon afterward we got out of the mud area and came to a hard, smooth, broken-stone road. I stopped my donkey and sat down to take off my rubber boots. Just when I got the first shoe on, Mac began to move down the level turnpike. I called, "Whoa, Mac! Huh!! You long-eared Mephisto!" The jackass paid no heed, but galloped on, shaking his head and kicking up his heels merrily with the dog in front of him, barking as if he enjoyed Mac's practical joke. By this time I was speeding after the runaway, a boot on one foot, a shoe on the other, and chased a half mile before I caught him. Then I led him back for my footgear.

Two miles beyond we again struck mud, thick and deep. Observing a little mound covered with long dried grass, I sat down again to change my footgear. Mac turned and eyed me mischievously, and wobbled his ears, then nodded to Don. I was so absorbed with the idea that he intended to lead me another chase that I failed to hear an ominous sound emanating from underneath my seat. Not until something seemed to burn me did I rise to the occasion, and light out, this time stocking foot, but making less speed through the black and sticky highway than on my former run.

Something less than a million bees swarmed about my head. I ran! Oh, how I ran! And I would be running still, perhaps, had not a farmer seen me and knocked down the swarm with a section of a rail fence. I was quite out of breath. The hero had only spared my life for future tortures.

larger



"I scrutinized his hat inquisitively."

After considerable search, I found boots and shoes, but failed to see either dog or donkey. Putting on my boots, I hung my shoes on the fence, and set out on the trail of the fugitives, which appeared to have gone into the brush. I waded into the thicket, calling Don all the time, and at last was rewarded. He leaped at me delightedly, and barked, and tugged at my trouser legs, and piloted me to the terrified donkey which I found tangled in a mass of wild raspberry bushes, his head tucked between his forelegs, and his back doubled up like a cat at bay. There were no bees on Mac.

That was a hot experience, for a raw March day. I plodded on through the mire to the house, whose proprietor had come to my rescue. The dooryard was filled with hives.

"Regular bee ranch," I remarked, pleasantly, though I burned uncomfortably.

"Yas. Right smart business," the man returned.

"You're right; bees do a smart business."

"Lived on 'em nigh ten years."

"You must find them a hot diet!" I said. "I lived on a nest of them less than half a minute and nearly burned up."

"I reckon so," he replied with a chuckle. "I saw yer scorchin'."

It was 2:30 P. M. when we crossed the state line. The first sight that greeted my eyes in Indiana was a flock of Ohio geese just ahead of us, being driven by a hoosier.

"Fine drove of geese you've got there," I said to the man.

"Yaw," he answered. "But Ohio geese is peculiar. Gooses won't run with th' ganders."

"No?" I queried. "What's the reason they won't?"

"Wall, jest th' way they's built. Won't run—jest fly, er waddle."

"What most all geese do, don't they?" I asked, much amused.

"Yaw," reiterated the hoosier, grinning; "jest fly, or waddle."

CHAPTER XVI.
All the devils are here

TOC

Get money; still get money, boy, no matter by what means.—*Ben Jonson.*

Indiana swamps, woodland, corn fields and log cabins were not unlike those of Ohio. On arriving in New Haven two hours after dark, I was quite tired out, and I think my companions were, too. We had tramped all day without dinner over a road alternately hard and muddy. I would have stopped to rest at a small place called Zulu, but the name sounded so cannibalistic that I looked to my firearms and hurried past.

Next day I registered in Fort Wayne. After calling on the genial Mayor, I set out to inspect the city and see what my chances were, for I found the outlook for my delivering a lecture discouraging, and, although for several days I had barely made expenses, did not attempt money-making there.

Fort Wayne is notable for its great car-shops and the Indiana School for the Feeble Minded. In the morning I boarded a car and rode a mile and a half out of town to the latter. The large building of brick and terra cotta, viewed in its expansive setting of well-groomed lawn and gay parterres, presented a picture of architectural beauty.

The superintendent welcomed me cordially, although it was not visitors' day, and graciously showed me through the interesting institution. Its neatness, the clock-work regularity with which the several departments are conducted, and the great variety and detail of the mode of instruction given the 550 idiotic inmates were a revelation to me. Many of the advanced scholars were making and mending their clothes and bedding; something I couldn't do, I fear. The idiots are carefully attended day and night. Never before did I see a natural-born bald-headed person. Here was one, a funny-looking girl, and I was told she had several brothers, sisters, parents, uncles and aunts, all bald from birth—a distinguished family indeed. I wondered whether her disappointment was as great as that of Pye Pod, who once possessed a head of hair, then lost it. I have heard it said people who never had money know not its value, and presume its so with their heirs.

For mortals deprived of reason the place is surprisingly quiet. The halls are tiled, the floors of the rooms are waxed, and all are so slippery that the inmates are unable to romp, which is probably the reason for such stillness. Whenever they gain sense enough to be boisterous like sane and healthy children, they instantly fall on their craniums on the polished floor and are rendered insensible.

I was interested in a group of little girls who were being taught a game. One wee child with a big head—bigger than I had ever been accredited with—was sitting in an invalid's chair with her head resting in an iron prop, because it was too heavy for one body to support in those hard times, and seated around in ordinary chairs were epileptic, paralytic, cross-grained idiots, etc., so far advanced toward health and sanity by careful training as to play a game.

While the great object of this school is to provide the unfortunates with a comfortable home and prevent intermarriage, a few are graduated every year and transferred to the large farm owned by the institution. I heard the Feeble Minded Brass Band play; its music I thought quite equal to that of many normal bands I had heard. The birthdays of great men (excepting that of Pythagoras Pod), are celebrated, and birthday parties given.

The superintendent drove me back to town and urged me to fetch my donkey out to entertain the idiots, and invited me to dine with him. So not telling Mac about the place, I rode him to the Home, where I found my host and his assistants ready to receive us.

"Shylock there will assist you," said the superintendent, pointing to a hump-backed inmate.

When we got Mac to the hall entrance the circus began. Two attendants helped Shylock boost the donkey while I guided his head, and we managed to pitch the beast headlong into the slippery hall, where he landed three times in succession—first, on his knees and heels, second, on his tail, and third, on his back. I think he imagined he was on ice, for he lay perfectly still, afraid to move.

The hall floor was cleared, but a bunch of idiotic heads stuck out of every doorway, and peals of hyenish laughter reverberated through the building. Finally we got Mac on all fours, and I rode him slowly down the hall amid the hysterical shouts and screams of the physically strong, if feeble-minded children, and talking, yelling and commanding attendants, all of which so frightened my sensitive mount that he squatted down on the floor, rolled over on his side, and brayed. Did you ever hear an ass bray in any confined space? It is awful! These unmanageable pupils and their overtaxed preceptors fairly went mad, while Mac yelled, "Hell is empty, and all the devils are here!"

The hall was now a swarming, uncontrollable mass of unbridled lunacy in human mould; romping, tumbling, fainting, and taxing the united strength and

strategy of the surprised officials to bring order out of chaos. The jackass went into a veritable fit, kicked the plaster off the walls, shattered an incandescent light globe, nearly rolled on top of an idiot who took him for a pussy cat, and brayed himself hoarse. Suddenly he leaped to his feet and ran akiting down the tiled hall floor until it turned; then he tried to turn, and flopping off his feet, came down on his vertebræ. As soon as we could get him out of doors, I handed him over to Shylock and went into dinner with the laughing superintendent. I never want another experience like that. The disappointing feature about the show was that probably not one idiot would remember it over to the next day.

The following morning my party set out over a black muddy road. Thrifty looking farm-houses, many of them of brick, were scattered along our route, and sheep and cattle basked in the sunshine on the south side of strawstacks, often attracting wistful glances from my long-eared partner. Arriving at Churubusco, I put up at a comfortable hotel near the railroad where the noisy passing trains kept me awake most of the night, and resumed the journey next day, after lunch.

Some four miles beyond the village we came to a new iron bridge, without its approaches filled in. No workmen were about. A single two-by-twelve plank was stretched from the bank to the bridge at both ends to enable people to cross, but evidently quadrupeds were supposed to ford or swim the stream. I tarried some moments thinking what best to do, when presently a countryman happened by, and helped me carry a plank from the roadside to widen the bridge approach for my donkey to walk.

What an ass Mac was! He attempted to walk the planks sideways, and consequently fell into the deep miry hole, almost into the stream. I feared he had broken his back, but he escaped injury. The farmer helped me uncinch the saddle and get Mac up the steep bank on to the road; then we transferred the plank at the other end of the bridge to that end and made a three-plank foot-bridge. Finally we got Mac on to the bridge proper, and by transferring the three planks to the other end I managed to overcome the obstacle, and proceeded on the journey, after the loss of two hours. My hat had anticipated the animal into the hole and was flattened by his weight; thereafter it supported a gable roof.

Two hours after dark we came to a barn that looked roomy and airy, and as the next town beyond Wolf Lake was so far away, I concluded we might as well take possession of it for the night. The barn door wasn't locked, so I led my animals in, and struck a match. No horses were visible, but a box stall contained a cow and a calf. Prowling about with lighted matches, I discovered a buck sheep, hiding behind his wool in fear of my big dog. I found a measure of grain for Mac and assigned Don to a pile of hay near the door, then tucked myself in some straw and drew my mackintosh over my shoulders, prepared for a night's rest.

I was almost asleep when the calf bawled; again when on the brink of Lethe, the sheep bleated. Suddenly my restless donkey kicked a board off the side of the barn and set Don to barking. I yelled, "Shut up!" Again the dog barked. The next second he made a leap in the dark, followed by a loud commotion, and at once the atmosphere indicated plainly what kind of an animal the dog was after. I couldn't get out of the door without running the lines, which seemed perilous indeed. Mac kicked and brayed as he never had before, and my dog was running round the barn trying to get away from the atmosphere or something. And I was as busy as the rest endeavoring to bury myself in the straw. Presently the dog and the buck sheep went to settling some misunderstanding, fighting like demons. The cow and calf then began to bellow in a discordant duet, and fearing lest any moment the cow would break the bars of her stall and enter the general fray, I dug all the harder in the straw. All at once, amid the obscured exciting scene and above the tumult, I detected an agonizing groan, and suspected Don was squeezing the life out of the sheep or the calf or the nuisance; but when it was all over and I heard the victim gasping in its death throes, it was plain that my dog had shaken all the strength out of our unwelcomed guest.

It was impossible for me to go asleep in that great, airy barn. I crawled out of the straw, and got my donkey out of doors as quickly as possible. As for Don, I felt indifferent about his joining our company, if he proposed to be familiar. On over the deserted highway we groped our way; the dog sneezing, coughing and rolling by the roadside, the half-suffocated jackass breathing hard and braying faintly for more air, and I soliloquizing vociferously about the existence of useless creatures.

The wind blowing head on, I kept some distance ahead of Mac, and threw mud and stones at the dog, which now seemed particularly fond of his master, and continued my tirade against such obnoxious things as we had lately run against.

"Every creature has some redeeming virtue," Mac A'Rony remarked after a while. "Above all things, don't belittle the skunk; he's the best financier in the world. He could go into the Stock Exchange and bull the market with one

scent, and all the members together couldn't bear it." Mac was ever doling out to me unwelcome philosophy under trying circumstances.

We reached Ligonier, a fine little town eleven miles away, the next day in time for one o'clock dinner. Since entering Indiana I had not made expenses; and my little reserve fund was vanishing. I had been told that Ligonier was a moneyed town, and its people liberal; so I tried to secure a hall for a lecture, but failing, I spoke my piece in the street. Fully two hundred persons assembled to hear me, and encored enthusiastically. I concluded with passing my hat and collecting 32 cents. I talked again three hours later on the same spot, and was rewarded with a contribution of three cents. I think that collection for a lecture is a record-breaker.

Goshen was reached next day by 5 P. M. The Scripture speaks of Goshen as the land "flowing with milk and honey," but as I have been told, I am somewhat rusty on Biblical history. At any rate, I looked forward to replenish my depleted exchequer here, if I had to resort to extreme measures. Before retiring, I made up my mind I was going to be awfully disappointed with Goshen. The people of the section of country I had threaded from the Ohio boundary were incredulous, superstitious, penurious and suspicious, and those characteristics seemed to reach their superlative in that particular town.

Monday dawned still and sunny—an ideal day for hanging out clothes, but not shingles. I hung out mine, nevertheless; it was essential to Mac's welfare and to mine, to say nothing of the dog's.

A drummer showed deep interest in my pilgrimage, and I asked him how he made out with his business. I had failed signally. He said he was glad I spoke to him on the subject, and drew me aside.

"See all the thrifty-looking wagon-teams hitched on the two sides of the Court House Square?" said he; "See those squads of grangers standing around waiting for something to turn up? Well, every stranger is looked upon with suspicion. If he attempts to drum up a new business among these fossils, he is immediately branded a 'fake.' After I had made two unsuccessful trips to this section, I vowed I would make the third one a success. A fake article sold by a first-class imitation drummer would just about catch these people. And ever since that day I have been unloading on them, and reaping a big harvest. Do you see the moral?"

I said I did, and thanked him. After lunch, during which I was accredited extremely thoughtful, I drew my friend aside and whispered, "I have it. I'll buy some axle-grease, and mix it with sweet oil, and sell it for eye salve!" The drummer eyed me as he might a wonderful character, felt of my head, and said I'd win out. At once I went to a drug-store for some pill boxes, blank labels and perfume, and to a hardware store for axle-grease and sweet oil; then retired to my hotel room, and mixed my "Eye Elixir."

As soon as my magic healing wares were ready to put on the market, I hunted up a sore-eyed tramp I had seen on the street that day, and promising him a percentage of my receipts, got him to assist me to get even with the folks he, too, had a grudge against. When I was fairly started on my eloquent talk about the virtues of "Eye Elixir," the tramp walked up with the quarter I had given him, and asked for "another box," saying to the crowd, he'd been looking for me all over the country and was glad to find me, for his eyes being almost well from using the first box began to get worse when he had no more salve, which was the only thing that ever helped his sore eyes. He said, if he could afford it, he would lay in a lot of it for future use, not knowing where he could get any more. Then a boy stepped up and bought a box, and an old woman bought two boxes, and the sales proceeded so fast when once started that I soon sold out, and took in $7, selling twenty-seven boxes of "Eye Elixir" besides the box I had sold to the tramp. I paid him one dollar for his services, with which he was delighted. This left me a net profit, after deducting the cost of making the salve, of $4.90, paying my expenses in town and leaving me a small balance. Then I cleared out of Goshen as quickly as possible. Oh, Shakespeare, how truthfully you said, "What fools these mortals be!"

I resolved that when I should return East I would go by ship around the Horn, or by train across the Isthmus, or else choose a trans-continental route which would give that section, honied and milked by Pye Pod, a wide berth.

CHAPTER XVII.
Darkest hour before dawn

TOC

Yankee Doodle came to town,
  Riding on a pony,
Stuck a feather in his cap,
  And called him "Mac A'Rony."

—*Old Ballad.*

A county poor-house on the road to Elkhart attracted my notice when I was about to pass it by. My outfit was recognized by a man raking the front lawn, and he urged me to visit the institution; so, thinking I might devote a quarter-hour to the cause of self-education, I tied Mac in the yard, and was shown through the dirtiest and most uninteresting building I ever inspected.

Old, lazy-looking men, with empty heads in full hands, lounged about on benches, and several others in the hospital ward seemed to be trying harder to die than to live. One wrinkled but round-faced wench, with a soiled bandage round her ears and forehead, was smoking a well-seasoned pipe in the kitchen while stirring mush. I was glad to see the house prison empty. Five minutes indoors sufficed me; and, bidding my escort a hasty adieu, I piloted Mac on to Elkhart.

Arriving in the city, I at once procured a license to sell pictures on the curb, a precaution I had been timely advised to take, and one that was rarely necessary on that trip. Then, before going to eat and to rest my tired bones, I led the donkey to a prominent corner in the business center and began to sell. I had disposed of two photos only, when a policeman with unusual pomposity ordered me away, but I continued to make sales and, as he was about to take me in custody, shook my license in his face, causing much merriment to the crowd.

Soon the cheering attracted the Mayor to the scene, and he, to my surprise, not only bought a chromo, but paid me for the privilege of riding Mac A'Rony. The jack reluctantly consenting, his Honor got into the saddle and rode down the half-choked thoroughfare a block and back amid thunderous applause.

The profits from my sales did not meet my expenses, including the cost of license, so I hurried on to Mishawaka, where, after supper I delivered a street lecture, passed my hat and collected 24 cents. I would yet be stranded in Indiana, at that rate. Mac advised me to leave town at once, and we made for South Bend at dark, reaching that city by ten o'clock. And there with only $6.50 in pocket, I put up at a small hotel and tossed in bed half the night, wondering how I should save myself.

"The darkest hour is just before dawn," and it was about that time when I recollected having received, a few days before my pilgrimage began, a letter from a Mr. Adams, of Chicago, extending me an invitation to be his guest, should I pass through that city. It was one of many letters received at the time, which I had not answered. I now regretted my negligence, but nevertheless, next morning, with due apologies I wired him to expect me on a certain train, and planned for a week's absence.

The lenient hotel proprietor agreed to take care of my animals as security for my hotel and stable bill; then I purchased a return ticket for emergency, and boarded the train for the Windy City, trusting to a dollar and a half, to my wits, and to "luck" to carry me through.

As I stepped off the train in Chicago, a stranger grasped my hand and gave me a most cordial greeting.

"Laying for me, eh?—first man I meet a confidence man," I muttered inwardly. But he was extremely courteous, and offered to carry my saddle-bags.

"No, sir," I said, politely. "I've carried them twelve hundred miles, and can carry them three thousand more."

"Pod is your name, all right;" the stranger continued, half in inquiry, half in surprise, I thought, as we walked out of the railroad station.

"You bet it is," I said, emphatically. "Just because you've plenty of wind out here you needn't think it can blow away my name."

"Well," said he, cheerfully, "Our wind is said to be the best brewed in all this country. It may not be strong enough to blow away pods, but I'll wager it can blow the pease out of 'em so far you never can find them." The man's facetiousness interested me; it bespoke his nerve.

"Tell me, Mister," I said, after walking several blocks, "where are you taking me, anyhow?"

"Oh, just three blocks more, then we take a cable," said my escort, as he made another futile grab for my countryfied luggage. When on the car, this confidence man had the confidence to introduce me to a pal, as the New York gentleman and scholar, Professor Pye Pod, who was surveying a trans-continental turnpike from the observation platform of a jackass.

"I want to know!" exclaimed bunco man number two; and suddenly, a new light affecting to dawn on his brain, he added, as if to disarm my suspicions, "I see. I see. I have it now. You are the journalist I've read about,—said to be well fixed—first visit to Chicago?"

"Not much," I returned. "Been here dozens of times. Can't say I'm well fixed, though, with only a dollar and a half to my name."

At this stage of the dialogue, I saw a police station. "Come with me," I said, "I want to procure a license. Then we'll have a 'smile.'"

And, to my utter surprise and gratification, both men stepped off the car and followed me like faithful dogs into the police station.

"Where's the Chief of Police?" I inquired of a man in uniform, who stepped toward me.

"Right here before you," was the answer.

"Well, arrest these bunco-steerers," I said, dropping my odd-looking luggage and laying a hand on each man's shoulder. I never saw greater astonishment and embarrassment than was expressed by these two confidence men at being so easily trapped by their "Uncle Rube."

"This man met me at the train when my depot came in," I continued, excitedly, in *lapsus linguæ*. "He knew my name, business, and previous condition of fortune, and put me on a car where he introduced this pal of his, and if I hadn't been forwarned against such fellows by my Uncle Hiram, and caught on to the game, I would have been robbed by this time and chucked into the sewer."

This was enough for the Chief. He seized each man by the collar. Instantly the first man found his tongue and tried to explain matters, and finally did so, to the satisfaction of all concerned. But what a surprise party for Pye Pod!

"Well! well!! well!!!" I exclaimed, my heart thumping like a pile-driver, as I realized my embarrassing predicament. "Who would have thought it? Mr. Adams, of course! My dear sir, how stupid of me! I have wronged you and your friend unmercifully. When I telegraphed you (the Chief here loosened his hold on the men) I never thought you would attempt to meet me at the train, let alone have time to. Your address of 131609 Wellington avenue, I supposed must be near to the State line; Chicago has grown so. Couldn't conceive how you could reach the depot before to-morrow."

Of course, it was "up to me" to treat. So I left my saddle-bags, and going to a cigar store, purchased a dime's worth of cheroots, and did myself nobly by the chief and the confidence men, whose faces were bloated and red on my return. Then my forgiving host took me to his distant home, where, after dinner, we enjoyed a smoke—of his own cigars—and a hearty laugh over my exceptional initiation to Chicago life.

While smoking and chatting, my host happened to mention a big mass meeting to be held that evening at Lincoln Turner Hall. The doors were to be opened at eight o'clock. It was now seven-thirty. At once I explained my financial stress, and told him that the object of my advance trip by train was to try to make enough money to continue my donkey journey. Adams suggested that, that being the case, we should attend the meeting, by all means; so we hurried off.

Arriving at the hall, my host introduced me to an officer of the league, who escorted us both to seats on the platform with a number of vice-presidents and their wives and mothers-in-law. After several orators had spoken, among them being Carter Harrison, soon to be elected Mayor of Chicago, the chairman reminded the audience of Pythagoras Pod and his celebrated donkey, Mac A'Rony, of whom they had read, saying that the meeting was honored with the Professor's presence; then he introduced me, after having said I needed no introduction.

It was five minutes before I could hear myself speak, and, not being there for that purpose, I didn't say much. But my speech seemed to tickle the audience, and when I had concluded, the chairman suggested that my histrionic plug hat be passed around the hall, on the inside, so it was; and, do you believe, it was returned to me with more wealth than I had possessed before, at any one time on my pilgrimage.

The two days following were busy ones. I contracted for the manufacture of a quantity of buttons, containing the picture of Pye Pod on his donkey, and arranged for the meeting with the manager of a large patent medicine concern on my return to the city with Mac A'Rony. Then, after a day's rest, I returned Sunday evening to South Bend, Ind., to find my donkey and dog well and delighted to see me, but myself suffering, for the first, with malaria.

I had a severe chill on reaching the hotel, and all night long I rolled and tossed with a fever. This was doubtless the result of my evening travels through the swamps and lowlands of the Hoosier State. At midnight, I sent a bell-boy for quinine, and by feeding on the medicine liberally, for several hours, I broke up the fever by morning; but still my bones ached. I had no appetite and was in no form to travel. At noon I forced down a little soup, paid my bills, and set out for New Carlisle, walking the whole distance, fourteen miles, by sunset. Mac was so slow that his shadow beat him to town. My

muscles and joints still ached, and I passed another sleepless night. Next day I pushed on to La Porte, fourteen miles further, and went to bed feeling a wreck. But as the chills and fever failed to return, I enjoyed sleep.

My Chicago trip was a boon to me. I gave no thought to money-making for the present. Wednesday morning, feeling in better spirits, I started for Valparaiso, and covered the twenty-two miles on foot by dark, and relished a hearty supper. Thus far the week had been cold and damp and cloudy. The roads, where they were not muddy, were very sandy, and Mac and I made slow headway.

The following night was spent in Hobart, where I was entertained at an amusing, though distressing cock-fight, and all day Friday I tramped or waded in sand six inches deep to the next town, Hammond, where I passed a restless night, in spite of my now restored health. In the morning I learned that the state line runs not only through the town, but also, the very house and bedroom I occupied. My bed was directly on the line, and somehow, any position I got in brought that line across some part of my body.

Dull monotony and bad weather distinguished the next day's journey; a rainstorm met us half way to Chicago, and wet us all the way. But on Palm Sunday, we progressed under more genial skies. I observed many pacific, law-abiding people with prayer-books, bottles and shot-guns, either on their way to church, to a fishing-stream, or to the woods; and we came upon a tandem bicycle party, the machine broken down, the young man and woman apparently broken up. She sat on a stone against a telegraph pole with chin in her hands, watching the gallant fellow, who was at her feet, on his knee caps with a monkey wrench in his hands, trying to repair damages.

From South Chicago we passed into Stony Island Boulevard and the Midway Plaisance of the World's Fair of '93. The remaining Art building arched its brows at my curious outfit, and an endless chain of bicycles and carriages conveyed past us an inquisitive and gaping multitude, many of whom altered their plans to follow us into the city proper. It was six o'clock when we reached Thirty-fourth street and I found a suitable stable for my animals. Then affectionately patting Don's head and rubbing Mac's nose, I left them and sauntered up the avenue, heaving a sigh of infinite relief over my hard-earned triumph.

As I trended the streets of that wide-awake metropolis toward its business center, I was stopped many times by truant messenger boys and idle street gamins, who seemed surprisingly solicitous about the physical condition of my hat.

"Mister, this way to a hat store." "If you want to buy a new hat, I'll take you to a hatter." "This way, Mister, I know a place to get a hat cheap." "Say, Mister, I kin get yer a hat fer nothin'."

Why should I wish a new hat? I asked myself indignantly. True, mine had seen better days, but it was worth more to me now than a hundred new hats. "Yes, yes, you dear old weather-beaten tile," I apostrophized as I strode on with a deaf ear to my inquisitors, "you are of royal stuff, for you have triumphed over many wars and dissensions and still wear a crown! The plebeian hats who calumniate you, although fresh from a band-box, are common compared with you; they are jealous of your exploits and envy you your faithful friend."

"Vividly do I recall our desperate encounters with the mad bull, the hailstorms and other warring elements; and that winter's night when you forgot your personal safety and made a noble self-sacrifice by receiving the assailant's bullet intended for me; and, again, the day the awkward jackass tried to yank me off the plank foot-bridge underneath him in his fall, when you threw your own lean frame down on to the bank in place of me and received the weight which would have mashed me to death, but which only squeezed the wind out of you. Why do all the idle clerks gaze at you so longingly from the shop-windows? Because they covet you as a drawing card to disdaining shoppers. I am proud of you. Rest in peace."

I spent the night with friend Adams, on his invitation. Monday morning I kept my appointment with the patent medicine man. He received me cordially, evidently aware of the boon I might be to his business should I enter his employ, and in order that he might better discuss my proposition and its possibilities, he invited me some miles into the country for a couple of days' outing at a mineral spring resort.

A stylish coach and four met us at the train, and wheeled us over a pretty rolling country, in the glow of the setting sun, to the cozy hotel-sanitarium, which was brilliantly illuminated and whose doors were open to welcome us.

And in less than twenty minutes, Pod made of his Apollo form a companion piece to "Diana Bathing."

The water then sold at fifty cents a gallon and there were two hundred gallons in my tub. Think of it! I had read about beautiful actresses and heiresses taking milk baths and champagne baths and Rochelle salts baths, but that $100 bath of mine in pure lithia water would have put all those pretty bathing women to the blush. But when, in my enthusiasm, I so told my

generous host, he spoiled all my beautiful delusions at once by saying quite mechanically, "Oh, two hundred gallons for a bath is nothing unusual; it's only the overflow."

Next morning he asked me if I would like a magno-mud bath. "Sir?" I interrogated, gravely. "If you had dragged and pushed and carried a stubborn, cantankerous donkey through four hundred miles of red and yellow Ohio mud, and two hundred miles of blue and black Indiana mud, not to mention some six hundred miles of New York and Pennsylvania mud of various hues and conditions, the overflows of December, January and February; if you had bathed in mud, waded in mud, soaked in mud and cursed in mud for nearly five months, and I were to put such a delicate question to you, your sensibilities would be shocked, your nerves paralyzed, your reason ossified."

My host apologized and withdrew the invitation; then with great wisdom and forethought, he introduced me to the physician, Dr. Tanner, the highest authority on fasting, and renowned for his having fasted forty days. I considered this the luckiest meeting of my whole journey. He took quite a fancy to me and gave me valuable instructions and prescriptions for fasting any period from one to forty days; but I was disappointed not to be enlightened on how to go several days without water.

That morning my host made me a liberal proposition to advertise his medicines, he guaranteeing to pay me a regular weekly stipend during the remainder of my pilgrimage to the Golden Gate, and, free of all charges, to provide me with all the photographs of my asinine outfit that I could sell en route. I signed the contract. Then we returned to Chicago.

CHAPTER XVIII.
Champagne avenue, Chicago

TOC

The whole duty of man is to be a mother.—*Jerome K. Jerome.*

One week of gamboling in sporty, wide-awake Chicago, and of high-life on the top floor of the Auditorium, put me in fine fettle to resume travel. My second morning at the popular hotel I indited this note to an Eastern friend; "Breakfasted to-day on the roof, got a shine in the cellar, and met everybody half way."

For nearly five months, through severe winter and early spring weather, I had hustled as I never had before to make ends meet; now I had swum the Hellespont to a prosperous shore, the remainder of my long, slow journey looked more enticing. Several valuable and useful articles were presented to me by wealthy admirers in the Windy City, who also dined me, took me to the theatre and entertained me in other ways.

One evening I was pleasantly surprised to be escorted to a champagne dinner given by my friend Williams, of the Union News Company of New York, to several prominent business men of the West. When the sumptuous repast was well under way he unpinned from the lapel of my coat a button containing a photo of Pod seated on Mac, and paid me a five dollar bill for it; and, learning I had a stock of buttons in pocket, the other guests followed suit. Such wholesale generosity was as overwhelming as my gratitude.

The man with whom I contracted to advertise gave me a donkey, which I named Cheese, to go with Mac A'Rony. And so delighted was Mac with this new comrade to share his burdens that, on my approval, he agreed henceforth to contribute to the papers every other letter on our travels to the coast, and so enable me to devote more time to bread-winning.

Easter morning I found a blue hen's egg at my plate. I was pleased with the remembrance and had the clerk place it in my letter-box. When I called at noon for my mail, I was told the egg had visited most all of the letter boxes, each guest in turn having disclaimed it; so, when at six o'clock I called for the egg to take it to my room for safe keeping, and was handed instead a parcel that smelled of chicken, I was not surprised; however, upon opening it, I could not conceal my astonishment.

"Mr. Pod," said the clerk, gravely, "the egg was handled so much that it naturally hatched. Certainly you are not surprised?"

"Not surprised that it hatched," I returned, to be reasonable, "but this is fried chicken, and the egg was boiled."

My Easter dinner with friends on Champlain avenue made me realize somewhat the stupor a boa-constrictor experiences after having swallowed an ox. My friend Bob B—— urged me to make his home my transitory abode, arguing that perhaps while at the hotel I was cheated of needed rest by yielding too much to entertainment by well-meaning acquaintances. He gave me a key to the house, showed me my room, and told me to drop in any time, day or night, and make myself at home.

Having promised to call on an elderly gentleman who had been very kind to me, I spent that evening with his family. Before leaving I had made great friends with his little granddaughter, and promised to call again and bring her some candy. "I want circus candy, the kind with rings around it," she explained, drawing imaginary circles round her finger.

When I reached my hotel the clerk said several gentlemen were waiting to see me. I was sleepy; besides, I felt I had caught cold and should doctor it at once. Explaining to the clerk that I was indisposed and begged to be excused to my callers, I slipped out of the door and hurried to a drug store. "A good drink of calisaya will fix you," said the drug clerk, who explained it was well charged with quinine, but failed to mention it was also well charged with alcohol. I drank two glasses of it, then boarded a car for Champlain avenue.

Before reaching my destination I fell asleep. But the conductor was thoughtful enough to awaken me and assist me to alight. I was so dizzy from sleepiness, I couldn't walk straight. I soon got my bearings, though, and reached Bob's house by experiencing sensations of treading a moving sidewalk, promenading a steamer deck in a high sea, and circumnavigating a crystal maze.

I found the door-knob but not the key-hole. We had been having damp weather, and I reasoned that perhaps the key-hole had shrunk shut. I searched my pockets for matches, and found enough wooden toothpicks to kindle my wrath. While I was fuming, a policeman came to my relief.

"Who be you, young feller?" he interrogated.

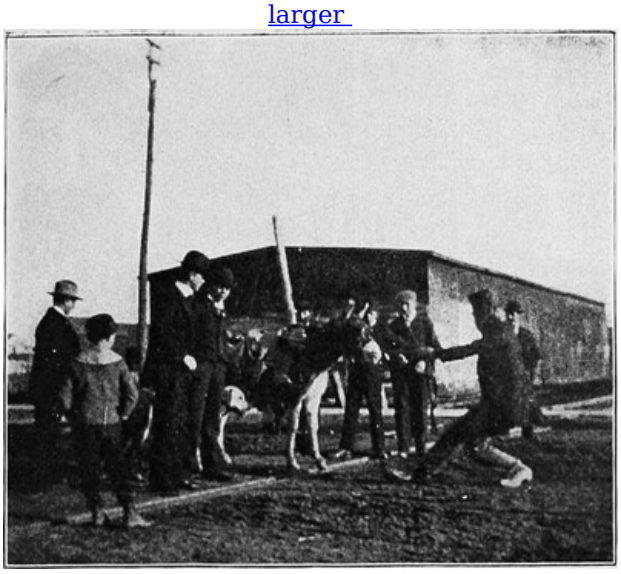
"Pyth (hic) thagoras Pod," I answered, civilly; and offering him the key, added, "Won't you open the (hic) door for me?"

"You don't live here, then," said the cop.

"I know (hic) it," I admitted. "Just visiting friends."

"Are you sure you know where you are at?" he queried, sternly.

larger



"He accused me of attempting suicide."

larger

"We made slow headway to the Mississippi."

"No (hic), I'm not sure," I said feebly, "but I think I'm on Champlain avenue."

"More like champagne," he returned, sourly. "What's the number of the house?"

"I forget it," I answered, "I know the house (hic), though, when I see it."

"I think you came here for business," said the officer. "You better come with me." And he locked his arm in mine.

"Let me ring (hic) up the folks," I pleaded. "They'll identify me." The cop stopped, hesitated, and, doubtlessly deeming prudence the better part of valor, "let." When I took my thumb off the electric button the household must have thought Chicago burning again. I heard Bob tumble half way down stairs; and, when he opened the door and identified me and saw me stagger in, he took another tumble. The third was taken by the disappointed cop, who hurried off to his proper beat.

Conscious of my inebriated condition, I was much embarrassed that my friend should find me in such a state at that late hour. He asked me no questions, and I told him no lies. When he had assisted me to bed, he turned out the gas, which likely I should have blown out, and left me to prayerful meditation. My late propensity to sleep had vanished. My brain was a whirling wilderness. The more I thought about that temperance drink of calisaya, the less respect I had for the principles of prohibition. I scored temperance societies, darned Salvation Armies, and cursed the birth of Matthews, who invented the soda fountain. Before long I was in a sweat. The red beverage was evidently breaking up my cold, but that wasn't all. It broke me up; it had broken the slumbers of my host; I was sure it had broken up my good reputation for sobriety.

I was too nervous to sleep. Thinks I, "A hot bath will just fix me. I'll get up and take one."

I rose and hunted for matches, but couldn't find any. Piece by piece, I scraped several ornaments off the mantel to the floor, one bronze Mozart statuette doing some effective work on my big toe that I had intended a

chiropodist to do. Next I fell over a center-table, and upset a glass vase on the floor, which broke its neck; then I tumbled over a rocker and wondered that I didn't break mine. Still bent upon reaching the bath room, I bent my nose against an opened closet door. I was mad. At last, finding the exit of my chamber, I groped my way into the hall, then hesitated. I thought I remembered the location of the bath room; I was under the impression my bedroom was on the third floor. In reaching for the balusters, I almost lost my balance. My head still whirling like a dancing Dervish. Slowly and dizzily I felt my way down stairs until I came to a door—the bath room door, I supposed. I opened it gently, groped my way in, and put my bare foot on a napkin-ring, which proceeded to roll away, landing me flat on the floor. Then the folding door swung to with a bang. I feared my friends would think burglars were in the house.

But I found the tub all right. I turned the faucets, and was pleased to have both run cold water, for I burned as with a fever. But, when I started to climb into the tub, I found I had either grown shorter in stature, or the tub had been raised. Perhaps it was managed by automatic machinery. I knew nothing about machinery; so with great effort I climbed up and into the tub, but found greater difficulty to get all of me in it. I reasoned that the dimensions of the contracted bath-tub must be all right, but the expansions of my head were wrong; I was intoxicated by a temperance drink, and had heard that it was the worst kind to get tipsy on. I made another heroic effort to jam my body into the tub, but some of me would always lap over the edges. I reasoned that, if I were sober, there would surely be room for three to swim comfortably about that bathtub. Cold water ran from the faucets for some time and I was considerably cooled off, when, suddenly, one faucet began to run hot water. Instead of turning off the water, in my excitement I tried to climb out of the tub, but was wedged so tightly in it a hasty escape was impracticable, and before I fell out on the floor my left leg was scalded. There were no pillows where I dropped, so the next moment the door swung open and the gleam of a lighted match shone in my face. I saw my host, with countenance as white as his nightshirt, suddenly assume a rosy hue, then I heard him giggle. I was glad he saw some humor in it, for I failed to. In one hand he held an old army musket, and I told him not to shoot. Sitting on the floor, I now saw plainly that it was the butler's pantry and not the bath room, and that I had taken a bath in the sink.

Bob, on gaining my room, put some salve on my scald, and wound my limb with the first handkerchief he came across, and I was soon fast asleep.

Next morning I remembered my promise to buy some candy for my little friend and visited a confectioner. It was a big store, and three salesladies tried to wait upon me.

"I wish the spiral-striped peppermint, kind of circus candy," I explained. "It's for a little tot I am fond of."

"I understand," said the girl, "but we haven't it,—but wait a minute."

Before I realized what she meant, she had dashed out the door, presumably to the store two doors away. I was sorry she took such trouble to please a poor patron. Soon she reappeared with a crystal jar of the long stick candy I desired, and dumping a pound of it on the scales, inquired, "How much do you wish?"

"Oh, one stick will do," I said. "She's a delicate child; I don't want to make her sick."

The girl almost dropped the jar. Then recovering her mental equilibrium, she asked, while refilling the jar from the scales:

"Will you take it with you, or have it sent?"

I blinked. "Take it with me, I guess," was my reply. As she wrapped the stick of candy, I reached in my pocket for the penny. Then I felt weak; I hadn't a cent.

"I-I-I-I declare!" I exclaimed. "I left all my money with the hotel clerk; I'll be back directly."

And out I rushed into the street where there was more air. By the time I got to the hotel and back I was willing to buy five pounds of candy. I no sooner entered the store than the girl, with a smothered smile, said, "We sent the candy to the hotel." Now I was embarrassed. "What hotel?" I inquired.

"Why, the Auditorium!" she giggled. "You're Mr. Pye Pod, aren't you? The proprietor said so, and appreciating your immense purchase, desired to spare you all the inconvenience possible."

I heard laughter in the office as I closed the door behind me. I dreaded to face the hotel clerk. As I strolled up street, I thought what a poor mother I would make even to one little child, and tried to fancy the awful strain on Washington to be such a good father to his whole country.

There was one thing that worried me generally when my meals were over; my hat. I feared I should lose it. The hat boy, clever as he was, by mistake might give it to another. Always when he handed it to me I stopped to examine it carefully, to make sure it wasn't one of the stylish tiles which had presumed to associate with it on the rack. It was customary for me to question

the custodian of hats in this manner: "Is this my hat?" "Are you sure it is?"

When, Tuesday evening, my odd-looking stove-pipe was handed me, I examined it incredulously, eyed the colored man, then stepping in front of a natty-groomed gentleman of fifty, who had just received his latest Dunlap from the custodian, I scrutinized his hat inquisitively, then my own, and eyed him inquiringly, as much as to say, "Are you sure our hats have not become exchanged?" The dignified guest did not take kindly to my manner. He frowned, even looked savage. The darkey seemed to think it funny, and laughed in his hand, with back turned. I accompanied the old gentleman down in the elevator, to the office, where we picked our teeth.

Then I addressed the clerk in injured tones: "I have a complaint to make."

"Let's have it," said the genial Harry.

"That black, blue-brown hat custodian at the dining room is forever getting my tile mixed with those of other guests. I hate to make a fuss, but——"

"You are quite right, Mr. Pod," said the clerk, seriously, "A first-class hotel should not tolerate such inefficiency in a trusted employee. I'll discharge the fellow at once."

I stepped away, contented, and lighted my cigar.

Then the stately gentleman addressed the clerk: "Who in —— is that fellow? He's off his trolley! He thought this hat of mine was his, and that rusty antediluvian, dilapidated specimen he wears was mine. What's his name?"

"Why, Professor Pythagoras Pod, of course. Didn't you recognize him? Everybody knows him. He knows his hat, too, and don't you forget it. Offer him fifty dollars for his old tile, and see how quickly he'll refuse it." The outraged dignitary shrank into his clothes, and, with a wry glance in my direction, walked away. The custodian of hats kept his job, but I never saw the stylish gentleman again.

PART TWO.

By PYE POD AND MAC A'RONY.

"Do you believe the whale swallowed Jonah?"

"No."

"And don't you believe Balaam's ass spoke to him?"

"Yes; I believe that."

"Why?"

"Because so many asses speak to me every day."

CHAPTER XIX.
Donk causes a sensation

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

Days are but the pulse-beats of immortal time.—*Sparks from Iron Shoes—Mac A'Rony.*

It was the twenty-tooth of April. The inclement weather, which had rained supreme for forty hours, suddenly abdicated in favor of the presumptive sun and genial air apparent which ruled gloriously for some six hundred and nine minutes. Save that it lacked the odor of new-mown hay, it was a day fashioned after a donkey's own heart. However, a yard of fresh grass painted green would have satisfied my taste better than did the golden sun rays and the transparent air.

At ten o'clock Pye Pod, D. D. (donkey driver), sauntered off to do an errand, and then hastened to the stables to saddle and pack his two noble and fractious partners, Cheese and myself. I believe my erudite collaborator has already introduced to you my long-eared comrade.

Such a load as we were to carry! Of course, I got the worst of the bargain in which I had no voice. Said my master, as he rubbed my nose, "Mac, old boy, since you have become hardened to the trip by reason of your thirteen hundred mile creep (I nabbed at him vexedly), I'll just let you shoulder the two boxes." And, with nerve incarnate, the unbalanced Professor balanced on my back what seemed to me two one-ton cases of pig-iron. I believed my time had come. Even the unsophisticated Cheese, whispered to me nervously, "Our coffins, Mac, sure as Balaam!" and resumed the mastication of timothy hay, as if it were his last meal.

The pack-saddles were tightly cinched to us. Every time Pod pulled on the ropes under my belly I grunted as if in pain, although it only tickled me, and gnawed a half inch off the oaken manger in seeming agony; so, while he imagined he was squeezing all the breath out of me, I had still enough left to inflate a balloon.

That's how I fooled Pod. All this time he was talking to himself. He vowed that he would get even with a certain officious policeman, who had daily gloried in the exercise of his authority, by ordering him to lead his "confounded jackass" away from the front portal of the hotel, where crowds of curious people always gathered around us and blocked the way. His soliloquy grew louder and more fiery every moment. Even Cheese lifted his snoot out of the haymow and, tilting his left ear, whispered, "Say, Mac, our master must have some unholy motive in mind. Hold on to your wind. Don't let him lace those lockers on you, as a squaw would bind a pappoose to her back, for you may want to kick 'em off. Pod's daft."

Well, that suspicious jack's most grotesque foreboding was soon realized. Everything went well until we were nearly opposite the great double portal of the hotel, when, suddenly, I felt the saddle slipping round my girth. Another second and I was flat on my back, jerked high off my feet on top of the boxes. For a moment I could not realize the undignified posture I was in. Being roped securely to the boxes, all I could do was to kick at the flying sparrows, and bray as only a frightened donkey can.

Crowds quickly assembled. Excitement ran high. Cheese, instead of raising a hoof in my defense, dropped his ears and looked complacently on my animated heap like a country gawk. The hotel guests rushed out bare-headed, some of them fresh from the cafe with tripe and ice cream in hand, and wild-eyed pedestrians flocked to the scene of my troubles. Don barked excitedly and kept the throng back. The coolest one of the outfit was Pod. He stood quietly by, grinning and bowing to the open-air audience, as if he were the bandmaster and I the band.

I now recollected Cheese's advice, and chided myself for having expanded my lungs at the packing. The thought was vexing to one in my position. Immediate relief looked hopeless. Scared half to death, I brayed myself hoarse before a would-be liberator wedged through the crowd and order Pod to clear the thoroughfare. He was that pompous policeman. He eyed Pod severely, and glancing at my up-turned face, inquired:

"What's in them there boxes, Mister?"

"Pills," said Pod, "just pills," and with his usual suavity added, "A very dainty but effective cathartic, the best remedy in the world for a morbid patrolman. I know you feel out of sorts, Mr. Cop, but the contents of one of these boxes taken internally will make you imagine you are not only the chief of the Chicago police but the Mayor of the city and the President of the United States combined."

The Professor then handed the man a small box, and proceeded to free me. And, do you know, I choked Michigan Boulevard for an hour before I was got "right side up with care."

We next moved on to the Columbus Statue, which then stood in a barren spot between the road and the lake shore, where a photographer waited to

take some rare views of our outfit. The bombastic policeman ordered us off the grass, although there was nothing but gravel in sight. Cheese was raving mad and so annoyed by the cop's impertinence that he boldly made a bluff at eating the sculptured stone wreath off the statue, just to worry him.

"Mac A'Rony, please keep your ears still for one moment, will you?" said the photographer, as he took hold of my flaps and pushed them forward, adding, "Now keep them there."

As he let go they flew back into a natural position like blades of whalebone. Next he twisted my nose almost out of shape, and addressed me as if I were a lady. "Now, smile gently—there!" Such a grin as I gave! The instant he removed the black cloth from the camera, a familiar lump came up in my throat, and I brayed. My efforts to restrain myself joggled my ears out of gear and completely shook the smile off my face. But I was "took," body and bra'in's, with the whole outfit.

How I shudder, when I gaze upon those photographs; my drooping eyes, and my lazy body—all taken together made a picture so perfectly asinine that one can almost detect the bray leaving my mouth. I have always been ashamed of that picture of real life. Like all donkeys, I was disappointed because my photo did not flatter me. Besides, my master's eagerness to keep his contract to advertise a patent medicine led him to drape Don in a gray blanket, on which, "Throw physic to the dogs," was brilliantly embroidered—words which helped make Shakespeare immortal, but caused Don to blush.

It was a long jaunt to Illinois street. Several times my burden threatened to come off. And once I almost made a free distribution of pills by falling in front of an electric car, which was brought to a stand only six inches from me.

I caused a sensation, to say the least. And when Cheese brayed in terror, a multitude flocked to the scene. The passengers were thrown out of their seats, some of them pitched off the front platform on the top of me, and screamed with fright.

Pod, of course, flew into a rage. He accused me of attempting suicide; but Cheese loyally defended me and said, "Such a load of medicine is enough to prostrate a herd of elephants."

Soon afterward, on turning a corner, the wind blew Pod's hat off, and it went flying under the wheels of a cable car which completely ironed the curl out of the hat rim on one side, and gathered a crowd on the other.

"Managing one jackass is a difficult job, but controlling two is impossible," I heard Pod mutter, as he slapped his plug on his bald pate.

Although it was only five miles to Garfield Park as the crow flies, it was ten by the course we took. At that place we were not overfed, and soon after leaving we encountered an electric hail storm. Volley after volley of round shot ripped open Pod's ill-fated tile, and his spleen broke loose again. "I'm glad this day's most ended!" he thundered. His remark seemed to solicit sympathy, so I answered gravely, "My worthy master, remember that days are but the pulse-beats of immortal time. You should cherish each as you do every heart throb." My philosophic words silenced him for a moment. Then, as if I might warp the wearisome hour by a mute tongue, I lay back my tail and ears till they were parallel with the road, and landed my cargo in Oak Park before six.

There was no hotel in sight, but as it was not yet dark, Pod was enabled to find a barn, adjoining a saloon, and there he stalled us, fed and watered us, and said good night.

CHAPTER XX.
A donkey for Alderman

TOC

BY PYE POD.

Full in the midst the polish'd table shines,
And the bright goblets, rich with generous wines;
Now each partakes the feast, the wine prepares,
Portions the food, and each the portion shares;
Nor till the rage of thirst and hunger ceased
To the high host approached the sagacious guest.

—Homer's Odyssey.

I left my embryo caravan in Oak Park for the night, and returned to the Auditorium Hotel. The clerk greeted me with, "Well! well!" grasped my outstretched hand, and with a smile said, "I thought your picturesqueness had left us for good." Then, pulling a pen out of the vegetable pen-stand which squinted "How to do?" with one remaining eye, he handed it to me.

"I'm a hard customer to get rid of," I remarked; "could not get out of the city entirely this day, though I've traveled miles—jacks at Oak Park—saloon barn, best I could find—no hotel—got to eat and sleep, you know." And having said this, I walked majestically to the "lift."

"Seventh floor?" queried the elevator boy.

"No—dining room," I corrected, patting my stomach fondly.

"Pretty late for feed, guess," observed the lad discouragingly, as we began to rise.

"There's a banquet on now," continued the lad.

"Great Balaam! I am late!" I exclaimed. "I've been a week saving my appetite for this dinner. Let 'er slide kid—there!" and I hurried to the dining-room.

I knocked persistently against the locked doors, while savory odors drifted through the keyhole, and was soon admitted by the assistant head-waiter. I smile now as I recall that watermelon grin, when the darkey yawned like a coalbin in expression of his greeting.

"I'm somewhat embarrassed, Jim, to appear so tardy," I began, "I had about decided to deny myself the honor and pleasure of the event. You see, my friends are all togged out in their pigeon-tails, while—just look at me."

"Why, Mistah 'Tagras, shuah dey will be glad to—"

"Yes, yes, I know they would be more pleased to see me in my odd regulation clothes; but no, not this time, Jim; close your scuttle—mum's the word. Just let me eat in this snug corner where I can hear the strains of the orchestra, out of reach of their stale jokes. Fetch on the viands." As I concluded I pressed a coin into the mahogany hand, and took from my coat a button containing Mac's and Pod's photo, and gave it to the delighted darkey.

There was novelty in this strange situation. It was the only feast I remembered ever having attended uninvited.

Across the spacious hall, obscured by Japanese screens, sat the garrulous banqueters, blissfully ignorant of my presence, while I, a famished and jaded nomad, sat comfortably drinking in the liquid music of the serenade and inflating my gastronomical pipes with terrapin, squab, robin's eggs, salads and other dainties galore.

Presently I was served with something more mellifluous than music, as Jim appeared with a bottle of that familiar sparkling liquid, which is proverbially wrapped in cobwebs and frost, in a pail of ice, and said: "Believe yo' sayed Mumm, Sah—be dis yo' taste, Mistah 'Tagras?" My eyes eloquently expressed my sentiments. Oh, what a nerve tissue a donkey journey does create! As I quaffed the soul-stirring nectar, I thought of Mac A'Rony—how he would have relished a quart of that sterling brand!—and then poured a bumper for him and drank it to his very good health.

When I had finished, I called the waiter and said, with visible effort: "Jim, I wish—hic—you would tell th' bandmaster (here Jim poked a napkin into his mouth), that a tardy guest—hic—heartily requests the pat—patriotic—hic tune Macaroni's come to town. Go, Jim, that's a good girl." And Jim went.

That waiter was the cleverest darkey I ever came across. We all well know that one trait of a thoroughbred darkey is the faculty for invention. Imagine my surprise when the fellow returned with a gentleman in full dress and introduced me. I, expecting to catch something different, failed to catch his name.

My new acquaintance seemed to feel highly honored with the presentation. He appeared a bit staggered, though, and with difficulty found my wandering hand. Taking my arm, he escorted and introduced me to the convivial assembly as the distinguished guest of the evening—"though somewhat belated, nevertheless his genial presence duly appreciated."

When he mentioned the name of Professor Pythagoras Pod such applause issued from the unsteady occupants of the hundred chairs that I, thinking it

my courteous duty to join in the encore, clapped my hands vigorously. This seemed to provoke great merriment. The laughter and clapping grew louder and louder, until hands and throats were inadequate to express the jubilant spirits of the banqueters, and they began to stamp their feet. Finally all arose, threw in the air imaginary hats, broke glasses of wine, and, in fact, I don't know what would have happened if the manager had not entered the scene.

Finally, some one called, "Speech! Speech! A speech from Mr. Pod!" I tried to respond. I didn't believe the guests knew who I was, other than a pod of some sort. The hotel manager did, but he had gone. I therefore decided not to reveal my identity; I would act the invited guest I was taken to be.

I did not speak long. What I said was ostensibly so appropriate, so pointed, so witty, so apropos, that the frequent cries of "Hear! Hear!" told me I had made a hit, and it was time to stop. I have no recollection of what I said on that momentous occasion, but I apologized for the abruptness of my departure on the plea that I had six more banquets to attend that evening, whereas I had but one stomach.

Wild cheers and handclapping greeted my speech. When quiet was restored I offered the following toast, asking all to rise with filled goblets:

Hic—here's to the man, boys, here's to the man
Who—hic—has the sagacity, gall, and who can
Partake of the bless—hics—of earth, though unbidden,
Without revealing the jack—hic—he has ridden;
Here's to—hic—his pocket and here's to—hic—his purse—
May Balaam shed tears when—hic—he rides in a hearse.

With a concerted "Bravo!" all drank my health. Then, hat in hand, I followed a very tortuous route out and to the elevator, and soon afterward found the keyhole of my chamber door, and retired.

I did not feel well in the morning, but nevertheless journeyed to Oak Park at an early hour.

What a surprise awaited me at the barn! The air was dense with the odor of beer. I had hardly anticipated trouble brewing; nothing was so foreign to my thoughts as the possibility of finding two asinine inebriates and a "jagged" canine instead of the sober company I left the evening before.

But there they lay, both donkeys paralyzed, panting and blear-eyed. An overturned beer keg swam in the deluge of froth that flooded the floor. Mac must have pulled the bung out of the keg. The fellow looked guilty enough, but, when I recalled my own recent dissipation, I didn't have the heart to upbraid him.

I was perplexed. What could I do? To resume my pilgrimage that morning was out of the question. I felt in my bones that as soon as the saloonkeeper learned of the calamity, I, Pythagoras Pod, would have to pay damages. Such I could not well afford. Why not go to the man and enter a complaint against him for harboring knock-out drops, and consequently causing my valuable animals ruination of mind, physique and moral character?

A capital idea! No sooner thought than done. The man was speechless.

"Why!" I exclaimed, pounding my fist hard down on the oaken bar, "think of it! a day's delay may lose me my five thousand dollar wager. THINK OF IT, MAN! FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS!!" I would have said more, but I noticed the Hibernian was knocked completely out of the metaphorical ring by my unequivocal utterances. His blanched countenance showed that his conscience smote him. He paced the barroom floor like a leopard trying to get away from his spots. Presently he stopped, and, thrusting his fingers through his goatee, looked out in time to witness Mac A'Rony turn a headspring from the barn door.

"Begorry!" he exclaimed, "if Oi hod that mule, Oi'd ruun 'im for alderman of the Tinth Ward. Shure, and it's phure air and wather the bye's votin fer. It's this Oi'm sayin', Misther Pod, Oi'll give ye twinty-foive bones fer th' brute in his prisent condishun; Oi will that, ond call it shquare."

Mac certainly was acting very compromisingly. But I explained to the Irishman no reasonable sum could purchase that particular donkey, and, furthermore, that twenty-five dollars would barely satisfy my claims.

The exclamation of "Holy Mither!" checked me for the moment, and as the man looked barnward he added, elequently shaking his fists, "Oi'm dommed, if th' shcapegrace ain't mixin' dhrinks!" Here Mr. Rooney and I rushed out in the nick of time to prevent my crazy jack from tapping a whiskey barrel standing in the shed adjoining the barn.

"Misther Pod, a curse on me soul if Oi would ruun th' bladherscat fer doorkeeper oof th' pinnytinsury! Here's tin dollars, tear th' likes oof it in two and rhuun ond buy a bhromo seltzer, and sober th' toper oop at wance." I took the proffered note, and had gone but a hundred feet when the Irishman called to me, "Hold on; before yez lave fer th' sphace of a mooment moind thet ye puts a muzzle on th' asrophoid rephrobate with th' bobtail ears, ond shpring a toime lock on th' crethur."

The animals having been dosed, I was about to question myself "What next?" when my host said cordially, "Shure, ond yez will feed with us. Yez may

keep th' change from th' shinphlaster ond good luck in sthore fer yez. Now, coom on to grub, ond lave th' brutes alone. They'll be afther havin' their sea legs soon." And Pat succeeded in conciliating me, and escorted me to the house.

By one o'clock my disgraceful donkeys answered to roll-call, and with touching humility submitted to be saddled.

With such disappointing interpositions of Fate the Golden Gate seemed to be a decade removed. For a while, the donks were wavering and their pedals unreliable; but after the first hour they meandered along quite acceptably. As Mac was slow to recuperate, I rode Cheese. He was surprisingly sure of foot, whereas Mac, swell-headed, drowsy-eyed and swaying, couldn't have walked a straight line a yard wide, unless it was a yard of grass. He walked with a suspicious tread, like one venturing on ice which threatened his death bath any moment. When the afternoon was well advanced Cheese showed symptoms of lameness in his nigh fore-leg, as I had feared, in consequence of his late circus. We passed Maywood and Elmhurst as we followed the main-traveled road. I was compelled to dismount and lead my cripple four miles to Lombard. Such was my luck in the State of Illinois.

It was after dark, the second day out of Chicago, and still we had traveled but twenty miles. To think—that munificent gift, Cheese, was already an invalid on my hands! I summoned a veterinary surgeon, and listened to his diagnosis with solicitous attention. "Only a strain of the shoulder muscles," said he; "must have run-hop-skip-and-jumped to get such a strain—does he ever play golf? Will require a full week's rest." The doctor rendered his professional opinion with the air of a metropolitan specialist prescribing a trip to Europe for some delicate society belle.

Next morning I rode in company with a good fellow two miles into the country, where I purchased a very long-eared, shapeless donkey, of a good character, and quickly rode him bare-back to town. Then I sold my cripple at auction in the public square.

The cumbersome pack-boxes, which the sturdy Mac A'Rony had borne without a murmur, I also sold to pay the doctor's bill.

The following day saw me in the town of Wheaton, whose reputed beauty I failed to appreciate in a pouring rain. I remained there over Saturday night and Sunday.

The clipping of Cheese II on Monday morning proved to be an exhibition well worth witnessing—at a safe distance. That "model" character turned out to have the temper of a vixen. First, a rope was twisted round his nose, then his four legs were tied securely together, and finally six strong men held him down on the floor to permit the finishing touches to his vibrating limbs, while carefully avoiding the finishing touches to their lives.

Instantly the half dozen assistants were sent sprawling across the floor in all directions, while the stable dog chased an imaginary bird into space and landed in a poultry yard. The frightened donkey was mad, or had a fit. On the other hand, Mac, in the noisy excitement, pumped his bronchial organs to their utmost capacity, and Don joined in the chorus, till any passer-by might easily have mistaken the barn for a slaughter house. Finally, the unruly subject was got under control, and in time released on bail (of hay). I verily believe that the electricity generated by that clipped donkey, if stored, could have propelled a trolley for twenty-four hours.

During the ensuing week, the villages of Geneva, Elberon, Maple Park and Courtland in turn greeted me with the usual curiosity and concern, and I was spared to enter De Kalb on Wednesday evening, after a most distressing adventure. When we had proceeded about two miles beyond Courtland, I unchained my dog for a short sportive recess. I rode Mac, and about three feet to our right ambled Cheese, a chain connecting his bit with my saddlehorn. My little troop was peacefully traversing the smooth country road when suddenly Don came bounding down the highway, chasing a little red calf, the dog barking gleefully, the calf bellowing with fright. Drawing my revolver, I fired to distract Don's attention; but without avail. A few moments later, as I was aiming at a flock of black birds, I heard the ominous clatter of hoofs rapidly approaching us from the rear, accompanied by a deep, hoarse mooing, which clearly emanated from a calf of mature years. Imagine my feelings when, turning in my seat, I beheld an enraged cow racing with Don in a bee line for me, the dog in the lead going a mile a minute, the bovine a mile and a quarter. It was the first I had known Don to flee from a foe. His eye now protruded, his tongue hung out a-foam, and his tail lay back straight like an arrow.

As I remember, the dog passed under the chain connecting my donkeys, and instantly with the force of a locomotive something alive plunged in our midst, striking the chain. How many double somersaults I turned I know not. How many minutes we remained in the dusty road overturned in a heap I can only estimate from the distance the lucky dog must have traveled to get out of sight so soon.

My first mental reflection was that the cow must be the calf's mother; my

second thought was to save my life. I managed somehow to crawl out from under the animated heap, and then surveyed the situation. The cow's horns were fast in the chain and one of her feet in the saddle gear; and she tossed her head savagely, every time lifting one donkey or the other bodily off the ground and dropping him in a heap in the dust. She kicked and bellowed, until, finally breaking loose minus a horn, she made for me head down, innocent as I was.

I didn't stop to argue, but lit out for the barbed wire fence with that outraged mother at my heels. I have heard you can tell how fast a man thinks by the way he eats. You could have told how fast I thought by the way I ran. Over the fence I leaped, leaving my long coat-tail hanging from the top strand of wire. The cow, blinded with rage, made a lunge at the piece of cloth only to lacerate her head on the barbs; then she jumped the fence and took after me, tail in air, and foam dripping from her mouth.

A small tree stood by the roadside not far distant, and I cleared the fence again and made for it. Although not an expert at climbing, I shinned aloft like a squirrel, and for a moment expected the bovine to follow. She reared on her haunches, and pawed furiously at the swaying branches; then, backing several feet, she charged headlong against the sapling, almost dislocating every bone of my body and every hair of my head.

All but shaken out of the tree-top, I contrived to gather in my legs and to wind them round the slender trunk. Then I reached for my revolvers. My Colt 44 was missing, but with my Smith & Wesson 32, I peppered that cow, until I shot away a section of her tail, and sent her off in a cloud of dust—like a howling, raging cyclone—in the direction of her calf.

I waited a while before venturing down to look for my animals, now conspicuous for their absence. Darkness had settled on the scene. Groping my way up the road, I soon stumbled over a pair of boots, further on a camera, and a hundred yards beyond my Winchester rifle, minus its holster.

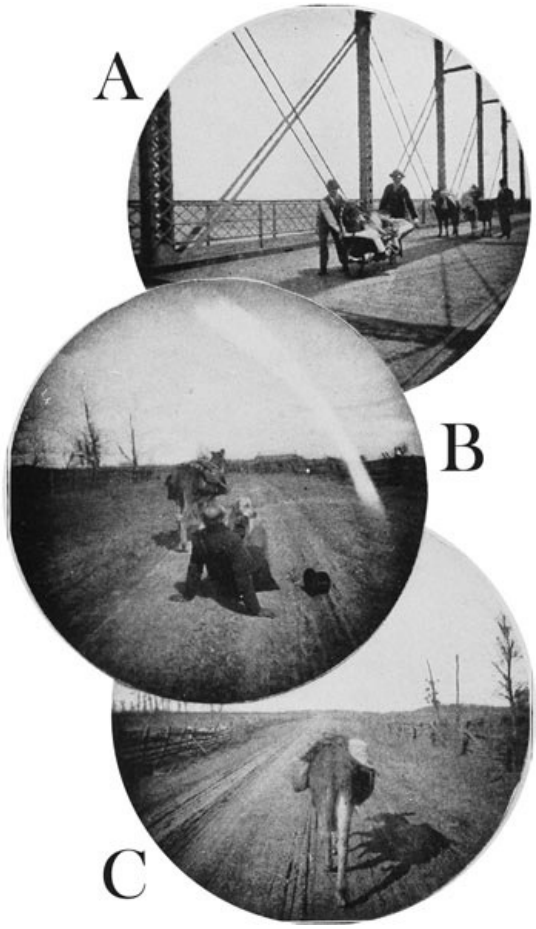
Still no sign of donkeys or dog. I stopped at a farm house and inquired: "Have you seen two jackasses strolling this way?"

The agriculturist pulled his goatee as he surveyed me from foot to crown, and replied: "No, I hain't seen *two* jackasses *strollin'* this way, but a *whole herd* of 'em came tearing past my barnyard a-kitin' about an hour ago, skeerin' the cattle I was a-milkin' into fits. Why! the brayin' and takin's on of the wild beasts caused a stampede of my hull gol-darned dairy. What be ye at a-pesterin' round these parts with a herd of wild jackasses?"

My response was terse, and was given before the man had finished. I hurried on, making inquiries at other farmhouses before I found my fugitive caravan huddling together in a corral, a mile beyond. My dog was with them, but no cows or calves.

Borrowing a lantern and two halters, I retraced my steps down the highway, my unwilling animals in tow, and resaddled and packed them as best I could; then I returned the loan and hastened to town.

larger



A. "In this way I crossed that bridge of size."
B. "I saw the streak of daylight."
C. "So slow that his shadow beat him to town."

CHAPTER XXI.
A donkey without a father

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

An uneducated person, seeing a picture of a donkey in a field, sees only a donkey in a field, however well it may be painted, and I fancy very exceptional ability would be required to make any of us think a gray donkey sublime, or believe an ordinary field to be one of Elysian.—*Ideala—Sarah Grand.*

There will be many converts to the Darwinian Theory by the time I have taken Pythagoras Pod to his destination. They are recruiting all along the line.

The Professor's street lecture in De Kalb in a mist was punctuated with effusive allusions to his "obstreperous asses," which epithet only strengthened our ill-feeling toward him, and furnished a new incentive for Cheese's rascality. When Pod reached the middle of an elegant burst of rhetoric, that animal, true to asinine instinct, pushed a hind foot against the orator's stomach and brought the speech to a finish. The afflicted one was tenderly borne away, I know not whither, but Cheese whispered probably to a blacksmith's where a bellows could be had with which to pump wind into the vacuum.

The following day, my master having come to, it was decreed that Cheese and I be taken to a smith's to have our corns pared, and our shoes repaired. Whenever Pod has an idle moment—thank Balaam he hasn't many!—he amuses himself by torturing a donkey. Shoes are a nuisance, especially new shoes, and I would much rather go barefoot as do country boys and girls.

The blacksmith, an expert cobbler, shook hands with us, with special deference to Cheese, who was to have the new footgear, then informed my master that if we jacks would treat him with respect he would do what was right, but if not, he would inflict on him what he himself had received from us. I overheard Pod mutter as he departed that he was sure that villain Cheese was going to kick him by proxy.

When Pod returned, that incorrigible donkey had both smiths in a corner, and was kicking knots out of the walls. Soon that shop appeared as if constructed of perforated cardboard, and the two men as if they were worsted. Both men were saved, however, by Pod, who ran to a bakery for some cakes with which he completely subjugated the murderous brute, and enabled the men to complete the work.

All next day we labored through mud, which made my feet feel good, but spoiled the looks of our new shoes. That day the Professor bought a new donkey.

"Sell him cheap, sound as a dye," said the man. Perhaps this was the truth, but he was the funniest donkey I ever set eyes on. His face resembled a poodle dog's, except that it was longer, and he appeared to be a combination of crosses between South American llama, Rocky Mountain sheep, baby camel, and muley cow, with only a sprinkling of donkey blood. After this freak was roped to my saddle and we had proceeded a little way, I asked, "Excuse me, friend, but what stock did you descend from?"

"Why, live stock," said the simpleton.

The rest of us hid our faces; but I persisted, "Who's your father?"

"I never had a father," he returned. "If I did, he never showed up in my lifetime. As for my mother, she kicked the tenderloins out of a farmer's thoroughbred pig, in consequence of which I was left to shift for myself, so you can't call me a shiftless fellow."

Well, the poor fellow ain't quite as bad off as Topsy, I thought—she had neither father nor mother.

For a week back Cheese had been complaining of a weak foot, which explains why Pod desired an emergency donkey. The heavy roads would have taxed a dray horse. But by shifting the burden from Cheese and myself to the new acquisition we were able to make better time with less effort.

The sun was hot, and Poodle's long coat dripped with perspiration. Before long, we were stopped in front of a house, where a man was cutting the grass with a lawn-mower.

"Hay, there, Mister!" Pod shouted; "will you loan me that machine a moment? I'll remunerate you handsomely for the kindness."

The farmer just shouldered that machine and fetched it down to the roadside. Then my master dismounted, and whispering to the granger something I couldn't understand, to my utter astonishment deliberately pushed that lawn-mower almost the whole length of that donkey's back.

I recall the incident so vividly. First sounded the noisy swish of the mower, next the fragrant air was hazy with flying hair, hat, man and mowing machine. A moment of painful silence followed, when suddenly a clatter from the roof of the house indicated that the jackass had promptly returned the machine to its owner.

Poor Pod, it looked as if he were no mower. The farmer laid him gently on the grass, where he finally awoke, and with the aid of hard cider and a

fanning machine was restored. Three miles beyond he caught the refractory jack that meant only to harm the machine, he said, and not the man, and securing a slipnoose to Poodle's tail, roped him to my saddle; next he tied Cheese to my tail, and leaping aboard his new expedient led the way.

All at once Poodle espied two donkeys grazing in a field. "I must say a farewell to my sweethearts before leaving," he protested, braying and making a dash for the fence, dragging me after him. I often wonder if he had any feeling left in his tail after that; for while it pained me to drag Cheese, it must have caused Poodle more pain to tow us two by resorting to such a sensitive extreme. Had not the fence been a thorn hedge, I verily believe that that "Samson" would have dragged us across lots to his sweethearts. I never saw Pod so enraged.

On nearer approach to Rochelle, we stopped in front of a house where Pod purchased a drink of milk of a woman who was passing milk cans to a man in a wagon. Neither the man nor the woman asked a question, much to my surprise, until we had proceeded some distance, when to prevent a tragedy, nature asserted herself and impelled the woman to call out: "Say, what be them thar animiles ye-ve got, stranger?"

"Two are camels, and one is a dromedary," Pod yelled.

"Dromedary!" The woman exclaimed; and, to the man, added, "That's a new sort of dairy I never heered tell of. Did you, Hank?"

CHAPTER XXII.
Rat trap and donkey's tail

TOC

BY PYE POD.

"By my faith, Signor Don Quixote," quoth the duchess, "that must not be; you shall be served by four of my damsels, all beautiful as roses." "To me," answered Don Quixote, "they will not be as roses, but even as thorns pricking me to the very soul; they must in nowise enter my chamber."—*Don Quixote.*

From Rochelle to the Mississippi I found the people more conservative, but interesting subjects for character study. The topography of the country varied but little. Snipe, quail, doves and meadow larks were prevalent. The pesty pocket-gophers were as shy of my fire-arms as of the farmers' dogs; one might shoot a dozen of them only to see the spry little fellows drop dead into their "home-made" graves. I have seen hundreds of them sitting upright on as many mounds, immovable as sticks, but pop! and they vanished.

Crossing this one-time prairie state, I recalled pictures of prairie fires in my school-books, and easily imagined the terror of the droves of wild horses and buffalo, fleeing before the leaping flames.

This seemed to be a contented section, and contentment is a great thing. Although no woodland was visible, I saw occasional clusters of "pussy willows," and groups of shade-trees embowering a house, above which the shaft of an aeromotor towered like a sentinel, asserting the homestead rights. When the windwheels were in motion, they created a noise which only an expert linguist could distinguish from the vernacular of a guinea hen.

Here and there bunches of cattle browsed in the meadows behind barbed-wire fences and thorn hedges; and long corn-cribs, often full to overflowing, had rewarded most every farmer.

About dark, May first, my small caravan ambled into the village of Ashton, and my bugle blasts aroused the nodding inhabitants sufficiently to give me a fair audience for a lecture. The Germans predominated, and to them May-day festivals are indispensable. Boys and girls celebrate by hanging May-baskets on door knobs, and a few wags, who resemble frogs, in that a half dozen make you think they are a million, shower corn, sand and bird shot at windows equal to a Kansas hail-storm.

The celebration that night seemed to be directed at my particular window. The racket had almost soothed me to sleep, when suddenly a rag doll loaded with shot came smashing through the blinds and landed on my bed. My patience overtaxed, I arose and resorted to free trade by exporting to the street a piece of crockery, and a chair, not to mention a few roasted invectives. I would have folded my bedstead and sent it sailing after them, but the disturbance of the peace and the pieces ceased together.

While at breakfast I wondered if any tricks had been played on my animals. I was quite sure of it before reaching the stable. The livery keeper came hobbling up on one foot and a crutch, with his face done up in fly-paper, and a bandage around his head.

"What's up?" I asked.

"Jacks got the spasms."

"You mean spavins," I corrected, innocently enough.

"Guess I ought to know the difference 'tween spasms and spavins," he returned, sourly. "Those d—— mules o' yourn kicked out petitions, hollared, and had such fits last night that they scared all the mice and rats outen the haymow."

"What kind of petitions?" I asked, remembering I had been tempted to issue a petition on my own account.

"What kind d'y, 'spose? Wooden petitions," said he. "And when I crawled out o' bed and went to the stalls to see what ailed 'em——"

"Ailed the petitions?" I interrupted, excitedly.

"Naw, the mules,—something like a thousand rats and mice ran over my bare feet. I thought the barn must be afire, and I jumped so the lantern fell outen my hand and broke, and I had to feel my way in the dark."

"You ought to know better than to feel around strange donkeys, night or day," said I, reprovingly.

"It wasn't th' feelin' of 'em what broke me up so," said he. "'Twas the kindlin' wood they piled up again me."

I did not discuss further the circumstances; I was quite satisfied, since we had grievances in common. While settling my bill, I noticed Mac gaze at the ceiling, so I glanced upward, too, and at once saw hanging to a nail on a cross-beam a circular rat-trap, bent almost flat, and containing two dead rodents. That solved the mystery. On recovering the trap, we found it sprinkled with donkey hair, and sheep twine, which was proof enough that some young villain had fastened a cage full of rats to Mac A'Rony's tail, he being the most amiable of the donkeys. There is nothing like the mysterious to frighten a dumb brute, and when that donkey heard strange noises and felt mysterious movements about his hind legs, he didn't wait for an explanation.

Good-bye, rats!

Although the day dawned clear, dark clouds began early to bank in the Southwest, and before I could reach the next town I was drenched by a heavy shower. But I was fortunate in selling Cheese II, my weak-footed jack, for seven dollars to the village butcher, who, while in Ashton, had generously fed my dog.

Wet to my skin, I took refuge in a German tavern managed by a widow with five comely daughters. All were kind and responsive to my wants, and brought to my room a varied assortment of house pets, literature, and cheese, not omitting a bottle of beer, for my entertainment and refreshment, while I remained in bed enveloped in comforters, waiting for my only suit of clothes to dry by the kitchen fire. Meanwhile I became almost asphyxiated from the gas generated by the Limburger cheese which had already smothered two hearty slices of bread. The next day I spent in Dixon, and the following day in Sterling, situated on Rock River. From my bedroom window I had a charming view of the dam falls and the iron bridge which spans the stream. My sojourn in both these towns was profitable.

It was a hot and dusty ride to Morrison, where I found a brass band serenading a leading citizen. "This won't do," said I; and making Mac bray, I blew my bugle, and at once turned the tide of popularity in our favor. The fickle crowd soon gathered and cheered me to the hotel, while the jilted band had the brass to march down the street past me, blowing itself with might and main until lost to view, not once thinking that distance lent enchantment to my ear. Next day we made slow headway to the Mississippi.

As I approached the "Father of Waters" the land, as well as my donkeys, were more rolling. Several times when wading through a pool of dust, Cheese III, alias Poodle, would suddenly stop, circle about, kneel and roll with all the paraphernalia he was carrying. Then my steed would follow suit, before I could get out of the saddle.

Thirteen miles from Morrison lay the village of Fulton, on the banks of the Mississippi, and it was 4:30 P. M. before we arrived at the big high bridge. The bridge approach on each side of the river crosses a broad stretch of lowlands which at certain seasons is inundated. My donkeys refused to pass the toll-gate, although I had paid the toll. I demanded of Mac an explanation. He maintained silence, as did Cheese, and neither of them would budge. A squad of laborers, amused at my plight, asserted their donkey nature by imitating an ass's bray, and so perfect was the imitation that my animals took them for donkeys disguised in human apparel, and joined in the awful chorus. Presently a timid woman following us with a terpsichorean horse called to me and gesticulated wildly. I feared a runaway and was at a loss to know how to urge my contrary animals on, but before long a double dray team came to my assistance. The teamster roped Mac to the rear axle of his wagon, cracked his whip, and drove on, dragging the obdurate donkey on his haunches across the bridge, while Cheese crept closely behind in fear and trembling.

When I had crossed the Mississippi it was exactly seventeen minutes past five.

As we wended our way into Clinton, Ia., cheers greeted us from every quarter. "The streets were rife with people pacing restless up and down;" but soon all footsteps followed in one direction, to the Reviere House, where I took advantage of the favorable circumstances to make a speech, and to dispose of a host of my chromos.

I had traveled thirteen hundred and sixty miles, about one-third of the distance by trail from New York to San Francisco, and had consumed one hundred and sixty days; and there was left me only one hundred and eighty-one days in which to accomplish the remaining two-thirds of my journey.

CHAPTER XXIII.
Mac crosses the Mississippi

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

Hell is paved with good intentions.—*Samuel Johnson.*

How the Professor ever landed that lop-sided, dilapidated tile of his on the west bank of the Mississippi without a bottle of fish-glue is beyond me.

The wind gave our whole outfit a good blowing up for not crossing the bridge earlier in the day, and Pod had to handle the hat as carefully as an umbrella to prevent it's turning inside out.

Except at such times, we donks were the only ones to get a "blowing;" the threats Pod used to coerce us across that lofty bridge and his final cruel expedient of having a double team drag me with a rope around my neck were enough to drive one to suicide.

"We must reach Iowa to-day," said he. "You show absolutely no interest whatever in the next state; but I'll convert you." I protested until I was hoarse. Said I, "When you take into consideration all the different animals that came out of the ark,—monkey, parrot, man and ass,—and the results of several thousand years of study and research, how many believe in any other state? Only one. Man. There are a few horses and dogs and cats and, occasionally, a white rat, that enjoy heaven on earth, but we jackasses are always catching ——! The last word of my peroration was spilled, as my master whacked me over the ears with his black-snake whip and knocked all the theological and theosophical considerations out of my head.

"Get along, there, Mac," he shouted, "and quit your everlasting braying;" and as the horses started, I "got," to save my neck.

When we reached the middle of the bridge and I was over my dizziness, I slackened my neck rope and followed the wagon more willingly, but my fetlocks bled from scraping on the rough planks and my rich aristocratic blood painted a faint red trail behind us. It was a hot day; I burned as with a fever, and wanted a drink.

"And they call this the 'Father of Waters,'" my master soliloquized, as he watched the sluggish current creep under the bridge.

"What do they call the father of beer?" I asked, facetiously, for I was mad.

"Mac," said Pod, "you have brought me back to earth. Let us hurry to town."

When we were on Iowa soil, the Prof. tied his "stove-pipe" over my ears with a green ribbon, and added insult to injury by making me parade into Clinton in that condition before all the genteel donkeys along the road.

We stopped at the post-office, and Pod read on the way to the hotel portions of two letters, one informing him that his sombrero was at the express office, the other casting aspersions on my race. "Yes, I did promise to meet you at the Mississippi and accompany you across the plains," the letter ran, "but really, old man, after reading your articles, I have concluded that I want nothing to do with a jackass."

Pod seemed disappointed and, handing the envelope to me, said, "Here, Mac, what do you think of it?" I greedily devoured the contents without a murmur, and the Professor galloped into the express office.

"Do you realize that you have swallowed a postage stamp?" Cheese asked, gravely, after I had stowed away the morsels of paper.

"Most assuredly," I said, smacking my lips, "and hereafter you can look upon me as a sort of internal revenue collector."

But now Pod appeared under cover of a broad-brimmed hat, looking frightfully cowboyish. That evening the sombrero so completely unbalanced his head that he sauntered up the street armed to the teeth, and attempted to "hold up" an Indian cigar sign, to the amusement and terror of passing pedestrians. Later on, he became more rational, and gave a street lecture.

Friday, May seventh, was a lucky day for Pod and me. Friday is Pod's and the seventh of the month is mine,—with a few exceptions; hence, the Prof, has on an average of four and a half to my one.

His first errand in Clinton was an act of courtesy. He called on Mr. Gobble, the genial Mayor, and obtained one of his quills to embellish the autograph album which was destined to furnish me a delectable repast, unless Pod should find a gold cure to destroy my appetite for stationery.

His second errand was to place an order for panniers to be made after his own designs, for they would soon be needed; and his third, to call at the stable and superintend a tonsorial artist clip Cheese III after the devil's designs. The circus had begun when he arrived. There, tangled in straps and ropes, lay the frightened subject on the stable floor, kicking, while several men were performing rare feats of tumbling. Pod was indignant.

"Is it necessary to pile on the donkey in that fashion?" he inquired, starting up a ladder to the loft.

"I reckon so, squire," said the clipper, rubbing his bruised arm; "we tied the brute t' auger-holes in the floor, but he yanked the holes plumb out o' the

boards, and we bored 'em in agin. Then he brayed, and strained, and pulled out the holes agin. What's he been livin' on? Indian turnips?"

Pulled the holes out of the floor! Such an astonishing statement was enough to warp a donkey's credulity. But the operation was finished at last, and Pod returned to the hotel to answer some letters, one of which seemed to tickle him very much. It was from a farmer in the neighborhood, and I'll quote it word for word.

CORNVILLE HOLLOW, IOWA, MAY 6, 1897.

Prof. Pithygors Pod, Eskire, M. D.:

Illustrious Sir:—My wife has give me unexpeckted opertunety ter do ye the grate onner of namin our latest and last kid after ye and if ye cum this here way ye will see a namesake ye will be prowd of. Times are not so good with us of late but hope they air with you wishing you a socksessfull jurny I remane Yours fraternally

CY SUMAC.

I did not see Pod's reply, but I took him to the post office to purchase a ninety-nine cent money order, which he mailed to Cy, and overheard him say that was all the money he had when he started and no man had a right to think he was any richer now, and hoped naming children after him wasn't going to become a fad.

On our way to the hotel a little girl, walking with her papa, expressed the wish to ride on my back. Pod overheard her, and jumping off, placed the little one in the saddle, and led me down the street.

Pod is never safe without a chaperone. He had no more than got his land legs than a monstrous colored woman, whose avoirdupois was out of proportion to her energy, and with shoes that made him keep his distance, stepped in his way, and with a grin half the width of an adult watermelon asked him if he was "shully dat wonderful traveler Pye-tag-o-rastus w'at was chasin' a mule roun de world."

For a second Pod was somewhat colored, too; but he laughed, and said he believed he was the gentleman. Then the old mammy held out a great black hand, with knotted fingers, looking more like an elephant's foot than anything else, and asked if she might have the honor to walk a piece with him. The Professor took the proffered hand, and the pair sauntered on down town, and were soon lost in the crowd.

CHAPTER XXIV.
Pod hires a valet

TOC

BY PYE POD.

"Why, Toby's nought but a mongrel; there's nought to look at in her." But I says to him, "Why, what are you yoursen but a mongrel? There wasn't much pickin' o' *your* feyther an' mother, to look at you." Not but what I like a bit o' breed myself, but I can't abide to see one cur grinnin' at another.—*Mill on the Floss.*

The good old black mammy, who made my acquaintance on the street, called upon me at the hotel to present me with a little dog. I thanked her, and told her that one dog was all I could take care of; whereupon she argued that I should visit the Indian Reservation at Tama City, and if I presented a dog to the Chief that I would be royally received. A good idea; I wondered it had not occurred to me. I accepted the dog.

An hour later I came near being arrested for promoting a dog fight in defiance of the law. Don was generous, however, and left a little of the cur for the Indian Chief, but next morning the sight of a bandaged and plastered dog being dragged behind my outfit was gruesome indeed.

This is how I managed the dogs. I chained Don to one end of an eight-foot pole, and the mongrel to the other, so that the dogs could not get closer than four feet. Then I chained Don to the saddle-horn.

I hoped to reach the town of DeWitt before dark. Everything went smoothly and I was congratulating myself on getting out of the city without a mishap, when, suddenly, both dogs leaped to the opposite side of my donkey in the effort to reach a cat basking in the sun. The pole yoke caught Mac's hind legs and upset us, almost causing a runaway. This and other incidents delayed me many hours. On arriving at the village tavern, "The Farmers' Home," I was agreeably surprised to find the landlord not so much out of spirits as I. A "night cap," then to bed.

Next day I rode sixteen miles, through the beautiful farming country to Wheatland. Nature was arrayed in Sabbath attire, and no sermon could have inpressed me more than the pure, sweet voicings of God's creation. Graceful turtle-doves, always in pairs, flitted in mid-air; bevies of quail whistled in the meadows and ditches; flying-squirrels, half winged, half jumped from tree to tree; and coy Norwegian girls scampered indoors as my "mountain canaries" now and then joined in a carol.

Just before entering town a gay cotton-tail rabbit shied at my pistol ball, allowing the ball to graze a calf grazing in the field beyond, to wing a pigeon on a barn further on, and eventually to announce my advent to the towns-folk in a most singular manner.

When I arrived, the church bell was faintly tolling, and a crowd of people were staring wild-eyed at the belfry tower. I inquired of a countryman what was up.

"Blamed if I know," said the sexton; "I was jest settin' down to feed, when sudden I heard a sharp clang of the church bell. Sounded like it was hit with a hammer. Whole hour before church, and the doors are locked. Now I'd like to know what sot that bell to chantin'."

"Go up and find out," I said.

"Not on yer life," he replied. "You may think us folks superstitious—well, we are. Lots of queer things happen in this town."

When I reached the privacy of my room, I did a good deal of thinking; but whichever way I reasoned I arrived at one conclusion. My pistol ball must have struck the bell after calling on the calf and the pigeon. It was merely a chant's shot.

The landlord of the Siegmund Hotel did not venture close enough to shake hands.

"Doos them dogs bite—yes?" he asked from the veranda.

"No," I answered, "they won't bite you and me, but they are very fond of each other."

Don looked up at me appealingly, as if he thought he had been persecuted. When the donkeys and the mongrel were in the barn, I turned Don loose. He was tickled, and ran round the barn three times, jumped over the hen-coop, upset the landlord, and then chased the house cat so that it climbed to the top of the hotel chimney. Most extraordinary dog; no common pastime satisfied him.

The hilly country I was now entering made it necessary for me to walk half the time, as a precaution against wearing out my animals. But the air was sweet with lilac, tulip, violet and apple blossoms; blue and red and yellow birds serenaded me as I passed, all making me feel somewhat repaid for my winter hardships.

The main street of Mechanicsville was beautifully shaded, and along the road-side was a tempting pasture for ruminating animals. As I rode along and admired the scenes, I recalled a sentence from the Scriptures: "Whatsoever cheweth the cud that shall ye eat." To the right, in the cool shade, reclined a

gentle-eyed cow, chewing her cud; to the left, at the base of a magnificent tree, sat a pretty bloomer girl beside her bicycle, also chewing. I was puzzled.

On reaching Mount Vernon, I discovered, after diligent inquiries, that Washington had never been there, dead or alive. Cornell College, for boys and girls, distinguishes the place as a seat of learning, and the students showed an abnormal appetite for knowledge by purchasing my books and photos. A few miles west I crossed a ridge of wooded hills, descended into a lovely vale, crossed Cedar River, and drew rein at Bertram, a mountain town consisting of a railroad station, side track, tavern, store, and two to three houses.

From Bertram we mounted another and still higher ridge, from the summit of which I could see the great verdant valley, and, winding about it, a spiral cloud of smoke from the busy city of Cedar Rapids, where I arrived at six o'clock.

That evening, after a lapse of nine years, I met my old friend, Steve D——, who once had tramped Switzerland with me. After I had explained the cause of my unique pilgrimage and each had given an account of himself, he planned for me a pleasant two days' sojourn, and suggested it was time I had a useful traveling companion. As I moved westward, the towns would be farther apart and I would have to camp often on the highway. The services of an able and trusty man would save me much time. Steve said he would try to find him.

Cedar Rapids contains some of the largest oatmeal factories in the country. I met through my friend several pleasant people, dined with his family, and was tendered a spread at the Grand Hotel, to which a few of his friends were invited. Meanwhile I found the man I was looking for.

He was about twenty, had been night porter in a hotel, and was well recommended. Twice I refused him because of his apparent inexperience in "roughing it," but I was won over by his persistence at the third call. He said his name was "Coonskin," and Wisconsin the State of his nativity. His attainments were something extraordinary. He could sling a Saratoga trunk into a first story window; had painted the highest church steeples, and broken the wildest horses; could skin all kinds of game, and, with equal facility, could "skin the cat;" in fact, he had made an enviable record in athletics, and had won several championships for sprints. He could swim like a frog, and, as for shooting, his comrades couldn't touch him with any kind of a gun. He was never ill, and had stood all kinds of exposures from hanging all night on a church steeple after his ladder had fallen, to riding on the trucks of a baggage car, as the result of the disbanding of a theatre troupe.

This Coonskin was a wonderful combination of resources; he was the very man I wanted. He wished to go with me for fun and experience, and was perfectly satisfied if I would defray his expenses. I took Coonskin at once to make the acquaintance of Mac, Cheese, Don, and the mongrel, and to be assigned to his duties.

At nine o'clock the morning of our departure, he called at the hotel with a small bundle done up in a red handkerchief, and wearing a new pair of shoes.

"What have you in that bundle?" I asked.

"Everything."

"Extra suit of clothes?"

"Yep—and patches for emergency."

"Extra shoes already broken to your feet?"

"Yep—and chloride-of-lime and extra socks."

"Brush and comb and tooth brush?"

"Yep—and corn plasters and curry-comb."

"Extra suit of underwear and handkerchiefs?"

"Yep. Pajandrums, too."

I smiled in astonishment, so small was the bundle. "Well done," said I, "after this you shall do all my packing."

I was gratified to note Coonskin's quick perception, his alertness to obey, and his capacity for memorizing. He did not have to be told a thing more than three times before understanding it, and his lively interest in my welfare manifested itself at the start. When I went to the stable at eleven o'clock, I found he had added to my itinerant kennel a bull terrier, which took to Don as fondly as Don had taken to the mongrel. I remonstrated.

"The more dogs you offer the Indian Chief, the bigger time he will give you," said my valet. "Better keep the terrier; I'll preserve harmony."

Glad to shift some of my responsibilities to the broad shoulders of this young genius, I returned to the hotel and dressed for luncheon.

You may imagine how my heart was set aflutter when luncheon over, my valet rapped on the door and, venturing a foot in the room, said, with the courtliness of a Sancho Panza, "Your highness' donkeys and dogs are at the door."

My guests were as much amused as I, and accompanied me to the street, where a crowd had assembled. I shall never forget the expression on my old friend's face when he saw the dogs yoked together. A second pole had been brought into use, and, Don and the mongrel having become reconciled, the

bull terrier was made a sort of pivot round which revolved the other two, a mean dog between two extremes.

Coonskin said at first he had made the little mongrel act as the pivotal dog, but he had no sooner left the animals than Don and Towser swung round and clinched in pugilistic style, and, had it not been for the efficacy of the stable hose, with all hands at the pump, the mongrel would have soon been converted into sausage.

It was nineteen miles to the village of Norway; we did not arrive there till eleven at night. Once or twice on the way Coonskin was prevailed upon to relieve me in the saddle for a couple of miles; but although his new shoes were paining him, as I could see from his gait, he was too "game" to admit it, and whenever I asked him to ride, protested that walking wasn't a circumstance with him. He would rather walk than eat.

We found Norway asleep. After assisting Coonskin to stable the donks and secure the dogs, I perused a newspaper while my young neophyte went out to smoke. When he limped in, I noticed his coat pocket bulged with something he would conceal. I did not question him. But before retiring, I opened his door to give him orders for the morrow, and found him dressing his feet with Indian ointment, which he admitted he had procured from the village druggist. He had with difficulty aroused the man from slumber, in consequence of which he was made to pay double price for his cure. Coonskin was somewhat embarrassed, but I praised his pluck in glowing terms, and put him at ease. Next day he was ready to take advice, by wearing his old shoes and riding most of the journey.

CHAPTER XXV.
Done by a horsetrader

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

What made Balaam celebrated as an astronomer?
He found an ass-to-roid.—*Old Conundrum.*

I had heard about the chilly climate of Norway, and was not surprised when we donks met with a cold reception. We had plenty of hay but no grain. Next morning the landlord said that he expected some oats soon after our departure.

Pod had walked the last three miles, and warming up, had strapped his vest to the saddle, where I found it next morning. Peaking out of a pocket was a crisp five dollar greenback.

Now, a donkey likes anything that's green. I never had eaten a vest. But I determined to tackle this somewhat tough corduroy "steak," and made a fair breakfast on it, not to speak of its garnishes of green money, lead pencils, and a scented lace handkerchief, the one my master had long carried in the left inside pocket. Save for the fact that I got a few sharp bones of a pocket-comb in my teeth, and a page of court-plaster stuck in my throat, I relished the repast.

But not so the Professor. When he had searched some time for the vest, he looked at me. As luck would happen, I had left sufficient circumstantial evidence on the saddle to convict most any donkey, but no one in particular. However, I suppose I looked guilty, and my past record was against me. Pod was speechless a moment, then he made up for lost time, and said that he believed a jackass would devour a house and lot if he had the chance.

"I don't know about a house," I replied, "but I know I could eat a lot if it were set before me." Then I caught it!

By nine o'clock the clouds having dispersed, we started for Blairstown.

The Iowa farms were pleasing to my eye. Horses and cattle were cropping the juicy grass, hogs were shelling corn or taking mud-baths, fowls of all kinds were engaged in athletic sports trying to add some new feather to their plumage, and occasional bunches of sheep were standing in barnyards and corrals with wool pulled over their eyes, not knowing what to do with themselves. It looked like a Garden of Eden, where donkeys were excluded.

Finally we met a farmer with a team of lazy horses. Pod asked him if a donkey was a known quantity in those parts, and was told that a man by the name of K——, living near the next town, owned two that he had been trying to give away. A mile beyond, we met a man in a one-horse gig, who had a word to say, too. One donkey knows another when he meets him.

"Your name is K——?" Pod inquired.

"That's the name I always went by," said the black-eyed, black-hearted man. I did not like his looks; I felt it in my bones that Pod was going to be "done" by him. When a man or donkey is over anxious to acquire something, he is pretty sure to make a blunder. On being catechised, the man said his business was "hoss tradin' some, farmin' some, and various some."

"Hear you've got a donkey for sale," Pod observed.

"Nope," said K——, "but I've got two of 'em. Sell both er none."

"I was told you have tried to give them away," said Pod.

The "hoss trader" threw one leg over the other, spat tobacco juice in Don's eyes so he couldn't see all that might a-cur, raked timothy seed out of his whiskers, and inquired, "Who was tellin' ye that?"

"The fellow didn't give his name," answered Pod, "and I wouldn't undertake to describe his physical geography, but I could locate him if I wished to."

"If I could lay my hands on him, I'd dislocate him," said K——, snapping his eyes.

When my master told about his travels, the Iowan became interested, and showed signs of weakening on his ultimatum. Meanwhile, I discovered the subjects of the discussion grazing in a meadow, and brayed them a courteous "how to do," thus calling Pod's attention to them.

The hoss trader was sharp enough to see it, and his animal instinct told him that vanity was Pod's weak point; so he opened up with a little blarney.

"Now, Mr. Pod, I'm fair t' say I've sort o' takin' a likin' to ye, and I want to help ye along. I'll sell both my donkeys for ten dollars, er one for five and trade the other for one of your'n. Jest let your partner here run across the field and drive 'em over. I want ye to see 'em."

Coonskin went, and K—— continued: "They're two as fine-lookin' jennies as ye'll run across in many a day, both healthy and strong—not too young—not too old—often plow with 'em—kind and gentle—boy rides 'em everywhere—fast, too, but no danger runnin' away. Why, they're twice the size o' your'n, and 'll carry double the load."

"I'm more than satisfied with my donkeys" (very flattering to Cheese and myself), Pod affirmed, "and only require one more. If I am suited with one of

your donkeys, I am willing to pay five dollars for it, but I will not trade one of mine, nor will I purchase both of yours."

By this time the animals arrived. They were certainly big enough, and as for the danger of their running away, they didn't act as if they could run ten feet if charged with a thousand volts of electricity. The farmer said he was bound to make a satisfactory deal with Pod somehow, and that if he wasn't convinced by the time we reached his house that both animals weren't superior to either of his (an absurdity on the face of it), then he would consider some other proposition.

When we reached the house, Cheese and I were generously fed, and Pod and Coonskin invited into dinner. Then K—— chased his donks around the yard, and felt them all over, and finally hoodwinked my master to buy one, and trade the other for Cheese. I could have kicked the daylight out of that man.

When K—— was on his way to town with his five dollars, Pod came to the stable. My new companions were crabbed old spinsters, and raised some objections to going with me.

"Where are you bound?" one asked.

"San Francisco," said I, "but I don't know where that is any more than do you. Guess it's land's end." Then I told them how far I had come, and that Pod said only a few days before that the journey had only begun; also, that he expected we donks would fall off some before long, from which I inferred the fall would be gradual and the horrors of death prolonged.

It was enough to frighten the wits out of any old maid, and it took a pitchfork, two hoe-handles and a crowbar to get those donkeys out of the gate. Then one of them balked, kicked, threw Coonskin, broke her halter, and ran back into the yard. She could run after all.

That was enough for Pod. He rode me back into the yard, and told Coonskin to fetch Cheese out of the barn. And it didn't take him long to shift the blanket from that gray spinster to my old chum.

"You just tell your dad when he returns," said Pod to K——'s son, "that I don't intend to put up with any such game. He grossly misrepresented that donkey; it would take a week to travel a mile with her. As I have paid him for the other one, she belongs to me and I shall push her along with the outfit. But this animal," and he pointed to Cheese, "is mine yet awhile. Good-bye."

"Do as you like," K——, Jr., replied. "I know nothin' 'bout yer agreement."

We covered the first mile in slow time. Coonskin's new steed was forever stopping, and straying out of the road to eat grass. The young man wore himself out keeping her moving by rapping her with the flat side of a hatchet. This big, brown jenny was made of the right stuff, but evidently lacked training and experience.

We were yet a half mile to Blairstown when a young woman and a child drove toward us with a skittish horse. It acted as though it had never seen a donkey. It pricked up its ears, and snorted, and, so help me Balaam! in a jiffy that buggy was on its side, the girls on the ground, and the horse running to beat a cyclone. Luckily, the girls escaped injury. My master was as frightened as he was chivalrous, and assisting the girls to their feet, invited them to ride us donkeys to town; which kind offer was respectfully declined.

On our arrival, Pod took us to a blacksmith's to have the new donkey's fore feet measured for a pair of shoes. The smith seemed to be much taken with me, and said I had the smallest feet of all the gentlemen donks he ever met. The remark so tickled my vanity that I nibbled at his coat tail, whereupon he turned to me and inquired, "What kind of a donkey are you? Chinese?"

"Not much," said I, indignantly, "My name is Irishy, and I always supposed I was a thoroughbred Irish ass, but I'm beginning to believe I'm a roamin' donkey, after all."

I could see that Pod expected trouble from some quarter, but none of us knew just where the lightning would strike. The next village, Luzerne, lay fifteen miles to the west. My lady companion did not carry herself too gracefully, nor her rider, either. She was broad and flat across the hips, and, as Coonskin did not possess a saddle, he found it more comfortable to sit far back on her where he could get a good swing of the fence rail he substituted for a whip.

We were ambling peacefully along the dusty road late in the afternoon, when Pod broke the silence with a word to his valet.

"Well, Coonskin," said he, "what 're you going to call your donkey?"

"Damfino," said Coonskin; and he added, with a drawl, "Git ap."

"You ought to have found a suitable name by this time."

"I *have* named her," emphasized the young man.

"Good!" shouted the Professor. "Let's have it then."

"Damfino," yelled Coonskin, with a wild swing of the fence rail.

Pod's face turned on its axis with a puzzled expression, as his eyes regarded the hopeful pioneer. Said he, "See here, young man, I know not whether my ears deceive me, or you are not up on my dialect; you say you have named the donkey, yet, when I ask the name, your answer implies a

contradiction. Again, what is her name?"

Coonskin drew a long breath, and said loud enough to be heard a mile away, "Damfino."

As the fellow uttered the word, I dropped to the joke and, stopping in the road, brayed till my sides ached.

A new light now came into the Professor's eyes, and he smiled. "Damfino, then, is the lady's angelic name," said he resignedly. "It's odd, it's not inappropriate. Let it stand."

"Very well," returned Coonskin, "I will proceed with the ceremony." And letting the fence rail fall on his steed's rear quarter, he added, "In the name of the great and only Balaam, I christen thee Damfino." It was an interesting event. Thenceforth Cheese and I resolved to be more choice in our language and decorous in our manners in Miss Damfino's presence; and we lived up to our pledge two hours before Cheese called Don and the bull-terrier bad names for accidentally upsetting Miss Damfino with their yoke, and I kicked the tired and panting mongrel in the neighborhood of its pants.

CHAPTER XXVI.
Pod under arrest

TOC

BY PYE POD.

Thou hast described
A hot friend cooling.

—*Julius Cæsar.*

It was nine o'clock in the evening. While we were chatting with the landlord of the only tavern in Luzerne, a portly, smooth-looking individual entered the room. He was clad in a great fur ulster and top boots. After a familiar "hello" to the landlord, he eyed me searchingly, and added, "Your name is Pod, ain't it?"

I said, "I believe so; yours is what, don't it?"

Evidently not pleased with my expression, he instantly struck an attitude, or something equally hard, and announced, "I'm the sheriff of Borden County, and have come for a jack belonging to Mr. K——."

"Jack?" I interrogated; "boot-jack, apple-jack—"

"Just plain jack," interrupted the officer.

"Well," I replied, carelessly, "I have no jack belonging to Mr. K——, but I have the jenny he sold me for five dollars. Mr. K—— imposed upon me, and if he will refund the money, I will be only too glad to return his hundred-year old mule."

Here K—— himself entered. He stormed about, and said that I told only a section of the truth.

The sheriff gave his client a look, which quelled his ire for a moment, then, turning to me, said: "You talk reasonably enough, Mr. Pod, and doubtless mean right, but Mr. K—— has sworn out a warrant for your arrest; and if you don't want trouble and a double-jointed advertisement just turn over to K—— the jack he claims, and send your man back for the gray jenny."

It may not seem strange that I was converted to the officer's way of thinking.

"Take the donkey you claim," I said to K——, "you have the advantage of me. I haven't time to fight my case in the courts."

My black-bearded adversary now calmed his temper; his victory must have tasted sweet. I calculated the cost of the warrant and the sheriff's services to be at least ten dollars, since the officer had sacrificed angling for posse duty; although he was prevented from catching fish, there was a nice mess for me.

With reluctant equanimity the man who had wished to help me along explained that he had boasted of having acquired one of Pye Pod's noted donkeys, but when he found I had outwitted him, he swore vengeance.

On the other hand, the officer had conducted himself as a gentleman.

"Here, Coonskin," said the officer, "take this dollar and fetch us a pail of beer;" and, turning to me, added, "we must drown ill feeling amongst us, for when you come this way again, we'll show you how to catch fish."

By one o'clock next day Coonskin, weary, hungry, and morose, had managed to steer his slow "craft" into Luzerne and to moor it in front of the tavern barn. That closed the interesting event.

On our way to Tama City I was greeted by a member of assembly, who tendered me an invitation from the Mayor to dine with them that day. Lounging about the shop doors and strolling the streets, on our arrival in Tama, were many stately, still proud redskins, who, when they espied me with the wealth of canines collected on my way, shied off the scent for "fire-water" and dogged my trail to the hotel.

After dinner with the Mayor and Assemblyman, I escorted them to the stable to discover Mac A'Rony devouring a new hair-cushioned carriage seat. At once the Mayor wanted to buy that donkey outright, head and seat, for a round sum.

On expressing my intention to visit the Indian Reservation, some three miles away, his Honor gave me letters of introduction to the Indian Teacher and the Indian Instructor in agriculture. There lived the Sac and Fox tribe of the Musquaques. I was told that they were one of the most primitive tribes in the States, holding on to the primeval, and often evil, customs of feeding on dog soup, indulging in various kinds of dances, living in teepees, or wickey-ups, and wearing bears' teeth, eagles' claws, scalps, skins and moccasins. As you know, I had long hoped to be welcomed as their guest. I was tired and weary of the care of my dog pack, and wished to present it bodly, save Don, to the Chief.

About two o'clock we saddled and packed. When ready to start, a diminutive bicyclist, mud-bespattered and perspiring from a hot century run, he affirmed, wheeled up to the stable and, almost before catching his breath, introduced himself to me.

"My name is Barley Korker," said he, "de champion lightest-weight wheelman in de United States, weighin' jest sixty-eight pounds. I'm jest troo wid a trip from New York in one month and tirty-two days. My bicycle was giv

me by de Cormorant Club of Phil'delfia. De Bourbon Club of Chowchow Wheelman of Pittsburg put up five hundred dollars 'gainst de wall dat I couldn't go all de way to San Francisco and git dere. On de way I hears of de great donkey traveler, Professor Pod, so I says, I'll jest catch up wid him, and mebbe he'll take me 'long wid him."

I at once made the little fellow a proposition, which he accepted; if he would wheel ahead of my caravan every day, carrying a small flagstaff with a streamer containing the words, "Official Courier to Pye Pod," I would, as long as he gave satisfaction, defray his traveling expenses. Barley was delighted. He forthwith purchased a piece of plum-colored silk and a bit of white silk for letters, needles and thread, and, having once been a tailor by trade, when we went into camp that night said that he would make a beautiful streamer, one I would be proud of. He promised to have it completed in a couple of days.

I had not more than finished my business with my courier, when a rustic-looking boy rode up on a white donkey, and called to me, "Want ter trade?"

"Not anxious," I returned, but showed no signs of a desire to flee.

"Trade with yer, if you give me five dollars to boot," said the enterprising lad.

I recalled how I had been swindled recently in a trade, and resolved to make a deal with that boy by hook or by crook.

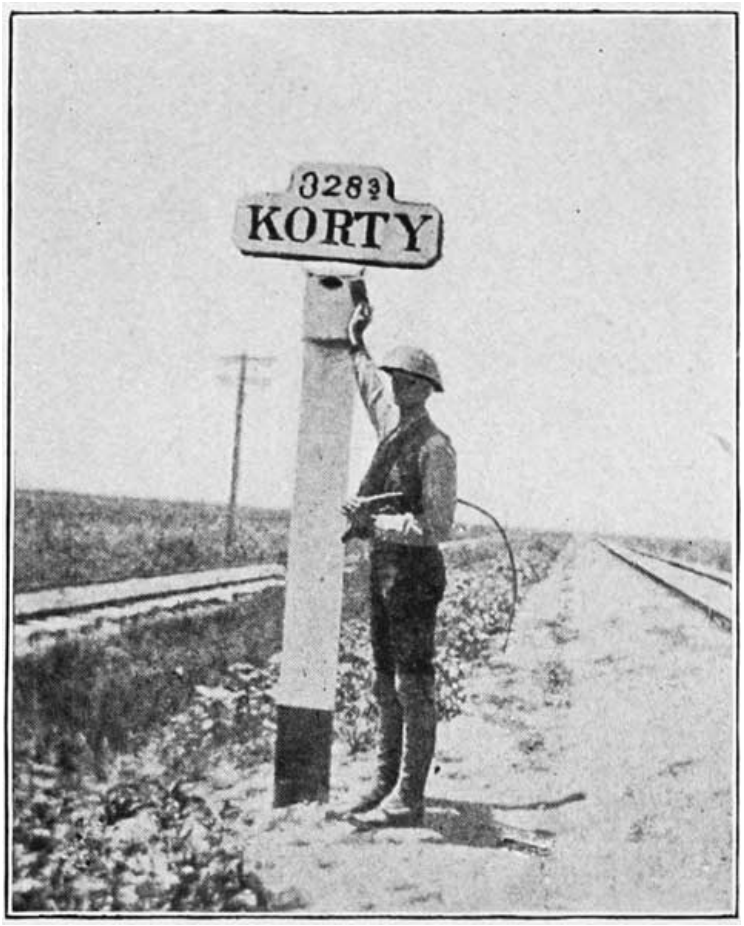
"Do you suppose I would think of trading this thoroughbred Irish ass that has gone around the world for your common beast, just because mine is tired from fast and long traveling, and yours is fresh?" I saw I had made an impression; the lad dismounted, and examined Cheese IV, critically.

"I hain't no money to-day," said the boy, "but if you'll give me two dollars to boot I'll trade."

larger

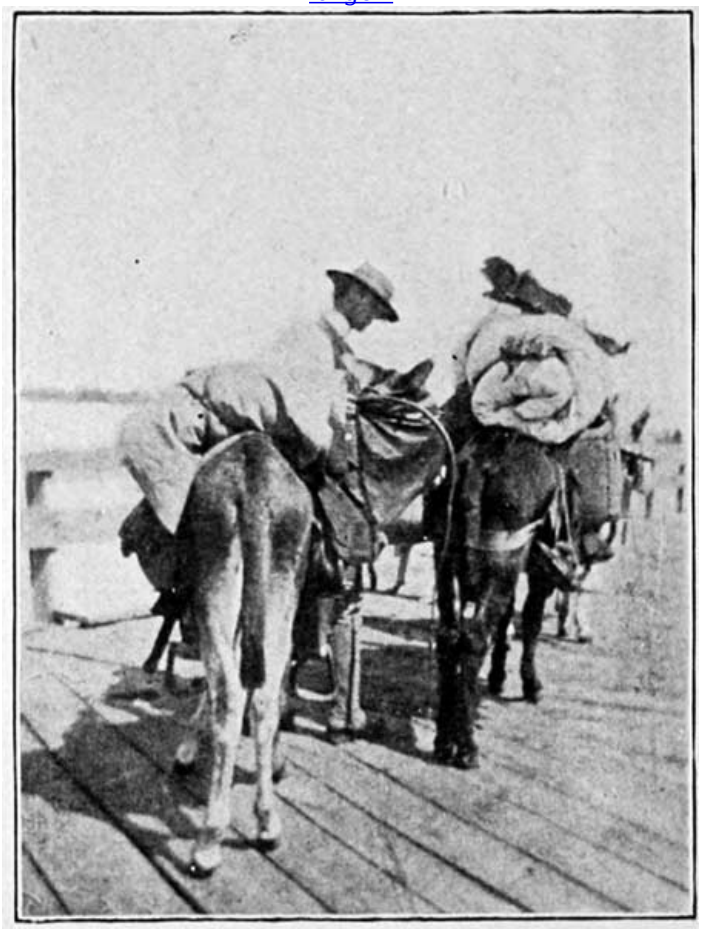
"I killed my first rattlesnake."

larger



"That was the town."

larger



"Over the Platte . . . after blindfolding them."

"What! do you want the earth?" I exclaimed. "Only before dinner I paid two dollars to have this donkey shod. I don't intend to pay two dollars more to shoe your animal."

The lad replied "All right," and galloped away, but had only gone a short distance when I hailed him. He came back without hesitation, and I then concluded a bargain. It was agreed that a blacksmith should take the new

shoes off Cheese and put them on his donkey, and that I should pay him three dollars to boot. An hour later Cheese V was shod, bridled and saddled, and that afternoon became Coonskin's mount, Damfino carrying the principal portion of our luggage, and Mac A'Rony his master.

My party reached the Reservation in time for me to meet the Indian teacher before he left school, my courier having wheeled ahead to announce my coming.

I was greeted warmly when I presented the Mayor's letter, was shown some of the lodges of the tribe, and made acquainted with a few of the foremost braves of the camp. The teacher was an admirable interpreter, and the Indians grunted approvingly at meeting such a noted personage as Professor Pye Pod.

A fat old buck named Ne-tah-twy-tuck (old one), on being presented, extended me his hand, muttering, "How do?" His grip almost mashed my fingers.

"Much dog," he observed, eyeing my pack with doubtful admiration.

"Yes, too much," I replied; "I want to visit Me-tah-ah-qua, your great chief, and give him a heap of dogs." The Indian grinned majestically, while his teacher turned his head to control his risibles.

"Make pleasant?" the redskin grunted, and shook his head disapprovingly. "Me-tah-ah-qua say no dog good—old—make tough soup." And the brave pinched one of the mongrels, causing such a ky-eying that my interpreter feared it would put the whole camp on the war-path.

Presently an Indian boy notified the teacher that the chief had heard of Mr. Pod's arrival, and wished him to dine with him at his lodge. I accepted, and the boy departed; and soon afterward Coonskin and I were escorted to the chief's wigwam, taking my dog pack with me.

Me-tah-ah-qua met us with a grunt, rubbed my nose against his until it became lopsided, and likewise greeted Coonskin.

Then the chief waved us into the wigwam. He seated me on his right, and Coonskin on his left, while opposite to me he placed his disenchanting daughter of forty-five summers. Opposite the chief sat his first councilman, Muck-qua-push-e-too (young one), and at my right, at the entrance of the tent in full view of the host was seated our Government interpreter, seemingly much amused by the event. I lost no time in presenting my dogs to the chief, who in broken sentences, half Indian, half English, accepted the munificent gift in befitting words.

The spread consisted of a wolf skin, and on it rested a large flat stone on which to stand the kettle of soup when ready.

For some moments the chief regarded me searchingly, then said, "Me-tah-ah-qua wants—big donk man to live with him—and marry—his only daughter —Ne-nah-too-too. Me-tah-ah-qua will give—him a bow and a quiver of arrows —three seasoned pipes—five ponies—a new wicky-up—two red blankets—a deer skin—bag full of dogs' teeth—fifteen scalps taken by his father."

The chief left off abruptly, as if for my answer, but I shook my head thoughtfully, and the chief continued:

"If you—will marry my daughter (here the chief glanced at me, then let his eyes dwell fondly on that aged belle of forty-five summers), Me-tah-ah-qua will make—you chief of his tribe—before he goes to—the Happy Hunting Grounds. He will call—your first born Chicky-pow-wow-wake-up."

I was never more embarrassed, and eyed the damsel of forty-five summers, trying to persuade myself that she was beautiful and rich, and still shook my head. The old chief, seeing his inducements were not alluring, motioned to his councilman to pass the pipe of peace. After we had all taken a puff at it, the kettle of dog soup was set before us, and we all dipped in our ladles, the chief first, and began to eat.

When I first looked into that caldron of bouillon, I could see in my mind's eye, all kinds and conditions of dog staring at me, and almost fancied I could hear them barking. The soup wasn't bad, after all; it reminded me of Limburger cheese, in that it tasted better than it smelled. But Coonskin and I, and even our interpreter, ate sparingly (I use the word "ate," because there was so much meat in it). I learned from the teacher that the whole kettleful of soup was extracted from one small spaniel. "Dog gone!" I sighed.

The feast at an end, I thanked the chief for the honor conferred upon me, shook hands with his daughter, and departed. Barley Korker, Mac A'Rony and the rest of the party welcomed me with glee, and soon we were marching over the hill toward the house of the Indian farmer.

In front of a wigwam sat the chief's squaw, an old, wrinkled and parched woman of a hundred and five winters, weaving a flat mat; a little way off two Indian boys were filling pails with sand, making believe they were at Coney Island; and still beyond I saw two squaws carrying huge bundles of faggots for the wigwam fires, round which sat the lazy bucks, smoking.

A half-mile further on we met the Indian Farmer, and I presented my letter of introduction. He extended me a glad hand, and invited us all to supper, and on the way to his house, enlightened me about Indian farming, and the results

of our Government's efforts to civilize the savage tribes. The Reservation contains 2,800 acres of woodland and arable soil.

After supper on bread and milk with the farmer, we travelers made our beds of hay and horse-blankets in the barn, and then followed the trail half way back to the Indian village, until we came to a house, where I discovered in the darkness its rustic incumbent leaning on the fence, smoking. There we lay down on the dry sod, lit our pipes, and listened for the first sound of the Indian drum beats which, the farmer told us, we would soon hear; that was the night for an Assembly dance, and the first drum beat was to assemble the tribe to its nocturnal orgie.

As I reclined on the grass in the starlight that mild May evening, my mind recalling the harrowing tales of the early settlers of the West, the first sound of the drum beat sent a thrill through my frame. I mentally counted the weapons comprising the arsenal in our belts; and even Don crept closer to me and rubbed his face against mine. After a few moments' interim the drum again beat, but for a longer period, sounding something like the army long-roll, only more weird. The farmer said this was the signal for the dance to begin, so we strolled leisurely down the hill trail through the woods to the grotesque scene.

A circular corral, fenced with three or four strands of wire, surrounded a pole driven slantingly in the ground, and from the pole was suspended a very bright lantern. Already within the enclosure could be seen the dusky forms of the Musquaques, some of them grouped in a sitting posture, crosslegged, in the center of the corral, beating a large shallow drum resting on the ground; while maneuvring fantastically about them were four agile reds, clad in loose-fitting, bright-colored robes, feathers, moccasins and sleighbells, dancing, and pow-wowing frightfully.

Finally we drew closer to the scene, and then an educated Indian, named Sam Lincoln, welcomed us into the enclosure. He said he was a graduate of the Carlisle Indian School of Pennsylvania, and greeted us in the true American style, but he still loved the primitive customs of his people. We sat on the ground against the fence, and occasionally one or another of the dancers would put a pinch of tobacco into the hand of Sam, seated next to me.

"What was that he just gave you?" I asked of the Indian.

"He give pleasant of tobacco," said Sam. "Show good feeling—Indian not steal—leave things around—Indian no take—Indian honest." By that sign of distributing tobacco among his fellows, the tamed savage promises fair play among his tribe.

The men alone danced. Before long, the squaws, one by one, came into the ring from various quarters with pappooses bound on their backs in shawls or robes, and squatted in a circle just behind the drummers. As the dancers became fatigued, I noticed that they would exchange places with the spectators, most of whom were in dancing rig. Sam Lincoln, after a time, excused himself politely and asked me to sit on his coat, reminding me should I leave before his return not to forget to leave the strap he loaned me to tie my dog to a post.

The weird proceedings were all too exciting for Don, and it was all I could do to prevent his making mince-meat out of the dancers and prowling squaws. The whoops and pow-wowing and yells were thrilling enough to frighten even a man "tenderfoot."

Toward midnight speech-making began. The drummers stopped beating the drum, and an old patriarch walked from the fence toward the center group, and stood behind the squaws a moment in silence. Presently he softly uttered something that sounded like a prayer, to which all the dusky auditors responded feelingly at the close in a monosyllable not unlike "Amen." Then the drum-beating and dancing was resumed, continuing some moments, to be followed by another prayer.

At last, a great pipe was put through a series of mysterious calisthenics, and passed around among the drummers.

At midnight the full, round moon rose above the wooded hills, and cast a broad, silvery sash across the ring, illuminating the weird and grotesque scene. Now a squaw entered with a large earthen jar and passed it around to all the Indians, the bucks first. I was ignorant of its contents, as it was not passed to me and my white comrades. Fatigued from travel, I finally rested my head on Don's warm body, and went to sleep; and it must have been near one o'clock when Coonskin awoke me. Then we three, accompanied by my dog, started for the barn to lay ourselves out for a few hours' repose. I shall never forget that night.

Sam Lincoln said that several members of the tribe, a few weeks previous, had gone to visit another branch of the tribe in Wisconsin, in the absence of which a "meeting dance" was held every fourth night, when the Indians appealed to the Great Father for their safe return. Sam told me that in all their various dances a different drum was beaten—there was one each respectively for the snake dance, ghost dance, wolf dance, buffalo dance, peace dance, war dance, meeting dance, etc. The drum for the meeting dance,

Sam pronounced beautiful, and "much nice"—"seven dollars fifty cents worth of quarters on it—all silver on drum—fine drum—much cost." The Indians valued their drums, evidently, more than any other of their possessions.

We rested well that night in our haymow bed, although the rats kept the dog busy till morning, so Barley said; he was the only one of us three who failed to sleep soundly. We rose in good season, and traveled five miles to Mountour, Barley Korker wheeling on in advance to order breakfast. He proved himself a good financier on this, his first, mission as Pod's official courier, and pleasantly surprised me by having bargained for three twenty-five cent breakfasts for fifty cents.

Before reaching Marshalltown, we met with a terrific thunderstorm, and rode up to the hotel at six o'clock in a drenched condition.

CHAPTER XXVII.
Adventure in a sleeping bag

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

What the devil was the good of a she-ass, if she couldn't carry a sleeping bag and a few necessities?—*Stevenson.*

Our sojourn in Marshalltown was brief. Before leaving, my master purchased cooking utensils, so that he would not be compelled to travel more than he ought to in a day to reach a town; now he could cook his own meals. After going into camp the first night, Pod fetched out the cooking tools, and having saved up a huge appetite, went to work to get a fine supper.

"Hello! Coonskin," said he, "what do you think? We've plenty of frying pans, but nothing to fry—never once thought of buying grub." And three more disappointed, famished individuals I never saw. But when to get even they ate double their usual breakfast next morning and were charged accordingly, Pod was enraged.

We trailed through State Center, Nevada, and Ames to Boone, arriving at midnight, May 22d; and continued on next day to Grand Junction, where a farmer invited the men to sleep in his kitchen. Instead of accepting, they shared with us donks the comforts of the barn, where, after a supper, cooked at a safe distance from the hay-stack, Pod received a delegation of gay young chaps from town. They brought all kinds of prohibition drinks and eatables; the popping of corks kept me awake until a late hour. And when I complained, all I got was an invoice of corn on the ear.

The Mayor of Jefferson, during our stop, presented Pod with a heavy shillalah that was intended as an ornament, but several times later, persuaded to do business. The Irishman, also, as a compliment to my ancestry, invited us all to dinner. After passing through Scranton and Glidden, two or three interesting incidents occurred on the road to Carroll. One night we were caught in a shower that seemed to settle down to business for the night. Coonskin thought he saw a barn in a meadow, so Pod sent him to investigate. He came back soon and said it was only a double corn-crib, built so a wagon could drive between, under a roof. All three thought it was just the thing; it was better than tramping through rain and mud. So we broke through the fence, and soon were unpacked and fed all the corn we could eat. The men made their bed in one of the big cribs of corn, the best they could with their scant blankets, and went to sleep. Pod told me that wasn't the first night he had spent in a crib. And I shouldn't wonder if that were so. I said I preferred corn on the ear to corn on the feet.

It was a funny sight before the men arose. There happened to be several holes in the inner wall, and the men had twisted and turned about so much during the night in their dreams and to get the ears comfortably filled into their backs, that it resulted in Pod's head sticking out of one hole, Coonskin's foot out of another, and Barley's seat plugging another. When Pod awoke, his head was red as a beet; he found his feet higher than his head, Damfino having pulled the corn out of the hole during the night. So much did we donks eat that, before starting on the day's journey, our stomachs ached and doubled us all up.

Then a ridiculous sort of runaway happened. A fat Irishwoman tried to drive a gentle horse past our party. The pet stuck up his ears and stopped a hundred feet away; Pod called to the courageous driver to wait, and that he would send his man to lead the horse past us. But the woman yelled back that she could manage her own horse; so she whipped him on. To the left was a marsh deep from the heavy rains; and the frightened horse made a dash through it, but he hadn't run far before he stuck knee-deep, right beside us. The horse snorted and plunged, and tried to get away, but it was no "go." He burst the traces, and the frantic driver hollered so that I almost "busted" too.

"Don't move your feet an inch, or you'll go over," Pod cautioned the woman, but she took it as a personal offense, and said her feet were all right.

"Help me and Oi'll pay yez!" she implored.

So Coonskin waded in and, tying the reins around the broken traces, led the horse on to dry land at a safe distance. Then he held out a hand for his pay.

"Phwat do yez want, ye poppinjay?" said the ingrate.

"You promised to pay me if I would help you," replied the valet, soberly.

"Ah, gwan, yez crazy loot!" she exclaimed. "Dishpose of thim hathenish jackasses, ond yez will have money ond th' rishpect of the community."

Coonskin was watersoaked up to his waist. But before he could get to a hotel to change his clothes, our little courier met us coming into town, and inquired, "Hev yuse been havin' a fallin' out wid de crazy mule?"

"Not by a blank sight," retorted the valet, in ill humor. He felt like scaring Barley, and he did. "Two women met us down the road a way driving a fractious horse—horse got frightened at donks—ran away—upset wagon—both women killed—expect sheriff and posse after us with shot guns. You

weren't in the muss and are safe. Here's my mother's address."

To say the fellow was scared half to death doesn't express it. It was his business to gather information and pace our party out of every town on the best road to the next. On this occasion he took us out on the longest road to Carroll, saying he had paced us on that road to elude pursuit.

"Dey's method in my madness, Mr. Pod," said the excited fellow, leaping off his wheel, to better explain matters. "If de whole blamed country's after yuse, do yuse tink I was goin' to let yuse be catched if I could help it? We sticks togedder, we do, tru t'ick an' thin, an' when de sheriff t'inks he is chasin' yuse one way, we's chasin' ourselves de udder way, see?" And our courier looked heroic. Pod said he was grateful, and slyly winked to Coonskin, who turned his head and grinned.

At Carroll, Pod purchased some canvas for a sleeping-bag. He said he was tired of sleeping in barns and corn-cribs and such, and if he had a bed of his own, he would be independent. Barley sewed up the canvas for him, to save expense, and we left town with the patent bed.

Of course, the men were anxious to put the thing into service. About nine o'clock, the three crawled in and soon went to sleep. The bagful of humanity rested on the sloping roadside where the grass was thick, their heads being at the higher end, their feet at the lower.

We donks were up bright and early the next morning eating thistles, when, suddenly, I heard Miss Damfino giggling. She nodded toward the sleeping-bag, and I saw a funny sight. The seam at the foot of the bag had been ripped by the weight of the three bodies sliding down against it, and now six legs were sticking out clear up to the knees, the feet turned skyward in all directions. In a lumber wagon opposite, a farmer sat taking in the curious sight with a phiz that would make a monkey laugh. One couldn't tell who or what was in that bag, except for human legs. Miss Damfino was so convulsed with merriment she just lay down and rolled.

Now it happened that Cheese V was a droll wag, and chock full of innocent mischief, so as soon as his eyes lighted on that row of awkward-looking feet, he quietly strolled over to the sleeping-bag and commenced to lick the bare soles of those sensitive pedals. In a minute the peaceful bed looked as if hit by a cyclone. Such yells, I had never before heard. The men's heads were down so far in the bag that the terrified fellows didn't know which end to crawl out of first, so tried both ends at once; and, slap bang me! if that bag full of live things didn't begin rolling and hopping about the highway like a sackful of oats. One could have heard the hollaring a mile off. I laughed so hard I thought I'd die, and Cheese, Damfino and Don were weak from the strain of their risibles long afterward. The farmer almost rolled off the seat, but finally he pacified his excited horse, got down, and caught the animated bag before it jumped the fence, ripped it open, and pulled out the dazed men. For the life of me, I thought at one time the bag would reach the creek across the field, and drown the men. Cheese escaped detection for his practical joke, and I, from the way Pod leered at me all day, knew that I got all the blame.

CHAPTER XXVIII.
Mayor rides Mac A'Rony

TOC

BY PYE POD.

If I know'd a donkey wot wouldn't go
To see Mrs. Jarley's wax-work show,
Do you think I'd wollop him?
Oh, no, no! Then run to Jarley's——

—Old Curiosity Shop.

Dennison was still and peaceful when, at nine in the evening, we trailed up to its leading hotel, after a long and tiresome day's walk, for, to relieve Cheese and Mac A'Rony, Coonskin and I had journeyed half the distance on foot. But we left next day in good season for Arion, taking it slowly, as Cheese was noticeably lame; he had stumbled in the darkness the evening before. At Arion, so aggravated was his injury, that I tarried a whole day, for I appraised him a valued animal.

When I resumed the pilgrimage, I took it slowly, and relieved the animal from any burden more than his saddle. Coonskin and I took turns riding Mac, who was as chipper and strong as ever. He gloried in his health and vigor, and found amusement in chaffing his unfortunate comrade.

The eve of May thirtieth was spent in camp a few miles from Woodbine. The following morning, when we were still two miles from town, my courier, who had preceded us, wheeled back in company with an old, white-haired man leading three white Esquimaux dogs. The stranger managed his sportive pets with one hand, and carried a basket of apples in the other; and, introducing himself and shaking hands, he presented me with the delicious russet fruit, and welcomed me to his home in the distance as his guest for the holiday, a pleasure I was compelled to deny myself, for lack of time.

According to his own account, he was a hermit and lived in the society of his canine companions, as he had the greater part of his seventy-five years. Content to subsist on the product of his little thirty-six acre farm, he denied himself the use of any portion of a small fortune of $15,000 in gold which, he claimed, he had buried somewhere outside of that state; nobody had ever helped him to a cent, and he resolved that no one should enjoy a dollar of his money.

I put up at the Columbia Hotel, Woodbine, a pretty brick hostelry, and, after an enjoyable lounge in the parlor, we all went out to see the military and civic parade, in keeping with the usual Memorial day custom.

The band assembled from all quarters and kinds of quarters—doors, windows, cellars, barns, corn-cribs, hay-stacks, hencoops, smoke-houses, etc., and without delay began tuning instruments. Their uniforms challenged imitation. No two were dressed alike. Every horn was different; they tried to outvoice each other, when, suddenly, the bass drum banged away and upset the equilibrium of the horns, until the snare drums and cymbals interfered as peacemakers. At last, after much strain of nerve tissue, the medley of musical tools settled down to a good, sensible patriotic tune, which held sway for fifteen minutes.

But the procession that followed the band beggared description. The band acted as leaders, the Grand Army followed as pointers, then trailed the wheelers—carriages filled with citizens and farmers. There were democrat wagons, side-bar buggies, buckboards, carts, gigs, surreys, hayricks, baby carriages, wheelbarrows, goat carts, and velocipedes. Pedestrians then fell into line, and brought up the rear. To cap the climax, a big, fat man with inflated chest galloped past on a faded, wind-broken horse, and exhorted the excitable celebrators to strictly obey orders. "Remember, citizens," he yelled, "let us take care not to have any accident to-day, for we are not used to 'em here!" The procession had begun slowly to move forward, when suddenly the command was given to halt, and the bangity-bang, clapity-clap, rip-slap of wagon tongue against wagon boxes sounded like freight cars when the engine clamps on the brakes.

The firearms carried looked as if they had been loaned by some museum for the event. They were muskets, match-locks, flint-locks, and minus-locks; Winchesters, Remingtons, Ballards, Floberts, Sharps, Springfields; shot-guns, muzzle-loaders and breach-loaders; blunderbusses; carbines, bean-shooters, sling-shots and cross-guns—a most formidable looking arsenal. Such a pageant!

When the procession arrived at the cemetery, the hearse, filled with flowers, stopped in front of a newly made grave. Then the undertaker in black clothes and red cap, seated beside the driver in blue coat, white trousers and stovepipe hat, banged a bass drum in his lap with an Indian club, as each floral piece was placed on the several soldiers' graves.

Presently my attention was directed to a new excavation, before which solemnly stood Coonskin, as immovable and statuesque as a marble slab; and

soon I observed an aged woman approach, bend toward the human statue, and read the pathetic epitaph on his back: "Take Blank's cathartic pills and keep healthy."

"Poor boy!" she exclaimed, sorrowfully, "a pity to have died so young."

That was too much for Coonskin, who instantly resumed consciousness, and wheeled about, as the frightened mourner gasped, "Bless my stars, alive!" When Mac took in the situation he brayed with merriment, almost shaking me out of the saddle.

The interesting proceedings concluded with a volley fired over a grave, and at once bird shot, buck shot, salt pork, hickory nuts, marbles, acorns, beans, and pebbles rained about us frightfully. When the firing was through, I assisted a quack doctor probe for a number one duck shot in Barley's shoulder and an acorn in Coonskin's leg. As I mounted my terrified donkey, I noticed the old woman had fainted. Bending over her was a gallant fellow countryman trying to fan her back to life with his broad-brimmed hat, while exposing patched trousers to an admiring crowd. As soon as she came to, we started for the hotel, congratulating ourselves on our narrow escape.

Next day we set out for Logan. Our arrival was signaled by an assembly of townspeople, headed by their Mayor, who greeted me cordially and asked to ride the celebrated donkey. He rode Mac up and down the central street before the cheering throng, as had the Mayors of other towns we had visited. Then I delivered a lecture on my travels, on a corner of the business street, after which Coonskin, who had lately received his banjo-guitar from home, accompanied me with my mandolin, recently purchased, as we gave a short serenade of music and song that made everybody sad and wish we would depart.

The morrow was the first of June; I welcomed summer joyfully. Missouri Valley was reached in the afternoon, and there, with my dog chained in the cellar of a hotel and the three donkeys stabled, we men retired and slept the sleep of the just.

The further I journeyed, the more primitive and squatty were both dwelling and store in small places, and the architecture reached the superlative of simplicity on the plains; but I observed more of a passion for flower gardens and shrubbery evinced west of the Mississippi than east.

The great bluffs characterizing the banks of the Missouri now loomed up, verdant and picturesque, after the genial showers and sunshine of spring. Every turn in the road presented a different kaleidoscopic effect to the landscape. Wild roses lined the roadside as we passed in review with our hats trimmed with blossoms, and songbirds caroled sweet melodies from early morn till eventide. Pure springs and wells were ever within reach, and the farmers treated us to brimming bowls of sweet milk and buttermilk. One day, after imbibing freely from a barrel of buttermilk, standing against the porch, where I was chatting with the housewife, I was astonished to see a calf walk up to the barrel and drink. After that I lost my appetite for buttermilk.

All through Iowa were droves or bunches of white-faced cattle, the predominating breed. I was told that the white-faced cattle make the best beef, which seemed to sustain the theory early advanced by the Indians, that pale-faces made the best roasts.

During the last few days, I noted a happy change in Damfino's demeanor, and a marked improvement in Cheese's tender feet. Damfino traveled faster and more smoothly, her long ears swinging back and forth with every stride like pendulums of a clock and apparently assisting her to walk to regular time.

Just as we were trailing out of Crescent City, a woman presented me with a large bouquet of flowers.

I had intended to travel ten miles that lovely June night, but when some five miles from town, on observing an inviting grassy lot, I decided to go into camp. We let our donkeys roam at will and graze, and spread our sleeping-bag under an apple-tree; then, with Don on guard and with the gleaming stars beaming on us through the boughs, we enjoyed a delightful sleep. At dawn we were awakened by the owner of the property, a short, crabbed individual, who lifted a dirty face above the top fence-rail and called, "Git out," to us.

I was awfully sleepy and dozed on luxuriously. After a while he again hailed us, now from the opposite quarter, but still on the outside of the enclosure, where I could see him eyeing disapprovingly my huge dog. Finally we induced him to come into our camp, on the promise that our dog wouldn't molest him, and even invited him to breakfast with us. When we departed he was in good spirits. He said he lived "over in that house yonder all alone," because he couldn't afford to live "together." Of course, we understood. He informed me that we were following the old Mormon trail to Council Bluffs, where Mormonism and bigamy flourished for a season before the historic band of pilgrims crossed the Missouri in 1848. Thursday, June third, my donkeys ambled into Council Bluffs.

CHAPTER XXIX.
Across the Missouri in wheelbarrow

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

He was mounted upon a mule, which he rode gineta fashion, and behind him, by the duke's order, was led his Dapple, adorned with shining trappings of silk, which so delighted Sancho that every now and then he turned his head to look upon him, and thought himself so happy that he would not have exchanged conditions with the Emperor of Germany.—*Don Quixote.*

The city of Council Bluffs is four miles from the Missouri River, and takes its name as many people do, from both sides of the house. Council comes from the old Mormon councils formerly held there, and Bluffs is borrowed from the bluffs on which the city is built.

Often such things are handed down for many generations; the Mayor seemed to be constructed on the bluff order. He had the consummate cheek to tell my master he wasn't allowed to sell photographs without procuring a license, and thought he had squelched him, but he almost fell out of his chair when Pod nonchalantly pulled out a fifty dollar bill and said, "Just make out a license at once." Then he went to work and did a land-office business, taking more money out of the town than the Mayor could put into it in a year's time.

Next morning Miss Damfino went shopping, coming back with a brand new pair of shoes. She said she saw lots of donkeys shopping, and began to distribute to a stableful of equine and asinine gossips such a lot of scandal that I was ashamed of her. She had also discovered the startling fact that there was one more river to cross. "Furthermore," said she, "our highfaluting, aristocratic, literary genius, Mac A'Rony, is to enjoy the distinction of crossing the great Missouri River Bridge in a wheelbarrow." This caused me to collapse. I fell on my knees and preyed on the bed of yellow straw, and brayed aloud for spirituous support, but all I got was a bucket of water. An hour afterward I was saddled for the show. I had experienced riding in a wheelbarrow before, and did not like the idea, but said nothing.

Sure enough, when we arrived at the bridge, there stood a wheelbarrow, just brought by a wagon from the Bluffs. I eyed the vehicle disdainfully. That was the same kind of carriage that a man once went to London with to fetch a wife home in, and now, as a fitting jubilee memorial of that historic event, I, a respectable scion of an ancient race, was to be toted across a bridge into a great city in this outlandish vehicle, to the cheers and jeers of a multitude. The event was heralded in the morning papers of both Council Bluffs and Omaha; I saw Pod reading about it on the way.

At the bridge, I was at once unsaddled, and my luggage distributed equally between Cheese and Damfino. The quilts and blankets were folded in the wheelbarrow, and with the help of two men Pod and Coonskin lifted me into the one-wheeled carriage, where I was strapped and roped so securely I couldn't budge without upsetting. Pod wheeled me a short way first, then Coonskin relieved him; in this way I crossed that bridge of size. When half way, I thought I would be easier if I turned over, for it was an awful long bridge; in a minute I was on the bridge proper, the wheelbarrow on the top of me, improper. Wasn't Pod mad though! A street-car line crossed the bridge, and cars full of curious passengers were passing continually, having paid extra, I reckoned, to see the circus. I had to be untied, and again deposited in the wheelbarrow, and do you believe, those human jackasses didn't have sense enough to lay me on my other side. Then another distressing circumstance happened soon after. I could see the street at the Omaha terminus jammed with people as on a Fourth of July, but that didn't matter; a horse-fly buzzed around me a minute prospecting, and suddenly made his camp-fire on my left hip. Soon the fire burned like fury, and I not able to stand it, made one super-asinine effort, ripped and tore, and upset myself and Pod, who was wheeling me. Then the crowd cheered louder than ever. Some boy with a large voice yelled, "Hurrah for Mac A'Rony!" and three cheers were given.

"I think he'll walk the rest of the way, Coonskin," said Pod, referring to me. "Save us the trouble of fixing him in the wheelbarrow again."

Thinks I, I'll just get even with the Professor at once, and I lay down as if I were in a barnyard for the night. It didn't take those men long to put me in the wheelbarrow again, I tell you. This time Pod didn't seem to care whether I was all in or not. My tail caught in the spokes of the wheel, and wound up so quickly that I was nearly pulled out on the bridge. The wheelbarrow came to such a sudden stop that Pod fell all over me. At first I thought I had lost my tail by the roots. It was sore long after. Couldn't switch off flies with it, and had to kick at them, and ten times out of nine I'd miss the fly and kick my long-legged rider in the leg or foot, whereupon I would catch it with whip and spur.

At length we crossed the bridge, and there I was dumped; then I had a good roll in the dust, just to show there was no hard feeling; after which a

host of inquisitive spectators followed us to the Paxton Hotel in Omaha, where we were to have a two days' rest.

Good fortune began to fall before us now like manna from the sky. The first morsel came in the manner of a proposition for Pod and me to pose in front of a leading apothecary's shop in the business center, and extol the virtues of fruit frappe, and incidentally his perfumed soaps, insect powders, and dog-biscuits, in consideration of several dollars in silver. The frappe clause of the contract was most agreeably cool and delectable for that summer season, and the sample doses of the various ices to which Cheese and I, not to mention Pod, were treated, furnished rare sport for an appreciative audience. The cheerful proprietor, recognizing my blue blood, attempted to feed me with a long, silver spoon; I so admired the spoon that with my teeth I stamped it with our family crest.

As the demand for frappe increased, the brass-buttoned society began to gather from the four points of the compass, and finally attempted to arrest Pod for blocking the thoroughfare; and, but for the timely arrival of the druggist, there would have been a riot. Coonskin had two guns in his belt, and Pod declared he would not be taken alive.

On this occasion, besides the money received from the druggist, Coonskin sold many chromos, for the wily Professor was far-seeing enough to work in considerable nonsense about his travels, and got even the police so interested that several cops wedged through the gang and purchased souvenirs. We made a pretty fair street show. All were there but Miss Damfino, who felt indisposed and remained indoors.

One of our severest crosses (some folks think the ass has only one cross, and that on its shoulders), was experienced a few miles southwest of the city, where we donks refused to walk a narrow plank over a shattered bridge, and were forced to ford the stream.

CHAPTER XXX.
Pod in insane asylum

TOC

BY PYE POD.

> We may live without poetry, music and art;
> We may live without conscience, and live without heart;
> We may live without friends; we may live without books;
> But civilized man cannot live without cooks.
>
> —*Lucile.*

It was my good fortune to obtain in Omaha a most adaptable teepee tent, a triangular canvas bag, as it were. One man could put it up in a minute. This waterproof tent had a canvas floor stoutly sewn to the sides, and when the door was tied shut neither sand, water, nor reptile could invade its sacred precincts; mosquito netting across the two small windows kept out all kinds of insects. Three could sleep in it comfortably, besides allowing ample room for luggage and supplies; and the tent with its folding poles only weighed thirty pounds. This extra baggage was added to Damfino's pack, for she was large and strong, and by this time in good traveling fettle.

I could now thoroughly enjoy the outdoor life of the West, with its fresh and fragrant air; after sleeping a few nights under the stars, only some imperative emergency could induce me to spend a night indoors. Although my two attendants were not companions of choice they were fairly good company, but my courier unconsciously furnished entertainment for Coonskin and myself. He had such an absurd dialect—he said he had learned it in an eastern factory where Irish, Germans, and Swedes, and other nationalities were employed—and his gullibility was a constant challenge for practical jokes.

One day at supper, an idea of putting up a game on Barley came to mind.

"It's a pity we haven't blue beetle sauce for our quail, Coonskin," I said, giving my valet a sly wink, and he, suspecting I had some joke in mind, took up the argument.

"You bet," was his response. "Seen hundreds of beetles to-day."

Barley eyed Coonskin, then me, and satisfied that we were serious, queried, "Do yuse mean wese kin make sauce of de blue beetles what wese see in de road?"

"Why," I said, as with astonishment, "haven't you ever heard of it before? Man, they pay a steep price for blue beetles at Delmonico's. Only the wealthy enjoy such a luxury."

"The dandiest stuff I ever et on broiled birds of any kind," seconded my valet cleverly. The repast over, my courier was convinced of the surpassing virtues of blue-beetle sauce.

Next day the bettles came out thicker than ever. With enthusiasm, I dismounted, and began to fill my emptied purse with the insects, and Coonskin followed suit by filling a handkerchief, exclaiming: "By the very old Ned! Gather 'em all; we'll have a treat for the gods."

Up to this, Barley kept on his wheel within talking distance, but now he leaped off and made a dive in the dust with his hat, as if he had trapped a butterfly. "Remember, man," I called to him, "there should be seventeen in every family; bag every one of them."

"Here's fourteen Ise got, guess dey's one family, but can't see no more; besides my handkerchief's full. Has yus got a sock yuse kin lend me?" I said I had, and then he came to get the sock. His trousers pockets were filled with the strong smelling beetles.

Suddenly, he dived for a whole entomological tribe almost under Mac's feet; had the donkey not leaped over him, we all would have been hurt.

We lunched in a small village where I purchased peppermint oil for flavoring the sauce. That night, I made a concoction that would only satisfy a Siwash appetite. We had bagged two dozen quail and doves, so we had plenty of game, and an abundance of beetles; the next thing in order was a heap of fun.

After frying our potatoes, gun oil, peppermint oil, pink tooth-powder, butter milk, lemon juice, and beetles were stirred in the frying pan, and when it began to sizzle and steam, Barley was put in charge and cautioned to keep stirring it. I thought, when he looked at the repelling mess and inhaled a little of those bug aromas, he would smell the joke, but he didn't. He kept on stirring, and smacked his lips, and finally said that it looked done. I decided to bring the joke to an end. Going to the fence ostensibly to tie more securely the donkeys, Coonskin loosened Damfino's rope while I seated myself at our table, and called, "Supper is ready." At once that grinning youth chased the freed donkey plumb into our fire, and so surprised was my courier that he never knew whether Damfino or Coonskin kicked over the pan, and robbed us of the rarest delicacy on record.

I stormed about like a madman, and blamed both attendants, then went at

the hot broiled birds inwardly delighted with the success of the joke. Barley never was the wiser. The following day, several times, he told me we were passing lots of beetles, but he wasn't going to spend his time catching them to be wasted.

Something followed the game supper which more fully explains my courier's displeasure. By oversight, one of the socks of bugs was left untied; the result was, beetles ran the tent all night. Barley claimed he found a beetle in his windpipe. Coonskin spent the night lighting matches and hunting the pests. I myself smothered a score of more in my pillow. That experience closed my calendar for practical jokes.

On to Lincoln was now the watchword. While still five or six miles from the city, a donkey and cart hove in sight, both gayly decorated with flags and bunting. The driver said he had been sent from Lincoln by a prominent citizen to escort me and my party into the city.

Barley had been busy stirring up the populace, so when I rode majestically up to the leading hotel on Mac A'Rony, I found a crowd of representative citizens there to give me a befitting greeting. As soon as my donkeys were anchored, a tall, fat, jovial member of the medical profession, advancing with outstretched hand, welcomed me to the city.

"Mr. Pod," said he, smiling all over, "I'm Dr. E—— and am at your service. I shall take pleasure in doing what I can to make your sojourn a pleasant memory."

The first thing the Doctor did was to take me to the Executive Mansion. We found the Governor absent, but easily traced him to a local sanitarium, where my escort found him on a couch, wrapped in swaddling clothes, apparently secure from all intruders but the genial Doctor himself. He had just finished a Turkish bath, but he sent the Doctor for me at once.

"We meet under difficulties," was his Excellency's smiling greeting. "I'm trying to knock out an attack of rheumatism."

"True enough," I acknowledged, extending my hand, "both of us are flat on our backs."

Gov. Holcomb then wrote some hieroglyphics in my autograph album, and expressed the hope that I would not find it as hot on the desert as I did in that room.

Our next stop was at a soda fountain. Then we visited a leading clothier—where I procured a contract to direct, with Mac's assistance, the public's attention to alluring bargains in its show-windows. For this I received a five dollar note.

My first evening in town was pleasantly spent in the company of Mrs. Bryan, who, on learning that I was in town, invited me to call.

I remained in the last evening to rest, while Coonskin and Barley took a trip to Burlington Beach, a famous local watering place.

"Wese taught, yuse see," said my little courier, in the morning, "dat it was something like Coney Island; so it's bein' only ten cents round trip dare, wese takes de trolley an' goes down.

"Well, yuse oughter seen de place. Before wese gets dare it begins to smell—why, Coney Island ain't in it fer smells. Den wese gets off de cars and shuffles our feet across a long wooden bridge over on to a island, where dare was a dance hall and lots of girls of all kinds and canal boats, and dongolas, and drinks, and beers—talk of beers!—say, wese had a tank dat high fer a nickel. Yuse see, de beach is on a island in a counterfeit lake, made of salt wells and sand, but day ain't no oysters, ner clams, ner crabs, day's nothin' but bad smells—but say, yuse oughter seen de lobsters crawlin' round wid dere sweethearts on dere arms! Say, dem peoples t'ought dey was havin' a big time. Gee, I wished day could see once Coney Island!"

We had not journeyed far beyond Lincoln Park before we approached the State Asylum for the Acute Insane. From the beginning of my pilgrimage, I had kept a sharp lookout for Insane Asylums, always passing them after dark, but Mac argued that the public had by this time found me harmless, and advised me to call. So I did.

"A patient has arrived," some one called to an attendant. I was startled, but soon recovered my equilibrium, when I observed several doctors and nurses rush out of doors to a carriage at the porch. The lunatic having been safely deposited in one of the wards, the Superintendent then welcomed me, and persuaded me to accept his invitation to visit and inspect the institution.

There was only one department that interested me. I had no sooner entered the kitchen than my omnivorous eye caught the pie-ocine stratum of a well-developed pie, and my curiosity led me to inquire if it were made by a lunatic.

"Why, most certainly, Professor!" exclaimed the Superintendent. "What's the matter with it?"

"As far as appearances go, I think it's all right—doesn't look different from any other pie I've seen and eaten. Shouldn't think a crazy man could make a decent pie, though; did he do it all alone, without anybody watching him?"

"Oh no, we employ a sane cook to supervise the cooking," explained the

officer, much to my satisfaction. "Will you have a piece?" he asked.

"Y-y-y-y-yes," I said incredulously, "if you are sure there is no danger of insanity being transferred to me by such a delectable agency."

The head cook then butchered the great pie into quarters, and the Superintendent said, "Help yourself, boys."

I gathered up the juicy quarter, and saying, "My good sir, you have heard of dog eat dog, you shall now witness Pye eat pie." I proceeded to devour it. I couldn't recollect ever having eaten better pie; I was almost prompted to ask the cook to slaughter another, but, instead, carried the remaining quarter out to Mac A'Rony.

When we had left the asylum, I could not help but remark the scrutiny with which each man regarded the other.

At length we went into camp near a farm house, where we certainly acquitted ourselves in a manner to arouse the suspicions of any sane observer. We put our sleeping-bag on the ground outside of the tent, built a fire close to the tent on the windward side while a strong breeze was blowing, cooked creamed potatoes in the coffee pot, and steeped tea in the frying pan; and Coonskin tied all three donkeys and the dog to a small sapling by their tails. I felt sure that insanity was breaking out in our party in an aggravated form, and congratulated Cheese, Damfino and Don for not having eaten infected pie.

Camp Lunatic, as we called it was visited by the owner of the farm, a hospitable German, who had a large family. He gave us a generous donation of corn-cobs for fuel, milk, butter, fresh eggs, and water, then introduced his wife and children. I asked him how he came to have such a large family. He explained that he had a large farm and couldn't afford hired help, and he thought the best way to remedy the difficulty was to rear boys to help him. He looked hopeful, although he had eight girls, no boys.

Supper over, the farmer conferred on me every possible honor, even letting me hold his youngest girl, a child of ten months. He said, enthusiastically, he was going to name his boy after me; the wife smiled heroically.

To cap the climax, I was asked to write my name in the big family Bible. The book was in German. My host opened it to a blank page, and, without comment, I inscribed my name underneath the strangely printed heading—Gestorben, thus pleasing the whole family.

When we reached our tent, Barley began to find fault with me. "What for did yuse want to write your name on de Gestorben page?" he asked seriously. "Dat means bad luck, dat does."

"And why?" I inquired, puzzled.

"Gestorben is German and means death, yuse crazy loon!" he returned. "It's de lunatic pie dat's workin' already; wese all goin' crazy."

Next day was hot. In the afternoon my party rested three hours in the shade of a peach orchard, where we were treated to ice cream by the kind lady of the house close by. It was about 105 miles from Lincoln to Hastings, and we covered it in five days.

Threading the villages of Exeter, Crete, Friend, and Dorchester, we arrived in Grafton, where I caught my courier in a dishonest trick, and discharged him.

The party reached Hastings Thursday, June 17, where I purchased a saddle for Coonskin. Detained by a thunderstorm, we passed a miserable night in close quarters. Next morning, Mac pranced about like a circus donkey, and trailed to Kearney in a manner almost to wind his fellows.

Before leaving Hastings, the Superintendent of the Asylum for the Chronic Insane, three miles out of town, telephoned me to stop and dine with him. On this occasion I rode into the asylum grounds without hesitation or nervousness.

"You must earn your grub, according to contract, Professor," said the Superintendent, when the greetings were over, pointing to a wood-pile in the rear of the building. As soon as I fairly began to comply with the suggestion his young lady secretary, the daughter of a deceased and much esteemed congressman, trained a camera on me and the axe and secured a picture.

I was then notified I had more than earned my dinner, and was escorted into the family dining-room, where an enjoyable repast was accorded me, after which, some twenty wardens and matrons purchased photos at double price. Then I resumed the journey with more heartfelt blessings than had been expressed to me on similar occasions.

The trail was superb. But an intensely hot spell followed, and made all of us perspire. Two days of hard travel brought us to the old Government Reservation of Ft. Kearney, established by Gen. Fremont on his historic overland trip to California in pioneer days.

The fort has long since been abandoned. There the Mormons camped for a short period after leaving Council Bluffs.

Next evening, I made my camp on the site of the notorious Dirty Woman's Ranch of early days, and spent a Sunday in delightful rest and recreation in the shade of the grove of wide-spreading elms and cotton-woods that sighed

mournfully over the deserted scene.

larger

A. "Trail through the timber."
B. "He had caught a nice mess."
C. "Climbing Pike's Peak."

We crossed the long, low bridge over the Platte, early in the morning. It required nearly an hour and all our wits and energies to get the donkeys across, even after blindfolding them. And when my party ambled into Kearney, that sultry, dusty June day, grimy with dirt and perspiring, we all were in ripe condition for a swim. The little city looked to be about the size of Hastings, but did not show the same enterprise and thrift. In fact, the inhabitants ventured out in the broiling sun with an excusable lack of animation, and seemer to show no more interest in their local affairs than they did in Pye Pod's pilgrimage. It was here I first saw worn the Japanese straw helmet. It served as a most comfortable and effective sun-shade, and purchasing a couple, we donned them at once.

Kearney is said to be the half-way point, by rail, between New York and San Francisco. My diary, however, showed I had covered fully two thousand miles of my overland journey; I had consumed 227 days, with only one hundred and thirty-four days left me, the prospects of accomplishing the "feat" in schedule time looked dubious enough.

The great Watson Ranch, when my donkey party arrived, was experiencing its busiest season. But, while the male representatives were in the fields, the good matron in charge of the house made us welcome and treated us to cheering bowls of bread and milk. When Mr. Watson, Jr., arrived, he showed us about the place and enlightened me about alfalfa, of which he had over a thousand acres sown; fifty hired hands were busy harvesting it.

For a week or two we had, for the most part, been trailing through the perfumed prairies at an invigorating altitude ranging from two thousand to nearly three thousand feet, inhaling the fresh, pure air, gazing on the flower-carpeted earth, and enjoying a constant shifting of panoramic scenes of browsing herds, and bevies of birds, and occasional glimpses of the winding Platte and the sand dunes beyond.

The cities and villages, that formed knots in the thread of our travels on the plains, came into view like the incoming ships from the sea. At first one spied a white church-steeple in the distance like a pointed stake in the earth only a mile away, but soon the chimneys and roofs and finally door-yard fences would come into view, then what we thought a village, nearby, proved to be, as we journeyed onward, a town of much greater size seven or eight miles beyond the point of calculation. The crossbars on the telegraph poles, along the straight and level tracks of the Union Pacific, formed in the eye's

dim perspective a needle, as they seemed to meet with the rails on the horizon. Little bunches of trees, scattered miles apart and then overtopped by the spinning wheel of an air motor, indicated the site of a ranch-house where we might procure water. The trail ahead became lost in a sea of flowers and grasses.

From time to time, as I dismounted to ease myself and little steed I picked from the stirrups a half dozen kinds of flowers, ensnared as my feet brushed through the grasses. Great beds of blood-red marshmallows; natural parterres of the wax-like blooms of the prickly pear; scattering stems of the flowery thistle with white corollas as large as tulips; and wild roses and daisies of all shades and colors—the white and pink, and the white wild roses being the first I ever saw; these with varicolored flowers of all descriptions were woven into the prairie grasses and likened the far-reaching plain to a great Wilton carpet enrolled from the mesa to the river.

Some of the sunsets were gorgeous. At times, the western sky glowed like a prairie fire; and the sunrises were not less magnificent. Sometimes, we were overtaken by severe electric storms, and obliged to pitch the tent in a hurry. When the lightning illuminates the plains at night, the trees and the distant towns are brought into fantastic relief against the darkness, like the shifting pictures of a stereopticon.

A flash of lightning to the right reveals a church or school-house, to the left, a bunch of cattle chewing the cud or grazing, ahead of us, a ranch house, and, sometimes, to the rear, a pack of cowardly coyotes, at a safe distance, either following my caravan, or out on a forage hunt.

Often, as the trains swept by, the engineers would salute with a deafening blast of whistles, frightening the donkeys and entertaining the passengers. Some of the prairie towns which look large on the map have entirely disappeared. In one case, I found more dead citizens in the cemetery than live ones in the village. Frequently, as a means of diversion, I left the saddle to visit these white-chimney villages of the dead. Such might be considered a grave sort of amusement, but really some of the gravestones contained interesting epitaphs. In one instance the following caught my eye:

"God saw best from us to sever
  Darling Michael, whom we love;
He has gone from us forever,
  To the happy realms above."

Imagine the shock to my sobered senses on reading these lines cut on a white-washed wooden slab, close by:

"Here lays Ezekiel Dolder,
  Who died from a jolt in the shoulder;
He tried to shoot snipe
While lighting his pipe,
  And now underneath his bones moulder."

Just below the heartrending epitaph appeared in bold letters the satisfactory statement—"This monument is pade fer."

On the lonely plains, miles from habitation, a single grave fenced in with barbed wire in a circular corral, I discovered a mate to the preceding epitaph, which illustrates the utter abandon with which the rugged, dashing "bronco buster" regards the perils of riding a bucking wild horse.

"Here is buried my bronco, Ah Sam,
Beside me—I don't give a damn!
  While bucking he killed me;
  On this spot he spilled me,
And now the devil's I am."

Sometime before parting with my courier, unknown to him we pitched camp one dark night in a graveyard. Barley was an early riser, and, as we know, as superstitious as he was gullible. He was the first out of the tent at dawn. Suddenly he rushed back, exclaiming: "De Resurrection has came, fellows, an' wese de first livin' on earth agin." And with terror in his eyes and voice, dragged Coonskin and me to see a strange sight indeed. There, some forty feet from the tent, stood a towering crucifix with a figure of the Saviour, life size, looking down upon us, while about us were tablets and mounds: the scene was so still and solemn no wonder that my awestricken courier thought the world had come to an end.

On the 24th of June, after a hot and dusty trail across an arid waste, where only occasional patches of buffalo grass and cacti matted the earth in the place of the long prairie grass and flowers we were tramping in a few days before, my weary troop, jaded and hungry entered the little village of Overton.

CHAPTER XXXI.
Narrow escape in quicksand

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

And the ass turned out of the way, and went into the field; and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.—*Book of Numbers.*

Shortly after reaching Overton, I took Pod with Coonskin and Don to pay our respects to Towserville, a large dog town so closely situated to Overton as to inspire a rivalry far more serious than that existing between Minneapolis and St. Paul. Overtonians complained of repeated raids made by prairie dogs of Towserville on their chickens and gardens. On the other hand, the Towser "villians" repudiated the calumny, then fled in confusion from the charge of shotguns and rifles.

As our party approached with guns trained for a complimentary salute, I saw his honor, the Mayor, seated in his hallway. The roof of his mound towered above the other habitations, and was undoubtedly the City Hall. Copying after New York, each burrow in Towserville had a representative in the City Council.

I'm sure we would have been welcomed cordially, had not Don wanted to be first to shake the Mayor's paw; his honor abruptly excused himself to avoid a scene, and his fellow townsdogs likewise, with the result that the above dogtown population rushed in and slammed the doors in our faces. The Professor was embarrassed. He had no visiting cards, so decided to leave at each door a sample box of cathartic pills; and a careful distribution was made.

Next morning as we passed Towserville, his dogcellency, the Mayor, his alderdogs and towndogs looked regretful of their slight to us, as each stood at his door or sat with his housekeeper, the owl, on the roof of his dwelling, nodding and waving at us. Others, however, were prostrate, either from remorse or Pod's magnanimity.

Sometime about noon, we approached the shallow current of the Platte, where we were unpacked and fed. We donks were almost roasted from the sun's scorching rays. Close by was a deep well, but no bucket in which to draw water. So Coonskin hitched a syrup can to the rope and drew water for Pod and himself. Soon a drove of cattle, accompanied by two ranchmen and a boy, came down to the river to drink with us donks, just to show there was no hard feeling. The lad laid down to drink from the stream.

"Here, boy, come and have a drink of cold water!" Pod called. "That ain't fit to drink."

"Fitter'n that well water," answered the lad.

Said Pod: "I'd like to know the reason."

"Well," replied the lad, approaching, "I dropped a dead jackrabbit in the well a week ago."

Somehow the men had drunk so much of that cool well-water they hadn't room for dinner; too cool water I guess aint' good for one when heated. After the dishes were washed, Pod took off everything but his socks and collar-button, and wrote his newspaper letter, while Coonskin went prospecting. Pretty soon the latter returned with a sand turtle and, hitching it up in a rope harness, said he was going to keep it for a pet. He named it Bill. He said it would make a fine center-piece for the table; it would keep the Buffalo gnats and mosquitos and flies off the victuals, and if tied at the tent door no centipede or tarantula would dare enter. Pod thought it a good scheme. So, when we packed up, Bill was put in one of my saddle bags, without my knowing it. All new luggage was generally tied on to Damfino; I supposed the turtle was.

After going a couple miles, I felt something mysterious crawling on my back. I looked around, but my master was in the way; so I up and kicked with all my might, determined to scatter that crawling thing to the four winds, but, instead, threw Pod completely over my head. Then I ran pell-mell down the desert trail, kicking and braying, with that terrible something gnawing my hair and bouncing and flopping with every jump I made. I ran fast and thought fast, and that thing stuck fast. Suddenly, I stopped, laid down, and tried to roll on it. This I couldn't do, on account of the saddle horn. But while I was still trying, the rest of the party came up, and solved the mystery by capturing the turtle, Bill; then they chained him on Damfino, and our outfit moved on peacefully for several miles, the men talking merrily. Said Pod, "Hitting the trail on the plains in summer isn't as comfortable as driving a city ice-wagon.

"Not much," Coonskin returned; "but the donkeys and dog have their woes, too."

"Verily so," confirmed the Professor. "For instance, there's Damfino; she thinks she's awfully persecuted. Being a female, she doesn't have much to say. But how about Mac? Doesn't he do more kicking than all the rest put together?"

"Oh, well," Coonskin answered, "you see Mac regards himself a pioneer and all the others mere tenderfeet."

I couldn't help grinning at the simple debate. The fact of the case was, our caravan had been growing larger with every day's travel. New articles were continually added. Cheese and I generally carried the men; but to our saddles were hung guns, revolvers, cameras, and the lantern, not to mention a bundle of blankets; all of which, added to the burden of our thoughts, a nagging whip and a pair of spurs, and a million and one buffalo gnats, mastodon mosquitos, and other kindergarten birds of prey, tended to make us lose our mental equilibrium a dozen times a day. In my case, there was a lump of avoirdupois in the saddle ranging between 150 and 160 pounds. Sometimes Pod would get out of his seat and walk a mile or two, to relieve me. With Cheese it was much the same. But that old spinster, Damfino, bore a burden, increasing daily. She was large and strong, and couldn't appreciate fine sentiments, or fine stuffs either, even complaining of sand in the wind, and coughed and snorted continually. Her sawbuck saddle corset was laced tightly around her robust bust, and to this unhealthsome vesture were hung on both sides large canvas panniers, packed with canned goods, medicines, salves, ink, cow-bells, vegetables, ham and bacon, vinegar, old shoes, toilet articles, including currycomb, clothes, soap, flour, salt, baking-powder, cheese, coffee, tea, kerosine oil, matches, cooking tools, ammunition, folding kitchen range, and two dozen et ceteras. On top and lopping over the panniers were roped the tent and tent-poles, folding beds, canteens, musical instruments, axe, and axle-grease, five iron picket-pins, packages of photos (for sale), a tin wash basin, two tin pails, extra ropes, a half dozen paper pads, and a dozen more et ceteras.

Beneath all that burden, she ambled along without a murmur, swinging her ears to help her outwalk the rest, except Don, who kept up a dog-trot.

A ranchman gave Pod some new potatoes one day (half of which I yanked out of the tent door at night and devoured), and in reply to his habitual inquiry, "Where'll we stow 'em?" Coonskin said, "On Damfino, of course." When some canned goods were added to the list of poisons, my master was puzzled. "Strap 'em on Damfino," advised Coonskin. Pod bought some canteens. "Where'll we put these?" he asked. "Oh, hang 'em on Damfino somewhere," said the wise "Sancho." One day a large package of chromos came, and the Professor was discouraged. "How the d—l can we carry these?" he asked with bewilderment.

"Why," ejaculated the valet chuckling, "right on Damfino." Just then that silent old maid looked at the men; and I saw blood in her eye.

Picture if you can our party trailing along the banks of the Platte that bright June afternoon. A few miles away loomed the cacti-covered sand-dunes, and between them and the river stared the desert of glistening alkali, sprinkled with cacti and sage, where an occasional steer was scratching an existence—and mosquito bites. We came to a muddy irrigation ditch, where the water had leaked out. Across it was an alfalfa field, and beyond that an adobe ranch house. We donks thought the mud in the ditch was stiff; the green field looked tempting. Damfino whispered that she would make a bolt for the field, if we would follow; and we said we would. At once she shied into the ditch, and the next minute was knee-deep in quicksand, and still sinking. Cheese and I stood riveted to the trail, while the men just gaped at Damfino with open mouths. Damfino, thinking she would soon be out of sight, brayed as she never brayed before.

When Pod got his senses he yelled, "Let's pull her out!"

"What with? Every rope and strap's on Damfino," said the truthful valet, running around like a head with the chicken cut off. Coonskin tried to reach a rope and, losing his balance, put a foot in the quicksand. Then, all excited, he attempted to pull his foot out, and got them both in. The Professor tried to reach a bridle-rein to his comrade, and went sprawling across the ditch on his corduroys and whiskers, his arms elbow-deep in the mire. This put Don in a panic. Seeing his master sinking, he grabbed his boots and pulled them off. Then he fastened his teeth in Pod's trousers, and I expected to see them come off too, but s' help me Balaam! the dog only pulled off one trouser leg, when Coonskin managed to free himself by crawling over Pod's corduroy road to dry land, and saved the day! At once, with a bridle-rein, the valet roped the Professor's feet and pulled him out, after which both men fastened the reins to Damfino's pack and tied the other ends to the saddles of Cheese and myself. Then that she-ass, wet and gray as a rat, with her burden, was dragged out of the ditch into the trail. Well, that quicksand pulled all the bad nature out of her, and she went a long time before she was tempted to leave the trail again.

The men looked grateful as they wiped the brine from their faces, and Pod remarked, "That was a narrow escape for all of us. Our donkey party came within two of going ass-under, sure."

CHAPTER XXXII.
At Buffalo Bill's ranch

TOC

BY PYE POD.

It has come about that now, to many a Royal Society, the Creation of a World is little more mysterious than the cooking of a dumpling; concerning which last, indeed, there have been minds to whom the question, *How the apples* were got in, presented difficulties.—*Sartor Resartus.*

It was noon at Big Springs, the last village on the Union Pacific Railroad in Nebraska, when I sat down to write in my dairy. I had just finished a combination breakfast and dinner, warranted to kill any appetite and keep it dead for twelve hours. Consequently I wrote under great pressure.

Since striking Camp Coyote, I had shot prairie dogs, owls, jack-rabbits, and gophers innumerable, but on Wednesday, June 30, I killed my first rattlesnake. It was not the first we had seen, but the first to lie in our path. I wanted to shoot it's head off, but instead of it losing its head, I lost mine, and severed its vertebræ. The snake was three feet five, and possessed eight rattles and a button. Cookskin suggested that the button might come in handy in many ways. "You know, Pod, you are always losing buttons."

These dreaded reptiles abound on the plains, particularly in dogtowns, where they can dine on superfluous baby-dogs when families become too large. Three sorts of creatures, including the owl—animal, bird, and reptile—bunk together companionably, but have quarrels of their own, doubtless, like mankind in domestic affairs. At that season the South Platte was drained for irrigation in Colorado. I was riding peaceably along, watching its morbid current and the gray hills beyond, when suddenly my valet yelled to me, "Look out, Pod, a rattler ahead!"

Coonskin was riding Cheese, who leaped to one side, but my own steed, blinded by his spectacle-frames, walked on and stepped over the coiled snake, which struck at my leg. Fortunately my canvas legging protected me from the reptile's fangs, which glanced off, letting him fall in the trail. Instantly I turned in my saddle and ended its miserable existence.

The report of my revolver attracted some cowboys, who galloped up on their rope horses and accompanied us to their adobe house a few miles beyond. It was five in the afternoon, the day was hot, and our journey long and dusty. They were a jolly lot. Thir ranch was a square sod structure, without a floor, and sparingly furnished, but cool and comfortable.

"We'll have hot biscuit for supper," said one of the cowboys.

"So you like cooking," I remarked; "I pride myself on the dumplings I make, and my flapjacks are marvels of construction."

"Hang together well, I suppose," observed the cook, smiling and piling buffalo chips in the stove.

"I haven't tasted dumplings since I visited the World's Fair," said another.

"Well," declared the first speaker, "my tenderfoot friend, your oven will soon be hot, and the flour, soda, shortening, and apples are on the shelf. Anything else you need, ask for it."

I was in a bad fix; I remembered the parrot that got into trouble with the bull-terrier by talking too much.

"It requires a long time to steam dumplings; it will delay supper," I protested.

"We shan't turn you out, if it takes you all night, but we'll shoot the enamel off your front teeth if you don't make them apple dumplings, and do your best," said a cowboy.

"All right, boys, I'll try my luck, and you can save time by helping."

"Sure," all replied.

"Fetch me the shortening," I called.

"Right before your eyes," said one.

"Blamed if I can see it," I explained. The fellow put his hands on a cake of greasy-looking substance.

"That's soap," I said, remonstrating, with a chuckle.

"All we use for shortening," apologized the cook; "don't see much butter or lard out on this here desert."

I fell to with a will. Before long my dough was mixed. As I rolled it out with a tin can, I directed a cowboy to put in the apples and roll up the dough. Soon the dumplings were in the steamer, and the cook began to prepare other eatables for the meal. Then, my duty done, I watched two fellows throw the lariat, and shoot the fly specks off Coonskin's hat in midair.

At last, five hearty eaters sat down to dinner. The cook's hot biscuits, potatoes, bacon, eggs and coffee were delicious, and I devoured them greedily. But in the middle of our repast I turned my head in time to detect the cook meddling with the dumplings.

"Shouldn't take off the cover till they're done," I shouted; "makes 'em heavy."

"Didn't take it off—lifted itself off," explained the man, regarding me first,

then the steamer. "Man alive, the dumplings are as big as cabbages."

"And 'tain't more'n likely they've got their growth yet," said Coonskin, who examined the wonders.

"Gracious!" I exclaimed. "How many apples did you cram into each dumpling?"

"Only fifteen or twenty," the cook returned; "awfully small, you know."

"That explains the size of them," said I. "You've got a half dozen whole apples in each dumpling, and a peck or more in the steamer. Don't you know dried fruit swells?"

"But how am I to keep the lid on the steamer," asked the hungry cook, wistfully eying the disappearing meal.

"Sit on it, you crazy loon," suggested a companion.

And the fellow did. Presently there was a deafening report, and the cook was lifted off the steamer, while dumplings flew in every direction, striking the ceiling, and then, from heaviness, dropping on the floor. One broke my plate into a dozen pieces. Another hot and saucy dumpling shot through the bursted side of the steamer, hitting one of the cowboys in the eye.

"Just my luck," I said; "they would have been as light as a feather."

"Light!" exclaimed the injured fellow with a handkerchief against his scalded optic. "It was the heaviest thing that ever hit me, let me tell you, and I've been punching cattle seven years."

When the excitement was over, and we had found sufficient grub to complete our meal, all assembled in the cool outer air, where Coonskin and I entertained with our musical instruments until bedtime.

Next morning, on my suggestion, a cowboy threw his lariat round my body good-naturedly and pulled me over, but before I could right myself Don took three bounds and pulled the fellow down by the shoulder, frightening one and all. I shouted so loudly to the dog that I was hoarse for a week. That demonstration of Don's loyalty was a revelation to me. The man was not injured, although his coat was torn.

The lack of energy and enterprise of the town of the western plains was both surprising and amusing. I expected a package of photos at Willow Island. When I called for it I was informed that the railroad station had burned a few months before, and that their express stopped at Cozad, which I had passed through. So I wrote to have the package forwarded to a station farther west.

Gothenburg, the next town, was in a decline, the reaction of a boom. A traveler approaching it expects to find a business center. Many stores and dwellings were of brick, but whole rows were vacant at the time. The soothing melody of the squalling infant was only a memory to the village druggist; the itinerant butcher and milkman had ceased their daily rounds; and all that was left to distinguish the half-deserted village from the desert was an occasional swallow that went down the parched mouth of a chimney. There is another town characteristic of the plains. I had a letter to post at Paxton, but forgot it; some miles beyond, a ranchman whom we met said I would find a post-office at Korty, five miles further on. After traveling two hours, we could see no vestige of a village anywhere. Don ran ahead to the top of every sand hill and stood on his hind feet to have the first peep at the mysterious town. I came to the conclusion the ranchman had said twenty-five miles instead of five. Finally the trail approached the railroad.

"I see the town of Korty!" my valet exclaimed.

"Where?" I asked.

"There. Plain as day. Can't you see it?" he asked, pointing straight ahead.

"I must confess I can't," I replied. "Let me look over your finger." Then I saw it. It wasn't one hundred feet away. A single white-painted post stood beside the track, and on it was nailed a cross-bar, lettered in bold type, "Korty;" underneath was a letter-box. That was the town. There was no section house, no water tank, no break in the wire fence, and there being, of course, no general delivery window in the "post-office," I did not ask for my mail.

On the way to North Platte, we passed the site of old Ft. McPherson, where Buffalo Bill, the celebrated scout, once lived and won his fame and title by providing buffalo meat for the Government, and also the site of a notorious Pawnee village, now called Pawnee Springs. We reached North Platte, situated at the confluence of the North and South Platte rivers, which form the great River Platte, Saturday afternoon, and spent Sunday in a manner to meet the approval of the most pious.

That first evening I lectured from a large dry-goods box on a prominent corner.

Sunday afternoon an old friend and classmate drove me into the country to the famous "Scout's Rest Ranch," the estate of Mr. Cody (Buffalo Bill), where I saw a herd of buffalo and a cornfield of 500 acres.

"There is quite a contrast between your cornfield and mine," I said to the manager.

"How big a cornfield have you?"

"Just a small one," I replied. "One acher on each big toe."

"I see, only sufficient for your own use," came the response; "your 'stock in' trade, as it were." Then the ranchman purchased a photo, and we two grown-up school boys drove back to town, in time to escape a thunder shower.

The country between North Platte and Julesburg is a desolate and barren region. Occasionally we could see a ranch house, sometimes cattle grazing on I knew not what. There was plenty of alkali grass in the bottom lands of the Platte, and further back on the mesa, patches of the short and nutritious buffalo grass, half seared by the scorching sun. The railway stations, with one or two exceptions, consisted of water tanks and section houses, where water could be procured. At Ogalala we met a train-load of Christian Endeavorers, and had a chance to quench our thirst.

CHAPTER XXXIII.
Fourth of July in the desert

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

What a thrice double ass
Was I, to take this drunkard for a god,
And worship this dull fool!

—*Tempest.*

Where and how to celebrate the Fourth of July greatly concerned Pye Pod. The third was spent in Julesburg, a town in Colorado, two miles west of the boundary line; as Sunday was the Fourth, we naturally expected a lively programme for Saturday.

We were disappointed. Everybody had gone off on an excursion, and Julesburg was dead. So my master, realizing the long journey before us, inquired as to the possibility of obtaining an extra donkey, and was told of one, some six miles from town. He rode in a buggy to a ranch right after lunch and brought back the prettiest damsel I ever saw. Her name was Skates; Pod said he so named her because she ran all the way and beat his pride-broken, wind-broken horse into town. I gave Skates a loving smile, but she gave me a look, which said, "Keep your distance, young feller." So I did. But I lost my heart to that girl then and there.

Pod noticed my leaning toward Skates, and asked me my intentions. I frankly told him. "But what nonsense for a youth of four years," he remarked. "Mac, be patient; wait until you are of age, at least."

Time was precious, and we could not tarry. That afternoon we set out for Sterling, sixty miles into the desert, where, it was said, there would be a big time on the fifth.

Monday dawned cloudy and threatening, as is usual with celebration days. The tent door was open, and Skates and I were looking in, I waiting for a chance to pull a bag of eatables out of the tent for her.

"What is your programme for to-day?" Pod asked his valet.

No answer. The question was repeated; still no response. Then my master turned drowsily on his pillow, and beheld Coonskin with bloodshot eyes and the only whiskey bottle clasped lovingly to his breast. The valet wanted to say something, but his lips refused to speak. It was evident that his celebration had begun the night before. Pod sat up and rubbed his eyes to make sure he was not dreaming, and then asked the fellow why he drank all the emergency whiskey.

"R-r-r-r-r-r-r-rat-schnake bite-bite-bited me—d—drank whisky t'shave life," stammered the youth. "H-h-h-hic-have shome, Prof."

Pod looked mad. He up and dressed, and mixed soda and water and lemon juice, and made Coonskin drink it. Soon the tipsy fellow tried to dress, but finally gave it up and went to sleep. Two hours later he awoke quite sober, and came out to where Pod was currying me for the celebration, and showed him his programme. I haven't space to give it in full.

One feature was an obstacle race, the prize for the winner being a quart bottle of snake-bit (whiskey). Coonskin said, as his excuse for drinking the whiskey, that he was certain of winning the race, but afraid the bottle might be broken before the event. Pod thought that reasonable enough, and forgave him; but he told me confidentially that he didn't know what he should do if he were bitten by a rattlesnake without whiskey at hand. I suggested, in such event, he should point a revolver at Coonskin's garret, where his brains ought to have been, and make him suck out the poison.

The obstacle race began at eleven in the morning. The start was made from the tent door; the course and conditions were as follows:

Run to the fifth fence-post down the trail, alongside the railroad track; crawl through the barbed-wire fence four times between different posts on the way back to the tent, without tearing clothes; creep through the legs of the little portable table (purchased in Julesburg) without rolling off an egg resting on it; run a hundred yards and unpicket one of the donkeys and ride it round the tent three times with a spoon in hand, holding an egg; ride the donk back to his picket-pin and crawl between its hind legs without disturbing the animal's equilibrium; stand in the tent door and shoot some hair off one of the donkey's tails without touching the tail proper; then lead that donkey to the tent and hitch him to the turtle, Bill. Cheating, if detected, forfeited the prize.

Well, while there were two starters, there was only one finisher. It seems that Coonskin shot a piece off Cheese's tail (improper, the donk said), and, in consequence, man and donk disappeared over the horizon, without leaving their future address or the date for their return.

Coonskin rode Cheese into camp after dark. Then he rubbed axle-grease on Cheese's sensitive part, and prepared the delayed dinner. Next came fire-works—Roman candles, firecrackers, and pin-wheels—after which both men retired, fancying they had the jolliest Fourth ever witnessed by man or donkey

in the history of the Colorado desert.

CHAPTER XXXIV.
Bitten by a rattler

TOC

BY PYE POD.

Sancho Panza hastened to his master's help as fast as his ass could go, and when he came up he found the knight unable to stir, such a shock had Rosinante given him in the fall.—*Don Quixote.*

The casualty, which terminated our celebration on the fifth, seemed to portend bad luck. The metaphorical lightning first struck me. We struck camp, that hot July day, before the sun was an hour high, and a mile beyond trailed through a dog-town reservation. I had long been desirous of securing a prairie dog to have mounted; as a rule one can pick off these shy creatures only at long rifle range. This morning, stealing up behind a cornfield, I wounded a dog, then dropping my gun, ran to catch him before he could escape into his hole. Crawling through a barbed-wire fence without afterward appearing in dishabille is considered by a tenderfoot the feat of feats. Before I reached the hole half undressed the dog had tumbled into it. He must have made a mistake, however, for out the fellow came, and made for another hole. I grabbed him, but instantly dropped him, for he tried to bite me. Then, like a shot, he dived into the second hole, and I thrust my arm in to pull him out. But my hand came out quite as fast as it went in. It was bitten; and at the mouth of the hole I now detected for the first time the tail of a rattlesnake. That was an awful moment, What should I do? My whiskey was gone; I had no antidote for the poison. I rushed to where Coonskin was waiting with my outfit.

"Make for the house!" he exclaimed.

A ranch house stood some two miles away, but not a soul was in sight. Still, that seemed to be my only salvation; I realized a painful death was the only alternative. With a hundred other thoughts rushing into my head, I ran toward the distant house. Coonskin began picketing the donkeys, and promised to follow.

While racing madly through the cacti and sage, I thought of my past, from three months upward. Just when I had reached an episode, which almost ended my reckless career at the age of ten, I heard the sound of galloping hoofs, and, a moment later, a young woman reined her steed at my side, dismounted and gave me her horse.

"Into the saddle, quick, man!" she cried. "Mother has turpentine and whiskey. The horse will take the fence and ditch. Pull leather, stick to the saddle, never mind the stirrups!" and to the horse—"Git home, Topsy!—Run for your life, old girl!" Like a flash, the big mare sped forward with the velocity of the wind.

To pull leather, in the parlance of the cowboy, means to grip the saddle with the hands. For a cow-puncher to pull leather is deemed disgraceful; for Pod, it was excusable. Although the mare fairly flew, she did not travel half fast enough to suit me. With reins round the saddle-horn, I gripped the saddle with my left hand and sucked the bite on my right, but suddenly the mare took a hop-skip-and-jump over the fence and ditch; fell to her knees, and threw me over her head.

When I sat up, I saw a woman in the door of the house, yet a half mile away, no doubt, wondering how a maniac happened to be on her daughter's steed. The next moment, Coonskin arived all out of breath, and assisted me to the house. Before we could fully explain the situation, the good woman disappeared, soon to return with a bottle of turpentine, which she turned nozzle down over the snake bite, while my valet poured whiskey down my throat.

They say it takes a long time and much whiskey to affect one bitten by a rattler, but this case seemed to be an exception; in a few moments, my head was going round, and I prostrate on a couch. My kind nurse looked curiously at the turpentine, and finally said it was queer it didn't turn green, as it should in the case of a rattle-snake bite.

A half hour passed and still there was no change. Then when I repeated my story of how the thing happened, she grinned, and said she guessed it was the prairie dog and not the snake that bit me, after all. I was so dead drunk when the daughter came that she glanced at me and asked in a whisper, "Is he dead?"

"No," said the mother, "and he ain't going to die. We've been trying to cure dog bite with 'snake bit', and I reckon it'll take a week or more to sober the man up."

Then the daughter began to get a meal, and Coonskin went after my outfit, on the good woman's suggestion, to fetch my animals to the corral.

It was not until morning that I was fit to sit my saddle; but I made the effort, and after thanking my hostesses and insisting on paying for the turpentine, we said good-bye.

Mid-day travel, in the Colorado desert at that season, was enervating in the extreme. Our straw helmets, being supported by a skeleton crown, allowed a

free circulation of air over and about the head; also a free circulation of buffalo gnats, blue flies, mosquitos, flying ants, grasshoppers, and everything else that hadn't an excuse for living. Everything seemed to be free in that country.

The sunrays beat down mercilessly on the sandy plain, and every live thing seemed to be in search of shade or water. Once, while crossing the dry and cracked bed of a stream, I saw a rabbit, almost dying of thirst, and I put an end to its agony with my six-shooter. In the narrow bars of shade cast by the fence posts along the railroad, could be seen occasional birds, standing on the hot sand, immovable, with bills wide open, panting from the excessive heat.

We reached Sterling late that night, after a twenty-eight mile journey. The town looked dull. Everybody complained of the hottest weather for years. It occurred to me that an awning would add greatly to our comfort, so I bought the canvas, and had one made. Henceforth we would travel at night, and sleep as much as possible in the day beneath the awning. I also purchased a light folding chair, which, with our table and stove, could easily be carried on Skates, the new donkey.

We pitched camp eight miles from town, near a sod house and well. On the way the donkeys became obstreperous, and before they were under control, our only lantern was smashed. This stroke of bad luck was the forerunner of other misfortunes.

As I fell on my hard bed, expecting to have a delightful rest, I voiced a righteous yell of pain, and leaped out of doors. I was a fair imitation of a porcupine. Coonskin had carelessly pitched the tent on a bed of cacti. The astonished fellow made profuse apologies, and set to the task of picking the cactus spears out of me by the flare of lighted matches. But for a week I suffered the sensations of sleeping on pins and needles.

The turtle, Bill, deserves some notice. He was put in the center of a table at meal time to catch flies, but all that stupid turtle did was to scrape them off his head by drawing it under his shell. He disdained the carnivorous diet. Millions of insects swarmed about the table, where before only thousands had gathered, attracted, doubtless, by Bill. They literally covered our food and all we could safely eat was flapjacks. Holding a fork against the mouth, we could with lips and tongue draw a flapjack in through the tines, by which delicate operation all flies and other insects were scraped off; and in course of time a fairly good meal was conveyed to our stomachs. Of course, one's success depended upon the strength of the flapjacks. Most of them stood the strain.

The afternoon of July 11, we saw Long's Peak, the first spur of the Rocky Mountains, in view. The following evening we rode into Fort Morgan. Journeying on, to escape the heat of the day, we came at midnight to where several trails crossed, and were puzzled which to take.

"Put the responsibility on the donkeys," I finally suggested. "They've great instinct."

"Good idea," commented my valet; "I've often heard of horses taking lost hunters out of the woods." So giving the word, my caravan resumed the march in the darkness, and went into camp about four in the morning. When I arose about noon, I was surprised to find ourselves on the outskirts of a village. I called Coonskin, with a feeling of suspicion dawning in my mind.

"The blasted town looks familiar," said my valet.

About that time a cowboy rode up, and I asked him the name of the town.

"Fort Morgan," he answered. "Have you fellows lost anything?" Coonskin and I eyed each other, then both gazed thoughtfully at the jackasses.

I was provoked about the loss of that night's journey; to think of our following our donkey's ears round an imaginary race-course in the desert, some twenty odd miles, was not conducive to a good temper. Many well-meaning persons had advised me to carry a compass. Some day, some night, they said, I would stray from the trail. I resolved to purchase such an instrument immediately on reaching Denver.

We spent the afternoon enjoying the luxuries of our new awning and camp chairs; I writing my article for the press, Coonskin reading a thrilling dime novel.

"This is life," remarked my napping valet, as he rolled over on his pillow.

"You bet," I replied; "we know who we are."

"I suppose there are lots of folks who don't know, Prof," he returned; "but they'll find out before we reach 'Frisco."

"But Coonskin," I asked, looking up from my writing, "do you know where we are?"

I had no sooner put the question than a whirlwind swept down upon the camp and scattered everything broadcast. Tent, awning, table, chairs, ink and writing pad, packing cases, and articles of all kinds, not to mention dog, donkeys, and men chased each other over the cacti and sand; the tent half inflated, rolled over in the scudding wind like a balloon.

"No, I don't," said Coonskin, gaining a sitting posture a rod from where I stood on my head, some hundred yards from our original camp.

"What are you talking about?—are you wandering?" I asked.

"I think the whole shooting-match has been wandering some," said he, picking the sand out of his eyes.

It was long before we collected our belongings. I never found my letter for the press.

Just before sunset we took up the march across the broad, rolling plains, which grew tiresome to look upon before darkness set in. But occasionally a hand-car with its sloop-rigged sails set to the wind would speed over the rails in the distance, like a cat-boat before a gale, and break the monotony of the scene. This mode of travel appears to be characteristic of the Western plains alone.

We saw innumerable buffalo wallows, great depressions in the sand where the vast herds of buffalo in the early days wallowed in the cool earth for salt, and to escape the heat and pestering gnats. In most cases these "wallows" are covered with cacti and other desert verdure, and are apt to upset the unwary traveler after dark, unless he keeps to the beaten trail.

At a little before sunset we arrived at the great D. Horse Ranch, where we watered our animals and accepted the ranchman's invitation to supper.

CHAPTER XXXV.
Havoc in a cyclone

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

That is the idea; for Juliet's a dear, sweet, mere child of a girl, you know, and she don't bray like a jackass.—*Huckleberry Finn.*

We did not tarry at the D. Horse Ranch, but later on pitched camp near a sheep ranch run by a Mexican, who met us with a grunt that nobody understood.

"Gee! how I wish I could speak Spanish!" remarked Pod, facing the squatty ranchman. It was comical to watch Coonskin's puzzled face. "I once studied Spanish, but why didn't I master it! Just two words can I remember: "porque"—why, and "manana"—to-morrow. But how can they help me? To utter them would be to ask, why to-morrow? And there would be no sense in that."

"But it might convey the idea," I interrupted, "that either you know more than you looked to know, or appeared to know more than you do know; and that would be something."

My master did not answer, but when the Mexican came around again, he said to him, "Porque manana?" The Mexican laughed—who could blame him—and said something about Espanola, a young lady I never heard tell of, and invited us all to the corral, except the men, who followed him to the house. Nothing like Mexican hospitality when one understands the language as Pod did.

At first the Mexican did not comprehend that we all were thirsty. The Professor asked for a drink in many varieties of expression, concluding with a desperate "Porque Manana?" at the same time pointing to the well. The Mexican grinned, and replied in a peculiar vernacular, and handed him a huge tin cup. Pod next inquired the right trail to Brighton in many artistic demonstrations of verbal inflection and gesticular design, and wound up with a heroic "Porque Manana." The mystified sheep herder shook his head quizzically, and began to pour out a whole tubful of liquid linguistics which my pedantic master drained to the dregs without discovering their meaning; then he shook hands with the gracious host and gave the word to "hit the trail."

"Mighty lucky you understood Spanish, Mr. Pod," Coonskin remarked, when we were some distance from the house. "I'd give a farm to speak it like you."

That tickled Pod's vanity, and he told his flattering valet that Spanish could not be learned in a day, but perhaps sometime he would give him a few lessons, just to prepare him for an emergency.

That night we donks were picketed to a rickety, barbed-wire fence, and the men pitched the tent close by, cooked, and went to bed early. Seldom had been so much care taken to prevent my getting wound up in the rope so I couldn't eat or lie down. In the morning there was a surprise for everybody. S' help me Balaam! if there wasn't a circus, then I never saw one. We donks were completely tangled in the dismantled wire fence, and cutting up capers to beat a side-show. I kept my eye peeled on the tent door for an hour. Finally Pod came out, took in the situation at a glance, and then sat down on a cactus, for less than a fraction of a second, to laugh.

I was proud of the rôle I played in that matinée. There I was, with a fence post wired to each of my legs, which raised my feet off the ground, walking about on veritable stilts, and close behind me followed Cheese and Skates with a post yoking their necks together, like oxen, while Damfino was rolling over and over, unmindful of the cacti, as if our extraordinary sport were for her special entertainment. We were quiet, until Cheese suddenly opened his mouth and brayed with glee. I told him to shut up. Says I, "Pod will think we got in this fix on purpose, and give us Hail Columbia."

Pod looked worried. He said he wondered how they could dismount that giraffe—meaning me, no doubt—without breaking his legs. I didn't feel comfortable so far above the earth, the atmosphere was chilly, and the rarified air made me dizzy; but that remark frightened me. The trick was, at last, accomplished. Coonskin held my fore-stilts, while Pod braced his feet, and with a violent push threw me over on my side on a pile of blankets and pillows. Well, let me tell you, my donkey friends, it required two hours to free us from the fence-posts and wire. After that, both men busied themselves like Red Cross Nurses. (Skates said they were cross nurses of some sort), and bandaged up our cuts and scratches, then, after breakfast, they saddled and packed us for the day's journey. I never want another experience like that.

On Thursday night, I think (I ate up Pod's only calendar), we again wandered from the trail, and about two o'clock camped near a cottonwood tree which seemed to indicate we were near water. Although I was awfully dry, I had to wait till morning. It was pleasant to be lulled to sleep by the rustling of leaves (and it was consoling to know something besides us donks had to rustle), yet there we were in the boundless desert. Don's barking

awoke us early. A ranchman rode up and said we would find plenty of water yonder at the well, the only water for many miles around; then he rode away.

There was one long row of cottonwood trees hundreds of feet apart, stretching for a mile or two across the desert, as if planted by birds fifty years ago.

Pod took us empty donks and canteens over to the well. That was the novelest thing I ever saw; and the water was the coolest I ever tasted. An iron wheel turned in a cog and drove a piston-rod down a deep well, the power being furnished by a meek-looking horse which walked round the pump in circus fashion, thinking he was the whole show, and pulled a sort of walking-beam that turned the cog-wheel. There the ranchman and his big small boy rode every morning many miles from home to pump water for their cattle, which ate (they evidently had eaten everything in sight) during the day, and chewed their cud at night in the cottonwood shade.

That morning, when several miles nearer our goal, a stiff wind introduced itself and increased in velocity until such speed was attained that the men had to stop traveling and tie the whole outfit to the picket-pins driven in the ground. That gale beat the tornado on the shore of Lake Erie, and the cyclone near Sterling. We donks had to lie down with our backs to the wind, for Damfino, not thinking, lay the other way at first, and the wind blew into her mouth so fast she swelled up twice her natural size. She was so full of air that she arose and turned around, before being able to lie down again.

Pod said it was a good time to write his letter for the paper. So he hitched his shoulders to ropes tied to picket-pins about five feet apart, and sat in a camp-stool, and, facing the gale, laid his writing pad on the wind, and finished his article in fine style.

When I asked him how the wind could be so strong as to brace up both the pad and his story, he said he was writing in a lighter vein than usual.

We were in sight of Brighton next morning when a strange accident happened to Pod. We were approaching a field of grain on an irrigated ranch when, suddenly, he was struck on the head by a mastodon grasshopper and knocked senseless out of the saddle. At once Don chased the creature and headed him off, while Coonskin lassoed him and bound him on Damfino. We took the wonder to Denver. There Pod put the thing in a bottle of alcohol, but it hadn't been there more than a half hour when it kicked out the bottom, and almost upset a street car in trying to escape. Again the grasshopper was captured, then poisoned and skinned, and the bones were expressed to the Smithsonian Museum.

About one o'clock we left the line of the B. & M. railroad, and cut across the plain six miles to the Union Pacific, which we had left on the previous week. Then we began to descend into the verdant valley of the Platte. Great fields of grain waved in the breeze on either hand. The song of the reaper was cheering, the glistening snow on the distant Rockies, cooling.

At last our caravan ambled into Brighton. It impressed me as a pretty town; after crossing a two hundred mile desert, I was in condition to compliment any sort of a place. That night we traveled ten miles and camped near the Nine Mile House, where, next morning, we were disappointed not to obtain breakfast.

Beautiful, far-famed Denver loomed up on the distant plain. The smoke from her smelters curled on high, a dusky sign of prosperity. We breakfasted three miles nearer the city, and at two P. M. our picturesque outfit strode up Seventeenth street and anchored in front of the Albany Hotel. Denver at last!

CHAPTER XXXVI.
Two pretty dairy maids

TOC

BY PYE POD.

At the head of the procession strode the four heralds. Silently they marched, in silence the populace received them. The spectacle reminded very old men of the day the great Axaya was born in mournful pomp to Chapultepec.—*The Fair God.*

When I had taken a bird's-eye view of Denver, and visited many of its handsome streets and buildings, and met its hospitable citizens, I dubbed it one of the most attractive cities.

One of the first to greet me was a member of the Jacksonian Club, who invited me to attend a lawn party to be given at the home of a fellow member. The grounds were illuminated with Japanese lanterns and a platform was erected for speech-making, while indoors were served refreshments. In the midst of the pleasant proceedings a gentle rain frightened everybody into the house, where dancing closed the festivities. Of course, every pretty girl wanted to dance with Pod.

Sunday seemed to be the accepted day for sight-seeing. The "Seeing Denver" car (electric) made two twenty-five mile trips a day, threading the more attractive portions of the city and suburbs and giving the passengers a splendid idea of the beauties and possibilities of Denver. Each car was manned by a director, who clearly described all points of interest en route.

Finally, the car was stopped on the heights overlooking Clear Creek Valley, where, in 1858, Gregory, a North Carolina prospector, discovered gold in quartz and proved his theory that all placer ore came from a mother lode. People in the East, hearing that gold could be found here in quartz, hurried to the spot, resolved to be contented if they could only find it in pints. While many were disappointed, within a year one hundred and seventy quartz mills were erected, and in 1860 Colorado's gold output amounted to $4,000,000.

The Colorado farmer raises everything in the fruit and vegetable line that can be produced in the East. Through the system of irrigation the soil is brought to such a state of production that one farmer near Denver was reaping a revenue of $5,000 a year from a twenty-acre plot.

"One of our best crops is tomatoes," said our guide, with the view of enlightening some possible investor. "There, you can see in the distance, is one of our largest canneries. It cans tomatoes only. All the tomatoes they can are raised around Denver, and all the tomatoes not consumed in the city are sent to this cannery to be canned. They raise all they can and what they can't raise they can't can. They eat all they can, and all they can't eat they can. Moreover, all they can't can they eat, and what they eat they can't can. All canned tomatoes they can and cannot eat they ship to those who can't visit Denver to eat all they can. If you can visit the cannery and see them can all they can and eat what they can't can, and can't eat a can yourselves, you then only can understand why it is they can't eat what they can and can't can what they eat. Can you not?" When he had finished three women cried.

Later on the journey the car was stopped in a different quarter of the suburbs, where several got off to pluck wild flowers. In the course of our tour many attractive buildings were pointed out, among them the Consumptive's Home, erected by philanthropists of the East, and the several smelting mills, one of which boasts of a chimney four hundred feet in height, the tallest on the continent. While the ladies were gathering wild flowers I was persuaded to perpetrate a practical joke suggested by two jovial Johnny Bulls. I had become quite chatty with their party. They had the impression that I was a cowboy, and when they discovered their error they proposed I should jostle a fellow countryman of theirs as soon as they could decoy him off the car, they claiming that he still believed me a real cow-puncher out for a holiday. They said it was his first trip to America, and that he had frequently expressed a curiosity to see one of those wild men of the plains. On promises of their support in case of offense being taken, I chuckled and awaited my chance.

Presently the man was persuaded to pick a wild rose, and as he was about to pass me I backed roughly against him, almost sending him off his feet. When he had regained his equilibrium and was on the point of rebuking me, I turned furiously upon him: "Say, you foreign tenderfoot," I said, "you got a preemption on the whole earth? If so, just fence it in. Don't yer brush me that way agin, or I'll show yer how we trim moustaches out in this country when our razors ain't sharp. Understand?"

As I uttered these words I put my hand on my hip-pocket. My sombrero was tilted, and the attitude I struck would have amused any real cowboy. The astonished Englishman, red in the face, edged away in silence and eyed me narrowly.

"Turn your lamps the other way, or I'll shoot off yer eyebrows!" I shouted.

At once the innocent butt of our ungentlemanly joke ventured to apologize for the carelessness that was not his, when a peal of laughter from behind told plainly that the joke was off. I turned to see everybody in a fit of laughter; I

now began to feel embarrassed, and had not my confederate immediately explained the case and introduced me to their imposed-upon comrade, I certainly would have felt very awkward. As it was, the tourist laughed heartily at the joke, complimented me on my art in acting and gave me a cordial handshake. At our journey's end I was introduced to all the ladies, and induced to pose for their cameras, after which I departed with the well-wishes of all.

I must not overlook an amusing incident of the trip. One of the passengers was an Irishman, who caused much merriment by a stroke of wit, or a blunder, just as the car stopped in front of the City Hall.

"This lovely park which you see," said the director, "has been brought to its present beautiful condition by levying a tax of one mill on all property owners. The burden, you see, was light for each person, and just to all."

"Light was it!" the Emerald-Islander exclaimed. "Begorry! mills must be dom plintiful in these parts, whin every mon is willin' to give uup a mill for an interist in a parruk. Be dad! it must ha' been rough on th' mon that owned but one mill. It was thot!" Whereupon our erudite guide politely dissertated on the great difference in mills, to the amusement of the English party and the Hibernian's satisfaction.

Before leaving Denver I found it advisable to add considerable to my traveling equipment. I ordered a tin canteen from my own design, to hold a gallon of water, and within it was fashioned a receptacle for holding two pounds of butter. Its value was constantly appreciated when crossing the deserts where we were enabled to carry butter, and an extra quantity of drinking water which was kept cool by wrapping the canteen with cloth and canvas and keeping them in a moist condition. I also purchased a large basket-covered demijohn of port wine (for medicinal purposes), an extra pack-saddle and camp supplies.

Although that altitude of 5,000 feet was quite invigorating, the sun at that season was unusually warm, and I intended to enjoy as much camp life as possible. We took a southerly course towards Pike's Peak, threading the villages of Littleton, Castle Rock, Sedalia and Monument, and the city of Colorado Springs. The scenic beauties of Colorado became more manifest every day.

Sunday afternoon I observed in the southwest a dark cloud draw a threatening hood over that giant discovery of 1806 by Col. Zebulon M. Pike, and I decided to camp in the vicinity of a dairy ranch. Anticipating a shower, I rode Skates, my fastest donkey, to the house with canteen and pail, leaving Coonskin to unpack, pitch tent, and build a wood-pile under shelter.

On approaching the house, I detected a pretty dairymaid in the doorway. I endeavored to dismount from my asinine steed with grace, but the picture so unbalanced me that I caught a foot in a stirrup and fell heels over appetite on the ground at my charmer's very feet, much to my embarrassment and her amusement.

"Can you spare me a quart of milk, Miss?" I inquired, lifting my hat. She smiled. Then, fearing lest I might have created the impression of begging, I asked; "can you sell some? I mean to pay for it, of course."

My words seemed to break her spell, and she replied sweetly, "We have two kinds—cream and skimmed milk." And her eyes sparkled. I caught my breath and gave her a chance to lose hers. "Per-per-perhaps you might mix the two safely—mightn't you?" I now felt the crisis coming, and twisted myself nervously. The maid laughed. It quieted my nerves.

"But," she returned, "you see, the cream is all engaged, and—and I would not like to sell you the skimmed milk, because—because we feed that to the hogs."

I smiled now and tried to answer. "Well, what is good enough for hogs ought—," and I hesitated, feeling I was getting things twisted; but she came to the rescue nobly.

"What you mean is, what is good enough for you ought to be good enough for hogs, eh?"

"Thank you," I said. "What you say goes," and I handed her the pail, which she accepted with a shy courtesy.

As she hurried to the spring house, I watched her admiringly until foosteps behind caused me to turn around. Behold! there was another young lady, tall and becomingly gowned, even prettier than the other. The softness of her brown, lustrous eyes bespoke the tenderness in her nature. Even Don interpreted this when she patted his head and observed: "What a nice dog you have!"

The expression "nice dog" was very familiar to Don, and they were no sooner uttered than the huge dog arose to the occasion by planting his fore-paws against the lady's breast and attempting to steal a kiss.

The shock would have upset her completely if I had not caught her in my arms. It was therefore under somewhat embarrassing circumstances that the dairy maid witnessed the embrace—embarrassing to all save the dog. Explanations will only make matters worse, I thought, so I took the pail and

kept mum, though I know I looked anything but innocent.

Business over, we conversed until it began to sprinkle, and then, after accepting the ladies' invitation to spend the evening with them, I cantered back to camp.

"I feared you had gone on to 'Frisco," said Coonskin; "I'm dying for a drink of water."

Indeed, I had forgotten to fill the canteen—all on account of those charming girls. "I declare, Coonskin," I explained, "I had such a time persuading the folks to sell me a little milk that I never thought of water. I'll hurry back for it." And not giving my companion time to anticipate me, or stopping to mount a donkey, I did the errand on foot.

That evening we passed a pleasant hour with "wine, women and song," and departed with another invitation to a fish and game dinner next day, if I would tarry and provide trout and birds. Of course, I tarried. Coonskin accompanied me into the canyon next morning with rod and line, and in the afternoon with gun and bag. By five he had caught a nice mess of trout and I had shot a young jack-rabbit.

It was a delicious repast that was served us by those New England girls. We ate fish till their tails stuck out of our mouths. The bread tasted like angel's food, and the beans were well done, in spite of the fact it required a whole day to cook beans in that altitude.

I smacked my lips and said to myself: "I'll eat heartily now, for it'll be long before I'll get another dinner like this."

On the way to the Springs next day I suggested to Coonskin that we climb the Peak and see the sun rise.

"Why, is sunrise up there any finer than it is down here?" he inquired.

I thought he was making a mental calculation of the number of steps, and labored breaths, and obsolete words the ascent would require.

"Certainly," I said, "the reflections to be seen from that altitude are more beautiful and varied than from the plains."

"They're more beautiful perhaps, but I've been riding a mule over three months now, and my reflections are about as varied as anything could make 'em."

My donkey party reached Colorado Springs in time for dinner.

larger

"A. Independence Pass . . . one of the loftiest of the Continental Divide."
"B. Trail to Florisant."
"C. Two days of hard climbing to cross Western Pass."

CHAPTER XXXVII.
Donks climb Pike's Peak

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

The Professor, scorning to waste shoe leather and economize francs, began the ascent on a mule steered by a woman holding on to the beast's tail.—*Easter on the Riviera.*

A curious proceeding held my rapt attention as we neared Petersburg, a suburb of Denver. At the terminus of a horse-car line I observed a car approaching us down-grade, with a horse on its rear platform. As soon as the car stopped at the station the horse stepped off on a platform and took his place in front of the car, ready to haul it up-grade again and earn another ride. I did not have the chance to ask the horse how he enjoyed it, but I would willingly have exchanged places with him.

Next morning, to my surprise, Coonskin was the first to rise. Our camp was near Littleton, on the banks of a small stream, and here at early dawn that ambitious youth gathered a panful of glittering wet sand, and rushed into the tent with it, almost out of breath.

"Look here, Pod!" he called, excitedly, "see the strike I've made! The river bottom is yellow with gold!"

Then I heard Pod say, "Rich, I should say! Funny this placer hasn't been discovered before now."

"Let's file a claim," said Coonskin, "we can make a million in six months."

"Let's!" the Professor exclaimed. As soon as breakfast was over both tenderfeet were trying their luck at panning gold. A cabin stood not far away, and presently there issued from it an old man who approached the argonauts, and sat on a log to watch them.

"Your first experience at placer mining?" the stranger observed.

"For an instant both men looked confused. I could see that Coonskin didn't want to reveal his newly discovered fortune by the way he dumped his sand and said nothing. But Pod held on to a frying-pan full of sand with one hand, and reached for his revolver with the other to defend his claim.

"Well, boys," observed the native, laughing, "you're goin' through jest what all tenderfeet do when they first strike these parts—try to wash gold dust out of mica. All the streams out here 're filled with them glist'ning particles, but recollect, boys, all what glitters ain't gold. That you've got's called 'fool's gold.'"

It was plain that Pod was disappointed, but the stranger gave him some good advice, and a large Colorado diamond for a keepsake, then strolled away, leaving two sadder but wiser men.

The road to Colorado Springs was a popular thoroughfare for bicyclists. Saturday afternoon, as we donks began the ascent of a long, steep, and winding incline, a din of voices and a whir of wheels suddenly sounded ahead, and a party of fifty or more young men and women in gala attire came speeding down toward us. As quickly as possible we donks turned out to the right. I think the bicyclists must have been English, for they steered to the left. In a minute "it was all off."

It happened that the leader of the wheel brigade saw us donks too late and tried to save himself by turning suddenly to his right. Result: Tire off and man off. Sequel: A wild rough-and-tumble conglomeration of sexes, as his followers mixed up with our party. Bicycles, donkeys, men, women, lunch baskets, packs, hats, petticoats and cameras were distributed in all directions. The cries and shrieks of the bruised and frightened together with the confusion of the wreckage so terrified us donks that as soon as we could pick ourselves up we reared on our haunches, and cavorted, and brayed, and so help me Balaam! it was the worst mix-up I was ever in.

When every man had assisted some one else's girl to her equilibrium, a council of war assembled to adjust grievances and repair machines; but the proceedings did not interest the Professor, for he hustled us donks up hill and out of sight as quickly as possible. The din of voices soon sounded in the distance like a swarm of yellow-jackets.

Colorado City was a gambling resort lying between Colorado Springs and Manitou. Our stop there was all too brief. While Pod and Coonskin were at feed we donks stole down-street to watch a "play." That was the time I regretted having eaten the five dollar bill back in Iowa, for three times in succession the roulette ball dropped on my colors, and by compounding the principal and interest each time I could have made a beautiful scoop which might have given us donks a high old time.

Thence onward Pike's Peak was the chief topic of discussion. To begin with, Pike's Peak is the largest mountain of its size in the world. Cats can't live ten minutes on the summit before going crazy, and dogs even lose their bark at the timber-line. I concurred with Pod that it would be a big feat to climb the Peak. On the other hand, Cheese and Skates demurred from our opinion. Skates positively declined to leave the stable, and Cheese backed her

up by putting both fore feet in the manger. Damfino stood by Pod and me. She argued that when one has climbed to an elevation of 14,147 feet above sea-level he is likely to feel a blamed sight nearer heaven than he is ever apt to be again. The result was that Damfino and I alone accompanied the men on that adventuresome trip.

Everything went well until we struck the cog track in Engleman's Canyon. It was the first experience for us donks in "hitting the ties." I did not fancy the route at all. But Pod, having seen a boy ride a native burro up the track, resolved to do no less. The first half mile was not steep, and the men rode us donks; but when we caught up with a party of men and women making the ascent, an ambitious boy grabbed my tail and allowed me the privilege of dragging him a hundred yards before the Prof discovered him, and dismounted. How I thanked the boy for his thoughtfulness.

Damfino lagged behind. She had changed her mind. The consequence was, we donks were driven ahead, and Coonskin no sooner hit Damfino a whack with the butt of his six-shooter, then she began to pace so fast none of us could keep up with her. When we came to the steep 25 per cent. grade the men were winded; not so we donks. The men called to us, but we would not listen. They threw stones at us, and we quickened our gait. The men couldn't run up-grade to save their lives, whereas mountain climbing finds a donkey in his true element. "Ain't this fun!" exclaimed Damfino. "Never had such a picnic!" I added. Well, Pod walked half the way from New York and prided himself on walking, and Coonskin had won medals for sprinting: so it looked to us a huge joke, and we just brayed.

The next instant a locomotive bell sounded ahead, and I saw a train approaching from round a bend. We felt that we had the right of way, and were much put out when the train refused to stop. We would not get off the track; it would be contrary to the nature of first-class donkeys to do such a thing.

Say, what wonderfully powerful things steam engines are! We got it in our heads that we could stop the train, if we didn't push it off the track. You just ought to have seen us pitch headlong down the bank of the canyon into the foaming torrent. It was a mighty plunge we made, I can tell you. Before we rose to the surface the car stopped, and many of the passengers got off. The banks of the pool were so steep we couldn't climb out, and we had to swim and tread water to keep from drowning. Damfino brayed like a lunatic, I spouted like a geyser, and great excitement reigned among the tourists.

Evidently "nothing was doing" for our immediate relief. The engineer was loudly refreshing Pod's memory that he had no right on the railroad bed with his donkeys, and the female passengers gesticulated wildly and condoled with Damfino and me for the deep predicament we were in. One facetious fellow asked if we jackasses were Baptists, and the Professor told him he didn't know what denomination we formerly adhered to, but he believed that we were skeptics now.

Presently our masters began search for ropes and straps. Alas! all of them had been left behind. I was now through with coughing, but still weak and out of breath, while Damfino pumped logarithms of abuse at the cog train and exhorted me to keep swimming—advice entirely unnecessary. Finally the car steamed down to Manitou, and the sympathetic occupants called back that they would send aid.

Coonskin was first to come to his senses. Said he, "I can run, I'll run to the village for help;" and away he went to beat the cars. This expedient awoke the Prof.'s dormant mind to an idea, and he began to roll rocks into the Pool. At the same time he yelled something at us, but I couldn't wait to listen, for I ducked under water in the nick of time to dodge a half-ton boulder. It came within an inch of knocking all the bad character out of Damfino's head, and completely submerged us both. After that Pod was more careful, and instead of rolling one giant stone he sent two middle-weights down the bank in a manner to make us dive. I concluded Pod had gone daft.

"For Balaam's sake! what you trying to do up——" I brayed loudly, but scarcely finished when I came within an ace of "passing in my chips," as a gigantic pebble of the first water whizzed between our heads. Pod called back, "I'm lifting the bottom of the pool so you two can crawl out." I was astonished at such inventive faculty. A wonder we donks survived to tell it. Rolling stones may gather no moss, but they need a lot of looking after.

It seemed hours before Coonskin returned. By this time I had found a footing so I could rest with my head out of water.

"Why were you gone so long?" Pod asked, as he sat himself on a rail to rest his windpipe.

"Well," said the winded man, adjusting a lariat, "I hunted all over Manitou before I found the superintendent of the waterworks."

"But what on earth did you want of him?"

"I told him of the fix of our donks, and asked him to change the course of the stream till we could get them out of the pool."

"You idiot! And what did he say?"

"Oh, he was civil enough; said he, 'If you would like to have the mountain moved a little to one side I will have it put on jackscrews without delay."

Now it nettled me to listen to such nonsense while Damfino and I were refrigerating in ice water, and I brayed to the jester above: "Say there, you old fool, if you had only thought to have him pump the water out of the canyon above us you might have furnished a little dry humor that we would have appreciated."

The lariat was found to be of little service, but soon a couple of tourists arrived on the scene and assisted the two with their contract to raise the devil, as well as the bed of the torrent, and, at length, to extricate us water-soaked donks from our unhappy predicament. Then we were taken to the stable, rubbed down, and put to bed.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.
Sights in Cripple Creek

TOC

BY PYE POD.

It is the property of great men to rise to the height of great events.—*Victor Hugo.*

The city of Colorado Springs possesses many attractions, and is growing in population and wealth. Here is a good-sized collection of pretty homes, built on wide and well-shaded streets, where reside beside the health hunter of independent means the mining king, the wealthy ranch owner, the Eastern capitalist, and the English tourist or speculator.

Friday morning we entered that picturesque Swisslike hamlet of Manitou with flying colors. The summer tourists were either lounging on the broad verandas of the hotels or assembling for burro trips to the Garden of the Gods and other famous retreats in the mountains.

Coonskin and I rode our favorite mounts to the principal hotels, Hiawatha Gardens and the iron and soda springs, at which several places I delivered lectures to the amused tourists and reaped a small harvest.

The Garden of the Gods is some distance from town, the popular drive being fourteen miles from start to finish. To ride our slow steeds there would mean a sacrifice of a day's time. So after much prospecting, I bargained with a garrulous but genial guide to drive us with his team to the Garden and Glen Eyre for the sum of $2.

What a gay old ride that was, in a cushion-seated carriage! I'll bet there wasn't one square inch of the seat that I didn't cover before I got back. Some way I couldn't seem to get in a comfortable position. The driver-guide was very accommodating and offered to go back to put a saddle on the seat for me to ride in, if I would but say the word.

The Garden of the Gods is a picturesque and grotesque natural park, the rock formations of red and white sandstone resembling roughly most every bird and beast and human character imaginable. In fact, one old pioneer whom we met insisted that the place is the original Garden of Eden, and that when Adam and Eve were caught eating the sour apple, God caused the earth to cough, whereupon it threw up mountains of mud and petrified many fine specimens of the menagerie. The mountaineer struck me as something so unique in his make-up and mental get-up that I bribed him to accompany me and explain those wonderful exhibits of the earth's first zoo. "Now there is Punch and Judy," he said; "most folks take them as sech."

"I suppose you make out they are the stone mummies of Adam and Eve?" I interrogated, showing effusive interest.

"Our first parents, sure's you are born," he returned with conviction. "And there yender is th' old washerwoman what done up Eve's laundry."

"But," I argued, "the Scripture says Eve didn't wear clothes, so she couldn't have had any washing."

The man coughed.—"Well, my young man," said he, "I've lived a good many year and in a heap of places and seen a lot of females come inter the world, or seen 'em soon after they did come, and I never yet saw one come in dressed, but yer kin bet yer last two-bit piece, from what I knows of women, it didn't take Eve more time than she needed to catch her breath to change her 'mother Eve' fer a 'mother Hubbard."

Then the pioneer pointed out the "Kissing Camels," the "Seal" and "Bear," and the "Baggage-room."

"Are there any petrified elephants in this menagerie?" I asked. "I'm fond of big exhibitions."

"N-n-no, they ain't no elifants here," said he with a jerk of the head. "Yer see when the mud was coughed up, they got so fast they left some of their trunks. That's them in the Baggage-room yender." And he ha-hahed over this poor joke.

As we passed successively the "Buffalo's head," the "old Scotchman," the "Porcupine," the "Ant Eater," the "old man's wine cellar" and the "Egyptian Sphinx" my guide enlightened us on geology, botany and mineralogy far beyond my powers of understanding, but not desiring to reveal my ignorance, I listened attentively, and now and then gasped: "Well, I never!" "I do declare!" "Would you believe it!" and "Gracious sakes alive!"

The "Gateway" to the famous park lies between two giant towering rocks three to four hundred feet in height, and further on the "Balancing Rock," a mammoth mass of sandstone, appears to be on the verge of a fall. Before leaving the park with its myriad curiosities, I called upon the "fat man" who runs a bar, restaurant, curiosity shop and miniature zoo. There lying in a box partially covered was a sculptured figure of a Digger Indian, which some enterprising mortal must have buried, unearthed, and sold to the hoodwinked man, for genuine petrified aboriginal meat.

Rainbow Falls, Grand Caverns, William's Canyon, Cave of the Winds and Cheyenne Mountain Drive all had their peculiar attractions. On Cheyenne

Mountain is the original grave of Helen Hunt Jackson, author of "Ramona."

It was about midnight when, with a small lunch in an improvised knapsack and revolvers in our belts, Coonskin and I began the ascent of Pike's Peak, the first attempt to do it having been so summarily defeated. By 1 a. m. we were well up Engleman's Canyon and with the aid of a lantern we surveyed the wild and steep cog track with about the same pleasure one feels in descending a deep mine with a lighted candle. Higher and higher as we rose toward the starlit heavens we found it more difficult to breathe and easier to freeze. At times the grade was so steep that we had to creep on our hands and knees to prevent sliding backward to Manitou. The so-called beautiful Lake Moraine looked disenchantingly black and icy, and the timber line, still far above us, seemed as elusive as a rainbow. We had to stop frequently to rest our knees and to breathe, for air up there was at a premium. Later on we built a fire of railroad ties and ate our lunch.

By four o'clock we overtook others striving to make the climb—men, women and small boys, whose chief aim in life evidently was to climb Pike's Peak. Some of them had started twelve hours before; others had been twenty-four hours climbing seven miles, and from the questions they put to us were doubtless under the impression there was an error in the guide books and that they had already tramped fifty miles from Manitou.

The sunrise effects from the Peak are marvelous, but Uncle Sol appeared to have as hard work in rising mornings as we travelers. The sunrise looked as uncertain as our arrival on the summit. Once, we tarried to speculate on our chances of reaching the opposite side of Manitou in time to witness the event, then resumed tramping and creeping, puffing and blowing and snorting, and venting our wrath on Mr. Pike for discovering the peak, and made the turn to find the sun as tardy as ever, with no apparent inclination to rise.

One old man we overtook told me he had been "nigh on to twenty year" climbing Pike's Peak, and hadn't climbed it yet. That gave me courage. I wouldn't back out. It looked as if there were only one more turn to make, when, about half way around, three shivering maidens sitting on a rock asked me most pathetically if I had seen any kindling wood about. My heart was touched! I replied that I had not, but would try to find some.

I built a fire, and the girls were real nice to me, and insisted that I share their cheese sandwiches.

On arriving at the summit I was just in time to see the most dazzlingly beautiful sunrise to be witnessed on earth.

Arriving on the board walk in front of the Summit House I saw Coonskin thawing in the sun, fast asleep. Inside the house a young man lay on a sofa in a swoon, for want of air. There is a golden opportunity for some enterprising man to transport barrels of air to an airtight building on the Peak, and sell it to patrons for a dollar a pint. A hundred gallons could have been sold that morning—I would have bought fifty myself.

Wandering aimlessly and weakly, as if from that tired feeling, about the house and rocky-looking grounds, were several dozen mountain-climbers, shaking hands with themselves for having seen the sunrise, or examining the crater of the extinct volcano, or discussing the mysterious ingredients of their coffee cups in the only restaurant, which small concoctions cost fifteen cents each. I haven't said what was in the cups; it was supposed to be coffee. I bought a cup, and forgetting that I had drunk it, bought another, and still I didn't make out what it was. Then I purchased another, and after I had finished four cups began to have a suspicion of coffee. It cost me sixty cents.

After resting an hour we started back to Manitou. It was two p. m. before the foot-sore Pod and his lung-sore valet managed to get to their hotel. In less than an hour both became rational, and agreed that the first of them to mention Pike's Peak should instantly be deprived of breath.

To those who boast of their ability to grow fat on beautiful scenery I heartily commend the trail through Ute Pass, Divide, Cripple Creek, South Park, Leadville and Aspen to Glenwood Springs, crossing Western and Independence Passes. First proceeding up Ute Canyon along the banks of the turbulent stream and in the shadow of the towering cliffs, often in view and in hearing of the trains on the Colorado Midland, we passed the summer retreats of Cascade and Green Mountain Falls, at which places the tourists flocked from hotels, cottages and tents to talk with Pod and Mac A'Rony.

Only a brief stop was made at Divide to enable me to replenish my larder; then we hustled on toward the famous mining camp.

Early every afternoon a thunder shower drenched our party. Once or twice the thunder in advance warned us so we could pitch tent and crawl under shelter. Thus our travels in that region were impeded.

Three miles beyond Gillette we climbed to Altman, said to be the highest incorporated town in the United States, some 11,300 feet above the sea. It rests literally on the summit and hangs down over the mountain sides secure enough whenever and wherever there is a prospect hole with sufficient gold in it to serve the miners a foothold and check their sliding further. The high altitude of the district makes it especially undesirable for women, causing

nervous troubles. Even the male population are more or less excitable, and when prospectors think they have made a strike some of them run about like lunatics.

From Altman we took a tortuous trail, threading Goldfield, Independence, Victor and Anaconda. The mountains about are honeycombed with prospect holes—or graves they might be properly called, for many of them contain buried hopes. From a distance they look like prairie-dog towns, but occasional shaft-houses and gallows-frames rise here and there to give character to the mining region, while several railroad and electric car lines wind about the hills and gulches.

Many of the cabins in these towns are built of logs; the streets look to have been surveyed by cows rather than engineers. As a rule, there is no symmetry to the thoroughfares—up hill and down hill, crooking and winding, crossing and converging, in a manner to puzzle a resident of a year. The situation of most of the habitations seems to have been governed by the location of the claim of each house owner. This great camp got its name from two circumstances occurring when the locality was known for no other virtue than a grazing place for cattle. One day on the banks of the creek that trickled through the present site of Cripple Creek a man broke his leg, and the following day a cowboy was thrown from his bronco and had his arm broken. Some one, seeing both accidents, said: "I reckon we'd better call this place Cripple Creek." So the noted camp was christened.

CHAPTER XXXIX.
Baby girl named for Pod

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

You do ill to teach the child such words; he teaches him to kick, and to hack, which they'll do fast enough of themselves; and to call horum;—fye upon you!—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Frequently since crossing the Mississippi Pod had received letters from proud parents informing him that they had named their latest boy after him. At that time in Cripple Creek, several boys ranging from a day to six weeks old, whose destinies were thought to be promising, were afflicted with my master's ponderous name.

A little green-eyed Irish girl, five days old, was named Pythagorina Podina Mulgarry. The happy father called personally on Pod and asked him to act as godfather at the baptismal service, Sunday afternoon. The impressive ceremony took place at the cabin of Miss Pythagorina, as the aged grandmother wished to witness it. Pod said he was somewhat embarrassed about attending, since he had forgotten almost all his Latin, but he arranged with one of the pall bearers to give him nudges and kicks when it was expected of him to make a response, and so he got through fairly well—better than the kid did. He said the babe was an unruly child, and kicked so frantically when the priest took her in his arms that two flatirons were tied to its feet to keep them down. It was simply nervousness, because the high altitude affected the child's nerves. So when the priest was handed the tiny thing in swaddling clothes and held it over the barrel that served as the font, the poor girl was frightened and squirmed, and suddenly slipped out of the priest's arms into the barrel and sank out of sight. There was great excitement and surprise because the flatirons didn't float, and the undertaker, or what you call 'em, overturned the barrel of water and set everybody afloat, drenching the sponsors and guests.

Pod said the scene was without a parallel; he was soaked to his equator; the half-christened, half-drowned Pythagorina Podina was picked up from the flood with a tablespoon, and the ceremony finished; then she was rolled on the barrel to get all the water out of her, and put to bed with hot flatirons at her feet to prevent croup and mumps. Then the wake broke up. I don't believe the child understood a word that the priest said; Pod didn't.

That night he got up a fine supper, and invited some old friends. He bought a big porterhouse steak, thick and tender, and personally broiled it on his patent folding stove. Just when everything was on the table and the guests were finding stones and tin plates to sit on, Don, not having had a thing to eat for an hour, coolly pulled the hot steak off the platter and dropped it on the ground. Pod didn't say anything, though, but just forked it on to the platter and scraped off some dry grass and a sliver and a bug, and carved it up and generously put it on the ladies' plates. The ladies looked at the dog, and then at Pod, not knowing which to thank, then feeling sensitive about accepting the best part of the steak, insisted upon Pod's having one of their pieces and Coonskin the other; and both men being kind and gallant accepted the compliment, and all fell to eating. But the guests didn't eat much. They said they had just had dinner. You could see plainly from their appetites that they were telling the truth. After supper Don feasted on the tougher parts of the steak, and we donks were fed the scraps of potatoes and bread and tin tomato and peach cans. When the banquet was over the guests went home.

Pod devoted Monday morning to business, and took in a good stock of supplies, and after lunch we set out on the trail to Florisant, about twenty miles away. About six o'clock we went into camp on the margin of a famous petrified forest. Pod objected at first, because of the scarcity of fire-wood.

"Lots of petrified wood chips lying around," I remarked; "and they'll last. Ordinary wood burns up too fast."

"Bright idea!" exclaimed Pod. And Coonskin went to work gathering petrified wood for the supper fire. "The only trouble will be in starting the fire," said Pod. "Just as soon as it's once going, it ought to burn smoothly enough—might pour coal oil on the chips. What do you say, Coonskin?"

Coonskin's opinion didn't benefit Pod much. His hard-wood fire wasn't very satisfactory, but with some dry brush the men got the meal under way. Next morning we visited the noted petrified stump, measuring upwards of forty-five feet in circumference. Several saws were imbedded in it, for many futile attempts had been made to take off some slices for the Denver Exposition. It has been estimated by various ornithologists, botanists and entomologists that the stump is millions of years old. I think they were guessing at it, for I couldn't see the rings, and even if I had seen them with a telescope a fellow couldn't live long enough to count them.

We journeyed until ten at night, stopping at Florisant only a few minutes to buy a crate of peaches. Several times I had a suspicion that we had been misdirected. When we came to the end of a narrow wood-road I was sure of it.

We went into camp, and before breakfast a timberman called on us.

"You kin trail through the timber to Pemberton," said he to Pod, "and then cut through to Fairplay, er you kin go back the way ye came."

"What do you say?" Pod inquired, turning to Coonskin.

"I think best to go through the woods," said the valet.

So we were headed for the timber. Our tramp through the forest I cannot soon forget. Up and down the rocky heights, through thickets of quaking asp and pine, tangled roots and fallen trees, we climbed and panted and coughed and brayed for some four miles, when we stopped to rest and realized we were lost. Coonskin said he was an experienced woodman, and would blaze the trees so we would get out again. Wonderful! the amount of learning he had gleaned from dime novels. He lagged behind to do the blazing; and pretty soon I smelt smoke. The Professor snuffed.

"Smells as if the woods were on fire somewhere," hinted Pod.

"Look behind you; they are!" I exclaimed. And Pod caught that erudite valet-back-woodsman in the act of setting a tree on fire with oil and matches. Fortunately for us the wind wasn't blowing strong, but we had to change our course some, and hustle faster, for the blazing trail chased us. Coonskin learned a new lesson, and turned down the corner of the page so he'd recollect it. After Pod had explained the meaning of the word "blaze" in this case, the fellow was more put out than the fire.

At length we struck a trail which led to a couple of cabins in the canyon. A board sign informed us it was simply Turkey Creek. I couldn't see any turkeys, but there was good pasturage around. The hot trip through the timber made us all hungry.

It was three o'clock when we donks were picketed and allowed to graze. Then Coonskin went fishing. He said he had seen some trout in the stream; by supper time he had caught a nice mess. Pod said he would fry the fish, and went at it so enthusiastically that he forgot to put the bag of corn meal back in its place. After the meal was over, he began to look around for the bag. It was nowhere to be found; I had eaten the corn meal and bag. It was comical how those two men puzzled their brains about that missing commodity. When Coonskin detected some meal stamped in the ground, Pod pointed at me and said, "That's the thief, there."

Next morning, Coonskin was the first to return from fishing, and looked much excited. When Pod returned he told him he had seen huge bear tracks; he was going bear-hunting. Pod laughed at him.

"Now let me tell you," said the boy, "we aren't likely to get any big game on this trip if we are looking and gunning for it. That was my experience in the woods of Wisconsin. The men at the saw-mill said we should see bear in this forest, but where are they? It's my opinion if we loiter around this here canyon a day without guns we will see a bear pretty soon. A silvertip would be a boon to you, Prof; its skin would fetch fifty dollars or more. Let's look for bear."

"What would you do if you saw a bear?" Pod asked.

"Well, now leave that to me," said Coonskin. "In the first place, it would be worth a hairbreadth escape to see one wild; I've only seen bears in circuses, or traveling chained to Italians; in the second place, I can run. I've plenty of medals for sprinting, but if I saw a real bear I could beat all records."

Pod looked at me and I looked at Pod; I hadn't anything to say on the subject; it didn't interest me as much as it did Coonskin. Pod went fishing that afternoon with a gun, and took the whole arsenal along with him, including the axe.

Somewhere about five o'clock Pod came into camp with a good mess of trout. After cleaning the fish, he took off his guns, and laid down on the grass, and wondered if that crazy valet had run across any more bear tracks. He wasn't there long when, suddenly, I heard yells issuing from the canyon down stream round the bend. The shouting sounded nearer every second, and I soon distinguished Coonskin's voice. Pod got up from the ground excitedly.

"Coonskin's in trouble, plain enough," said Pod aloud to himself, "I must run to his aid." So he started on a trot down stream to the bend, and then quickly turned, falling all over himself, and ran toward the cabins faster than I ever saw him run before or since. And immediately Coonskin came flying into view with the biggest bear at his heels I ever want to see.

That sight paralyzed me; I couldn't get on to my feet for a minute or two, then I broke the rope and kited up the canyon a hundred yards, where behind a tree I waited to see the interesting finish.

CHAPTER XL.
Treed by a silvertip bear

TOC

BY PYE POD.

Who dared touch the wild bear's skin
Ye slumbered on while life was in?

—*Scott.*

How fast a man can run when he knows he's got to win a race! There was one time in my life when "can't" was an obsolete word in my vocabulary. It was when that silvertip granted Coonskin's chief desire in the field of adventure.

"Shoot him! Shoot him!" cried the angler, as he fairly flew past me, headed for the first cabin.

But I had neither time nor gun to shoot; when I heard bruin at my heels I switched off to the left and ran three times around the second cabin before I realized the bear had taken a stronger fancy to my comrade. It seems he had chased Coonskin around the cabin several times, until the man dived in the door and head first out of the window. Bruin followed in, but remained. He smelled the fragrant peaches.

Coonskin, however, under the impression that bruin was still after him, ran twice around the cabin before he climbed a tree.

Meanwhile, I, having climbed a tree close to the cabin, descended to the cabin roof. I knew silvertips couldn't climb trees, so I felt safe. The sudden shuffle of my feet on the gravel-covered roof disturbed the peace of the present incumbent, and out he came, rose on his haunches and looked about to see what was up. I was immovable. Back into the cabin went brother Bruin, and began to break up things, generally.

Then followed a few moments of dreadful silence. Not a sound issued from Coonskin's tree; he was probably trying to recover his breath and reason. Night soon fell upon us; it gets dark early in the canyons, and the mercury falls fast. I was chilly, for I shivered frightfully. The blankets and guns were on the ground just outside the cabin.

"Let's flip a coin to see which of us goes down for a gun," suggested Coonskin from his tree. But I did not take him seriously.

"Don't you wish you had taken the fish-line off your rod?" he added; "you could fish up a blanket and keep from freezing."

"By jingo!" I exclaimed, "I have my line, and I'll try it."

At once I fashioned a fish-pole out of a pine bough, and after much patience secured the only blanket within reach. Then winding it around myself, I lay as snug as possible, but couldn't go to sleep. That was the longest night I ever experienced. How long we should be kept off the earth, was an unpleasant speculation. Once I called to Coonskin not to go to sleep and tumble out of the tree, but he answered that he was so stuck up with pitch he couldn't fall.

Our hopes were low, when, suddenly, about seven o'clock, from the canyon below appeared a man in the rough garb of a mountaineer, with a rifle across his shoulder and a hunting knife in his belt. As he was about to pass I hailed him.

The hunter stopped, looked my way, approached to within a few feet of the cabin, and said a cheery "Good morning." I responded in a mood still more cheery.

"What you doin' up there—smoking? Had breakfast, I reckon."

"No, haven't cooked yet this morning," I returned.

"Glad t' hear that—haven' et yet myself. Got 'nough to go round?" he asked, shifting a cud of tobacco from one side to the other.

"Don't know about that," I said. "You'll have to ask the boss—he's inside."

As the rugged looking huntsman approached the cabin door, I held my breath, but I rose to my feet when I actually saw the hunter's hat rise on his uplifted hair as he looked into the cabin door. With the quickness and coolness that come to one habituated to solitary life in the wilds, he put his Sharp's rifle to his shoulder, aimed and fired. There was a second report, followed by a tremendous thud, and the sound of something within struggling for life and vengeance. The hunter had no sooner fired than he dodged, and stood ready for a second charge; but that was not needed.

"Come down," he said to me with a grim smile. "I'm boss here now."

I slid off the roof, and Coonskin, to the man's surprise, appeared from his lofty perch; then we introduced ourselves. While I thanked the hunter for his kind offices and welcomed him to breakfast, Coonskin began to prepare the meal. Our guest explained that he was a bee-hunter.

"When the bear meets the bee-hunter searchin' for a bee tree, brother Bruin says, 'Ahem! Excuse me, but I'm workin' this 'ere side of the trail, you just take t'other side.' Then the bee-hunter says: 'Pardon, my friend, Mr. Bear, but I'm workin' both sides of this particular trail, just throw up your paws.'"

The bee-hunter chuckled over the practical joke played on him, and said as it came from a tenderfoot he'd take it in good part; but if it had been a backwoodsman that played such a game he'd settle with the bear and the man in the same fashion. His words and manner startled me.

The bee-hunter rose from the log and drawing his knife, dropped on his knee, and began to skin the bear as if he thought he owned it.

"You needn't bother about skinning it for us," I said, "we're quite satisfied that you killed it."

The man eyed me. "This bear belongs to me, if ye want to know," he said.

"How is it your bear?" Coonskin asked, when he came to announce breakfast. "You shot it, but in our cabin."

"That don't make no difference, and I don't intend arguing the question," came the positive retort; "I say he's mine—who says he hain't?"

I suddenly felt a bee in my bonnet. "The 'ayes' have it," I said.

That stopped the debate, but I could see blood in Coonskin's eye when he ushered us to breakfast. Before we had finished, my nervy valet asked our guest if he played poker. "Ya-a-as, some," the hunter drawled. "If there's money in it, I'll jine ye in a game."

larger

"Through thickets, tangled roots and fallen trees."

What could Coonskin have in mind, to challenge this rough mountaineer to a game of cards? He had often boasted of his skill at poker. Now he cleared the table and brought forth the cards he had carried way from Iowa, and motioning the bee-hunter to a seat, the two cut for the deal. From my seat, beside Coonskin, I discovered a little round mirror hanging on the wall behind the hunter opposite; it was the one my valet had purchased in Denver. Where he sat he could see the hunter's hand reflected in the glass. I felt if he were detected in this underhand game it would go ill with both of us; so put both revolvers in my belt, and kept mum. That was an interesting game.

"Lend me some change," said Coonskin. I threw him my bag of silver. Then he added: "Pod, you count out the matches here for chips and act as banker." So I was drawn into the game. The first few hands were very ordinary, and caused no excitement. But finally the bee-hunter, arched his eyebrows; I knew he must have a fine hand or a bluff, in store for his tenderfoot opponent. He bet heavily, but Coonskin raised the ante every time. Suddenly what had been in Coonskin's mind all the time was revealed. "Lend me fifty dollars," said he to me, and to the bee-hunter added: "I'll lay this roll of bills against the bear skin, and call you."

"I'll go ye," said the bee-hunter. When both men lay down their hands, I had taken down the mirror and hid it in my pocket.

"Beaten by four jacks! I be d——d!" the outraged mountaineer exclaimed, pounding his fist on the table and regarding his four ten-spots with grim disfavor. Coonskin grinned from ear to ear as he swept in the money. Said he, "Mac A'Rony, Cheese, Damfino and Skates—I swear by them every time. Whenever I get that hand I'm billed to win."

"So yer travelin' on them jacks," remarked the defeated partner.

"No, not exactly," Coonskin returned as he rose from his seat. "The jacks I'm traveling with are out doors; these are their tin-types."

The bee-hunter looked chagrined enough, but he took the thing as a matter of course, apparently never dreaming that he had been actually buncoed by a boy tenderfoot. Presently he rose, and shouldering his rifle, made his departure without thanking us for our hospitality. I hoped sincerely he would find his bee tree, and harvest a rich reward. I told Coonskin he was a brick. He accepted his winnings modestly, and fell to finishing the task of skinning the bear. It was a fine skin. After salting it, and wrapping it in gunnysacks, I packed our luggage while Coonskin saddled the donkeys.

Shortly after noon we reached the road that was already familiar to us, and five hours later arrived in Florisant.

It was sundown when we went into camp. I had lost three days, but I had been fully compensated by the pleasures of angling and bear-hunting.

Next day we were off for Leadville in good season. My animals seemed to be in fine traveling form; by sunset we arrived in South Park. It was Saturday. There we enjoyed the hospitality of a deserted, floorless cabin, where, sheltered from the wind, we could eat without swallowing an inordinate amount of sand. Close by was a fine spring, so we resolved to remain until Sunday afternoon. We were awakened at dawn by a bevy of magpies perched on the tent; Coonskin was so annoyed that he crept to the door and shot the chief disturber, in spite of the bad luck promised him by a popular legend.

South Park is one of three great preserves in Colorado. There once roamed buffalo, deer, elk, antelope and wolves, while on the mountains bordering the valley were quantities of mountain sheep. A few deer, sheep and bear are said to be still found in that section. Coyotes are heard nightly, and the evening we trailed out of the Park a traveler with a prairie schooner said he had seen two gray wolves.

Our afternoon trip through the Park was a painful one. Mosquitoes attacked us from every quarter, and it was mosquito netting, pennyroyal and kerosene alone that saved our lives. When we consider that Mosquito Pass, the highest pass of the Rockies, 13,700 feet, was named after a mosquito we may derive some idea of the size of the insect.

It was late in the night, when, after brief stops at two sheep ranches run by Mexicans, and another at a small settlement, we entered the canyon. It required two days of hard climbing to cross Western Pass. The snow-capped peaks of the range looked grand and beautiful, and the noisy streams in the canyons leading from the summit on both sides were stocked with trout.

The morning we trailed out of the canyon into the Arkansas Valley was clear and lovely. After traveling some distance up the valley, the smoke of the Leadville smelters burst into view, and a mile beyond the city itself could be seen nestling against the towering mountains.

This famous mining camp gave us royal welcome. The report in the papers that Pye Pod would lecture that evening drew an enthusiastic throng, applauding and crowding closely about the donkeys, all eager for the chromos that Coonskin sold while I talked.

Next morning we crossed the valley and pitched camp on the banks of Twin Lake, two lovely sheets of water at the mouth of the canyon leading to Independence Pass.

This pass is one of the loftiest of the Continental Divide—that snowy range from which the rivers of Western America flow east or west through undisputed domains. Trailing up, the ascent gradually became very precipitous and the trail a severe trial. Over this pass, climbed the overland stages and freighting wagons with their four and eight-horse teams. It was, in ante-railroad days, a popular route, and the now deserted cabins of Independence once composed a lively mining camp. Although the trail was kept in good order, yet wagons and teams frequently toppled over the narrow trail, and mules, horses and passengers met their death on the rocks below.

We men walked to relieve our animals and arrived at the summit at sundown. Looking backward, for six or seven miles the view surpassed in grandeur any scene of the kind I had ever viewed. The stream appeared to be spun from liquid fleece from the mountain sides, and tumbled and foamed over the rocks and fallen trees in its bed until it looked like a strand of wool in a hundred snarls.

While resting, a heavy snow squall descended, and drove us on across the pass into the western canyon for shelter. This canyon surpassed in grandeur and size the other. Knowing our sure-footed steeds would keep the trail much better than we, Coonskin and I got in the saddle, but more than once I nearly went over Mac's head.

When we had proceeded only a mile below the summit, the trail became particularly narrow and rocky. To the right, protruded from the bank a great boulder, and to the left sloped a deep and sheer precipice, to which only the roots and stumps of trees could cling. Here my valet dismounted; I should have done likewise. Mac considered a moment whether or not to descend further, then made a sudden dive, shying from the declivity and striking the rock on our right, and was jarred off his feet, falling with me over the edge of the trail.

Down and over we rolled toward the yawning gulf some forty feet before we caught on a stump and stopped. That was a dreadful moment for me. For a time I lay still, not daring to excite Mac.

Carefully I extricated myself from my perilous position, and held my donkey's head down till Coonskin got the ropes from Damfino's pack and came to my relief. In time the other three donkeys pulled Mac A'Rony up on to the trail.

We pitched camp and Sunday morning continued down the trail, which soon presented difficulties still more discouraging. The numerous springs had necessitated corduroy roads often hundreds of feet in extent. But these had been so long in general disuse that the logs had rotted away in places.

Frequently Coonskin and I dismounted and repaired the corduroy breaches, with fallen trees, thereby losing much time. By dark my outfit had made but three miles. In the darkness of evening we came to the empty cabins of old Independence, whose single inhabitant called to us from his doorway as we passed.

At last we arrived at an old-time stage-house. It was now temporarily tenanted by fishermen from Aspen, who asked us to spend the night with them. I accepted; soon my animals were feeding on the fresh grass bordering a spring nearby, and Coonskin and I seated at the hot repast our hosts had quickly provided.

The house was large, with a high roof and a dirt floor. A great fire blazed in the center, lending comfort to the cozy quarters. The anglers had spread their blankets in one end of the shack, and we pitched our tent in the other and soon fell to sleep, while the fishermen likely continued to swap "lies" till a late hour. The last remarks I heard almost made me cry.

"I don't think it would do for me to go to hell, pa," said the lad of the party.

"Why?" queried the sire.

"Oh," said the boy, "the light would hurt my eyes so, I couldn't sleep."

Getting an early morning start, we trailed down and out of the long canyon into Roaring Fork Valley, and at four o'clock arrived in Aspen, a famous silver camp of early days. A crowd soon gathered, and I had no sooner announced a street lecture for that evening than the news began to spread all over town. Here supplies must be bought, some business transacted under my advertising contract, and Mac shod. For the first time that jackass kicked the blacksmith. When I reprimanded him, he claimed the man had pounded a nail in his hoof almost to the knee, and added, for the smith's benefit, "Shoe an ass with ass's shoes, but set them with horse sense." Which I thought sound philosophy.

At the appointed hour and place for my lecture the street was choked with an eager audience. Coonskin had been instructed to have the donkey there, saddled and packed, by eight sharp. They failed to appear. So impetuous and enthusiastic were the crowding, cheering citizens that I mounted a block and began to talk. Suddenly, I was interrupted by a shout, "The donkeys are coming," and at once the crowd became so hilarious that I had to cease speaking till my outfit arrived. "Mac A'Rony!—Mac A'Rony!—Damfino!—Cheese!" echoed and re-echoed, as a number of boys ran to meet the donks. It occurred to me that Coonskin might soon have his hands full, so I hastened to his side. But, ere I arrived my handsome Colt's revolver was stolen from its holster, buckled to Mac's saddle horn. As Coonskin was riding Cheese and trailing the others he could not guard against the theft, but I blamed him for not heeding my instructions always to leave the guns at my headquarters. It was the only article lost by theft on my journey. The four marshals on duty hoped to recover the revolver, and forward it to me, but I never received it.

When I had finished my lecture, Judge S—— passed his hat and handed me a liberal collection. And as my outfit trailed out of town toward Roaring Fork, a young man wheeled up with us and gave me a silver nugget scarf pin. In Aspen, as in Leadville, I disposed of many photos.

It was a fine evening. I was promised a smooth trail through to Glenwood Springs. We were to travel ten miles that night, and hence would need to sleep late next day. So I advised Coonskin to set the alarm clock, just purchased, for ten a. m.

CHAPTER XLI.
Nearly drowned in the Rockies

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

And riding down the bank, he spurred into the water.—*The Fair God.*

When, at the conclusion of Pod's Aspen lecture, he gave the signal for our outfit to "move on," I breathed a sigh of relief. I abhor crowds; I despise shoemakers. They say that an ingrown nail is painful; an inpounded nail is worse. Pod said he wouldn't care if I had lockjaw; for then I'd have to keep my mouth shut.

"You ordered Bridget to call us at eight in the morning, didn't you?" Pod asked of his valet, when we were a mile out of town.

"I did that," Coonskin replied. Who could Bridget be? Surely the turtle, Bill, hadn't changed his name. I'd hate to have him pull me out of bed.

"Have the men got a woman stowed away in their luggage?" queried Cheese; "I hear 'em talking of some biddy."

"It's scandalous!" exclaimed Miss Damfino, and Miss Skates said she thought so, too. These words were hardly spoken when, about eight o'clock, we were strolling peacefully down the trail along the high bank of Roaring Fork River in the darkness, something with a shrill voice suddenly began to scream and kick up a terrible racket in one of my saddle bags, electrifying my whole being. Was Pod bewitched? Or was some demon upon me? I asked both questions at once, and not waiting for an answer, ran through the darkness blind with terror. Ears back, tail out straight, and legs spinning, I failed to see the trail, or hear my master's "Whoas!" I only thought the devil was after me, and flew through the air like a meteor. Soon the trail turned to the right, but I kept on straight ahead, and suddenly tumbled, tail over ears, down the steep bank into the rushing river, my master still holding on to reins and saddle horn. How deep I dived I can't say. The dampness poured into my ears and mouth and drowned my thoughts, and just when I had begun to think of my past life, I came to the surface with that demon still yelling and clinging to the saddle or to Pod. Then a terrific jerk on my bit brought me to my senses, and I swam to the nearest shore. It was a long, hard pull. Pod clung to me as though I were a life buoy, and when I climbed on to the bank out of breath, the screaming demon chased me half way up to the trail.

Pod's mouth was a flame of fire, but aimed more at Coonskin than at me. Reckon he thought me too wet to burn.

The whole outfit, including dog and turtle, awaited us with bated breath.

"We've found out who Bridget is," said Cheese, laughing.

"To the devil with Bridget!" I retorted. "What in the name of Balaam was that after us?"

"The new alarm clock, you fool," replied Cheese.

I was too full for utterance—too full of water. The Professor was a sight, even in the darkness. Never saw him so mad.

"Didn't you know that if at six o'clock you set the alarm for eight in the morning, it would ring at eight in the evening?" he vociferated, wildly gesticulating at his scared and speechless attendant.

Cautiously through the darkness we proceeded for a couple of miles, Pod walking to prevent taking cold, he said. Then we were steered to an old cedar stump, where we camped. Bridget's alarming voice had made a fearful impression upon me. Several times on the way to camp I imagined a demon was after me, and shied into the sage. Why, I've seen roosters and hens chase all over a half acre lot and jump a fence after losing their heads, simply from nervousness.

The cedar stump was set ablaze, and as soon as Pod had pitched the tent, he began walking around it dressed in his only suit of clothes, trying to get thoroughly dry. He was not in a good mood to talk with, so I kept aloof.

Next morning the valley and the mountains hemming it in revealed a beautiful and bountiful nature. Although alfalfa seemed to be the chief crop, fields of wheat and oats waved in the breeze. It was August; the harvest had hardly begun. The vendure on the mountains was not less lavish in its rare autumnal tintings than were the internal colorings of the hills with metals—copper, lead, silver and gold. Now the trail would hug the river so closely I could hear the roaring flood, and again the current would sink beyond reach of ear or eye, suddenly to burst upon us later.

The sun grew hotter with every hour's travel; the trail became more dusty; the prickly sage looked more browned and withered.

One evening, under the screen of darkness, the men pitched camp conveniently near to an alfalfa field, hay-stack, and potato cellar. The sage, while much seared by the sun, was yet too young and green to burn, so when Coonskin dropped two large boards in front of the tent Pod was elated. The fellow said he had unroofed a tater cellar. In view of the shady deed, Pod kindled the fire on the shady side of the tent and proceeded to cook the supper. We hadn't time to make our escape next morning before we heard the

rattle of a wagon approaching. Presently a team of horses, driven by a short, morose-looking, black-whiskered farmer, stopped right in front of camp. Instinct told me he was the owner of the property we had "squatted on" and intended to make trouble. Pod was seldom embarrassed, but when so he appealed to Coonskin's wit and gall for the desired relief. The man climbed out of the wagon and walked toward the tent, until he saw Don, and stopped short.

Coonskin winked slyly at Pod and me under his hat-brim, and said to our caller, "Walk right in, sir, and make yourself miserable; the dog won't hurt you;" then Pod said a "Good morning" sweet and juicy. The stranger's sharp eyes surveyed the remaining board and the cremation ashes of the departed, and nodded sourly.

I was now saddled, and Coonskin was buckling on his belt with revolvers and hunting knife. Said he to our guest, "This traveling round the world on a bet ain't what it's cracked up to be."

"Reckon not," returned the stranger. And he asked, "Big bet."

"N-o-o, only fifteen thousand dollars."

The stranger grunted, as he mentally appraised the value of his lumber, and then regarded the men as if he wanted to put a price on their heads.

"Wouldn't been so bad," Coonskin resumed, "If one of our original party hadn't got scalped by Esquimaux when crossing the Arabian Desert."

"I want ter know!" the stranger exclaimed. "How did it happen?" As he spoke, he sat down near the board and whittled a stick, now and then eyeing Coonskin with overdue interest.

"Well, you see," the valet began, "we were trailing on the desert at night, because the sun in India is so hot, when he suddenly hailed what we took to be a caravan. But instead of one outfit, there were three, all of 'em enemies of each and tother—Hottentots, Spaniards, and Solomon Islanders, all at lagerheads. Say, weren't we in a nice mess!"

"'Pears so," the farmer ejaculated, with wrapt phiz.

"At once all tried to capture us," Coonskin continued, "but pretty soon fell to fighting among themselves; and that'e how we escaped. But Jack got shot." Coonskin looked as if he had lost his last friend.

"Poor Jack," muttered Prof., shaking his head sorrowfully.

I saw plainly the story had touched the stranger's heart. "Purty sad, wasn't it boys?" he commented. "Didn't ye have no shootin' irons along?" he asked.

"Should say we did—a whole battery," said the valet. "We shot several of the black demons (here waxing excited as he recalled the harrowing spectacle), but what was a thousand of them compared with one Jack!" And Coonskin tickled me in the ribs.

"Ner a hundred Jacks," returned the farmer absentmindedly, and looking thoughtful. Then Pod said it was time to be going, and offered to pay the farmer for the board he had much enjoyed; but the latter said he "didn't want no pay," and, after offering Pod and Coonskin his plug of tobacco, clambered into his wagon and drove off.

Then we made for Glenwood Springs.

CHAPTER XLII.
Donkey shoots the chutes

TOC

BY PYE POD.

> You may nail it on the pailing as a mighty risky plan
> To set your judgment on the clothes that cover up a man;
> It's a risky piece of business, for you'll often come across
> A fifty-dollar saddle on a twenty-dollar hoss.
>
> —*Old Saw.*

We reached Glenwood Springs the week of the annual races, and I piloted my outfit to a prominent corner in town. At once a crowd gathered. After making a few remarks about my trip and promising a lecture before leaving town, I inquired for the leading hotel.

"The Colorado," answered a chorus. Then a man in shirtsleeves, sombrero, and high boots edged to my side, and whispered, "Prof, there's a dollar house t'other end of town. The tax is five dollars a day at the Colorado."

"How much can I make at the dollar house?" I asked.

My informant shrank into his clothes. "I don't believe you can make your salt," he answered.

I left my outfit, and rode Mac to the post office. I had not been indoors long before I heard loud cheers and laughter in the street. I rushed out, thinking somebody was making sport with my donkey, and was surprised to see Don leading by the reins that incorrigible flirt, Mac A'Rony, up-street toward the post office. He had strolled to the next corner to make the acquaintance of a prepossessing donk of the opposite sex, and my faithful dog, conscious of his responsibilities, was doing his duty.

The town is situated on the east bank of the Grand River; across, some distance from the water, stands the Hotel Colorado. An iron bridge spans the stream, and across it I led my caravan to the hotel in time for dinner. As I dismounted, the guests on the veranda hurried to the railing and whispered to one another; I paid no heed, but, giving my valet instructions to care for my animals, hurried in. The clerk extended his hand in greeting.

"Just on time," said he. "Lunch is awaiting you."

I shall never forget the sensation I caused when I entered the dining room. A sweeping glance detected every eye upon me. I sat at the nearest table opposite two dudes who almost choked to death when I reached for the menu card. Even the pretty waitresses stopped as if struck. One of the poor girls dropped a tray of dishes. Every countenance said plainly, "How did it drift in?" Several pretty girls at the next table, seasonably gowned in silks and muslins, whispered and giggled audibly.

Presently the dudes considered there wasn't room for us three at the table, and changed their seats so precipitately that one of them stumbled over the legs of his chair and broke his fall by first breaking a cup. As they now faced the pretty girls, their prospect was more inviting, if not picturesque. My hair and beard were long, one of my coat-sleeves threatened to come off with the slightest cough or sneeze; I looked like one who had experienced hardship and rough traveling.

This is a treat, I thought, as I divided my interest between the diners opposite and my menu card. I was famished. The waitresses kept aloof from me.

Suddenly my ear caught the words spoken by one of the dudes, "He acts as if he owned the dining room, and had first bid on the hotel." I smiled. Just then I felt a hand on my shoulder, and recognized the head-waiter, who, a moment before, had left the room probably to see the hotel clerk. He was all smiles, as he asked if I was being waited upon. I said I was not.

"I-I-I beg your humble pardon," he stammered, and off he danced. The next minute a half dozen waitresses were assailing me for my order. Finally I was lavishly served; then there was dissatisfaction at the next table. The dudes began to complain because that "hobo" received every attention while they were neglected.

Having received an invitation to the races, I did not tarry longer than necessary. I was sure things would be different when I returned for dinner. And such a change as there was! I was assigned to a table at which was a bevy of girls and two or three gentlemen. My seat had evidently been reserved for me by request. I didn't have to wait for the waitresses to pass me things, the girls did that. I was treated like a hero, and almost embarrassed with attentions. When I retired to dress for the ball given in my honor by the young women of Glenwood, I fell in a chair and laughed till my sides ached. What fun the study of human nature does afford!

The evening paper stated that the famous donkey traveler, Professor Pythagoras Pod would be the guest of the evening, and was expected to appear in traveling clothes, spurs, and belt guns. And so I attired myself, arriving at the hall at eight-thirty, and was at once introduced to one and all

of the fair gathering. I danced myself completely out. When supper was announced I was glad. Had I traveled thirty miles that day I couldn't have felt more fatigued. It was almost eleven o'clock when I set out for my hotel.

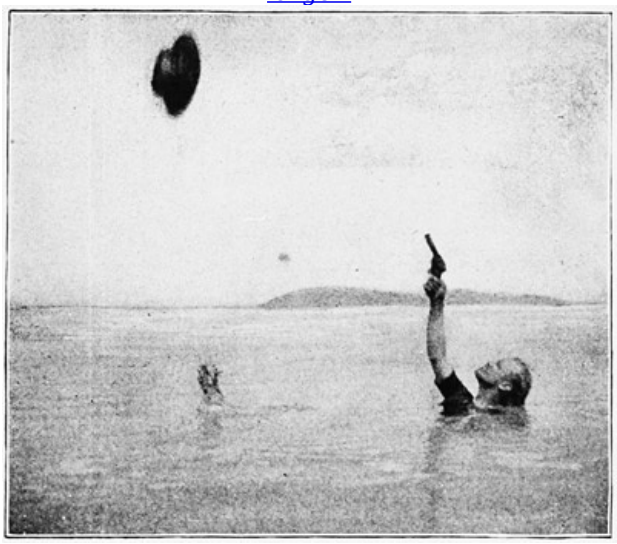
One of the attractions at the Colorado is the great out-of-doors natatorium, between the river and the hotel. I had hardly crossed the bridge when I heard Mac's bray issuing from that quarter. The darkness and thick foliage obscured the view, but I heard splashing of water, and laughter, and another wild bray, and concluded some mischief was on the boards among the college students who were guests of the hotel. Quickening my pace, I stole through the shrubbery to the reservoir, and beheld a sight to cause me fright. There was a high chute beside the natatorium, and a staircase for the bathers to climb to the top "to shoot the chutes." There, almost at the top of the stairs, was my misused donkey, being carried to the source of the water raceway by several young men, the donkey braying and kicking frantically, the men struggling in the throes of smothered laughter as well as with their asinine burden. By the time I had collected my senses, Mac was deposited on the platform.

"Heigh, there!" I yelled at the top of my voice. "Drop that donkey, you ruffians!" They dropped him. And down he came, tobogganing over the slippery, watery chute, over and over, and landing in the pond, flat on his back. It didn't take long for Mac to finish his bath. When he rose to the surface he snorted and brayed louder than ever, and in swimming about to find a place he could climb out he chased every bather on to land. One of the men got a rope, and, several others assisting, pulled the frightened animal out. Without stopping to discuss the affair, I led Mac to his corral.

The following morning a committee persuaded me to deliver a lecture to the guests of the hotel. A notice was posted, announcing Pod's lecture to be delivered at 2 p. m. on the broad veranda in front of the hotel office.

I talked in my happiest vein. The interest manifested by my fair auditors would have inspired any lecturer.

larger



"And floated on Salt Lake."

larger

"Skull Valley desert; we stopped to feed and rest."

I concluded with these words: "It is very gratifying for me to know so many

are interested in Mac A'Rony's welfare. I hope to take him through with me to the Pacific. I do not like it to appear that I, while a guest of the hotel, am taking undue advantage of its privileges, but if there are any among you who desire a souvenir of our novel trip I have a few pictures which may be procured at twenty-five cents each. I now formally bid you all adieu."

The souvenirs went like hot cakes. Presently a sweet girl who had purchased three pictures, with beaming eyes and a winsome smile, asked, "Oh, Mr. Pod, won't you please put your autograph on these photos?"

"Certainly," I replied, "but each signature will cost twenty-five cents extra." I said it, just to see how it would take.

"Of course, I'll be glad to pay for the autographs," the maid returned, and handed me the photos to sign. And I was kept busy signing pictures until my hand ached.

My last afternoon in Glenwood was a busy one. I decided to heed the admonitions of many Westerners I had met, to avoid the Green River desert, a barren waste of shifting sands, utterly devoid of water, stretching a hundred and thirty miles and more, and, instead, to trail northwesterly via Meeker, White River, and the Ute Reservation. On the Meeker route I was promised fair grazing and ample water supply every twenty or thirty miles of the distance to the Mormon City.

It was five in the p. m. when Coonskin brought my caravan to the hotel, and saluting me, said, "Professor, your donkeys are ready and packed for the journey." The guests of the hotel, with few exceptions, were assembled to witness the start, and my dog in appreciation of the compliment strode grandly among the ladies and kissed their hands, and I believe bade every one an affectionate farewell.

I thought this a good time, for once on my trip, to put on stylish "airs." I had never called upon Coonskin to exercise the duties of a valet, in the strictest sense. As soon as he buckled the guns on the saddles, I dropped my ragged canvas leggings at his feet, put forth a foot, and gave him a significant look. Immediately the gallant "Sancho" knelt down on one knee and proceeded to lace the leggings on me, creating much amusement. I then made a short farewell address, got into Mac A'Rony's saddle, and gave the word to start. Such a cheer as arose from the ladies that lined the veranda! I'll bet there wasn't one who would have missed the event for a five dollar note.

Hugging the Grand River (the only hugging I had done in that section) until after dark, we trailed through the sage until ten o'clock, when, discovering a fair grazing place, I ordered camp.

My donkeys had just rested two days, so next day, the 28th day of August, I made them trail fast and far, in spite of the heat. It was five o'clock when we pitched camp near the Scott Ranch.

I had observed a cow and several hens about the ranch. If I couldn't get milk, I might still obtain fresh eggs, and vice versa. Not waiting to unpack for a can, I set out for the house and knocked at the back door.

"Come in," called a female voice.

I entered the kitchen with hat in hand and politely said, "How to do?" The sober-faced housewife did not pause in her duties as she welcomed me to be seated.

"I came to purchase some milk and eggs," I said presently.

"Ain't got no eggs er milk to spare jest now," she replied; "cows all dried up." My face reflected my disappointment.

"Are all your hens dry also?" I asked, as the woman deluged a big white cochin with a pan of dish-water.

"That one ain't," she returned, smiling at her play on a word and a hen. The incident, trifling as it was, served to break the "ice." I introduced myself and explained my journey; the woman was interested; she had read about me. She told me to make myself "at home," and, admitting that one cow still gave milk and she could spare me a little, she went to the creamery. When she handed me a pail of milk, I offered to pay for it, and persuaded her to sell me a loaf of bread. But I had hardly started for camp with my precious purchases than I was surrounded by a swarm of yellow-jackets which proceeded to alight on the rim of the pail and my hand. I dropped the milk instantly, if not sooner. The woman's exclamation of indignation embarrassed me. I explained and apologized, while my kind "hostess" tried to convince me of the docility of those yellow-jackets; from her account one might suppose they were merely a dwarf species of canary birds. But finally she forgave my indiscretion, refilled the pail, and handing it to me, told me the insects were perfectly harmless, and were not known to sting anybody, unless they were harmed. I thanked the woman for her exceptional generosity and rare treatise on "insectology" and again started for my tent, resolved to preserve that milk at any cost. But I soon wavered from my resolve; the pail wavered, too. I couldn't change it from one hand to the other fast enough to elude those docile yellow-jackets. Then I hit upon a new idea; it looked practical enough. I spilled some milk on the ground, and after weaning many hornets from the pail, I lifted the latter, covered it with my hat, and made for camp.

Now once in a while a babe is found hard to wean; the same may be said of a yellow-jacket. One buzzing fellow, doubtless young and feeble, and being tired from long flight, sat on my bald pate to rest, there to die a violent death. On that spot, although his remains were removed, was soon reared a monumental mound, sacred to his memory. I yelled before I remembered it was not manly to do such a thing, and the good madam hastening to my aid, if not relief, carried the pail of milk to my tent, also bringing with her a can of jam. Her kind, forgiving disposition mentally paralyzed me. My own unprecedented conduct almost made me hang my sore head with shame.

We men dined on bread and milk, and at seven o'clock struck out for Meeker. We had passed through the village of Newcastle when some fifteen miles from the Springs; and there were invited into a peach orchard to delight our palates with some delicious fruit, but no other village did we thread on our route to White River.

The last twenty miles of the journey led us across a series of divides, mesas or benches, variously called, and between these miniature watersheds trickled occasional rivulets which either lost themselves in the parched soil, or struggled on till they joined with a larger stream to reach a river. As the tired eye wanders over this sun-scorched wilderness, strewn with what appears to be volcanic matter, he imagines he sees on the black, rock-strewn butes the craters of long-extinct volcanos, which the ravages of time and the elements have almost leveled. And over these charred piles and the intervening plains of white and yellow sage one sometimes sees a solitary horse or steer standing bewildered, as if before impending doom, or else trending by animal instinct some tortuous, obscured trail to a hidden spring.

Meeker takes its name from a family, massacred by the Indians in the 70's. Four or five hundred inhabitants to-day compose this quiet and now law-abiding community, whose chief pursuits appear to be the pursuit of wild steers, horses, fish and game. White River flows past the town on its picturesque way to the Grand, the latter further on joining forces with the Green to form the Colorado.

The hills about Meeker abound with large game—mountain lions, bear, bobcats, and, when the snow comes, deer and elk. I was informed from authentic sources that in early winter the deer are driven by the snow down the river in to Grand Junction valley in such numbers that ranchmen have had to stand guard over haystacks with guns and pitchforks. One woman told me with modest candor that she had actually seen her husband catch and hold a deer in his arms.

After leaving Meeker the scenic views from the trail down and along White River for seventy miles are magnificent and imposing. Rising sheer and bold from the west bank of this deep stream, is a lofty ridge of brown and barren mountains, whose mural crests of red and yellow sandstone and limestone formed in my imagination the walls and watch-towers of castles of a prehistoric race, while the placid river at their base appeared to be a mighty moat to protect the towering battlements from menacing foe.

White River City lies some twenty miles south of Meeker. It has great possibilities. If another house were erected there, and it domiciled as many people as the one habitation then standing did, the population of the place would be increased 100 per cent. Even a part of that house was converted into a post office and a general store. About twenty-five miles from White River City is Angora, another town containing a single house. We arrived at sunset. The proprietor of this goat ranch invited me to pitch camp on his meadow lot, where my animals could find some feed, and treated me to a leg of goat. He possessed a herd of about two hundred Angoras, and derived his chief livelihood from their hair, hides, and "mutton," as he called it. I found the meat sweet and tender; it was hard to distinguish it from lamb; possibly because I had forgotten how lamb tasted. My host visited my camp-fire and entertained me with many interesting tales of adventure.

Occasional gardens and fields of alfalfa are seen on the east bank, all due to irrigation. Great water-wheels, turned by the river current, raise cans of water ten feet and more and empty them in troughs, so conveying the water to ditches.

Ranchmen had cautioned me to give Rangely, the next settlement, a "wide berth." I was told it was a den of outlaws and desperate cowboys, who lived by "rustling" cattle and rebranding them, hunting mavericks, (unbranded calves) and following other nefarious pursuits. Instead of frightening me away, these accounts interested me.

At four in the afternoon we came to a trail branching and leading to a large log house a half mile away. That was Rangely; and we headed for it.

CHAPTER XLIII.
Paint sign with donk's tail

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

I'll say of it
It tutors nature: artificial strife
Lives in these touches, livelier than life.

—*Timon of Athens.*

Pod was always looking for trouble. The fellow who courts trouble finds it sooner or later. I brayed myself hoarse trying to persuade my reckless master to give Rangely a wide berth. He couldn't think of it. He was anxious to meet real wild-and-woolly-west cowboys of the old-time style; he didn't fear the worst of 'em.

"Hit the trail, there, Mac," he said, spurring me toward the hotbed of cowboy rascality. Arriving at the house-saloon-store-city-hall-business-headquarters of Rangely, the dozen rough-looking men lounging about swaggered toward us, pleased-like and curious.

"Prospectin'?" one inquired.

"N-o-o-o," Pod drawled; "just traveling." That was the time in Pod's life when he ought to have lied. Then he explained where he was from, and where he was bound, but did not say that he was a darn fool. The cowboys grunted, or nodded, or smiled, some winked to each other, and one of 'em nudged another in the ribs; everything they did had a deep meaning. I began to tremble for Pod. Would they shoot at his heels and make him dance? Or make him ride a bucking bronco? Or what?

"Better feed yer jacks, Mister," said one; "ye'll find grain in th' shed yender." Pod seemed to be as delighted as we donks.

"The Prof is going to catch it soon," Cheese observed.

"Serve him right," added Damfino.

Coonskin left us to feed and walked to the house with Pod. Soon afterward they returned with a cowboy, who said I had a good shape, asked my weight, and inquired if I was sound in body and mind; then he questioned Coonskin.

"What did you do fer yer salt 'fore ye jined th' outfit?"

"I was night porter in a hotel," was the reply.

"What was ye doin' 'fore that?"

"Railroading some."

"And 'fore that?"

"Painting."

"Paintin' what?"

"Church steeples."

"Golly! yer jest th' man we're lookin' fer."

Coonskin didn't quite understand them, but he did later.

"Bridle this 'ere jack," said the cowboy, meaning me. Coonskin bridled me and rode to the joint. I didn't think anything would happen to me. Several more cowboys had just come in from the range, and soon every man of the gang was busy. I now noticed one fellow mixing red paint; three or four were making two ladders; another one appeared with an armful of blankets; and another with ropes, and presently a cowboy climbed one of the ladders to the roof. Something was doing, sure. Pod seemed interested, but didn't say anything. Coonskin looked as if he saw his finish. I giggled.

Suddenly came a surprise. One cowboy wrapped the blankets round my body, while another bound them on with lariats; another trimmed my tail with a pair of sheepshears. Then ropes were fastened to my body and the other ends thrown to the men on the roof. Next the ropes were slung round the two chimneys at both ends of the roof, and thrown to the gang below. At once the cowboys grabbed hold and pulled, and I rose in the air, until my head bunked against the eaves. There I dangled and swung and kicked and brayed. Never was so scared in all my life. Splinters flew as I kicked holes in the house, and knocked off a section of the eaves. The cowboys howled, they thought it so funny. But the real circus began when Pod was commanded to mount a ladder with a pail of red paint, and using my tail for a brush, paint the name "R A N G E L Y" on that house. Coonskin was made to climb the other ladder with another pail of paint, and, he being a professional painter, with a real paint brush go over Pod's lettering to make a decent job of it.

Well, I had seen Pod mad, but never as mad as he was then. He grabbed my tail and started to paint a big letter R, when I up and kicked the pail out of his hands and sent red paint flying all over half the cowboys; not satisfied with this, I put a few more holes in the house, and finally hit the ladder and spilled Pod on the ground. The cowboys thought that was fun, too; some were so tickled they fired off their revolvers. Here Coonskin was told to divide his paint with Pod, and the painting was continued on the letter A.

The Prof worked as well as he could with such a nervous paint brush, now and then dodging my heels. I admit I didn't know what I was doing, when

suddenly I struck my master in the stomach, and made him get down from the ladder. But the sign had to be finished. Up the ladder again Pod climbed like a man, the cowboys pulled on the ropes, dragging me along so that my tail could be brought to where the next letter should be. Then Pod started on the fourth letter, G. By this time the men were tugging on the ropes to keep me in position for the painter's convenience. Finally the men backed from the house and pulled me away from its side, and Pod turned me about till I hung the other end to, and began the fifth letter, E.

Now I could see the sign. It was up hill. I knew it wouldn't suit those cowboys, and I expected it would have to be painted over. It wasn't Pod's fault, it wasn't mine. As I was gradually pulled along the eaves the higher I was raised, because there was no pulley on the rope. But now that I was turned about, I was swung back some, and the E had to be painted below the level of the first four letters. L and Y followed each other up hill, until, just as the job was finished, I hit the pail a crack with my right foot and sprinkled two more cowboys. The crowd made sport of them, and I think, after all, those cowboys fared worse than we three painters. Then I was lowered to the earth.

To my surprise, the cowboys liked the sign immensely. One pronounced it artistic, another said it was odd and people would notice it, and several agreed that it was the best job of its kind they ever saw. Pod didn't seem to be tickled over this flattery, but Coonskin was puffed up with pride, and when one fellow told him he ought to have stuck to painting, he acknowledged that he should have done so.

When the two started down the ladders the cowboys called: "Hold on there, we want a speech." So the Prof made a speech. Both men were then escorted indoors and the barkeeper mixed a high-ball in a pail and sent it out to me. I was "loony" for hours afterwards.

I never want another experience like that. Pod said afterward it was his first and last painting. He thought the cowboys might have shot a pipe out of his mouth, but he hadn't thought they could condescend to such a low trick as to make him paint a sign with his donkey's tail. The cowboys wanted us to spend the night with them, but Pod replied that he couldn't tarry, but he said he was much obliged for all their courtesies. About dark we said good-bye, and pretending we would travel ten miles that evening, pitched camp near a bridge crossing White River, one or two miles from Rangely. At dawn the men were out after sage hens. They saw several, but couldn't get a shot at the shy creatures.

We started early and traveled over a desolate wilderness of sage and greasewood in a torturing sun, and were unpacked at one o'clock for an hour's rest. Sometimes the trail led through deep channels in the hard-baked sand for several hundred yards, where we were obscured from view. These channels wound about through the desert and mesa, as if they might be the beds of dried-up rivers; and they were often so narrow that had we met a wagon either our outfit or the vehicle would have had to turn back. We came across quantities of skeletons and skulls of horses and cattle and wild animals, but I failed to see any donkey's bones. Don was glad when in these cuts, for he managed there to keep in the shade, while trailing in the open he was ever trotting ahead to hide under a bush where three-fourths of him was exposed to the sun.

Toward the middle of the afternoon we crossed the backbone of the plateau, at an altitude of seven thousand feet, and met a wagon with four horses, bound for Leadville with honey. The driver said he was from Vernal, some sixty miles to the west. Pod thought honey would go well with hot cakes for supper, and after some coaxing got the freighter to break a case and sell him a half dozen boxes. Then the question arose, how could he safely carry the honey?

"Good idee not to put all your eggs in one basket," Coonskin remarked. Pod said he wouldn't. He tucked one box in a saddle-bag, another in a roll of blankets strapped behind his valet's saddle, another in a bag of supplies on Skates, and the last two he packed carefully in the canvas awning. The men conversed and smoked awhile, when the stranger happened to mention that he sometimes dealt in hides. Here was the chance the men were waiting for. The bearskin Skates had carried from Turkey Creek belonged to the poker-player, but he promised half what he should get for it to Pod, if he would let the donks carry it till disposed of. The man said he was willing to give $60 for a fine silvertip skin, so Coonskin unpacked. The stranger was more pleased with it than he would admit, and hemmed and hawed some about the price, but finally paid the $60, and we moved on.

It was six o'clock, and the sun was sinking behind the distant plain when the buildings of the K ranch loomed in the distance. The sound of galloping horses approaching us from behind caused me to look around, and I beheld two Indians with guns in hand, yelling and gesticulating wildly as they leaned over their ponies' necks, spurring hard to catch up with us. When Pod and Coonskin saw the Indians after them, they got ready to throw up their hands. Their faces were as chalky as an alkali desert.

"Have you seen any cattle branded U. S.?" one of the wild men inquired. Pod said he hadn't.

"Where you from?" questioned the half-breed. Pod said: "White River country."

"Ah, we just from there—been hunting up stolen cattle," the half-breed replied. "Found them, but fellows wouldn't give them up. We've done our duty; the fort must deal with them now."

Pod asked what fort, and was told Fort Duchesne, some seventy miles away. We learned that two companies of colored troops of the U. S. army were stationed there. The Indians never touched us.

CHAPTER XLIV.
Swim two rivers in Utah

TOC

BY PYE POD.

"Dost not hear the neighing of horses, the blare of the trumpets, the beating of the drums?"

"I hear nothing," said Sancho, "but a great bleating of ewes and wethers." And this was true, for the two flocks had now come up near them.—*Don Quixote.*

The great K ranch welcomed us just before dark. My animals were generously fed, and we men soon joined the Indian policemen at supper in the house.

When, next morning, the foreman saw us pack the donkeys, he expressed surprise at my traveling with such a luxurious camp outfit. The folding table and chairs, awning, many blankets and other articles were condemned as disgraceful by this experienced plainsman; so, my sensibilities being shocked by such a criticism, I abandoned a hundred pounds of luggage, giving the table, chairs and superfluous blankets to the ranchman, and selling him the awning; then we resumed the journey.

Green River was twenty-five miles to the west. The journey was even more monotonous than that of the previous day. The powdered alkali rose in our faces and penetrated our eyes and throats, compelling us almost constantly to sip from our canteens, wrapped in wet cloths to keep the water cool. Frequently my dog would jump at the larger canteens in the panniers and bark for a drink. I loved to watch him lie down in the narrow shade of a donkey, and, resting his chin on the rim of the basin, slowly lap the frugal measure of water I was able to spare him.

We reached Green River by five, and waited until the ferryman awoke from his daydream to guide the flat-boat across the stream for us. He charged me only two dollars. I thought it very decent of him, as the river was too deep to be forded and he controlled the only ferry; our only alternative was to swim this treacherous stream. Several overland travelers with prairie schooners were in camp on the opposite shore, eastward bound.

I paid a dollar to graze my animals in an alfalfa field for the night, but when we left for Vernal next morning every donkey had the stomach-ache. They grunted and groaned on the march until noontime, and deplored their gluttony with sundry brays that were grating on the nerves.

Vernal is a veritable oasis in a desert, nestling in a broad and fertile valley, which, irrigated from the numerous springs in the mountains forming a rampart round it, is a garden of vivid green. Farmhouses dot the orchards and meadows everywhere, and the village itself is splendidly shaded. Honey is a leading industry; one can see bee-hives in almost every door yard.

After a good supper with a stranger who offered his hospitality, we two strolled about the flower-scented streets in the cool evening air, until we retired to a downy bed in his apartment that made me wish my trip at an end. Here were no mosquitoes. The fruits of this valley are prolific and delicious, and haven't a blemish; the water is pure, and the climate healthful and exhilarating; surely Vernal received its name from Nature.

The frontier post, Fort Duchesne, lay twenty-eight miles to the south, across a desert waste. A few miles beyond Vernal we entered the Uintah Indian Reservation. Further on we saw the shacks and teepees of the Utes, and once we passed a party of this treacherous tribe on their ponies. Apparently taking us for desperadoes, they veered off to some distance in the sage and gave us a "wide berth." The strength and humility of their little steeds was surprising. Several of them carried four and five people, the buck sometimes with a boy in front of him and his squaw astride behind him with a papoose strapped to her back, and a boy or girl behind her. When they saw Damfino with her towering pack they, too, perhaps, did some wondering.

We crossed the bridge spanning the Uintah River just before sunset, and reached the guardhouse of the fort just as the bugle sounded retreat parade. To my surprise and delight the officer of the day, Lieut. Horne, was adjutant and chief commissary, and better still, an old classmate. And when, after parade, I saw the popular officer crossing the parade ground to meet me, I wondered if the changes wrought in our appearance by the lapse of thirteen years would make us both unrecognizable. Our meeting was amusing. The orderly ushered me into the officer's presence, and I advanced and grasped my old friend's hand in a manner to convince him that I knew him; but while we shook hands vigorously and playfully punched each other in the shoulders, the puzzled man could not speak my name.

"You old fool! Don't you know me?" I asked, still shaking his hand.

"You disgraceful old vagabond! Of course I know you; but blast me if I can place you," he returned grinning all over. "Who are you for heaven's sake? Where 're you from, and how did you get here? Speak, man! Relieve me of suspense, if you don't want to get shot by a colored regiment of United States troopers."

"Why," I asked, "is it possible that you do not recollect your old classmate; the famous pillow fight at S—'s Hotel? The mock fight with our old chum, Mike H—n, in my room, when you frightened the boy from West Virginia half to death with—?"

"Pod! Blast me, if it ain't Pod!" exclaimed the Lieutenant. "Well, well, if this doesn't beat me. Sit down and tell me about it. I am glad to see you. But you do look rough. Prospecting? Or fighting Indians? Or what?"

I explained. My animals, I said, were waiting outside in the care of my valet. Horne rose in astonishment.

"Traveling overland with a valet!" he exclaimed. "You are a beautiful looking swell. I have often read about you, but, blast me! if I ever once suspected it was my old chum making the famous trip. Show me the jackasses." Forthwith I escorted the laughing Lieutenant out and presented Mac A'Rony.

I spent two enjoyable days at Fort Duchesne, as the guest of my friend. One of the first to call upon me was the genial Colonel commanding. He asked me to lecture to the residents of the post. Accordingly, I gave my talk that evening to a large audience, and at its conclusion I was introduced to many ladies and officers of the post and afterwards entertained at the army club.

The following day, at one o'clock, my outfit was ready to start. The donkeys were in fine fettle, and Don frisked about gayly, eager for the journey. My friend regretted I could not spend a month with him, and tucked a package in my saddle-bag by which to remember him, and many officers and ladies joined with him in wishing me God-speed. Then we waved an adieu and climbed the long, sage-covered mesa, toward Heber City, a hundred and thirty-mile march without a habitation in view.

Fort Duchesne was still in sight when a hailstorm struck us. The donkeys were compelled to close their eyes and turn their backs to the fearful charges of the merciless elements, while we men pulled our hats over our eyes, put our hands in our pockets, and crouched under our animals; still we were severely bruised, and our necks and arms were black and blue. When the hail ceased, the leaden clouds poured down a cold rain, which beat in our faces and greatly impeded travel. The trail was soon converted into a veritable torrent; the sand or rock-waste soil softened into mire many inches deep, causing the stubbornly faithful burros to slip and stumble and labor as they never did before.

We had journeyed only sixteen miles when, at eight o'clock, we pitched camp on the banks of the swollen Lake Fork River. The night was black. What a nasty predicament! No bottom to the soil anywhere; the mud and water reached to my boot-tops. Before unpacking we cut sage brush and trampled it into a large square bed two feet deep, on which to place our packs. Then, picketing the animals, we tried to kindle a fire with water-soaked brush sprinkled with coal oil; but failed. Soon a ranchman arrived leading his horse, and said he had almost lost his steed while fording the river and narrowly escaped drowning. He joined us in a cold supper of canned meat and corn, whiskey and water, then rode away in the pouring rain.

Our bed that night was anything but inviting. We could not pitch the tent. The soaked sage and the rain saturated our canvas sleeping-bag and dampened our clothing. How I regretted having disposed of those "superfluous" blankets at the K ranch. We were not only wet, but cold, rolled in two blankets and a quilt. When I awoke in the morning I even wrung the water out of the underwear I had slept in, and, also, my trousers and coat before I could get them on, and then in the still pouring rain ate a cold breakfast, saddled, packed, and resumed the trip.

That day we made twenty miles, and "ran" as terrible a gauntlet of thunderbolts as I ever witnessed. Next day it became necessary to swim Lake Fork. Mac said it was his Rubicon as well as mine.

The current was swift, and roared and foamed like a mountain torrent. My donkeys, brought to the water's edge, reared and wheeled and rushed intractably into the willows, scraping off their packs on the miry banks; it required a half hour to replace and securely cinch the luggage on the beasts so that it might not be washed away. Then, with stout willow goads and howling invectives, we drove the braying animals into the flood and followed them, fording or swimming across the river. Cheese was carried down stream and almost drowned.

Gaining the nether bank we tramped through storm and mire all day, making eighteen miles, and after dark camped with the party of a prairie schooner at the foot of a hill, where we found seasoned cedar stumps for fuel, and built a roaring fire. The soil there was more solid, the land gently sloping, and we pitched the tent near the wagon and fire, staked the donkeys, and joined hands with our chance acquaintances to provide the evening meal. The good woman of the party gave us a pie, a can of beef and a loaf of bread; these luxuries, together with boiled potatoes and hot coffee, put our bodies in prime condition for a sound night's sleep in wet garments and bedding. My provisions were not only quite spoiled by the rain and river water, but were

insufficient to last us through.

Rising early, we breakfasted in the rain, and traveled only fifteen miles, swimming the Duchesne River once and fording it twice that day. The stream was somewhat deeper than Lake Fork, but the current less swift, and at every crossing my donkeys rebelled. Soon after the last fording, the sun broke through the clouds, and gave us an opportunity to dry ourselves and freight. A patch of wild meadow enabled my animals to fill their empty stomachs with grass, while some giant sage brush soon dried in the broiling sun, allowing us to spread our blankets and soaked apparel thereon. We unpacked, and cooked, and when our clothes were dry enough to feel comfortable and shrunken enough hardly to be got on, we resumed the march. Our supplies were in a mess. Our only can of coal oil was broken, and the contents had seasoned every eatable not canned. The forgotten boxes of honey had been smashed, and everything was gummed with it; every pack smelled like a bee-hive. The honey I rolled in our underwear, diluted with the water of the several fords, had permeated the raiment so thoroughly that now the heat of our bodies began to warm it up, and my clothes were soon glued to my skin.

That night we camped on Current Creek, after fording the stream. A bear appeared, but scampered grunting into the thicket, my dog not inclined to give chase. Once I was awakened by the cry of a mountain lion, and Coonskin said the yelps of wolves kept the dog growling and snarling half the night through.

It appeared that we were experiencing the fall equinox. Wearily traveling through another day of rain, we camped for the night near a bunch of dwarf cedars. Now the rain ceased for a couple of hours, and enabled us to kindle a fire and cook before lightning played on every hand and the rain descended again. Our largest canteen leaked from some accident it had received, and our surprise and despair on discovering the emptied receptacle may be imagined. What should we do for drinking water? I had not more than asked the question than my eye discerned several small basins in the table rocks close by. These basins were filled, but were so shallow that only by dipping the water with a saucer could we obtain a two-quart can of the precious liquid; next morning we secured another frugal supply for the ensuing day's journey.

Our luggage was placed under two cedars for protection from the storm. During the night we were awakened by the terrific crash of a thunderbolt, which struck so near as to shock us. In the morning I saw that one of the trees had been struck. But our packs were uninjured, save the whiskey bottle, which was broken and its precious contents lost. Thus the sympathy existing between "Jersey lightning" and Utah lightning. Another day's tramp over a muddy trail, and a night camp on another roaring stream, Red Creek; our supplies quite exhausted, we boiled some onions and ate them with the last of our honey. I felt as if I were eating diphtheria medicine. Next morning we breakfasted on a turkey buzzard shot by Coonskin, and that afternoon my jaded caravan crossed the summit of the plateau, and descended into the beautiful Strawberry Valley in the glow of a gorgeous sunset. Soon after, we met two sheep-herders on horseback, looking for two comrades, and, when crossing the broad, verdant valley, we saw two great flocks of sheep, one grazing up the valley, the other down. We camped near Strawberry Creek. The four sheep-herders rode up presently and having a wagon full of supplies, said if I would lend them my tent-poles they would string up a lamb and divide. I gladly consented. Two of the herders rode off to mill up the flocks for the night, while the other two butchered a sheep, built a fire and cooked.

If the scene of that highland camp could have been painted with true color and detail, it certainly would have made the artist famous. A few feet from the flaming fire stood my tent-poles like a tripod, and from their apex was suspended, head down, a fat mutton; on bended knee with hunting knife in hand, one of the herders was taking its woolly pelt. The coffee-pot and frying-pan were on the fire with a kettle of boiling potatoes, and, while the shepherd-cook was preparing bread for my Dutch oven, two herders gathered sage for a reserve supply of fuel.

Some fifty feet way the horses were picketed, and across the stream the donkeys grazed on the juicy grass, untethered but none the less secure in the novel corral of twenty thousand sheep which the faithful shepherd dogs promised to keep milled round us all throughout the black, chilly night. The camp-fire sent flashlight beams on the surrounding scene, and etched weird pictures on the darkness. The silhouetted heads and backs of the horses and donkeys moved fantastically against the starry sky like animated mountain peaks on the distant horizon; the vast field of wool encompassing us and the bleating of its contented life seemed like the troubled waters of some highland lake imprisoning us on its one small island; and away across the vale and again just above us towered the barrier of mountains against the sparkling heavens, forming banks and pillows for stray clouds to sleep upon.

At a late hour we hungry men sat down to a tasty supper of fried mutton, potatoes, hot bread and coffee. The air soon rang with laughter. Later when we brought forth our companionable pipes and began story-telling round the

cozy fire, I felt a delight which seemed a full compensation for the hardships we had suffered during the last week. Suddenly the cry of a mountain lion set the collies barking, but the report of a herder's rifle silenced the prowler and sent him back, no doubt, into the hills. The lions and wolves are a constant menace to the flocks in that popular valley.

It was midnight when we retired. Storm-clouds had gathered and shut out the light of the stars; it looked and felt like snow. The shepherds, learning that we travelers were short of bedding, brought us two heavy woolen blankets; so we rolled ourselves together and were soon asleep, and in the morning awoke, covered with snow an inch deep. By seven o'clock we were ready to resume our journey and the shepherds had saddled their mounts for their day's duties.

Trailing out of the valley, and through Daniel's Canyon, we traveled some twenty-five miles down to the lowlands, and at nine in the evening pitched camp near where, next morning, we discovered a ranchhouse and haystack.

Heber City lay five miles away; arriving there we were royally entertained.

Friday we started for Provo. The trail lay through a picturesque canyon, along the bank of Provo River, where the mountains rose sheer and barren to a great height on either hand. Numerous waterfalls pour their loveliness over steep declivities; patches of crimson and yellow verdure showed in the crevices of the gray summits; and now and then a terraced vineyard or orchard or an irrigation ditch, hugging the steep slopes, indicated a habitation was hidden somewhere near in leafy bower or vine-covered trellis. Once we crossed the river on a new iron bridge replacing an old stone structure which avalanches had demolished.

Passing the night in Provo, I rode Skates six miles to Springville, through a beautiful, verdant valley, where rows of poplars lined the fields and orchards, reminding one of Normandy. There I was greeted by a newspaper editor and a school principal, the latter inviting me to dinner.

Returning to Provo I found my outfit ready for trail. Making a brief stop in Lehi, we reached Pleasant Grove about eight, and camped in a peach orchard adjoining a hotel. The landlord welcomed us to a hot supper, in spite of the late hour, then offered us a downy bed, which we declined, preferring the pure, crisp outer air.

I boarded the early morning train for Salt Lake City to attend Sunday service at the Tabernacle and hear the famous organ and choir. Coonskin remained behind to care for our animals.

Without my donkeys to identify me, my rough, unkempt and most eccentric person caused a sensation at the Mormon capital. I kept aloof from everybody, and nobody was inquisitive enough to inquire my name, errand, and previous condition of servitude. I strolled about the beautiful city, and then went to church.

larger

"The last and only drop."

larger

"Just finished lunch when the posse arrived."

An usher with a charitable heart led me half way down the aisle to a pew in the midst of that fashionable congregation. Every one was dressed better than Pod. But I did not feel ill at ease; on the contrary, I felt at home. A great many true churchmen and churchwomen should have kept their eyes on their hymnals instead of watching me try to chant "I want to be a Mormon and with the Mormons stand." Presently my sensitive nerves were irritated by successive coughing across the aisle. I looked to see what kind of a mortal was suffering so, and beheld a vision of loveliness! Instantly I remembered a small box of cough drops in my pocket, and felt it my duty as a gentleman to summon the courage to cross the aisle and offer the soothing remedy. Soon with palpitating heart and crimson face, I stepped with quaking limbs across the aisle and reached the box to the fair cougher.

I remember her look, as she lifted the lid of the—empty box. I knew plenty of people in my lifetime who had fainted; I regretted never having taken lessons from them.

My head reeled, the Tabernacle was going round, and with difficulty I retreated to the pew in front of my hat, which I looked for, but couldn't find. I needed fresh air, I wanted to go out. Strange to say the lady stopped coughing. It was the shock that cured her, but the congregation were not aware of that. Some of them saw her look into the mysterious pasteboard box and turn red-beet color, and cease her convulsions. That was why several spoke to me, and asked if I were a magician, or healer, as they had read of such people. When I had once escaped into the airy street, I wondered how that box became emptied; then, suddenly, I recollected that, before retiring the night before, Coonskin asked if I had some cough drops left, and helped himself.

After dinner I felt better. I visited the Jubilee Museum, where was exhibited an interesting collection of Mormon relics of pioneer days, and then took a car for Fort Douglas, about three miles from the city on the mountain side, and was invited to tea with an officer of the post, my old friend Lieut. K——n.

It was late when I reached Pleasant Grove. The following day my party covered nearly twenty-five miles, and about two o'clock on the succeeding afternoon marched into the Mormon capital. There a well known pioneer made a speech and welcomed me to the city; and after I had responded in fitting words, he presented me to leading citizens, among them bishops, presidents and elders of the Mormon church. The presiding bishop, an affable old gentleman, asked the privilege of caring for my animals at the Tithing House; another prominent citizen invited me to be his guest. I declined the latter kindness, preferring to be a free lance and to make the most of my sojourn. I was next introduced to Governor Wells.

That same evening Coonskin and I were invited to the theater, and next day, besides delivering many lectures, I contracted with S——& Company, prominent silversmiths, to make a full set of silver shoes for Mac A'Rony, to be sent to Oakland, Cal., and there to be set for his triumphant entry into San Francisco.

CHAPTER XLV.
Initiated to Mormon faith

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

O, that he were here to write me down an ass! but, masters, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am made an ass.—*Much Ado About Nothing.*

My sojourn in the famous Mormon Capital was too short for my taste. I shall remember it as long as I have bra'in's. I am proud to say that I was initiated into the Mormon faith and took unto myself no less than eleven wives; and I would have outrivaled Brigham Young in connubial conquests if Pye Pod had not bribed the Elders and put an end to my marital ambitions.

While a guest at the Tithing House, I found it well stored with asinine and equine luxuries. The Bishop and many charming lasses brought me bread, cake, apples and jam, and some genial fellow of a convivial turn tapped a bottle of rum punches. After imbibing a few "balls," I was quite ready to tipple Cheese, Damfino and Skates, and right here let me say, that of all skates I ever knew or heard about, the last named takes the palm as an artist in "high-jinks." While she gave a clever exhibition of an inebriated athlete, the rest of us donks lay stupidly on a bunch of hay, which was one-tenth of some Mormon's harvest, and reveled in day dreams.

Skates had reached that stage of her circus where she was burlesquing a Shetland pony cavorting on two legs, when Coonskin announced it was time to start. None of us stirred, except Skates. She showed the man how superbly she could pirouette on her left legs around the corral; then, suddenly, she toppled over in front of him, and reached for the bottle lying at his feet. Coonskin grabbed the bottle, smelt of it, eyed each one of us distrustfully, flung it over the fence, and prodded us all on to our feet. You can bet he had a hard job to keep two of us standing, let alone all four of us. He looked disgusted, turned on his heel, and made for the gate at once.

When Coonskin returned, he bore a pail of water in each hand. Indeed, the forgiving old soul, I thought, is going to refresh us and wash that dull, brown taste out of our mouths. Staggering to my feet, I advanced to meet him. Damfino and Cheese were almost dead to the world, but Skates made for the man on a lop-sided trot, arriving at one pail just as I reached the other. Into the liquid we dipped our nozzles, and as quickly jerked them out. What strange tasting water!

"Water from a mineral spring," observed Skates. "No, it's a bromo-seltzer," said I. Then each drank about a fourth of a pailful, and would have drunk more, but Coonskin snatched the pails away, and, it seems, transposed them.

Again we fell to drinking. But, so help me Balaam! soon something began to boil and sizzle inside of me. I thought I had swallowed a school of swordfish, but immediately a geyser raged within, and, like a shot, spouted out of my mouth, spraying Coonskin's face; and almost simultaneously Skates played another fountain in the man's eyes.

"Seidlitz powders!" I gasped, trying to catch my breath, which seemed to have left me forever. And didn't that man curse the whole race of jackasses! Dropping the pails, he ran for a pump.

Presently Coonskin returned. "You infernal scapegraces!" he exclaimed, as he eyed me and picked up the pails.

My recent experience had quite restored me to a rational donkey, and, remembering that "a soft word turneth away wrath," I said, "You are too eager to fix the blame on an innocent creature, Master Coonskin. The recent episode which was so distasteful to us three, and most exasperating to you, points a good moral. Never become so absorbed in the virtues of a cure that you are blind to its possible effect upon your patient."

The man left us, shaking his head and talking to himself, and administered the dose to Damfino and Cheese.

When Coonskin first visited us it was eleven o'clock. Damfino did not sound eight brays to announce the sun's meridian and the hour for barley, but we donks were considered sober enough to be packed by one o'clock, although in poor condition to travel. It was an effort for me to walk, an impossibility to walk straight. My asinine comrades grunted and groaned from nausea, and Cheese complained that we had been cheated of our mid-day meal.

When we arrived at the Hotel, Pod had just finished his luncheon. Damfino looked into the hotel portal and brayed. Then Pod came out, got into my saddle, and amid great applause from the assembled citizens, piloted our caravan down the broad thoroughfare, out of the lovely poplared streets and hospitable, home-lined avenues, past orchard and field and cottage and windmill, over the road to Garfield Beach, on "that mysterious inland sea," a few miles from the city. Once or twice, as I wabbled across the level and luxuriant valley, I turned my head for "one last, lingering look behind," though I confess I did so timorously, with a feeling intermixed with superstitious foreboding, as I recalled the story of how Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt.

It suggested itself to my reason that if there was one spot on earth indigenous to such a dire transformation it was right in that Salt Lake valley.

There, above and behind us, and across the majestic towers of the Temple, lay Fort Douglas, the gem frontier post of America, its white painted fences and barns glistened like meerschaum in the sunshine, with lovely drives and walks, and smooth-cut foliage, and sleek-broomed lawns of emerald, and fountains (not charged with seidlitz), and blooming flowers. And beyond towered the rugged, snow-crowned summits of the "eternal barrier" which holds the fort below, and guards with loving care the "Land of Promise" and that so-called "modern Zion" at their feet, like a dog guards his bone when threatening elements are wagging his way.

We arrived at Utah's Coney Island, Garfield Beach, late in the middle of the afternoon. This famed resort, named after the martyr President who was the victim of an assassin, is a very pleasant retreat on the lake shore. It is accessible by railroad train, horse and buggy, or donkey engine, although few people accept the latter mode of conveyance, as Pod did, I observed.

Pod stopped to swim and float on Salt Lake. Then we went on and brought up at a delicious fresh-water well, in front of the Spencer Ranch-house, where I led my asinine quartette in the song of the "Old Oaken Bucket." An audience at once gathered. Mr. S—— invited us all to tarry for the night, and when the Prof. accepted, we donks gave three "tigers" and a kick, which struck the ranch dog as being most extraordinary. Landing on the other side of the fence, he yelped himself into the house without further assistance.

CHAPTER XLVI.
Typewriting on a donkey

TOC

BY PYE POD.

There are braying men in the world, as well as braying asses; for what's loud and senseless talking and swearing any other than braying?—*Sir Roger L'Estrange.*

We set out early from Spencer ranch, refreshed by a good night's sleep. The weather was mild, but the trail dusty, and the country uninteresting. I found Tooele to be a sociable town that, from appearances, subsisted mainly on sympathy and fruit. Some of its denizens own outlying ranches or fruit-farms, and the remainder, those who don't, have sympathy for those who do. There appears, however, betwixt these two outcropping extremes to be ample means with which to provide the more modest comforts of life—wives and children: for such are known to exist, under any conditions, all over the world.

No sooner had I entered the village, than a gentle-eyed siren coyly approached, and said her papa wished me to put my jacks in his stable. While I was trying to please that man, a squatty youth scraped across the road in his elder brother's breeches to say that his mother would like to have me spend the night at her house. "Sociable people all right," my valet remarked, while I said to the boy, "Kid, you run and tell your good mother that I have a man with me, and, if she can accommodate us both, I will be glad to compensate her liberally for the hospitality."

But these Mormon *beaux esprits*, while followers of the Prophet, reverence old Bacchus as though he were Young.

As soon as my animals were provided for, Coonskin and I were called to supper and greeted at the gate by Mr. and Mrs. Noah and the children. I was hungry and tired. It occurred to me that in all probability my hosts had drawn heavily on their larder to provide a generous repast, and would yet have to pluck all their drakes and ganders before they could make our beds down.

That evening, on venturing in the street, I was held up by a jolly party, armed with two kegs of beer, a barrel of sandwiches, and a number of mandolins and guitars. In front of my donkey's quarters was a spacious, grass-grown area, where they spread their feast; there I met my fête. The serenade, if not the banquet, was in honor of the whole party, biped and quadruped. Although my dog whined at the harmony to frighten the performers, Mac and Damfino applauded the classic selections vociferously, while all four donks availed themselves of standing-room only, rest their chins on the top corral rail, and audibly discussed the exercises.

As soon as my entertainers departed, Coonskin and I sought our hostess. It was a beautiful September night. No air was astir. The sky was darkly clear and the myriad stars were winking with insomnia.

Startled from sound sleep at early dawn by a blast from a "busted" fish-horn, I rolled out of bed in the presence of Noah, instead of Gabriel, as I was frightened to expect.

The next thing was to wash and dress. A half vinegar barrel stood at the back door abrim with water. I was told it was soft, but I found it hard enough to wash in. A few feathers floated on the surface, and the soft water looked like soft soap. Old Noah was one ahead of me and dipped in. His wife, sons, and dog made their ablutions in turn, while the Shanghai hens and a pet magpie had doubtless rinsed their fowl beaks in it.

I watched the exhibition reflectively, and, concluding it would not show proper respect to appear at table before taking a dip, and that more than likely I should have to drink worse water before I had crossed the desert, I ducked my head, paddled my fins, then dried them in the sun, for I couldn't "go" that towel. The scrambled pigs' feet at breakfast was a new dish to this epicure, though my versatile valet observed with an inflated appetite, that he had often made pigs' feet scramble back in Wisconsin.

In spite of a late start, we reached Stockton before noon. My first duty was to hunt up an opulent resident, whom I had met at the soiree in Tooele, and who had promised me a burro.

We at once unpacked the donkeys, to give them a restful nooning, and piled the luggage in front of a store. It was here that my philanthropic friend found me smoking. At once, he sent a lad to chase up a good, strong burro to make good his promise; next he offered me the freedom of the town.

"I'm kind of tired, my good sir," I said gratefully, "but—how—how far is the town."

The donor of Coxey blinked his eyes and felt of his goatee, then, straightening back, said, "Not fer, it's right here. Can't you see it all round ye? Ye didn't cal'luate ter find a New Yirk er New Orlins, did ye? This is jest plain unadulterated Stockton, and it's glad ter welcome ye. Now, if ye're trim ter go about a piece, I'll guide ye."

"Thanks, awfully," I replied, rising. "Take me to a smith the first thing; I want all my donks' feet examined and put in condition for the desert."

Then leaving an order for supplies at the store, I had Coonskin ride my new

burro to the blacksmith.

After a two-and-a-half-hour sojourn in Stockton, my caravan was wending its way to the next and last town we would visit in Utah, St. Johns. The next after that would be one hundred and seventy-five miles away. Here and there along the trail a ranchman's shack stood alone, the glistening window panes flashing like a lighthouse tower in that sea of sage. An occasional horse or steer would loom above the brush; once or twice a jackrabbit bounded across the trail, or a weary buzzard careened in the air overhead, as though figuring for me a fatal horoscope.

I was silent a long time before Coonskin reminded me that I had neglected my weekly letter to the papers.

Said he, "It's a good time to cultivate the acquaintance of Samantha Jane, that typewriter you got at Salt Lake."

"Can't you suggest something more sensible?" I replied. "How can I manage the machine while riding a jackass?"

"Easy enough," said Coonskin. "Lash it on Damfino, and seat yourself as you would to play solitaire."

Great idea! The neglected typewriter was at once introduced to my party for the first time, and secured in a comfortable position on the broad-backed donkey. Then I seated myself vis-à-vis, and opened up a somewhat spirited conversation on the journey.

It was not with the best of grace that Samantha Jane consented to be my amanuensis. She held the sheet of paper very mechanically, and appeared utterly devoid of animation. I first tried to date my letter. I shot my finger at the S key and struck the L just as Damfino nabbed at a sage bush. I'll correct the spelling afterward I thought, and tried to hit the letter E, but rapped A full in the face. "Don't joggle so!" I yelled at my steed, and, drawing a bead on P, literally knocked down Z, as Damfino stubbed her toe. Next, in vexation, I shot at T quite recklessly, and punched Y's face close by. The effort had overtaxed me, and snatching the paper from my typewriter, read aloud L-A-Z-Y. Mac grinned from ear to ear, and Coonskin laughed loudly. The donkey remarked that practice is a good remedy for incompetence, even if it does not cultivate patience.

Again and again I tried to write the abbreviation "Sept.," but at length called "Coonskin, I'm going to discharge this typewriter, and stow her away till we get to Eureka."

"Your courtship is amusing. Keep it up, you'll understand each other in time," he replied.

"I have my doubts," brayed Mac, "when she won't even let him make a date with her."

I resolved to begin the letter anew, and to write at least a paragraph, date or no date. This is how it looked when I had finished.

"Talo hab$ getoch-Tho forntnigs ate erut%wsot
pirowigs og owhym, dyl swelboka swice, bomblastnig
wisj thu cleg pry) wet dnpenting tresgd wobm -&a
wihng rubpint dor a Togues Cruop; % ro mi Noty gni-
leek befort dajosty ga eht5 safey haschimb she boj o rew
laim$."

It was extremely encouraging, to find but four correctly-spelled and distinctly English words in all that jumble of dialects. I thought it a good paragraph to practice on, and would have tried it over, but Coonskin called to me that we were approaching town and, from appearances, the villagers were going to give us a hearty welcome. So I stopped Damfino, and hastily tucked Samantha Jane away in time to avoid a scandal.

CHAPTER XLVII.
Pod kissed by sweet sixteen

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

Very good; well kissed! an excellent courtesy.—*Othello.*

By the time our caravan reached St. Johns, Pye Pod was bewailing his failure to discover the key to his typewriter's character, the non-production of his newspaper letter, and the forfeiture of the check it would have brought him; besides, he was borrowing trouble by deploring his prospective desert journey ere it had begun.

"What a sleepy old hamlet in which to bid farewell to earth!" he muttered dejectedly, as we passed the first house. "I'll bet 13 to 1 that there isn't a soul in the whole settlement to welcome us. The great and only Pythagoras Pod, D. D. (donkey driver), passeth through with his stately train and entereth the seared and thorny purgatory of the desert without the perfume of a single rose to waft to him its balm of comforting sympathy."

Suddenly a happy cheer greeted our ears in the distance. The sound was sweetly feminine, and Pod said that to his sensitive ear the angelic chimes swelled and died and softly returned, like the tender notes of the nightingale in an echo vale. (Pod is often swelled by the divine inflatus). At this time not a soul beyond our outfit was visible, but soon we discovered in the foreground of a kennel-shaped schoolhouse a bevy of girls, all clad in white and garnished with flowers and delicate vines. As we drove near, the whole band of pretty maidens, led by the tallest of them, approached and surrounded us. I knew not whether Pod was frightened or elated; he fell off my back in an effort to dismount gracefully.

The pretty chieftess made a bow, and looked at the sky, and played nervously with her skirt, and turned side-ways, and finally began to intone her "Him of the Asinine Pilgrimage."

"Noble and valorous courtier," she began softly—and a donk of the party brayed, "Speak louder!"—"we daughters of St. Johns, Queen of the Desert, come to greet you with kind and admiring hearts." (Coxey brayed boisterously, "Here, Here!") "We hail your brilliant achievement, as the planets hail the sun"—("What a Venus that middle one," I confided to Pod)—"Your courage, your fortitude, your manly sacrifice of the associations of your nativity and of the affectionate kisses of dear ones left behind you. These, we deem, should be recognized. Therefore, having learned that you and your stately caravan were coming by this highway and that your trusty charger, Mac A'Rony, was still standing faithfully by you" (I bowed at the compliment)—"and your poultroon of long-eared cavalry"—"For Balaam's sake! What's that she calls us?" I questioned my mute master. "She means 'Platoon,' not 'poultroon,'" he explained—"St. Johns has befittingly chosen the flowers of her desert garden—thirteen comely virgins—to be presented to you on this momentous occasion. And so, in honor of your famous exploits," continued the chieftess, composedly, "we now come to meet the lion fearlessly in his desert haunts. Here, take these flowers" (she handed Pod a bunch) "and wear them. They will prove a talisman to conduct you and your party in safety to the farther desert shore." And with the most exalted, sweet-scented nerve Pod accepted the bokay. He smelled of it, and examined it, and then disappointedly yet courageously replied: "I see no tulips among the flowers, and I love two-lips so much."

"Indeed? Well, then you shall not be disappointed," said the pretty speaker; and, s'help me Balaam! If that girl didn't step forward and give my surprised master her two lips. And every one of the dozen others, except the last one, gave hers too, or drown me in an alkali pond. The last girl sensibly boxed his ears. Pod just kissed every mouth of them, from the eldest to the youngest, save the one. The touching ceremonies over, I rather expected my master to respond eloquently in a few well-chosen words, but he was speechless. "Speech!" cried Cheese, and every donkey of us repeated, "Speech, Speech!" Then Pod found his tongue and began:

"Beautiful and spicy sage-flowers," he bungled; and the maidens' sweet faces colored,—"I am completely overcome with this splendid ovation. As frogs dive into a crystal pool, you have disturbed the morbid surface of my present feelings with radiating ripples which shall widen and cease to fade into oblivion only when I shall have reached the desert's opposite strand. The honey you have left on my lips shall sweeten my ertswhile bitter hours, and the milk of your human kindness will quench my thirst when the last drop in my canteen has evaporated. Now I must bid you all a fond and affectionate farewell."

At once the silver-tongued orator went down the line again, kissing each and every one of the dozen he had sampled before; then he got into my saddle. The thirteen foolish virgins backed sorrowfully against the barbed wire fence with handkerchiefs to their eyes; the blushing, crimson sun hid his phiz behind the distant mountains; a dumb weathercock tried to crow as he

tucked himself to roost on a neighboring barn; and our caravan moved on toward the desert waste.

"A complete triumph," remarked the Professor, swelled with pride; "but for that eldest prude who slapped my face."

"The incident points a moral," I returned. "Don't attempt to pet every cat that purrs."

CHAPTER XLVIII.
Last drop in the canteen

TOC

BY PYE POD.

The lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.

—*Shakespeare.*

Rocky Mountain canaries were singing their lullabys and Bridget (the clock) had just called eleven o'clock when the house of St. Joer loomed in the darkness. A hush was upon it and all the out-buildings. Though nobody greeted me, still I knew where I was by the odd-looking arch over the corral gate. Mr. St. Joer was at the soiree in Tooele, and had made me promise to tarry with him a night before braving the desert; so we camped in the corral. We were awakened early by the genial ranchman, and escorted in to breakfast with him and a guest, a young man from Salt Lake City, who had just ridden horseback from Granite Mountain, where he had been inspecting some lead mines.

It was a treat for me to sit again at a meal not cooked by myself; all four of us ate with genuine relish. The stranger was about thirty, of light complexion, tall and slender, and was dressed in a nobby riding-suit, with leather leggings and spurs.

"If you take the Granite Mt. trail to Redding Springs," suggested my host, turning to the young engineer for his indorsement—"but no, that's too risky," he corrected.

"Save forty miles and more," commented the engineer. "I can give the Professor a diagram of the desert and all the trails to Fedora Spring in Granite Mt.; the trail from there to Redding is not confusing, I understand."

I said I would take the risk to save forty miles, a two days' journey. My first intention had been to go south of the desert by Fish Springs, the route generally traveled by emigrant schooners.

Three hours later, we were climbing the rocky summit of the range that hid the great desert beyond, and threading the jagged causeway called the Devil's Gate.

They rose sheer and craggy high above us—immutable witnesses of that sundering catastrophe of nature when the earth's mighty convulsions of a prehistoric age converted an obstacle into a convenient pass. When out on the western side and I beheld the broad expanse of sun-tanned desert reaching from that sage mottled slope to the parallel-stretch of mesa, some twenty miles away, the intervening Skull Valley lost for me its legendary terrors. But it was a forlorn-looking prospect; only two things made up the perfect picture of a despised Nature—alkali and sage.

About noon, when we had proceeded some distance into the Skull Valley desert, we stopped to feed and rest an hour before resuming the march. As we seemed to have abundance of water and provisions, this glaring solitude with such a lugubrious name caused me no dread sensations, for when supplied with the necessities of life, it is difficult for one to realize the dying man's agonies of starvation or thirst.

By six we had crossed Skull Valley. The last mile of trail wound up a slight grade to a grassy bench, where stood a low-roofed, log shack; it was the deserted Scribner's Ranch. A few moment's reconnoitering resulted in our finding the spring.

Then we unpacked and picketed the animals, excepting Mac A'Rony, who was usually allowed to roam at will; for when tied, he was forever tangling himself in a snarl that required time and patience to unravel.

Our tent was pitched a hundred feet from the shack, whose dusky contour, wrapped in the sombre veil of night, on the mesa above us and against the sparkling firmament, looked cold and repelling indeed.

Day had advanced two hours when we awoke. The broad desert to the west gleamed at white heat. While I cooked breakfast, Coonskin saddled the animals, to save time; then, the meal over, we quickly packed and started for the scorching sands. The trail was as hot and level as a fire-brick floor. As far as the eye could reach in three directions, the blue, curved dome of heaven and the glistening desert met in a gaseous haze, hiding the horizon, but in time, far to the west, as we proceeded gradually, rose a bluish-gray pyramid, which we know to be Granite Mountain; while, to the rear, the distant hills, where stood the deserted cabin, looked to be mere dust-heaps at the base of Nature's architecture—the towering rocks of the Cedar Mountains through which we trailed the morning before.

Every few minutes we had to tap our canteens; the powdered alkali dust rose in our faces and swelled our eyes and tongues; no amount of water would alleviate our pangs of thirst. Besides, the evaporation of the water in our cloth-wrapped canteens and basket-covered demijohn was frightfully great; I feared lest the supply would not last us through to Fedora Spring. I gave Don

frequent drinks, yet his eyes were blood-shot and his tongue hung out foaming and swollen. As a precaution against any sudden freak of madness on his part, I held my revolver in readiness to dispatch the dear fellow should it become necessary.

On the other hand, my donkeys strode along quietly, without complaint or seeming discomfort, as if in their native element.

Not a living thing could we see beyond our caravan. No jack-rabbits ventured into the desert; no more would a water-spaniel breast a scalding sea. The only living thing we met with in that gigantic kiln was a horned toad, which was existing as a hermit and was apparently content. We captured it, and Coonskin named it Job, because the horns which covered it looked like the extinct craters of once boiling boils. Our water was vanishing so rapidly by noon that I decided not to tarry for lunch and rest, but to hasten to the spring; but at five, when the sun was nearer the horizon and evaporation less, I ordered a dry camp, and the donkeys were unpacked and grained with the last of the barley generously presented by St. Joer. We men lunched on cold meat and crackers and canned fruit, and sparing draughts of warm water; after which we reclined and smoked until the sun set. Then we repacked before darkness set in to confuse us. How the donkeys did enjoy rolling in the alkali! When they had finished their dry ablutions they looked like negroes who had been hit with a bag of flour.

Just before resuming the march, we men poured a few drops of citric acid into our two quart canteens, whose tepid water was only an aggravation of our thirst; the acid made it palatable. Soon afterward I discovered our great error. The acid so worked on the tin that the water became, in time, unfit to drink; fearing lest it would poison us, we both had to throw the precious liquid away.

About mid-way that afternoon I saw my first mirage. It was simply magnificent, wonderful! A snow-crowned mountain rose out of the desert, and on top of it, turned bottom-side up, rested its counterpart, both phantom peaks remaining a while immovable; then they appeared to crush into each other and dissolve. The spectacle was bewildering. Like mammoth icebergs in a glistening sea, they seemed to melt and leave on the arid waste a great lake of crystal water. At sundown they reappeared with still grander effect.

The sun threw a crimson, fiery mantle over the under mountain, which produced the effect of flowing lava down its snow-white slope to a flame-red lake on the desert, while above, on the upper mountain, reflected and danced shadows of rose-color and pink, as if reflected from flames within the crater of a volcano underneath. Then, as the sun sank below the horizon, the upper mountain gradually rose toward the zenith and opened wider, like a great fan, tinted with all the colors of a rainbow, until it faded into radiating webs of gossamer, and disappeared.

One other time we saw plainly the skeletons of a man and a horse glistening several hundred feet from the trail, but I was too incredulous to put faith in the old proverb, "Seeing is believing," and passed on. Just before dark the huge Granite Mountain looked to be only a couple of miles away. Still we traveled till midnight before we passed the edge of the dusky pile, so deceiving are distances in that rarified air.

The evening in that cooling oven of baked sand and alkali was oppressively long, dull and wearisome. Every trail branching toward Granite Mountain had to be checked off my diagram, for we had seen no sign-board. True, the heavens lent a little cheer with their sparkling lights, but the temperature fell from far above the 100 degree mark to 70 degrees by eight o'clock, and to 48 degrees before we pitched camp. We had passed three trails not on the diagram, and I began nervously to speculate whether the sign-board had been taken by some overland voyager for fuel and we had passed the trail to Fedora Spring.

The clock pointed to one. A few moments later a well-beaten trail curved southward toward the towering pyramid of rock. I called a halt to reason with my man on the advisability of following it.

"We'll chance it," I said; and we trailed toward the mountain. Narrower, rockier and steeper grew the trail for two miles, before I discerned the sloping sides of the canyon we were in, when I ordered camp. The donkeys were securely picketed to the roots of giant sage with our longest ropes, to enable them to find sleeping places among the rocks; I knew they must be very thirsty, and would try to break away in search of water. Then we made our bed in the trail, and with lantern went to find the spring; but we searched in vain and returned to our camp-fire discouraged. Evidently we had taken a wood-trail into a dry canyon.

Only half a two-quart canteen of water was left us. We ate a cold lunch, and drank sparingly; after which I took charge of the canteen for the night. Coonskin remonstrated at once, saying he was thirsty. I said I was, too, and that when I should drink, he could, but not otherwise. We were in desperate circumstances, and I must exercise my authority. So we crawled into our blankets, on the hard and narrow trail under the glittering canopy of heaven,

and were soon asleep. But, before lying down, with a realizing sense that we were lost and without the water to keep us alive half the distance either to Skull Valley or to Redding Springs, I knelt in fervent prayer to God to guide us out of that awful wilderness to water in time to save us from the death that seemed to be in store for us on the morrow. The beaming planets, also voyagers on a limitless sea of mystery and doubt, looked down, cold and unsympathetic. Coonskin was first asleep; when I was sure, by his breathing, I quietly rose and gave my faithful dog a few drops of water in the wash basin. He was grateful indeed, and tried to be content; he seemed to realize the situation, and licking my cheek, lay down close to my side.

The sun shone over the walls of the canyon and awoke us frightfully late. We stretched and yawned. Now, I thought, if I had only taken Mac's suggestion to lay in a store of carrots and turnips, the water in the vegetables would have sufficed in emergency, and the donkeys had feed.

As my hopeful outfit tramped and slipped and tumbled down to the shining plain, I almost felt I could see my finish on that sun-scorched lime-hued gridiron which faded away into a gaseous nothingness in three directions. When we came to the main desert trail, I halted my caravan to debate with my despondent valet as to what would be the wisest move. Should we go east or west?

"Flip a penny," said Coonskin, "Heads, west; tails, east!" and he at once threw the coin whirling in the air, and caught it, tails up.

"West we have been traveling, and west we shall continue to go," I said positively; and gave the command to move on, adding: "If we fail to discover the sign-board after passing beyond the mountain, then we'll come back and search to the east."

We had proceeded a mile and a half when Coonskin went crazy, or had a fit, and I emptied the canteen in his mouth. This revived him. He had partially undressed and was trying his best to frighten me and the dog. The sun beat down furiously; the sky wasn't the only thing that looked blue. I raised the canteen to my lips and drained it of the last and only drop. My tongue hung out swollen, and my palate and throat burned. Another half mile, and I should have despaired, when, suddenly, a small white board, nailed to a short stake, loomed up ahead of us. I knew intuitively it marked the branch trail to the coveted spring. No two happier mortals ever lived than Coonskin and I. We threw our hats in the air; we shouted, and hurrahed, and sang; and turned handsprings and somersaults on the white, dusty floor of the desert. An hour later my little caravan had climbed the canyon to its fountain, and there we men fell on our stomachs with my dog, under the heels of the five donkeys which crowded about the cool, delicious waters, and drank until seized by the collar and dragged away from the spring by a man and boy.

Near by stood prairie schooners, and some yards beyond were their horses, nibbling on the tops of sage brush. The party was bound east, and did us a kindness by preventing our drinking to excess in our condition.

The man was kind enough to caution me before departing to mark well the sky and the wind, for should we be caught in a rain in that dreaded Red Desert, whose soil is so tenacious, we would "pass in our chips" without doubt.

At one o'clock we struck out. The afternoon's march was just as tedious, and uncomfortably hot, and thirst-provoking as that of the previous day. But, with the exception of a fright we received late in the day when a few drops of rain fell from a passing cloud, there was nothing to mar the serenity of the journey to Redding Springs. The long-traveled trail was worn to a depth of twenty inches and more for many miles. We men, especially I, had to sit our animals Turkish-fashion to avoid being drawn out of the saddles by our dragging feet. The march after sunset to two in the morning was the most wearisome. Finally, when we were still three or four miles to Redding, I heard a dog bark ahead in the darkness, and thought we were almost there. Yet we traveled an hour and a half before the buildings of the ranch loomed in the darkness. Soon we had supped, and were wrapped in slumber.

Redding Springs is a great oasis in the Salt Lake Desert. Three springs, varying from fifty to one hundred and fifty feet in diameter, overflow the reeded banks and irrigate a wide area of what otherwise might be an arid spot. An Italian owns this cattle-ranch and grows most of the necessities of life; he seemingly is content, though far removed from the cheerful and busy world. He believed that two of the springs were bottomless, and had some subterranean outlet. A steer once attempted to swim across one pond, and was drawn under by the suction and never seen again. To prove the Italian's theory, these two ponds, or springs, contained fish whose blindness indicates they must have lived in underground channels where eyesight was not required, soon losing their optics altogether.

Mac A'Rony observed, when I had related to him the dago's story that in all probability the steer had undertaken an underground voyage to join a herd of sea-cows in the Pacific.

Our much-needed day of rest was a delightful one.

It was a twenty-eight mile journey to Deep Creek. My outfit was in readiness to start at 7 a. m. next day. The nine miles across the sage-covered plain to the mountains was accomplished in a little over three hours; then my animals began slowly to climb the ascent over a rough but well-beaten trail.

By carrying out the directions given me by the Italian, at ten that night my fatigued caravan was straggling along the western slope of the broad-shouldered Deep Creek range. The sky was clouded, the air heavy with mist; a shower was imminent. I strained my eyes to ferret out a habitation of some sort from among the distant and faintly twinkling lights, but when I had selected one for our objective point and gone a hundred yards or so, it suddenly went out, and I had to single out another one. Again we were disappointed. Evidently it was the bed-time hour; soon all the lights would be extinguished.

Presently rain began to fall. I took it as a timely warning, and ordered camp. We pitched our tent in the trail, the only place in which we could spread our bed, and crawled under cover just as the rain poured down with a vengeance.

We had not more than closed our eyes than Don uttered a growl of warning, and I heard the sound of galloping hoofs approaching. I sat up. Then I heard the trampling of sage to one side of the trail, and looking out, saw a man on horseback. "Hello there! Who be you? Travelin' er goin' somewhere?" called a voice. I liked the tone; the words were genial, even cheery. When I answered, he gave us an urgent invitation to pack up and go on with him to his cabin a half mile distant, as his guests until the storm abated.

"I thought you were drunken Injuns at first," said he. "Not common for white men to camp in the trail. My horse was so frightened he nearly spilt me, shying into the chaparral."

I laughed good-naturedly, and promised to arrive at his house in time for breakfast, explaining that it would not be worth our while to dress and pack in the rain, since we were perfectly comfortable. Soon a hush fell upon the scene, and the beating rain on the canvas lulled us sweetly to sleep.

When we arose in the morning, everything was dripping and a furious gale blowing. The rain appeared to be over, but no sooner had we packed up than down again it came. We hustled our animals up the muddy incline, and soon rode into the door-yard of the only cabin on the trail, and commenced unpacking. Soon our midnight acquaintance, Murray, and his chum, an old man who went by the cognomen of Uncle Tom, came out and welcomed us; both our hosts were effusive in their hospitality. One stabled and fed the donkeys, and the other ushered us into the cabin where we were provided with dry raiment and a hot breakfast. The fire in the stove roared in triumph and scorn at the scudding rain and wind without, while I smiled in gratitude.

The men brought us books and tobacco, and couldn't do enough for us. The storm soon assumed the character of a hurricane; and I tried to fancy my little party struggling in the throes of those merciless elements to make headway across the valley and up the western mesa. The gale waged all day and night, but on the following morning the sky was clear and the wind had died considerably. It was a relief to get out of the stuffy house into the free and open air. I took the axe and exercised myself with chopping wood for an hour, which display of energy greatly pleased Uncle Tom, who, I assumed, provided the fuel for the camp.

Murray was to start at eight on a round-up; so I resumed my pilgrimage at the same time. Before good-byes were said he presented me with a fine hair rope, braided with his own hands, as a souvenir of the happy occasion. The place to find large hearts is out on the western plains!

Nine o'clock saw us trampling sage in a short cut down the slope toward a small group of log houses, designated as Deep Creek. The frontier store was kept by an Irishman, but bossed by his wife, who tried to impress me with her importance. Adjoining it stood another old shack, and projecting from its front eves was a small signboard on which was the following startling announcement:

1st. class dentestry
All kinds dun cheap. Horses a specilty.
Wimen prefured.
TERMS CASH or credit.

I was amused at the novelty of this dentist's shingle; so was Mac A'Rony.

"Poor Damfino!" he ejaculated presently, as I rubbed his nose. "Can't you help her out of her suffering? The poor girl has had a toothache for two days."

"Most assuredly I will," I said. "Why didn't you inform me before?" And forthwith I ferreted out the frontier tooth-doctor. He, resurrected from his prolonged lethargy, hunted up a dust-covered tool-chest, and followed me impetuously to his asinine patient.

CHAPTER XLIX.
How donkey pulls a tooth

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

> Of all tales 'tis the saddest—and more sad
> Because it makes us smile.
>
> —*Byron.*

Contrary to the old saw, "Misery loves company," Damfino wished to be alone. She said she wanted to cry, but couldn't. She had the sympathy of us all. Only those who have suffered can appreciate the sufferings of others. I never shall forget my profanity and the pain that prompted it when the too considerate Prof. consented to my electric bath.

And now, with the same kind motives oozing out of his face, he introduced the sage brush dentist to Damfino. Dr. Arrowroot dropped his toolchest and seizing his patient by the upper jaw with his left hand and by the lower jaw with his right, said: "Open up, madam," and proceeded to examine her molars.

"Locate the claim, Doc?" an on-looker asked, facetiously.

The doctor said he did, but no sooner began to dig than he was ejected. Then the tooth-doctor called for volunteers to assist him; every man not valuing his life responded. Two Mexicans held the remote end of a long pole and pried Damfino's jaws apart, while several Indians and halfbreeds braced against her sides to prevent her from kicking and falling.

At length, Doc fastened his forceps on the ulcerated tooth, and, grinding his teeth and wrinkling his face, yanked with all his might. He might just as well have tried to pull a tree out of the ground. He rested a few moments, then sent for some hay wire and a lariat, and after wiring the lariat to the tooth, tied it to Damfino's hind feet. We other donks were holding our sides; I thought I would "bust." Then, when the patient was unbound—that cantankerous donkey's four legs were roped together to prevent further excavations in the local cemetery—there was performed the neatest, cleverest, most thoroughly successful piece of dental surgery that I ever heard of. That moaning "Old maid" just kicked the tooth clean out of her jaw. And, s'help me Balaam! the root of all that evil was three inches long.

Poor Damfino was the last to realize that the trick had been accomplished, and kept on kicking till she threw off the lariat and slung the molar half way through the side of the store. When Pod showed her the tooth, she brayed for the loss of it, and as evidence of her ingratitude, the shrew turned to me and whispered: "Mac, since I pulled my own tooth, how can that brutal dentist have the nerve to ask pay for it?"

"He got the nerve from your tooth, like as not," I said. "You once told me that the Bible says, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,'"—and in a jiffy Damfino made for that innocent, fleet-footed tooth-doctor, before Pod could have time to settle with him.

Before long, I was leading the troop up the sage-covered mesa in step with Damfino's mutterings. When we arrived at Billy Jones' ranch, Billy was leaning on the picket fence in front of his back door. His house was once turned around, hind side foremost, by a cyclone. He was munching pinenuts, and did not budge, at first, taking us for prospectors. When Pod introduced himself, Billy almost fell to pieces with surprise. Soon Mrs. Jones came out, and Pod was almost persuaded to remain over night.

But we did not tarry. It was dark and misty; rain threatened to descend any moment. When darkness settled, it was as black as Egypt and almost impossible for me to follow the trail. After a while a light could be seen through the mist; Pod said it must be the Tibbits' ranchhouse, where he proposed to camp.

Suddenly, wwhile chuckling over a joke, we donks walked slam-bang against a barbed-wire fence, throwing the men into a rage. Then I leading the way, we followed the fence, turned a corner round a barn, and finally anchored at the back door of the house. Pod found the doorknob, and made the ranchman's acquaintance, while Coonskin pitched the tent, unpacked and picketed us donks, then both men gathered fire-wood with which to cook. Mr. T——, when once assured that Pod was neither beggar nor tramp, authorized us animals to be fed grain and hay; but his wife said it was too late to prepare supper for the men. This did not disturb Pod for he soon had one prepared.

My, that ranchman was close-fisted! Pod even had to pay for his kindling wood before starting the fire. The old man was a plain-looking ruddy-faced Englishman, as snobbish as he was penurious, but after a time he condescended to "join" the five in a post-prandial smoke. And not until it was pounded into his thick cranium, that his strange guests were traveling like princes did he affect to be hospitable.

Long before dawn, our donkey matin song awoke the natives as well as our masters, and Pod issued from the tent, half awake, hardly in presentable condition to face Madam T., who was splitting wood, while the old man looked

on. He now insisted on his "guests" taking breakfast with him, and afterwards charged for the bacon, eggs, coffee and bread double the sum charged by other ranchmen previously. The bill for hay, grain and firewood was also presented and paid by the amused Prof. Coonskin was rash enough to hint to Mr. T. that by some oversight no charge had been made for water, for our party drank lots, but the Briton said no, he'd be generous.

He accompanied us horseback four miles, nearly to the base of the mountain, where we turned to cross the pass, and on the way acquaint us with the superior advantages of country life in England as compared with the disadvantages in America, and admitted that, while a squatter in the West, he had for twenty-five years declined to be naturalized.

The climb over the Antelope Mountains was slow and laborious. Across the flat valley beyond, mottled with sage and greasewood, alkali and sand spots, rose the summits of the Kern Mountains. We trailed through straggly groves of dwarf pines laden with cones, full of tiny nuts, some of which the men gathered and munched unroasted. Coonskin said they were a dandy invention, just the thing to break the monotony of talk, for they kept the jaws at work just the same; and they were so hard to gather and shuck that a fellow couldn't eat too many to crowd the stomach.

The valley was about ten miles broad; we crossed it and camped at the base of another range of mountains, near the V—— sheep ranch. The boss was away, but his genial wife and son were holding down the claim. They visited camp after supper, listened to the Professor's marvelous tales, and next morning the good woman sent her son horseback to lead us beyond the point of conflicting trails, to the entrance to the pass to Schelbourne. As the lad rode off we donks joined in that pathetic hymn: "One more mountain to cross," just as a sort of parting serenade.

The trail was smooth, but in some places almost obliterated; it was the old pony express trail of ante-railroad days. Sometimes it was steep and we donks puffed like engines. There were the charred stumps of the telegraph poles that the Injuns burned to annoy Uncle Sam, and occasional ruins of stone or adobe cabins or saloons, relics of those hot times of savages and fire-water. Every time I saw one of them I felt dry.

By 11 a. m. we had crossed the summit and were resting near the great stone barn of Schelbourne. It is built strong, with sheet-iron doors and shutters, and high enough to admit a stage coach and four. When the Injuns used to get out for a little holiday sport, the stage, freighted with passengers, mail and express, used to drive in at a two-forty gait; and I've heard tell how the iron doors would shut and give the coach a friendly boost in the nick of time to receive on their armor a hail of leaden bullets or a shower of poisoned arrows.

On reaching the plain, I heard my master tell his valet we would spend that night at Green's ranch. I was glad, for I was hungry; the savory smell of the nuts the men chewed was tantalizing. Midway the plain we were stopped to enable Pod to empty a sackful of cones, which Cheese had threshed by his wibble-wobble motion, and to refill their pockets with nuts. At length, we arrived at Green's a half-hour after dark. Here we donks were fed and watered; then Coonskin proceeded to get camp ready for the night, while Pod made a fashionable call on Mrs. Green. And—well, he will tell you what happened.

larger

"Coonskin and I took shelter behind our donkeys."

CHAPTER L.
Encounter with two desperadoes

TOC

BY PYE POD.

Here, brother Sancho, we may dip our hands up to the elbows in what they call adventures. But take note, though thou seest me in the greatest danger on earth, thou must not set thy hand to thy sword to defend me, unless thou shouldst perceive that they who assail me are rabble and low people, in which case thou canst come to my aid.—*Don Quixote.*

It was early evening, October 5, at Green's ranch. The somber quiet of the place seemed to indicate a deserted estate, but a dim light in the window invited me to knock. At once I heard feet shuffle across the floor, and a bolt slide in the door.

"Who be you?" called a woman, distinctly.

I introduced myself through the key-hole and was admitted. Mrs. Green extended me a left-handed greeting while holding a sixshooter in her right hand. It was a most interesting reception.

"What are you going to do with that?" I inquired, smiling. The idea that a frontier woman should be so easily frightened seemed ridiculous.

"Haven't you heard?" she returned. "Why, the whole country is up in arms looking for two desperate outlaws. They shot a sheep-herder last night in Telegraph Canyon, and after robbing the fellow of four dollars, left him for dead. Mr. Green went to Egan Canyon this afternoon for the mail, and hasn't returned. He ought to be back by now. It is only three miles away." Here the somewhat perturbed woman glanced at the clock, which indicated 8:00.

I conversed with Mrs. Green a few moments, and she invited us men to supper and told me to feed my animals from the hay-stack. I said we were well provided with food and fire-arms, that she might feel quite safe from the brigands. Now Coonskin called for me and said our evening meal was under way. So, I bade Mrs. Green a good night.

Coonskin, whose chief literary diet had been dime novels, listened to the news with rapt attention, and suggested that I cook while he prepared camp for a sudden attack.

"Gee! Wouldn't I like to capture 'em, though!" he said enthusiastically.

"I would like to see you try it," I returned; "you have been 'spoiling' for a scrap with an Indian, or a desperado, or some wild beast ever since we crossed the borders, and I shouldn't wonder if this were your opportunity. Something tells me that we'll meet these outlaws."

Supper over and dishes washed, we retired. Our bed, only separated from the earth by a single canvas, never was more comfortable. The night was cool and a gentle breeze was blowing, but there was no sound, save the braying of the donks. Suddenly I heard Don, who was on guard, growl, then a sound of wheels and a horse's whinny.

"Will your dog bite, Mr. Pod?" called Mr. Green.

I rushed out barefoot and dispelled his fears, and, after shaking hands, questioned him how he knew who I was.

"Oh," he chuckled, "anybody would know you by your outfit; besides, everybody along the trail has been expecting you, even two desperadoes."

This was interesting. But I explained that his wife had told me all, whereupon he invited us men to breakfast, and was escorted by Don to a point which he considered the limit of his master's domain.

While at breakfast I learned that the Salt Lake newspapers, containing illustrated accounts of my prosperity, had subscribers all along the trail; that the shooting at Telegraph Canyon was the first in that section for sixteen years; that no pay-boxes were expected at the Egan mill, where a half dozen men were working; and that, what was of more importance than the rest, it was the prevailing opinion that Pye Pod was the man the outlaws were laying for.

"Griswold is the unfortunate man's name," said Green. "The outlaws pretended to be friendly, lunched with him, and started off on their horses. But Griswold had no sooner turned his back than the strangers ordered him to throw up his hands. They took all his funds, shot him, and galloped away with his good horses, leaving their jaded ones. The poor fellow regained consciousness, and managed by morning to crawl six miles to a ranch. Resolute men hurriedly saddled their horses, and soon thirty were after the outlaws. I hear Griswold is with them, he having recovered. But they say at Egan that some of the boys this afternoon gave up the chase, because it was getting too warm for them; they felt pretty near the game."

Mr. Green gave me a second-handed description of the desperadoes and their outfit, and directing me on my route, wished us Godspeed.

I felt that my route forced me to overtake rather than to meet by chance two men who set but little value on other men's lives, and even less on their own; therefore having everything to gain and nothing to lose, they put up the best kind of a fight.

We soon arrived at Egan, where we were kindly received. The men showed us about the works, allowing me to take photographs, and gave me a more accurate description of the outlaws, and the long trail of a hundred miles to Eureka. At three points only should we find water, at Nine Mile Spring, Thirty Mile and Pinto Creek, the latter being seventy miles away. No habitation would we see; only an occasional coyôte, or a band of wild horses, or possibly some prairie schooner, or the outlaws, or some of the possès.

By trailing through Egan Canyon we cut the backbone of the mountain range and now, at an altitude of several hundred feet above the plain, were climbing higher and higher the rugged plateau, until we reached Nine Mile, and unpacked. The spring was in a grassy spot, and Coonskin first replenished our canteens, then released the donkeys.

It was noon. Accustomed as we were to travel on two meals a day, I could set no regular hour for them. It was twenty-one miles to Thirty Mile Spring. So we cooked here.

The desperadoes formed the chief topic of discussion, even Don showed the bloodhound in him, and, ever since leaving Egan, showed unusual excitement and was more vigilant. We must have crossed the tracks of the outlaws, or were following them unwittingly. Taking everything into consideration, we were in a fair mood to be startled when the dog sprang to his feet, and growled. Then three men, heavily armed, galloped up and dismounted. I was relieved when I saw one of the riders wearing a bandage round his head; it must be Griswold.

The strangers left their steeds standing, each tying a rein to a stirrup, then introduced themselves. We had just finished lunch and were smoking when the possè arrived; but now Coonskin cooked for our friends, while I did all the honors and gleaned all the information essential to our interests. They were affable fellows and resolute, but had set out hardly equipped for the chase. One picked up a two-quart canteen, saying good-naturedly that he reckoned he would have to rustle it. I said they were welcome to anything I could spare.

Before separating on our several missions, Coonskin photographed the party, and Griswold repeated his description of the outlaws. Couriers had been dispatched to Ely, Hamilton, Eureka, and other points; these men were bound for Hunter, seven miles over the mesa. Before leaving they asked me if I would blaze a sage-brush fire that night should I reach Thirty Mile and discover any evidence of the bandits. They also admonished me to hold up and shoot without considering an instant any two mounted men of the description given, else we two would never live to tell how it happened.

With this parting injunction, unofficial though it was, the riders loped away, and my nervous troop, at half-past two, "hit the trail" in lively form. I was glad the country was clear and open. Only an occasional dwarf cedar stood in dark relief against the sage. About midnight the grade began perceptibly to grow steeper, and in consequence of the clouds which had gathered the darkness was dense. I felt we must be near to Thirty Mile. The idea of passing the spring and having to trace our steps next morning was not to be entertained. Seeing a bunch of cedars some distance to the right, I headed for them. And there we camped. Behind the screen of three small trees and the darkness we spread our blankets, lunched on bread and cold meat, and went to sleep. The donkeys were picketed still another hundred yards back, so as not to be seen from the trail; we did not light a fire.

By ten o'clock next morning we had breakfasted, and were trailing toward the summit of the plateau. Three miles further on was Thirty Mile. Here again I unpacked the animals for an hour's grazing on the grass by the spring.

The noon hour found us weary travelers reclining on a heap of blankets. To the east, some fifty feet away, stood a tub, obscured by pussy willows, and brimming with cool water furnished by a cedar trough which reached from the bubbling spring. The overflow streamed down a tiny gorge in the hard soil, under cover of the willows, and finally sank in the earth.

"I'm afraid the fellows ain't going to bother us after all," said Coonskin disappointedly, at length. "I'd give a farm to get a whack at them."

He had no sooner uttered the words than he turned pale, and I turned to behold two small moving dots on the horizon, some two miles down the trail. "Jove!" he added, "I believe the outlaws are coming."

Indeed, I could make out two men, mounted on a dark and a light-colored horse respectively, slowly approaching. Assigning to my valet the shot-gun and the Smith & Wesson double-action revolver, I loaded two extra shells with buckshot, tested the locks of my Winchester and single-action Colt revolver, gave Coonskin explicit instructions, and awaited events.

When the strange riders rode to within a half mile of us they stopped and dismounted. It was plain they were cinching their saddles, probably preparing to do some rough riding. The dark horse appeared to be somewhat darker than the one described by Griswold, but I was cautioned that they might exchange a horse for one on the range in order to mislead their pursuers. They and their outfit in all other respects tallied with the description given to me.

My companion in arms, who of late had evinced such courage, now showed signs of weakening. He protested that it would be better not to attempt to hold up the fellows until we were sure we were right, and when I said that I proposed to get the drop on them the first opportunity offered, and to shoot if necessary, and should count on him to aid me, he was speechless. Don seemed to understand, and stationing himself some ten feet before us, watched the strangers eagerly. I assured Coonskin that if our dog allowed those horsemen to enter camp, we could rest easy, but if, when I hailed them, Don uttered a protest, we could mark them as the outlaws. "Don't let them corral us," I cautioned; "if they get us between them, the game is up."

Those were anxious moments for me, as well as for the young man who was ten years my junior. I was seated on our packs, my Winchester lying across my knees, cocked; Coonskin sat on the ground at my right, with shot-gun in hand. Our revolvers were in our belts. Our bearded and sun-burned faces, long hair, and generally rough attire, added to our unfriendly attitude, must have puzzled the approaching horsemen. When they had come to a hundred feet from us, I called roughly, "Helloa, boys! come in. You're just in time for grub."

Instantly Don leaped to his feet, and with tail straight out and body trembling from rage he uttered a savage growl of defiance. He identified the desperadoes.

Instantly reining their steeds, one of them slung some simple questions at me, designed, no doubt, to throw us off guard.

"Purty nice lot of burros you've got," he began.

"Pretty fair," I replied disinterestedly.

"Which way you traveling?"

"West. Where 're you bound?" I inquired.

"Just lookin' round. Which is the trail to Hamilton?"

I did not answer. Then the man asked: "How far is it?"

"I don't know, and I don't care a d——," I answered coarsely, with bravado, as if I considered it wasting time to talk.

The smiling outlaw now looked grave, and turning to his comrade asked, loud enough for me to hear: "Shall we go in and cook?"

"No, better water our horses and go on," said the partner.

Then, quite as I anticipated, while the more slender man rode direct to the tub of water, to the right of us, the other guided his horse to our left, to hem Coonskin and me in between them.

Instantly I rose to my feet, and trailing the rifle over my wrist strode, eyeing him defiantly, in a line at a right angle with the course of his horse, but the rogue did not go far before turning his steed in the direction of the tub. There both men dismounted behind their steeds, took off the bridles with spade bits that their horses might drink, and regarded us tenderfeet with some respect and concern. They handled their bridles with their left hands, which left their right hands free to use the revolvers I had seen in their belts; in view of which fact, Coonskin and I took shelter behind our donkeys, three of which were lying down after rolling, and, aggressive as well as defensive, awaited our opportunity.

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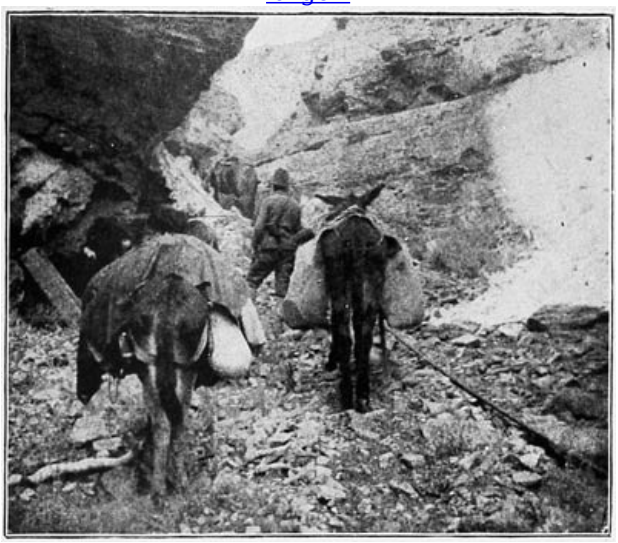

"Through Devil's Gate, their panniers scraped the walls."

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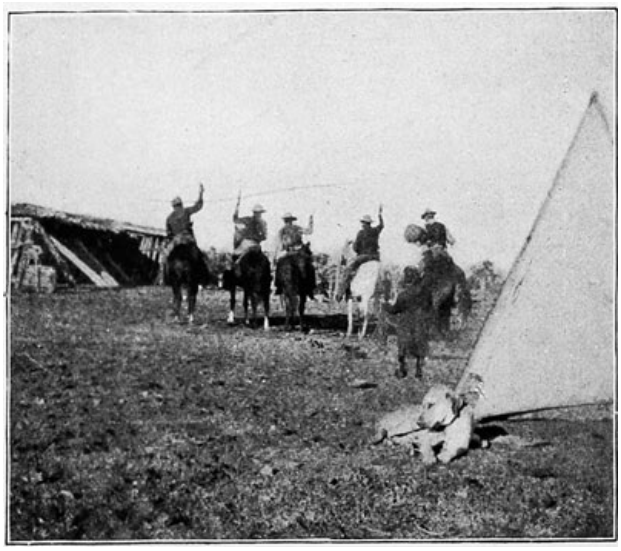

"Fired their revolvers in the air."

Presently the spokesman of this bandit party, inquired: "Say, fellows, have you seen three armed men mounted, looking for two fellows riding a grey horse, bare-foot, and a sorrel with a bald face, they claimed shot a man in Telegraph Canyon?"

"Not exactly," I said with a faint smile. "Don't think I ever saw *three* armed men." I waited a few seconds for my levity to produce the desired effect, then added: "There were three determined-looking fellows armed with double-barreled shot-guns who stopped here. They were man-hunting."

"That so?" queried the outlaw, quite excitably. "How long ago were they here? Where'd they go?"

"Oh just a little while ago. They took in a few cans of water," I here pointed in their direction, and said: "They were going to cook over there behind that knoll."

At once, as I hoped they would, the desperadoes were thrown off their guard and looked behind them. And as they did so I raised my rifle and whispered to Coonskin to pull on them. But "Sancho" never budged, his courage had left him. The outlaws turned their eyes upon us so quickly I think they must have overheard my whispered command. They hastily bridled, mounted, and rode southwesterly in the direction we were bound, while turning in their saddles and watching us until they were beyond range of our guns.

I was in the mood to "jump" Coonskin for not aiding me to hold up the outlaws. Our one great opportunity to distinguish ourselves on the journey was lost. "Think of the receptions we would have had if we had captured and disarmed those desperadoes, and marched them handcuffed into Ely, the county seat! And think of the handsome reward," I said.

The thought of a forfeited reward seemed to stagger the boy. I concluded my lecture with the emphasized mandate that henceforth I must not detect any unusual display of courage or prowess on his part, unless it should be solicited by me, and furthermore, I did not wish to hear any expressions of desire to attack anything more formidable than a jack-rabbit.

Our donkeys were soon packed for a twenty-mile evening tramp toward Pinto Creek. I pinned a penciled message on paper to the tub before departing, for the benefit of the possè, and my caravan was on the move again. About midnight we made a dry camp at a discreet distance from the trail, where without building a fire we made a cold lunch serve for our second meal that day, and retired.

Next morning early we resumed the journey. By two o'clock we had crossed the Long Valley Mountains and were on the margin of a sage-covered plain, still probably twenty miles to Pinto. Several times we were puzzled by forking trails, and were in doubt whether we were on the right one to Eureka.

I judged the valley to be ten miles wide. On we rode, the plucky animals swinging slowly along in that awkward yet amusing hip-movement characteristic of the burro, until I distinguished across the plain what looked to be a house. I decided to head for it. We arrived there at five o'clock, to find the place temporarily deserted, to discover a fine spring and plenty of hay. Here we cooked our evening meal and were enjoying a smoke when two men rode up with an air of conscious proprietorship. They were Mr. Robinson, proprietor of Newark Mines, and his superintendent. Both were very hospitable. Mr. Robinson invited me to help myself to anything I or my party needed, regretted that we had not waited to dine with him, and asked us to spend the evening at his house and breakfast with him.

When I told them the story of our experience with the outlaws, they were greatly interested, and it called forth many tales of adventure from both those

frontiersmen. We were treated to a heaping plate of delicious apples, and it was a late hour before we sought our tents. It was a relief to feel myself well beyond the outlaws' domain.

Next day my good host directed his superintendent to guide us over Chihuahua Pass, which would save us a fifteen-mile journey around the extremity of the mountain by way of Pinto.

The climb over the pass was rich with beautiful views. After rising several hundred feet and looking back, the vista between the summits and the plains glistening in the sun was superb. The mines were a mile or two up the canyon, and to this point my kind host accompanied us, after which his man on horseback led us over the roughest and most puzzling part of the trail.

So narrow was the passage through Devil's Gate that two animals could not walk abreast, and their panniers often scraped the rough walls of the winding and rocky gate-way. Having once gained the summit, a great oval of bench-land spotted with buffalo-grass, we rested and grazed the donkeys while we lunched; then we shook hands with the good-hearted guide, and trailed down the long, pine-covered slope to Eureka.

CHAPTER LI.
Donk, boy and dried apples

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

I will feed you to bursting.—*The Fair God.*

Eureka is a good old mining town that saw its finish when Congress demonetized silver. As have some clouds, it has a silver lining; the earth beneath and the surrounding hills are rich, or rather poor, in the white metal. A few of the mines were still operating, and any one could see ten-horse teams drawing ore done up in bags, like grain, to fool any mule or donk. The night we hungry donkeys arrived in town we followed a wagon filled with bags of ore a quarter of a mile out of our course before Prof. discovered the mistake.

I observed that the populace didn't take much interest in what I had to say, so I didn't say much, but I thought lots, and stored away plenty of grain and hay, to say nothing of water. The amount I drank would make a camel envious. But I wasn't satisfied. I hadn't tasted fruit for a long time. So I got out of the corral, strolled to a grocery store, and helped myself to dried apples; I was about to nab a bacon when I was driven away to a watering-trough by a kind boy who knew a thing or two, and then led to the corral.

I remembered having eaten less than two quarts of apples, but before ten minutes were gone I easily believed I had eaten ten bushel. To look at me you would have sworn I had swallowed a barrelful, barrel and all. Most of the day, I spent rolling round the corral in pain. For the first time in my life I knew what it was to be really tight.

The kind boy stood innocently by, and a companion of his dared him to go up first. "Up where?" asked the kind boy.

"Up in the balloon, yo' big idiot!" said the other. "Jest got ter tie a basket to his tail, and git in, and hang on. Fillin' fast, he'll rise purty soon."

That mockery was more than I could stand while lying down, so I rolled on to my feet and made both boys scarce. And if a horse-doctor hadn't stabbed me, the kind boy would have needed a balloon to save himself.

That evening saw me well again, but my cravings took a different turn. I had a taste for a newspaper. Finally a man threw one to me. Among its contents, I ran across the following squib, and smiled:

"MAC TEMPTED AND DRIVEN OUT.

> Some vixen let out one of Pye Pod's burros—it happened to be his pet jack—then drove him to Pete Dago's open-air lunch counter, where the ass helped himself to that diet which would go farthest, yet take up the least room—dried apples. It's a sad story, but the worst is over, and save a small doctor's bill, and a grocer's bill, and a five dollar bill, and the small boy, Bill, who has been placed in the coop for the night, no other bill figures in the case. The distinguished party leave in the morning, also the nigh extinguished party (meaning me). Adam was the first ass to be tempted to eat of forbidden fruit, but not the last. Adam blamed Eve. Mac blames a kind boy. Adam deserved some commiseration for having perhaps sampled apples too green, for we know what it is to be a boy, but no compassion can be tendered the 'narrow-gage mule' that is such an ass as to pack away a hundred pounds of evaporated apples, gulp down a cistern, and expect to fly."

During his sojourn Pod wrote his weekly letter, discussed the desperadoes with the sheriff, photographed some crippled, dried-up Piute Indians, and doctored the sick dog, for Don had on the trail imbibed too freely of alkali water.

We left town the morning of October 11th, and arrived at the Willows about midnight, after a long forced march through a wilderness. There Pod pitched camp. Neighing broncos disturbed my dreams, and daylight revealed a bunch of cowboys on a round-up, also a bale of hay, which set us all braying so loudly that we awoke the men in time to start for Austin before the sun got scorching hot.

The cowboys were a jolly lot. They gave an exhibition of rough riding which nearly frightened Damfino into epileptics and Don into hydrophobia. Then the whole lot of 'em fired their revolvers in the air and skooted through the sage, yelling like mad.

Our next stop was the Blackbird ranch, twenty-five miles further on, whose hospitable proprietor showed greater interest in the novel tent than in anything else. Coonskin took it down with one hand, pitched it with two feet, and while the wondering spectators pulled their whiskers, bound up the canvas and tied the rope with his teeth.

The seventy-five mile journey from Eureka to Austin was accomplished in three days. There, the Professor lectured to an immense audience.

Austin is another mining town that had seen more prosperous times; its people, like those of Eureka, were cordial and generous. When Pod and I led

the troop out of town, he was considerably enriched in pocket and mind.

Twelve mile ranch is twelve miles from the town. Same, I suppose, as October thirteenth is the 13th of the month. Here was a large stock ranch, and the thrifty proprietor did his best to persuade my stubborn master to remain over night, at least until the threatening storm had passed. He would not tarry, but hustled us on in a drizzling rain.

By nightfall we began to climb a canyon winding over the Shoshone Mountains, I think, and about midnight reached the summit in a blinding snow squall. The wind blew at half a hurricane gait, and the men were mad because they couldn't light a match to look at the compass and get their bearings, and Damfino laid down on the dog that had lain under the donkey to get out of the ice-shod wind, and the men wasted twenty minutes searching for the right trail.

You see, my biped friends, that another range of mountains met the Shoshones at right angles at this point, and it was dollars to nutmegs that the men would miss the trail in the dark, which happened; as the result, two hours later, our outfit slid into camp for the rest of the night some two half miles from the plain. Breakfast was served at ten. Menu: sage brush for five.

We were on the north side, and the wrong side, of the range, plain enough. Pod said it was Coonskin's fault, Coonskin claimed the Prof. was to blame, and the dispute would have ended in the blessings of the pipe of peace if Coxey and Cheese had not chewed up the only bag of tobacco while the men were feeding.

We were now in what was, I believe, the Sinkarata Valley. It stretched many miles to the north, and appeared to be twenty miles wide at the narrowest point. No sign of habitation could we see. All day long we trailed through that desolation parallel with the range until we came to a cross-trail leading to the mountains. Here the men examined the compass, and headed for the hills.

It was sundown ere we began the ascent, and ten o'clock when we went into camp half-way to the summit. The air was chill, and we thirsty animals were left unguarded while the men built a fire. I smelt snow on the mountain peak, so did my comrades. My instinct told me that in a moment more we all would be picketed for the night. Our mouths were parched; but the men had only enough water in their canteens for themselves.

Self preservation is the first law of nature, I reflected, and to think was to act. I whispered to Damfino, she passed the word to Coxey, and all five of us desperate donks stole away unnoticed in the darkness and followed our noses as fast as our weary legs could take us in the direction of the peak. The air was so rarified I could hear the least sound, and the slow-kindling fire flamed more plainly instead of more dimly as we widened the breach of confidence between us and our masters.

"Rather hard on the fellows for us to run off with their water," observed Cheese, stopping for breath.

Sure enough, the men were left without supplies, water or food. Not a thing had been unpacked. I loved the Professor, for he had many times made sacrifices for me, and the thought made me stop and look back. The men were talking and gesticulating excitedly. Presently one started up the trail, and the other down, and were soon lost to view. They had set out on the wrong scent. With some misgivings I hastened to catch up with my comrades.

CHAPTER LII.
Lost in Nevada desert

TOC

BY PYE POD.

Then, looking down at the great dog, he cried, with a kind of daft glee:

"*Up an' waur them a', Quharrie,*
Up an' waur them a', man;
There's no a Dutchman i' the pack
That's ony guid ava, man—Hooch!"

—*The Raiders.*

Never before was I in such a desperate plight, nor was I ever more frightened than now. I knew not where, but believed we were in the De Satoyta Mountains, possibly on the trail to pass between Indian Peak and Mt. Atry. We had kindled a fire, warmed our hands, and were about to unpack when Coonskin exclaimed, "For God's sake! Pod, the donks are gone!"

Often had I exercised the importance of Coonskin's picketing the beasts before leaving them, but now was no time to scold. I directed him to take matches and examine the ascending trail, while I retraced our steps and did likewise. Luckily our revolvers were in our belts, and it was agreed that the first to discover traces of the deserters should shoot until hearing a shot in answer. Don went with Coonskin. The lighted lantern was left by the unreliable fire.

It was difficult in the wind to keep a match lighted long enough to be of value, even when protecting it with my hat, as I knelt on the hard trail or on the softer earth in the sage, and strained my eyes to detect the shoe prints of my runaways. Every few steps I stopped to listen for a signal shot, and deplored our dire predicament without food or water.

I had about concluded that the only resort left us was an all-night tramp over the pass, perhaps to be followed by an all-day hunt in the next valley for a habitation and spring, when I heard the welcome signal from Coonskin. Presently through the still air came the sound of Don's barking, then I knew the fugitives were captured. With a lighter heart I now gathered sage preparatory to cooking, for we had traveled all day without a bite.

Our animals that night were securely roped both to the iron tent-pins and the tent, so that they could not slip away during the night without taking us with them.

When I opened my eyes next morning, Mac stood with his head inside the tent-door, wistfully eyeing the canteen by my pillow. My heart was touched, but I thought, "Self-preservation is the first law," and knew that, if turned loose, all five donkeys would have the asinine instinct to find a spring in time to save themselves, whereas a man might fall a hundred feet from a spring and die in ignorance of it.

One hour after sunrise the breakfast dishes had been cleaned with a rag, in the absence of water, and the donkeys were standing to be packed for the disheartening journey. A heap of ashes smothered some fragile hot coals of sage, which, from all appearances, were most inviting to any donkey to roll in. While cinching the pack on Coxey, I observed Mac to steal to the ash heap, look at it wistfully a moment, circle round it two or three times, and, kneeling down, flop over on his side, plumb in the middle of the warm, gray ashes, and still warmer coals. It was his custom to roll over several times, but he didn't do so this morning. He didn't roll at all. If he had fallen on a huge rubber ball, he couldn't have bounded on to his feet with more alacrity.

When Mac once had his balance, he shook himself vigorously and brayed, then eyed the ash heap as if it were a nest of rattlesnakes. The air smelled of singed hair. The donkey reached around and licked his side a moment, then he backed away. When one donkey rolls and his fellows do not follow suit, you can mark it as most significant.

Two hours later my caravan had crossed the summit and were marching down the western slope of the range.

Nevada is the home of the wild horse, and now we saw bunches of these wary creatures grazing in the distance, or running like deer for the hills at the sight of my outfit, although five and more miles away.

It was 2 o'clock when, rounding a bend, my searching eye discerned across the valley, close to the base of the Augusta range, a building or hay-stack. My heart leaped with joy. Our canteens were empty, but ere long we might slake our thirst at a ranch well and give our faithful animals a treat.

On we pressed until, passing the stack, we reached a trail leading into the canyon. A few moments more, and I saw a wreath of smoke ascending not far up the pass. My intuition told me it was the Maestratti ranch. And it was.

We received a hearty welcome. Don, poor thing, was so weak from a prolonged siege of dysentery that he could scarcely creep to the house; but, while Coonskin and I unpacked and watered the donkeys, my faithful dog was fed scalded bread and milk by our hostess, who ordered a hearty meal for us

men.

Mr. Maestratti invited us to a bed in his house, but I declined it, preferring my own blankets; and now, as I strode wearily to it, I called affectionately to my dog. Something told me I was going to lose him, my devoted friend during three thousand miles and many months of travel. I missed the loving pressure of his face against mine, his warm tongue on the back of my hand, his gay antics and playful bark when in his happier moods, and anticipated the grief I should soon feel. I paused at the tent door and whistled.

"Don has stolen away to die," said Coonskin, feelingly. "That's just what dogs do. Let's take the lantern and try and find him." So saying, the man lighted up, and we began the search.

We found him. He was lying beside a stalk of sage a hundred feet from camp, uncomplaining, weak, and breathing irregularly. The flare of the lantern aroused him, and he turned his bloodshot eyes to mine, as much as to say, "Leave me, kind master, I shall soon be out of misery. Do not mourn."

Then I thought of his identification of the outlaws at Thirty Mile, and of his attack on the cowboy in Nebraska who had playfully lassoed me at my request. I remembered the chill nights in Iowa barns when he crept over and nestled against me in the hay that the heat from his great, warm body might keep me comfortable. I could not restrain my tears. My best friend must not die in the brush alone. We persuaded him to return with us, and made him a comfortable bed in a corner of the tent, patted his head, and retired. But soon the poor fellow stole out into the frosty night.

It was not the rising sun or a donkey's bray that awoke me, but a woman calling, "Breakfast!" I intended first before answering the demands of my stomach, to look at my dead friend's face, but to my surprise and delight I saw the dog lying in the sun, his head up and his tail wagging, very much alive. He had passed the crisis of his illness during the night; I had hopes that he would soon be well.

A fortunate circumstance threw us in the company of a stranger journeying westward in a wagon. Like everybody else, he showed great interest in my travels, and when he saw the condition of my dog, he offered to convey him over the mountains.

We arrived at the summit of the pass by ten o'clock. There we rested an hour and fed our animals. The journey down the western slope, while apparently as trying to the donkeys as the ascent had been, was more inviting to the convalescing dog, and he on the way surprised us by leaping out of the wagon and making after a jackrabbit.

At two o'clock Don's Good Samaritan drove away to the south, and at four we arrived at the Donaldson Ranch. Many courtesies were extended us here and we were half persuaded to remain over night with these hospitable people. We cooked dinner early, gave our animals a liberal mess of barley, filled our canteens, packed and departed at seven with the well-wishes of all and a fifty-pound bag of grain, which was donated to Mac A'Rony.

Darkness had set in. Although cautioned about two diverging trails which we would reach before ascending the mountain, before an hour had passed I realized we were going in the wrong direction. The night was chill and pitch dark. Quickly changing the saddle from Mac to my fleet-footed Skates, I rode back to the ranch. No light shone through the windows of the house, and I knew that every one had retired. I could see no expedient left me other than to arouse somebody to set me straight. Feeling my way to the house, I shouted with all my might, and soon awoke Mr. Donaldson, Jr., who came good-naturedly to my relief, saddled a horse, and insisted on guiding my party to the summit. We did not arrive there until midnight.

The noonday saw me at Horse Creek, and midnight, at Sand Spring, where we camped. At dawn, a sweeping glance from my tent door revealed the most desolate of surroundings. To the west was a great barren desert, while on every hand were massive sand dunes, some of them towering a hundred feet.

A breeze had sprung up during the night. After purchasing a peck of pine nuts from some Piute Indians who had camped close by for the night, and were now starting out on the home trail, I tied the door flaps as tightly as possible to keep out the drifting sand, then went back to bed. In spite of my precautions the sand forced an entrance, coated our blankets an inch thick, and scattered seeds of unkindness in our nostrils, ears and hair. When I awoke and saw the sides of the tent bended inward and half way up the walls an uneven horizon, where, through the canvas, the sand and sunshine met, I roused my companion and we dressed. In a few moments more we might have been buried alive.

How we were to cook breakfast was a serious question. On unfastening the door, we were immediately blinded with sand and alkali dust; and it was only with the greatest difficulty that I could find the ruins of the old restaurant of '49, which at early dawn I had discovered only two hundred feet away. The floor of this structure had long since gone to provide camp-fires for many a traveler, but I kicked off a piece of siding. Then I tried to find the tent. I groped and stumbled in the blinding storm, and only by calling to Coonskin

and keeping him constantly answering did I hold to my bearings and succeed in reaching camp.

Saturating a few sticks with coal oil, I got them a-blazing, and then under cover of our water-pail I ventured out of the tent and built a fire sufficient to boil coffee. Our bread when buttered looked as if veneered with sand-paper. Coonskin, gulping down a half cup of coffee, echoed my sentiments when he remarked, "It takes plenty of grit to cross these plains."

How we ever packed and drove our half-crazed animals out of that sandy hurricane is beyond my power to describe. Blinded and choked with the sand themselves, they could scarcely be made to walk to the well. Having washed out their throats, Skates was persuaded to move, and the others followed reluctantly out of range of the warring elements.

As soon as we were clear of the sand belt, we stopped and made our toilet. All day long while crossing that broad desert my eyes smarted and swelled, and they did not cease paining me until we reached the first habitation, where I procured witch-hazel.

Grimes' ranch at seven o'clock saw my whole party in better spirits. I declined both the invitation to remain over night and to stop for supper. Mr. Grimes telephoned to Mr. Len A——n, of Sinclair, advising him that I was on my way there and expected to arrive by nine. It was much after that time, however, when my outfit reached the ranch. When still three miles away and a full hour's march, we could see a lantern swinging, and when we got within a half mile the sound of cheers and calls of welcome greeted our ears. We answered the signals with our lantern and cheered so lustily that Mac A'Rony paused to bray and led the donkey quintette in a heartrending chorus.

The day's thirty-mile jaunt thus came to a happy end in marked contrast with its beginning. A stalwart, broad-shouldered man, with a smiling face half hidden by a beard streaked with gray, lifted his sombrero as he grasped my hand and shook it heartily.

"Welcome, welcome, my boy! Now make yourself at home," said Len A——n.

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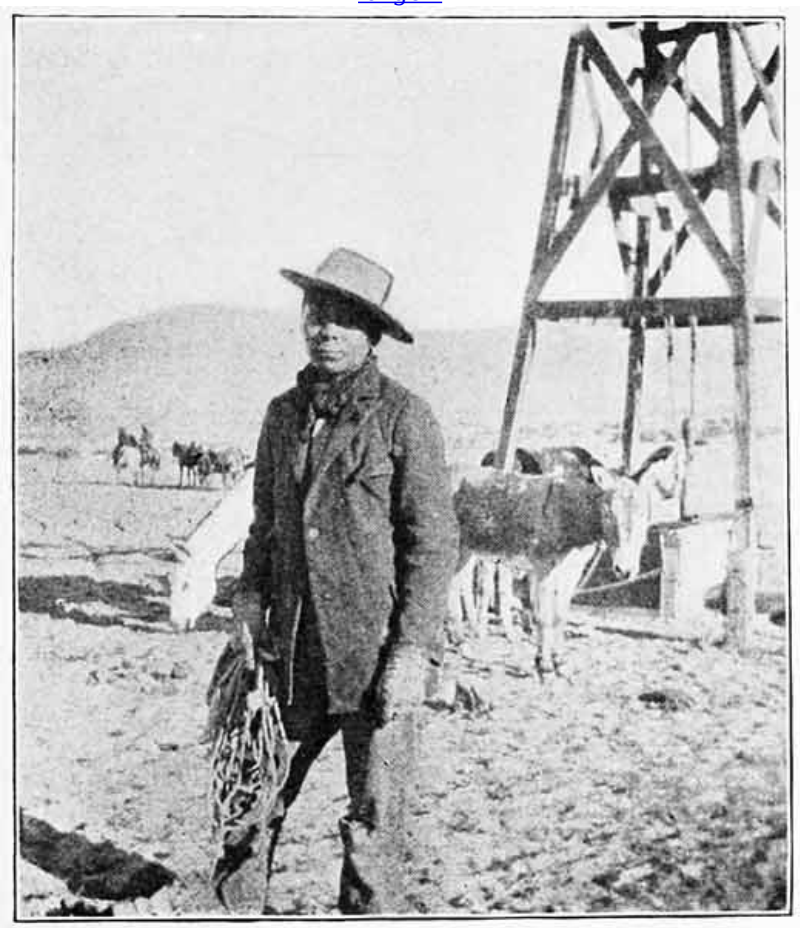

"Some Piute Indians who had camped close by."

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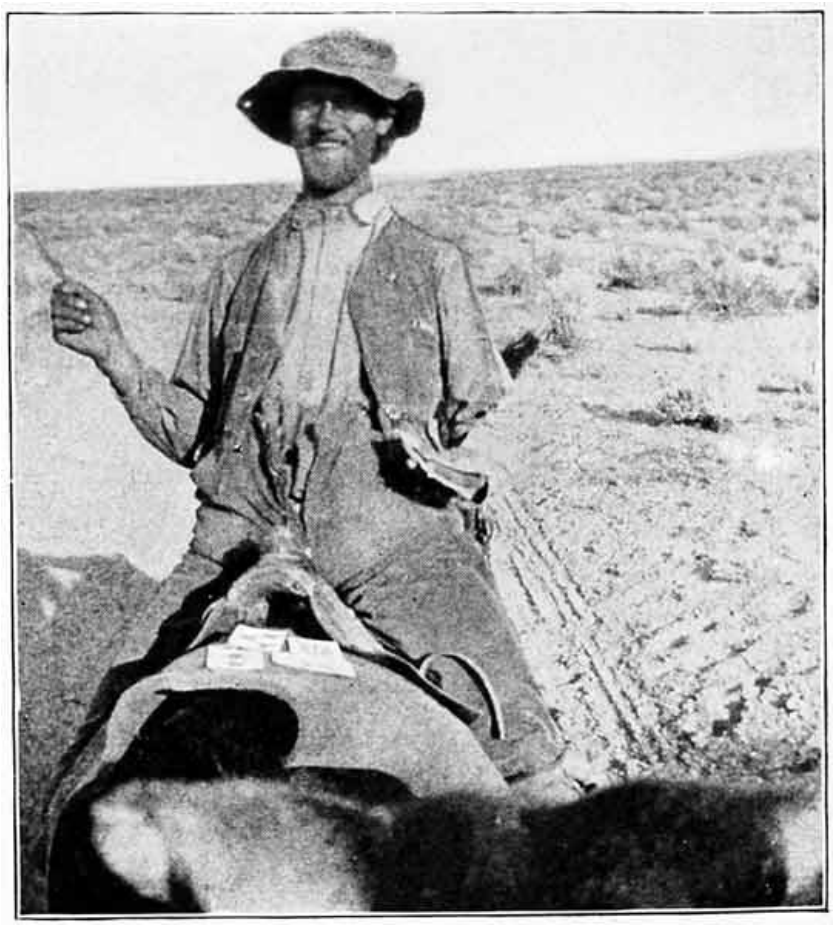


"Playing Solitaire on Damfino's broad back."

CHAPTER LIII.
A frightful ghost dance

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

"A torch for me, let wantons, light of heart,
Tickle the useless rushes with their heels;
For I am proverb'd with a grandsire phrase.
I'll be a candle-holder, and look on."

—Romeo and Juliet.

Old Len A——n was a jolly old soul, and a jolly old soul was he; he leaped aboard in the middle of my back, and hollared to me: "Git!—Haw!—Gee!"

We donks had a great time at that little desert metropolis. Len owned the place, that is, until Pod's outfit arrived, then Mac A'Rony owned it. Pardon my seeming vanity. When the nabob of Sinclair rode me to the corral, the crowd cheered me three times three, "Hooray fer Mac A'Rony!"

Besides Len, the sturdy pioneer of '49, there were the foremen, store-keeper, blacksmith, bronco buster, justice of the peace, postmaster, cowboys, cooks, and numerous wives and daughters and cousins and aunts all willing and anxious to make our party comfortable. Pod was at once escorted to the house to entertain and be entertained by the ladies, while Coonskin unpacked, watered and fed us donks, like a good fellow. For once on my long journey, I had my fill.

Finally we were left to entertain ourselves. In less than a half hour I wanted a drink, for when we were led to the well I refused to imbibe; now I regretted it. Donks are funny creatures—regular Chinese puzzles. When you think us thirsty we ain't, and when we are we must help ourselves, or go dry.

I discovered a rope dangling from a projecting arm of a high gatepost, nabbed it, and pulled; the gate did the rest—opened. So I walked straightway to the well trough and drank, then sauntered to the house to learn how Pod was faring. S' help me, Balaam! there he sat with Coonskin at a long table, surrounded by men and women, all talking and laughing and "joshing." But I noticed the travelers kept their knives and forks busy, and wasted no time. It made me hungry to see them eat, so I returned to the corral to finish my barley; but when I got there I found it already finished. No use talking, a jackass ain't to be trusted, nohow, at any time. The only thing left for me to do was to go foraging.

Out I went, nosing around, hoping to discover a clothesline with some shirts and socks hanging on it, or to stumble over an old gunnysack or cast-off garment. After a little, I observed that the second largest house was the scene of considerable activity, and I sneaked up and peeped in the window.

The ground floor was one vast room, presumably the bunk house for those men not having homes of their own. At one extremity a ladder reached from the floor to the loft. One half of the ceiling was boarded, and the other half looked white, as if it were made of canvas or sheeting. I suppose lumber was scarce out there in the desert. Now, a donkey's curiosity ain't to be sneezed at. Fearing lest I might be discovered and locked up, I withdrew to the rear to another window, when, suddenly, I ran into a heap of bedding and other stuff. I could arrive at only one conclusion; there was to be a dance in honor of Pye Pod.

I had devoured half of a hay mattress before the guests began to arrive for the dance. They came from the various houses and cabins, clad in their finest, and among them were a fiddler and a mouth-organ grinder, who at once pitched camp in one corner of the room and tuned up.

To open the dance, the Prof. led off with the landlord's pretty daughter in a waltz, Coonskin sailed around close behind with her black-eyed companion, and soon that bunk-house was as busy as a stock exchange.

After several dances had occurred, the men excused themselves and came out to the table beside the luggage, and commenced opening several bottles of the "real article." I stood stock still at some distance in the darkness, but within smell of the refreshments, and noted that some took it straight, while others mixed it with sugar and water, or milk. Coonskin doted on punches of all kinds (except one variety reserved for obstreperous donks), milk punches, rum punches, whiskey punches, claret punches, etc., but milk punches mostly, and so this was an event for that unbridled youth. He gulped down several milk punches with great glee, and then followed the gang into the house and went at the dance again in earnest. Later on the men came out for more refreshments. At a late hour that "O be joyful dance" was brought to a sudden finish by a frightful incident, or accident.

It seems that the cowboys had to rise early to hunt up stock on the range, and therefore went up the ladder to bed before the dance was over. As Coonskin had a cot with them, he was asked to retire at the same time, so as not to disturb them. But that boy wanted just one more dance—it was one too many.

When he started to climb the ladder I held my breath; once he slipped through the rungs and only caught himself by his chin. The rest of the dancers kept their feet as busy as ever, and the fiddler had just called "Balance ter corners," and everybody looked to be in good spirits—the best of spirits was in the men—when all at once Coonskin dropped through the sheet ceiling overhead on to the floor in their midst. I was glad to see he lit on his feet like a cat, instead of on his head, as one would suppose with such a heavy "load" as it must have had. The frightened, embarrassed fellow chased himself in his shirt tail round and round that room, passing three doors at every lap, yet calling: "Where's th' door?" For a moment everybody looked paralyzed. But by the time the first of them regained his senses, Coonskin discovered a door and scooted out into the darkness, and ran plumb over me. Both of us went sprawling on the ground. It broke up the dance and everybody there. The women gathered in one corner and laughed in their sleeves, and the men ran out to look for what had dropped out of the ceiling, or sky—they seemed sort of dazed like, as if they didn't know. When I got my breath, I set out for the corral and brayed with laughter all the way.

Finally, I heard a familiar voice whispering to me in the stable door, and creeping up I discovered Coonskin shivering with a sheepskin about his shoulders.

"They're after me, ain't they?" he asked.

"Well, I reckon they are," I replied. "How did it happen?"

"Well, it was this way," Coonskin explained. "When I went upstairs to bed, I found the men had blown out the candle and left me to undress in the dark-hic-ness. I felt round till I found my cot, and undressed, all but my shirt, when I found my pillow missing. Says I, 'Where's my pillow?' One fellow says: 'There it is, over there; wese had a pillow fight.' So I started to go for it. I hadn't gone far before I sort o' felt I was treading-hic-on velvet, but I thought it was the punches and kept right on, till I struck the floor downstairs. That-hic-'s-all."

Just then the men entered the stables and finding Coonskin huddled up in wool, had a laugh, and brought him clothes to put on, and went with him to the deserted dance hall, and saw him safely to bed.

The more I thought of this accident the more sober I got, until I thought what a miracle saved Pod's valet, and wondered what he would have done without him out there in the desert. Then I tangled up my legs and went to sleep.

Next day Coonskin was the most embarrassed fellow that ever rode a donk. The good-natured host could hardly persuade him to breakfast. Everybody was silent at the table, Pod said; but finally Len began to chuckle, and remarked that he'd been West nigh on to fifty year, but last night was the first time he had ever seen the ghost dance. Coonskin said it was no ghost dance, just a new kind of breakdown.

After breakfast, Len gave Pod a look at his stock and made him stock up with all necessary provisions. He wouldn't take a cent for anything, only a few photographs to distribute to his retainers. He even said he was sorry for the hard times; he would like to give the Prof. at least a hundred dollars. I believed the generous old pioneer, for it would be just like him.

Pod began the day in fine spirits. He had been pleasantly surprised on being assigned to a room in Len's house to notice the furnishings arranged with distinctively feminine taste; so he was not surprised, when at the breakfast table he catechized Miss A——n, to draw from the lips of the blushing maiden the confession that she had resigned her boudoir to the distinguished donkey-traveler. Hence Pod had a delicious sleep in the downiest of beds. And, as a token of his appreciation for the courtesy, he presented the young lady with a silver scarf-pin which he had worn across the desert.

I shared some of my master's regrets on leaving. The women hugged me good-bye, but when the ranchman's daughter put her arms round my neck, Pod was so jealous that he jammed a spur in my side.

After a time we got started on the trail. Len not only declined pay for Pod's supplies, but gave me a hundred pounds of barley. This my comrades offered to carry provided I would divide with them.

For the three days following there was little else to see besides sand and sage and basaltic rocks. Ragtown still stands, a squatty cabin and dilapidated shed with corral adjoining, where old Ace Kenyon of questionable fame reaped a harvest from the half-starved emigrants of early days by extorting from them rewards for recovering their lost cattle, which he had had his retainers drive into the mountains in the night. Ace would place all the blame on the innocent shoulders of the Indians. He claimed that such depredations were often made by hostile tribes, and that only through the courage of his desperate cowboys could he possibly retrieve them. After the despondent emigrants had tarried several days and been forced to pay extravagant prices for provisions, and some of them induced to throw away their rags for a suit of new clothes, the cattle would be driven into camp. Then the elated travelers

had to open their purses again. Ragtown, situated as it was at the extremity of the Humboldt Desert, was a sort of overland depot, and we were told that thousands of emigrants used to drift in that direction from other routes when water had given out and for miles the trail was then strewn with cast-off raiment, abandoned wagons, sometimes with oxen attached, and the skeletons of cattle and men who died from thirst. At times we could see the winding line of cotton-woods that marked the tortuous current of the Carson in the distance, and again the river would flow slowly close at hand. Pod spent most of the dull hours playing solitaire on Damfino's broad back, riding backwards.

We struck camp at the last ranch on the Carson the morning of October 18, and tried to reach Dayton the same night. Everything went well until we came to a point where three trails met. Pod had been cautioned to take the best-beaten one, so, the night being dark, Coonskin left us donks in Pod's charge and ventured to examine the trails. It was eleven o'clock. Not a thing had we had to eat or drink all day except a small measure of barley. To stand waiting for that slow boy to get his bearings was more than we donks could bear, and soon Damfino whispered to Cheese and me to slip away from the outfit and follow her lead.

The suggestion was at once acted upon. Each of us took a different course to start with, but we soon caught up with Damfino, who led us a good pace for two hours and ran us all into Six Mile Canyon about one a. m. There we lay down with saddle and packs on, and, to our surprise, discovered that faithful dog, Don, lying close by, on guard. It was not the most comfortable night I had ever passed, but it was better than standing. When Coonskin found us in the afternoon he caused me to change my ideas on that question, but on reaching Dayton, the Prof, was so glad to see me that he lavishly dined us all, watered us, and let us roll to our heart's content. So all scores were settled.

CHAPTER LIV.
Across Sierras in deep snow

TOC

BY PYE POD.

It means, monsieur, that a storm is raging at the summit—a snow storm—which will be upon us ere long. And, dame! it is dangerous!—*Tartarin on the Alps.*

We left Dayton at two o'clock. Carson City lay six miles away, close to the Sierra Nevadas, whose towering heights, on the Nevada side, rise abruptly from the plain. That afternoon's journey was the last we were to experience through the monotonous chaparral.

When we trailed into Carson, the sun had gone down behind the forest-covered mountains, leaving me a little less than thirteen days in which to reach San Francisco.

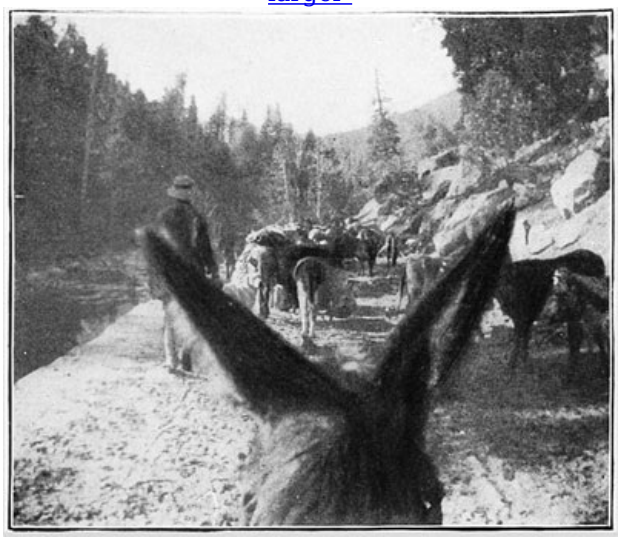
The leading hotel was pointed out to me, and a cheering crowd followed us there and called for a speech from me. While unstrapping our traps for the porter to take, we men answered inquiries about the trip, then conducted our animals to a stable, to be cared for.

I was glad to note that they were generally in good condition, although Damfino's shoulders were somewhat tender from the rubbing of the pack-saddle, as the result of her running away. Dr. Benton, at the stable, after dressing her shoulders, showed me the famous watch bequeathed to him by Hank Monk, the clever stage-driver of early days, to whom it was presented for having driven Horace Greeley over the pass to Placerville, in time to keep his lecture engagement.

larger

"Began to plow Snow toward Placerville."

larger



"The Cattle Passed Us."

I had just registered at the hotel, and was chatting with the group of men crowded round me, when a generous, good-natured gentleman edged through the cordon and grasped my hand.

"I'm going to take charge of you," he said, with a comical wink of the eye; "you are my guest while in town."

The next moment I found myself launched in an offhand lecture on my travels. And I should have talked myself hoarse had not my host led me out to

his carriage. After telling the landlord to make Coonskin comfortable, I asked who the gentleman was who had taken me in custody.

"Why, he's Sam D——s; you've heard of Sam, of course—editor, writer and humorist—famous story-teller—the biggest 'josher' on earth——." But that was enough. I fled.

Indeed, Sam's reputation was known to me long before I arrived on his stamping ground. I leaped into the buggy, and we drove for his country home.

"Keep yer hand on yer pocket-book!" shouted one of my host's intimates; whereupon Sam turned to me with affected seriousness and observed, "Good advice. But I took the precaution to leave my money and watch at the office. I heard of your capture for donkey-stealing back in Iowa."

On the drive my host recalled many happenings of the golden days of the Comstock, which made me lose all reckoning of the present. Soon we had reached his ranch. When I met his family I was ready to believe some of his accounts of the practical jokes he claimed to have played on his fellows. I was somewhat disconcerted when he introduced me to his wife as a noted "road agent"—an old friend of his who had wavered from the path of rectitude—whom he desired to feed and hide from the sheriff's possè, hot on his trail. But I was amused when his good wife, who of all would be expected to know him best, apparently took his word for granted, and, regarding me with nervous suspicion, started to get me a quick lunch. But Sam delayed her a moment.

"Dan wants to entrust this $25,000 with me until he has eluded the possè," he said to his wife, taking my weighty saddle-bags and passing them to her. "There is no fire in the front-room stove, is there? Might shove 'em in there." She accepted the trust so seriously that I laughed outright, and exploded the joke. My hostess chuckled good-naturedly, and said that most any woman might take me for a bandit. I did look disreputable.

Adjoining the ranch were a few acres owned by "Mrs. Langtry," and sold to her by Sam, so he said, but how he made the deal is too good a story to be injured by my telling. I was up early next morning. In spite of my host's urgent invitation to remain another day, I drove to town with Sam after breakfast. There I was shown several places of interest.

Dark and threatening clouds hung over the mountains and alarmed me. My friend cautioned me to hasten across, if I would avoid the storm. By two o'clock my outfit left Carson and began the ascent of the steep trail over the pass to Glenbrook, a lumber camp on the shore of Lake Tahoe. Dr. Benton advised me to telephone him from Glenbrook, if it snowed so hard as to endanger us before crossing the second summit, in which case he volunteered to dispatch at once a relief expedition, with horses to break the trail and render me a safe conduct beyond the snow belt. I shall always remember the veterinary's thoughtfulness. My friend Sam must have been interested in the plan.

As higher we climbed the steep ascent, the air became more damp and chilly, and the heavy clouds looked more ominous. We men were afoot, for my donkeys were burdened enough. Mac A'Rony and Cheese were favored, merely carrying the saddles and guns, for Cheese seemed to be quite worn out, and Mac, while sound and strong, was the one, if it be decreed that only one should survive, I wished to take through. The donkeys often stopped for breathing spells, and not until we neared the summit did they require urging to make the fatiguing climb.

By this time we were over our ankles in snow. The biting wind came down over the pass in aggressive sorties and volleyed blasts of cutting snow dust in our faces, nipping our ears and noses, and blinding us. By reason of the fast-falling flakes and the darkness, the donkeys often lost the trail, and the snow obscured the rocks over which we all continually stumbled and slipped.

At length, when we stood on the summit and looked back over that battle-ground, I think all of us took courage for the final conflict awaiting us on the next and higher pass.

We arrived at Glenbrook at eight o'clock and found cozy quarters for all. The storm having driven everybody indoors, the place looked coldly uncordial for a time; but as soon as its warm-hearted people were apprised of my arrival they hastened to welcome me. When provision had been made for the comfort of my animals, I returned with Coonskin to the hotel, where a hot supper had thoughtfully been provided for us. And there we recounted our adventures, which evidently afforded our auditors the keenest enjoyment.

Morning revealed a dreary prospect. The snow was a foot deep, and it was still falling thick and fast. My friends urged me to tarry until the storm had abated, but I set out, after an early breakfast, for Myer's Station, twenty miles away. There I hoped to find feed for us all, and, should the storm be over by that time, comfortable shelter for the night.

The trail followed the shore of beautiful Lake Tahoe—never more severely grand and picturesque than now—followed it many miles before it led into the majestic, white-clad forest. The snow fell incessantly, while the rays of the sun, peeping through its cold armor, either melted it into slush or softened it so as to "ball up" the donkeys' hoofs and render their tramp more difficult.

When we reached Myer's Station it was snowing harder than in the morning, so I resolved to rest an hour and to cross the pass that night. The solitary tavern first came into view through the dense snow-screen, not a hundred feet away. It was four o'clock. Then a barn loomed up beyond and across the trail, and I felt grateful. I had great confidence in Skates, Damfino and Coxey; Coonskin and I had ridden but a little that day, so that, if Mac A'Rony and Cheese could fortify themselves with plenty of grain, I had hopes of getting all five over the summit.

Alas! my hopes were soon shattered. There was neither grain nor hay to be had. The landlord explained that he didn't keep "no cattle." Even the pantry was depleted, but my host would find a bite for us men, and "boil" us some tea, which would have to suffice until the expected supplies arrived. They might be delayed by the storm until morning. Meanwhile we shouldn't starve. I didn't intend my animals should starve, either, but bought several loaves of bread and fed it to them.

"Don't think I am going to stay here over night," I said to the tavern-keeper.

"You don't mean to cross the summit in this storm!"

I nodded. At that moment a man stumbled in, accompanied by a frigid gust of wind, and, walking to the stove, stamped the snow off his high boots, unwound a tippet from his neck, and slapped his ice-covered hat against his limbs.

"Whose jackasses be them outside?" he inquired.

"Mine," I replied.

"Where ye bound with them?"

"Over the pass to Placerville."

The man laughed, then, looking sober, inquired, "Where yer from, may I ask?"

"New York," I said, nonchalantly.

"Not with them little burros?"

"With one of them."

"Je-ru-salem! I don't know but ye may cross with 'em!" he exclaimed, in astonishment. "But I doubt it. Jest fetched down my four horses—left the wagon up to the hubs in snow half-way up the trail—snow must be three foot deep on the summit. You'll leave your carcasses in the snow, if ye try it, I'm tellin' ye."

Said the proprietor, "If you will wait here till to-morrow, there'll be five hundred cattle cross the pass and break the trail for you."

"I go to-night," said I, "and will break the trail for the cattle."

I thanked both men for their kind caution, but said such impediments had stared me in the face ever since leaving New York, and never yet one of them proved to be an obstacle. As we moved off, the men stood in the hotel door, gaping in mute wonderment at my stubborn resolution.

Darkness gathered ere we began the ascent of the mountain. Slowly the donkeys climbed the slippery trail, Coonskin, upon my advice, walking beside Cheese and watching him with utmost concern. The snow scudded against our faces, although the mountain somewhat shielded us from the biting gale we had faced all day. The three stronger animals carrying the packs walked ahead, while close behind them struggled Cheese and Mac, supporting our saddles and lighter traps, we men encouraging them the while with kind words and allowing them a few moments' rest every time they stopped.

Soon I feared lest Cheese would give out. At length, when about one-third the summit was climbed, he stopped and deliberately lay down. I knew that meant his abandonment, then and there. We might induce him to climb a little further, but we might better free him at once; he would likely find his way back to the station. So we took off his saddle and bridle, cinched them on Mac, and, saying a sad farewell, hid our faces in our sleeves, and soon had climbed beyond his vision. It was no time to indulge in sentiment. Once or twice Mac, Cheese's oldest comrade, stopped and looked behind, then with a soft bray resumed the ascent; and from the distance at once came Cheese's response, causing my eyes to fill with tears. No two human beings could have shown more tender feelings at parting than did those two heroic little donks.

Finally we came to the abandoned wagon, half enveloped in whiteness. I had no idea of the hour, but it must have been eleven o'clock when my sturdy leader, Skates, began to stop for rest at every twenty paces.

An hour later we could make only ten feet headway with every undertaking. I was afraid another donkey would drop at any moment. Several times I thought we had reached the summit, when a turn of the Z trail showed a clear space, with Skates far in the lead, ploughing and dragging her burden through two feet of snow.

Suddenly, when we had all but reached the summit, as we after learned, Damfino fell with a groan. She was so strong and hardy, I had not anticipated her giving out. Coonskin thought she had slipped and broken a leg. We took off part of her pack, and at length succeeded in getting her on to her feet; but not far beyond she again fell, when, realizing it was from fatigue, we left her,

with all the supplies on. We had no way to carry them, and I still had hopes of her resting out and trailing over after us.

It was now a question of life and death. Could I but get Mac A'Rony through, even by leaving all else behind, I should do so and fight to the bitter end. Mac was certainly a wonder. After thirty-eight hundred miles of travel, during a period of three hundred and thirty-odd days, he was chipper and nabbed at me mischievously as I kindly twisted his tail.

Eureka! At last we stood on the summit of that high Arctic pass of the snow-bound Sierras! Man and beast were ensconced in snow and ice, and my ears and face and hands and feet were numb; but I was too happy to feel any suffering. Could Cheese and Damfino have been with us then, I should have been jubilant.

The battle was won. I could now see myself, in my mind's eye, in company with Mac in Golden Gate Park, gazing out on the balmy Pacific. After a quarter hour's rest, we resumed the journey through the two and a half feet of snow, until, after several resting spells, we began gradually to descend. The air at once felt milder; the snow had ceased falling; as if crushed with defeat, the elements had retreated.

It must have been two in the morning when Coonskin, who was in advance beside Skates to check her impetuosity, shouted, "Helloa, Pod, I see a house!" I threw my hat in the air with delight. We had expected to have to wade through snow until daylight. Were we all to find a refuge in that half-buried cabin?

CHAPTER LV.
All down a toboggan slide

TOC

BY MAC A'RONY.

How he trots along on his mule! I declare the beast's ears are not so long as his master's.—*The Hunchback of Notre Dame.*

The supreme moment of my life had "arrove." Must have come on Skates. I had crossed the broad continent at last—all but a little toboggan-slide of one hundred and fifty miles, more or less, and that would be easy sailing. I felt boastful now. When Pod wasn't occupied in prodding me over the pass he was quoting "Hannibal Crossing the Alps" and other heroic adventurers, imagining his little exploit of the same class. Prof., old boy, just bear in mind that hobo Hannibal was not so fortunate as to have five gullible jackasses to help him.

The storm had abated. As I stood waist-deep in snow while the men-folks were trying to waken the sleepers of an uninhabited shanty, I looked back where we donks sang "One More Mountain to Cross" for the last time, and I gave three brays with a gusto.

Standing in snow or water taxes my patience. Coxey brayed to the men to "get a move on," but Skates and I amused ourselves by sucking icicles hanging from our bangs. Pod's courageous valet received first orders. He rode an avalanche bareback down the mountain and went through the door without knocking until he hit the other side of the shanty.

"Don't shoot, for heaven's sake, folks;" he yelled. No answer. "Beg thousand pardons, friends, but couldn't stop," he added. No answer. Then he picked himself up and called. "Ain't nobody livin' here? Speak up, I won't hurt you." No answer. The next thing that boy did was to find the lantern he had lost in the snow slide, and explore the place.

"The cabin's empty," he called presently.

"Any stove and fuel?" Pod asked.

"Yep," answered Coonskin, "and a hay tick, and-waow-w-w-w!!!—!—!—!—!—spook! Scat you!—and a gol blasted cat," he added. "Folks must've left just before the storm." Then to the dog he called, "Here, Don, sick'em—cats!" and Don sicked.

My elated master next ordered Skates to slide down that chute to the cabin, and she shooted. He hinted that Coxey and I would follow, but I wasn't so sure. Judging from Coonskin's experiment, it looked too swift for my blood. But when I witnessed Skates safely descend and heard Coxey's whisper, "Come on, Mac, show your nerve," I was bound to stay with it and follow suit.

We donks no sooner reached the door than Pod began to unpack us. It was no go. Knots and buckles, everything was frozen stiff; my saddle felt glued to my back.

"We must fire up, and thaw them out," said Pod, and he led us in doors. Coonskin converted some shelves into kindling, and soon the little stove was roaring like a coke oven. When we began to thaw, one by one the ropes and straps were unhitched, or cut, until we were all relieved of our burdens—and part of our avoirdupois.

Although the men had tramped almost all the way from Carson in order to spare us, our wrenching and twisting in climbing the slippery summits had loosened our saddles, which rubbed into our shoulders until we were badly galled. Our proud flesh had frozen to the icy blankets, and when Pod, while near the stove saw our conditions great tears melted in his eyes, and he rubbed my frosted nose, I suppose expecting me to purr. We got thawed out by three in the morning.

That small apartment depicted a busy scene. We donks were so cramped that we couldn't turn if we had tried. While Coonskin dried the bedding, the Prof found in the luggage a box of tar, and gave us a good plastering. Then he put us in the other room,—it was a two-room house,—and fed us the hay tick, and a wooden soap box for dessert, and bade us good-night.

I heard Coonskin mention something about supper, but Pod told him all the grub was cachéd in the snow over the summit and that Damfino carried the keys; there was, however, a possible chance of getting a bite later if he would go back for the supplies. Soon after I heard both men snoring.

As I recall the circumstance, I don't see how we three donks stood it, cramped up in that small room, eight long hours before the men got up. First we ate the hay tick; the hay went fast enough, but it took time to chew the tick. Then we gnawed soap box until dawn. The latter was savory, but rather tough, and had to be eaten slowly on account of the bones—nails, Pod called them—which would get into our teeth. Coxey happened to swallow one, and said he wouldn't lie down for a week for fear of puncturing himself. Every time one of us gnawed on the box Don barked, taking it to be mice. He lay under Coxey with one eye open, ready to vacate at a second's warning, for that donk pretended he was going to lie down every moment.

We breathed the air of that cell ten times over, and had begun on the eleventh course when the door opened. What a magnificent pair of spectacles

was open to our eyes! The mountains on both sides of the canyon looked like great billows of a frozen sea, while the fir trees sticking out of the snow resembled the spars of sunken wrecks with their torn sails frozen to the yardarms.

Coonskin was up first. While dressing he happened to glance out of the window and his tell-tale exclamation caused Pod to leap out of bed.

"Well! In the name of Balaam, if there ain't Damfino!" he laughed.

"She's a nervy dame," observed the youth with satisfaction. "She knows the other donks are here, all right."

Curiosity led me to stick my head out of the door, and there, knee-deep in snow, stood the old girl, patiently waiting for an invite to our house party. Skates had to be taken up to pilot down the half-starved, half-frozen, timid refugee. Damfino slipped on the way but collected herself, and the "girls" whispered something to each other, which I could not catch, and laughed. I suppose it was a joke, so I got off an old one to Coxey, and he brayed with merriment. Then I told it to Pod, and he gave it to Coonskin, who snorted like a colt over a horse chestnut.

As soon as Damfino was unloaded the men got breakfast. The dishes washed and our galls redressed with tar and cotton wool, our shoulders were padded for the saddles, and we were packed for the journey. Two o'clock swung around before we got up that toboggan-slide. Once there, we stopped for wind, then began to plow snow toward Placerville.

It was a beautiful day, but the glare of the sun on the snow made us shed tears. Not a sound jarred the air, except the swish-swash of our pedals hewing away the snow, or an occasional asinine sneeze, or canine cough, the result of a night's exposure. At the steep and narrow turn where the stage driver nearly spilled Horace Greeley trying to take him through on pony-express time, I became interested, and the spot where Sawlog Johnson was crushed to death by a giant tree falling on his shadow riveted my attention for some time. I thought it a good place to rest; the trees were bent by the heavy snow and ice, and I knew lightning never struck twice in the same spot.

We reached Hart's shingle camp long after dark. Pod and I were cordially received and entertained. When about to resume travel next morning the drove of cattle which we were urged to wait for passed us. They had crossed the summit in quick time, of course, after we donks had broken the trail.

Now only small patches of snow dotted the roadside, and we had a muddy trail down to the Bridge house. The keeper gave Pod a round reception, and charged him an all-round sum. We left early next morning.

The scenery on that mountain trail was a thing to out-last a donkey's memory. One sheer cliff rising a thousand feet marks the site of a bold exploit. It is said that once upon a time Snowshoe Thompson, while out hunting above this cliff, was chased by a grizzly, and only escaped by leaping off the precipice and striking the frozen river on his snow-shoes, the momentum taking him down to Sacramento, seventy miles away. On that cliff was afterwards found a grizzly of 1,220 pounds dead weight with a hunting knife in his heart. It was the coroner's verdict that the bear was so astonished at the fearless hunter's brave act that he committed suicide with the knife the hunter dropped in his hurry.

Although it was near to November, the foliage of the trees was barely colored. The climate of California charmed me. We were making fast time down grade, in spite of our jaded condition, and we did not tarry for lunch. When Placerville hove in sight I was a most tickled donk. Just one minute after dark we ambled into town, and were escorted to the famous spot where Horace Greeley first stepped on California soil.

CHAPTER LVI.
'Frisco at last, we win!

TOC

BY PYE POD.

Who can tell a man from manners?
  Who can tell him by his close?
Beggars often smoke Havanners;
  Nabobs wear a bottle-nose.

—Dog-eared Doggerels.

Placerville greeted us royally. It was once one of the largest cities in California, and in those lawless days was called Hangtown. After describing my journey in my happiest vein, the thoughtful sheriff passed his hat and presented me with about nine dollars. Then amid hearty cheers for Mac A'Rony, we were escorted to a hotel.

That evening Coonskin and I were fêted by the young "bloods" of the town.

The following morning a jolly party drove me to Coloma, where I saw the statue of Marshall, and old Sutter's Mill, where he discovered gold. It was a lovely autumn day. The leaves were turning, but the verdure of the Pacific slope is more subdued in its colorings than that of the East, where the change of seasons embellishes it with scarlet. My genial companions were refreshing to me after being so long a recluse, but, returning to Placerville, I dined and wasted no time in starting for Sacramento. Coonskin had shipped to San Francisco most of our luggage, to relieve our animals, and at two p. m. my little caravan drifted toward the Sacramento Valley.

The next stop was Folsom, the seat of a state prison, twenty miles away, where we arrived at midnight. All the inhabitants seemed to be asleep. We were noisily debating about which street to follow, when a man called from a chamber window, and directed us to the best hotel, saying he would call on me in the morning. He introduced himself after breakfast as an officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and asked to see my donkeys. I escorted him to the stable, but I feared trouble. I knew three of my donkeys were galled since leaving Carson, and was so solicitous that I sent Coonskin to have the blankets and saddles cinched on them for the start, hoping the officer would be guided by the wisdom of the proverb, "What the eye cannot see the heart cannot grieve for."

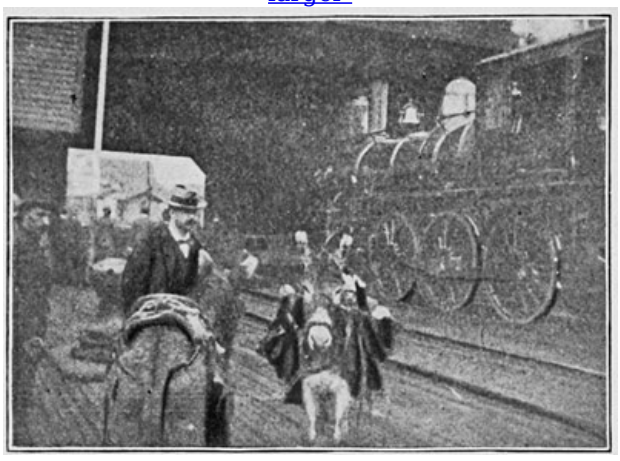
You may imagine how disconcerted I was when the officer uncinched the saddle on Skates, the one most galled, and lifted the blanket.

"I am sorry to say, Mr. Pod," said he calmly, "I must arrest you for cruelty to animals."

I protested, and explained that my valet and I had been as tender and solicitous for our animals' health and comfort as a father could have been for a child; that we had tramped across both passes from Carson; and that the galls resulted from unavoidable loosening of the cinches and the shifting of the saddles. We had even changed the packs from one animal to another at frequent intervals to distribute equally the general burden. If he doubted my word we would show him our feet.

The sight of our sore and bleeding feet caused the "humane" officer to blush at his threat, and as a sympathetic murmur ran through the crowd he said: "Professor, I must say, you men are exonerated. You are as bad off as your poor donkeys, but I cannot let you take this animal out of town in that condition."

larger



"Across on the exclusive Solano."

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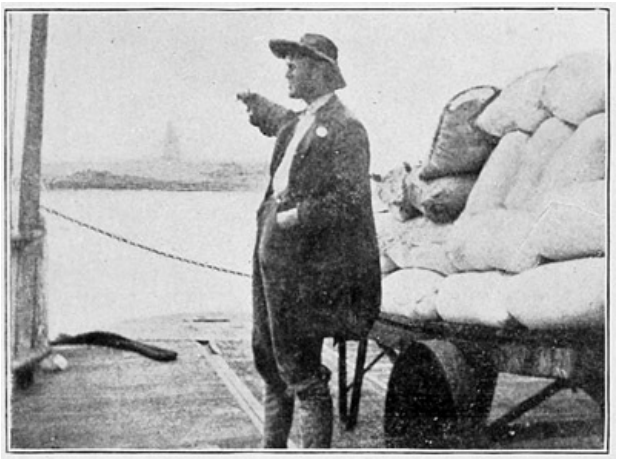

"I pointed toward the goal."

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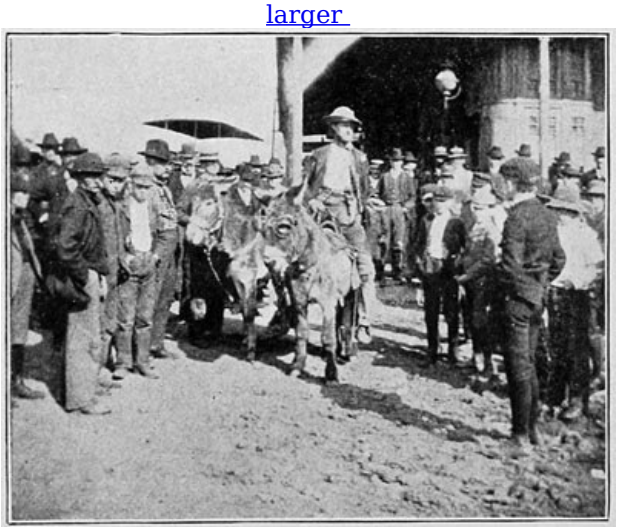

"The Ferry approach in 'Frisco was choked with a rabble."

I was grieved to part with Skates, who had piloted us across the summits in that heavy storm, but the law must be obeyed. I sold the donkey to a son of the hotel landlord, who promised to cherish her as a pet. We were allowed to proceed with the rest on condition that neither of us would ride.

It was a long day's journey to the capital, upwards of thirty miles, and we got under way by nine o'clock. Coonskin and I could scarcely walk, and as we drove our three jaded burros down the main street we were cheered on every hand. After reaching the open country Mac A'Rony, observing me screw my face and hearing me sigh from pain, seemed to say: "I'm sorry, old man, but when we are out of sight of those meddling officers, get in the saddle and I will carry you a way." The dear fellow; he could read me like a book.

We threaded a lovely country. The orchards were denuded of fruit and verdure, but the vineyards were laden with their white and pink and purple harvest, and the waving alfalfa sent us whiffs from their fragrant censers all along the trail. We stopped at the great Sonora Vineyard to rest and enjoy some Muscat grapes; and shortly after lunch hour, we rested again at a weighing station, where I received a telephone message inquiring when we might be expected at the capital.

Handkerchiefs and hats were waving from the balconies of the Golden Eagle Hotel, Sacramento, and newsboys were crying the arrival of Pod and Mac A'Rony as we approached. While I had tramped most all of the way from Folsom, I rode into the city, and after a brief address at the hotel, sent my animals to the stable.

The landlord welcomed me cordially, and I was immediately assailed by reporters. The next morning a newspaper man took me driving about the city. I was presented to several state officials, and shown through the handsomest state capitol grounds in the Union. Half the day was devoted to business duties; in the evening I delivered a lecture; and several times I was asked to escort a party of ladies to the stable to see the donkey that enjoyed the unrivaled distinction of having made a 4,000 mile journey from the Hudson to the Sacramento.

Next day we started for 'Frisco at eight a. m. Just five days were left us in which to travel the ninety miles to our goal. There were many who advised me to go by way of Stockton, a longer journey by forty miles, cautioning me that my donkeys would not be allowed to cross in the "Solano" ferry at Benicia, which was reserved strictly for people and passenger trains.

But we started on the shorter route, Mac and I leading the way out of the beautiful city and along the banks of the Sacramento River, through the toolies and hop fields towards Davisville.

When yet a mile to town, Damfino while not even carrying a saddle, staggered and showed symptoms of the colic. The noble beast had done her duty on the hard trip from Iowa, and being the biggest and strongest, she had borne the heaviest burden. She had earned her freedom. I decided to leave her by the roadside. Somebody would soon find her, and take good care of her; which I afterwards learned to be the case.

Next morning Coonskin and I set out early with the remaining two donkeys, Mac A'Rony and Coxey, for Suisun, some twenty-five miles away, we walking two-thirds of the distance for the sake of our animals, although augmenting our own sufferings, for our feet still pained us. My dog, Don, on the other hand, was full of health and abrim with mirth.

Suisun welcomed us at sunset. That evening a happy idea came to mind; I would send Coonskin to Oakland by train. Considerable business must be done there which he could attend to, besides, he might arrange for hotel and stable accommodations, and engage a blacksmith to put on Mac A'Rony the silver shoes which should be at the express office in that city. There was left me three days in which to travel fifty miles, but now I could ride alternately the two donks and not overtax either.

I was received with usual courtesies at Benicia, and the hotel swarmed with townspeople and guests to hear about my trip.

At nine next morning a sympathetic crowd accompanied me to the ferry, fully expecting to see my party refused passage.

"You cannot board the Solano with your burros," said the officer, positively; "the boat is strictly reserved for passenger trains and people."

I did not show surprise, but calmly explained my overland trip, and emphasized the importance of my reaching 'Frisco with Mac by noon of November 3.

"Will you send a message to the Southern Pacific's head office at my expense?" I asked. The officer said he would, and sent it. The answer soon came directing the ferrymaster to pass Pod and party across on the exclusive Solano and extend us every courtesy.

The officer seemed much astonished at receiving the message. His obsequiousness made Mac A'Rony bray. When the expected train arrived and the Solano left the dock and the passengers realized that they were the first to cross in the company of four-legged donkeys, they treated to cigars and fruit and paid Mac A'Rony exceptional homage.

Landing at Porte Costa, I was directed on the shortest route to Oakland, and amid cheers and hearty well-wishes started to climb the trail over the hills which border the river from that point to some distance south.

It was after dark when, descending the bluffs and trailing a few miles along the river, I rode into the little village of San Pablo. The streets were quite deserted, and the few men I talked with answered my inquiries in Spanish. Finally, I entered a humble tavern whose Irish proprietor directed me on the right road. Only a few miles now lay between me and Oakland, and although tired and hungry I did not stop for supper, but pushed onward over the level road, now and then walking a half mile to rest my tired yet uncomplaining mounts or to ease my joints, until I rode into the city at midnight. Coonskin met me on the road and cheered me with the information that all the duties assigned to him were attended to, then piloted me to the hotel and the animals to the stable. After getting something to eat I retired.

Coonskin had interviewed the reporters, and the morning press heralded my advent in long and sensational notices. When I went to the stable everybody seemed to identify me with the traveler pictured in the papers. I inwardly chuckled when I thought of my dilapidated garb and general unkempt appearance. I was still lame and felt that I had walked around the world in eighty days.

My poor little donks were lying down when I went to their stalls. The twenty-eight-mile tramp of the preceding day had told on them. Mac rose to his feet and stuck up his nose to be rubbed.

"You have almost earned your pension, too," I said. "But now come to the smith's to have your new shoes put on. They are of pure silver, and befitting one that has made such a record in the field of travel." The little fellow smiled, and playfully pulled the handkerchief out of my pocket while I adjusted his bridle. And when he walked out of the shop "in" his pretty new shoes he looked as proud as any lad in his first pair of pants.

Coonskin and I lunched early. The customary crowd followed my party to the ferry, and some crossed with us on the boat to 'Frisco. How happy I felt while drifting over San Francisco Bay! I pointed toward the goal, and to a bystander, said: "During my 340 days' journey, I have had only a vague vision of the city before me, but the day I started from New York I felt as confident of reaching it as I do now." Several passengers laughed incredulously; nevertheless I spoke the truth.

The ferry approach in 'Frisco was choked with a rabble. Upon landing Coonskin and I rode our little long-eared animals up Market street to a prominent hotel, a cheering throng of men and street gamins tagging behind or following by the walk on both sides of the street. And when at two o'clock the glass doors to its great white court were thrown open to us, I was just twenty-two hours ahead of schedule time.

The several rows of balconies were crowded with hotel guests and friends waving handkerchiefs and hats, and cheer upon cheer rose to the crystal roof and descended to our ears. The court was packed. I called a porter.

"Bring a rug for my silver-shod donkey to stand on," I ordered. The darkey looked mystified, and had the insolence to question my strange request, but he soon brought the rug. The reporters aided me to urge back the crowd to give the spectators in the balconies a view of Mac's silver-shod hoofs, all four of which Coonskin lifted, one after the other, for them to see.

"Three cheers for Mac A'Rony!" some one shouted from the balcony. It was the signal for a general outburst of applause; and Mac, Coxey and Don, each, respectively, brayed or bayed his deafening acknowledgment of the popular ovation.

Then I briefly reviewed my long and tempestuous voyage of 4,096 miles on a donkey's hurricane deck in 340 days and two hours. Frequently I was interrupted with laughter or cheers, as I cited some ludicrous experience, and the unbridled throng, many of them mere street loungers, laughed and yelled and whistled until, finally, the incensed manager was attracted to the Court. The police were unable to cope with the crowd, so I was requested to remove the cause of the disturbance. Indeed I was grateful for the excuse to get away from that wild scene. Coonskin took the animals to the stable, and I, after registering, immediately sought a more exclusive hotel, to whose landlord I bore a letter of introduction from a distinguished gentleman friend.

I must have looked as if I had crossed Central Africa and had fought fifty tribes of cannibals. My clothes, hat and leggings were in shreds, my sleeves were fastened to my coat with bale-wire, and blue cotton hung in view.

"Do you take tramps at this hotel?" I inquired of the astonished clerk of the Occidental, as I leaned on the office counter. He stopped sorting letters and eyed me with curiosity, but before he recovered his reason, the junior proprietor appeared, and said: "Sometimes," then with a knowing smile extended his hand in greeting.

"I believe this is Mr. Pod," he said. I nodded and handed him the letter. When he had read it the affable young gentleman extended me the freedom of the hotel and three days later got up a coaching party in my honor.

I was soon a transformed man. After a shave and hair-cut and bath, I dressed and appeared at the office attired as a gentleman on parade, and was hardly recognized by the clerk to be the same man.

Coonskin, too, I had fitted out completely; besides I gave him a sum of money and an honorable discharge. In a few days he secured a situation in a hotel, but later set out for a mining camp in the Sierras to dig for gold.

I presented one donkey to Golden Gate Park, and sold the other, but I retained possession of my dog. Frequently afterward I called at the park to see dear old faithful Mac A'Rony.

In conclusion, let me state that I had eleven donkeys on my overland trip, never more than five at one time. I wore out ten pairs of boots, and put one hundred and forty-eight shoes on my animals at an average cost of ninety cents each, and arrived at my journey's end with several hundred dollars in pocket and weighing thirty-three pounds more than I did the day I set out from New York with ninety-nine cents.

"I am as free as Nature first made man,
Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in the woods the noble savage ran."

EPILOGUE

TOC

This tale will be hard to swallow, because truth is stronger than fiction.

The trip was more healthful for Pod than for me.

There are four distinct distances across the American continent, viz:

Three thousand miles as the crow flies.

Three thousand five hundred as the train steams.

Four thousand by overland trail for a man.

A million miles as a donkey goes.

The most monotonous constant companion for a long journey is a man.

There are more people who descend to the level of a jackass than donkeys that rise to the plane of man.

If Pye Pod had been killed or drowned, or had died on the journey he would have been condemned and ridiculed as a fool by the same people who now applaud and envy him for his achievement.

If I had died on the first day of the trip the world would have called me lucky; now that I lived through it, I'm d——d lucky!

M. A'R.

TRANSCRIBER ENDNOTE:

End-of-line hyphens have been retained or discarded to maintain internal consistency, when possible.

In table of contents, for page 213, "XXVII." changed to "XXVIII." For the page 219 entry, "Accross" changed to "Across".

Page 49: in "he did it them.", "them" to "then".

Page 50: the quotation mark at the end of the paragraph that ends with "[...] to his quarters." has no obvious mate, unless at the beginning of the paragraph on page 49 "Those who were not 'let in' to [...]" If so, then this would be a long quotation containing five paragraphs, with only two quotation marks, other than embedded short quotations. It has been formatted (e.g. by indentation) as such herein.

Some instances of the odd use of quotation marks have been retained. Others--which seemed clearly wrong or misleading, have been changed. Some were changed silently, but a few of these are listed below.

Page 102: one "the" removed from "visiting the homes of the the great".

Page 107: "protographs" to "photographs".

Page 109: "into his hay loft.." to "into his hay loft." Similar corrections on page 121 and 126. Also fixed a double comma on page 255.

Page 120: "semed" to "seemed".

Page 130: "Exixer" to "Elixir". Missing quotation mark inserted after "moral?".

Page 166: "accompained" to "accompanied".

Page 173: period added to the end of "The topography of the country varied but little".

Page 190: period added to the end of a paragraph.

Page 193: quotation mark with no mate removed from start of paragraph beginning with "I did not discuss further".

Page 200: quotation mark with no mate removed from "I recalled how I had been swindled [...]".

Page 211: "wheeel" to "wheel".

Page 212: in "caught the animated beg before it", "beg" to "bag".

Page 216: missing quotation mark inserted for "a pity to have [...]".

Page 218: "Fnally" to "Finally".

Page 224: "smaal" to "small".

Page 246: excess quotation mark removed after "companion.".

Page 253: "Hhat" to "That".

Page 258: "I thing the whole" to "I think the whole".

Page 260: "Buy" to "But".

Page 278: "comething" to "something". Also, "house" to "hours".

Page 308: missing quotation mark inserted. Also in illustration facing page 312.

Page 313: missing "it" inserted.

Page 341: quotation mark inserted after "patient.".

Page 376: "I answered. coarsely," to "I answered coarsely,".

Page 377: quotation mark inserted after "of water,".

Page 381: "to save him-" to "to save himself."

Page 410: missing quotation mark inserted before "Ain't nobody livin'". Also, extraneous single quote deleted after "blasted cat,". Also, "wasn"t" to "wasn't".

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