

Nye Bill

Bill Nye's Cordwood



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Nye B.

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Bill Nye on the Cow Industry

A COWBOY COLLEGE NEEDED TO EDUCATE YOUNG MEN TO THIS PROFESSION

No one can go through the wide territory of Montana to-day without being strongly impressed with the wonderful growth of the great cattle growing and grazing industry of that territory. And yet Montana is but the northern extremity of the great grazing belt which lies at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, extending from the British possessions on the north to the Mexican border on the south, extending eastward, too, as far as the arable lands of Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas.

Montana, at this season of the year, is the paradise of the sleek, high-headed, 2-year-old Texan steer, with his tail over the dashboard, as well as the stock yearling, born on the range, beneath the glorious mountain sky and under the auspices of roundup No. 21.

I do not say this to advertise the stock growing business, because it is already advertised too much, anyway. So many millionaires have been made with "free grass" and the early-rising, automatic branding iron that every man in the United States who has a cow that can stand the journey seems to be about to take her west and embark in business as a cattle king.

But let me warn the amateur cow man that in the great grazing regions it takes a good many acres of thin grass to maintain the adult steer in affluence for twelve months, and the great pastures at the base of the mountains are being pretty well tested. Moreover, I believe that these great conventions of cattlemen, where free grass and easily acquired fortunes are naturally advertised, will tend to overstock the ranges at last and founder the goose that now lays the golden egg. This, of course, is really none of my business, but if I didn't now and then refer to matters that do not concern me I would be regarded as reticent.

My intention, however, in approaching the great cow industry, which, by the way, is anything but an industry, being in fact more like the seductive manner whereby a promissory note acquires 2 per cent. per month without even stopping to spit on its hands, was to refer incidentally to the proposition of an English friend of mine. This friend, seeing at once the great magnitude of the cow industry and the necessity for more and more cowboys, has suggested the idea of establishing a cowboys' college, or training school, for self-made young men who desire to become accomplished. The average Englishman will most always think of something that nobody else would naturally think of. Now, our cattleman would have gone on for years with his great steer emporium without thinking of establishing an institution where a poor boy might go and learn to rope a 4-year-old in such a way as to throw him on his stomach with a sickening thud.

The young Maverick savant could take a kindergarten course in the study of cow brands. Here a wide field opens up to the scholar. The adult steer in the great realm of beef is now a walking Chinese wash bill, a Hindoo poem in the original junk shop alphabet, a four-legged Greek inscription, punctuated with jim-jams, a stenographer's notes of a riot, a bird's-eye view of a premature explosion in a hardware store.

The cowboy who can at once grapple with the great problem of where to put the steer with "B bar B" on left shoulder, "Key circle G" on left side, "Heart D Heart" on right hip, left ear crop, wattle te wattle, and seven hands round with "Dash B Dash" on right shoulder "vented," wattle on dew lap

vented, and "P. D. Q.," "C. O. D.," and "N. G." vented on right side, keeping track of transfers, range and post-office of last owner, has certainly got a future, which lies mostly ahead of him.

But now that the idea has been turned loose, I shall look forward to the time when wealthy men who have been in the habit of dying and leaving their money to other institutions, will meet with a change of heart, and begin to endow the cowboys' college, and the Maverick hotbed of broncho sciences.

We live in an age of rapid advancement in all branches of learning, and people who do not rise early in the morning will not retain their position in the procession. I look forward with confidence to the day when no cowboy will undertake to ride the range without a diploma. Educated labor is what we need. Cowboys who can tell you in scientific terms why it is always the biggest steer that eats "pigeon weed" in the spring and why he should swell up and bust on a rising Chicago market.

I hope that the day is not far distant when in the holster of the cowboy we will find the Iliad instead of the killiad, the unabridged dictionary instead of Mr. Remington's great work on homicide. As it is now on the ranges you might ride till your Mexican saddle ached before you would find a cowboy who carries a dictionary with him. For that reason the language used on the general roundup is at times grammatically incorrect, and many of our leading cowboys spell "cavvy-yard" with a "k."

A college for riding, roping, branding, cutting out, corralling, loading and unloading, and handling cattle generally, would be a great boon to our young men, who are at present groping in dark and pitiable ignorance of the habits of the untutored cow. Let the young man first learn how to sit up three nights in succession, through a bad March snow storm and "hold" a herd of restless cattle. Let him then ride through the hot sun and alkali dust a week or two, subsisting on a chunk of disagreeable side pork just large enough to bait a trap. Then let his horse fall on him and injure his constitution and preamble. All these things would give the cow student an idea of how to ride the range. The amateur who has never tried to ride a skittish and sulky range has still a great deal to learn.

Perhaps I have said too much on this subject, but when I get thoroughly awakened on this great porterhouse steak problem I am apt to carry the matter too far.

Overheard in Dudedom

"Why, Awthaw, what makes youah hand twemble so?"

A New Biography of Galileo

SOME HERETOFORE UNPUBLISHED FACTS ABOUT THE QUEER OLD ITALIAN – HIS REMARKABLE INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES – HIS BOOKS

BILL NYE

Galilei, commonly called Galileo, was born at Pisa on the 14th day February, 1564. He was a man who discovered some of the fundamental principles underlying the movements, habits, and personal peculiarities of the earth. He discovered things with marvelous fluency. Born as he was, at a time when the rotary motion of the earth was still in its infancy and astronomy taught only in a crude way, Galileo started in to make a few discoveries and advance some theories of which he was very fond.

He was the son of a musician and learned to play several instruments himself, but not in such a way as to arouse the jealousy of the great musicians of his day. They came and heard him play a few selections and then they went home contented with their own music. Galileo played for several years in the band at Pisa, and people who heard him said that his manner of gazing out over the Pisan hills with a far-away look in his eye after playing a selection, while he gently upended his alto horn and worked the mud-valve as it poured out about a pint of moist melody that had accumulated in the flues of the instrument, was simply grand.

At the age of 20 Galileo began to discover. His first discoveries were, of course, clumsy and poorly made, but very soon he began to turn out a neat and durable discovery that would stand for years.

It was at this time that Galileo noticed the swinging of a lamp in a church, and, observing that the oscillations were of equal duration, he inferred that this principle might be utilized in the exact measurement of time. From this little accident, years after, came the clock, one of the most useful of man's dumb friends. And yet there are people who will read this little incident and still hesitate about going to church.

Galileo also invented the thermometer, the microscope, and the proportional compass. He seemed to invent things, not for the money to be obtained in that way, but solely for the joy of being first on the ground. He was a man of infinite genius and perseverance. He was also very fair in his treatment of other inventors. Though he did not personally invent the rotary motion of the earth, he heartily indorsed it and said it was a good thing. He also came out in a card in which he said that he believed it to be a good thing, and that he hoped some day to see it applied to the other planets.

He was also the inventor of a telescope that had a magnifying power of thirty times. He presented this to the Venetian senate, and it was used in making appropriations for river and harbor improvements.

By telescopic investigation Galileo discovered the presence of microbes in the moon, but was unable to do anything for it. I have spoken of Mr. Galileo all the way through this article informally, calling him by his first name, but I feel so thoroughly acquainted with him, though there was such a striking difference in our ages, that I am almost justified in using his given name while talking of him.

Galileo also sat up nights and visited with Venus through a long telescope which he had made himself from an old bamboo fishing-rod.

But astronomy is a very enervating branch of science. Galileo frequently came down to breakfast with red, heavy eyes; eyes that were swollen full of unshed tears. Still he persevered. Day after day he worked and toiled. Year after year he went on with his task till he had worked out in his own mind the satellites of Jupiter and placed a small tin tag on each one, so that he would know it readily when he saw it again. Then he began to look up Saturn's rings and investigate the freckles on the sun. He did not stop at trifles, but went bravely on till everybody came for miles to look at him and get him to write something funny in their albums. It was not an unusual thing for Galileo to get up in the morning, after a wearisome night with a fretful new-born star, to find his front yard full of autograph albums. Some of them were little red albums with floral decorations on them, while others were the large plush and alligator albums of the affluent. Some were new and had the price-mark still on them, while others were old, foundered albums, with a droop in the back and little flecks of egg and gravy on the title-page. All came with a request for Galileo "to write a little, witty, characteristic sentiment in them."

Galileo was the author of the hydrostatic paradox and other sketches. He was a great reader and a fluent penman. One time he was absent from home, lecturing in Venice for the benefit of the United Aggregation of Mutual Admirers, and did not return for two weeks, so that when he got back he found the front room full of autograph albums. It is said that he here demonstrated his great fluency and readiness as a thinker and writer. He waded through the entire lot in two days with only two men from West Pisa to assist him. Galileo came out of it fresh and youthful, and the following night he was closeted all night with another inventor, a wicker-covered microscope, and a bologna sausage. The investigations were carried on for two weeks, after which Galileo went out to the inebriate asylum and discovered some new styles of reptiles.

Galileo was the author of a little work called "I Discarsi e Dimas-Trazioni Matematiche Intorus a Due Muove Scienze." It was a neat little book, of about the medium height, and sold well on the trains, for the Pisan newsboys on the cars were very affable, as they are now, and when they came and leaned an armful of these books on a passenger's leg and poured a long tale into his ear about the wonderful beauty of the work and then pulled in the name of the book from the rear of the last car, where it had been hanging on behind, the passenger would most always buy it and enough of the name to wrap it up in.

He also discovered the isochronism of the pendulum. He saw that the pendulum at certain seasons of the year looked yellow under the eyes, and that it drooped and did not enter into its work with the old zest. He began to study the case with the aid of his new bamboo telescope and wicker-covered microscope. As a result, in ten days he had the pendulum on its feet again.

Galileo was inclined to be liberal in his religious views, and more especially in the matter of the scriptures, claiming that there were passages in the bible which did not literally mean what the translator said they did. This was where Galileo missed it. So long as he discovered stars and isochronisms and such things as that he succeeded, but when he began to fool with other people's religious beliefs he got into trouble. He was forced to fly from Pisa, we are told by the historian, and we are assured at the same time that Galileo, who had always been far, far ahead of all competitors in other things, was equally successful as a fleer.

Galileo received but 60 scudi per year for his salary at Pisa, and a part of that he took in town orders, worth only 60 cents on the scudi.

Methuselah

A RECENT BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THIS GRAND OLD MAN – A SLAVE TO TOBACCO

BILL NYE

I have just been reading James Whitcomb Riley's response to "the old man" at the annual dinner of the Indianapolis Literary club, and his reference to Methuselah has awakened in my mind many recollections and reminiscences of that grand old man. We first met Methuselah in the capacity of a son. At the age of 65, Enoch arose one night and telephoned his family physician to come over and assist him in meeting Methuselah. Day at last dawned upon Enoch's happy home, and its first red rays lit up the still redder surface of the little stranger. For three hundred years Enoch and Methuselah jogged along together in the capacity of father and son. Then Enoch was suddenly cut down. It was at this time that little Methuselah first realized what it was to be an orphan. He could not at first realize that his father was dead. He could not understand why Enoch, with no inherited disease, should be shuffled out at the age of 365 years. But the doctor said to Methuselah: "My son, you are indeed fatherless. I have done all I could, but it is useless. I had told Enoch many a time that if he went in swimming before the ice was out of the creek it would finally down him, but he thought he knew better than I did. He was a headstrong man, Enoch was. He sneered at me and alluded to me as a fresh young gosling, because he was 300 years older than I was. He has received the reward of the willful, and verily the doom of the smart Aleck is his."

Methuselah now cast about him for some occupation which would take up his attention and assuage his wild, passionate grief over the loss of his father. He entered into the walks of men and learned their ways. It was at this time that he learned the pernicious habit of using tobacco. We can not wonder at it when we remember that he was now fatherless. He was at the mercy of the coarse, rough world. Possibly he learned to use tobacco when he went away to attend business college after the death of his father. Be that as it may, the noxious weed certainly hastened his death, for 600 years after this we find him a corpse!

Death is ever a surprise, even at the end of a long illness and after a ripe old age. To those who are near it seems abrupt; so to his grand-children some of whom survived him, his children having died of old age, the death of Methuselah came like a thunderbolt from a clear sky.

Methuselah succeeded in cording up more of a record such as it was, than any other man of whom history informs us. Time, the tomb-builder and amateur mower, came and leaned over the front fence and looked at Methuselah, and ran his thumb over the jagged edge of his scythe, and went away whistling a low refrain. He kept up this refrain business for nearly ten centuries, while Methuselah continued to stand out amid the general wreck of men and nations.

Even as the young, strong mower going forth with his mower to mow spareth the tall and dignified drab hornet's nests and passeth by on the other side, so time, with his Waterbury hour-glass and his overworked hay-knife over his shoulder, and his long Mormon whiskers and his high, sleek dome of thought, with its gray lambrequin of hair around the base of it, mowed all around Methuselah and then passed on.

Methuselah decorated the graves of those who perished in a dozen different wars. He did not enlist himself, for over nine hundred years of his life he was exempt. He would go to the enlisting place and offer his services, and the officer would tell him to go home and encourage his grand-

children to go. Then Methuselah would sit around Noah's steps, and smoke and criticise the conduct of the war, also the conduct of the enemy.

It is said of Methuselah that he never was the same man after his son Lamech died. He was greatly attached to Lamech, and when he woke up one night to find his son purple in the face with membranous croup he could hardly realize that he might lose him. The idea of losing a boy who had just rounded the glorious morn of his 777th year had never occurred to him. But death loves a shining mark, and he garnered little Lammie and left Methuselah to moan and mourn on for a couple more centuries without him.

Methuselah finally got so that he couldn't sleep after 4 o'clock in the morning, and he didn't see how anyone else could. The older he got and the less valuable his time became the earlier he would rise, so that he could get an early start. As the centuries filed slowly by Methuselah got where all he had to do was to shuffle into his loose-fitting clothes, and rest his gums on the top of a large sleek-headed cane, and mutter up the chimney, and then groan and extricate himself from his clothes again and retire. He arose earlier and earlier in the morning, and muttered more and more about the young folks sleeping away the best of the day, and said he had no doubt that sleeping and snoring until breakfast time helped to carry off Lam. But one day old Father Time came along with a new scythe, and he drew the whetstone across it a few times and rolled the sleeves of his red flannel undergarment up over his warty elbows, and Mr. Methuselah passed on to that undiscovered country with a ripe experience and a long, clean record.

We can almost fancy how the physicians, who had disagreed about his case all the way through, came and insisted on a post-mortem examination to prove which was right, and what was really the matter with him. We can imagine how people went by shaking their heads and regretting that Methuselah should have tampered with tobacco when he knew it affected his heart.

But he is gone. He lived to see his own promissory notes rise, flourish, acquire interest, pine away at last, and finally outlaw. He acquired a large farm in the very heart of the county-seat, and refused to move or to plot it and call it Methuselah's addition. He came out in spring regularly for nine hundred years after he got too old to work out his poll-tax on the road and put in his time telling the rising generation how to make a good road. Meantime other old people, who were almost 100 years of age, moved away and went west, where they would attract attention and command respect. There was actually no pleasure in getting old around where Methuselah was and being ordered about and scolded and kept in the background by him.

So when at last he died people sighed and said: "Well, it was better for him to die before he got childish. It was best that he should die at a time when he knew it all. We can't help thinking what an acquisition Methuselah will be on the evergreen shore when he gets there, with all his ripe experience and habits of early rising."

And the next morning after the funeral Methuselah's family did not get out of bed till 9 o'clock.

Notes on Some Spring Styles

THE LADIES FAVORITE BONNET AND HOSIERY – THE SMALL DOG WORN IN SHADES TO MATCH THE COSTUME – PREVAILING FASHIONS FOR GENTLEMEN

BILL NYE

It is customary at this season of the year to poke fun at the good clothes of our friends and well-wishers, the ladies, but it occurs to me that this spring there is a very small field for the witty and sarcastic critic of female attire. There has not been a time since I first began to make a study of this branch of science when the ladies seem to have manifested better taste or sounder judgment in the matter of dress.

Even bonnets seem to be less grotesque this season than heretofore, although the high, startled bonnet, the bonnet that may be characterized as the excelsior bonnet, is still retained by some, though how it is retained has always been a mystery to me. Perhaps it holds its place in society by means of a long, black pin, which apparently passes through the brain of the wearer.

Black hosiery continues to be very popular, I am informed. Sometimes it is worn clogged, and then again it is worn crocked. The crockless black stocking is gaining in favor in our best circles, I am pleased to note. Nothing looks more mortified than a foot that has been inside of a crockable stocking all through a long, hot, summer day.

I am very glad to notice that the effort made a few years ago by a French reformer to abolish the stocking on the ground of unhealthfulness has met with well-merited failure. The custom of wearing hosiery is one that does great credit to the spirit of American progress, which cannot be thwarted by the puny hand of foreign interference or despotic intervention.

Street costumes of handsomely fitting and unobtrusive shades of soft and comfortable goods will be generally in favor, and the beautiful and symmetrical American arm with a neatly fitting sleeve on the outside of it will gladden the hearts of the casual spectator once more.

The lady with the acute elbow and the italicized clavicle will make a strong effort this season to abolish the close-fitting and extremely attractive sleeve, but it will be futile.

The small dog will be worn this season in shades to match the costume. For dark and brown combinations in street dresses the black-and-tan dog will be very much in favor, while the black-and-drab pug will be affected by those wearing these shades in dress. Small pugs that are warranted not to bag at the knees are commanding a good price. Spitz dogs to match lynx or fox trimmed garments or spring wraps are now being sprinkled with camphor and laid aside for the summer. Coach dogs of the spotted variety will be worn with polka-dot costumes. Tall, willowy hounds with wire tails will be much affected by slender young ladies and hydrophobia. Antique dogs with weak eyes, asthma, and an air of languor will be used a great deal this season to decorate lawns and railroad crossings. Young dogs that are just budding into doghood will be noticed through the spring months trying their new teeth on the light spring pantaloons of male pedestrians.

Styles in gentlemen's clothing have not materially changed. Lavender pantaloons, with an air of settled melancholy and benzine, are now making their appearance, and young men trying to eradicate the droop in the knees of last summer's garment may be seen in their luxurious apartments most any calm spring evening.

An old nail-brush, with a solution of ammonia and prussic acid, will remove traces of custard pie from light shades in pantaloons. This preparation will also remove the pantaloons.

The umbrella will be worn over the shoulder and in the eye of the passing pedestrian, very much as usual on pleasant days, and left behind the door in a dark closet on rainy days.

Gentlemen will wear one pocket-handkerchief in the side pocket, with the corner gently emerging, and another in the hip pocket, as they did last season, the former for decorative purposes and the latter for business. This is a wise provision and never fails to elicit favorable comment.

The custom of wearing a few kernels of roasted coffee or a dozen cloves in the little cigarette pocket of the cutaway coat will still continue, and the supply will be replenished between the acts, as heretofore.

Straw hats will be chased down the streets this spring by the same gentlemen who chased them last spring, and in some instances the same hats will be used. Shade trees will be worn a little lower this summer, and will therefore succeed in wiping off a larger crop of plug hats, it is hoped. Linen dusters, with the pockets carefully soldered together, have not yet made their appearance.

Hunting an Ichthyosaurus

THE VICTIMS OF A PRACTICAL JOKE TRAMP FIVE DAYS ALONG BITTER CREEK IN SEARCH OF AN ANIMAL THAT HAD BEEN DEAD 5,000 YEARS

BILL NYE

Several years ago I had the pleasure of joining a party about to start out along the banks of Bitter creek on a hunting expedition. The leader of the party was a young man who had recently escaped from college with a large amount of knowledge which he desired to experiment with on the people of the far west. He had heard that there was an ichthyosaurus up somewhere along the west side of Bitter creek, and he wanted us to go along and help him to find it.

I had been in the west some eight or nine years then and I had never seen an ichthyosaurus myself, but I thought the young man must know his business, so I got out my Winchester and went along with the group.

We tramped over the pale, ashy, glaring, staring stretch of desolation, through burning, quivering days of monotony and sage brush and alkali water and aching eyes and parched and bleeding lips and nostrils cut through and eaten by the sharp alkaline air, mentally depressed and physically worn out, but cheered on and braced up by the light and joyous manner of the ever-hopeful James Trilobite Eton of Concord.

James Trilobite Eton of Concord never moaned, never gighed back or shed a hot, remorseful tear in this powdery, hungry waste of gray, parched ruin. No regret came forth from his lips in the midst of this mighty cemetery, this ghastly potter's field for all that nature had ever reared that was too poor to bear its own funeral expenses.

Now and then a lean, soiled gray coyote, without sufficient moral courage to look a dead mule in the hind foot, slipped across the horizon like a dirty phantom and faded into the hot and tremulous atmosphere. We scorned such game as that and trudged on, cheered by the hope that seemed to spring eternal in the breast of James Trilobite Eton of Concord.

Four days we wallowed through the unchanging desolation. Four nights we went through the motions of slumbering on the arid bosom of the wasted earth. On the fifth day James Trilobite Eton said we were now getting near the point where we would find what we sought. On we pressed through the keen, rough blades of the seldom bunch-grass, over the shifting, yellow sand and the greenish gray of the bad-land soil which never does anything but sit around through the accumulating centuries and hold the world together, a kind of powdery poison that delights to creep into the nostrils of the pilgrim and steal away his brains, or when moistened by a little snow to accumulate around the feet of the pilgrim or on the feet of the pilgrim's mule till he has the most of an unsurveyed "forty" on each foot, and the casual observer is cheered by the novel sight of one homestead striving to jump another.

Toward evening James Trilobite Eton gave a wild shriek of joy and ran to us from the bed of an old creek, where he had found an ichthyosaurus. The animal was dead! Not only that, but it had been dead a long, long time!

James Milton Sherrod said that "if a college education was of no more use to a man than that he, for one, allowed that his boy would have to grope through life with an academical education, and very little of *it*."

I uncocked my gun and went back to camp a sadder and madder man, and, though years have come and gone, I am still irritable when I think of the five days we tramped along Bitter creek searching for an animal that was no longer alive, and our guide knew it before he started.

I ventured to say to J. Trilobite Eton that night as we all sat together in the gloaming discussing whether he should be taken home with us in the capacity of a guide or as a remains, that it seemed to me a man ought to have better sense than to wear his young life away trying to have fun with his superiors in that way.

"Why, blame it all," says James, "what did you expect? You ought to know yourself that that animal is extinct!"

"Extinck!" says James Milton Sherrod, in shrill, angry tones. "I should say he was extinck. That's what we're kickin' about. What gallded me was that you should of waited till the old cuss was extinck before you come to us like a man and told us about it. You pull us through the sand for a week and blister our heels and condemb near kill us, and all the time you know that the blame brute is layin' there in the hot sun gittin' more and more extinck every minute. Fun is fun, and I like a little nonsense now and then just as well as you do, but I'll be eternally banished to Bitter creek if I think it's square or right or white to play it on your friends this kind of a way.

"You claim that the animal has been dead goin' on five thousand years, or some such thing as that, and try to get out of it that way, but long as you knew it and we didn't it shows that you're a low cuss not to speak of it.

"What difference does it make to us, I say, whether this brute was or was not dead and swelled up like a pizen'd steer long before Nore got his zoologickle show together? We didn't know it. We haven't seen the Salt Lake papers for weeks. You use your edjecation to fool people with. My opinion is that the day is not far distant when you will wake up and find yourself in the bottom of an untimely grave.

"You bring us a hundred and fifty miles to look at an old bone pile all tramped into the ground and then say that the animal is extinck. That's a great way to talk to an old man like me, a man old enough to be your grandfather. Probly you cacklate that it is a rare treat for an old-timer like me to waller through from Green River to the Yallerstone and then hear a young kangaroo with a moth-eaten eyebrow under his nose burst forth into a rollicking laugh and say that the animal we've been trailin' for five days is extinck.

"I just want to say to you, James Trilobite Eton, and I say it for your good and I say it with no prejudice against you, for I want to see you succeed, that if this ever happens agin and you are the party to blame you will wake up with a wild start on the follerin' day and find yourself a good deal extincker than this here old busted lizard is."

True Merit Rewarded

STYLE OF SCHOOL LITERATURE KNOWN THIRTY YEARS AGO

ONE OF BILL NYE'S SELECTIONS, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF – ARRANGED WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MATTER OF CHOICE, DELICATE AND DIFFICULT WORDS

One day as George Oswald was going to his tasks, and while passing through the wood, he spied a tall man approaching in an opposite direction along the highway.

"Ah," thought George, in a low, mellow tone of voice, "whom have we here?"

"Good morning, my fine fellow," exclaimed the stranger, pleasantly. "Do you reside in this locality?"

"Indeed I do," retorted George, cheerily dropping his cap. "In yonder cottage, near the glen, my widowed mother and her thirteen children dwell with me."

"And how did your papa die?" asked the man, as he thoughtfully stood on the other foot awhile.

"Alas, sir," said George, as a large hot tear stole down his pale cheek and fell with a loud report on the warty surface of his bare foot, "he was lost at sea in a bitter gale. The good ship foundered two years ago last Christmastide, and father was foundered at the same time. No one knew of the loss of the ship and that the crew was drowned until the next spring, and it was then too late."

"And what is your age, my fine fellow?" quoth the stranger.

"If I live until next October," said the boy, in a declamatory tone of voice suitable for a Second Reader, "I will be 7 years of age."

A LARGE FAMILY OF CHILDREN

"And who provides for your mother and her large family of children?" queried the man.

"Indeed, I do, sir," replied George, in a shrill tone. "I toil, oh, so hard, sir, for we are very, very poor, and since my elder sister, Ann, was married and brought her husband home to live with us I have to toil more assiduously than heretofore."

"And by what means do you obtain a livelihood?" exclaimed the man, in slowly measured and grammatical words.

"By digging wells, kind sir," replied George, picking up a tired ant as he spoke and stroking it on the back. "I have a good education, and so I am enabled to dig wells as well as a man. I do this daytimes and take in washing at night. In this way I am enabled to maintain our family in a precarious manner; but, oh, sir, should my other sisters marry, I fear that some of my brothers-in-law would have to suffer."

"You are indeed a brave lad," exclaimed the stranger, as he repressed a smile. "And do you not at times become very weary and wish for other ways of passing your time?"

"Indeed I do, sir," said the lad. "I would fain run and romp and be gay like other boys, but I must engage in constant manual exercise, or we will have no bread to eat and I have not seen a pie since papa perished in the moist and moaning sea."

SAVED FROM A HURRIED GRAVE

"And what if I were to tell you that your papa did not perish at sea, but was saved from a hurried grave?" asked the stranger in pleasing tones.

"Ah, sir," exclaimed George, in a genteel manner, again doffing his cap. "I'm too polite to tell you what I would say, and beside, sir, you are much larger than I am."

"But, my brave lad," said the man in low musical tones, "do you not know me, Georgie. Oh, George!"

"I must say," replied George, "that you have the advantage of me. Whilst I may have met you before, I can not at this moment place you, sir."

"My son! oh, my son!" murmured the man, at the same time taking a large strawberry mark out of the valise and showing it to the lad. "Do you not recognize your parent on your father's side? When our good ship went to the bottom, all perished save me. I swam several miles through the billows, and at last, utterly exhausted, gave up all hope of life. Suddenly a bright idea came to me and I walked out of the sea and rested myself.

"And now, my brave boy," exclaimed the man with great glee, "see what I have brought for you." It was but the work of a moment to unclasp from a shawl strap, which he held in his hand, and present to George's astonished gaze, a large 40 cent watermelon, which he had brought with him from the Orient.

"Ah," said George, "this is indeed a glad surprise. Albeit, how can I ever repay you?" —*Bill Nye in Boston Globe.*

Bill Nye condoles with Cleveland

SURPRISE EXPRESSED THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD TAKE A MOTHER-IN-LAW INTO HIS CABINET AND ADD HOUSEKEEPING TO HIS OTHER AGONY

Hudson, Wis., June 3, 1886.

The Hon. Grover Cleveland, Washington, D. C.:

My Dear Sir: You have now assumed a new duty and taken upon yourself an additional responsibility. Not content with the great weight of national affairs, sufficient to crush any other pachyderm, you have cheerfully and almost gleefully become a married man. While I cannot agree with you politically, Grover, I am forced to admire your courage.

This morning a new life opens out to you – the life of a married man. It is indeed a humiliating situation. To be a president of the United States, the roustabout of a free people, is a trying situation; but to be a newly married president, married in the full glare of official life, with the eye of a divided constituency upon you, is to place yourself where nerve is absolutely essential.

I, too, am married, but not under such trying circumstances. Others have been married and still lived, but it has remained for you, Mr. President, young as you are, to pose as a newly wedded president and to take your new mother-in-law into the cabinet with you. For this reason, I say freely that to walk a slack rope across the moist brow of Niagara and carry a nervous man in a wheelbarrow sinks into a mere commonplace. Daniel playing "tag" with a denful of half-starved lions becomes a historic cipher, and the Hebrew children, sitting on a rosy bed of red-hot clinkers in the fiery furnace, are almost forgotten.

With a large wad of civil service wedged in among your back teeth, a larger fragment, perhaps, than you were prepared to masticate when you bit it off; with an agonized southern democracy and a clamorous northern constituency; with disappointment poorly concealed among your friends and hilarity openly expressed by your enemies; with the snarl of the vanquished Mr. Davis, who was at one time a sort of president himself, as he rolls up future majorities for your foes; with a lot of sharp-witted journalists walking all over you every twenty-four hours and climbing up your stalwart frame with their telegraph repair boots on, I am surprised, Grover, honestly, as between man and man, that you should have tried to add housekeeping to all this other agony. Had you been young and tender under the wings I might have understood it, but you must admit, in the quiet and sanctity of your own home, Grover, that you are no gosling. You have arrived at man's estate. You have climbed the barbed-wire fence which separates the fluff and bloom and blossom and bumble-bees of impetuous youth from the yellow fields and shadowy orchards of middle life. You now stand in the full glare of life's meridian. You are entering upon a new experience. Possibly you think that because you are president the annoyances peculiar to the life of a new, green groom will not reach you. Do not fool yourself in this manner. Others have made the same mistake. Position, wealth and fame cannot shut out the awkward and trying circumstances which attend the married man even as the sparks are prone to fly upward.

It will seem odd to you at first, Mr. President, after the affairs of the nation have been put aside for the day and the government fire proof safe locked up for the night, to go up to your boudoir and converse with a bride, with one corner of her mouth full of pins. A man may write a pretty fair message to congress, one that will be accepted and printed all over the country, and yet he may not be fitted to hold a conversation with one corner of a woman's mouth while the other is filled

with pins. To some men it is given to be great as statesmen, while to others it is given to be fluent conversationalists under these circumstances.

Mr. President, I may be taking a great liberty in writing to you and touching upon your private affairs, but I noticed that everybody else was doing it and so I have nerved myself up to write you, having once been a married man myself, though not, as I said, under the same circumstances. When I was married I was only a plain justice of the peace, plodding quietly along and striving to do my duty. You was then sheriff of your county. Little did we think in those days that now you would be a freshly married president and I the author of several pieces which have been printed in the papers. Little did we think then, when I was a justice of the peace in Wyoming and you a sheriff in New York, that to-day your timothy lawn would be kicked all to pieces by your admiring constituents, while I would be known and loved wherever the English language is tampered with.

So we have risen together, you to a point from which you may be easily observed and flayed alive by the newspapers, while I am the same pleasant, unassuming, gentlemanly friend of the poor that I was when only a justice of the peace and comparatively unknown.

I cannot close this letter without expressing a wish that your married life may be a joyous one, as the paper at Laramie has said, "and that no cloud may ever come to mar the horizon of your wedded bliss." (This sentence is not my own. I copy it verbatim from a wedding notice of my own written by a western journalist who is now at the Old Woman's Home.)

Mr. President, I hope you will not feel that I have been too forward in writing to you personally over my own name. I mean to do what is best for you. You can truly say that all I have ever done in this way has been for your good. I speak in a plain way sometimes, but I don't beat about the bush. I see that you do not want to have any engrossed bills sent to you for a couple of weeks.

That's the way I was. I told all my creditors to withhold their engrossed bills during my honeymoon, as I was otherwise engrossed. This remark made me a great many friends and added to my large circle of creditors. It was afterward printed in a foreign paper and explained in a supplement of eight pages.

We are all pretty well here at home. I may go to Washington this fall if I can sell a block of stock in the Pauper's Dream, a rich gold claim of mine on Elk mountain. It is a very rich claim, but needs capital to develop it. (This remark is not original with me. I quote from an exchange.)

If I do come over to Washington do not let that make any difference in your plans. If I thought your wife would send out to the neighbors and borrow dishes and such things on my account I would not go a step.

Just stick your head out of the window and whistle as soon as the cabinet is gone and I will come up there and spend the evening.

Remember that I have not grown cold toward you just because you have married. You will find me the kind of a friend who will not desert you just when you are in trouble. Yours, as heretofore,

Bill Nye.

P. S. – I send you to-day a card-receiver. It looks like silver. Do not let your wife bear on too hard when she polishes it. I was afraid you might try to start into keeping house without a card-receiver, so I bought this yesterday. When I got married I forgot to buy a card-receiver, and I guess we would have frozen to death before we could have purchased one, but friends were more thoughtful, and there were nine of them among the gifts. If you decide that it would not be proper for you to receive presents, you may return the card receiver to me, or put it in the cellar-way till I come over there this fall.

B. N.

No Doubt as to His Condition

Harry – I hear that you have lost your father. Allow me to express my sympathy.

Jack (with a sigh) – Thank you. Yes, he has gone; but the event was expected for a long time, and the blow was consequently less severe than if it had not been looked for.

H. – His property was large?

J. – Yes; something like a quarter of a million.

H. – I heard that his intellect, owing to his illness, was somewhat feeble during his latter years. Is there any probability of the will being contested?

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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