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(From the San Francisco Herald.)

Romantic History of an Old Clock.

In a quiet country town in New Hampshire, near the Maine line, stands an ancient mansion, whose appearance and surroundings indicate its occupation for many generations. Tall trees have grown up around it, and a wealth of tangled shrubbery and vines lend it an air of home-like quiet, so common to New England rural scenes. The place is an old homestead of a family named Blasdel, who, for four generations, have called it their home. Within this dwelling, and forming a prominent feature of its antique appointments, stands, like a grim sentry in his box, an old-fashioned eight-day clock. To a casual observer there is nothing remarkable in the appearance of this ancient time-piece, for it is ancient, as the inscription across its face—"Nicholas Blasdel, maker, Glasgow, 1738"—plainly tells. Such clocks are not rare in the old settled communities of the East, but a peculiar value is attached to this particular clock. Not only had it been in the family for upwards of a century, but it was the link-work of their remotest ancestor in America. Nicholas Blasdel, who made that clock in 1738, came to America with three brothers in 1740, and they brought the clock with them. Nicholas had been a clockmaker in Glasgow, and had acquired a little property. But the brothers were young, enterprising, and ambitious. Glasgow offered no inducements to active enterprise, and the news from the far-off land of America was well calculated to stimulate their youthful ardor. They determined to seek their fortunes in the Colonies, and packing up their effects, including the new clock, they crossed the Atlantic, and settled in New Hampshire. Three of the brothers died unmarried, but Nicholas took to himself a wife, and was blessed with a family. Before leaving Scotland he had acquired a piece of land near the city of Glasgow, but as it was of no great value at the time, he made no effort to dispose of it. This property was frequently made the subject of conversation in his family; and after his death, even down to the present generation, the story of his having left behind him a piece of land near Glasgow, has been told about the family hearth, with many curious speculations regarding it. But the children now living thought but little of the story. Sitting by the blazing fire in the old homestead, with the old clock staring down upon them, never pausing in its ticking. They have heard their mother and grandmother tell about the land that still stood in the name of Nicholas Blasdel, near one of Britain's largest cities, but the thought of attempting to gain its possession never entered their heads. Their Yankee predilections were averse to rummaging over the dusty past in search of fortune, when in a new country, rich with undeveloped wealth of every description; and so they dealt actively with the living present, and the story of the Glasgow property was nearly forgotten.

In the meantime the city of Glasgow had been spreading with wonderful strides. Its population had increased rapidly, its commercial interests expanded, immense manufactories had sprung up, and from the quiet sea-port of 1740, it had become the second commercial city of the kingdom of Great Britain. Far beyond its former limits stately piles had been erected, and the former suburbs were now the center of the city. Had Nicholas Blasdel been sleeping a kip Van Winkle slumber, and upon awaking endeavored to find his lot, it would have puzzled him greatly.

Yet there it was as he left it; still standing in his name, and reserved for the rightful heirs whenever they should claim it. Around its limits, and far beyond, the busy hum of trade would have greeted his ears; immense buildings would have met his eyes on every side; and he would have been lost in amazement at the wonderful changes that had taken place, and very likely would have been slow in appreciating that it was not all a dream.

When the property became valuable and was needed for building purposes, capitalists began to make inquiries concerning its ownership. The records showed its title, but the owner could not be found.—Search was instituted and continued for years, until it was definitely ascertained that he had come to America. A lawyer, sharp and keen as a detective, was sent to the United States, some years since, to endeavor to find the heirs of the estate. Blasdels were plenty throughout the length and breadth of the land, and the task, as may be supposed, proved a difficult one. The genealogy of each Blasdel whom he met had to be investigated, and perhaps after months of anxious search, it would be ascertained that the family was not the one he sought. In the course of his inquiries, he learned of a married lady living in Illinois, whose maiden name was Blasdel, and he was not long in finding her. He made known the object of his search, and was rewarded by the intelligence that he had at last found a solution of his difficulty.

The lady immediately told the lawyer of the old clock which the great-grandfather had made and brought over from Scotland with him, and of the family tradition concerning the property near Glasgow. The mystery was explained at last. The lawyer sped to the homestead in New Hampshire, and there, in its acclimated place, stood the old clock, its hands slowly revolving about the dial, and its huge pendulum swinging back and forth.

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,
Through days of death, and days of birth;
Through every swift vicissitude
Of changeful time, unchanged it stood;
And as if, like God, it all things saw,
It calmly repeats these words of awe,
Forever—Never! Never—Forever!

The old clock had solved the knotty problem. Musty documents, that had remained untouched for years, were brought to light; the identity of the family of Nicholas Blasdel was thoroughly established, and the heirs were made happy by receiving the information that their estate—comprised in the suburban lot of Nicholas Blasdel—was worth \$3,500,000, or \$17,000,000.

And now it may be asked, why is this romantic story published as an item of San Francisco local news? The answer is this: (One of our pioneer citizens, whose many friends will be pleased to hear of his good fortune, is one of the heirs to this vast estate. The family comprises the mother, two sisters, and two brothers, one of the latter of whom is Mr. Samuel F. Blasdel, the delivery clerk at the California State Telegraph Office, on California street, who was made aware of his stroke of good fortune on Wednesday last.

IDLENESS NOT HAPPINESS.—The most common error of men and women, is that looking for happiness somewhere outside of usual work. It has never yet been found when thus sought, and never will be, while the world stands, and the sooner the better for every one. If you doubt the proposition, glance round among your friends and acquaintances, and select those who appear to have the most enjoyment through life.—Are they idlers and pleasure seekers, or the earnest workers? We know what your answer will be. Of all the miserable human beings it has been our fortune or misfortune to know, they were the most wretched who had retired from useful employment, in order to enjoy themselves.

A new Missouri law against prize fights inflicts a penalty of two years imprisonment, or \$1,000 fine, on principals and assistants alike.

AN ACT to provide for the appointment of a Land Commissioner, and to define his powers and duties.

SECTION 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina, now met and sitting in General Assembly, and by the authority of the same, That the Advisory Board hereinafter created, is hereby authorized and required to appoint a suitable person to be known as the Land Commissioner of the State of South Carolina; said Commissioner, before entering upon the duties of his office shall execute to the people of the State of South Carolina a written undertaking, with good and sufficient surety, in the penal sum of twenty thousand dollars, for the faithful discharge of the duties of his office; said undertaking to be approved by the Advisory Board and filed in the office of the Secretary of State.—His salary shall be at the rate of two thousand dollars per annum while on duty.

SEC. 2. That said Land Commissioner shall hold his office at the pleasure of the Advisory Board, and, before entering upon the duties of his office, shall take and subscribe the oath prescribed in the thirtieth Section of Article II of the Constitution, which oath shall be filed in the office of the Secretary of State.

SEC. 3. That the Governor, Comptroller-General, State Treasurer, Secretary of State and Attorney-General are hereby declared to be an Advisory Board to the Land Commissioner; and said Commissioner shall, in all the duties imposed upon him by the provisions of this Act, be governed by their instructions and advice.

SEC. 4. That it shall be the duty of the said Land Commissioner to purchase, or cause to be purchased, any lands in any portion of the State, improved or unimproved, at such price as the said Advisory Board may determine, not to exceed in the aggregate amount, in any one fiscal year, the par value of the public stock of this State created by the General Assembly for this purpose.

SEC. 5. The Treasurer of the State is hereby authorized and directed to issue to the Land Commissioner bonds of this State in the sum of two hundred thousand dollars, with coupons attached, if in the opinions of the said Advisory Board so much be necessary, bearing six per cent. interest, the principal payable in twenty years, at the financial agency of this State, in the city of New York, the bonds to be signed by the Governor, countersigned by the Comptroller-General, and the coupons to be signed by the Treasurer of the State; the faith and credit of the State is hereby pledged to the payment of the principal and interest of said bonds; and a sufficient amount of taxes is hereby levied to pay the interest accruing on said bonds annually.

SEC. 6. All land purchased by said Land Commissioner shall be subdivided into sections containing not less than twenty-five nor more than one hundred acres, to be sold to actual settlers, subject to the condition that one half thereof shall be placed under cultivation within five years from the date of such purchase, and that the purchaser shall annually pay interest at the rate of six per cent. per annum upon any moneys remaining unpaid, and also all taxes imposed thereon by the authority of the United States or of this State, and, in addition thereto, shall, in every year after the third from the date of said purchase, pay one fifth of the principal.—The titles to said land shall remain in the State until the amount of said purchase shall be paid, principal and interest; but a certificate of such purchase shall be assignable at three years from date thereof: *Provided*, That in every case when a person purchases more than one section of fifty acres, they shall pay on such excess, one-fourth cash, and the balance to be paid in equal annual installments of one-fourth the amount of the purchase each year: *Provided*, That no person shall be entitled to purchase, in his own name or for his own use, more than one hundred acres.

SEC. 7. It shall be the duty of the said Land Commissioner to

deposit with the Treasurer of the State all moneys collected by him as interest due upon the sale of said lands, which shall be used by the Treasurer of the State in the payment of the interest on the stocks and bonds of the State issued for the purchase of said lands; and to invest in bonds of this State all moneys received by the said Land Commissioner in payment for said lands as principal; said State bonds to be deposited with the Treasurer of the State, to constitute a sinking fund for the final payment and redemption of all stocks or bonds issued by the State for the purchase of said lands; the interest accruing on the bonds of the said sinking fund shall be applied to the payment of the interest upon the stocks or bonds of the State issued for the purchase of lands.

SEC. 8. The books and records of the office of the said Land Commissioner shall at all times be subject to the inspection of the Advisory Board, or any member thereof; and the said Land Commissioner shall annually make a detailed report of the transactions of his office to the General Assembly.

SEC. 9. The said Land Commissioner, in addition to the compensation hereinbefore prescribed, shall receive such fees as the Advisory Board may prescribe, not to exceed in the aggregate for each title the sum of ten dollars, the cost of all other papers included. Said fees, also mileage and per diem, of the Land Commissioner shall be paid out of the contingent fund of the State, to be paid by the Treasurer on the certificate of the Advisory Board.—And the Land Commissioner shall be allowed such clerical assistance as may be authorized by the Advisory Board, which shall be paid in the same manner.

SEC. 10. The said Land Commissioner shall not purchase from or sell to the State any land, neither shall he engage in speculation in lands, either on his own account or as agent for other persons or corporations; and, upon conviction thereof, for every such offence shall be fined and imprisoned, at the discretion of the Court.

SEC. 11. All Acts, or parts of Acts, inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed.

In the Senate House, the twenty-fourth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine,
CHAS. W. MONTGOMERY,
President of the Senate pro tem.
FRANKLIN J. MOSES, JR.,
Speaker of Representatives.

HOOPER SKIRTS, says Harpers' Bazar, are being worn smaller, but they are not likely to disappear; on the contrary, the indications are that they will increase in size as the season advances. In Paris they are already worn larger.—They are so comfortable and without so healthful that ladies will not readily abandon them for the multifarious skirts of old; and they will probably be a permanent part of the wardrobe for all time to come, varying in shape or size, but never entirely abandoned.

A PARIS journal says it has been discovered that if the blades of cutting tools are steeped in an acid solution, composed of sulphuric acid and water, in the proportion of one of the former to twenty of the latter, they will only require to be finished on the hone; the length of immersion must be augmented, we are told, according to the fineness of the edge required, but nothing is said about the average time required. At any rate, it is an experiment any one can try.

A BILLIARD congress, it is announced, will soon be held in Boston. Preliminary arrangements have been made, and committees appointed to raise funds, procure a hall, and draft rooms for the New England billiard congress.

In the shipping records of the last century are found reports of small vessels—schooners and sloops of but twenty tons burden—clearing from American ports to Africa and the West Indies.—A large number of the ships then about registered between sixty and one hundred tons.

Singular Case of Instinct in a Horse.

We do not remember, says a Minnesota paper, ever to have heard of a more remarkable exhibition of equine intelligence than was communicated to us a few days since, by Mr. Allen, of this place. The circumstances, as they were related to us, were as follows:

Mr. A. has had for a considerable time a span of sprightly little horses, that he has never separated. In the stable, in the field, in the harness, they have always been together. This has caused a strong attachment to grow up between them. A few days ago, he went with them out to Lake Minnetonka, on a fishing excursion. Taking them out of the carriage, he led them down to the lake, and tied them with stout ropes, several rods apart, on a strip of grass that grew upon the shore, and left them to feed. Returning to the shanty, he threw himself upon the floor to await the return of the party who had repaired to the lake to fish.—Not much time had elapsed before the sound of an approaching horse's feet attracted attention and a moment after one of his span appeared at the door. The animal put his head in, and giving one neigh, turned, and at a slow gallop, yet under evident excitement, returned to the spot where, but a few moments before, he and his companion had been fastened.—Surprised to find his horse loose, and struck with his singular conduct, Mr. A. immediately followed, and found the other lying in the water, entangled in the rope, and struggling to keep his head from being submerged.

While Mr. A. proceeded to disengage the unfortunate horse, his noble benefactor stood by, manifesting the utmost solicitude and sympathy, and when his mate was extricated from its perilous situation, and again upon its feet, the generous creature exhibited the most unquestionable signs of satisfaction and joy.

That this intelligent animal should have noticed the misfortune of his mate, that he should know where to apply for rescue, and in his efforts should sunder a three-fourths of an inch rope—and, finally, that he should exhibit so high an appreciation of the event, are circumstances to astonish us, and commend themselves to the thoughtful consideration of those who would limit the power of reasoning to the "genus homo."

THE SHOOTING FISH.—This very remarkable fish is a native of the West Indies. Nature has constructed this aquatic sportsman in a very singular manner, but one admirably adapted to his sporting predilections. The fish has a hollow cylindrical beak. He frequents the rivers on the sea shore in search of food, and from the unusual manner in which he provides for his daily wants he derives his name. When this hungry gentleman spies a fly or an insect not taking due care of himself but sitting on plants in shallow water, he swims away to the distance of four or five feet, and often of six feet, that he may take aim at his prey, when he has done so to his satisfaction, he then with amazing dexterity and cleverness, ejects out of his mouth one drop of water, which is so well directed, and swiftly shot forth, that it never fails to knock the fly into the water and once there, all hope of escape is gone—the fish darts upon its prey and eagerly devours it; thus supplying us with another instance of the diversified mode in which nature qualifies its countless millions of creatures with the powers necessary for procuring food.

A WILD woman who was captured from the Indians on the plains, was brought into Jefferson City, Missouri, on the 18th instant, by a detachment of the 5th United States Infantry. She was half clad and nearly demented, and could give no account of herself further than that her name was Sarah Griffin, and that she came from Ireland. It is supposed that she was carried off many years ago by the savages and has lost her reason by ill treatment.

An ass covered with gold is more respected than a horse with a pack saddle on.

LaFayette's Watch.

Dr. John B. Ward, of Louisville, Kentucky, has in his possession an old English watch, one hundred years of age, which is claimed to be the one presented by George Washington to the Marquis de Lafayette at the time of the surrender of Yorktown by Lord Cornwallis. The watch is of the old English verge pattern, and is heavy with gold, the cases alone having \$43 worth of the precious metal. Without the outer case, it is about 4 1/2 inches in circumference and 1 1/2 inches in diameter.—The crystal bears the Roman numerals, with figures above to mark the minutes. The outer case is elaborately worked, and bears a representation of a Roman soldier presenting a crown to a goddess. On the inner case is the following inscription in German text:

GEORGE WASHINGTON
TO
GILBERT MOTTIER DE LAFAYETTE,
Lord Cornwallis Capitulation
Yorktown.

October 17th, 1781.
The works bear the name of E. Halifax, London, 1769. An outside copper case belonged to the watch at one time, but this has never been in Dr. Ward's possession.

The watch was taken to Louisville by a policeman of that city, who bought it from a needy Frenchman in Sacramento, California, in 1858. The Frenchman and the officer happened at the same hotel, and the former being in need, was glad to part with it for the sake of a little very necessary money. The officer afterward pawned it, and it afterward fell into the hands of auctioneers, who, in November last, offered it at auction. Dr. Ward, putting in the highest bid, secured it, and has kept it up to the present time.—He has written to Paris to notify some of the members of LaFayette's family, but none of them being in Paris, he has as yet been unable to reach any of them by letter.

The watch is believed to have been taken at the time the house of LaFayette was mobbed, in 1794, during the French Revolution, as otherwise it could hardly have reached this side the water and got into the hands of the pawnbrokers.

The most common error of men and women is that of looking for happiness somewhere outside of useful work. It has never yet been found and never will be as long as the world stands. Of all the miserable human beings it has been our fortune to know, they were the most wretched who had retired from useful employments, in order to enjoy themselves.

SIR WALTER SCOTT was, in one of his walks, leaning on the arm of his faithful attendant, Tom Purdie. Tom said: "There are fine novels of yours, Sir Walter; they are just invaluable to me." "I am glad to hear it Tom." "Yes, sir; for when I have been out all day hard at work, and come home very tired, and take up one of your novels, I'm asleep directly."

An Irish gentleman residing in Canada, was desirous to persuade his sons to work as backwoodsmen instead of drinking champagne at something more than a dollar a bottle. Whenever this old gentleman saw his sons so engaged, he used to exclaim: "Ah! my boys, there goes an acre of land, trees and all!"

THERE is to be a sharp struggle between Chicago and San Francisco for the trade of Idaho, Montana, Utah and the White Pine region—a trade sufficient to add largely to the wealth of the city that succeeds in controlling it.

A. J. WALT, once one of the wealthiest merchants of Memphis, became insane the other day, split a friend's head open with a hatchet, chopped the arm of another almost off, and finally, exclaiming "Vain world, good-bye!" threw himself from the window on the pavement, breaking his neck.

A friend to everybody is friend to nobody.

A man is a man, though he wear a crownless hat.