

YOUNG FOLKS.

THE LITTLE TRAP ROBBER.

When a boy, I lived on a great farm in what was then the backwoods of Canada. In those days the country was full of wild beasts and game of various kinds. Bears, wolves, deer, lynxes, foxes and raccoons were very plentiful, as were wild turkeys and geese, grouse, quail and many species of wild ducks; while pigeons used to visit us once or twice a year in flocks so prodigious as often to obscure the sky for hours by their wondrous flights. Through the whole length of the farm ran a large creek, not only well stocked with fish of many sorts, but to which also resorted great numbers of muskrats and minks, and, occasionally, even otters and beavers were to be seen there; so that, altogether, the place was a veritable boys' paradise. By the time I was 11 years old, I had become a fairly skillful trapper, and could even shoot pretty well for so young a boy. In the beginning of September, when the fur was getting good, I used to set traps, baited with clams, crawfish, pieces of meat or the neck of any bird, for mink and muskrats, just beneath the water's surface, along the edges of the creek. Each trap was tied by a long string to a peg set in the bank; and when one of the little animals was caught it would at once take to the water; whence, though always held down long enough to drown by the weight of the trap, its body was easily recovered by simply hauling in the cord.

Mink pelts were at that time worth only 50 cents and muskrats only 12-15 cents each, yet I made quite a little money by this fascinating pursuit. One morning in November, when I went to look after my traps, I found that one of them had been robbed; and on closer inspection I knew, by the color of a little fur sticking to its jaws, that it had contained a mink. Now, we boys, as well as older hunters, considered it the meanest of all things to rob a trap; hence I could not imagine who had played me such a shabby trick. But I was determined to find out if possible; so for several mornings I got up long before daylight to watch my traps, but never saw any one come near them. At the side of the public road, half a mile from our house, lived one of my father's laborers, whom I will call Hawkins. His little boy, Johnny, just my own age, was a playmate and a great favorite of mine. When told of my loss he seemed fully as angry as I could wish, and very earnestly, though not grammatically, exclaimed: "My! don't I wish we could catch the feller who done it!" And we did catch him. About a week after this my father sent me one day to the country store, two miles away, to get some trifling household articles. While the merchant, who, of course, knew every one in the settlement, was putting them up, he carelessly asked: "Does your little chum, Johnny Hawkins, own a gun?"

"Why, no," I answered. "His father has a big, old-fashioned, flintlock horse-pistol, and Johnny is always wanting to shoot it off. What made you think he had a gun, Mr. Peters?"

"Oh, because he came in the other day and traded a mink skin for some powder and shot and a flint."

"A mink skin?" I echoed. "Why, Johnny has no trap; neither has his father. Was it a fresh skin, Mr. Peters?"

"About two days old, I reckon. The mink had been caught by the neck, for I could see the marks of trap-teeth on the flesh side of the pelt."

"Well," I rejoined, "muskrats and minks are sometimes caught that way. We often set fox-traps for them, and then they're pretty sure to get some part of their bodies in; but mostly we catch them by the leg, in a common rat-trap."

"The little chap's borrowed a trap somewhere, I guess, and gone in on his own hook," said the storekeeper; "anyhow, it was a prime pelt, and I allowed him a big lot of ammunition for it, besides throwing in a couple of liquorice sticks."

Now it was my fox-trap that had been robbed; but I had sense enough to say no more to Mr. Peters, though I know what he didn't—namely, that Johnny couldn't have borrowed one nearer than five miles, and that if he'd really caught a mink, he would have told me of his luck the first thing. Still I could not bear to think that he had done such a mean, dishonest thing, and I thought the best way was to ask him about it; or, after all, some one else might have stolen the pelt and given it to him; and he, wanting to keep the pistol matter a secret, might have put off telling me. Oh, how I did hope that he was innocent! On my way home from the store, I stopped at Mr. Hawkins' house. The father, mother and Johnny were at dinner, while the 2-year-old baby sat on the floor, dabbing its face up with one of those thick sticks of liquorice in vogue at that time. Boy-like, though actually trembling with apprehension, I came to the point at once: "Johnny," I asked, "who gave you the mink skin that you traded to Mr. Peters' last Wednesday?"

The next moment I was very sorry that I'd said anything, for Johnny burst out crying as if his heart would break, and then he said: "Oh, Willy, I did steal it out of your trap; I wanted powder and shot so awful bad—and—and—I couldn't set the trap—agin."

"And didn't Willy give you that liquorice the bab's eating?" asked the mother.

"No, ma'am," sobbed the poor boy. "I got it from Mr. Peters."

"Oh, dear, oh dear! my son's a thief and a liar!" moaned the afflicted woman, and she, too, began to cry, while Mr. Hawkins sternly grasped a tumbler's whip from overhead. But I stepped so earnestly that he did not use it, as he had intended, upon repentant, trembling Johnny. The sturdy laborer was, however, a wise as well as a merciful man. He knew that this erring son must be taught a salutary lesson; so, after a minute of grieved silence, he decreed that Johnny must

work two Saturday half-holidays, piling brush in the new clearing in order to honestly earn 50 cents to pay me for the pelt—which the little fellow faithfully did; and after that there was no better boy anywhere. When my mother from whom I had no secrets, heard of the affair, she gave Johnny employment about the house before and after school each day, so that he was soon able to chum a set of traps for himself. Moreover, she carefully watched over the child and taught him many things which he could learn neither at his own home nor at the rude country school. And Johnny repaid her trusting solicitude by a course of unvarying honesty and an always exact and cheerful discharge of his little duties, as well as by a love and devotion as great as he had now learned to bestow upon his own hard-working mother; while to me he more and more became a dearly valued friend.

Like myself, John "Hawkins" is now on the snowy side of threescore and ten. Many years ago, after the death of his parents, he removed to Illinois, and at the present day is the wealthy and respected owner of a grand prairie farm in that fertile state. I have visited him and his surrounding colony of descendants several times during the last decade. On one of these occasions, when referring to old times, he feelingly said:

"Friend, Will, I owe all my prosperity and happiness, first, to the fact that my early misdemeanor was so promptly detected and punished in a way so wise and impressive; next, to the divine charity and good counsels of your sainted mother. I often think that if the robbery of your trap had remained undiscovered I might have become a confirmed criminal and ended my days in prison. But now look around you and see—thanks to His mercy and the forgiveness of those against whom I trespassed—how the Lord has blessed my old age."

And blessed indeed I deemed my venerable friend to be, as I witnessed, on Thanksgiving day of 1895, the joyous gathering of children and grandchildren at his home, and noted the love and reverence with which all regarded him and his aged wife, who ever adorned and softly crowned to a third little "Johnny," the first great-grandchild of the honored pair.

"GOD BLESS THE UNION JACK!"

Bishop Hartzell Praises Britain's Treatment of Her Colonies.

At a recent meeting of the Methodist preachers at New York, Bishop J. C. Hartzell, who was elected at the last General Conference of the Church to succeed Bishop Taylor, retired, as head of the missionary work in Africa, addressed the preachers on the outlook in his new field of labor. The Bishop spoke of the long struggle which has been carried on for hundreds of years by philanthropic and Christian people for the moral, mental, and social elevation of the negro, and reminded his hearers that the colored man had proved to be a willing and industrious pupil and grateful for the efforts in his behalf. Of the future of Africa Bishop Hartzell said:

"It is usual to refer to Africa as the 'Dark Continent,' but, in my mind, Africa is the land of promise, the country where the missionary will win his grandest and greatest victories in the future. God, in his wisdom, has held the veil of mystery, over Africa and will continue to do so until the civilized nations can be entrusted with its custody. We hear a good deal said about the gold and silver question. But, I tell you, there is 1,200-mile stretch of gold-bearing rock in Africa, with \$3,500,000,000 in sight already, which will settle the whole matter and keep the balance between gold and other coin metals at the proper figure."

Of the attitude of Great Britain toward her colonies and missionaries, the Bishop spoke in warm commendation. "God bless the Union Jack!" he said. "I want to see the troubles between the United States and Great Britain settled, and settled quickly. May the day come soon when the flags of the two nations shall float together from the same staff, wherever there is a strategic point between civilization and barbarism."

TRAINED CHAMELEONS.

What a Little Girl Accomplished With Two of the Reptiles.

Much has been written about the beauty, the stupidity and the viciousness of the lizard tribe, and I want to say a word about the intelligence of the chameleon, a little reptile belonging to the great lizard family, and in size the antipodes of the alligator, its big brother, writes a correspondent.

The incident I now relate came under my personal observation, and demonstrates that the chameleon is susceptible of education and can be ranked with animals classed much higher in the scale of intellectual development.

Miss Henrietta Keene, a little lady of 12 years, living in Philadelphia, was presented with two Florida chameleons, and she at once began instructing and educating her pets. By continued gentleness and kindness she won their confidence, and at her call they would raise their heads, listen and then come running quickly. Soon they responded to their names—Brinton and Baby—and nodded their little heads knowingly.

She then taught them to stand up on their hind legs and put their little forepaws together and stand in the attitude of prayer, looking solemn and closing their eyes; at a signal they would quickly prostrate themselves, roll over on their backs, and pretend to be dead, lying without motion, until told to rise, and embrace, which they would do with every sign of joy and pleasure.

THE QUEEN'S TRAVELS.

Queen Victoria in her long life has traveled very little abroad. (She has never been in Russia, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Spain nor Greece. She has never yet set eyes on any of her colonies, nor upon any part of Asia, Africa or America.)

BRITISH WARSHIPS.

Rumors at Halifax That the North Atlantic Squadron is to be Doubled in Strength.

A report is current to inside naval circles at Halifax that Great Britain has decided on what is considered the most important measure, so far as the defence of British North America is concerned, that she has ever taken at a time when the nation has not been engaged in war. It is stated that the squadron of warships now known as the British North American and West Indian Fleet is to be separated into two divisions, and each division brought up to surpass the strength, which so far has been maintained for the single squadron. On effect will serve for the defence of Newfoundland and the Atlantic coast of Canada, while the other will make its headquarters at Bermuda and look after the interests of Britain in her West Indian possessions and possibly those in South America. This step means that a powerful fleet of British warships will be found in Canadian and West Indian waters the year round, whereas at present the summer months find the ships on the Canadian and Newfoundland coasts, while the other half of the twelve months is spent in the West Indies. Heretofore during summer time it is not unusual to have one or two of the smaller ships of the squadron cruising in the West Indies. The division of the North American station, in the manner indicated may not take place until next spring, but it is probable there was a good foundation for the statement of a couple of months ago that Halifax harbor will contain at least one member of the British fleet this winter. One of the most interesting features of the story that the navy service will be doubled and more than doubled, is the statement that the flag-ship of the British North American division will not be the battle-ship *Renown*, but it will be the mighty ship of war, *Royal Arthur*, one of the great monsters of Britain's navy, and that she will bring the new Vice-Admiral with her to command this division. When the Vice-Admiral now commanding, Sir Jas. Erskine, leaves this station in a few months his flag-ship the *Crescent*, will return to England. The division of the station will of course mean two British Vice-Admirals on this side of the Atlantic. One of them will be Sir John Fisher, who will be the other is unknown, but his flag-ship will be the *Renown*. To keep the officers of the various ships attached to both divisions familiar with the waters of British North America and the West Indies it is said there will be an exchange of divisions every eighteen months, the ships on the Canadian coasts going to the West Indies and vice versa. The big cruiser *Talbot*, which recently came to Halifax from England to replace the *Magicienne*, will, it is understood, be one of the West Indian fleet, and her place at Halifax will be taken by another ship of the same class. The recent additions to the British ships in American waters have already greatly strengthened the squadron, and it is quite certain that by next summer Great Britain will have on this side of the ocean the greatest fleets she has ever despatched across the Atlantic. The ships have already begun to take their departure from Halifax and Bermuda for the winter. The *Talbot* and *Intrepid* having sailed this week, but the flag-ship *Crescent*, with several smaller vessels will remain for some weeks yet.

DIPLOMACY'S TRIUMPH.

How a British Consul Got Rid of an Unconvenient Gift.

A Consul, who, for a short time, represented Great Britain at the Persian Court, tells that when he arrived at Teheran, he was met outside the city by the Chamberlain of the Court, who, in the name of the Shah, presented him with four elephants. The Consul, who had only seen an elephant inside a menagerie, was paralyzed at his situation, but managed to express his thanks for the Shah's great kindness.

After he had been presented and had assumed the duties of his office, his greatest official burden was the care of his elephants.

Relief came in a few days, when the intimation reached him that the Shah expected a present in return.

"Certainly," said the Consul, as a smile wreathed his face; "I have only seen waiting to secure one worthy of so great a ruler."

That afternoon he proceeded in state to the palace and presented the Shah with five elephants. The Chamberlain seemed to regard the animals with some degree of suspicion, but Oriental politeness prevents the inspection of a gift horse in the mouth, and, anyhow, the extra elephant removed all doubt. "That extra elephant cost me \$25," said the Consul, in telling the story afterward, "but I considered myself well out of a bad scrape at the price."

A SHIRT DISABLES A SHIP.

The big Dutch liner *Amsterdam* was disabled the other day by a flimsy little shirt which happened to become wedged in the steering gear. A passenger innocently placed this bit of clothing in an opening in the side of his cabin which he mistook for a closet. A moment later a terrific shock was felt throughout the vessel, and the ship began to wobble helplessly in the heavy sea. The crew were at once set to ripping up flooring, breaking down cabin walls, and did not discover the source of the disturbance till they had done an immense amount of damage.

HE HAS THE WORD.

So you have gone into the white-washing and fence-painting business, have you, Uncle Christopher? Yes, sir; and when you want anything in my line you'll find my studio at No. 44 Strawberry Alley.

HOUSEHOLD.

CARE OF PLANTS IN CELLAR.

During the cold winter months the great majority of people have only their cellars to depend upon for the preservation of the plants they are "keeping over"; but if the cellars are warm and intelligently used, there is generally no difficulty in bridging most of the summer plants to the next season. At this period the plants are resting, and should be given the least possible amount of attention. The cellar is a good store-house, but it will not root cuttings nor grow healthy plants. If they show an inclination to grow, it is better to retard than to stimulate them. Water sparingly, and only in such quantity as to keep the plants from drying; and in case of very tender plants, it is better to depend on benches rather than the cellar bottom, as a very little dampness will often cause mildew. However, it is well to remember that ten times as many cellar plants die from over-care as from neglect.

And yet amateur floriculturists and gardeners persist in watering and stimulating their plants, without considering that dormant roots cannot remain wet without rotting, and that those desiring sleep grow irritable when kept awake. When some of the plants die they wonder, and then redouble their deadly watering and care-taking. And the strange part of it is their inability as to their agency in the ruin. I remember that my own first winter as an amateur cellar floriculturist caused me the loss of more than two thousand choice young plants, and yet it was years before I would confess to myself that I had been culpably careful.

The great secret of keeping a miscellaneous collection of plants in a cellar is in trying to promote rest, rather than retard it. In the case of most bulbous plants, water should be withheld entirely; hydrangeas, *otaksas* and *Thomas Hogg*, all aloes, and nearly all large tub plants—*rubber trees*, orange and lemon trees, palms, azaleas, and the like—may be watered once or twice, as the soil gets very dry; geraniums and begonias and fuchsias need very little water except when they are in small pots; then the soil should not be allowed to get quite dry. But it is always better to err on the side of dryness than of too much moisture. Large geraniums, indeed, may have the dirt shaken from their roots and then be hung in bunches to the rafters or put in barrels, and so long as the roots are kept dry and away from currents of air, they are all right.

Late in the winter most of the plants will wake and begin to send out tiny green shoots; if they have been stimulated this will occur too early, and the shoots will be frail and finally die; but if a judicious course of retarding has been practised, they can generally be put outside in time to save this new growth.

USEFUL RECIPES.

German Coffee Cake.—To two cups of warm water add one cake of dry yeast (previously soaked) or one small cup of home-made yeast and flour enough to make moderately thick sponge when well beaten; set in a warm place to rise over night. In the morning heat three cups of new milk, remove from the fire, put in one coffee cup of butter, add mixture to the sponge; also one cup of sugar, one tablespoon each of salt, cinnamon, nutmeg and lemon extract to suit the taste. Knead well into a loaf and set to rise in a warm temperature; when light, knead again and set to rise; then when light put in shallow pans about an inch thick and let rise till light. Moisten with milk and sprinkle with sugar just before placing in the oven.

Potato Pie.—Potato pie may be made by lining pie tins with ordinary pie crust and filling with mashed potatoes seasoned with a little fried onion and summer savory. Put on an upper crust, and bake from twenty to thirty minutes. Serve hot.

A Delicious Home-Made Candy.—Three glassfuls of granulated sugar, one and one-half glassfuls of milk, butter the size of an egg, one half cake of baker's chocolate; boil until it hardens in the water, remove from the fire, and beat until it begins to sugar; pour into buttered pans, and score like caramels.

SAVING LABOR BUT NOT HEALTH.

There is a mania in the air for doing each thing in the shortest possible time with the least expenditure of thought and effort. We look back at the slow and laborious processes our grandmothers used in preparing food as we do upon the stage coach, which required as many weeks to reach a given point as the fast trains to-day consume in hours. The housewife hails eagerly each new promise of "ready in two minutes," "saves fire and time." No one stops to ask if the new food is as wholesome as the old, if the mode of preparation is such as to ensure the best utilization of its initial nutrition.

FRESH TOMATOES ALL WINTER.

Few housewives know that with little trouble and expense, they can have fresh, ripe tomatoes in January by taking care of the green ones. The green tomatoes should be carefully wrapped separately in papers and spread out upon shelves, or the floor of a dark, cold closet, where, however, the temperature should be above freezing. If kept in this way, the vegetables will slowly ripen. When they are required, for use, expose them to sunlight and heat for a couple of days, and you will have tomatoes as firm and nice as those offered in the markets, and at little expense.

I'm trying to get back to me pore old mother. She ain't seen me face for ten years. I guess that is the truth. Why don't you wash it?

MARTYR, BANDIT, PATRIOT.

The Heroism and the Wild Career of a Cuban Leader of Guerrillas.

Liria Mirabel, who is reported to have been killed in a skirmish in the province of Puerto Principe, Cuba, was one of the most picturesque figures in the patriot army. Mirabel was originally a farmer of humble degree, industrious, peaceable and obscure. Some years ago his favourite brother was charged with the murder of a Spanish official. This brother was without wealth or influence; his conviction seemed certain. Liria saw how matters stood, and in a reckless spirit of self-sacrifice declared that he was the murderer and that his brother was innocent. After making this declaration he fled to the mountains.

The brother was released straightway and the police set about a search for the fugitive. Liria, however, was beyond pursuit. He had taken refuge in the fastnesses of the mountains, where the arm of the law cannot reach. After an unavailing search of a few months the Spanish Government declared him an outlaw and put a price on his head. Deprived of the means of learning a awful living Mirabel followed the example of Manuel Garcia and became a bandit. Again and again the Government raised the reward for Mirabel's capture, and sent out expeditions with orders to capture him dead or alive, but his one act of fraternal devotion had endeared him to the country people, and none of them would betray him.

HIS HAIR-BREADTH ESCAPE.

Mirabel pursued his lawless career with impunity. His system was the usual one. He would waylay wealthy Spanish planters and even high government officials and hold them for ransom. Several times he was within a hair's breadth of being captured, but, thanks to fortune, his own boldness, and the good will of the country people he always escaped unharmful. One night he lay at the house of a rich man, while in the room below were dining twenty government officials. Some of them were his bitterest enemies, and all would have been glad to capture him and deliver him to a certain death. By the good will of the host he was allowed to escape undetected.

Like other bandits of the romantic type, Mirabel made it his boast that he never harmed a poor man—a somewhat empty sacrifice, but one which increased his popularity. When the present revolution was mooted Mirabel devoted himself heart and soul to the cause.

POSED AS A PATRIOT.

He now no longer posed as a bandit, but declared that he was a patriot who devoted the proceeds of his calling to the cause of freedom. Meantime he was carrying on negotiations with the Spanish Gen. Blasco. He declared that on the receipt of certain money he would surrender himself and his followers to the authorities. As a matter of fact he never had the least intention of fulfilling his promise. When the revolution broke out he snatched his fingers at the government and joined the patriot army. His negotiations, however, had raised suspicions, and when just before the revolution began, a number of persons suspected of disaffection were thrown into prison, it was openly declared that Mirabel had sold the plans of the insurgents.

The accusation was groundless and it did not hurt his popularity among the wilder spirits of the south, who wished to make him their leader. The patriots of the north, however, were bitterly opposed to him. They openly branded him as a traitor, and named for their candidate Manuel Garcia. Neither was chosen. Soon Garcia's troops and Mirabel became leader of one of the many guerilla bands which have given the Spanish such trouble throughout the war.

The Cubans in New York declare that the real Mirabel is still alive. They say that Mirabel could not possibly have been at Puerto Principe at the time he was said to have fallen.

HOW GOLD WAS DEPOSITED.

Gold Can be Introduced Into Stones in Such a Manner as to Defy Detection.

An exhibition of the greatest interest to mineralogists and practical miners in relation to the much argued question as to how gold was originally deposited in auriferous quartz is reported from the Imperial Institute at Edinburgh, Scotland. J. C. F. Johnston, of Adelaide, Australia, who has given great attention to the subject, exhibited specimens of non-gold-bearing stones in which he has artificially introduced gold in interstices and on the face in such a manner as to defy detection, even by skilled experts. Some of these specimens were shown privately to several distinguished geologists, who expressed great surprise at the remarkable character of the exhibition. The discovery some years ago, that gold could be introduced to deposit from its mineral salt to the metallic state on any suitable base, such as iron sulphide, led Mr. Johnston to experiment with various salts of gold, and by which he has produced most natural looking specimens of auriferous quartz from stone which from previous assay contained no trace of gold. Moreover, the gold, which penetrates the stone in such a thorough manner, assumes some of the more natural forms. In one specimen shown the gold not only appears on the surface, but penetrates each of the laminations, as was proved by breaking. While this knowledge of how gold was probably deposited may help to suggest how it may be economically extracted, the thought also occurs what a power for harm it would be, in unscrupulous hands, for the fraudulent "salting" of mines.