HARLEM'S ROCK DWELLERS.

THE HIGHLANDERS AND LOWLANDERS OF NEW YORK CITY.

Spring Chickens, Fresh Eggs, Goats' Milk, and Goose Feathers—Fractional Fights on O'Shaughnessy Rock and Plug Point—A Funeral on the Rocks near Mt. Morris.

A bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked Irish boy, with deftly hurled pebbles and loud cries, was frantically trying to bunch and recall to their native rocks a flock of refractory goats from the Fifth avenue roadway a little south of Mount Morris Park. He redoubled his efforts as the writer approached, accompanied by an ex-road inspector and a police officer. Shanty-crowned crags stood to the right of the avenue and sunken lots, with a more than average crop of tin scraps, iron filings, paper refuse, tomato cans, and kindred pasturage to the left.

"It's little Jerry," said the police officer. "Wait till his mother calls the goats from the top of Stovepipe Rock yonder, and the flock 'll give me the slip."

"There she is now," said the ex-inspector, pointing overhead. "Mrs. O'Shaughnessy is the boss of this end of the rock squatters, just as Mrs. Conniss is of the other end. Many's the odd character to be found up there."

A large, comely woman of middle age had emerged from a whitewashed shanty on the summit of the rocks. Her costume and general appearance, as she perched there with her brawny bare arms akimbo, were as characteristic as any woman of Donegal or the wild hill region of Killarney. "Come out of that, Jerry, ye spalpeen!" she cried, in a shrill tone of voice. Then she called the recusant flock in a sing-song way, instinctively understood and obeyed. Across the road and up the rugged crag flew the score or more of goats, skipping and climbing with the agility of squirrels. The boy followed with equal nimbleness, turning to deride us, with thumb and fingers at his nose, and the entire group disappeared over the crest.

This particular paradise of the up-town squatters embraces a great rock-piled quadrangle, bounded north and south by 116th and 119th streets and east and west by Fifth and Madison avenues. Kindred districts of less significance surround it, but the still intact, rock-reared area—dominated at one end by Stovepipe Rock, the O'Shaughnessy stronghold, and at the other by Plug Point, the scarcely less impregnable fastness of Mrs. Conniss—is proudly preeminent, unapproachable in the varied traditions of its hardy mountaineers, and topographically only surpassed by breezy, tower-crowned Mount Morris itself, which overshadows it from the north. No cross street pierces it as yet, although the work of cutting through 118th street has been begun on the western side. One Hundred and Seventeenth street was but recently extended to its eastern base on the Madison avenue side. The greenish black trap and reddish gray surface rock frequently bobbs up over the roadway to a height of fifty feet or more. The sides are nearly inaccessible, save to the goats, though the rise at the southeastern point slopes up gradually from a narrow depression, affording a general access. There are two crevices in the towering rock wall, up through which zigzag flights of teetery wooden steps go clambering tortuously to the rocky plateau above.

As we skirted the eastern side two fashionable coaches were seen at the foot of one of these flights of steps. An old woman was tendering a covered basket to a lady in one of the coaches. Pretty faces were peering out of the window of the other. A liveried footman, bearing a basket, was coming gingerly down the steps from the heights above.

"Those rich folks and many more come or send here every day for their supplies of newly laid eggs," said the officer. "The squatter women also have a steady sale at good prices for the young chickens, geese, and ducks, which they raise in large numbers. A majority of their fashionable customers are rich and well-to-do Jews."

"In what way are the goats made profitable?" we inquired.

"By the milk which they give. It is richer, sweeter, and thought by some to be more nutritive for weakly children than cow's milk. Many of the goats have an unkempt, vagabond appearance, and might be set down as estrays, but they all have owners and regular shelter over night. There are hundreds of them, raised for their milk alone, and the demand is always ahead of the supply."

"Yes," said the road inspector, "and the squatters are first-rate folks to deal with, too. The men are mostly employed away from home during the day, while the women who remain in the shanties are just as hard working. They take in sewing or washing, take care of the children and poultry, and attend to the domestic trade. In spite of their poverty, in occasional drunkenness, and of the widespread feuds that sometimes arise between different localities, they are as uniformly honest in their dealings as any set I ever came across."

The ex-inspector pointed out a rough-boarded little candy and fruit stand. Its occupant was a withered but cheery-faced old man. One of the overhead residents, he said, had been there ever since Madison avenue had been cut through.

"You might imagine that the old fellow would pine away for want of patronage in such a place," said he, "but he doesn't. The children of the shanties pick up more pennies and nickels at odd jobs than you would think, and with these they swoop down on his stock of apples, bananas, peppermint sticks, and pop-corn balls like pigeons on a bursted malt sack. Then the road laborers hereabouts, Italians and others, are apt to leave a few pennies with the old man every day at lunch time."

He pointed to an odd little house, seemingly no bigger than a huge dry goods box, with a rough-fenced garden plot. The shanty was built of old boards, charred scantlings, and tin roof patches. The inevitable crook of rusty stovepipe protruded from its gable. The cabin crowned the very edge of a lofty, precipitous rock on the east side of the avenue, which had been rent apart not long before in the extension of 117th street.

"Old Mrs. Tanner occupies that shanty," said the ex-inspector. "No, she can't be related to the forty-day-fast cuss of that name; or, at all events, couldn't have any sympathy with his starvation theories. On the contrary, the good woman earns a decent livelihood by hard work, and always seems well fed, sleek, and contented. The funniest thing in old Mrs. Tanner's experience was the shifting of her shanty without her knowledge."

The good woman's cabin had occupied a crest directly in the line of the cross street that was being blasted through the rock. Her neighbors had warned her that the blasting and the encroachments that were rapidly made upon her rocky domain with the apprehension which she might otherwise have felt. On a certain day when she was away from home, the workmen had got a series of important blasts in readiness directly under her residence. There was every prospect of its being literally high in air, together with its garden, its goat shed, its henery, its goose pen, and other humble belongings, when the good nature of the inspector interfered. "Come men," said he, "let us lend a hand, and shift the old lady's property to the side of the road out of the way."

Half an hour proved sufficient to make the transfer. The blasts followed. Rapid subsequent work made the through cut practically complete, so that, on Mrs. Tanner putting in an appearance about dusk, she was at a loss to know what had become of her hill and her homestead until the latter, with all of its appurtenances, was pointed out to her on the sharp, newly-formed declivity on which it now stands. Her informants soberly insisted, however, by way of a joke, that the old lady was at fault as to any change of site, the house being on the same crest on which she had left it. Finding the internal arrangements of her shanty undisturbed, Mrs. Tanner was for some time in doubt as to whether her faculties were really failing her or her old-country fairies had been doing her a good turn, until some of her neighbors enlightened her.

"You referred to feuds between the squatters of different localities," said the writer as the officer resumed his rounds; "are there many, and are they very violent?"

"There are a good many long-standing quarrels among the squatters," the ex-inspector replied. "In times past they have been pursued with real Corsican vindictiveness. The police have them so thoroughly in hand nowadays that there are few outbreaks. Stovepipe Rock was the scene of the worst vendetta. It came to a head a long time ago, and resulted in a regular pitched battle between the O'Shaughnessies and Connisses on one side, and the men of sunken lots west of the Fifth avenue road line on the other. Come over and take a look around."

By the comparatively easy route on the southeastern corner we ascended the acclivity. It was an irregular path over a natural gully between the high-cocked premises of the independent rock dwellers up through the outlying shanties of the great quadrangle.

"There's a prevailing impression," said the guide. "That these people obtain their shanty and yard sites gratuitously, but it's a mistake. They pay on an average from $1.50 to $3 a month ground rent, which often, aggregates more than enough to pay the taxes on the property. Rich landowners are not apt to give anything away, not even a roosting place on a bare rock, the removal of which for building purposes must cost them thousands."

Here the ex-inspector, who had been long and favorably known to the rock dwellers, was besought to arbitrate between two women whose little holdings adjoined each other. They were in angry dispute over the possession of an alien goose, which had that morning sought refuge in the premises of one claimant, only to be seduced into the neighboring mud-hole that answered as the duck pond of her rival. A counter claim for possession was made. It was witnessed by most of the ragged small boys and girls living on the rocks, together with an apparently no less interested assemblage of grave and wise-looking geese. It was waxing so hot as to be rather hard on the goose, which was in the grip of both contestants, who were dragging and clawing at it in a way that made the feathers fly. As it was an old gray-backed, leather-webbed gander, it survived the pressure.

The ex-inspector decided the dispute satisfactorily by ordering an equal division of both meat and feathers, and the balcony of peace once more brooded over the picturesque purlieus of Stovepipe Rock and Plug Point.

"It was the only solution to the difficulty. I've had the settlement of such differences forced on me time and time again," observed the ex-inspector, as the ascent was resumed. "But either one of the women would have made some concession to have had the possession of the gander awarded to her alive, by reason of its annual yield of down. The production of goose down and quills is one of the staples of the rocks. This product, though the eggs are likewise profitable, accounts for the numerous flocks of geese that are raised hereabouts. The breasts and wings of the birds are plucked every spring, as the steadily warm days set in, and a pretty penny is often turned by the thrifty squatters, not only with the fashionable upholsterers and stationers, but also with wealthy families that come here direct for the luxurious fillings of their pillows and bolsters. Here we are on the top at last!"

The reporter and his guide had gained the highest point of the quadrangle on the west. An extensive view was had, which was only surpassed in the vicinity by the prospect from the crest of Mount Morris itself.

To the right lay the O'Shaughnessy stronghold, and to the left the Conniss citadel, with their respective knots of lesser shanties, like huts of baronial retainers clustering around them. A winding, stair-threaded chasm separated the rock-reared seigniories, and tortuously communicated with the roadway to the south. The gaze, looking westwardly, ranged over a number of sunken lots, formed by the high-graded streets and avenues. The hollows themselves are more or less thickly interspersed with frame houses and patched shanties very similar to those on the heights.

"There was a chronic feud between the rock squatters up here and the shanty people down yonder for a long time before the erection of the elevated railroads, and when this part of Harlem was much less built over and under police control than it is now," said the ex-inspector. "Mr. Kelly, a good fellow and hard-working, law-abiding man, now occupies the cosey-looking cottage which you see there in the middle of the great hollow directly below us. In those days that and the neighboring low levels were thickly sown with shanties occupied by a reckless set. The dwellers up here were neither better nor worse, I fancy. The encounters between the lowlanders and highlanders were frequent and sanguinary. They culminated in a combined attempt on the part of the lowlanders to carry the heights and oust the highlanders from their eyries. The battle waged long and desperately at the mouth of this long zigzag ravine, through which stairways then, as now, wound their way. It was the key to the position. The O'Shaughnessies and Connisses held it against great odds, finally beating back their opponents in a panic, and that, notwithstanding that the latter had been reinforced by a swelling contingent of German beer saloon keeper and his hangers on and by some Italian road laborers who had been induced to espouse the aggressive cause."

And then, as our informant entered upon exciting details, one could imagine the rocks—a sort of Casper, as it were—pointed out various interesting mementoes of what had proved a small-sized but veritable Thermopylæ for those New World Greeks and their rum-flushed exterminators. Here in the rocky pass, late on the memorable afternoon, the women of the O'Shaughnessies and Connisses, with their followers, hold their own against the invading horde. The first warning of the murderous design, as had occurred in the history of ancient Rome, was the clamoring of a great flock of geese, driven on the rocks by the stealthy approach of the hostile vanguard. Women and children shared in the heroic defence. Frying pans, rolling pins, and scalding water proved as efficacious as fists, empty bottles, and every variety of improvised shillalahs under brawnier direction. The boulders of the pass improvised the only artillery of the occasion. This was a gigantic young Peloponnesian rejoicing in the name of O'Rafferty. Occupying a rising vantage ground well up the pass, he hurled in rapid succession immense fragments of rock and matted earth over the heads of his compatriots and through the ranks of the invading assailants. Fired with whiskey and emulous of distinction, the latter held the battle line with courageous persistence. But in less than an hour they began to waver. An empty beer keg, furiously projected from the human howitzer, went crashing through their ranks.

There is yet shown the spot where their leader, a McGinnis of the old stock, went down, collared by the rim of a frying pan, and still flourishing defiantly the fragment of his shattered blackthorn. Stabbed with a brick, an O'Grady, his second in command, and a thunderbolt of sunken-lot chivalry, likewise rolled upon the plain. At this juncture the defenders were electrified by an announcement that the enemy's Italian auxiliaries were attempting to enter the stronghold by the main pass on the southeast, and that his Teutonic contingent was scaling the rock wall on the western side. A detachment, however, baffled these designs, while the rout of the main attacking force was completed by a furious sortie. When the police arrived about dusk, victory had declared indubitably for the valiant defenders of the rocks.

As we were quitting the rocks a funeral procession of waiting coaches formed in the avenue below. Cries of lamentation issued from a neighboring shanty close at hand. A wisp of black crape, tied to the knocker, swung on the door, where a group of mourners were gathered. They reverently entered the cabin. Its single room was thronged. A small open coffin lay on two chairs in the centre, with lighted candles standing in rows around it. At the head of the coffin stood the officiating priest, praying in a loud voice, with chin sunk upon his breast. At its foot knelt a sobbing man and woman and two little children. The other mourners passed slowly, in single file, around the coffin to obtain a last look at its silent occupant. It was the corpse of a little girl of singular beauty, as white and cold as frozen wax. At intervals the kneeling father and mother would throw up their hands in a piteous cry, in which they were joined by the children still left them and by some of the women present. This was the *keening* of the death wail, as it is called in Ireland.

We waited till the coffin had been closed and carried to the hearse. Then, as coach after coach received its load and took its place in the funeral line, the ex-inspector was thanked for his interesting information, and we departed from the rock dwellers and their domain.

DROUGHT IN NEW ENGLAND.

Mills Obliged to Shut Down and Farmers to Melt Snow to Water Their Stock.

BOSTON, Jan. 13.—Specials to the *Globe* from New Hampshire and along the Penobscot River in Maine show great damage to business by the drought, which dates back to August last. At Manchester, N. H., the mills are running only parts of their machinery, owing to low water, and production has lessened nearly one-half, causing great suffering to operatives. Prayer meetings have been held to pray for rain, but without avail. At Dover the mills are running on half time, except those supplied by steam power, and the Great Falls mills are almost completely stopped.

Along the Penobscot, from Bangor to Milford, the lack of water is seriously felt, and the cut of lumber has been reduced, owing to lack of power, some 12,000,000 to 15,000,000 feet, a reduction of from $60,000 to $80,000. In Augusta truckmen are supplying families with water from the river at fifty cents per hogshead. In Camden the Knox Woollen Mill and other mills along the Moguntiocook are running only half time. The operatives are able to earn only enough to pay their board. These mills have never shut down before in winter for lack of water. Farmers in the interior are obliged to melt snow to get water for their cattle and for household purposes. In Bangor, on account of the magnificent Holly system, there is no inconvenience from lack of water.

The *Journal* prints several columns of detailed reports from all sections of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. The despatches from Maine show that the whole Penobscot region has for months been suffering from a drought, which has had no parallel for half a century. The mills on this river seldom have to shut down, but since the early fall the saws, to use the expression of an old miller, "barely wiggled." In the neighborhood of Calais the drought has entailed great loss upon the lumber manufacturers. Many orders were left unfilled at the end of the season, and the whole community felt the depression caused by the withdrawal from circulation of fully $100,000, which in a fair season, would have been disbursed among the employees in lumber mills, in addition to the amount of wages actually received. The Saco River is lower than was ever known.

In New Hampshire the industrial distress is great. At Manchester alone 2,000 operatives are idle, and the Merrimac is lower than ever.

At Bellows Falls, Vt., water for manufacturing purposes was never so scarce as now, although for the past three or four months every precaution has been taken not to let any water of the Connecticut waste by escaping from the dam. Throughout the State the story of individual inconvenience and suffering is everywhere the same. Wells and springs that never failed before are dry now, and cisterns in thousands of houses are empty.

Absurd Trust in a Cat.

A young woman boarded a Pavonia ferryboat yesterday afternoon carrying a basket, with a cat's head sticking out of a hole in the cover. The young woman kept a watchful eye upon her charge, and best its head back many times before she took her seat. Then, with a sigh of relief, she placed the basket on the floor, and sitter intently watching the hole for some minutes without seeing anything, occupied herself in looking around the cabin. Two minutes before the boat reached the Erie dock the cat cautiously put out its head, dragged its body after it, and hid itself under the seat. When the boat had been made fast the young woman took up her load, looked once more at the hole, tapped on the lid in a reassuring manner, and went ashore, wholly unconscious that she was carrying an empty basket.

Billy Porter Soon to be at Large.

William Porter, the noted burglar, is serving his last months in the Kings county penitentiary. He will be released in March. He was worked into illness in the shoe shop, and has been allowed for some time to act as hallman. He is growing a moustache preparatory to going into the world again. His beautiful young wife, who attracted attention on his trial by her devotion to him has secured a divorce.

PROOF THAT NOTHING IS NEW.

An Alleged Discovery About Willow Bark Shown to be a Very Old Idea.

MILFORD, Pa., Jan. 11.—When that eminent scientific person, Prof. Strong, made his recent report on the results of certain experiments with the extracts of various kinds of barks to test their efficacy in the tanning of skins and hides, he little thought what a remarkable scientific fact it would bring to light in Pike county. The Old Settler is not a scientific person, nor are any of the boys, for that matter, and it isn't likely that they would ever have been affected by Prof. Strong's report if the snow hadn't been falling at the rate of two inches an hour all day yesterday, which behooved the Sheriff to appear on the scene in the Crissman House reading room in the evening with his long-legged cowskin boots on.

"Them boots," said the Sheriff, sticking them up on the fender of the baseburner and eyeing them fondly, "them boots has saved me many a doctor's bill. If they'd been made out of ducks' backs they couldn't shed water any better. There ain't any such leather made nowadays as is in them boots."

"As far as Pike county is concerned," said the ex-Poundmaster, "there won't be any leather made at all before many months. A year from this time there won't be hemlock bark enough in this county to tan a ratskin. And if you ain't got any hemlock bark, where are you goin' to get your leather?"

The Sheriff said that was so, and that it was too bad, because there was nothing like leather. Then the County Clerk happened to remember that he had read in some paper about Prof. Strong's investigations.

"If it's true what he says," remarked the County Clerk, "maybe there's something that'll take the place of hemlock. If I remember right, the Professor says that willow bark gives a liquor that'll tan to perfection."

The Sheriff remarked facetiously that maybe there was something in that, for when he was a boy he had known willow bark to be used very successfully by his father in tanning hide, but the bark was fast to the willow, and the hide was his own. The ex-Poundmaster was about to express emphatic doubts of the truth of the learned Professor's statement when the Old Settler waved his cane and said:

"Natur is durn queer, boys, an' they's some tol'able curious things in natur', I know, as to willer trees. Natur hain't got no time fur foolishness, an' this yer perfessor has dropped plumb onter what willers was made fur. I know'd it forty year an' more ago, but it slipped my mind, an' 'taint likely ex I'd ever a thort on it agin if I hadn't a heered you fellers a talkin' to-night.

"Back in '42 Chris Litts, over on Pocono, had a yearlin' heifer which he thort most ex much on ex he did o' his wife, 'cause the heifer were a pertic'lar fine breed, an' had all the pints fur the makin' o' the best milker they was in the deestrick. That ain't hardly givin' the heifer much of a recommend, nuther, ex takin' the hull deestrick through in them days, 'tain't likely they were ten cows ex had vim enough in 'em to give a quart apiece at a milkin', fur fodder were scarce, an' they wa'n't much enough raised thar in a year to make a good-sized cud fur a muley steer, an' when ye come to keep a cow on buckwheat straw hash fur breakfas' an' sassyfrax bark fur supper, they ain't no kind o' use o' yer 'spectin' to hev cream in yer coffee ev'ry mornin', besides makin' yer own butter an' sellin' milk to yer neighbors, fur if you do ye'll be disappinted. But that ain't nuther yer nor thar. Chris Litts had the heifer, an' when one nice day in the spring o' '42 he foun' her a layin' up in the scrub oak paster with her left fore leg broke, you kin jist bet they was weepin' an' wailin' an' gritin' of teeth in that corner of the county, with a leetle sprinkle o' cussin' throwed in. The calf's leg were broke squar at the knee, an' Chris carried her all the way in to the clearin'. O' course, Chris didn't think that nothin' could be did but to shoot the little critter an' put her out o' her misery, an' if that didn't make a pretty gash in the heart out'n him I'll swaller my cud. Ez luck would have it, howsomever, ole Lije Tuck, the blacksmith an' hoss doctor down to the Corners, come to Chris's that day to take a look at a spavin on a hoss that Chris's dad had gi'n him. 'Taint likely the ole man 'd a gi'n the hoss to Chris, but he couldn't git no one to buy it, an' when he offered to trade it to Grippy Grimes fur an ole trainin' day musket without no flint in it, an' no place to put one, ole Grippy sez him bein' much boot he'd be willin' to give. Chris's dad thort it didn't look ez if they was goin' to be much demand fur the hoss in that market, an' so he done the han'some an' give it to his son. So it happened ez Lije Tuck went up to look the hoss over jist as Chris were holdin' his gun to put the slugs inter the calf.

"'Wall, says Lije, 'how's Limpy this fine mornin' in May?' says he.

"'Limpy were the hoss.

"'Limpy be durned!' says Chris. 'If it'd been him I'd ha' spotted calf,' says he. 'I wouldn't feel ez if I were ramin' my hull consarned gizzard like a wad inter this gun,' says he.

"'Ye kin mean ter tell me ex yer calf is ben yankin' yer leg, mebbe,' says Lije, with his eyes bigger'n sassers.

"'No, I don't mean for say nothin' o' the kind,' says Chris, 'for they'd a ben a leetle consi'lation in that, 'cause I'd a got tolerant the b'ar an' fotched in his hide an' carcass, an I'd got some change back. No; Limpy's got a claim on this yer plantation yit, an' they hain't ben a b'ar spookin' roun' yer fur a week—leastways not sence that ole he feller dropped inter the skule house back in the hollerl fur noon day, and the teacher an' scholars out'n the winders, an' sat up all ther dinners. The trouble that's workin' on me is that the spotted calf has broke a leg, an' I've got to sing her,' says Chris.

So Chris took Lije 'roun' back o' the cabin whar the heifer were layin'. Lije 'xamined her, an' bimeby he says:

"'Chris,' says he, 'I'm gummed if I don't b'lieve Kin saw that critter,' says he.

"'What!' says Chris, jumpin' back more'n ten foot, 'yer kin say Limpy were the hoss spoon,' says he—that were a great byword with Chris. Ex fur that, 'twere a sort o' fam'ly byword with the Littses, an' from all I've heerd about it, it had been handed down from Chris's great-grandfather, an' the way it was first come thru' was that Chris's great-great-grandfather was out huntin' one day, when two Injins—

"'Lemme see,' interrupted the ex-Poundmaster, 'wasn't there something said a while ago about willow bark being good for tanning? Now, if there's any one here that knows anything about it I'd like to hear from him on the subject.'

The Old Settler treated the insinuation with silent contempt, and went on with his story:

"'By the great horn spoon!' says Chris, 'if you kin save that calf, Lije,' says he, 'ye kin draw on this yer farm fur half o' the crops this season, and it's your a,' says he.

"'Well,' says Lije, 'if it's all the same to you, Chris,' says he, 'it'll be worth a leetle more'n that to save the critter,' says he. 'So if I save her, I'll have to charge you plumb twenty shillin,' says he.

"'Save her,' says Lije, 'an' the money is yourn,' says he, 'if I hef to mortgage the clearin' to raise it!'

"So Lije out with his knife an' unjinted the calf's leg squar at the knee. Then he goes to the wood pile an' cuts a stick the same length o' the piece o' leg he cut off, and straps it snug an' nice onter the place whar the piece come from. Well, boys, to make it short, the operation worked to a squee joe. In less'n a week, b'gosh, that heifer were stumpin' roun' 'mong the scrub oaks ez lively ez a cricket.

"'Long come time, Jim Litts, the calf half turned up missin'. Chris hunted the woods fur two weeks, but never could find hide nor hair of her, an' so he made up his mind that some ornery lunkhead of a b'ar had chawed her, an' he guv up searchin' fur her. In the fall o' '44 politics was jest a-raisin' in the backwoods. Polk and Dallas was runnin', an' we was bound to heap 'em up a major'ty ez would 'stonish 'em. To help it along we laid out to hev a big Dimmycratic mass meetin' over at the Corners, an' to raise a liberty pole ez would top a leetle over anything ez the county ever see. I were one of a party ez went inter the woods lookin' fur a tree ez would chop up inter the proper len'th. Chris Litts were with us, too. Ez we was goin' 'long by a swamp ez lays over in back o' the Corners, all of a suddin' Chris says:

"'Hol' on,' says he; 'by the hoss spoon,' says he, 'that's durn sing'lar—a willer tree growin' in this yer woods, ain't it?' says he.

"Sure enough, thar was a willer tree, forty foot high, growin' in the soft edge of the swamp. We all stopped to take a look at it, an' I ain't ashamed to say I felt sort o' queer ez I see suthin ez looked like some kind o' an animal. We couldn't nose of us make out what 'twere, so we chopped the tree down to git a closer look.'

The Old Settler paused, and, straightening up in his chair, looked at the ex-Poundmaster with a glare of triumph in his eye.

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