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Story of a Clever Pony

Great numbers of wild geese were killed along the Texas coast during the past winter, as happens every year. That region divides with the Dakotas in the fall the honor of being the greatest goose field on the American continent.

The increasing shyness of the birds was more marked than ever. The geese have been shot at so much in the same territory that they have not only grown wiser, but many of them have ceased visiting that region.

It is no longer possible to kill quantities of geese in Texas by simple pass shooting or digging pits on the Gulf sandbars.

There died not long ago in the Nueces region a Mexican poacher named Gregorio who in the winter sold geese by the dozen when other men could not get a feather. All of that country is in vast pastures fenced by barbed wire and Gregorio being a market hunter, was ordered to stay out of them all.

In order to keep him out the gates, which are far apart, were locked and only the ranch bosses had keys. Still Gregorio would continue to go from pasture to pasture, covering thirty miles in a day and to show up in Corpus Christi or Rockport at night with Canada geese hanging to his saddle and strung all over him.

One day an overseer of cowboys saw him a mile away on the prairie and, being curious, dismounted and watched him. Gregorio was on foot 700 yards from a large flock of geese. His pony had been unsaddled and unbridled.

Secret of a Hunter's Great Success Explained.

Keeping the horse between him and the geese, the Mexican began to circle around them. Now and then the pony stopped to take a mouthful of grass. Any man, let alone a goose, would have taken him for a loose animal grazing on the prairie.

In course of an hour he had been worked within fifty yards of the thickest part of the bunch. Some of the stragglers were not twenty yards from him.

Then Gregorio stepped from behind him and fired one barrel at the geese on the prairie and another as they rose. He gathered five or six, then rode to the division fence a quarter of a mile away.

Evidently it was his intention to enter the next pasture. The fence was of three strands of wire, the lowest one two feet from the ground.

Gregorio got down from the saddle and at a word from him the horse sunk to his knees, then turned upon his side. Gregorio took him by the headstall and pulled his head under the fence, then took him by the tail and pulled his hindquarters under, and so, pulling first at head and then at tail, worked him through.

Once clear of the bottom wire, the pony rose, shook himself and stood to be mounted as if nothing but of the ordinary had happened. The mystery of Gregorio's ability to go from pasture to pasture in search of geese and ducks was explained and the ranch boss was so tickled by it that he instructed his men to let the Mexican alone.

Country Road on St. Joseph River, Michigan.



To the dweller in the country, in the western states, at least, this picture will be recognized as typical of the beauty of the average country road. Particularly at this season of the year are these scenes a source of delight to the worshipper of nature. The worker in the hot and dusty city may be pardoned if he pauses to ask himself whether all the joys of living are monopolized by his kind.

Photo by Eugene J. Hall, Chicago.

TO CATCH SQUIRRELS

Advice Given by a Farmer Puzzles New York Man on His Vacation.

Although there are few men of his age more active than William Curtis Gibson of East Houston street, the oldest survivor of the Volunteer Fire Department, he gives strong proof of his Scotch ancestry occasionally by his inability to appreciate a joke.

Mr. Gibson was born in New York and he has always lived here. His friends say that only once in his life has he traveled more than ten miles away from this city. That was last summer, when he went up to the Catskills.

It was on this trip that he met a farmer who disgusted him with everything rural. Mr. Gibson says he never met a more stupid man, and when he tells his squirrel story to prove it all his friends laugh. The experience speaks for itself.

Mr. Gibson was interested in the farm at first because it was a novelty. At the end of the first week he said to the farmer:

"Say, this is great. I am glad I come. I wish that I might take some of your squirrels back to New York with me as souvenirs of this trip."

"Sure you can," said the farmer. "Just go out and help yourself, to as many as you want. I've got more of them than I want."

"Thank you, very much, but how will I get them?"

"Catch 'em, of course. It's easy when you know how."

"All right, you tell me how and I'll catch a few."

"Well," said the farmer, "first off you creep up as near as you can get to them."

"Yes," said Mr. Gibson.

"And then you make the right kind of a noise to attract them and they will come to you."

"What kind of a noise ought I to make?" asked Mr. Gibson eagerly.

"Just make a noise like a nut," replied the farmer, and off he walked.

When Mr. Gibson tells this story he says positively that a nut does not make any noise and that a farmer who had lived in the country all his life without discovering that fact is too stupid to live anywhere else.—New York Sun.

Took the Starch Out of Station Autocrat

"That reminds me," said the traveling man, "of an experience at McLeansboro, Ill., years ago. It was a bitter cold Sunday morning when I went to the depot to take a train west. It was the only one that day and due in about an hour. The waiting room was cold. Huddled in a corner was a country woman, a waiting passenger, with two small children, both crying from the cold. An empty stove, no coal, no matches, no agent in sight."

"While debating what to do to relieve a trying situation, I thought I heard a noise from within the ticket office, which was hidden from view by a window covered with paint. I listened closely and soon distinguished the hum of voices from within."

"A little scratch in the paint covering the ticket window revealed on close examination four young men on the inside by a warm stove playing cards. One was evidently the agent."

"Enraged, I kicked on the door and alternately rattled on the window till, with a slow, hesitating shove, it went up a little and from within the agent, a youth with a surly air, demanded, 'What do you want?' Boiling with rage, yet imperturbable as a millpond, I asked for a telegraph blank, which was flung to me, and this is what I wrote:

"General Manager, F. & O. S. W. R. R.—Dear Sir: Send competent agent to care for McLeansboro station. Present agent playing cards in office; waiting room no fire; passengers freezing."

"As placid as if nothing was out of

the ordinary, I handed him a \$5 bill with the request to take the pay out of it and send the message at once. Before half the words were counted by the autocrat of a moment ago, he was an humble servant of the present. Apologies and explanations by the score were forthcoming, intermingled with pleading, that to send it would involve ruin for his career.

"It was my turn to assume the role of dictator; and if ever a fire was kindled in a hurry, then was the time. With all the dignity due to a prince and his suite the freezing family and I were treated.

"Passing through a year after, I asked the 'bus man how the agent was getting along. The story had evidently leaked out in McLeansboro, for he said: 'He got a dressing down last winter from an official of the road who happened along in disguise, and it has made a man of him.' I was that official, a plain traveling man, but the 'bus man was none the wiser."—Indianapolis News.

"Cyclists and Hens" Warned.
The church in Buecken, a German village of about 1,000 inhabitants, has a notice board which bears the following legend in large letters: "Cyclists and hens are forbidden to wander around the churchyard."

Necessity is the mother of advertisements.

One convincing proof of good citizenship is the prompt payment of your bills.

Christ's Crown of Thorns Preserved.

So many conflicting stories have been written from time to time about the Crown of Thorns that I may be allowed to make an authoritative statement on the subject. In the first place, I may venture to say that within my personal knowledge I doubt if twenty people in the whole of Christendom ever saw it, and even know where it is kept. In the United States, outside of myself, my wife and our daughter, who was too little to remember, I do not believe that a single individual ever saw the Crown of Thorns, unless Mgr. Ireland, who is a Sulpician as well as the keeper of the crown, was lately granted the favor of seeing it. If any one would like to know the reason why I was thus favored I may reply that the crown, which was entrusted to the care of two members of my family almost five hundred years ago, is today through some accidental circumstances in the keeping of my first cousin, the archpriest and dean of the canons of Notre Dame of Paris. A general error is that the crown is made of thorns, some pretending that while others claim it was made of it was platted from blackberry, white thorn or even of wild rose. The crown which I saw, and which is claimed to be the authentic one, is made of bullrush, through which

thorns are inserted. According to the gospels of Matthew (xx., 17), John (xxix., 2) and Mark (xxvii., 29), "the soldiers platted a crown of thorns," but the text does not mean, so my cousin, the archpriest explained to me, that thorns were used exclusively.

The crown was of a size to fit an ordinary head (its exact diameter is twenty-one centimeters and about three inches in thickness), yellowish from age and entirely made of bullrush, of the kind used in the Orient to make fruit baskets; that is, small, round bullrushes, two or three feet in length. As to the three remaining thorns, as far as I could judge, they belonged to a variety of parasite thorny bushes quite common in Asia Minor and Northern Africa. They were about three inches long.—Dr. Melite E. Chartier in New York Press.

A Real Help.

The Woman's Aid Society of New York has done great work in helping the poor. Like all charitable organizations, it has to contend with ingratitude, stupidity and wilful improvidence. The Commercial Advertiser relates one instance that is amusing to read of, but must have been a trifle discouraging to the society.

To a poor woman whose husband

was in jail they gave some clothing and ten dollars in money, thinking that she would know best what she wanted and so spend the money more wisely than they.

A week after the gift had been made a deputation of members called at the squalid home to see the results of their assistance. They found no improvement in the condition of the family.

"Well, Mrs. Nolan," asked one of them, "how are you getting along?"

"Fine," said Mrs. Nolan.

"Did the clothes fit, and did you find a use for the money?"

"Sure, the clothes fitted fine, an' the childer looked so nice I had all their pictures took wid the money ye gave me, an' 'm goin' to have me own took this week to send to the old folks in Ireland."—Youth's Companion.

Sheldon Talk in Politics.

They are talking of running Rev. Charles M. Sheldon for mayor of Topeka, Kan. Mr. Sheldon is the author of the book called "In His Steps," and about two years ago edited the Topeka Capital for a week to show how he believed Christ would run a newspaper.

"Men are led by trifles."—Napoleon.

STOLE MACHINE AT HIS LEISURE

A Tennessee Blacksmith's Singular Acquaintance of a Traction Engine.

"Ours is a peaceful section," said Col. Dan Turner of Memphis, Tenn., to a group of western men who had been discussing robberies, hold-ups and crime in general. "But when we do a thing down in Tennessee, we do it right, and robbing people or corporations is done to the queen's taste when one of our citizens sets out to do it."

"Not long ago it became necessary for one of the railroads to build a small branch line, and a traction engine was sent down there with the first load of road-building material to haul ties on heavy trucks from a little mountain hamlet near where the road was being built. When the workmen had finished hauling the ties the engine was placed alongside the road until it should be convenient to haul it away. It remained beside the road about six months, and when the contractor came along to clear up, he was rather amazed to find that nothing but the boiler of the traction engine remained where he had placed it. To make matters worse, every bolt and rivet that could be removed from the boiler was missing, too. A search was instituted, but the missing parts of the machine could not be found.

"Some time after the theft of his engine the contractor had occasion to drive through the country again, and stopped at a negro's blacksmith shop to have a shoe fastened on his horse. While the smithy was at work the contractor walked around the shop, and to his amazement, found in one corner of the place the missing parts of his engine. He immediately charged the negro with stealing it, and the man admitted his guilt. When the contractor had recovered from his surprise at the find, he asked the smithy why he had not taken the boiler, too, and the latter replied that he was making tackle to take to the roadside and left the boiler into his wagon when the contractor took the thing away."

SAYS PING-PONG IS A NUISANCE

Complaint of a Dweller in an Apartment Under the Scene of the Game.

Ping pong has the advantage of being possible in any kind of a room, and it is for that reason especially adapted to the dimensions of the ordinary flat. So it is a favorable diversion with flat dwellers who feel like asking a few friends in for the customary pleasant evening.

"If ping pong is suited to apartments," said one flat dweller, "I would like to say that it is, in my opinion, much more suited to the flat in which it is played than it is to the other apartments in the building."

"The family that lives over me is addicted to the game, and I am familiar with some of the drawbacks of living in such close relations with habitual ping-pongers."

"Regularly every night after dinner I hear the furniture in the drawing-room above me being pulled about the room. I know that the large table is being prepared for the game."

"After that I hear steadily until bedtime the invariable two tones of the bats, ping-pong, ping-pong, as the game goes on. I don't know at what time they stop. I escape to a bedroom before that time and try to go to sleep."

"It is not possible to do anything in the drawing-room in which the constant and unchanging ping pong is heard."

Sign That Failed.

Up on Lexington avenue an enterprising music dealer who desired to call attention to his wares had a sign painted in artistic white letters on a black ground and hung it on his outer wall. It read, "What is home without a piano?"

One dark night along came a painter, with material of his trade in hand, who either had no music in his soul or had a cultivated taste beyond ragtime and the ordinary performer, and added a word to the sign.

When the music dealer arose in the morning he was surprised at the appearance of his sign. It read: "What is home without a piano? Peace."

The final word was ruthlessly obliterated and the sign taken from the outer wall and hung behind the protection of plate glass.—Boston Globe.

This Gander Lived to Be 35.

The great gray gander of Danville, Pa., has passed to his fathers. He was 35 years and a few months old. He was raised by the late J. R. Phillips and at Mr. Phillips' death was bequeathed to his daughter. For some years she kept it and then gave it, a year ago, to Mrs. Agnes Walker of Sidler Hill.

He was blind when he died and had been for a year, and for several months could hardly walk.

He grew bald many years ago, and it is presumed that young, frivolous geese mocked him, for it was his habit to cover his topknot with mud to hide the sign of the years. His death is now a matter of town talk, and if ever a gander was sincerely mourned he is. He was the oldest goose known to the town.

The more a spinster sees of men the better she likes cats.

