Pete the Peddler or A Boy's Start in Life



CHAPTER X.

The name of the farmer where Pete was stopping for the night was Bennett. When he came up from the field to his supper he gave the boy welcome, and after the meal he heard all about Constable Lukens and the jail episode. He had heard during the day that the big tramp had been arrested at a village further on and would get at least six months in jail.

The farmer, his wife and Pete were



"THE STRANGER WAS MORE THAN PLEASED."

still talking when a stranger drove up in a buggy and came up the path from the gate. He made one or two inquiries about the roads and then sat down on the veranda steps and said:

"Mr. Bennett, I am going to tell you exactly what I want. An old trunk that my great grandmother brought over from Holland a hundred years ago went astray on the railroad several years ago. It was afterward sold at auction with other unclaimed baggage and was bought by a farmer down the road named Cumerford."

"Yes, I remember the day Jim Cumerford brought it home," replied the farmer.

"And he is dead now?"

"Yes, poor Jim."

"I have seen his widow. She thought the old trunk was still in the barn, but it wasn't. It has disappeared in some way."

"Well?"

"Well, I'm still searching. The old thing isn't worth a dollar in money, but I'd give twenty to find it."

"Do you mean that?" asked the farmer as he rose up.

"I certainly do. May I ask if you know anything about it?"

"I know all about it. A tramp was carrying it off on his shoulder two years ago when he was hit by a train up there at the curve and knocked into the bushes. The trunk went with him. I found him next forenoon, all bunged up, and took him to town to be cured. When I came back I looked around a little and found the trunk."

"And you've got it now?"

"Come out to the barn and see."

The stranger was more than pleased when he saw the old trunk full of hay. He at once pulled out a twenty-dollar bill and handed it to the farmer, and five minutes later was driving away with a smile on his face.

"Twenty dollars for an old trunk only good enough for a hen's nest!" chuckled the farmer, as he came back and sat down.

"That man must be a perfect idiot!" exclaimed the wife.

Pete smiled, but said nothing. If the papers in his pocket had been still lying in the trunk it would have been the biggest kind of a bargain for $20. Aye, the swindling gang of land speculaters could well have afforded to pay $20,000 for it.

Before going to sleep that night the boy made up his mind to hurry back to Johnsonville as soon as possibleand put the papers in Mr. Mims' possession. There must be no further risk of their going astray.

He was up with the lark next morning, and as he started out he had the good wishes of all left behind. He was told that if he came that way again he must be sure to call, and his heart was light and his hopes big as he turned his face homeward. Three days later he had the pleasure of handing the papers over to Mr. Mims and of telling him the story. The old man had hoped so long and been so often disappointed that when he did get hold of the papers at last he could not keep the tears out of his eyes.

When the rejoicing was over he said:

"Now we must talk business. These papers will make me a very rich man. I owe all my good luck to you, and you will not find me ungrateful. I want to make a business man of you. You have made a splendid beginning for a boy, and I want you to go ahead. You shall make a few more trips on foot, and then I will get you a horse and wagon. You can then carry all sorts of goods. After a couple of years I shall send you to school and put you through a business college and we will then plan further.

I have long known Peter the Peddler and been a friend of his, and so I can tell my readers that things came out so planned. All over the country they knew the boy for an honest peddler. He could sell goods when no one else could. He was satisfied with a fair profit and he always told the truth. He has a wagon out for two years and then for two years he went to school.

Then at the very curve of the railroad where he had looked for the trunk that day they began building a town. Mr. Mims was looking for just such a chance and the first store in the place had a sign over the door reading: "Mims & Wilkins." It is there yet, only the village has become a city and the little store a great department store.

Mr. Mims died several years ago, leaving most of his money to our boy Pete, but the sign will not be changed. Pete the Peddler is the Hon. Pete Wilkins now, a rich and successful merchant and the Mayor of the city as you read this, and he is a man who counts his friends by the thousand.

And now, in winding up this story, which I hope you have had the interest to follow, let me tell you something: You remember that Pete ate dinner with the Widow Cumerford and they had a long talk about the trunk. It had been taken away, and she could not say by whom. You know who it was. Well, Mr. Mims felt so good about getting his papers back that he listened to Pete and made the widow a present of $500, and neither the jailor's wife nor Mrs. Bennett have been overlooked. Whoever was kind to Pete as a boy has had evidence of his gratitude as a man.

THE END.

RAVEN-BOY'S POTLACH

BY H. IRVING KING.

Raven-boy put on his feather clothing, pulled his beak down over his face, and went flying across the country looking for mischief. At last he became hungry and perched on a bough to think where he might get food and make mischief at the same time. Then he chuckled unto himself, and his chuckle sounded like a loud "Caw" at what he thought was a bright idea.

So he called to the birds saying: "Come and potlach with me." Now potlach among the Alaskan natives is a great feast, which is sometimes kept up for days, at which the guests eat all they can and have presents distributed to them by their host, just as a hostess in this part of the country distributes favors at a german.

The birds were delighted to get the invitation, for food was scarce in the forest that year. But they did not wear the beautiful plumage they do now. So they said to Raven: "We would like to go, but, really, we have no clothes fit to wear at a potlach."

"Oh, that is all right," replied Raven-boy. "I will dress you up." By his magic he began at once to decorate the birds in all sorts of colors and give smooth and glossy plumage to all except two.

To these two he said: "Oh, I am tired. You two just stay as you are. You are not worth decorating."

"This he did in a spirit of pure mischief and flew away, followed by all the decorated birds. Then the two birds which had not been dressed up for the potlach went crying to Master Carpenter, who said to them: "What makes the tear-marks on your faces, my children?" "Oh," they replied, "Raven adorned all the other birds, but told us we were not worth adorning. And we want to go to the potlach."

"Never mind," said Master Carpenter. "You shall be handsomer than all the other birds."

He went to work painting them up and putting designs upon their feathers. When Master Carpenter had finished with them and they went out and looked into the clear, still pool which furnished a mirror for them, they saw that they were dressed in a more striking manner than any of the other birds, and they flew joyfully to join in the potlach.

These birds one can see to-day in Alaska — they and their descendants. The natives call them by the unpronounceable name of quedakoxawa, and they are a sort of duck with bodies and wings of white covered with spots of jet black, and having head-dresses of iridescent feathers which shine in the sun with all the colors of the rainbow.

The two belated birds found Raven-boy and his guests assembled at



HE BORED HOLES IN EAGLE'S BILL.

Ramsey Island, where the mischievous one had all the birds at work bringing in cedar bark, which, he said, was for a roofing to a large shed that he wanted to build for the potlach.

Raven was surprised when he saw the two birds come sailing in with their fine clothes on, and he exclaimed: "Who painted you?"

"Master Carpenter," they replied together. "Ha! ha! he is better than you at it!"

Raven was chagrined. "I will play some trick on that Master Carpenter yet," he cawed. "But come here," continued he. "Master Carpenter may be a very good workman, but he has not finished his job. All the birds now have holes in their beaks—that is the style—and you must be in style if you want to come to my potlach."

"So, thinking he was very cunning, he bored holes, one on each side, in the upper bills of the two birds. The other birds, coming back from the woods with bundles of cedar bark and seeing how beautifully the two latest arrivals had been adorned by Master Carpenter, and also that Raven was boring holes in their bills, all began clamoring to have their own bills bored, and Raven-boy, thinking it a good joke, went to work making holes in the bills of every one of his guests until he was tired out and threw down his bone awl.

"Oh, don't stop," cried Eagle. "You have bored the beaks of every bird except me. If you don't bore mine there is going to be a fight."

Eagle was big and strong and Raven was afraid of him, so he said: "Oh, well, come on then," and he bored holes in Eagle's bill. But he took no pains with them and that is the reason that to this day the nasal openings of the eagle run upward and are not like those of other birds.

"Now what shall we do with our bundles of cedar bark?" cried the birds when they had done admiring each other's pierced bills. "Oh, throw them down anywhere," said Raven. "I was only joking with you."

The birds threw down their bundles, and to this day, along the shores of Ramsey Island are many rocks which, the natives say, are the bundles of bark brought by the birds now changed into stone.

The birds thought this was a pretty poor joke, and while Raven was laughing at them they took council together and then demanded of their host: "Where is this potlach you invited us to? Is that another joke?"

Then he flew around in circles, high in the air, sending out loud calls for all animals to come to him, and, because of his magic and their own curiosity, the animals came, floating down to Ramsey Island in canoes, and stopping before the place where Raven-boy had declared he would have the potlach.

Raven pushed up his beak and became a boy as he saw the animals approaching, and the birds all gathered around him like a little army. When the animals saw the boy and his feathered tribe standing on the shore they were puzzled, not knowing what to make of it all, and did not come ashore. Raven-boy spoke to them in a strange language which they could not understand.

"What does he say?" asked Bear.

"I don't know," replied Beaver; send for Porpoise-woman."

When Porpoise-woman came she called out to Raven-boy: "Oh, it is you, mischief-maker, is it? Well what are you up to now?"

"Ha! ha! Porpoise-woman!" cried Raven-boy. "I am going to war now and these are my soldiers. I am going to eat up your friends, the animals. That is the mischief I am up to. Don't imagine any of them can escape, for to-morrow I shall come after them and the only way I can be overcome is by being bombarded with abalones and sea-eggs."

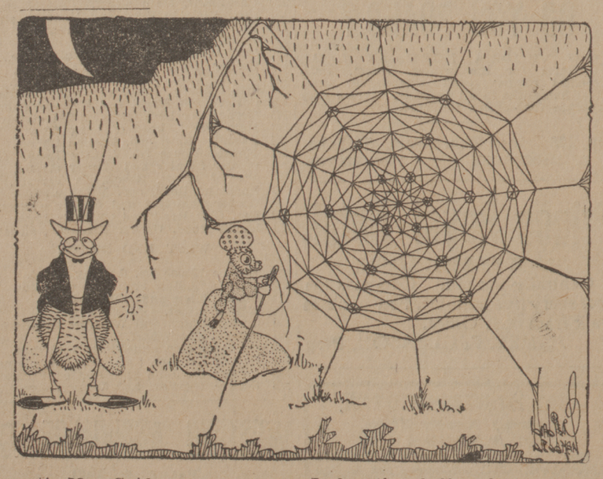
"Let us gather sea-eggs and abalones and go back and overcome him," said Bear.

They all agreed, and soon they came paddling back to Ramsey Island, their canoes laden deep with all sorts of fish-eggs and abalones. These they began to throw at Raven-boy and the birds, and Raven-boy laughed so hard at the joke—for you see it was a trick of his and this was the very food he wanted for his potlach—that his beak slipped down over his face and he changed into a raven in the very sight of the birds and the animals.

When the animals had emptied their canoes they went scurrying off, and Raven and the other birds, gathering up the food which had been thrown at them, made a potlach, which lasted three days. But before the first day was ended the animals, being told by Porpoise-woman of the trick Raven-boy had played on them, came back in a body and drove Raven-boy away, saying: "Off with you, mischief-maker. Go and find your own food; you shall have none of our providing. Let the birds continue the potlach, but no feasting for you."

This made Raven-boy very angry, but he pretended not to care and cried out as he flew off into the woods: "Oh, well, never mind. I never did care much for sea-food anyway."

DOMESTIC MRS. SPIDER.



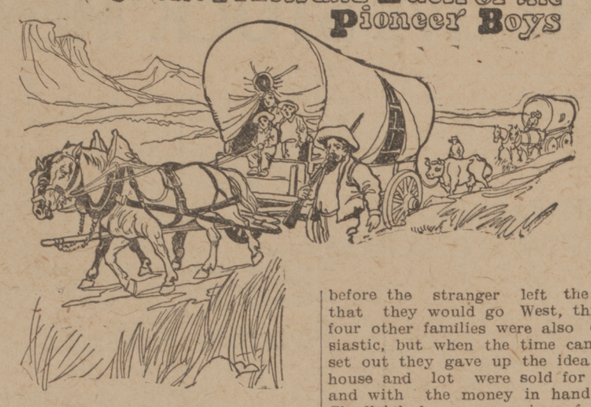
Domestic Mrs. Spider—
When Old Bugg wed Miss Spider
He was happy as could be
(Altho she's far from pretty,
She's real handy, as you see).

She was very, very clever,
Though she'd never been to school
(The fancy work she's making
Will show she is no fool)

In less than half an hour
She'd spin the finest rug,
Or make a swell lace curtain
For her husband, Mr. Bugg.

And so they lived real happy
And never had a word,
Until one awful, awful day,
They were eaten by a bird.

The White Horse Mine or the Pluck and Luck of the Pioneer Boys



CHAPTER I.

Forty years ago there was living in the town of Paris, in Eastern Illinois, a family by the name of Chudleigh, consisting of father and mother and two boys, the latter being named Joseph and Samuel, Joseph, who was always called Joe, was fifteen years old when my story opens, and Samuel, who of course was always called Sam, was two years younger.

Mr. Chudleigh was a middle-aged man, and had been in poor health for a long time. He owned the house he lived in, but as he had no trade to work at there were times when the family would have been "hard-up" indeed but for what the two boys managed to earn in one way and other.

One day there arrived in Paris a man who had traveled much in the far West. He had traveled the overland route to California twice, and he knew all about the climate and soil of Kansas, Colorado and the country beyond.

People had been rushing West for a good many years to find new homes, but there was room left for hundreds of thousands more. The stranger talked to a crowd of men at the village store, and among them was Mr. Chudleigh. He made many inquiries, and later when he went home, he said to the family: "Well, wife and boys, I am going to sell out here in Paris and go West and take up land and become a farmer."

Of course the three were much surprised and had a great many questions to ask, but when the matter had been thoroughly talked over all were satisfied that it was the best thing to be done.

Next day the stranger was invited to the house for dinner, and he took maps from his pocket and showed them the route they would have to take and told them much worth listening to. He told them what sort of a wagon they must have; what to take along; where to settle; what sort of people to make friends with and whom to avoid, and the talk lasted quite half a day. They must expect the encounter many hardships and dangers, but if they were on the watch they would pull through as safely as others had done.

The Chudleighs had quite settled it before the stranger left the town that they would go West, three or four other families were also enthusiastic, but when the time came to set out they gave up the idea. The house and lot were sold for $680, and with the money in hand Mr. Chudleigh began preparing for the move.

He first bought a span of heavy horses, and next followed the wagon. This vehicle was as heavy and strong as an army wagon and had a canvas top. In those they were called "prairie schooners." The wagon was roomy enough to hold all the household goods and the family besides, though the plan was for all to make camp every night when the weather allowed. After they had crossed the States of Illinois and Missouri and reached the Kansas line Mr. Chudleigh would buy farming utensils and seeds.



"DROP THAT OR I WILL PUT A BULLET THROUGH YOU?"

Each of the boys had a rifle which he had paid for in work, and the father bought one for himself. A cow was tied behind the wagon to make the long journey with them, and one morning at surise the big wagon moved out of the village and a hundred people were up to cheer it and to shout good-by to those who had lived among them for so many years.

Mr. Chudleigh struck due west on almost a straight line, and in following this route he passed through Quincy, Hannibal, St. Joe, Leavenworth and many other places which we now see mentioned in the papers almost daily, but which were then hardly more than villages, and some of them were without railroad connection.

They had only one adventure worth recording until they reached the Kansas across Missouri they were joined one day by two hard-looking men on horseback. The men claimed to be trying to find certain lands they had bought, but Mr. Chudleigh had his opinion of them from the first. They asked where he came from, whither he was going, how much he sold his home for, and many other impertinent questions. They were with the wagon for two hours and then rode on ahead.

It was a lonely road, with the farm-houses far apart, and after the men had disappeared Joe turned to his father and said:

"I don't believe those men are honest. They asked too many questions, and I believe we shall have trouble with them."

"I believe myself they are a bad lot," replied the father. "Neither one of them had a rifle, but I have no doubt they had pistols in their belts. We must have our rifles ready to shoot in case they stop us anywhere."

Mrs. Chudleigh was very much alarmed, and though the boys were a little shaky the father could see that they meant to stand by him in case of attack. For the next ten miles after the men rode on ahead, the wagon passed only one house, and Mr. Chudleigh expected to see the men step out of the woods at any moment. Nothing of the kind happened, however, and they finally reached a good spot to make camp and the horses were unhitched.

It was hoped that the strangers had gone on for good, but as supper was being prepared the two suddenly came into camp, and one of them asked if they could not purchase a meal. Sam and his father were busy gathering fuel for the night, but Joe sat with rifle in hand. He saw that the man who spoke had a pistol in his hand, though trying to conceal it, and he at once cried out to his father and brother. Then bringing up his rifle to cover the man with the pistol he said to him:

"Drop that or I will put a bullet through you!"

Mr. Chudleigh and Sam had their guns ready a moment later, and the strangers were taken by surprise and rendered helpless. The pistols were taken from both, and they were then driven out of camp and warned that if they were found hanging around they would be fired on.

(To Be Continued.)



HOW THE ANIMALS CAME

BY SARAH NOBLE-IVES.

The Head Apprentice rejoiced in the beauty of the earth over which he had toiled so many thousand years. It certainly was a comfort to him, after all his troubles, to see things getting on so well.

Still, he felt, rather than knew, that there was something lacking. Life there was, to be sure, but it was all rooted to the earth, and could not move from place to place as he could himself, nor show its gladness except by just growing. There was something to be done still, and he must find out what. He sat down by the side of a reedy lake to think it out. He was facing the hardest problem yet. There must be life on the earth that could move around and enjoy things.

For a long time he sat looking out over the reedy lake. Suddenly a breath of wind struck its surface, and he saw some water weeds begin to move on the ripples. He looked again; yes, there was no mistake — they floated before the wind across the lake. Here, then, was a growth which was not rooted to the soil. The water must be the place to start his next experiments. This was an idea to start with.

He took this idea and rubbed it well with thoughts till it shone in its mind like a light. Then he started on a trip to the Kitchen of the Universe.

There he found a jar marked "Protoplastic Yeast," and a bag marked "Embryonic Flour." With these articles he went back to the earth, and, finding a natural basin in a rock, he poured into it some of the flour and some clear spring water and made a little experimental dough. A drop of the Protoplastic Yeast was put in, and the mass was set to rise.

When he went to look at it a month or two later it was popping right out of the basin. It looked so queerly and wriggled so that the Head Apprentice was actually afraid to knead it up. He knew it must be spoiled. So he emptied the whole thing into the reedy lake to get rid of it.

While he stood there, trying to think what to do next, the waters of the lake became agitated as if they were boiling. What he saw looked like a school of jelly fish—formless, but alive.

Hurriedly he mixed up more of the dough; this time when it had risen he kneaded it into little forms and threw them into the reedy lake. He was delighted to see these retain their shapes and grow bigger, and I can assure you that he was very proud of them. They were not very beautiful, but oh! how big they grew, and he called them dinosaurs and plesiosaurs and icthypsaurs and pterodactyls, and a whole lot more names as funny and enormous as the animal themselves.

The Head Apprentice was so excited now that he kept right at work making new shapes. He stocked the water everywhere; he kneaded forms with wings, and they could gambol about in the air as well as in the water. Some of these queer animals began crawling out on the land, but none of them cared to stay there all the time; he must make a different kind.

He kneaded up some more dough and fashioned some little figures with great care—little ones with four legs. Then he set these in the sun to dry, so they would be more solid. The attempt was successful; the little creatures as soon as they were done began to walk around and eat grass and fruits.

Later some of the bigger ones began to eat the smaller ones; but he did not mind that, as he could make more, and once they were well started they grew and multiplied of themselves.

One morning to his dismay he found he had come to the bottom of the bag of Embryonic Flour. This distinctly gave him a shock; there was barely a handful left. He looked ruefully at it and said to himself:

"Well, I must put all my skill into this, since it is to be my last try. I'll make it a work of art."

He sat down and fashioned the little dough figure most carefully. Instead of four legs he gave it only two, and made the body so it would balance on these. He put two arms on it, and made a head that surpassed anything he had ever done before.

When it was baked it stood upright, and as soon as it had grown large enough it began to drive the other animals around. It was a Man. Not such a man as we see nowadays, but it was a pretty good effort for a Head Apprentice, and he was mightily proud of it.

And then, when there was nothing more to be done, the Head Apprentice craRled into a cave and took a little nap of a thousand years, for he was tired.

SO CHEERFUL!

"The window's lovely character
To me is ever plain,
For she lets in floods of sunshine
In spite of all her pane."
Thus spoke the Grand Piano,
His manner free from guile,
As he showed his row of ivories
In one unchanging smile.

LITTLE BILLEE'S IDEA.

If I was big like Uncle Dan,
I'd try to be a nicer man;
I wouldn't let a little lad
Be without things that he wants bad,
But every boy I'd see, I'd say
"Kid, tell me what you want to-day,"
And then I'd give him money, so
He could buy everything, you know.

A NAUTICAL WISH.

