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The... Professor's Way.

By HENRY
LEWIS.

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Professor Sweetzer, naturalist for a certain New England college, was a little man. He was round shouldered. He was awkward on his legs. He wore goggles for his weak eyes, and he arrived at the age of fifty-five without having loved. As between bugs and beetles and women, the bugs and beetles were ahead. It was only on rare occasions and when under the stress of excitement that he took the slightest notice of the other sex. Even when he did sit up and take notice of them he could not have recalled half an hour later what he said or whether they had red hair or black.

On a certain day it came to the ears of Professor Sweetzer that a portion of the vertebrae of a whale had been found on a farm in Connecticut. He arrived on the spot next day and verified the find. On an occasion thousands of years before an old bull whale had decided to take a trip inland and through some error of judgment had left his bones in a gravel pit. A piece of the backbone six feet long had been uncovered. The professor wanted to excavate for the rest. Where there is six feet of whale you can take it that there is more. He engaged board at the Widow Webb's and hired a man to wield the pick and shovel and thus went to work.

The Widow Webb was fat and forty and childless. She was worth a stony farm and \$900 in cash. A still older sister lived with her, and the farm work was done by a hired man with the good old fashioned name of Hiram Stebbins. Hiram was thirty-five and drank nothing stronger than cider, but he thought deeply. One of them was that if he married the widow he would become the possessor of the farm and \$900. He had been thinking of this and taking the farm work easy when Professor Sweetzer put in an appearance. Hiram looked at him and grinned. If any one had told him that within a week he would be jealous of that little dried up and humped specimen of humanity, he would have roared with laughter.

As soon as the professor had inspected the bone and become enthusiastic, he was a changed man. He became a fluent talker. He became fatherly toward the widow. He called her "my child," and often took her hand and held it while he tried to make her understand that a whale was a cachelot and that a cachelot could stand on his tail in the water as well as on his head.

When Hiram witnessed the hand holding act, he quit grinning. He was mad all that day as he heeded corn. He was mad when he came up to supper. He was mad when one of the cows kicked him at milking time. While the professor took a ramble in search of beetles, Hiram carried the milk into the kitchen and began:

"Widder Webb, how does it feel to have a baboon holding your hand?"

"Hiram, what do you mean?" was demanded.

"I mean that I have seen you and that little runt of a man squeezing hands a dozen times, and neither of you seems to care who stands by. Fell in love mighty quick, didn't you?"

"Look here, Mr. Stebbins, you have no right to talk to me this way. You know who the professor is. He's a great man. He has taught me more about whales in the last three days than I knew in all my life before. He also knows all about birds and bugs and bees. It's twice as interesting to hear him talk as it is to hear a sermon."

"Has a feller got to squeeze your hand to talk to you about whales?" asked Hiram.

"He hasn't squeezed it. That's simply his way. He is a fatherly man. When he gets to talking he don't know whether he has got hold of my hand or the leg of a chair. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to talk as you do. I always thought there was a mean and jealous streak in you, and now it's come out."

"Oh, it has, eh?" muttered Hiram. "Perhaps if I went around looking for the bones of an old whale, I'd be all right."

"I guess it would be better than grunting around. You don't care for educated folks, but I do. I was born that way. If I was to ask you about whales, you couldn't tell me anything."

"But the professor could?"

"Yes, sir, he could. Hiram Stebbins, do you know that the Latin name of whale is *Physeter macrocephalus*? Do you know that we get spermaceti and ambergris from its body? Do you know that he sometimes reaches the length of seventy or eighty feet? You stand there with a mean look on your face, and yet let me tell you that the sperm whale can swallow a man at a gulp. There are no teeth in the upper jaw, but the lower one has from twenty-five to thirty on each side. The eyes are small and placed far back in the head."

"Well?" grunted the hired man. "Well, the cachelot feeds upon fishes and cephalopodous mollusks. You probably thought he fed upon turnips. The whale is gregarious. Five hundred or more have been seen in a single herd. Terrible conflicts often take place among the males, and it is not unusual to find the lower jaws deformed. The left eye is said to be smaller than the right, and the whale cannot see behind him."

"All from the professor!" sneered Hiram as he bowed and walked out to fasten the beneop for the night.

When the professor wasn't assisting

his man to dig for bones he was hunting bugs and bees and butterflies. To his great joy, he discovered a seven spot bumblebee. As all of us know, a bumblebee is of dark color, with yellow spots on his back. There are often from five to six spots and only rarely a seven spotter. This bee, along with a dozen others, was placed in a pasteboard box, and when the house was reached the box was deposited on a window sill of the veranda. The professor had told the widow all about whales. As soon as he had a little spare time he meant to tell her all about bumblebees. Two days had gone by when the moment came. The bone digging labors of the day were over and supper disposed of when the professor and the widow took chairs on the veranda. He had found the shell of a small turtle in the gravel that day, and he set out to first explain about that. Hiram Stebbins was greasing his boots and chewing the rag in the kitchen and could hear every word. He also knew all about that box of bumblebees on the window sill.

According to Professor Sweetzer, turtles had hearts and lungs, hopes and aspirations. He would even go so far as to say that turtles loved and were loved in return. They did not sing like a bird nor bellow like a frog, but they were supposed to have musical ears for all that. In his earnestness the man got hold of the widow's hand. It was only his way. If he had got hold of her ear it would have been the same. He had called her his dear woman and his dear child half a dozen times, and in his lecture he had got as far back as the turtle's markings when Hiram Stebbins could restrain himself no longer. He saw red. He thirsted for gore. He rose up to do murder, but checked his onslaught and walked softly into the sitting room. The widow was up and the bee box before him, while the backs of the sitters were toward him. He lifted the cover and stepped back.

The dozen bumbles had been hopping mad and calling each other names for the two days. The cover was no sooner off than they swarmed to get room to square off. As they caught sight of the professor and the widow, however, the hatchet was instantly buried. There was a wild swoop, followed by wilder yells. Old seven spot led in the fray. He it was who lifted the professor over the veranda rail and let him drop among the hollyhocks while the rest were paying the widow attentions. The professor ran and was followed, the widow shrieked and was stung again and again. It was not until Hiram rushed out with smoke and flame that she was rescued and a neighbor woman sent for to treat the lumps and bumps and put her to bed. The professor returned not. Old seven spot wouldn't let him. No news came from him as the hours of night wore on, and Hiram wondered, but next morning the widow received a note reading:

"My dear child, please send my satchel by bearer. I'm off after more bones. The turtle, as I meant to have told you, is utterly without ambition."

"Waal," said Hiram to himself as he worked in the cornfield that day, "there was the professor and me and the widder and the whale and the bumblebees, and if I hain't come out top o' the heap, who has?"

The Ship's Log.

The ship's log consists of a log chip and a log line. The log chip is a piece of board, shaped like the fourth part of a circle, loaded with lead on the round side, so that it will stand up in the water. The log line is 150 to 200 fathoms long. It is wound upon a large reel, so held as to let it run out easily. The line is divided into equal parts by bits of string run through it, each marked by the number of knots in it; hence these divisions are called knots. The log chip when thrown into the water stands still and draws out the log line as fast as it unwinds, and the speed of the ship is shown by the number of knots that run out in half a minute. The usual length of a knot is 47.3 feet. When it is known how many of these run out in half a minute, it is easy to calculate how many would run out in an hour by multiplying by 120. The record of the heaving of the log, as well as all important things happening on shipboard, is made in a log book.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Open to Conviction.

No rock was ever more firmly fixed than were Mrs. Manser's opinions, but she considered herself of an extremely pliable disposition, with a mind open to conviction on all sides.

"It's the strangest thing to me, the way the rest of the family talk as if I were set in my views," she said one day to her nephew William's bride, with whom she had been laboring on the subject of calling cards for more than an hour. "It seems to me you're sort of taking the same tone," she continued, looking sharply at the young woman, "and I don't want you to. There isn't anybody in this world that's readier to be convinced she's in the wrong than I am by people who know more than I. All they've got before 'em, ever, is to prove to me that they do know more than I—and I tell you, my dear, there hasn't one of 'em ever been able to in this family!"—Youth's Companion.

The Koran.

The Koran, or Al Koran, the sacred book of the Mohammedans, was written about 610 A. D. by Mohammed. It is a prose poem of 6,000 verses, the object of which was to show that God had told everything that was worth telling to Mohammed and that those who doubted it should be slain in this world and turned over to Allah to be eternally damned in the world to come. There are today some 200,000,000 of human beings who profess to believe in the Koran.

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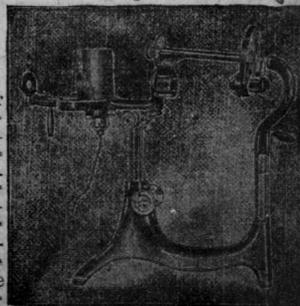
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