

THE POLITE WILD MAN.

EDUCATED, AND ONLY A MONTH BEHIND THE TIMES.

Six Feet Four Inches High, and Covered With Hair—He Takes the Leading Periodicals—When He Played Poker—When He Showed Fight.

In the almost unknown wilds of the Wise River Mountains, in the southern part of Montana, about forty miles from Butte, is the roaming place of the most interesting and mysterious characters of the state, if not of the whole Northwest. The man has been a mystery to the people of the section for more than a quarter of a century, and about the only positive thing they have been able to learn about him in that time is his name, Pottingill. He lives among the wild animals, lives like them, and is almost like one of them. He is prominent in a state noted for its interesting peculiarities, and is known and commonly spoken of as "the wild man." Many stories of his habits, encounters, and strange mode of living are told.

Recently a hunting party made a trip into the Wise River Mountains and camped for several days at the junction of the Wise and Big Hole Rivers, not far from the reported habitation of the "wild man." There was a natural curiosity to get a glimpse of the strange individual. A walk of several miles in the direction indicated by the guide brought the party to a short, narrow gulch in the foothills, where was found the rude hut described as the home of the wild man. The owner of the place was nowhere to be seen. There was no door to the entrance. The hut itself was half dug into the hillside, and the other half was formed of banded fir trees. The inside was about 6x10 feet in size, and did not contain a single article of furniture. The sleeping place of its occupant was the bare floor on one side of the hut, where the imprint of a human form indicated the spot where the man had passed his nights for a score and a half of years. A smoothly worn piece of wood served as a pillow. Its middle was worn hollow, showing that it has served its purpose for many years. Not a shred of clothing or covering of any kind was in the hut. After completing an inspection of the strange place, the intruders resumed their way toward the mountains, but had not left the hut more than fifteen feet behind when they suddenly came upon the object they were looking for.

He stood like an apparition upon a knoll but a few feet away, and had evidently been watching the trespassers for some time. An old army rifle was resting across his arm, and when the correspondent made a few steps forward the gun crept up toward the man's shoulder. The two men stood startled and amazed, and he as immovable as a statue. He is fully 6 feet 4 inches tall, and slightly stooped, with massive chest, shoulders, and arms, and with not an ounce of superfluous flesh, and weighing about 200 pounds. The only pieces of clothing he wore were a ragged, old army overcoat and a pair of old breeches that extended a few inches below his knees. His body was thickly covered with short hair, and his beard and the hair of his head, which were of an iron gray, hung in heavy matted curls about eight inches below his waist. Each curl was as thick as a man's wrist, and contained more hair than the head of the average woman. His feet were bare and his legs, like his body, were covered with a coat of hair. He appeared to be about 60 years of age.

"Are you the wild man?" finally ventured Mr. McKinstry.

The strange figure smiled surprisingly pleasantly and replied: "I believe that is what they call me."

"Do you live there?" was the next question, indicating the barren hut.

"Yes, that is my home, or rather my headquarters, but I do not spend much of my time there, for I am busy rustling most of the time."

The man's language was perfect English, and gave evidence of an educated man. He took a seat upon the knoll, and his visitors, having become reassured, sat by his side, and for an hour or more engaged in conversation with the strange creature. All efforts, however, to learn anything of his history were skillfully parried. Once when a question on that point was rather bluntly put, he said: "Every man has his secrets that the world is bound to respect," and the subject was dropped.

Concerning his life in the mountains he talked freely. He believed that nature intended man to live as he did, and pointed to the fact that he wore little or no clothing even in the most most rigid winters, and yet in the thirty years in which he had lived the life of a wild man in the mountains he has not known a day's sickness. He subsists almost entirely upon raw meat, mostly game which he kills himself. Though he carries a gun he uses it only in self-defense, and never to kill game. His method is to get on the trail of a deer, moose, elk, or bear and run it down. He has been seen to follow a deer in that way for a week or ten days, and, being tireless himself, the deer sooner or later falls an easy victim to his knife. It is also stated that during such a chase he never stops to eat, but sticks to the trail until he overtakes the animal, and after killing it he remains with the carcass until it is consumed. Stories of his encounters with bear and elk driven to bay are numerous. By the strength and methods of a Samson he is always victorious in the conflicts.

At intervals of from three to six weeks he returns to "headquarters" to look after a few head of horses which he has running on the range, but the only use he has for the horses, as he expresses it, is to remind him of the outside world and make him feel that he is not entirely alone. About twice a year, when game is scarce, he makes a trip to Dewey's Flat, a small settlement of ranches about ten miles distant from his "headquarters," for supplies. His "supplies consist of best and tallow, both of which eats raw and the latest magazines and periodicals. He raises what little money he requires by selling a horse occasionally.

The most remarkable thing about this man is that he is well read and well informed on the public questions, though he is usually about six months behind the times. Among the magazines he reads are the Arena, North American Review, Century, and Scientific American. He also writes a beautiful hand. His last visit to Dewey's was on election day, when he walked the ten miles barefooted through two inches of snow. Last winter the tax collector tried to compel Pottingill to pay a poll tax, but he refused, and

them the collector told him he would have to work it out on the roads or they would throw him into the Big Hole River. A few days after about thirty men were working on a road in a canon, and he came along with his gun on his shoulder. He walked out on to the ice on the river and invited them all out to throw him into the water, but instead of making good their threat every man took to the woods.

A Butte photographer offered him \$500 for the privilege of taking his picture, but Pottingill would not have it. The photographer, however, tried to take him unawares, but the wild man caught him in the act, and took his costly camera away from him and smashed it into tooth-picks. That was the only attempt that was ever made to take a photograph of him.

About two years ago he walked into a saloon at Dewey's, and some men who were playing poker jokingly invited him to take a hand.

"I have not played poker since I was in the army," he replied, "but for the sake of sociability I'll take a hand."

There were five in the game besides himself. From the rags of his old coat he pulled out \$200, and put it into the game, and by a streak of luck he soon had the five men broke. He then took his winnings, including his own \$200, and divided them into five equal parts and distributed the money among the five men.

"I came into the game only to benefit you," he said. "I would take no man's money," and with that he left and returned to the mountains, and was not seen again for a year.

Pottingill came to Montana during or soon after the war, long before there was any thought of building railroads into the State, and when everything was freighted in by "bull teams." Capt. John Brannigan of Butte, one of the old freighters, met him at the old town of Rochester about the time he first struck that part of the country. Cap. Brannigan stopped at Rochester with his freight train. Among the drivers was the usual bad man, who looked for blood. He entered a saloon, and found Pottingill there with a lot of freighters. The bad man began drinking, and threatened to eat somebody, and finally made a rush at a drunken and inoffensive old man. He had an ugly knife, and intended to carve his victim. Pottingill was sitting in a corner with his old army rifle across his knees, and up to this time had not said a word, but when the bad man made his murderous attack on the inoffensive fellow, Pottingill arose, set his gun in the corner and, reaching down, pulled a long knife from the boots he was at that time wearing, and walking over to the bully he placed his hand on his shoulder saying: "You have got a bad heart; there is murder in it, and I am going to cut in out."

All the fight was taken out of the bully and he begged for mercy, but would not have received it had not the men in the saloon interfered to save his life.

There are several stories told as to the reason why Pottingill came to Montana and adopted the wild life he is leading, and the most generally accepted is that during the war he was a Captain in a company of Missouri volunteer infantry; that he had a quarrel with a fellow officer, and was challenged, and then deserted the army and escaped up along the Missouri River, making the whole distance on foot, and landing in Montana when this country was still an almost unknown territory.

AFTER FIFTY YEARS.

An Anecdote With a Humorous and a Pathetic Side.

A gentleman whose "courtly manners" were mentioned in all the newspapers when he died—a few years after the incident here described—lanced in his old age that he wished to see the friends of his boyhood, and most of all, the fair young girl whose love long years before he almost, but not quite, had dared to ask.

He called at half-past eleven in the forenoon, and was asked to walk "straight out into the kitchen," as there was no fire anywhere else. His early ideal stood before him, in a worn calico dress, no collar, and a wide and not faultlessly clean apron. Her half-combed, grizzly hair was tucked under a rusty black lace cap, trimmed with faded purple ribbon. She had no teeth, and a huge pair of silver bowed spectacles were pushed up on her brown, wrinkled forehead!

Fifty years before they had parted with a kiss, and he had been intending to meet her with one, and thus bridge the chasm of years. But he changed his mind when through his gold-mounted glasses he took in the picture before him. Wiping her hands on her apron, she gave him a hearty handshake, and bade him sit down, adding that they were "killing pigs and tying up bladders of lard;" but if he would "stay to dinner," she would have "a fire put in the front room."

Of course he declined the invitation, and for his own comfort, as well as her convenience, he determined to make his call short. Still, he must say something complimentary before leaving; but what could he say?

Just then some lard boiled over, and with a shrill cry to her daughter to "come quick," the woman jumped up and caught hold of the vessel containing it. The smoke and perfume were in themselves far from agreeable; but they were grateful to the caller, as they gave him an opportunity for the desired compliment.

"Your step has lost none of its elasticity since the evenings we sauntered together along the banks of the R—," he said, "while this"—holding out his gold-headed cane—"is needed to support mine."

"Yes," answered the woman, "I'm as nimble as a kitten; and I've thought ever since you've been here, that I was glad enough time hadn't changed me as it has you!"

The Violet Fad.

We see violets everywhere; in the florists', along the streets, in milliners' windows. The flowers are so fashionable that others look odd except in bouquets. Much of their sudden popularity is due to the fact that this winter everybody is reading or talking about Napoleon. The violet was his favorite flower. Perhaps he really loved it for its fragrance and beauty, but it is more than likely that he fancied the color was royal and therefore suited to an

emperor. All over the garden and hot-houses have come from wild flowers, though many of them bear little resemblance to their plain country cousins. The wood violet has been petted and coaxed until it has become the splendid Marie Louise, a double flower of a deep, rich color and delicate perfume. The Neapolitan violet is smaller and of so pale a tint that it looks almost bluish beside the others. White violets are not rare, but they are so delicate that they are seldom used for decorations.

WILD BEASTS HATE NEW CLOTHES.

When a Trainer Changes His Costume he Takes His Life in His Hands.

On the programme for the Hagenbeck animal show Miss Sakontala was billed to appear with the royal Bengal tiger, Kittie, who rides the Arabian horse, Charlie. This act was also billed for Tuesday, but on neither Tuesday nor Wednesday did Miss Sakontala and the Bengal tiger appear. The management waited until the last moment Thursday, and was finally compelled to make the change.

The postponement is due to the condition of the horse Charlie, that was injured in this act in Cincinnati Jan. 2. During the performance the tiger became uncontrollable and tried to kill every one within reach. The cause of the tiger's outbreak was attributed to a change of costume by Miss Sakontala. Formerly she had worn black velvet tights and blouse. For some reason she changed and wore green tights, with top boots, and a red, white, and blue sash. The

tiger did not recognize her, and became contrary from the start. One of the beast's tricks was to jump from pedestal to pedestal, and then to jump upon the horse's back. When the time came to do this she refused. Miss Sakontala urged her, threatened, and at last used the whip. The infuriated tiger sprang for her, but the boarder, Nero, that is also in the act, valiantly interfered. He snapped at the tiger and distracted its attention from Miss Sakontala. The tiger finally caught the brave dog and tore the flesh from his thigh. In the mean time Miss Sakontala made her escape from the caged arena.

William Philadelphia, who assists in this act, had from the first of the trouble been engaged with the Arabian horse. Charlie had become terrified and tore frantically against the steel bars of the cage. Philadelphia knew that the dumb brute was powerless, and he felt the dog to attend to the tiger while he helped the terrified Charlie out of the ring. The horse is still weak from injuries received against the bars, but the management promises the act this week. This will be the first time the act has been tried since the accident, and all are anxious to see how it will turn out. The tiger is at present reposing sullenly in a cage, in a dark place, with its face turned toward the wall.

Many similar outbreaks have happened from time to time, and each has followed the adoption by the trainer of a strange costume. Everything is now maintained as nearly the same as possible. The same dog always appears in the same act and so on throughout, the idea of acquaintance and familiarity is maintained. If a hat or a wrap happens to lie within reach of the arena it is the first thing to catch the animal's eye. It will immediately go

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for it, and it can be reached will tear it to pieces.

William Philadelphia was nearly killed in New York a year ago for wearing a full-dress suit instead of his usual military costume. He was to make the lion Black Prince ride a horse. As soon as the lion saw the broadcloth suit he made for his trainer. The lion does not try to kill instantly, as does the tiger, but strikes out with his paw to knock his enemy down. In this case Black Prince struck at Philadelphia, striking him in the face. The terrible claws came out, tearing through the flesh. Seven stitches had to be made in the plucky trainer's face, but he is still at the business, showing yet the scars of the conflict.

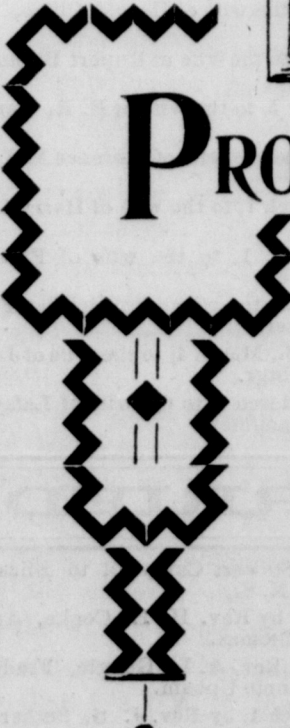
Again during the World's Fair in September, Miss Marsala Berg came into the ring wearing a shepherd's suit. Charlie, the fierce old tiger in this act, disliked the

change, and pounced upon her, killing her instantly. Charlie has not been worked since, but remains in the cage, a murderer, yet the handsomest animal in the show.

A Railway up Mont Blanc.

A continental engineering paper gives an account of a novel scheme for a railway for Mont Blanc. Instead of ascending the mountain in the usual way, the line is to penetrate into the mountain by means of a tunnel four and a half miles long, terminating exactly under the highest point. Here a vertical shaft will be constructed, reaching to the summit, and the travellers will be carried up by lifts. The depth of this shaft will be about a mile and three quarters, and the ascent to the observatory now being built on Mont Blanc would be rendered easy at all times.

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