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JOHN BOGGS' BARN DOOR,

OR

The Effects of Procrastination.

'It's too bad!' said John Boggs. 'What's too bad?' returned Matilda, his wife.

'Why the cart's broken down, and now all the hands must be idle while it's being mended.'

'The cart!' repeated Mrs. Boggs, laying down the stocking she was darning, and regarding her husband with a peculiar look. 'Do you mean the large ox-cart?'

'Yes.'

'What's the matter with it?'

'The hub is split right slap in two halves.'

'But I thought it began to split a long time ago. I heard you say, last week, that you must have a new iron band made for it.'

'Yes—I know said John Boggs, rather dubiously, 'I did say something about it, but then I didn't think 'twas so bad.'

'Yet you knew it needed mending John—for you said so yourself. I wish you would learn to be more prompt about these things. You lose more than you are aware of.'

'O no, Tiddy. I don't lose anything. Everything is as well on my place as things generally are.'

'Not quite, John. I know you manage to keep things in pretty good order; but you must acknowledge that you are in the habit of procrastinating. It's only last week that you lost a valuable sheep, just because you put off mending the floor in the shed. And now you have lost half a day's work of three hands just because you didn't mend your cart hub when it ought to have been mended. Ah, you do lose much; and there's no use in trying to hide it.'

'Well, complaining won't mend it, that's a rare case,' muttered John.

'No,' quickly but pleasantly returned Matilda, 'but paying heed to your experience might mend the whole trouble.'

'Pooh! You sit here in the house darning stockings, and I s'pose you think, 'cause you can see where to run your needle, you could see everything in the barn at once.'

'No, no, John,' said his wife smiling, 'You don't put it in the right shape. I can see the heel of a stocking, and when I see a place where my needle needs to run, I run it there. I don't expect you to see but one thing at a time, but when you do see that thing, and also see that it needs mending, then is the time to mend it.'

John Boggs commenced to whistle a medley of spasmodic notes, and at the same time drew on his coat. He had to go five miles to a blacksmith's, to have an iron ring made.

'John,' said his wife, plying her needle as she spoke, 'now mark my words: if you don't turn over a new leaf in this respect, you'll have a lesson one of these days that'll cost you more'n you can afford to pay.'

John whistled with renewed energy, now striking fairly into 'Yankee Doodle,' and with a dubious shake of her head, his wife turned her attention to her work.

John Boggs had two men to work for him, and by this breaking of the cart they were either obliged to lie still or go at some work which was of little use. He had a large farm, and excellent one for producing vegetation; and he was quite 'well to do' in the world. His children were all daughters, and hence the business of overlooking the affairs of the farm all devolved upon him.

As we have seen, John Boggs had one fault. He would put off till to-morrow what could be and should be done to-day. He contrived to keep his place looking clean and tidy, because at certain periods he would be seized with a sort of renovating fit, and would then roll up his sleeves and go to it. But this didn't work always. Many a time very important things were left till he felt like it. That was a great expression of his—'Well, When I feel like it.' Sometimes there would be a breakdown that had to be attended to immediately, and while he had the hammer and nails in his hands he would fix up several other things that had been long awaiting his coming. Very often an hour was required over something that would not have consumed five minutes of his time had he taken it in hand when he first discovered it. And not only so, but he lost in two other ways—it required more nails to do the work at this late hour, and could never be made so good, at that, as it was before, nor as it would have been had he attended to it in season.

John had often promised his wife that he would reform, but he had not done it yet. He did not realize how much he lost; or, if he did, the effect was momentary. When he lost his sheep, he would never let such a thing go again. And yet there was at this very moment a bad

place in the floor of the tie-up, where the cows were kept. He had noticed it three days before. He saw one of the cows tread upon it, and he knew that a heavy ox would break through there at once.—But the floor was not mended yet, for all that.

When the ring or hub-band came home Mr. Boggs went to work to put it on, but it would not work. He had missed a figure in his calculations. The spokes had worn the sockets so much that all the straps in the world could never fit on that broken limb again.

'Jerusalem!' muttered the disappointed man, as he found he could not make the thing work, 'if I had only fixed the thunderin' thing when I ought to, this wouldn't have been. It's too bad—too thunderin' bad!'

But there was no help for it. A new hub had to be made. He managed to find an old wheel which he could use while thewright was fixing his, and this uncomfortable way he managed to get along without losing more than a day's time.

One morning, about a week after the breaking of the hub, one of the little girls came running in while the family were at breakfast.

'Papa! papa! the white faced heifers' broke right through the floor!'

John Boggs knew that his wife was looking sharply at him, and he avoided the peculiar glance which he felt sure he should find there if he turned that way. He called up the two men and hurried out. As good fortune would have it, the heifer was not seriously harmed; but John knew he could not claim credit for her safety. When he came back his wife said not a word on the subject. At first John was afraid his wife would reprimand him; but when he found that she kept silent on the subject, he felt worse than he would if she had just chided him a little. He knew that she felt it—that she understood it—and her continued silence seemed to indicate that she considered him incorrigible. From that moment he resolved that he would reform. Ah—he had made that resolution before.

For two months no real accident happened, for John Boggs kept things pretty straight, but still there were some short-comings. The habit of procrastination was too firmly fixed to be easily thrown off.

As autumn drew near, John Boggs began to look around for an opportunity to carry into execution a plan he had been considering for some time. He had a very choice stock of cattle, and having received an excellent offer for them, he could buy in the spring to good advantage. So he sold eight oxen for a price which might by some be considered almost fabulous. The same purchaser wanted horses, and John sold his three heavy ones, heaping only a three year old colt, which he thought would answer for all his riding through the winter.

Very near John's farm was a large tract of land, covered with very heavy pine trees, some of them magnificent white pines; and he had partly contracted to cut these trees down, fashion the logs, and haul them a distance of three miles to the river. The contract would be a valuable one to him, because he lived so near to the wood. He supposed he could find plenty of men who would be glad to come on and furnish teams if he would keep them. He had hay and grain in plenty, and of course wished to have most of it eaten up on the place. By selling his oxen and horses he made a clear profit of about one-half of what he got for them; and now, if he could get some one to come on and furnish teams, and in return take one half of the proceeds of the job, and have their animals kept, he would do well. But he found it more difficult than he expected to obtain the help. He could find plenty of men who would gladly come with such teams as they owned; but he wanted heavier ones.

At length he hit upon the very man. 'I've found him,' he said to his wife one evening, on his return from a visit to a neighboring town. 'I've found just the man. He's got teams enough, and will come on as soon as wanted.'

'Who is he?' asked Matilda, quite pleased with her husband's success.

'Aaron Rolf; you know him, don't ye? He's got six yoke of oxen and four good horses, and he says if I'll give him equal shares of what I am to have, and take care of his animals and men, he'll come.'

'Aaron Rolf?' repeated the wife. 'I know him well. If he says he will come, then you may depend on him. He never makes a promise unless he knows he can keep it; and he never undertakes to do a thing which he cannot do as it should be done. Some people call him odd; and I don't know but he is, in one sense of the word, for he minds his own business, does his own business, has everything in its proper place; and will have no one about him, if he can help it, who will not follow his example.'

'Why you seem to know him well, Tiddy.'

'And why shouldn't I? You forget that I lived in his father's family several years.'

'Oh! Is he a son of old Ben Rolf?'

'Yes—his eldest son.'

'Aha! that's he. Well, I'm glad he's such a man; it'll make it good for me.'

'I should like to have him here very well this winter—that is, if you must have some one.'

So John Boggs gave himself no more

uneasiness upon the subject of the fall's work. Mr. Rolf was coming over to look at the timber before he closed the bargain, but then John had explained everything fully to him, and he was perfectly satisfied.

One day John went to tie the colt up in the stall, and he found that the edge of the trough was worn almost down to the hole through which the halter was tied. He knew that it was not safe. A slight pull would break it out.

'I declare,' he said to himself. 'I must fix that when I get time.'

He meant when he felt like it, for he had ample time then. All that was necessary was to step to the wagon-house, get an inch-and-a-half-sugar, and bore a new hole. It would have taken him, perhaps, five minutes to have performed the whole operation. He led the colt into the next stall, and then went into the house and sat down.

Ah, the old habit was not gone yet.—He would fix the tie-hole when he had time! John Boggs hadn't quite reformed, for all his place looked so well outside.

An evening or two afterwards, just as he was sitting down to supper, one of his daughters came in and told him that the back barn door had tumbled down again.

'Why, I set a log of wood up against it firmly only a little while ago,' exclaimed John.

'Then I guess some of the sheep must have rubbed it down,' said the girl.

'John Boggs,' spoke the wife, almost sternly, 'haven't you fixed that door yet?'

'I declare, I'll fix that to-morrow,' was John's response.

'But why haven't you fixed it before?' persisted Matilda.

'Why—I haven't had time.'

John held down his head as he made this reply.

'Haven't had time!' repeated the wife, elevating her eyebrows in real astonishment. 'John Boggs, what do you mean?'

'Why, I did mean to fix it, but whenever I've thought of it, it has been when I was busy about something else.'

'Ah, John, let me tell you, that kind of work won't suit Aaron Rolf.'

'Let Aaron Rolf mind his own business,' returned John warmly; 'and,' he added, with a bold look into his wife's face, 'there's other folks, too, might do the same to some advantage.'

Matilda Boggs smiled, for she saw that her husband was playing the brave—a thing that she seldom did in her presence. Not that she was a domineering wife, but she was one of those straight-forward, sound-sensed, stern-virtued women, who find it absolutely necessary to guide an easy husband sometimes. She had intended to ask her lord to go out and fix the door after supper, but as he was already chafed, she concluded to say no more at present.

The facts about that barn door were these: The lower hinges had been useless over two weeks, but had been made to work by being careful in opening and closing the door. But some three days had elapsed since the upper one had become loose that no dependence could be placed upon it. John had noticed it, and he had said to himself that it must be fixed, and he had resolved to do it when he felt like it.

The next day came, and in the morning John Boggs went out to the barn, and passed through into the yard. He set the back door up after him, and braced the stout cord stick up against it to hold it to its place.

'I declare, that must be fixed. I'll attend to that right off.'

He went out into the field, and when he came back he went over to a neighbor's to see about some help, and remained there till dinner time. Just as they were sitting down to dinner, Aaron Rolf drove to the door. One of the hired men took his horse, and he came in, where he was heartily welcomed by John and his good wife.

In the afternoon the two men went out to the timber-land, and it was nearly dark when they returned. They had seen the whole lot, and Mr. Rolf was much pleased with the proposed plan in every way. As near as they could calculate, it would take them, with themselves and four other men, and six yokes of oxen and four horses, a hundred days. Perhaps more, but surely no less. Rolf found that his share of the proceeds would amount to eight hundred dollars. Then from this he was to pay the two men whom he was to bring on, leaving him six hundred dollars for his horses, oxen and himself. But as he would be at no expense at all in feeding anybody or anything, he considered the remuneration just fair.

'I can have more than that for hauling goods for our new railroad company,' he said; 'but I should have to be away from home all the time, and I don't like it.—I like this plan. I can go home as often as I please, and feel perfectly free to remain a day if I wish.'

During the evening the work was all planned; and before they retired, Aaron Rolf had about made up his mind that he should sign the article of agreement. It was arranged that they should go to the justice's and have them legally drawn up. John Boggs thought there was no need of any such paper; but Mr. Rolf thought differently. Said he—

'We may forget, but a written paper can't forget.'

And upon that they retired for the night.

In the morning Mr. Rolf got up, and went out to sniff up the fresh air. Having washed and combed his hair, he tho't he would go down and look at his horse, and perhaps give him some water. He saw one of the hired men and asked him if he had watered the animal. It had not been done. So he went on to the barn. He found the stable where he had seen the man hitch his horse the night before—but the horse was gone! He went through to the back of the barn, and found the door not only open, but flat upon the ground! He went on into the yard—and there he found the bars down! He hunted up the hired man.

'Look ye, my man, have you seen anything of my horse?'

'No, sir,' was the answer.

'Just come here.'

The man followed Rolf into the empty stall.

'Did you hitch my horse there last night?' the visitor asked, pointing to where the hole was broken out.

'Yes, sir,' the fellow said.

'Didn't you know that wouldn't hold a horse?'

'I supposed Mr. Boggs had fixed it, sir. I heard him say two or three days ago he must do it when he had time. It was kind of dark when I hitched the horse, and I didn't notice.'

'Fix it when he had time!' repeated Rolf, in surprise. 'Hasn't he an auger?'

'Yes, sir.'

'And hasn't he had five minutes to spare within three days?'

'Yes, sir—a good many of 'em, I should think.'

'But how about this door out here—didn't you know that was unsafe?'

'Yes, sir. It's been so a long while. But Mr. Boggs said he'd fix it when he had time, and so I never touched it.'

'Who lugged that great log of wood around here to hold it with?'

'Mr. Boggs did, sir.'

'He did, eh—yes, yes. And how do you suppose them bars came down?'

'Bars!' repeated the man, somewhat startled; 'are them bars down again?'

'They're down now, sir.'

'Well—I'm glad on't! Mr. Boggs said he'd fix 'em yesterday. They only wanted some pins in 'em. I asked him yesterday mornin' if I shouldn't fix 'em, and he said no. He said I might go to work and he'd attend to that. Now the cows are all gone!'

'Ah—I understand,' said Mr. Rolf.—And as he spoke he turned away and followed the track of his horse to the road, and saw that it was turned towards home. He knew the nature of his horse, and he was sure he should find him in his own stall. So he returned to the barn; and having taken the bridle on his arm, and thrown the light saddle over his shoulder said to the hired man:

'You can tell Mr. Boggs that I have gone after my horse.'

'But shan't I go with ye sir?'

'No. I know just where I shall find him.'

So Aaron Rolf went away all "saddled and bridled."

When Mr. John Boggs came into breakfast he looked very 'blue.'

'Why—what's the matter, John?' the wife asked eagerly, for he looked really sad.

He made no answer; and Matilda was upon the point of asking him again, when one of the rosy-cheeked little girls came running in, with eagerness upon every rounded feature.

'O mamma! she cried, 'don't you think Mr. Rolf's horse has run off! He broke out the stall where the halter-hole was clean worn off down to e'en a'most nothing!—and he ran out through the barn door what was all tumbled down! and he got through the bars where the cows hook 'em down!—and—don't you think—he's gone off to try and catch him! He went with the saddle on his back! My sakes—ain't it too bad!'

Matilda Boggs looked at John Boggs a full minute, and then went on with her breakfast.

She spoke not a word further upon the subject.

The next forenoon there was a letter left at the house of John Boggs. That individual received it from his wife when he came to dinner. He had been fixing up a door, and some bars, &c. He opened the letter and read as follows:

OAK HILL, Sept. 23, 18—
MR. JOHN BOGGS—Dear Sir. You may consider that all business relations between us are at an end. But I will not thus abruptly break off our plans without giving any reason. It is this.—I am by nature very nervous, and I could not entrust my interest in the hands of a man who cannot take care of his own.—Were I not assured that the accident of last night was the result of a habit with you, I might hesitate; but I understood it all. This will remain a secret with me; and trusting that we may remain friends, and that you may overcome an evil which cannot but result in harm to you if followed up. I remain yours, &c.,
AARON ROLF.

John Boggs read this letter, and then rushed from the house. Matilda picked it up and read it. A cloud passed over her face, and then a ray of sunshine came. In a few moments she looked happy and contented.

But the dinner was getting cold, and she sent one of the children after him.—He came in, looking sad and dejected.

His wife went up to him and placed her hand upon his shoulder.

'John,' she said kindly, 'cannot you buy some oxen?'

'Yes,' he returned, moodily.

'And can you not buy them and still have much of the money left which you received for those you sold?'

'Yes.'

'Then go and buy oxen and hire your men, and do that work yourself. I'll do all I can towards taking care of your hands. And I'm sure you'll make much more than you would to have a partner. Come—we can do our duty without the help of any man who does not want to assist you.'

John Boggs was dumb with grateful emotion. He understood his wife perfectly. He knew how noble she was; and he now realized that if he had only given heed to her advice before he might have been spared of his shame. But he soon gathered up, and his only answer was to draw the faithful woman down and kiss her.

That very afternoon he commenced upon a rule of life from which he resolved not to deviate. He posted off at once, and before night he was the owner of eight yokes of oxen. They were not such beauties as those he had sold, but they were stout working oxen. Next he engaged his men. And when the season for work commenced he went at it with a will. The logs were all cut and deposited in the river, and he was the clear net gainer of one thousand dollars by the operation.

But this was not all he gained from that fallen barn door. He gained the little lesson he so much needed; and from the rule it gave him he never deviated.—He never again saw a thing upon his place that needed attention without bestowing that attention at once. And the result was soon manifest. Everything was in its place, and everything was safe. His wife was happy, for she had no more occasion to perform that most unpleasant of all domestic duties to the true wife—the chiding of a husband. But there was one more thing: He could put a friend's horse into his stall without the danger of the animal's making off during the night through a hole that should have been, but was not, stopped by a barn door.

How Coffee came to be Used.

It is somewhat singular to trace the manner in which arose the use of the common beverage, coffee, which few persons in any half or wholly civilized country in the world would be willing to dispense with its use. At the time Columbus discovered America, it had never been known or used. It only grew in Arabia and Upper Ethiopia. The discovery of its use as a beverage is ascribed to the superior of a monastery in Arabia, who, desirous of preventing the monks from sleeping at their nocturnal services, made them drink the infusions of coffee, upon the report of some shepherd, who observed that flocks were more lively after having browsing on the fruit of that plant. Its reputation spread through the adjacent countries, and in about two hundred years it reached Paris. A single plant brought there in 1714, became the parent stock of all the French coffee plantations in the West Indies. The extent of the consumption can now hardly be realized. The United States alone annually consume it at the cost of its landing of from fifteen to sixteen millions of dollars. You may know the Arabia or Mocha, the best coffee, by its small bean of a dark yellow color. The Java and East India, the next in quality, are larger and of a paler yellow. The West India Rio, has a bluish or greenish gray tint.

Snow Storm in the Olden Times.

The year 1717 is memorable in the history of New England on account of the unusual quantity of snow which fell February 20 and 24 of that year. In those storms the earth was covered with snow from ten to fifteen feet, and in some places twenty feet deep. Many houses of one story were buried, and in numerous cases paths were dug from house to house under the snow drifts! The visits were made by means of snow-shoes, the wearer having first stepped out of their chamber windows. One gentleman wishing to visit his "lady love," walked three miles with snow-shoes, and entered her residence as he left his own, namely the chamber window. He was cordially received as he was the first person the family had seen from abroad for a week! Cotton Mather has left a manuscript account of "this great snow," and the many marvels and prodigies attending it.

Secret of a Happy Home.

If you wish to make your neighbors and your family happy—if you would see calmness and evenness of temper developed in your children—if you would lighten the cares and smooth the path of the companion of your bosom—do not irritate or scold, or be in a passion when your humor is crossed; but remember that others have hearts as soft as yours, and let the sunshine of Christian meekness and gentleness always beam from your eye. How happy will be the circle in such a case! Ay, this Christian temper is about the only requisite to make firesides happy—places which husbands and children will regret to leave, and be glad to return to. Let the husband be indulgent, then, to the annoyance of his ever-working and overworking wife; and let the wife always meet him with smiles when he comes home perplexed with the cares of business; and let both be forbearing under their mutual imperfections, and homes will be as God intended them.

Scene in a School Room.

The Springfield Republican is responsible for the following:

Come here, George, I wish to examine you in punctuation. What's that?

George—That! that's a comma.

Mistress—Right; now what's that?

George—Ah! now you've got me where my hair's short; I dun kno.

Mistress—George, I do not wish you to use any slang phrases here. When you are unable to give correct replies, say so but do not repeat such phrases as that which you have just used. Now, what's that?

George—I dun kno.

Mistress—Don't know what that is!—Why that's a period.

George—(Looking critically at the point in question.) Hal hal hal! Now I've got you where you're hair's short; that ain't nuthin' only a fly dirt!

Mistress—(Re-examining critically.)—George you are dismissed.

A Bald Eagle Frozen to the Ice.

The other day a large Bald Eagle caught a Wild Duck in the river Susquehanna, opposite Duncannon, carried it to a cake of ice which had lodged on a rock, and commenced his feast. During the operation, it is supposed that being wet, his feet and feathers, from the intense cold, froze fast to the ice; and being unable to extricate himself, he perished.—He was seen flapping his wings until dark. There was a desire to capture the great "American," but he could not be approached on account of the great mass of floating ice between him and the shore.—Harrisburg Tel.

To prevent Turnips from sprouting in warm Cellars in Winter, cut off all the fibrous roots and a portion of the tap root. The tops should also be cut close. This will not prevent them from heating and decaying, if placed in large piles. B.

Pride arises from self-ignorance.

Three Children Burned to Death.

On Friday last, three children of Louis Bender, a farmer, residing at Fostoria, in Blair county, were burned to death by the house taking fire. The father had gone to work in the morning, and the mother was absent milking the cows; when, as is supposed, the children set fire to a box of shavings in the house. The flames had cut off all communication, before the fire was discovered, and the charred remains of the children were not taken out until the house was in ruins. The eldest was a boy aged five years; the next a girl, aged three, and the third was a babe but three months old. The parents are almost distracted, and the mother had not tasted food for three days after the terrible calamity.

The value of food consumed in New York, last year, is estimated at \$120,000,000, and the number of the various quadrupeds that have been eaten, is beavers 191,374; cows, 1,012,345; swine 555,479. Of the beaves, the greatest number—a thousand per week—came from Illinois, which is the greatest beef producing State in the Union. It furnishes twice as many as the State of New York.

DYING ITSELF.—Harry H. of Providence, tells a good story of a young man who had a light and incipient moustache. One day, fingering the few hairs, he said to Harry: 'Hadn't I better dye this moustache?' 'Oh no,' replied Harry, 'let it alone and it will die itself.'

New York is certainly a great city. They have now a "Dog Boarding House," and one is advertised at the corner of Broadway and Forty-fifth streets. The keeper will board dogs at \$1 per week, and train for \$1.60.

Boozy fellow was observed the other day driving a "porker," holding on to his tail, and when asked what he was doing replied that he "was studying ge-hography."

The Louisville Journal says one million and seventy-five thousand hogs were killed at that place the present season and adds that many more may be added.

Judge Read, of the Supreme Court of this State decided on the 27th ult., that the term orphan applies to a child bereft of one parent as well as to one who has lost two.

In swearing the members at Harrisburg on Tuesday, 35 took the oath of office by kissing the Bible, 26 by the uplifted hand and 35 affirmed.

Nicholas Longworth, the vine grower of Cincinnati, pays thirteen thousand five hundred and ninety dollars and twelve cents annual taxes.

If pettiest government is not more oppressive now than formerly, it is certainly double in extent.