

BAXTER SPRINGS NEWS.

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CAPRICIOUS MATILDA.

A Maniac's Story.

I passed in a morbid mood one day through a place where maniacs dwell, and a pensive pleasure while wand'ring there I foolishly thought I felt, and as with a thoughtful air I stood by a patient maudlin mad, an interval of lucidity the unfortunate being had.

A garment they call the straight-jacket was o'er his anatomy slipped, while drops of water from up above on his cranium slowly dripped. As he raised his lugubrious eyes to mine I experienced feelings queer, for I recognized an old friend and asked: "Old friend, what do you here?"

"'Tis a lurid story, old fellow," he said, with a dreary, doleful smile;

"But if you are partial to wild, weird things, my recital may beguile. Know then that here in a maniac's cell I bide whatever betide, because of a woman's perfidy, which her name was Matilda McBride.

"When Matilda and I were first engaged I'd luxuriate beard and hair, which were neither remarkably dark, nor yet extraordinarily fair; but Matilda disliked them much and oft, besought me in manner fond to bleach my hair and whiskers. I did, converting the same to blonde.

"At first she admired me thus, but soon her taste took another tack, and nothing would do but her lover true must dye him a somber black. I yielded weakly again to please this most capricious of jades, and dyed my hair and whiskers as black as the ace of spades.

"Next day she thought that a shaven face would become me exceedingly well; I bade farewell to mustache and beard with a sorrow no tongue can tell; yet still she was quite unsatisfied, for before a fortnight fled

"A face so smooth was effeminate," capricious Matilda said.

"Ere long she wanted my hair done up in papers to make it curl. I mildly consented, for I would have gone to the moon to please that girl.

"The following day, in her artless way, with an irresistible smile, she proposed that I wear my curly hair cut short in State's prison style.

"'Twas done, but her next caprice was one that filled me with dire dismay, for she thought I'd certainly look my best with my hair a premature gray. She set about by her conduct, then, to turn my hair snowy white, but human nature could stand no more, and my reason took its flight.

"So if you ask me, old friend, the cause of my sitting here all day in an ill-fitting straight-jacket much too small, while you dripping streamlets play, I answer—"The keeper shut the door in a manner cruel and grim, and said: 'That there's his delusion, sir; Lor', you mustn't listen to him.'"

—Harry B. Smith, in America.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

How the Boys Were Punished for Their Disobedience.

"Don't say anything more about it. You've got to pick them oranges, to-day and get 'em ready for market early tomorrow morning. It's nothing but hunting and hunting from morning till night, and I ain't going to have it no more. You understand now."

"But after we get 'em picked can't we go after the wild turkeys? There's a big roost of them down in the low hommock."

"You can't get 'em picked before night, and have any time to hunt. So that ends it."

"But, father—"

"It ain't no use, I tell you."

Mr. Bullock twirled his long whip around his head and made a resounding snap with the lash.

The two half-asleep mules started at the sound, and lazily pulled the heavy load of oranges down the sandy hill. The two boys, with their orange-clippers in their hands, stood, silently in their places and watched the retreating cart as it slowly disappeared in the pine woods.

"It's too mean for any thing!" said George; then, as he turned to his brother: "Them turkeys won't be there another day, I reckon, and we'll miss the finest sport of the season. I wish these old oranges was somewhere else."

"Never mind," hopefully replied James, as he looked at the golden fruit over his head. "May be we can get 'em picked before night, and then we'll go and have some sport."

"That's so. Let's get to work at once," enthusiastically chimed in George.

With their bags slung over their backs the two boys then mounted the ladders, and began clipping the oranges with a will. For a long time nothing could be heard but the monotonous click, click, click of their big scissors as the golden fruit was out from the tree.

The two were so intent upon their work that they forgot to talk.

Then they began to get tired. They had emptied their bags a dozen times, and the trees were beginning to look bare, when George threw down his clippers and said:

"Oh, it's too bad to miss them turkeys—I declare it is!"

"Yes, it is," assented James. "I hear the old gobbler now. He must be right near the edge of the hommock."

"That's so. I reckon he's makin' fun of us. He knows we can't go for him." They looked wistfully at the loca-

mock for awhile, and then George burst out decidedly:

"I'm going, anyhow. We can kill the old fellow, and get back time enough to finish these trees! I'll steal up to the house and get the gun, and you get the corn-fiddle."

"All right!"

The two boys then separated. George made a detour of the grove and entered the house from the back, while James stole up to the packing-house where his favorite corn-fiddle was kept.

This musical instrument made a horrible grating noise, which was sufficient to frighten any thing but turkeys. When properly handled it made a sound very similar to the call of a wild turkey gobbler, and the boys had used it effectively more than once in calling together a flock of wild turkeys.

At the edge of the hommock the two boys met about ten minutes later. George was struggling under the heavy load of a big, muzzle-loading shot-gun, while James held the corn-fiddle in his hand ready to play on it.

"They roost somewhere over this way," said James, pointing with his finger to a dense part of the low hommock. "We must get around on the other side and then call them to us."

"Well, you lead the way and I'll follow. This gun is so heavy that I can't get along very fast."

A Florida hommock is not a very pleasant place to work your way through, and the boys made slow work of it. The tropical luxuriance of the vegetation closed up every avenue as soon as it was made, and the boys could not see their own path behind them a dozen feet. The ground was soft and boggy, and in places the saw-palmettoes were so plentiful that they scratched the hands of the two young hunters as they pushed their way through them.

"Listen!" suddenly exclaimed James.

"Wasn't that the old gobbler?"

"I heard something," replied George, resting his gun on the ground; "but I don't know what it was."

"There it goes again," whispered James.

"It must be a turkey. Blow on your fiddle."

A horrible grating noise soon echoed in the forest, silencing the song of the birds around. It had the harsh, wailing and unevenly modulated gobble of the wild turkey. The two young hunters crouched down behind a clump of palmettoes as James made the noise. In a short time there was a responsive gobble from a distant part of the hommock.

"The old gobbler is getting mad," whispered George. "He thinks another gobbler is trying to call his flock away from him."

James kept up the noise, answering the old gobbler in defiant outbursts. The old male bird was apparently drawing nearer, for his gobble sounded plainer and louder every minute.

In a short time there was a cracking of sticks and dead leaves, and then out of an adjacent clump of palmettoes the red head of the big turkey gobbler suddenly appeared. Half a dozen turkeys were with him.

"Now fire!" whispered James, suddenly ceasing his din with the fiddle.

George raised the old fowling-piece to his shoulder, took a quick aim and fired. The old gobbler gave a sudden shriek and uttered a loud shriek, and then disappeared in the bushes.

Without waiting to see the result of his first shot, George aimed the second barrel at the flock of astonished turkeys. Then, dropping his piece, he started on a run after his game.

One turkey was killed outright, and another one wounded. James seized this one, while George started in hot pursuit after the old gobbler, which was also severely wounded.

The gobbler, however, was not to be caught so easily. Although wounded in the wing and side, the big bird could get through the bushes about as fast as the boys.

It was evidently going to be a long chase; but the boys were so excited they did not mind that. They were bound to have that old turkey.

Suddenly the gobbler broke through the dense glades and ran out on a strip of land that projected thirty or forty feet out into a deep lagoon. The old bird seemed to be cornered then.

But, no; with a sudden spring and a heavy flutter of the wings, he managed to get across the water to a small island of cypress trees about forty feet distant.

"Oh, dear, he's got away from us!" shouted George.

"Look, look!" screamed James, in his excitement; "a gator!"

Sure enough, a big alligator had been sunning itself near the island, and as soon as the gobbler sought refuge on the island its wicked eyes winked and blinked knowingly.

The wounded bird was unconscious of the presence of another living creature on its island of refuge.

The alligator was close to the turkey, and after raising its head stealthily, it took a sudden dive toward it and seized the gobbler in its huge jaws.

The boys felt about as bad as the gobbler did as the big "gator" quietly made a meal of their game.

"If we only had the gun here I'd have that rascal's hide!" ruefully exclaimed George. "My! but isn't he a big fellow? I don't want him to get hold of me."

"But what's that noise behind us?" suddenly inquired James, looking fearfully around.

"A rattler! a rattler!" the two exclaimed almost in a breath.

In following the turkey the boys had disturbed a big rattlesnake from its sleep, but they were so intent on pursu-

ing their game that they had not heard the ominous rattle.

The snake was now coiled up about thirty feet away, swinging his head from side to side in a threatening manner.

"Isn't he a whopper?" said George, fearfully. "And he's right in our path, too. We can't get back to the mainland without running across him."

"We can't swim around him, either, for there's that big 'gator,'" whispered James. "What'll we do, any how?"

Indeed, that was a serious question with the boys now. They were actually penned in by a rattlesnake on one side and a big alligator on the other.

Neither reptile would attack them if they remained quiet, but that meant that they had to stay there until either the snake or the alligator got tired of remaining in one spot.

It was a queer and dangerous trap into which they had got caught. The neck of land on which they stood was narrow, low and damp, and the boys could not sit down and rest themselves.

The rattler remained in its defiant position, watching the two lads sharply. The alligator, after eating the turkey, quietly closed its eyes and apparently went to sleep.

"May be we can escape this way and the old fellow won't bother us," said James.

He stepped into the water, but his foot had no sooner touched bottom than the huge "gator" opened its eyes and made a motion to enter the water, too.

"It won't do, James—it won't do. He'll snap you up in no time."

It was evident that the boys could not escape by the water side, and then they turned their attention to the snake.

They looked around for some big chunk of wood to throw at the reptile, but there wasn't a piece large enough near them.

"We'll have to wait until he gets ready to go, that's all," said James, decidedly. "It won't do to make him angry."

And that was the only conclusion that the boys could come to, and they both remained quiet for a long time after, first resting on one leg and then on the other. Their feet were wet and they felt very uncomfortable. The rattler, finding every thing quiet, lowered its head and closed its eyes to finish its nap.

The alligator also seemed to slumber. But the first noise which the boys made roused the two watchful enemies and two pairs of wicked eyes gleamed at them.

The morning soon slipped away and the sun began to go down the western sky. It was a long wait, and the boys fretted and worried. They thought of the oranges, which were not yet picked, and of their father returning home to find that the work was not finished.

"We can't stand this any longer," suddenly exclaimed James. "I'm going to call for help."

"But nobody will hear us," said George, discouragingly.

The two boys then set up a long, loud shout. They repeated it at short intervals until their voices were hoarse. The snake and alligator no longer slept, but moved around uneasily as if they disliked so much noise.

As their last and only resort the boys kept shouting and screaming, almost crying, for pains began to shoot up their legs from their wet feet. No one seemed to be within calling distance.

The sun slowly sank lower and lower toward the western horizon, and night was near at hand.

"Oh, dear, what can we do? We'll get killed if we stay here after dark," sobbed James. "Help, help, help!" he then shrieked in desperation.

"Hello-o-o!"

The boys started as they heard this response. Then they answered it with repeated cries. Some one was coming to their rescue.

In about fifteen minutes Mr. Bullock pushed his way through the hommock to the strange scene.

"What's the matter?" he inquired, in a stern voice.

The boys soon explained the circumstances to him.

"Humph, that's it, is it?" He had brought his gun with him, and it did not take him long to fill the rattler with heavy buckshot. The boys then stepped across the dead body of their enemy and reached the mainland.

"So you've had a pretty good scare, I reckon," said Mr. Bullock, as he looked at the two frightened faces.

"Well, I was going to scare you with a whip for not obeying me, but I think you have been punished enough for your disobedience. You can go home now while I skin this rattler."

The two boys hurried through the hommock, and did not stop until they reached the house. Their afternoon's experience had taught them a hard lesson, and the next time the brothers went turkey-hunting they were careful to first obtain their father's consent.—G. Ethelbert Walsh, in Golden Days.

A strong pressure has been brought to bear upon Mr. Gladstone by an American publishing house to induce him to write his autobiography. An agent has gone to England to see about it, and it is said the compensation will be the largest ever before offered for a similar work.

The cable is a great invention. It enabled New York to commence sneezing as soon as the influenza appeared in London.—Milwaukee News.

Any thing mixed with water requires a hotter oven than any thing mixed with milk.

THE AGENT'S DEFEAT.

He Strikes a Lady Who Knows All About Photography.

Scene: Suburban residence. A gentlemanly person awaits the coming of the lady of the house, who presently appears.

"—Madam, I have taken the liberty of calling upon you to explain our new system of club pictures and to show you a few specimens of our work."

She—My dear sir, I—

He—Quite so. You were about to observe that you were very busy this morning, and besides you did not care for any photographs at present. Your next-door neighbor said the same thing, but, nevertheless, when she had seen the beautiful pictures which I shall be pleased to show you she decided at once to take a ticket for one dozen of these exquisite works of art.

She (frigidly)—What my next-door neighbor does is nothing to me, sir, and I don't want—

He—Really, madam, it's no trouble, I assure you. I know you were about to observe that you did not want to trouble me to show you these charming specimens, but I am persuaded that you will be delighted with them. And then they are so reasonable in price, when you take into consideration the high grade of work, that it is positively like giving them away.

She (impatiently)—Sir, I have no time to—

He—No time to sit for pictures just now you were about to say, but I can assure you there is no time limit about this system. You merely give me fifty cents in exchange for the coupon, and call at the gallery whenever it suits your convenience, pay five dollars more, and have your sifting. You are then entitled to one dozen elegant imperials and one copy of this new and beautiful discovery of the art, called—

She—See here, you, sir, I want you to understand that if I had my way I would put every photographer in the country in jail. Pictures, indeed! Do you see the stains all over my carpet? That's where my husband, who is an amateur photographer, spilt some of his chemicals. Do you see the hole burnt in that piano cover? That's where he ruined it by trying to take a flash light picture and came near setting the house a-fire, to say nothing of frightening the baby into convulsions. There's scarcely a decent piece of crockery in the house that has escaped being utilized as a developing dish, or for some other such purpose.

He—But, my dear madam—

She—Don't dear me. I know your vile tricks, sir. If it hadn't been for your miserable art—art, indeed!—my house would not resemble a pig-pen. Look at my mantel-pieces, closets, tables and bath-room, and, in fact, look at the whole house! It is filled from top to bottom with some evidence of your vile trade. Five dollars a dozen! I would not give you five cents for all the trash you can make. I've had photography for breakfast, dinner and supper till I'm sick of it, and if you don't get out of this house this minute I'll call the hired man to set the dog on you.

He—Really, madam, I'm sorry—

She—No, you're not. That's what you always say—that's what my husband says when he has ruined some fresh thing with his nasty compounds. That's what he said when he spilt muriatic acid over the front breadth of my new evening dress. Sorry! Now, I tell you what, if you don't get outside that door in something less than no time you will have cause to be sorry in earnest. And just you remember to tell at the next house you go to up the road that their next neighbor didn't decide at once to take a ticket.

Gentlemanly person beats a hasty retreat.—N. Y. Sun.

FIGHTING THE APACHES.

How an Arizona Rancher Won General Crook's Friendship.

James Payne, of Arizona, can tell more about the bloodthirsty Apache Indians in a minute than any other man: He has been at Washington telling the committee on Indian affairs that the people of Arizona don't want the Indians removed to the Fort Sill Reservation in Indian Territory. Mr. Payne says if the Indians once get back to the west side of the great river they won't rest until they get a few scalps. The Apaches have raided Mr. Payne's ranch three times and stolen any amount of stock.

"You can't depend upon them," said the rancher. "Just as soon as they get back Geronimo will lead them to the San Carlos Agency and then the trouble will begin: At their feasts they drink a grain whisky which makes them crazy. Then they start out on plundering expeditions. If they are removed it will be against the wishes of the people of Arizona and New Mexico."

With Mr. Payne is J. B. Shepard. He is the champion Indian story-teller of the West. Speaking of General Crook, he said: "I'll never forget when I fought beside General Crook in an Apache battle. We had been after the redskins some days, and one noon we sighted a band at Crazy Jim's Gulch. The General started us on a run, and the way we called after the Apaches was a caution. They stopped and set fire to the prairie grass, hoping to head us off, but we fooled them. When they saw that they couldn't get away they rounded up their ponies in a circle and stood in the center. We skirmished around a bit and then called in. General Crook has a heart like an ox, and he said: 'Boys, just slay a few dozen of the warriors. Don't kill all, just

enough to let them know that we are the people.' 'Twas a sweltering day and there wasn't a spot on the sun. After throwing off our coats and rolling up our trousers we opened fire. In a few seconds the Apaches began to drop. Taking advantage of an open place I led a crowd right into the midst of the Indians. Suddenly my pistol was hurled from my hand and I had to work with an old sword. Being pretty handy with the big knife I more than held my own. I had just laid out my tenth man when I felt a touch on the elbow. The air was so filled with Indian hair you could not see the sun and I asked:

"Who is there?"

"General Crook," was the reply.

"What is it, sir?"

"I wish to restrain you," spoke the General. "There is nothing I admire so much as a good fighter—you know that, Jim, but when it comes to turning this little spot on the prairie into a slaughterhouse I kick."

"Appreciating the fact that I had gone too far I withdrew, but from that day until now General Crook and I have been like two brothers."—Chicago Tribune.

ALL ABOUT SPONGES.

If You Want a Good Article It Will Cost You Twenty Dollars.

Charles Wood has for many years purchased sponges for a drug firm of Boston. Talking of the article the other day he said:

"Good sponges have become so expensive that they are a luxury to be enjoyed only by those well to do. Of course you can buy a reef sponge cheap, a small one costing only a few cents; but if you want a Turkey cup sponge large enough for bathing purposes you will have to pay \$4 or \$5. Sponges come all sizes; the largest one I ever saw measured twenty inches across. These very large sponges are apt not to be perfect, and they do not bring as good prices as smaller and more perfect ones. The largest of the perfect kind measures about fourteen inches across the top and nine inches through, such a sponge being worth about \$20. It is too large for bathing purposes, and too expensive to be used in washing carriages, and is kept by dealers for a chance customer. A good size bathing sponge is about eight inches across the top and five through, and is worth \$8.

"The expensive sponges are bought principally by physicians and dentists, and are used much in administering ether. There are very many people who can not tell the difference between 'Turkey cups' and common reef sponges, and they are astounded at the difference in price. They are asked \$3 for what they think they can get just as good for 25 cents. There are sponges from Florida called sheep's wool, which, in the opinion of many buyers, are as good, although much cheaper, for all practical purposes as the silk ones. They are used mainly for washing carriages, although they make a good bathing sponge. Reef sponges come from Cuba and Nassau. Turkey cups from around islands of the archipelago. Sheep's wool and reef sponges come in 10, 20 and 40 pound boxes, and the finest of the former, known as Rock Island goods, sell wholesale at from \$2.80 to \$3.15 per pound. The Turkey cups are sorted at London and Paris into three qualities and sent to us in bags. They are sold by the piece."—Boston Globe.

HOW TO GO TO SLEEP.

Some Interesting Remedies for Sleeplessness Suggested.

Correspondents have been supplying this journal with various remedies for sleeplessness. A curate in London is afflicted in direct proportion to the mental worry and absence of air and exercise he has to endure, and finds that "to walk even one mile a day is a great thing" in the way of a remedy. At the moment, he says, the best thing one can do is to get up, drink half a glass of water, and walk round the room. The slight alteration of cold and warmth has a soporific effect. For a permanent result: "Live healthily." Avoid too little and too much exercise, food, particularly wine. Dine lightly, eating very little meat. Bathe an hour before dinner, not before going to bed. Do something in the evening that does not excite you, something like whist, that does itself mechanically. Decide how much sleep you ought to have—say eight hours—and get up sternly when you have been in bed eight hours, however long you have been awake. Increase your air and exercise gradually."

A journalist, when suffering from an over-excited brain, and finding his eyes in constant movement, although the lids are closed, resolutely fixes the gaze downward—say to the foot of the bed—while the lids are kept closed. If his sleeplessness arises from flatulence, he takes a remedy for that. "A most wretched liar-awake" of thirty-five years' standing, who had for ten years thought himself happy if he could get twenty minutes' sleep in the twenty-four, minutes, took hot water—a pint, comfortably hot, one good hour before each of my three meals, and one the last thing at night—naturally unmixed with any thing else. The very first night I slept for three hours on end, turned round, and slept again till morning. I have faithfully and regularly continued the hot water, and have never had one 'bad night' since. Pain gradually lessened and went the shattered parts became calm and strong, and instead of each night being one long misery spent in weeping for the morning, they are all too short for the sweet, refreshing sleep I now enjoy."—Spectator