THE MULE INCITER STRUCK

INDUSTRY AND SNIFFIN CORNERS SUDDENLY HALTED.

The Bluff and Hustling Stranger Tells How Sam Bigelow's Genius Overreached Itself and How Sam's Widow Plans to Restore the Old Ways.

CHESTER, N. Y., Feb. 24.—Besides worrying over the bluff and bustling stranger's sick aunt, the new landlord is afraid now that the Sniffin Corners outfit got lost in the big snow. The bluff and bustling stranger had come in on the train that lands folks from down Edenville way. He strode to the hotel register and ran his eye over the late arrivals.

"Huh!" said he to the landlord by and by. "Cripps. Hiram Cripps of Sniffin Corners. Didn't register. Why didn't he?"

The landlord said he hoped the stranger would excuse Mr. Cripps, for really the only reason why his name didn't appear on the register was that he hadn't come in as yet to put it there.

"Ah! I see!" said the bustling stranger. "Stormstayed, poor chap! And the boy that brought the mule. Seen him anywhere about?"

If the boy that brought the mule had been anywhere about at any time, the landlord said, he had managed to escape notice.

"Huh, huh," said the stranger. "Exactly. Sticks to the barn. That's right. Of course you let him have a nice comfortable stall for the mule?"

The landlord assured the stranger that there were only nice, comfortable stalls in the barn, but up to that moment none had been selected for the entertainment of anybody's mule.

"No?" said the bluff and bustling stranger. "Well, well! Too bad! Looks like that outfit was stormstayed too, poor critters! Huh! Might just as well got off down Sugar Loaf way and seen my sick aunt. You'd feel kind o' like you ought to do it if you had a sick aunt who was going to leave you the farm, wouldn't you?"

The landlord admitted that he thought he would, and the stranger said that was just what he'd do. Then, by and by, he said:

"That bulging genius of Sam Biglow's played hob with things after all, didn't it?"

Without waiting for the landlord to answer he went right on.

"Yes," said he. "Sam's widow has put the wheelwright works back on to hand-power again, and I've bought the mule and hired Hiram. But say," said the stranger. "Maybe the news about the strike at Sam Biglow's wheelwright works at Sniffin Corners and the putting of the works back on hand power by Sam's widow hain't got over this way yet?"

The news, the landlord said, hadn't got this far, not yet, but it would no doubt be along later on.

"It'll be along right now!" said the stranger. "I've got it with me. The first inkling I had of it was when Hiram dropped me a line. Hiram Cripps. Hiram is a cousin of mine.

"'Dear Cousin Joseph,' so Hiram starts out in that line he dropped me, Joseph being my name, Joseph Billingfoot, 'if Halley's comet is going to swish its tail amongst us and smash things and smother us like we had blowed out the gas and then bunked in I wish it wouldn't wait till June to do it. I wish it would pitch right in and do it now. Even a destroying comet would be kind if it would do it now, me chucked jobless on the world, what time tempests snarl and pickled pork keeps right on going up! Why don't it do it now?' So Hiram drops his line to me, and without waiting for me to drop him a line back and assure him that I didn't know why he goes right on and gives me the reasons for his sudden longing to get the everlasting hook and get it right away. He had gone on strike. The strike had failed. Sam Biglow's genius had bulged too much. His near streak had overworked itself. Sam's widow had put the works back on hand power and Hiram was fired.

"That near streak in Sam Biglow has always made talk at Sniffin Corners. It bulged as much as Sam's genius, and Sam was always cutting things down to hardpan cost and a little lower, though Hiram was such a good stump grubber that Sam never begrudged him the $15 a month that Hiram stuck out for. Then Sam got a new mule in a dicker. Say! Does anybody know why mules take whims, and not only take 'em but stick to 'em?"

The landlord said that there might be them that could solve the problem, but as for him he wasn't far enough up on mule even to think of trying it. Hiram Cripps's cousin Joseph merely said "Huh, huh," and resumed his narratin'.

"And that new mule of Sam's," said he, "took a whim against Hiram. It resented Hiram the fust time it got its eyes on him and instantly began to kick up behind. Just kick and kick and kick. Otherwise peaceful as a lamb, let Hiram come in sight and upward that mule's heels would fly again, spitter, spatter, spang, knocking things every which way.

"Well! That certainly did mix things around Sam's in a way that clogged industry at Sniffin Corners. In a misguided moment, while Sam was trying to think up which to turn loose, the mule or Hiram, Hiram spoke up and said to Sam:

"'It's too rambunctious bad that your mule can't kick down like it can kick up, for no blacksmith's helper you've got can pound out and spatter iron like that mule could do it when it took to goin' once if it could kick down like it can kick up,' said Hiram, and like a flash Sam Biglow's genius grabbed the idea.

Sam pitched in on that idea and when he got through with it he had his ripsaw and his bellows and the other cutting and pounding thingamajigs in his shop connected up with a big paddle wheel and a fly wheel that he had rigged up in one corner of the shop, with shafts and belts and pulleys and things. And he had a nice stall in front of that paddle wheel, and in front of the stall a little closet. In that closet he posted Hiram. Then he led the mule in the shop and tied it in the stall, facing the closet. Then he hollered for Hiram. Hiram stepped out of the closet. Spit, spang, spat! Spittery, spattery, spangy-ty-spang! The mule's heels played up against that paddle wheel. Hum-m-m it went 'round and 'round. Whiz-z-z went the fly wheel so fast you couldn't see it. All around that shop all sorts of wheels took to whirling and buzzing. The hum of industry at Sniffin's Corner, so to speak, had woke to living song!

"Then Sam ordered Hiram back to the closet. The mule came down to earth. For nigh on to ten minutes the wheels kept whizzing 'round, and as they slowed up Sam hollered:

"'Hiram!'

"Out of the closet popped Hiram. Up in the air went the mule again. Spit! Spat! Spang! Spittery, spattery, spangy-ty-spang! Humm-m-m, whiz-z-z, hum! Back to the closet for Hiram. Rest for the mule while the wheels went 'round. Hiram out, mule up. Hiram in, mule down.

"'Works to a dinktum!' said Sam. 'Just as nigh to perpetual motion as time 'll ever see!'

"Sam got rid of three hands in the shop and his near streak just gloated. And all Hiram had to do was to loll in his closet, step out every ten minutes, start the mule and the works and go back to his lolling, with a quart of cider a day to daily with besides his little $15 a month. Then it began to dawn on Hiram after a while that he had a corner on that mule compelling energy and he swelled out and said to Sam:

"'Sixteen dollars a month, Samuel, and three pints of cider a day, or I walk out on strike.'

"'All right, Hiram,' said Sam. 'Back to the grubbin' hoe and no cider!'

"For Sam knew that three days for Hiram at the grubbing hoe and no cider would be plenty to break the backbone of that strike like that mule had kicked it; and besides that Sam had been waiting for a chance to connect the mule up with the fanning mill and the churning machine, so he could cut down on one more hired man, sell the churn sheep for mutton and so release quite a few shillings in capital that had been tied up in the critter for better than seven years.

"What Sam Biglow ought to done was to made that strike a lockout or else put blinders on the mule, for Hiram had been on strike only one day when he threw up his hands. He walked in the shop to hunt up Sam to tell him so. He found the mule first, and the mule of course resented it. Spitty-ty-spat, spang! Sam was up there working at the paddle wheel. Yes, yes! Even genius is liable to reach out and grab more than it can chaw!

"'The Widow Biglow,' so Hiram dropped his line to me, has put the works back on hand power again. She is going to order 'em to drowned the mule. And I am chucked out.

"On the jump I sent and bought that mule. And I hired Hiram. I'm going to start 'em in business down our way. Their getting along as far as this I see has been postponed some on account of the weather. It's just as well, for now I'll have a chance to run down and see that sick aunt of mine while I'm waiting for 'em. Give the mule a nice, comfortable stall, but keep Hiram away from it unless you want things scattered. I'm 'most ashamed to ask you to cash my check for a mere two dollars, I swow I am, but that's about all I'll need till I come back from seeing my sick aunt, and a fellow can't be too careful of his money these times. Or would you rather charge it up against the mule?"

The landlord said he'd do one as quick as the other. It made no difference to him.

"But sakes alive, man!" said he. "Why didn't you mention it when you first came in? I've sent all my cash to the bank now and the bank's closed. And now I'll have to wait till to-morrow to do it," and the landlord was all put out.

The stranger said he'd go telegraph to his aunt and if she wasn't too sick to-morrow would do all right. His aunt must have been too sick, for he didn't come back, and besides worrying over the bluff and hustling stranger's sick aunt the landlord is afraid now that the Sniffin Corners outfit got lost in the big snow.

POPULARITY OF HUNT DANCES.

Importance of This Sporting and Social Function in English Society

From the Court Journal.

I everywhere hear gossip regarding hunt balls, and not a few of these increasingly popular sporting and social functions have already been fixed. The master of the Handley Cross Hounds once gave it as his opinion that "Them wot does much huntin' dancin' will not do much huntin'," meaning probably that the hunt ball is not likely to beget early rising for the chase on the morrow.

Nowadays a local fixture of hounds after the annual ball is almost as much looked forward to as the function itself and is as a rule "the" fixture so far as numbers go of the season. Hunting men and women from all parts of England are included in the house party, and hunt buttons and hunt collars vie with one another in their profusion. That ever entertaining authority Shotley invests the hunt ball with no small importance. His opinion on anything appertaining to hunting is worth having, and as the subject is now on the tapis I make no apology to any one but him for quoting his remarks.

"Hunt balls are a great attraction," he says, "tending to keep large families at home, and it must not be forgotten that one ball begets another and that the fixing of a hunt ball often sets an example to all the country hostesses of the district who have a room which is large enough for a ball. Hunt balls are of very frequent occurrence in these days, and the room which is available for the hunt ball is often afterward used by certain of the local hostesses whose house is not large enough to accommodate a large crowd. Now all this ball giving, this going to meets on the part of people who do not ride and this staying in the country instead of going abroad means that huge sums are dispersed in the hunting districts which might otherwise be spent in town or on the Continent.

"Has any hunting man or woman ever lived in a remote district where there was no hunting and compared it with a hunting country in the winter? I have been in such a place, not for long, I am glad to say, but quite long enough to realize the depression under which the whole community labored. There were no balls, no dances of any sort; only a few normal dinner parties where the hostesses vied with one another as to the number of dishes they could put on the table where the talk was of magisterial or parish affairs among the men and the delinquencies of the servants among the women."

Long Lived Clergymen.

From the London Evening Standard.

"Nobody lives so long as the parsons. Gardeners run them close, and brewers' draymen come at the bottom of the list," said Dr. Rheinhardt in a lecture at the King's Weigh House on "The Duration of Life." "An interesting theory has been put forward," he continued, "that the children of youthful parents are gifted with physical energy, but seldom with great intellectual activity.

"When the father is over forty the children will not make good soldiers, but are marked by superior intellectual ability, and with a still older father the children will have marked philanthropic tendencies. Longevity is much commoner in southern Europe than in northern climes. Bulgaria, with a population of 3,000,000, has more than 5,000 centenarians leading the lives of useful citizens."

FEET WARM WITHOUT HOSE.

Danish Musician Has Appeared Before Royalty in "Flesh Tints."

From the Chicago News.

"If you would avoid the uncomfortable sensation of having cold feet never wear hose."

This unique method of keeping the pedal extremities from suffering in zero weather was extolled by Henry Bramson, court cellist to the King of Denmark, who arrived at the Auditorium Hotel Friday to prepare for a concert in which he will appear at the Auditorium Theatre Sunday afternoon. The cellist declares that he has never worn hose and that instead of causing his feet and ankles to become cold, as would be supposed, the scheme aids him in keeping them warm.

"I have gone without hose as long as I can remember and it has never caused me any discomfort. I have been laughed at by my friends for the eccentricity, as they call it, but I have always persisted that it is the only way to keep the feet warm in very cold weather. One of my neighbors at my home in Copenhagen, Otto Sverdrup, who was with Nansen on his polar expeditions, at first ridiculed my plan, but now he is one of my most able lieutenants in advocating its adoption. He never wears them now.

"I have appeared before every court of Europe except that of the German Emperor and never has any objection been made to my playing with my legs bare. In fact I have often been complimented upon my 'flesh tinted' hose."

MONSTER HORNET NEST.

One 36 Inches in Diameter Found in Ohio—How It Was Made and Guarded.

From the Columbus Dispatch.

E. E. Walston of Williamsport, Pickaway county, brought to Columbus an unusually large hornet's nest which was found on the farm of W. I. Woods, a mile and a half north of Williamsport. It measured about 36 inches in diameter and was about 3 feet deep.

"It is the largest I ever saw," said Mr. Walston. "It takes about two years for hornets to build their nests. These are made from moss from trees and fence rails and are waterproof. A family of from 300 to 500 live in each nest and they leave when the cold weather comes.

"The next spring the queen returns and deposits eggs and a new family is raised. Hornets will attack you more quickly than any other insect. They are always on the alert for trouble. One or two stand guard at the entrance to the nest and they spot an enemy fifty or seventy-five yards away and will fly out to give battle to him.

"When these sentinels see trouble they give the signal to those inside and then go out to meet it. If you should raise your hand at a distance they would see the movement and interpret it as a hostile one, and then look out. If you do not bother them they will not bother you, but do not get in their way. They sting whatever they hit."

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