Bright Stories For Young Readers.

BEN ROWAN.

A SURPRISE FOR THE "BOXER OF SUMTER'S ARMY."

A Revolutionary Fourth of July.

BY EVERETT T. TOMLINSON.

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Ben Rowan was familiarly known as the "boxer of Sumter's army." Tall, with broad shoulders and deep chest, he also boasted that there was not in South Carolina a right arm like his own. The wrestling matches and "rough and tumbles" in which the soldiers of the revolution frequently indulged in the quiet of the camps were his delight, and it had come to pass that Ben Rowan was the acknowledged champion. Not a man could stand before him, and on this Fourth of July morning in 1780, when Sumter's men, with their 300 British prisoners, had gone into camp by the banks of a little river, Ben had been almost tempted to try and draw the tank and powerful Thomas Sumter himself into a friendly bout, for Ben well knew that the title which the British had bestowed upon the leader, "the South Carolina gamecock," was well deserved. And now Sumter had thrown aside his hat and coat, and, with his boots off, lay stretched upon the ground, enjoying

HE BEGAN HIS DESPERATE RIDE.

the shade and rest after the fierce onslaught of the preceding day.

But Ben Rowan, whose face glowed with good nature, for not one in all the army was better liked than he, had not felt quite bold enough to express his wish to the general, and as he turned from watching him he saw that many of his companions were running toward the bank of the river.

"Hello! what's on foot now?" said Ben, ready for almost any enterprise.

"We're going in swimming Ben. Come on."

"But I can't swim," replied Ben, ruefully, for, with all his strength, swimming was an art which he had never been able to acquire.

"That doesn't make any difference. Come and join us. It's hot, and you can cool off, anyhow."

IN THE WATER.

Ben yielded, and soon was in the midst of the hundred men, who had laid aside their clothes and were dashing about in the water like a company of boys on that hot July morning. He found himself at a disadvantage, however, and the shouts and laughter of the men were loud and long, as, taking advantage of his inability to swim, some of them upset him in the water, and even were able to "duck" him by their combined strength, glad of their opportunity to settle old scores in this fashion. Ben's laugh was among the loudest as he rose sputtering from the water only to receive the fresh onslaught of others. "Come on, all of you!" he shouted. "It's your turn now, but it will be mine tomorrow." The shouts increased as a fresh band accepted his challenge and succeeded in spite of the fact that several of their number were thrown headlong in the attempt, in forcing Ben's head once more under the water. A call from the men in the camp was not answered by the excited swimmers, who were about to start again for the boxer, as he stood undaunted and waiting to re-

An Almost Incontrollable Fit of Laughter.

ceive them. The call was repeated, and this time the startled bathers stopped and listened. Shout followed shout, and the sound of guns broke in upon the stillness. Here and there among the trees they caught a glimpse of scarlet coats, and men who wore a red rag in their hats, the badge of the tories of South Carolina.

"Tarleton! Tarleton!" was the cry, and in a moment a scene of indescribable confusion followed. Some of the men darted into the forest, while those who could swim struck out for the farther shore with strong and lusty strokes, expecting every moment to have their flight checked by a bullet. The uproar in the camp grew louder, and shouts and cries and the sounds of guns were increased in such a manner as to redouble the confusion of the startled swimmers. Ben Rowan and his challenge were both forgotten now in the excitement, and every man was intent only upon his own safety.

Poor Ben stood for a moment and gazed wildly about him. On every side there was confusion, and where safety lay was a problem he could not solve. He turned and started swiftly out with the stream, hoping that somehow he might be able to follow his companions to the other shore; but when the water rose to his chin and once or twice he almost lost his footing, he knew that safety could not be found there. Death by drowning was as sure as death by the enemy's bullets. Checking his flight and with difficulty regaining his upright position, he succeeded in making his way back into the shallower water, and then stood for a moment striving to collect his thought and decide upon some course of action. The increasing uproar in the camp warned him that he had no time to waste, and turning quickly he began to try to make his way through the water, which now only came to his waist. Falling, stumbling, struggling, the desperate boxer made his way onward and had almost gained what he thought would be a safe position, when suddenly he found that the water farther down the stream, even near the shore, was beyond his depth. With a desperate effort he again regained his footing, and then scarcely realizing what he was doing, sought the shore and darted swiftly up the bank. He had hoped to find a shelter in the forest, but in a moment he found himself in the midst of a band of men, who greeted his appearance with a shout that increased the confusion of the already desperate man.

He gazed wildly about him and quickly realized that he was in the midst of the prisoners, whom doubtless Tarleton, or whoever was leading the attack, hoped to release by the sudden onslaught. It suddenly dawned upon him that these men were not armed. Perhaps he might yet be able to force his way through them.

A FIGHT FOR LIBERTY.

In a moment the desperate man began to strike out in every direction. He flung the men who tried to hold him aside as if they were boys. He forced his way steadily on, now falling and now struggling to his feet, and once more flinging his tormentors from his back. With head foremost, he plunged into the midst of a group that tried to block his passage, as a modern half-back forces his way through an opposing eleven. Sometimes he felt as if all the breath had left his body, and he never should breathe again. Sometimes he fell, and he thought he could never rise again; but his strong arms and lungs stood him in good stead now, and he had almost gained the outer edge of the company. There, as he darted forward with renewed hope, two men seized him by either foot, and he was thrown heavily forward upon his face. Almost stunned by his fall, he was roused by the shouts of the prisoners, who had recovered somewhat from their fear now, and started swiftly after him, and, twisting and kicking desperately, he managed to free himself from the grasp of the two men before the others could approach, and leaping once more to his feet ran swiftly on. For Ben had caught a glimpse of a group of horses near by, and a sudden inspiration had come to him.

In a moment he had gained them, and roughly breaking away the rope by which one was tethered, he leaped upon his back. Behind him came the shouting mob, having no guards now; but without waiting to receive them Ben struck his horse a quick blow on the neck, and darted swiftly forward. Without saddle or bridle, with no way of guiding or controlling his steed except by slapping him now on one side of the neck and now on the other, he began his desperate ride through the forest. Scratched by the low lying limbs of the trees, unable to fully control his horse, and yet urging him on at his utmost speed, he at last gained a place where the shouts behind him became fainter and fainter, and soon died away altogether. Still Ben Rowan kept on his way. His horse soon leaped the low fence and gained the road, but there was no rest for him. Lying low upon his neck, which he grasped with one arm while with the other he contined to guide him, he rode on and on. Faces from the scattered cabins looked out at him in astonishment, but Ben gave them no heed. It was not long after this time when Cowper wrote his famous account of Johnny Gilpin's ride. But Ben Rowan had never heard either of Cowper or Gilpin, and it was Ben Rowan's ride he was interested in just then.

For two hours he urged his horse onward, and then realizing that he was not pursued, and recognizing a little house that stood back from the road as the home of a friend, he turned his weary steed into the lane, and from a distance called aloud.

In response to his summons a man came forth and, gazing at him a moment in astonishment, said, "Who are you? What do you want?"

"I'm Ben Rowan; that's who I am, and I want some clothes."

In a moment his story was told, and Ben was fitted out to the best of his friend's ability, but a sorry sight he was. He was so much larger than his friend that he could scarcely move in his clothing. Weary as he was, Ben laughed good-naturedly at his own appearance, and, after taking a rope and securing his horse in a safe place, he entered the house. About three hours later Tarleton's men went past the place. "They've got their own prisoners, but they haven't any of our men," said Ben, when at last the procession had gone. "I'm going back to see what I can find."

Once more mounting his horse, this time having a good bridle, Ben retraced his way. As he came near the camp he began to advance more cautiously. No scarlet coats could be seen, but soon he caught sight of a band of men whom he thought he recognized. In response to his hail, one man came out into the road, and Ben knew he was with friends again. As the men came out of the woods he looked at them a moment as if he could not trust his senses, and then broke into an almost uncontrollable fit of laughter, in which the men joined. Some of them were dressed in pieces of carpet, through which they had cut holes for their arms. Others wore dresses, while still others had garments ill-fitting and grotesque. At last, when there came a lull, one of the men said: "It was this way, Ben. All that Tarleton's band wanted was to get back their prisoners. They scattered all of us in short order, and when some of us left our clothes on the tank, they gathered them in too. We had a sorry time of it, but the most of us have got something to wear. And you have, too, I see."

"Me?" Oh, yes; I have to hang on to my buttons when I laugh, but I don't think any of you will be troubled again.

All night the stragglers kept coming into camp, many of them dressed in garbs as strange as those Ben had first seen, and each new arrival was greeted by renewed shouts of laughter. On the following day they rejoined Sumter, and as they were ready for the march, Ben Rowan said: "That was the greatest Fourth of July yet. I think it'll stick in our minds for some time."

And it did.

HUNTING FROM ELPHANTS.

A Recently Tamed Beast That Would Stand Any Charge.

Mr. H. W. Seton-Karr, in the July Century, tells of his experiences when "After Big Game in Africa and India." In the latter country he hunted as the guest of the Maharaja of Kuch Behar. Mr. Karr says:

One of the first things the Maharaja did after our arrival was to hand to each guest a slip of paper on which was written the name of the elephant allotted to him for shooting purposes, which bore on its back the structure known as "howdah," to carry the shooter and his guns. As these elephants were necessarily large and the howdah is high, the oscillation was much greater than if one were seated upon a plain pad upon the elephant's back, or on one of the smaller elephants, which have a smoother gait. We usually, therefore, went to the cover, or jungle, upon one of the "beating" or "pad" elephants, which afterwards during the operations of the day were employed in a long line to force the rhinoceroses and other animals out of the dense thickets in which they live.

The howdah elephant, which the Maharaja allotted to me was named "Secunder." Three years previously it was an uncaptured wild elephant ranging at liberty the jungles of Bengal. It was a fine female, between nine and ten feet in height at the shoulder, with short but perfect "tushes" projecting a few inches beyond the upper lip. There are other elephants in the Maharaja's stud which have been tamed more recently still. It was very gentle and obedient, and perfectly fearless, and therefore very valuable as a shooting elephant; as, for example, on several occasions during the following three weeks it stood without flinching the charge of wounded buffalo, tiger and rhinoceros, thus enabling me to take a steady shot. Almost all elephants show great fear of the Indian rhinoceros; there are few that will not turn tail when they scent their enemy, and fewer still that will stand the crash and short snorts that precede the charge.

About breakfast time each morning the elephant told off for each guest was brought to the neighborhood of his tent, and the howdah placed upon it, resting upon a saddle composed of two cushions of strong sacking about six feet by two, which rested in turn upon a large cloth covering the whole of the elephant's back. The howdahs for shooting are lightly build of wood and cane work, and contain two seats and racks to hold six guns or rifles, three on each side. All this is lashed on by ropes passing under the elephant's neck, belly and tail. The weight which an elephant is able to carry upon its back exceeds a ton; for short distances they have been known to carry as much as three thousand pounds, but for long marches half a ton is considered the limit. Many of the Maharaja's elephants had fine tusks, but most tusks are cut at regular intervals to prevent them from injuring one another. One or two of the fighting elephants, however, had pointed tusks.

ODD NEW TOPS.

Amusing Toys That Spin by Means of Springs and Strings.

BY THEODORE WATERS.

Some really odd and wonderful spinning tops are being used this summer. In the toy shops and on the sidewalks

may be seen strange-looking affairs, which, to put it broadly, do all manner of things. There are tops which draw pictures on paper, tops which hum tunes like an aeolian harp, tops shaped like ballet girls and pirouette with as much grace, tops made to spin up and down a piece of wire like a tightrope walker, tops shaped like dogs and give a shrill shriek like a steam whistle when they spin, tops which spin by means of a spring when you press a button, tops which are simply high teetotums, tops which have to be roundly whipped to make them go, tops with cords attached which can be lifted from the ground and spun in the air, and tops, if you will believe it, which are over three feet high and require two or three men to spin them.

The top which draws pictures on paper is little more than a lead pencil run through the center of a disc of lead. It is spun between the thumb and forefinger, and as it whirls over a piece of white paper naturally leaves a track wherever it goes. Concentric rings, spirals, S-shaped figures, waving lines, there is almost no end to the figures it will trace or the amusement it will afford. By spinning it on a piece of heavy cardboard, you may pick up the latter, and by manipulating it, cause the top to trace out original designs of your own. It will be quite easy to make one of these tops out of an old medal and a lead pencil, and then all the fun can be had without cost.

The top which sings like an aeolian harp is composed of tin, and looks very much as two small bells would if their mouths were placed together. Through the center is the axle or pivot on which the affair spins, ad inside of the top are several reeds such as are used in a mouth organ. As the top spins air rushes through holes in the sides and plays on one or more of the reeds, causing it to emit a musical note. By striking the apex of the top as it spins you may change the key of the music, other reeds being thus set in motion. The ballet girl top is shaped like a stage dancer without arms. The dancer's skirts are made of iron. The lower hem of the skirt is perforated, and through the holes therein the air plays on reeds as in the top just described. The dog tops are somewhat similar. The air enters holes in the sides, but instead of encountering a reed it blows a whistle.

There is nothing very strange about a huge teetotum, but the top which spins by means of a spring is more interesting. This top is cut in half. The spring is concealed in the upper half. A small post attached to the lower half fits in a hole in the upper half. By placing the two halves together and turning the upper part on the post you wind up the spring. Then by pressing on the upper end of the post you suddenly release the spring and the lower half of the top is made thereby to spin for a considerable time. The top which balances on a slack of tight wire has a groove in the point, of course. It is composed of an inner spinning disc and an outer non-spinning frame work. The inner disc is set spinning by means of a cord. The top is then set up on a wire, the latter fitting in the grove. The motion of the spinning disc causes the whole affair to balance itself and it can be made to slide up and down by holding the wire in the direction of an inclined plane.

Chinamen are great kite flyers and top spinners. Their mammoth tops are hollow like a barrel and made of very

light wood. The lower part near the point that is is heavy. This lowers the center of gravity and enhances the spinning quality. As a matter of fact, a top could be made as big as a house if it was desirable. The only trouble would be the machinery required to spin it. In China it is accomplished by means of a long cord to set it going and a board or stick to hold it steady at the top until it is fairly in motion. Once off, however, these Chinese affairs will spin for a long time and as they are lacquered and painted in various colors they present a sight which would cause something of a sensation if it happened on this side of the world.

Tons of Brains.

Pittsburg News: There are said to be nearly 2,000,000 tons of brains in this world. The statement looks more like fiction at first. One suspects that Richard Harding Davis or Stephen Crane may have added a few hundred thousand to the figures as representing the amount of their own gray matter. But the total is vouched for by one of those extraordinary dabblers in figures who like this sort of calculation.

There may be that quantity, but a good deal of it must be very shop-worn, and some of these whose brows are bulging must have got their contents at a bargain counter sale. For instance, take those disciples of the Aubrey Beardsley cult. They run so much to convolutions that one is pardoned for thinking their brains may be a little twisted—like their work. Then the man who gets up the yellow kid supplements. The coloring matter in his head must be some thing more lurid than gray. If it is yellow, it is not first-class stuff, and therefore does not count in the sum total. Cigarette fiends, and there are many of them, probably have just smoke wreaths inside their skulls, but the smoke being solid counts in the alarming total.

For the 2,000,000 tons of brain there are an awful lot of follies in the world. There must be a ton of foolishness to every ounce of brain, so the sum total of folly must be almost as heavy as the reputed weight of the world itself.

Greatest Nation on Earth.

"The Britons proudly boast that the sun never sets on the queen's dominions, as if they were special subjects of solar favoritism," writes William George Jordan on "The Greatest Nation on Earth," in the July Ladies' Home Journal. "But it is equally true that there is always sunshine on some part of Uncle Sam's great possessions. When it is 6 p. m. on Attoo's island, Alaska, it is 9:38 a. m. of the day following at Eastport, Me. If we locate the centre of the United States, calculating it at midway between longitude 67 of Eastport and longitude 193 of Attoo's island, it will be found on the 130th degree of longitude, about 280 miles west of San Francisco, in the Pacific ocean."

JACK LANGDON'S CELEBRATION

Or, the Grand Duke and the Fire Crackers.

BY GERALD SRENAN.

I.

"I don't care if he is a grand duke! He has spoiled my Fourth o' July!"

And Jack Langdon shook his small brown fist after the retreating carriage of his excellency the governor of O——.

Jack Langdon's father was one of the growing number of Americans who have taken up business in Russia. He owned the iron works of V——, and was respected both by foreigners and natives throughout the province governed by the Grand Duke Alexis Alexandrovitch. Relying on this respect, and the favor with which the authorities regarded him, Mr. Langdon had ventured to waylay the grand duke on one of his morning drives, for the purpose of asking certain privileges. The reply of the governor was polite, but none the less decided. He said: "You ask, my dear Monsieur Langdon, that your young son be permitted to celebrate your national holiday, the Fourth of July, by the letting off of certain toy explosives. I regret to have to inform you that such methods of jubilation, while common in America, could not be allowed in Russia. Two years ago your countryman, Monsieur Moreland of the Vralsk mills, requested a like favor, and was reluctantly refused. The fact is that our laws strictly forbid the use of explosives in any shape or form. My good cousin, the late czar, enacted the law, immediately after his father had been slain by the nihilists. Firecrackers, in themselves harmless, would give the nihilists a chance to introduce dynamite."

"But surely," protested Mr. Langdon, "a tiny demonstration in honor of the birth of a friendly nation——"

The grand duke raised his hand deprecatingly.

"I cannot help it," he said, "but such is the law. Your son will have to forego his cannon crackers, I fear, this Fourth of July."

And then, signalling to his outriders, the governor drove on, leaving Mr. Langdon rather annoyed, and little Jack very angry indeed.

II.

"I think it's a shame," soliloquized Jack, stalking moodily away; "and if ever I get to be president of the United States I'll remember this to Russia. It won't seem like a Fourth of July at all! Just think! all the fellows at home are having heaps of fun with firecrackers and squibs, while I must be satisfied with a few flags that don't make any noise at all."

It is proverbial that human nature urgently craves the particular luxury which it cannot obtain; and so Jack Langdon (although he might have covered the district for a dozen versts with stars and stripes, besides making speeches and beating drums to his heart's content, was not happy because the grand duke had interdicted firecrackers.

Despite his father's remonstrances, Jack refused to be consoled. It was his first Fourth away from home, and he yearned with a mighty yearning for the "bang-bang" of the patriotically exploded cracker. And the more he thought it over the more he hated the Russian government in general, and the province of V—— in particular.

Brooding over his rebuff, Jack sauntered along the roadway until he encountered the familiar teleque driven by Uncle Petrouchka, a neighboring peasant, with whom he had picked up some sort of acquaintance. To Jack's surprise, Uncle Petrouchka did not seem so friendly as usual—in fact, the old farmer only acknowledged the boy's salute by a gruff inclination of his head, and shook his mare's rein to urge her to a faster pace.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Jack. "What can be the matter with Uncle Petrouchka? This is not fair day at V——, so he cannot have taken too much vodka. I have done nothing to offend him, and I can't understand why he should act like this. Hello, Uncle Petrouchka! what has happened to make you so grumpy?"

But Petrouchka, answering only by a grunt, whipped up his shaggy mare, and the teleque disappeared round a corner.

III.

Jack's curiosity was aroused, and, for the nonce, he forgot all about the governor's refusal of his petition. At this point the road took a sort of long loop, so as to touch at a certain neighboring village; so that it was possible for Jack, by cutting sharply across country, to come out ahead of Petrouchka's lumbering farm wagon, two versts further on. Across country went Jack, skirting the borders of the forest and encountering no living being until he once more leaped into the hard white roadway on the opposite side of the loop.

"This is a great joke on Uncle Petrouchka!" he cried. "How the old fellow will cross himself and wonder to see me here before him."

Then it occurred to Jack to give the teleque driver a surprise; and stepping into a little wood of pine and birch, he crouched down in the grass to await Petrouchka's coming.

But the first wayfarers to pass along the quiet road came from the opposite direction—that in which Moscow lay. Peering out of his hiding place, Jack Langdon saw that these travelers were three in number, that they journeyed afoot, and that each carried upon his back a heavy pack like that borne by pedlers. He also noticed that, although the three were dressed in caps and sheepskin coats like ordinary peasants, their swarthy faces presented a keen, crafty aspect.

"This is the grove, Anton," said one of the men, as they came abreast of the spot where the little American lay. "I remember the trees.....We had better set down the packs and wait for our friend the peasant."

"Set them down lightly then," cautioned another, as he deposited his burden with what seemed to Jack extraordinary care on the soft, grassy bank. "Anything like a jar might send us all to the blessed land above——"

"Where there are no czars and no governor generals," added the third, with a little laugh. Then all three set down their packs, and sat cautiously beside them.

"The peasant is late," said the last speaker, after a pause. "I hope, Michael Demitrovitch, that you have not scared him away."

"On the contrary," said the man addressed, "I think I have scared him hitcher. I told him frankly that unless he came the band would cut his throat as he slept——Moreover, I tickled his fancy with the reward."

"You did not let him suspect what the packs contain, I hope?" asked the one called Anton.

"Certainly not——He thinks we are simply smuggling rare Swiss clocks into V——. The packs loaded into his telecque, he will return to the farmhouse. Tomorrow he has a lease to haul a load of vegetables from the market garden of this Yankee mill owner, Langdon, into the city. He will carry the packs under his vegetables and deposit them unsuspected, in the care of our good friend Feodor Michaelovitch, the tavern keeper. Once in Feodor's hands, the rest is easy."

Michael Dimitrovitch slapped his knee joyously.

"Aha!" he said. "It is easy indeed. ——Down the cellar stairs to Feodor's inn, and thence through the mine to the palace vaults——Ho! Ho! It will be a sad day for the grand duke, the fourth day of July. Those three little boxes of dynamite will blow the record chamber into atoms. All the incriminating documents will be destroyed—those documents which the grand duke has spent so many years gathering together. Perhaps even his excellency himself and a few of his officers may—but let us hope for the best!"

The other two nihilists laughed in chorus as their companion boasted of the coming destruction of the grand duke's record room—wherein so many manuscripts dangerous to the existence of their brotherhood were stored. As for Jack Langdon, young as he was, he could not help but understand the nature of the plot which had unraveled itself before him, and he shuddered involuntarily as he glanced at the three heavy packs, which he now knew to contain dynamite. All

"Aha!" he said, "it is easy indeed."

his bitter resentment against the grand duke was now forgotten, and, burrowing deeper into the deep grass, he awaited developments, while pondering with all his might over some means of preventing the threatening outrage.

IV.

Presently along the road came the rumble of Uncle Petrouchka's teleque. Jack saw the three conspirators lift up their packs and go to meet the old peasant. The perilous boxes were loaded into the wagon; he saw money change hands, and then Uncle Petrouchka drove off toward his farm, while the three men passed the little wood once more, walking at a quick pace toward the north. Hardly were they out of sight than Jack sprang to his feet and set off along the road in the wake of Uncle Petrouchka.

Late that night a score of police surrounded the farm house of the old farmer, dragged him out of bed and captured the packs of dynamite. Dragged by torchlight to the steps of a carriage near by, Petrouchka was horrified to perceive therein the Grand Duke Alexis Alexandrovitch, seated beside his little acquaintance, Jack Langdon. When he learned that what he thought were packages of smuggled clocks really contained deadly explosives, Petrouchka broke down utterly, and told the whole story, giving descriptions of the three conspirators, which afterwards led to their capture, and completely verifying the account conveyed to the grand duke by little Jack Langdon.

Jack had saddled his own pony, and ridden, at full gallop, into V——, where he found the governor at a brilliant banquet. The news of nihilistic conspiracy, however, secured him an audience with the result that Petrouchka's house was surrounded, the dynamite captured and the state records saved.

"And now, my little hero," said the governor, when all was over, "what rewards can I confer upon you for the great service you have done to Russia?"

Jack thought a moment and then answered: "First I should like poor old Uncle Petrouchka to get off, and secondly, I want leave to explode firecrackers on the Fourth of July."

With an amused smile, the grand duke wrote the following order, and handed it to the petitioner:

"For the reason that Ivan Ivanovitch Langdon has placed the empire under an obligation, it is hereby ordained.

"First—That the prisoner Petrouchka be remanded indefinitely in the custody of the said Ivan Ivanovitch.

"Second—That the said Ivan Ivanovitch be permitted on the Fourth of July next ensuing to explode firecrackers and squibs in such quantities as he thinks fit, in honor of his native country.

"And third—That the municipality of V—— be ordered to supply the said Ivan Ivanovitch with one ton of the very best firecrackers which its merchants can import across the frontier at the expense of the government.

"Given under my hand and seal.

"(Signed) ALEXIS ALEXANDRVITCH,
"Governor for the Czar."

And so Jack Langdon spent a happy Fourth of July in Russia after all.

DRAGGED BY TORCHLIGHT TO THE STEP OF A CARRIAGE.

Our Congress.

The following appropriate and keen bit of sarcasm is from the Washington News Letter. The house of Reed met on Monday, as usual. The speaker took the chair and said to himself: "Mr. Speaker, you will now come to order." He further remarked: "I do not believe in the efficacy of prayer, hence we will dispense with the ceremony today." Then he stated that the proceedings of the precious meeting would be considered approved without reading.

The speaker then announced, "as there was no unfinished business on hand, and even if there was I do not consider myself a quorum at this stage of the game, hence we will pass the order." Throwing his eye to a cock on the lift side, he said: "Did I hear a motion to adjourn? Well, I should smile. My hearing is very acute, and when it comes to adjourning, I am a quorum from quorumville."

He put the question: "If I am in favor of adjourning, I will please signify by saying aye. If I am opposed, I don't know myself. I have it. The house is adjourned." So ended the great proceedings of the house of representatives, which stands nearer to the people than any other branch of the government.

FOUGHT WITH CUSTER.

Major Mathey, Retired, Says Reno Was to Blame.

Denver Times: Major E. G. Mathey, U. S. A., retired, of 1767 Vine street, this city, who was with Captain Benteen in charge of the pack train that General Custer had under his command at the battle of the Little Big Horn, on June 25, 1876, says the recent accounts of the battle throw discredit upon the great general. The newspaper accounts published a few days ago are in some instances inaccurate, according to Major Mathey, who says the life of Custer, as published by Frederick Whitaker, brevet captain of the Sixth New York veteran cavalry, shows Custer to have been a brave and careful soldier. Major Mathey says Whittaker's publication is the best account of the life of the Indian fighter.

Major Reno, in his report, blamed Custer, but Major Mathey says the blame is not where it belongs. An extract from the publication named, reads: "Reno marched until he came to the village, dismounted and occupied a timber bottom, which completely sheltered him and his horses. Girard (the interpreter), says, corroborated by Herndon, a scout, not many Indians in sight at this time, and firing at 500 and 900 yards. So long was the range that Charley Reynolds, another scout, said: 'No use firing at this range; we will have a better chance by and by.' An officers present says that Reno mounted and dismounted, and then mounted again in hot haste, and made what figures in his report as a 'charge.' He is the only person I have heard call it by that name.

"The surgeon present says there was only one man wounded before Reno abandoned the timber, and his loss begun when he was making the charge, men and horses shot from behind. Think of the charge they must have made, across the Little Horn, and were checked in their flight by Benteen running into them. I say running into them, because it was mere accident. But where was Custer? He moved down to the lower end of the village from three to four miles. How long did Reno engage the Sioux village? Not more than 30 minutes. What is the conclusion? That Reno was in and out of the fight before Custer was engaged. If further proof is wanting, it is found in the fact that Reno says in his report he heard Custer firing from the top of the hill, to which he retreated."

The foregoing is the statement of an officer who was with the expedition, and who examined the ground. Whittaker himself says: "No general can do anything if his colonels do not support him; no colonel can fight a cavalry regiment under Upton's tactics if his battalion commanders slight, disobey, or even misunderstand his orders. Custer was a peculiar man. He fought in a peculiar way, and needed to have men under him used to his rapid, energetic style, and who understood him. Did Reno understand him, and was he used to him? The official record says not. He had never served under Custer in the field, nor seen an Indian fight since the civil war."

Facts furnished by a friend of Major Reno are as follows: "At the time Reno ceased his forward movement no man had been killed or wounded, but the cloud of dust denoted an immense number of Indians a short way off, and several times that number between us and that cloud, which was over the village, advancing in their peculiar manner and passing to our left and rear. * * * The command was dismounted, the horses placed in a wood, and the men deployed on foot across the plain.

"The number of Indians continued to increase and surround us. Colonel Reno ordered us to prepare to mount, which, of course, took every one to the wood. We were mounted as though to charge, and in an instant afterward dismounted, and I supposed we were to fight it out there, when a fire opened from the rear through the brush. * * * We were ordered to mount. I was by the side of Colonel Reno, going out of the wood, and asked if we were going to charge through. He said yes, and the command moved, Colonel Reno in the lead. I was here separated from the command for a time, and on turning towards it, saw it moving toward the ford that led up the hill. The column was fighting at close range from all sides. I rejoined with difficulty, and followed close along the rear to the ford, and here the confusion began. Previously the men had kept in column, using their pistols. When the ford was reached, it was each man for himself. In passing up the hill, beyond the river, horses and men were joined together, and some of the hindmost suffered necessarily."

Major Mathey says it can be seen from even such small extracts from the authentic account of the proceedings of the fatal day that Major Reno was to blame, and not General Custer.

What He Wanted.

Cincinnati Enquirer: "Here is a mighty good book," said the persistent train boy, "'How to Win a Woman.'"

"Say, look here," said the baldheaded passenger, "if you've got one on how to lose 'em I'll buy it of you at your own price."

Not a Mere Separation.

Cincinnati Enquirer: Wallace—I hear that you got separated from your money while you were at the seashore.

Hargreaves—Separated? It was an absolute divorce.