

# THE STORY TELLER

## THE VOICE OF THE DRUM.

The march of the ages through History's pages  
Is led by the resonant voice of the drum,  
And marking its time beats the pulse of the nations;  
It calls and its votaries come.  
No slower, no faster, unmoved by disaster,  
Its faithful voice sounding the call for its own,  
It summons the poet, the slave and his master,  
The prince from the steps of the throne.  
They list to its pleading and follow its leading,  
Before the voice of all nature is dumb;  
The prayers of the priests and the tears of the mothers  
Are lost in the roll of the drum:  
Come up, come up, come up to the cannon,  
Come up to the cannon, come up to the cannon,  
Come up, come up, come up to the cannon—  
Oh, follow, oh, follow the drum.  
Still telling the story of conquest and glory,  
It speaks not of slaughter, it recks not of pain,  
It tells not of corpses all mangled and gory—  
The siren who lures not in vain.  
Through the smoke of the battle its echoing rattle,  
Still calmly insistent, rolls on in its might,  
Till the timid grow bolder, and shoulder to shoulder  
Press on in the thick of the fight.  
The dead and the dying together are lying  
With ears growing heavy and eyes growing dumb,  
But through all their moaning and over their sighing  
Still echoes the throb of the drum:  
Come up, come up, come up to the cannon,  
Come up to the cannon, come up to the cannon,  
Come up, come up, come up to the cannon—  
Oh, follow, oh, follow the drum.  
—Ann J. Flint, in Youth's Companion.

## © Paul Keister, © Snake Charmer.

By Bradford K. Daniels.

It was while working on the C. N. railway that I first met Paul Keister. We were fellow-engineers engaged in the construction of the big bridge across South river, and boarded at the same house.

Although I was much older than he, I was drawn to him from the first. His full, sensuous mouth, misty brown eyes, and low, musical voice, possessed a fascination for me, for which now, when looking back after the lapse of years, I am unable to account.

When he looked at you he never seemed to see you, but always seemed to be looking through and beyond you into infinity. When quiet he had a fashion of gazing fixedly before him, evidently seeing nothing with the physical sight. At such times his eyes reminded me of deep pools of water, in the depths of which shadowy, unguessed things were moving about.

As we were the only boarders at the little farm-house, we were thrown together a good deal; and it soon became a habit with us to sit upon the veranda overlooking the river for a while after supper, to smoke and chat.

Keister, although only 28, had had a wide experience. His father, a German, had gone to India, and there married a native girl. Paul was their only child. The son had become a civil engineer, and had worked with a British syndicate until the death of his parents, when he had come to Germany to his father's people, and from there had drifted to America.

I can see him yet as he used to sit, tilted back in his chair upon the veranda, one leg thrown over the other and a cloud of smoke about his head. Occasionally he would run his long, tapering fingers through his wavy black hair, look out upon the river as if he saw some object of interest upon its glassy surface, and then begin in his low monotonous voice one of his Indian yarns. His descriptive powers were masterly, and many of those eastern scenes are stamped upon my mind almost as vividly as if I had been an eye-witness.

It was about the snake-charmers that he loved to talk the best of all. At times he would wax eloquent over this uncanny theme, and his usual nonchalance would give place to a feverish earnestness. He used to maintain stoutly that there is a subtle affinity between snakes and the human race, the psychology of which is not wholly understood.

"I tell you," he used to say, "you have no idea how a snake and a man—who possesses the gift—can read each other's thoughts. You talk about mind-readers; they've got a lot to learn yet from those dusky devils in India who conjure with the descendants of the tempter of Eve."

"Once I saved the life of a professional snake-charmer—the old fellow slipped into the river among the crocodiles, and I pulled him out just in the nick of time—and out of gratitude, I presume, he gave me a few lessons in his exalted art. I must have been a very apt pupil, for be-

fore I quit I could charm a cobra every time."

For some moments he said nothing more, but fell into one of his odd fits of abstraction. Presently he roused himself and said, with a slight shiver although it was July: "My, but there was a fearful fascination about it!" Then he rose abruptly and went into the house, leaving me wondering.

Some days after this conversation one of the navvies—a treacherous-looking Spaniard—struck a fellow-workman over the head with a shovel and killed him outright. In the evening we were sitting on the veranda as usual, and I remarked: "Of course they'll hang the fellow, and he rightly deserves it."

"They haven't any right to hang him or anybody else," Keister replied sharply. "Do you suppose that devilish Spaniard could keep from braining poor Mike? No more than a wolf can keep from killing a lamb that crossed its path. It was the fellow's nature. I tell you, and a man can't change his nature any more than a leopard can change its spots."

"I believe in a sort of transmigration of souls, up the scale and not down. That idea that the easterners have, about the souls of people going back to inhabit beasts again, is all rot. It seems to me something like this: Man is the highest order of creation upon the earth. He is the embodiment of all that has gone before him. In the long struggle upwards from chaos to the present time—from the first spark of life to the complex animal called man, all the sensations and experiences of the orders of life that have preceded him are embodied in him, and lie buried in his sub-consciousness. When a nameless terror of the dark assails a child, it is a remnant of the fear some poor naked ancestor experienced in the dark, teeming jungle, when existence was a precarious thing, and meant a constant struggle with the giant forces about him. When an ungovernable passion seizes a man and he commits murder, it is the disposition of one of his monster ancestors, who wallowed in the primeval slime, and fought its enemies to the death, with tusk and claw, asserting itself. As a child will sometimes resemble some remote ancestor in disposition or appearance, or both, so will reappear in every man traits that characterized some form of life in the endless chain that reaches back through the limitless ages. A man is not a unity but an infinite complexity—a multitude of conflicting experiences, tied up in one bundle. Free? Bah! He is no more free than a man in the middle of a moving multitude is free to stand still or go the other way. His environments, past and present, determine his course of action."

I was so astonished at this sudden burst of philosophy that it took me some moments to formulate a reply in defense of my theory of the free agency of man. When I began to state my theories, he laughed in his odd, bewitching way, and skillfully changed the subject of conversation.

As the weeks went by Keister's remarkable ability to handle men became apparent. There was a certain compelling power in his look and voice that was hard to resist. More than once during the burning August weather, when the men were well-nigh worthless because of the heat, I marvelled at his unique gift.

One evening after an exceptionally hot day, we threw ourselves upon the grass in the shade of a big gum tree, instead of taking our accustomed places on the veranda. Within a few feet of Keister was a large pile of loose stones, upon which the sun had been beating mercilessly all day. I was lying flat on my back, with my hands locked under my head, and gazing up at the drooping leaves of the gum tree, when I heard my companion utter a sharp exclamation of surprise. Turning towards him, I saw his eyes riveted on the stone-heap. In a moment a large rattlesnake came gliding softly towards him from the heated pile. In an instant Keister was sitting cross-legged and gazing steadily into the monster's eyes. I was too terrified to move or even speak, so simply watched as one in a trance.

For a moment the snake wavered, then, approaching to within two feet of Keister's lowered face, raised itself to fully a third of its length and swayed its body with a rhythmic motion like that of a rush in running water. Then they gazed steadily into each other's eyes as if each were reading the inmost secret of the other's being. For a moment the snake's bead-like eyes seemed to soften till they looked almost human, while Keister's eyes took on a hard glitter and his face became contorted in a way that made it appear the very incarnation of evil.

Presently the snake turned and glided back to the stone-heap. Keister flung himself upon his face and burst into a tumult of sobs, exclaiming brokenly: "Ye gods! ye gods! I thought I was delivered from hell when I left India."

I stole softly into the house and left him there under the quiet stars.

The next morning he did not come down to breakfast, and when he appeared at the bridge he seemed to have aged ten years in a single night. His face looked white and drawn, and there were big black circles under his eyes like those about the eyes of a person who has been strangled.

For several days he shunned me; but in the course of a week he came back to his old self, and we were together as before. I studiously avoided making any reference to what had happened, as it was evident that he did not wish to discuss the painful affair. This was the first shadow between us.

All went well for nearly a fortnight when I was summoned to the nearest town on business. I was absent for three days and when I returned Keister looked even more ghastly than on the day following his strange performance with the rattlesnake. I attempted to approach the subject several times but was unable to break through his chilling reserve.

From that time forward Keister was a changed man—so changed that even the dullest navy noticed it, and followed his listless motions with wondering eyes.

On the morning of the 20th of August there was a great commotion among the workmen who tented on the south side of the river near the bridge. One of their number had been found dead in his blanket, and the doctor, who acted as coroner, hinted that there had been foul play, although he finally brought in a verdict of death from heart failure.

Keister seemed greatly affected by the unhappy affair, and did not put in his appearance after dinner.

Three mornings later another man was found dead, and the following morning still another. Upon the face of each victim was a look of wide-eyed terror that was horrible to see.

Of course the excitement was at white heat, and the terrified navvies began to pack their trunks and disappear as if by magic.

Then an extraordinary thing happened. The last victim came to life as they were burying him and kicked the end out of his coffin. After they got him out of the coffin he was so terrified for a time he could not speak but lay upon the grass rolling his eyes wildly. Finally he gasped, half-shouted:

"Keister! The devil! A snake! Oh! oh! oh!"

When finally the poor fellow became calm enough to tell his story, it was this: In the night he had awakened from what seemed a hideous nightmare to find Keister looking intently at him with snake-like, glittering eyes. Upon his face, which showed distinctly in the moonlight, was the most diabolical expression he had ever seen. He tried to cry out and get away, but he was powerless to move. Keister was the devil come for his soul. At this point of the story the poor fellow began to rave, and it soon required six men to hold him.

The navvies began to whisper among themselves, and soon the whisper, like the awakening of the sea, grew into a hoarse clamor. Presently some one among them shouted:

"Keister! Where is he? Let's stretch him!"

Knowing that Keister was in his room and that it would not be long before they would be searching it for him, I hastened toward the boarding house, with the assuaged feeling that my friend was a doomed man if they found him.

I found the door of his room locked, and when he did not answer to my knock promptly broke it open. As I stepped in an ominous rattle from the direction of the bed made me start back. When my eyes became accustomed to the twilight of the room, I saw Keister's lifeless form upon the bed. Coiled up beside him and looking at me with venomous eyes, was a big rattlesnake. Just then I heard the howls of the approaching mob, and sprang to the door.

"Keister! Keister! Down with Keister!" they shouted, and would have borne me down and trampled me under foot, had I not drawn a revolver and leveled it at the head of the leader, a brother of Keister's last victim.

Raising my disengaged hand for silence, I said so that all could hear me:

"Keister is dead upon his bed; he has been bitten by a rattler."

Never shall I forget the look of superstitious awe which, in the hush that followed, came over that dark sea of faces. A moment before, and they had been distorted with passion; now, they seemed to resemble those of overgrown children who had listened to a ghost story. Soon they slipped away by twos and threes; until only the head engineer and myself were left with the dead.—Canadian Magazine.

# ROAD & FARM IMPROVEMENT.

## MENNONITES OF KANSAS.

Years Ago This Prosperous Sect Tried to Make an Old-World County in This Country.

Abandoned and falling into decay near the town of Hillsboro, in Marion county, Kan., stands an old Dutch windmill, built in 1871 by the Mennonites. Nearby is a settlement, or "dorf," of prosperous Mennonite farmers. The mill, once useful in the economy of the community, is now the home of owls and bats. The weatherboards are falling off, the wooden cogwheels are rotting away and the doors gone. It is



THE OLD MILL OF 1871.

successor is a steam roller not far away.

The settlement is called Guadenau, meaning the "Valley of the Grace of God." It was regularly organized with a "dorfschulze," who sat in judgment on the disputes of the settlers. The courts were open to them, but if they invoked them they were in peril of expulsion from the church. They tried to reproduce in this country the villages they had left in Russia and to establish here the manners and customs of their ancestors. They succeeded for awhile, but the new generation that has been born there prefers the American way of living; so the windmill and the patriarchs of the settlement are all that is left of the original "dorf."

The head of every family took 160 acres of land. In the beginning the tracts of all were thrown together and cut up into 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ -acre "kegels." In this way they were able to build the homes close together and farm the outlying land. They made the "dorf" three miles long, and fronting on a road they built their houses. The walls of their houses were made of clay and were eight feet thick. The roofs were made of "blue stem," a tall grass which at that time grew abundantly in the bottomlands roundabout. A number of these houses, prettily whitewashed, exist to-day, but the most of the original habitations have been succeeded by wooden farmhouses. The "kegel" system has been almost abandoned. The Mennonites soon contracted the American habit of "trading," and the "kegel" system necessitated the concurrence of too many persons in making deeds.

**Extension of Rural Delivery.**

The growth of the rural mail delivery system has surpassed the most sanguine expectations of its promoters. At first it was doubtful if the plan would prove a success, and considerable opposition was stirred up by cross-roads postmasters who were naturally anxious to hold their jobs. The first route was established only six years ago, but on July 1, 1902, there were 8,461 routes in operation. There were 536 more on August 1, and 10,198 petitions for routes are still under consideration. According to population Iowa leads the union in rural free delivery routes. There were 954 in that state on July 1, and 32 additional routes were placed in operation on August 1. Arkansas, of the larger states, is at the bottom of the line, with only 20 routes.

**Our Corn Milling Industry.**

The magnitude of the corn milling industry is little appreciated. According to official figures, a total of 241,000,000 bushels of corn was ground into flour and meal in the census year, or almost exactly half the consumption of wheat. Of course a very large proportion of the corn product was used for stock food; yet, this granted, a very important quantity undoubtedly went into consumption for table purposes. What a pity that Europe, proverbially hungry for cheap and wholesome food products, does not appreciate the beauties of our corn bread and "rye and Injun."—Orange Judd Farmer.

**Rural Mails Protected.**

With the post office appropriation bill passed by congress recently, a section was adopted providing for the punishment of persons injuring or in any way defacing mail boxes on rural free delivery routes. This went into effect with the signing of the bill by President Roosevelt, and is now in full force. Previous to this the government had no special section covering rural routes, and prosecutions were made under the section protecting post office boxes in cities. Any robberies should be reported to the United States district attorney for the district in which they occur.

In August we get after the borers in the orchard. We find them by the wood dust around the stem of the tree. We go after them with a sharp knife and a small wire. If we do not get the job done in August we do it in September.

## THE FARMER'S CLOTHES.

They Should Be Neat and Well Fitting and Worn with the Manners of a Gentleman.

In this day of agricultural colleges and agricultural journalism, ready access to high-class literature, telephones, free delivery of mail and electric railways, when the farmer is no longer isolated and uneducated, but a man learned in the sciences, in art and literature, and embracing in his vocation the best that is in botany, chemistry, geology and natural philosophy, the contempt sometimes shown the countryman certainly proves that there is something out of joint.

The cause of this attitude must lie in the oddness of wearing apparel or general carelessness or utter disregard of personal appearance displayed by many a farmer when he visits the metropolitan center. It is not expensive clothing that marks a well-dressed man, be he from country or city, but care, neatness and cleanliness and avoiding of oddity in personal appearance. There are no successful farmers who cannot afford to wear as good clothes as nine-tenths of the city men.

The average farmer cannot follow all the latest styles, but he need not be a slouch, gawking specimen of humanity, bringing down contempt not only on himself, but on farmers as a class. It is hard for a farmer to appear anything but a farmer, do the best he can, but this fact need not worry him any if he will only strive to bring his calling to the point where it will be recognized as it is. When he is at work on his farm, when he goes to the home village or town market, and when he hauls his produce along the highway, no matter how he is dressed, the farmer is not looked upon with disfavor by any well-bred persons; he is then merely at work and is respected by those with whom he comes in contact the same as any other good, honest workman is; but when he lays aside his affairs of the farm and goes into the city on business or pleasure it is undoubtedly a duty he owes to his vocation and to his fellow men to present as good an appearance as his means will admit. If he is to be respected by those who have no other means of estimating him, meeting him but casually as they do, than by his personal appearance and manner, he must pay some attention to attire, cleanliness and manners. He must not neglect those little courtesies that mark proper consideration of others, and that belong to the well-bred man. He must not be odd, nor rude, nor uncouth. Good clothes and good manners will obliterate self-consciousness which makes one awkward and ill at ease in the presence of others, and will develop that proper amount of self-esteem which makes a man scorn to be odd or untidy or uncouth, and which will enable him to easily adapt himself with quiet unperturbed demeanor to his surroundings, however polished and cultured. It is easier to say this than to do it, but like all character development it must be worked for with the hardest of effort and most constant practice.—J. G. Allshouse, in Ohio Farmer.

**DURABLE PLANT LABEL.**

A Simple Little Thing, But of Incalculable Value to the Gardener and Fruit Grower.

Where one has several varieties of the same kind of plants, or is trying new varieties, it is always desirable to put a marker at the end of the rows. A piece of lath with the name



LABELS FOR PLANTS.

marked upon the end with a lead pencil is a common plan, but before the end of the season the pencil mark is usually nearly, if not wholly, effaced. A simple plan is shown in the accompanying sketch. The lath and the name in lead pencil is used as usual, but over the name is fastened a bit of wood, as shown in the cut, to protect the marking from the weather. A thin strip of wood, a few small screws and a jackknife are all that are needed, and a dozen of such markers can be prepared in a few moments.—H. C. West, in Farm and Home.

**Keeping Flowers in Water.**

To keep short-stemmed flowers, pansies, mignonette, etc., in water, paint the outside of a new tin basin a natural tint, and also an inch round the top on the inside. Have the tinner cut a piece of wire netting a little larger than to fit the inside of the basin, and solder it so it will be oval when done. Fill the basin not quite full of water and insert the stems of the flowers through the netting. The wire will be more durable if painted on both sides before it is soldered in place. With care the water can be poured off and fresh added without displacing the flowers.

**The South is Waking Up.**

Stock growing is certain to become one of the leading industries of the south. The progress that has recently been made in this direction has demonstrated that the southern farmer is waking up to the possibilities that can be achieved in this direction. The abundance of water and grasses, the mild winter season, and the short season in which stock have to be fed, make a combination of advantages that cannot be surpassed anywhere in the world.—Cotton and Farm Journal.

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**Harvest Hand Excursions.**

From July 26th to August 20th the Great Northern Railway will sell harvest excursion tickets at rate of \$5.00 for each person, in parties of five or more, from St. Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth, Wash. Superior, and \$18.00 from Chicago, to points on Great Northern Railway in Minnesota, North and South Dakota.

Also on same dates tickets to all points on their line in Minnesota west of Bank Centre and Benson, and in North Dakota east of Minot, at following rates for each person, in parties of five or more: From Sioux City, Ia., and Yankton, \$8.00; from Sioux Falls, \$7.50.

Tickets and information from all railway ticket agents, or upon application to F. I. Whitney, G. P. & T. A., St. Paul, Minn., or Max Baas, G. P. & T. A., 230 S. Clark St., Chicago.

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