

THE AGITATOR.

Devoted to the Extension of the Area of Freedom and the Spread of Healthy Reform.

M. H. COBB, EDITOR.

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

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Written for the Agitator.

INTEMPERANCE.

Why tread so rudely on my hearth, Destruction's demon, thou! Why crush our buds of promise so, To bind thy conquering bow!

NOTES OF TRAVEL.

From a Pamphlet issued by the Emigrant Aid Company. "Notes of a Trip up Kansas River, including Observations on the Soil, Climate, Scenery, &c."

Passing the west line of the Patawatomie nation, we entered upon open prairie, often reaching the river on both sides; now and then a small grove, and a light fringe of timber on the banks.

Passing the mouth of the Blue, which comes in from the north, (as nearly all the tributaries of Kansas do,) and appears to be navigable for some distance, we were pleased with its fine bottoms and long streak of timber.

On Monday night, just before reaching Fort Riley, we were overtaken by a tremendous thunder storm. We were surrounded by prairie: and the captain had to lay his craft close to the shore, and cast anchor, there being no stump or tree to hitch to.

A little after sunrise, on Tuesday morning, we neared Fort Riley—its fine stone buildings loomings up grandly in the sunbeams. It is located at the junction of the Republican and Smokyhill forks of the Kansas, on the second bench or roll of the prairie, having higher bluffs immediately behind, from which the building rock is quarried.

of timber, with occasional groves near the water's edge, in the ravines, and on the bluffs. This is truly a delightful valley—the most inviting for settlement we ever saw.

The 'Excel' made a short trip up Smokyhill, Lieut. Sargent, from the Fort, accompanied us. We had an exciting time. The constant announcement from the man who heaved the lead, was, 'No bottom.' The river was full, and the current strong, but we had great difficulty in getting round the short bends;—it keeps on the course of the main Kansas, coming a little more from the south-west.

Some forty miles up Smokyhill, an extensive bed of gypsum has been found, specimens of which have been tested and proved to be of superior quality; we brought a small specimen home with us. Salt is also alleged to be very abundant on the Saline fork; the waters of the Smokyhill are often quite brackish, and when the boilers of the 'Excel' are filled from that river, there is a slight incrustation of salt deposited.

With fine springs and clear running water. This is, indeed, a well-watered region, and must be salubrious and healthy. We previously mentioned the scarcity of timber above Patawatomie; it may here be added, that it is inadequate to supply what would be needed for agricultural purposes, and hardly sufficient for firewood. Here and to the westward, a new era in agriculture must be inaugurated—a new system must be practised. Nature demands that it should be so.

(To be Continued.)

GEN. SAM. HOUSTON meeting Reverdy Johnson one day in the Capitol, the Senator and ex-Senator very naturally entered into conversation about public men; when speaking of Douglas, the General said he had been "sent back."

"Sent back," said Mr. J., "what do you mean by that?" "Why," said Gen. H., "did you never hear the story?" "No."

"Well, there was a man in my neighborhood when I was a boy, who made it a rule not to allow his boys to come to the table till they were seventeen years old. He had a boy whom a neighbor, who was aware of the father's rule, happened to see one day sitting at a side table; knowing, however, that the boy was more than seventeen, he asked him how it happened that he was still prohibited from coming to the table? 'Why,' said he, 'when I was seventeen father let me come, but I was so hungry, and in such a hurry to help myself, that I stood up and reached so far, that a sad accident happened, whereupon my father immediately set me back two years.'"

"Is that the second bell?" inquired a guest of a stable porter of a country tavern, the other day. "No sir!" exclaimed the darkey, "dat am de second ringin' of de first bell—we has but one bell in dis house."

THE MAN who "harbored" a thought, is supposed to live on the sea-shore.

SELECT MISCELLANY. THE VENOM OF SERPENTS.

The following is by S. Gilman, L. L. D., published in the St. Louis Medical Journal, and is certainly the most interesting article we ever read upon the subject:

"There is much in the history and habits of the reptile tribes, however repulsive they may be in appearance, that is very interesting. During a sojourn of two or three months in the interior of Arkansas, I paid some attention to that branch of history called ophiology. I found four varieties of rattlesnakes, (Crotalus) of which the Crotalus Horridus and Crotalus Kirtlandi are by far the most numerous. The former is the largest serpent in North America. The family of moccasin snakes (Coluber) is also quite numerous, there being not less than ten varieties, most of which being quite as venomous as the rattlesnake. By dissecting great numbers of different species I learned that the anatomical structure of the poisoning apparatus is similar in all the different varieties of venomous serpents. It consists of a strong framework of bone, with its appropriate muscles in the upper part of the head, resembling, and being in fact a pair of jaws, but externally to the jaws proper, and much stronger. To these is attached by a ginglymoid articulation, one or more moveable fangs on each side, just at the verge of the mouth, capable of being erected at pleasure. These fangs are very hard, sharp, and crooked, like the claws of a cat, and hooked backward, with a hollow from the base to near the point. I have occasionally seen a thin slit bone divide this hollow, making two. At their base is found a small sack containing two or three drops of venom, which resembles thin honey. The sack is so connected with the cavity of the fang during its erection, that a slight upward pressure forces the venom into the fang at its base, and it makes its exit at a small slit or opening near the point, with considerable force; thus it is carried to the bottom of any wound made by the fang. Unless the fangs are erected for battle they lie concealed in the upper part of the mouth, sunk between the external and internal jaw-bones, somewhat like a pen-knife blade shut in its handle, where they are covered by a fold of membrane, which encloses them like a sheath—this is the vagina dentis. There can be no doubt that these fangs are frequently broken off and shed, as the head grows broader, to make room for new ones nearer the verge of the mouth; for within the vagina dentis of a very large crotalus horridus, I found no less than five fangs on a side—in all stages of formation—the smallest in a half pupal or cartilaginous state, the next something harder, the third still more perfect, and so on to the tenth, well-set, perfect fang. Each of these teeth had a well-defined cavity like the main one. Three fangs on each side were frequently found in copper-heads, vipers and others.

The process of robbing serpents of their venom is easily accomplished by the aid of chloroform, a few drops of which suffices them. If while they are under its influence, they are carefully seized by the neck, and the vagina dentis held out of the way by an assistant, with a pair of forceps, and the fang is erected and gently pressed upward, the venom will be seen issuing from the point of the fang. It may then be absorbed by a bit of sponge, or caught in a vial, or on the point of a lancet. After robbing several serpents in this manner, they were found, after two days, to be as highly charged as ever with venom of equal intensity with that first taken.

During the process of robbing several species of serpents, I inoculated several small but vigorous and perfectly healthy vegetables with the point of a lancet well charged with venom. The next day they were withered and dead, looking as though they had been scorched with lightning. In attempting to preserve a few drops of venom for future experiments in a small vial with two or three parts of alcohol, it was found in a short time to have lost its venomous properties. But after mixing the venom with aqua ammonia, or spirits of turpentine, or oil of peppermint, or of cinnamon, or of cloves, or with nitric or sulphuric acid, it still seemed to act with undiminished energy. It is best preserved, however, for future use by trituration with refined sugar or sugar of milk.

A very fine, large cotton-mouth snake, being captured by putting a shoe string around him, became excessively ferocious, striking at even the crack of a small riding-whip. Finding himself a prisoner, without hope of escape, he turned his deadly weapons on his body, striking repeatedly his well-charged fangs deeply into his flesh. Notwithstanding this, he was put in a small basket and carried forward. In one hour after he was found dead, and no amount of irritation could excite the least indication of life.

A large rattlesnake, beheaded instantly with a hoe, would an hour and a half after, strike at anything that pinched its tail. Of several persons who were testing their firmness of nerve by trying to hold the hand steady while the serpent struck at it, not one could be found whose hand would not recoil in spite of his resolution; and one man, a great bully, by-the-by, was struck on the neck with considerable force, and staggered back fainting with terror.

Seven venomous serpents belonging to five different species, were made to fraternize and dwell amicably in one den. A beautiful pair of long-bodied speckled snakes, known as kingsnakes, known to be fangless and consequently without venom, were duly installed as members of the same family. Some easiness was perceivable among the older members, but no attempt was made to destroy

the intruders—though they might have been killed instantly. The next morning four of the venomous serpents were found to have been destroyed by the king-snakes, and one was within their coil, and the two remaining ones would make no effort at self-defence. A large rattlesnake seemed stupid and indifferent to his fate. He could not be made to threaten or give warning even with his rattles. The smallest king-snake was afterwards inoculated with the poison of one of the serpents after it had destroyed, and died immediately after—thus evincing that they must have exercised some power besides physical force to overcome their fellow-creatures."

In short, the result of a great number of experiments performed with the venom on a great variety of serpents, seem to lead to the following conclusions:

- 1. That the venom of all serpents acts as a poison in a similar manner.
2. That the venom of some varieties is far more active than that of others.
3. That a variety of the collubar, known as the cotton-mouth, is the most venomous serpent in Arkansas.
4. That the venom of serpents destroys all forms of organized life, vegetable as well as animal.
5. That alcohol, brought in contact with venom, is to a certain extent, an antidote.
6. That serpents do possess the power of fascinating small animals, and that this power is identical with mesmerism.
7. That the blood of small animals, destroyed by the venom of serpents, bears a close resemblance to that of animals destroyed by lightning or hydrocyanic acid; it loses its power of coagulation and cannot be kept long from putrefaction."

A SCHOOL EXAMINATION.

Once upon a time we were traveling through Georgia, and after putting our horses in the stable, and ourselves in a condition not to desire food or drink, we took a walk of about half a mile from the village to the school house. The master wore a dirty coat that looked the color of the back of an old dictionary; his shirt was decorated with ink, and so tightly did his pantaloons fit him that one would suppose that he had been born with them on, and that they had grown in exact ratio with his legs. The walls of his seat of learning were more mysterious than an Indian map. They had once been white; but like an old maid, the wear and tear of time had changed them to a deep saffron. On them the young Raphaels of the surrounding county had sketched sundry young gentlemen with goggle eyes, large heads, and very small legs. The wall above every scholar's head was emblematic of his or her taste; the flower drawn with chalk spoke of the boanist; and the harp in ink of the musician.

Upon an invitation from the schoolmaster we took a seat beside him, and soon in an authoritative tone, he called for the "spelling class to come up." About half a dozen boys ranged themselves in front of the desk, and looked as surprised as young chickens just out of their shells; they waited for the master's signal to commence the massacre of the English language. "Dictionary," shouted the master.

"Dye-shun dyction-i-dyction-i-ryery." After getting this out, the boy seemed to be much relieved, and immediately commenced sucking his fingers after the most approved manner. "Peregrinate," roared the master, and he to whom he addressed himself, puckered up his mouth as if he had been eating green persimmons. "P-p-p-e-pe-pe-pe."

"You suttering rascal! you have got half a bushel of peas there. When you get a P. in your mouth, grab hold of it with your tongue, and don't be shelling them out here in that manner. Commence again, sir."

The boy's eyes popped out of his head like those of a boiled cod-fish, and drawing a long breath, with much difficulty he got out the first syllable of the word, and there he stopped. The next boy went on and spelt the word, while the stutterer got a whack over the head with a ruler. "Calumniate," said the master to a cross-eyed youth who had been looking all the morning with one eye in front of the green, while with the other he endeavored to scan his book. The eyes this youth looked daggers at each other, and had it not been for his nose, which was actually worn away in the middle by the frequent glances of his optics across it, they would most certainly have attacked each other.

"Kow," said the pedagogue. Calumniate, you calf. Steer right or I'll put a yoke on you." "Kal—" boy scratches his head—"um"—boy seems going into convulsions—"knee, ni"—the agony seems over—ate, calumniate.

"Encyclopedia," bawled the master. The boys looked horrified, and seemed to think that the word was at least a month long.

"Begin," said the master. "Can't," said a bandy-legged aspirant to literary honors.

"Next," muttered the pedagogue, "I see just like Johnny," answered the boy addressed.

Finding it useless to press them on the subject, the master bade them go to their seats, and ordered up the geography class.

"Morocco—where—products—inhabitants,—climate and soil?"

"Morocco is capital for Pompeii and Al-leygaters. Never been discovered where it is, but is respected to produce feather head-inhabitants in great abundance. Its climate is salubrious and soil aptediluvian."

"China—where—products, &c.?"

"China is remarkable for its poorcellings (porcelain we suppose was here meant) and manufacturers of cups and saucers—most of the principal officers have their tails, and are called mudi-darens, from the circumstance of its being punishable for man to touch their ends. These tails is made out of their own hair, and is prospected to have been derived from, the P'shaws of Turkey. Souchong opium, and Madagascar tea is drunk here in great quantities."

"Kamschatka—inhabitants—products, &c."

"Kamschatka is celebrated for its dogs and manufacturers of whaleoil. Its last governor was a kangaroo, and on account of the inhabitants eatin' so much grease and blubber, it is the opinion of learned men that after death many of them will be changed into sperm candles."

"That's right—go to your seats—good boys—won't flog you put twice this week, if you behave yourselves. You, Jim Stokes, don't let me catch you with a quire of paper in the seat of your trousers again, nor with your copy book in your jacket. I were out my ratten a lickin' you, and get no thanks for it."

"Master, what's the meaning of calculus?" shrieked a boy of about ten years of age.

It's a term in arithmetic, and means to calculate with without figures roared the master. About that time we perambulated.

KNICKERBOCKIAN.

The Knickerbocker for August, sets out some good things on its "Little people's Side Table."

"Our 'Ann' has a little girl to help her with the 'house-work'—as sui generis a little creature as the sable Topsy. A few days since, when 'Ann' came in from having, as she said, a short 'chatter' with a friend, she detected her little 'help' in some misdemeanor, and proceeded to reprimand her for it. In the course of her Ann's 'pad' versions, she said:

"Do you think you are fit to die?" "I do no!" said the little girl, taking hold of her dress and inspecting it, "I guess so if I ain't too dirty!"

"When my grand-mother, (long since in Heaven) was about three years old, she was taken to the funeral of a deceased play-mate. The little corpse was lying in its coffin, around which flowers were strewn; and she, being lifted up, kissed its cold cheek, and whispered:

"Please give my love to God!" "This strikes me as one of the sweetest expressions I ever heard made by a child."

"Our little Charlie has always been in the habit of saying a little prayer before going to bed. A few evenings since, all things being ready for retiring, and when he was about to kneel at his brother's knee, he stopped, and looking earnestly into his mother's face, said:

"Mamma, I am tired of praying somebody else's prayer; may't I make one myself?"

"His mother said, 'Certainly, my boy, if you really wish to.'"

"He knelt very reverently and clasped his hands; then with earnestness of unaffected childhood, said to his mother:

"Mamma, if I get stuck, will you help me out?"

"My little boy after listening some time to his mother's efforts to get a peddler to throw in something' with everything she purchased, cast his longing eyes on some primers in the trunk. The peddler, reading his wishes, offered to give him one. The little fellow hesitated, and when urged, said: 'I don't know as I will take it, unless you will throw in something.'"

"A little girl had been playing in the street until she had become pretty well covered with dust. In trying to wash it off she didn't use enough water to prevent the dust rolling up in little balls upon her arms. In her trouble, she applied to her brother, a little older than herself, for a solution of the mystery. It was explained at once—to his satisfaction, at least:

"Why, sis, you're made of dust, and if you don't stop you'll wash yourself all away!"

"This opinion, coming from an elder brother, was decisive, and the washing was discontinued."

"One day a little school-mate of Willie's was in here, and the two got to disputing about the number of days in a week; Willie persisting that there were seven, and his little opponent stoutly maintaining that there were only six. 'Well,' said Willie, 'you say them over and I will count.' So the days were named and counted, from Monday to Saturday, inclusive; and then there was a pause, which Willie broke by saying:

"And Sunday."

"Ho!" said his diminutive opponent, with a look of supreme contempt, 'that belongs to the other week.'

"One pleasant day last Summer, I took my seat in the stage coach bound from Fall River to C—Among the passengers was a little gentleman who had possibly seen five summers. The coach being quite full, he sat in the lap of another passenger. While on the way, something was said about pick-pockets, and soon the conversation became general on that interesting subject. The gentleman who was then holding our young friend remarked:

"My fine fellow, how easy I could pick your pocket!"

"No, you couldn't," replied he; 'I've been looking out for you all the time!'"

"What do you drive such a pitiful looking carcass as that for? Why don't you put a heavy coat of flesh on him?" "A heavy coat of flesh! By the powers, the poor carter can hardly carry what little there is on him."

"Scarce and high—good butter."

Grief divides itself into several periods, in the case of widows. 1st Period.—Despair, six weeks. The period is known by a black, paramatta dress, a black cap, and the disappearance of the hair beneath the widow's cap. 2d Period.—Profound grief. Despondency, six weeks. Profound grief is recognized by the dress, which still continues to be of paramatta, and the despondency which succeeds, to despair is symbolized by the white crape collar and cuffs.

3d Period.—Grief, softened by the consolation of friends, and the hope soon to rejoin the departed object of her affections in a better world. These melancholy sentiments last six months; they are expressed by a black silk dress; the widow's cap is still worn.

4th Period.—Time heals the wounds of the heart. Providence tempers the east wind to the shorn lamb. Violent attacks of grief only come at rare intervals. Sometimes grief widows seem as though she had forgotten herself; but all at once, a circumstance, happy, entirely indifferent, recalls it, and she falls back into grief. Yet she dwells from time to time upon the faults of the beloved, but it is only to contrast them with dazzling virtues. This period would be tiresome for the world at large; therefore it has been decided to express it simply by half mourning.

5th Period.—There is now only a softened melancholy, which will last all her life, i. e. six weeks. This touching and graceful sentiment shows itself by a quiet and gray silk dress; the sufferer less feels the loss, than the actual deprivations of a husband.

We should be doing the author an injustice if we omitted to give the beautiful passage with which he concludes the subject: "As to those who really grieve over their relations, they will do well not to annoy the world by the signs of a real grief; they will do well to wear their sorrows within as they do when mourning over friends, those relations made by the heart. And if you should meet with any such, do not address to them conventional consolation for there is a portion of themselves which they have buried with their dead. Their only consolation is the hope that they shall never be able to console themselves; that is to say, never to forget, never to see those die in their hearts whom they have already seen die in the flesh. Show those afflicted ones that they have not lost all and show them love is still left them. But all this is not the fashion."—Fraser's Magazine.

THE NEW GUDGEONS.—The following dialogue, which actually took place some years since between an old lady, who had much confidence in professionals, and a learned but eccentric clergyman, goes to strengthen a conviction already strong in many minds, viz.—that human nature is gullible;

"Now, parson, you are a man of much learning; I want to ask you what became of the eleven days, when old style was altered to new?"

"Well, well madam, you know this world is hung on two great gudgeons—"

"Indeed, sir! Well, what then?"

"Well, it had been turning round on the two gudgeons a great while, and they got worn out, and it broke down."

"Do tell if it did!"

"Yes, marm. Well, after the world broke down, all the people turned to and put in new gudgeons, and set it going again; and it took 'em just eleven days!"

The old lady was abundantly satisfied, and would have given to the learned gentleman the degree of bachelor of science, without further examination.

We regret to hear of Gov. Bigler's severe sickness. He appears to be recovering however. He has but a short time to get over the State, and we want to here him at Pittsburg—Post.

The Pittsburg Union, a day or two since, contained a brutal article chocking over the fact that Judge Pollock had been attacked with sore throat, and rejoicing over his physical inability to endure the fatigue of stump speaking. It boasted that the Judge was "no match for his antagonist in physical energy," and that bets had been offered that "the hardy ruffian (Bigler) would give his opponent a trial of physical endurance among the hills of Western Pennsylvania that had not been equaled since Tom Iyer's training for the fight with Sullivan."

We regret to hear, now, of Gov. Bigler's illness as sincerely as we did of the indisposition that prevented Judge Pollock from speaking at much length in Butler. We cannot imitate the example set us by the Union; but we may be permitted to hope that since it has found how idle and empty its boasts were, it may learn to exercise more charity toward opponents who are exposed to the common ills of mortality.

THE MILKMAN.—Jinks, the Hastings milkman, one morning forgot to water the milk. In the hall of the first customer in his round, the omission dashed upon Jinks' wounded feelings. A large tub of fine, clear water stood on the floor by his side; no eye was upon him, and three did Jinks dilute his milk with a large measure filled from the tub, before the maid brought up her jugs. Jinks served her and went on. While he was following down the next area, his first customer's footman beckoned to him from the door, Jinks returned, and was immediately ushered into the library. There sat my lord, who had just tasted the milk.

"Jinks!" said his lordship.

"My lord!" replied Jinks.

"Jinks," continued his lordship, "I should feel particularly obliged if you would henceforth bring me the milk and water separately and allow me the favor of mixing them myself."

"Well, my lord it's useless to deny the thing, for I suppose your lordship watched me while—"

"No," interrupted the Nobleman. "The fact is, that my children bathe at home, Jinks, and the tub in the hall was full of sea water, Jinks."

FATHER did you ever have another wife besides mother? "No my son; what possesses you to ask such a question?" "Because I saw in the old family Bible where you married Anna Dornay, 1838, and that ain't mother's name, for her name is Sally Smith."

Boy destined for the Presidency.