

A FEW RAT TALES.

An Exciting Hunt in the Sewers of New York.

A Drab and Yellow Rat as Large as a Cat - A Modern "Pied Piper of Hamelin Town" - How a Watchman Calls Thousands of Rats About Him.

Not long ago the writer attended a rat hunt in the Canal-street sewer, New York, at the invitation of Capt. Webb, who had been superintendent of the sewerage system of the metropolis for over thirty years.

Our party consisted of nine men and twelve thoroughbred rat dogs of superior merit. Preparations had been made to attack a host of rats at every possible point of vantage.

Our party entered the sewer by a row-boat from the river front near the midnight hour, when business in the city



WE ENTERED THE SEWER IN A BOAT.

had been suspended for the day. The scene was that of a huge tunnel, the strong old brick walls being coated with grim yellow and gray slime.

Being past the midnight hour, when all business had ceased, and the city at large was asleep, very little of the usual flow—as in the daytime—was visible.

Everything was quiet, the almost inky stream at our feet seeming blacker than ever, and the current went sluggishly along, suggestive of the classic river Styx, imaginations of goblins, imps and spirits hovering here and there.

These ruminations were broken when Capt. Webb, who had heretofore kept silent, ordered a halt. We stood still. His workmen had hung up lanterns on spikes driven into the walls of the tunnel, and thus there was enough light thrown forward from the arch above to enable us to see, in the shadows beyond, what seemed to us thousands of electric sparks.



HE STRUCK THE FLOOR WITH HIS CLUB.

them they glared upon us. They seemed to realize their peril and appreciate their desperate condition.

The string of dogs, which up to this time had been kept in the background and were controlled with no little difficulty, were let loose and dashed impetuously forward toward the hosts of rats.

Instantaneously there was a transformation scene. The whole atmosphere seemed full of dogs and rats. The snarls and howls of the canines mingling with the screams and squeals of the rodents was a pandemonium of the most appalling character.

struggle continued, and at times it was almost impossible to distinguish dogs from rats as they sprang, leaped, clinched, snapped and tumbled over each other in the mad contest.

The most that we could see was a grim, weird sort of merry-go-round of heads, tails, legs, paws, teeth, claws and fur of rats and dogs.

Rats cannot be domesticated, but they can be tamed to a certain degree, and, although by their nature always shy, they can be made familiar with those who are constantly near them.

He surveyed the situation with an intelligence worthy of a military hero. He knew the watchman well, but he was evidently suspicious of my appearance. He sat on his haunches, about twenty

feet away from us, and stared and glared curiously. Far away in his rear, in the shadowy background, could be dimly seen the forms of others of his tribe, who, with the exception of inaudible squeals, seemed to be awaiting developments.



HE SET THE LANTERN DOWN AND COMMENCED TO PLAY.

The watchman took from his pocket an ordinary comb, which he wrapped with thin paper, and, placing it next to his teeth, began vibratory sounds, with rising and falling inflections.

The old king rat suddenly arose on his hind legs and whirled his head to and fro like a marshal reviewing his forces, and thereupon for a moment all the others remained motionless and quiet.

After a short pause he commenced whistling a soft low minor key tune. To my immense amazement some of the "varmints" joined with modulated squeals and means, as if in mimicry.

Then he began to tap the floor with his club, at which signal the throng of rodents commenced to encircle the old king rat in a processional dance and galop.

FINANCE AND COMMERCE.

New York Stock Market. New York, Dec. 19.—There was a big break in industrials to-day shortly after noon. The Stock Exchange was the scene of wildest excitement; in fact there was a condition of affairs bordering on a panic.

Chicago Gas broke from 90% to 83, Distilling and Cattle Feeding from 64 to 57, American Sugar from 107 1/2 to 104 1/2, National Lead from 44 1/2 to 39 1/2, Cordage from 138 1/2 to 134 1/2, American Tobacco from 120 to 117, Linseed oil from 41 1/2 to 37, and Starch from 32 1/2 to 30.

Table with columns for Stock Quotations and Bid prices for various companies like Western Union, Adams Express, American Express, etc.

Table with columns for Bonds and prices for various government and corporate bonds like Oregon Improvements, Alabama, Louisiana Consols, etc.

Table with columns for Produce and Merchandise and prices for various goods like Flour, Rye, Wheat, etc.

granulated, 4 11-16 @ 5. Molasses foreign nominal; New Orleans quiet, steady. Rice steady, fairly active; domestic fair to extra, 4 @ 5 1/2; Japan, 4 1/2 @ 5.

Chicago Markets. Chicago, Dec. 19.—Leading futures ranged as follows: WHEAT—December, 70 1/2; January, 71 1/2; May, 75 1/2; July, 75 1/2.

Table with columns for Chicago Markets and prices for various commodities like Wheat, Corn, Oats, Pork, Lard, etc.

A Million Pound Bank Note. WHAT would you do if you were a stranger in London, with no money except a million pound bank note in your pocket, and some good reasons why you were afraid to go to the Bank of England and get it changed?

Y. M. C. A. Notes. The old rooms were closed last night to the public, as the work of tearing up is now going on. The new quarters will be opened after Christmas.

John Porter, a fireman on the Shenandoah Valley railroad, was severely cut across the abdomen with a knife at a late hour Saturday night while engaged in an altercation with several people in a disreputable house in Potlicker flat.

B. L. Wright was assessed \$15 yesterday morning by Justice Turner for assaulting his wife southwest of the city. He was arrested and brought here by H. L. Luckett and John Whitesell.

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MR. C. D. MAHONEY, agent for the Canton Steel Roofing Company, (in this city) wishes to inform the public generally that the destruction of their factories by fire on December 8, has in no way affected him in receiving orders for goods in his line.

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THE ROANOKE TRUST, LOAN AND SAFE DEPOSIT COMPANY, ROANOKE, VA.—EIGHTH ANNUAL STATEMENT, JAN. 1, 1892.

Table with columns for Resources and Liabilities, showing financial details like Loans and discounts, Stocks, Real estate, etc.

P. L. TERRY, President. S. W. JAMISON, Secretary and Treasurer. Jan 19-1st