

STORM IN THE SUMMER.

Storm in the summer's a mighty funny thing,
Like a woman's temper when it takes a fling;
Comes of a sudden, and you don't know why;
You start in guessing, and it's all gone by;
Swift and swoop, and it's in full blast;
You catch your breath, and it's down clear past;
Thunder and lightning and sulphur in the air,
And the very next minute the sun shines fair!

And it's just this way that the truth is shown
Why sweet Dame Nature is a woman known;
She can nurse her wrath through a mighty long
truce,
But it breaks for keeps when it does break loose!
And she storms like a tyrant and makes things
hum
Till it's easy to believe that it's kingdom come,
And all of a sudden there's mercy in her eye,
And she laughs and dimples, and the storm's gone
by!

—Ripley D. Saunders in St. Louis Republic.

Old Parker's Ghost.

By M. Quad.

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That I really and truly saw a ghost on a certain occasion is a matter of legal record, and I believe it is the only ghost ever legally known to a community.

I was a boy of 11 when the family emigrated from Ohio to Michigan and settled in a town of 1,500 people. There had just died a citizen named John Parker, who was always referred to as old Parker. He was one of the pioneers of the town, and his eccentricities had greatly retarded its growth. No one ever learned where he came from or anything about his private life. He came alone, lived alone and died alone. He was a queer looking little old man, stoop shouldered, of shambling gait, and there were days when he refused to speak to any one. He bought 200 town lots and then refused to sell or lease. He built a saw-



IT WAS THE LITTLE OLD MAN.

mill, and the first lumber turned out was wanted for the erection of a church. Because the old man was asked to make a discount in price in favor of the Lord, as it were, he shut down the mill, boarded up doors and windows, and the saws never turned again. He bought two stores and five or six houses and shut them up, and he bought every improvement for the benefit of the town. On the other hand, he lent men money at a low rate of interest to make improvements, encouraged people to settle there and built the first schoolhouse entirely at his own expense.

While owning five or six comfortable houses, which were empty, old Parker lived alone in a miserable shanty and cooked and washed and mended for himself. No one was ever permitted to enter his house, and he never entered the home of any one else. There were a few men with whom he would converse, but he did not give them his confidence. There was no mourning in Red Oak when it became known one morning that old Parker had been found dead in his shanty. The feeling was rather one of relief and congratulation. It was soon ascer-

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aised that his affairs were in a mud-dle. He had left no will, and the papers in the hands of his lawyers did not represent the half of his possessions. It was hardly a fortnight before a brother and sister turned up, each claiming the estate, and through them it was learned that the old man must have been possessed of at least \$85,000 in gold when he died. Of this sum only about \$200 could be found. The town was turned upside down over the affair, and it had got into court when we moved into the village. That was in midwinter. As a boy, I could not understand or interest myself in the legal complications of the case, but the fact that old Parker had hidden a big lot of gold somewhere appealed to me very strongly. The sawmill and all his houses were searched, but no trace could be found. It was generally believed that he had buried it, but until the snow melted no effort could be made to find the cache.

On the 14th day of March, with six inches of snow still on the ground, I went with my father into the woods after a load of wood. We had a yoke of oxen and a sled, and when the first load was heaped up my father drove off with it and left me behind to cut down a dead ash and clear a road around a bit of a swamp.

After he was out of sight I sat down on a log to watch a rabbit hopping about. I may have spent five minutes watching the animal when a slight noise at my right startled me, and I looked around to find old John Parker sitting within ten feet of me. He had been described so often that there could be no mistake. It was the little old man with the stoop shoulders, the long hair, the seedy garments, the catskin cap he wore every day in the year. He had a dry hacking cough; he had bushy gray eyebrows; he had missing teeth. He sat there and rubbed his skinny hands together and looked at the ground at his feet, and I took in every detail as clearly as you see this print before you.

Was I frightened? Strangely enough, I was not. Perhaps this was because I had never seen the old man when living. He looked so real before me that I never thought of spooks or ghosts. I simply believed that his dying had been a mistake—that he had gone away instead of dying. I was no more in fear of him than of the trees about me. I wondered a bit how he could have approached me so closely without my having heard him, for the snow had a frosty crust to it, but there he was, and it was not long before I said to him:

"Did you come out here to see my father?"

Old John did not look about, though he continued to rub his hands. I repeated the question in a louder voice, but the result was the same. I looked to see if he had an ax or a gun, but nothing was in sight. So far as I could tell, he had not yet seen me, and, feeling a bit embarrassed over the situation, I rose up and moved over to make my presence known. I had started to repeat my question, and my eyes were full on him, when he dissolved. He faded out of my eyes as a wet finger mark fades from a school slate, and I found myself looking at a snow covered log. I looked for his tracks, but there was none. I looked for the spot where he had sat, but the snow had not been disturbed in the slightest. I did not have a fit of the shivers and run away. It was a sunny day, and I thought the glare on the snow had in some way played me a trick. I had the tree down and the road cleared when father returned, and when I told him of my strange visitor I expected to be laughed at. Indeed, I laughed as I told it, but father didn't. He began to question me very closely, and by the time he had loaded the sled I could see that he took the matter seriously.

When we were ready to go, he asked me to point out the exact spot where old John had sat. This was easy enough to know, as my own tracks were there in the snow. The snow on the log was piled up and frozen hard, but father soon cleared it off with the ax. Then he pounded on the log, found it hollow and cut into it. He had hardly struck 20 blows when there came a sound to show that the ax had struck something besides wood, and five minutes later we had old Parker's missing gold out of the hollow log. It was in two tin boxes, and there were many papers with it to clear up the mystery of his life and assist the heirs in settling up the estate. They were generous to me in settlement, and it was part of the legal records of the county that I saw a ghost at 2 o'clock in the afternoon of a bright day and recovered the treasure because of it.

Like a Turk.

"Yes," said the man who is impecunious but amiable, "I'm working like a Turk now."

"Like a Turk?"

"Yes. The sultan of Turkey, for example. About the only exercise I get is dodging creditors."—Washington Star.

His Oratorical Failings.

"I have two objections to that ambitious young Demosthenes as an orator," remarked Isocrates. "He is too egotistical, and he appears to chew his words." "Uses his teeth on them, probably," suggested Aphobus.—Chicago Tribune.

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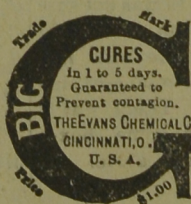
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