

The Calf Path.

One day through the primeval wood
A calf walked home as good calves should;
But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail, as all calves do.
But still he left behind his trail,
And thereby hangs my moral tale.
The trail was taken up next day
By a lone dog that passed that way;
And then a wise bell-wether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,
And drew the flock behind him, too,
As good bell-wethers always do.
And from that day, o'er hill and glade,
Through those old woods a path was made,
And many men wound in and out,
And dodged and turned and bent about,
And uttered words of righteous wrath
Because 'twas such a crooked path;
But still they followed—do not laugh—
The first migrations of that calf,
And through this winding woodway
stalked,
Because he wobbled when he walked.
This forest path became a lane,
Then bent and turned and turned again;
This crooked lane became a road,
Where many a poor horse with his load
Toiled on beneath the burning sun,
And travelled some three miles in one.
And thus a century and a half
They trod the footsteps of that calf.
The years passed on in swiftness fleet,
The road became a village street,
And this, before men were aware,
A city's crowded thoroughfare,
And soon the central street was this
Of a renowned metropolis,
And men two centuries and a half
Trod in the footsteps of that calf.
Each day a hundred thousand rout
Followed the zigzag calf about,
And o'er his crooked journey went
The traffic of a continent.
A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead.
They followed still his crooked way,
And lost one hundred years a day;
For thus such reverence is lent
To well established precedent.
A moral lesson this might teach,
Were I ordained and called to preach.
For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf paths of the mind,
And work away from sun to sun,
To do what other men have done.
They follow in the beaten track,
And out and in and forth and back,
And still their devious course pursue,
To keep the path that others do.
But how the wise old wood-gods laugh
Who saw the first primeval calf!
Ah! many things this tale might teach,
But I am not ordained to preach.
—Sam W. Foss.

No Feathers There.

A policeman who was making his way up an alley off Calhoun street stopped to look over a fence where a colored man was splitting wood. Nothing was said by either for a time, but the colored man finally queried:
"Doan' find no nuisances in dis yere ya'd, I reckon?"
"I wasn't looking for nuisances," replied the officer. A man down here lost seven chickens last night."
"Seven chickens—hu!"
"Yes, seven large, fat, juicy chickens."
"Some one dun riz 'em right off de roost, I reckon?"
"Yes."
"An' dun ola'ar off wid all dat poultry?"
"Yes."
"Hu! Yum—yum! Dat accounts fur it!"
"Accounts for what?" asked the officer.
"Fur yo'r looking into dis back ya'd. I knows what yo' was lookin' fur—fur chicken feeders!"
"Well?"
"Well, jist lemme told yo' sunthin'. In de fust place, I was laid up wid a chill, and couldn't hev gone out had I dun wanted to; and, in de next place, if I had absquatulated dat poultry my twenty y'ars' speerience in de business would hev made me put dem feedees an' heads an' feet whar' de hull creation couldn't find 'em in a week's hunt. No, sah—yo needn't reckon to 'lucidate no asperity by lookin' ober de elongated back fence ob de undersigned!"

Lady (to butcher)—I thought I ordered a calf's tongue of you. Look at this; it is as long as a beef tongue.
Butcher—Beg pardon, madam, that is a calf's tongue; but, you see, it was a female calf.

Mr. Skinner—Now, Patrick, I want you to roll down the lawn, and the children may stay in the yard and watch you.

The new Man-of-all-Work—I'd have yet underhand, sor, that I'm no acrobat; an' if its a circus yes wants for the childer, ye'll have to hire another man.

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Shepherds A'wheel

BICYCLES USED BY THE SHEEP MEN IN CALIFORNIA.

Herding sheep on a bicycle is an innovation introduced by Frank Smith on the wide, roadless plains lying between Fresno slough and the foothills of the coast range, in the western part of Fresno county. Perhaps the wheel will not come into general use for that purpose, as it is nearly always impracticable to ride a bicycle over ranges where sheep find pasturage, but nature has provided one of the finest courses in the world on the open plains of the west side, where the ground is as level as a floor, and the wheelman can often ride fifty miles without changing his course, and all the time over a country where roads are almost unknown, and where not a fence nor a ditch interposes to stop the journey. The cabins of a few homesteaders sometimes meet the view, dotting the horizon here and there, but aside from these there is little or no evidence of civilization in all the country as far as the eye can reach. That region is a dead waste, almost without vegetation, except during the rainy weeks of winter and early spring: When the hot weather comes the short growth of alfalfa dries and the winds sweep every vestige of it from the face of the earth, leaving the ground smooth and level as a race course. This season the unusual rains and the phenomenal warmth have produced a growth of verdure such as has seldom been known there, covering the earth like a carpet. The sheepmen have driven their herds to that quarter from all sides, because pasturage there costs nothing. Frank Smith, who has charge of several herds, breaks the monotony, says the San Francisco Chronicle, by gliding on his wheel from band to band, thus dispensing with a horse and deriving pleasure from what was formerly work. He can round up a herd quicker than a dog can do it, and the dogs seem to view the bicycle with disgust as the latest device of labour saving machinery.

The most novel experience is in riding after coyotes, which always hang on the outskirts of a band of sheep, ready to put a sick or crippled one out of its misery the moment the herder's back is turned. A coyote is able to keep ahead of a bicycle, and enjoys the exercise for the first few miles. But when he's had an hour or two of the sport, and the tireless and unflagging wheel continues to hang upon his line of retreat, the fun begins to wear off, and the long-eared galloper of the plains realizes that the transaction is not intended for a joke. By the time another hour has passed, and ten or a dozen miles more of the level plain have been measured off, and the remorseless wheel continues but little more than two hundred yards in the rear, or perhaps has gained a little, the situation becomes decidedly unpleasant for the coyote. The smile of scorn that curled his lip during the first ten miles of the race, as he looked back, first over one shoulder and then over the other, gradually disappears soon after the second ten miles is entered upon. The animal looks back as often as ever, but the expression on his impudent face seems to say that the joke has been carried far enough, and he is willing to cry quits if the wheel is willing. The coyote is a long winded animal, and it takes a good wheelman to ride one down. Under ordinary circumstances it is impossible, for he will strike for a thicket when he discovers that it is to be a survival of the fittest. But on the west side plains there are so few places of concealment, and the prairies are so level and limitless that the coyote may have to run two or three hours before he can find cover, and the latter part of such a run is a weary one for him. He may be able to escape, but sometimes falls a victim to the revolver of the wheelman, and once in a while he is lassoed, although in such a case he must be shot anyway, for his teeth are called into action as soon as he finds himself at the end of a rope. Besides he is apt to jerk the rider off his wheel by sudden turns.

The jack-rabbit is not so noble game as the coyote from the bicyclist's point of view, but is harder to run down. It is not because of greater speed or greater endurance, but because the rabbit will not run very far in a straight line. When it finds itself pursued it may run in one direction for awhile; but it soon doubles back, and from that time on it runs in circles, or more probably in an angular course, defying the wheelman, and continually keeping out of range of the pistol. Efforts have been made two or three times to run down the only antelope, perhaps, in central California; but the effort did not meet with success, because these animals never venture very far from the foothills of the coast range, and when pursued they run for rough ground. An antelope, after it had drunk its fill, could not outrun a bicycle ten miles on smooth ground. The animals are swift for a mile or two, but cannot keep up their pace long at a time. Those in Fresno county have their home in the brush back of the foothills, and seldom venture onto the plain.