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### THE MAGIC TREE.

A True Story Illustrating the Great Intelligence of Bees.

On a certain plantation, which it will be as well not to locate, there was a very large, hollow orange tree which, according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, had never borne any fruit, although it blossomed regularly every spring. After blossoming the blossoms would all gradually disappear and a small orifice on the end of the twig would be all that was left for the balance of the year. This went on for a great many years, until one day the place was sold to a man from the North, who determined to cut down the tree and solve the mystery if possible. He accordingly had the tree cut down, and instead of finding a solid trunk he found nothing but a large outside shell of a tree, while the inside was perfectly hollow, and was occupied by a large family of squirrels and a colony of bees. The bees and squirrels were very light in color and did not appear to have any eyes, and the oranges were elongated instead of round, although very sweet tasting, and otherwise appeared to be excellent fruit. The man was puzzled to account for the phenomenon, as there was no opening in the tree by which even the bees could get inside it, but the mystery was explained by an old colored man, who had been on the place many, many years. He told the following story:

When the orange tree was very small it was found to be growing hollow, and after it got to be about a foot thick the hole near the center of the trunk was made larger and a limb grafted into it; the tree then did well, apparently, but had never borne fruit. It is thought that the bees and squirrels had gotten into the tree and made it their home, and when the limb was grafted in their means of egress were stopped up and they made prisoners. As bees are known to be very industrious the following will readily be believed: The bees would go out to the end of the twigs, which were also hollow, every spring and pull the blossoms inside, and thus get the honey by turning the flowers inside out, the oranges would then grow inside, and the twigs being small, account for the elongated shape of the fruit; the bees would live on the honey and the squirrels on the fruit, and thus a colony of each was established, and lived in comfort and plenty on the inside of the orange tree.

### WHY THEY RACE SLOW.

A Dakota Conductor Gives Some New Points on Railroad Financiering.

A man was one day making a trip on a "mixed train" on a Dakota road, says *Times Staffings*. Passage on these trains is never taken except for journeys of considerable length; walking is as easy and much faster for short distances. On this occasion the movement was even more deliberate than usual, and the passenger called the conductor to his seat and said:

"Isn't this motion pretty slow?"  
"Well, we ain't flying, I'll admit."  
"Sure every thing is all right?"  
"I think so."  
"Wheels all greased?"  
"Yes, I greased them myself."  
"Tires all on?"  
"Yes. We run through the creek back here and soaked up the wheels so that they would stay."  
"Any spokes loose?"  
"No."  
"You are certain the wheels are all on the rails?"

"They was when I come in."  
"Couldn't be possible that any of them are off and the axle dragging, could it?"  
"I guess not."  
"Are we going up-hill?"  
"No, this is pretty middlin' level."  
"Do you always run at this gait?"  
"No, we generally hump along a little faster'n this."  
"May I ask what is the trouble, then?"  
"Certainly. We found a two-year-old steer stuck in a trestle back here, before you got on, and stopped and helped it out. You know the rules of the road are that in such cases the animal belongs to the company."

"But I don't see why that should make you run so thundering slow."  
"Why, you blame fool, we're takin' that steer along to headquarters; get it tied on behind, and it ain't used to leadin' and don't walk up very well. I'm doing all I can: got the brakeman prodding it up with an umbrella, and an ear of corn tied to the bell-rope. If you think I'm goin' to start up and go howlin' along and yank the horn off as good a steer as there is in the territory, why you're mistaken, that's all. Us train men can't expect our pay unless we bring in some stock once in awhile."

### FELINE STRATEGY.

The mastery of herself which a cat shows when, having been caught in a position from which there is no escape, she calmly sits down to face out the threats of a dog, is a marvelous thing, says a writer in the Boston *Transcript*. Every body has seen a kitten on the street door-step attacked by a dog ten times her size, as apparently self-possessed as if she were in her mistress' lap. If she turns tail and runs down the street she is lost; the dog will have a sure advantage of her. Even as it is, if he could get up courage enough to seize her on the spot, he would be able to make short work of her.

"You dare not touch me and you know it," is what her position tells the dog. But she is intensely on her guard, in spite of her air of perfect content. Her legs, concealed under her fur, are ready for a spring; her claws are unsheathed, her eyes never move for an instant from the dog; as he bounds wildly from side to side, barking with comical fury, those glittering eyes of hers follow him with the keenest scrutiny. If he plucks up his courage to grab her, she is ready; she will sell her life dearly. She is watching her chance, and she does not miss it. The dog tries Fabian tactics, and withdraws a few feet, settling down upon his forepaws, growling ferociously as he does so.

Just then the sound of a dog's bark in the next street attracts his eyes and ears for a moment, and when he looks back the kitten is gone! He looks down the street and starts wildly in that direction, and reaches a high board fence just as a cat's tail—a monstrous tail for such a little cat—is vanishing over the top of it. He is beaten; the cat showed not only more courage than he had but a great deal more generalship.

### ENERGY VERSUS LUCK.

The Ignorant Superstition Which Prevails in Regard to the Latter.

"Give a man luck and throw him into the sea," is, perhaps, one of the oldest sayings extant all over the world, for we find its equivalent in every language spoken. It is a pity we are not all gifted with this fortunate grace; if we were we need never trouble at any time. But it happens, however, says the London *Standard*, that the so-called lucky ones are very few and very far between; and yet, to note the observations of every-day life, one would imagine that the contrary were the case—that is to say, if we may judge from the fact that everybody asserts that every body else is lucky except himself. "I never knew such luck as that man has," says Jones of Brown, and Brown of Jones remarks that "Jones has the very devil's own luck—every thing he does turns out well!" and still they may be both in the same boat struggling against impending adversity, or calmly gliding along the stream of comparative prosperity.

It is merely the outcome of an unfathomable discontent that pervades all, or nearly all human creatures—that semi-jealous feeling of each other's neighbor that finds lodging in every breast. Now, risking the wrath of the superstitious and the believers in omens and odd numbers, we firmly maintain that there is no such thing as luck at all. Perseverance and circumstance are the secret of all success, and, as nothing succeeds like success, luck is the natural sequence of perseverance. It is mainly the kickers and lazy people who perpetually rave about lack of luck, forgetting that, if there be any virtue in this tantalizing talisman, it is very like the philosopher's stone, and requires a considerable amount of delving and diving to secure.

Shakespeare gives evidence that he was not free from this peculiar failing. In the "Merry Wives of Windsor" he makes that genial and obese old rogne "Falstaff" say to "Dame Quickly," "Good luck lies in odd numbers. They say there is a divinity in odd numbers—either in nativity, chance or death!" This idea is, of course, founded on the Pythagorean system, "All nature is a harmony; man is a full chord, and all beyond is Deity, so that nine represents Deity." And thus a major chord consists of a fundamental or tonic, its major third and its just fifth. Seven notes complete the octave, and nine is Deity. The odd numbers being the primary notes of nature, it is easy to see how they came to be considered the great or lucky numbers, but then the luck belongs exclusively to the numbers and not to the application thereof, as is the popular impression.

But to enter into or properly explain the positions and qualities of odd numbers would paralyze the great Euclid himself. So, to return to our luck. If there be such an uncanny thing, how is it that never since the creation has one man ever been known to credit his success in life to luck? His downfall, yes, to bad luck; his rise and progress to luck, good, bad or indifferent? Never. If any one had the temerity to suggest such a thing the notion would be scouted as not only preposterous but impious. The answer would be something like this: "My success, sir, which you vulgarly attribute to luck, has been achieved by sheer hard work and determination; and what I have earned I deserve." And in most cases it would be right.

Certainly there are at times fortuitous circumstances that make a man successful, whether he will or not, but then such is not luck, it is pure accident. And as we are all liable to meet with disagreeable accidents, so are we all likely to meet with agreeable ones. Only we never own it, supposing we think so. We go on declaring that "it is better to be born lucky than rich," and yet we are quite incapable of explaining what we exactly mean. In the commercial sense—and it is only in the commercial sense that we think upon the subject—if we are rich, we don't want luck, and if we are lucky we are rich. Lord Beaconsfield says in "Venetia": "Luck, is he who has neither creditors nor offspring, and who owes neither money nor affection—after all the most difficult to pay of the two." This is so cynically true that not a soul believes it.

Faith in the charm of the horse-shoe is held sacred to this day, in town and country, by ignorant persons; but we do not imagine that they nail it up over the door as a protection against witches, as was once the custom. It is supposed to rather bring good luck than to avert any evil. Many otherwise sane individuals will stoop to pick up a shoe in the street, and others would rather deliver up all their goods and chattels than walk under a ladder. There is more common sense in this latter idiosyncrasy than may appear at first sight. One does not run so great a risk of receiving a paint-pot or a brick, that may be on the journey from the roof to the pavement, outside the range of the ladder as immediately under it. This is about the only superstition that is worth preserving.

Generally speaking, logical people discard the conceit of any thing coming to pass through mere "luck," though numbers on the surface profess unshakable belief therein. As a rule, those who complain about their bad luck are those who complain about any thing—those who expect fortunes to drop into their laps without any exertion on their part to obtain them. People are frequently heard to lament they are down on their luck, and then they absolutely do sit down on their luck and stay there. Most things come to the man who works, but very few to the man who calmly sits down and waits. Failing to get superstitious as much as common sense. There is no such quality as luck, except it be in a very unknown quantity. People have had luck when they can not take the rough with the smooth; when they wear out the smooth and forget that it ever existed. Good luck means good intentions well carried out; and, after all, the only lucky man in the world is he who is lucky enough to get what he deserves.

### Bone-Cutting by Electricity.

Removal of sections of bone in surgical operations has heretofore been a long, tedious process, effected with a mallet, chisel, gouges, etc. It is, perhaps, the most brutal and unscientific method which could be adopted, and sounds like the operative butchery which existed in the last century. This has all been reformed by an invention called the electric osteotome, says the London *Electrical Engineer*, which is an instrument holding a circular saw at its extremity, revolved with lightning speed by an electric motor. This, when held against a bone, makes a clean cut through it in a few seconds; in fact, its action is instantaneous. By holding the osteotome in a slanting position, wedge-shaped pieces can be cut out with equal promptitude. There is no danger of the saw cutting the soft parts, as they are protected by a retractor, an instrument which is passed down and under the bone.

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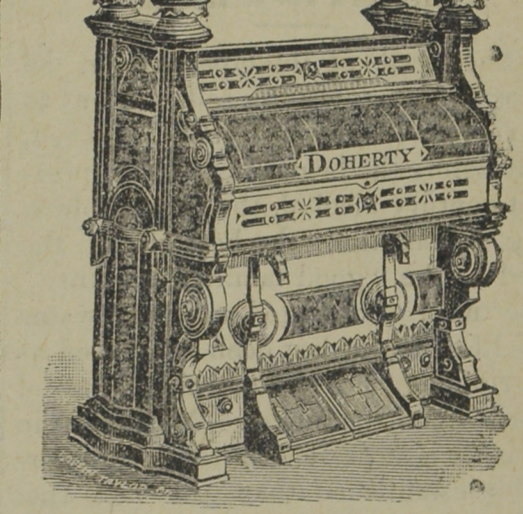
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