

THE AGITATOR.

Devoted to the Extension of the Area of Freedom and the Spread of Wealthy Reform

COBB, STURROCK & CO.,

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

PUBLISHERS & PROPRIETORS.

VOL. 3.

WELLSBOROUGH, TIOGA COUNTY, PA., THURSDAY MORNING, JANUARY 1, 1857.

NO. 23.

WHAT IS LIFE.

My child thou art resting thy hopes upon,
The mist that feths at day;
On the rainbow wreath and its heaven born tint,
That passes forever away.

Thy lot like mortality's surely shall be,
In the midst of life's tumult and glare,
But child, let thy armor be harnessed and bright,
Like the shield of the christian prayer.

"What is life mother?" said a manly boy,
And his form grew staller yet.
While the pride of his dark hazel eye was subdued,
By the long sickle lashes of jet.

Do not friendship and truth lead us on by the hand!
Is not gold a prize worthy to bear?
Dear mother believe me, I'll win thee a name,
Thy sorrow clad brow shall yet wear.

My child, in the turmoil and hurry of life,
On cometh a wearisome day;
Thou wilt find thy pain the dead ashes of strife,
Are but thorns in thy perilous way.

Then court my boy for the angel of death,
O'er wings his dark pinion this way;
But at his approach the sorrows of life,
Flee forever and ever away.

EDITH.

Select Miscellany.

The Herring Pie.

A TALE OF AMSTERDAM.

It was a cold winter's evening. The rich banker Bronker had drawn his easy chair close to the corner of the stove, and sat smoking his long clay pipe with great complacency; his intimate friend, Van Grote, employed in exactly the same manner, occupied the opposite corner. All was quiet in the house, for Bronker's wife and children were gone to masked ball; and, secure from fear of interruption, the two friends indulged in a conversation.

"I cannot think," said Van Grote, "why you should refuse consent to the marriage. Bronker can give his daughter a good fortune, and you say that your son is desperately in love with her."

"I don't object to it," said Bronker. "It is my wife who will not hear of it."

"And what reason has she for refusing?"

"One which I cannot tell you," said his friend, sinking his voice.

"Oh, a mystery! Come out with it. You know I have always been frank and open with you, even given you my opinion of your absurd jealousy of your wife."

"Jealousy of my wife! Nonsense! Have I not just sent her to a masked ball?"

"I don't wonder you boast of it. I should like to have seen you do as much when you were first married. To be sure you had reason to look sharply after her, for she was the prettiest woman in Amsterdam. Unfortunately, she has become the better horse; and you refuse an advantageous match for your son to gratify her caprice."

"You are quite wrong, my friend, I never allow any one to be master here but myself; and in the present instance I cannot blame Clotilda. The secret of her refusal lies in a herring pie."

"A herring pie?" exclaimed Van Grote.

"Yes, a herring pie. You may remember it was a favorite dish of mine, and that my wife could not endure even the smell of it. Well, during the first year of my marriage, I was a very little—very little—jealous of Clotilda. My situation obliged me to keep open house; and among the young sparks who visited us, none gave me so much uneasiness as the handsome Colonel Berkenrode. The reputation that he had already acquired for gallantry was enough to create alarm, and the marked attention he paid my wife convinced me it was well founded. What could I do? It was impossible to forbid him the house, for he had it in his power to deprive me of the Government contracts: in other words, to ruin me. After pondering deeply on the subject, I decided on doing nothing until the danger should become imminent; all that was necessary was to know how things really stood. Having just purchased this house, I caused a secret closet to be made behind the stove here. I communicated with my private room, and from it I could overhear everything that passed in this apartment without risk of being discovered. Thank God, I have had no use for it these last twenty years, and indeed, I do not even know what has become of the key. Satisfied with this precaution, I did not hesitate to leave Clotilda when any of her admirers paid her a visit, though I promise you that some of the gallant speeches made me wince."

"Upon my word," interrupted his friend, "you showed a most commendable patience, in your place, I should have contented myself with forbidding my wife to receive his visit."

"There spoke the bachelor. As I didn't want to drive her headlong into his arms, I went a different way to work. Day after day was I forced to listen to the insidious arguments of the seducer. My wife—I must own she made a stout defence—at one time tried ridicule, at another entreaty, to deter him from the pursuit of her. He began to lose hope in proportion as I gained it, till one day he bethought himself of threatening to blow out his brains if she would not show him some compassion. Moved at this proof of the strength of his passion, she burst into tears and pleaded that she was not free—in short, she gave him to understand that I was the obstacle to his happiness. Berkenrode was too well skilled in the art of seduction not to see that he had gained a point."

"He raved, cursed me as the cause of his misery, and tried to obtain a promise from me in case she should become a widow. She stopped him peremptorily; but I never closed an eye that night; and Clotilda, though she did not know I watched her, was as uneasy as myself. On the following day a circumstance occurred that increased her agitation. While at breakfast a message came from the cook asking to see me alone. I desired him to come in (as I was not in the habit of interfering in domestic affairs,) and communicate his business in my wife's presence. When the man entered he was as pale as a ghost, and scarcely seemed to know what he was about. At last he told me he had received a package containing a small bottle, three hundred guilders, and a note, in which he was requested to put the contents of the former into the first herring pie he should prepare for me. He was assured he might do

so without fear, as the contents of the bottle were quite harmless, and would give a delicious flavor to the pie. An additional reward was promised if he complied with the request and kept his own counsel. The honest fellow, who was much attached to me, said he was convinced there must be something wrong in the affair, and should not be happy till the bottle and money were out of his hands. I poured a few drops of the liquid on a lump of sugar and gave it my wife's lap-dog. It fell into convulsions and died in a few minutes. The case was now plain—there had been an attempt to poison me. Never shall I forget Clotilda's pale face, as she threw herself weeping into my arms. "Poison! A murder!" she exclaimed, clasping me as if to shield me from danger. "Merciful Heaven, protect us both!" I consoled her with the assurance that I was thankful to my unknown enemy, who was the means of showing me how much she loved me.

"That day Berkenrode came at the usual hour; but in vain did I take my seat in my hiding-place, he was not admitted. I afterwards found that she had sent him a letter, threatening, if ever he came again, her husband should be informed of all that had passed. He made several attempts to soften her resolution, but to no purpose, and a year afterwards he married. No acquaintance has ever existed between the families, and now you know why my wife refuses her consent to our son's marriage with the daughter of Berkenrode."

"I cannot blame her," said Van Grote. "Who would have thought that Berkenrode, a soldier, a man of honor, could have been capable of such a rascally deed?"

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Bronker, "and do you really think it was the General who sent the poison?"

"Why, who else?"

"Myself, to be sure. The whole was my own contrivance, and it cost me three hundred guilders in a present to my cook; but I saved my wife and got rid of her troublesome lap-dog at the same time."

"Do you know, Bronker, I think it was rather a shabby trick to leave Berkenrode under such an imputation; and now that your son's happiness depends on your wife being undeceived—"

"I am aware of all that, but to undeceive her now is not so easy as you think. How can I expect her to disbelieve a circumstance in which for the last twenty years she has put implicit faith?"

He was interrupted by the entrance of Vrow Bronker; her cheeks were flushed, and she was saluted by Van Grote rather siffly.

"What, not at the ball, Clotilda?" asked her husband.

"No, I had a bad headache," she replied, and Maurice had promised to take charge of his sisters. But I have come to tell you that I have been thinking over his marriage with Mina Berkenrode, and altered my mind on the subject. In short, I shall withdraw my opposition to the match."

The friends looked at each other in astonishment.

"By-the-by," she continued, "here is a key I found some time ago. I think it must belong to you."

"Well, Clotilda," said her husband, striving to hide his confusion as he took the key, "this is good news about the marriage—"

"Suppose you and your friend celebrate it by a supper. There is a herring pie in the house, and you need not fear that it is poisoned."

She left the room. Bronker looked foolish, and Van Grote rubbed his hands, as he exclaimed:

"Caught in your own trap! He who digs a pit for his enemy shall fall into it himself."

"Nevertheless," replied Bronker, "I think I have got well out of mine."

Lost His ORATION.—In the political struggle of 1848, two delegates from D—

New Hampshire—a lawyer and a tailor—started on their mission to the capital of that State together, in a wagon. The tailor was quite as ardent a politician as his companion, albeit he was not so profound, but what he lacked in black learning and logic he made up in abundant flow of words, set speeches, snatches of political orations, &c., which he had picked up at different caucuses, and which his retentive memory hoarded up, ready to be delivered on fitting occasions. They had not proceeded far on their journey when Mr. Broadcloth asked his companion if he intended to make a speech, and receiving an affirmative answer, told him he should like to hear it if it was "cut and dried."

Accordingly our limb of the law delivered himself of the speech—the labor of more than one long night—to our "snapper of rifles," who, after applauding it much and criticizing it a little, desired the lawyer to go through with it again, which was complied with. After discussing freely its merits and chances for improvement in delivery more especially, the man of measure actually prevailed on the speaker to go through with it again; then complimented the victim by telling him "it was now perfect and couldn't be better."

Immediately they arrived at Concord they repaired to the chamber of the Convention, which had just organized. Our man of cloth watched the chance, and before his companion could say—"Mr. Speaker," he anticipated him, got the floor, and to the surprise and astonishment of his friends in general and his companion in particular, recited the whole speech as he caught it on the journey from the unsuspecting lawyer's lips, *verbatim et literatim*, and coolly took his seat amidst thunders of applause.

A PRINTER once described a clever clergyman as a "full-leaded article with a white line after it."

Communications.

Letter from Minnesota Territory.

ZUMBA, Minnesota Ter. Dec. 1, 1856.

FRIEND COBB:—I am thankful to hear from you every week, as I am pretty sure to do through the *Agitator*; and as I have occasion to write to you on business I thought it might be acceptable to some of your patrons to get a few words respecting the progress and improvement of the country around me.

Very little more than two years have elapsed since I came to Southern Minnesota. It was then a vast, and almost unbroken wilderness, through which I traveled one hundred and fifty miles in one direction and saw but six human habitations. In traveling over thirty miles north, and nearly fifty miles south of this line, I found the country about as thinly populated; and the tract of country now comprised in Olmsted county, (24 miles north and south by 30 miles east and west,) then contained less than forty white inhabitants. It now boasts a population of more than twelve thousand souls!

In July, 1854, Rochester, in this county, had neither shanty nor tent wherein to shelter man; it has now 320 acres regularly laid out in lots, streets, alleys and squares, with ten dry-goods stores and groceries, four hotels as large as Wellsboro boats, with some smaller establishments of the accommodating kind, where daily stages are running from Dubuque in Iowa to St. Paul, and mail carried three times weekly each way. In town are six mechanics' shops of various kinds, four physicians without patients, and lawyers and preachers in such abundance above the wants of the place that they find it necessary to resort to manual labor for support. In addition, Rochester has a population of over six hundred persons, besides, in this county we have, our Oronoco, Durango, Marion, Highforest, Prescott, &c., containing from 50 to 150 inhabitants each, all aspiring to become cities.

Our experience in Agriculture proves satisfactorily that we have bettered our condition much by our journey West of the Mississippi. The past summer has been the first that we have seen crops growing on land of second plowing. It has shown us corn from 12 to 15 feet in height, yielding, in some cases, 80 bushels per acre without hoeing.

Small grain and roots pay largely for the labor bestowed upon them. I have raised carrots of which some grew to the length of two feet, and several weighed four and a half pounds each. Comfortable frame buildings are rapidly going up, and the country is filling up with wise men and women from the East, who bring with them their capital in a new country—energy and perseverance. Truly, GEO. HUYLER.

[We hope to hear from Mr. Huyler often. Every familiar voice from the Great West finds attentive listeners here; and the hundreds who will doubtless seek homes in the West the coming year from this region, will profit by the information. Ed.]

Farmers.

"Agriculture is the most healthy and most useful employment of Man."

These words of the illustrious FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY, who was himself a living exemplification of the truth of the above noble sentiment. Most of the eminent men of his day agreed with him in practice—most of them now agree with him in precept. Tilling the soil in all ages has been the subject of innumerable eloquent addresses, and orators never fail to give the ploughboy now and then a puff. Washington was sincere when he uttered the above sentence, and he devoted the latter portion of his life to Agricultural pursuits, thus practically carrying into effect the oft-quoted motto.

But in my opinion, by those that call themselves "the better class," farming is looked on as a low calling and beneath the dignity of "well bred gentlemen." Although writers may praise the "occupation"—although stump orators may eulogize it—(though the Collegian may give it a place in his best productions, yet, notwithstanding all these things, the more elevated portion of the human race look with contempt upon the low and degraded calling of the farmer! Nothing is more common than for a graduate of College to leave school and come back home and give his old friends a cut and dried oration upon the nobleness of farming, but you could not shock his feelings more than to ask him to milk the cows, or to feed the pigs. The idea would be shockingly disgusting to his highly cultivated nature. Give him a scythe some hot day in July with the Thermometer at 90 deg., and ask him to mow twelve hours for seventy-five cents, or to cradle three or four acres of grain for a day's work, and just watch his countenance about that time. It would be well to have a "selling bottle on hand, for the thought of such horrible things might temporarily deprive him of his senses. Although he has spent days in preparing his address on this subject, yet he could not entertain the idea of performing a part of the farmers' laborious duties, without a shudder. Poor fellow, he likes the theory of farming, but abhors the practice; and leaves school to practice some honorable profession. Perhaps to run a one horse law office; with a brother graduate, and thus passes through life with the United States Senate always just five years in the future! Honors are always crowding themselves thick upon him—in imagination, and of course he expects the coming historians to do him justice, and to place his name in capital letters; among the list of noble and self-sacrificing reformers that have gone before him and that unborn

millions will yet rise up and call him blessed! Happy fellow! he is to be envied; and has made a wise choice in turning from the ploughboy in disgust.

It is a notorious fact, that the Farmers form the great portion of the inhabitants of this country—that they form the bulwark and strength of the nation—that it is this class that feed the world and were it not for them, many of our codfish aristocrats, would go to bed supperless—that they are the backbone of society, and were they struck out of existence, the world would present a very different aspect than it does now. Notwithstanding this, farmers, in these latter days are scarcely ever taken from their "healthy" calling, to take a part in the affairs of their country.

Public opinion will allow them to dig and delve—to spend their lives beneath the scorching rays of a summer sun; but they must be debarred from all participation in the affairs of their country. Such is the prevailing custom. In these enlightened times, a farmer would be considered insane if he would have the audacity to ask to be sent to the State Legislature. Yes he would be looked upon as an idiot if he would ask for any thing higher than a town supervisorship. Now is this right? Because a man helps feed and clothe the world, should he be debarred from participating in all things that custom calls honorable? But such is the case, and it is folly to deny it.

Look at our Congress, and how many farmers will you find there? Look at our State Legislatures and tell me how many of the "useful" class you find there? How many of the "healthy" race have been appointed foreign ministers, or have held high offices? It is not because the farmers are ignorant and wholly unacquainted with our form of Government, for no class of men in this nation possesses more general intelligence than does this. Custom, to-day, reserves all places of honor and profit for those that have a profession. The more "elevated classes" furnish office seekers, and the farmers furnish voters. Now this is not right, and as one of the "useful" class, I protest against the prevailing custom; and now how shall public opinion be changed in order to have our farmers represented in our places of trust?—Like every thing else, the reform must begin with those that would be benefited by the change. "Hereditary bondmen" know ye not who would free, himself must strike the blow! Yes the change should begin with the "healthy" class, and they should make themselves "useful" in laboring for their own rights. I know full well, that the position I now occupy, is in opposition to long established usage, and no doubt will have a couple of tame elephants sent down upon me, by the man who put his hair in papers.—But I bide my time. FRANK.

For the Agitator.

Contentment.

BY MELANIE.

"We can't all have things alike. Nor you haven't got such a dress as this, but my mother could make me one, nor I can't have one like yours." So I heard a little girl of five years old say, a few days since, looking wishfully, meanwhile from her own homespun flannel to a muslin-de-laine, worn by the young lady she was addressing. I could see that she was trying hard to be contented, though she could appreciate very well the difference in the garments she was comparing. I thereupon fell to wondering if I tried as reasonably to be content with my condition to offset what I consider disadvantages, against what are as palpable advantages. I have not a palatial residence, like those I have lately seen in the city, but I dwell in a comfortable house, that answers all the purposes of my life equally well, and if I have not so fine a carriage as rich people ride in I have health to walk when I wish to go abroad, and to enjoy what blessings are bestowed upon me. And if I have not enjoyed all the advantages of school and education I have desired I am, in turn, free from some of the responsibility and care that attends those more highly favored ones. So I went on musing, till I wished some of my discontented friends could hear little Sarah put down the risings of discontent so nobly, and after resolving to take a lesson thereupon myself, thought I would try to tell it for the benefit of any who may be comparing themselves with those they think more highly favored.

For the Agitator.

The Importance of a well-spent Life.

A life well-spent is of rare occurrence; notwithstanding which, it is of the greatest importance. Every moment of time wasted in idle pursuits, will bring remorse and stand registered against us in the great Ledger, until the great day, unless the transgressor repents, and it is blotted out by the Atonement.

Alas! how the victim of dissipation and even the moral idler will tremble in view of their misspent past! Time well-spent, is a jewel of price, and the angel-watcher will not forget to record it. In the improvement of time we possess a conscience void of offence, and win the approbation of the wise and good; nor these alone; we shall have the approbation of the King of Kings and a welcome to the House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Life is but a passing moment—a smile, a tear, and all is over. Progress depends not upon the length of life, but upon how well we improve our time and talents. That prepares us for life, and therefore for death.

Chatham Valley. ANNA.

Dig your potatoes when the ground is dry, and be careful in handling them not to bruise them. When you hole them, be careful to cover well with straw.

A Tale.

Mr. Choate's miserable and nondescript manuscript has frequently furnished the basis of many a spirited bon mot, the best we ever saw having been penned by the late Major Noah. But the peculiar illegibility of Mr. C.'s hand writing will be seen by the following incident: On the occasion of the meeting it became necessary that the letter of declination should be publicly read, and the chairman was called upon to fulfil the office. Chairman accordingly rose and thrust his hand into his left pocket to find the letter. Letter wasn't there. Chairman tried the right; no go. Tried the coat tail pockets, no success. Letter turned up missing. Chairman stared at Secretary, and Secretary, in turn, scrutinized the countenance of the Vice President; no Choate manuscript could be found. The next step was for the person to whom it was addressed to go to his hotel, Col. Richard B. Jones's, in Dock-st., and hunt the letter. Col. Jones was as busy, when his guest entered, as a muskrat at high water engaged in giving a Dutch carpenter directions for making an ornamental cornice.

"What's the matter, sir?" he asked as the fat man rushed into the saloon, puffing like a porpoise; "what's your hurry?"

"Why, Colonel, I'm as mad as the devil; I've lost Rufus Choate's letter to the Democratic meeting, and they're waiting to hear it read."

"Ah, indeed! that's a pity," remarked the Colonel, with his usual sympathy.—"Where did you leave it last?"

"Well, the fact is, I don't know, but I'm pretty sure I left it in my room."

"Have you looked there?"

"Yes; but I can't find it."

"Why, that's very strange; nobody has entered your room since you left. Suppose you go up and take another look?"

The fat gentleman acquiesced, and they ascended the stairs together, when fat gent espied a paper lying on the floor, which he declared to be the missing document. This he seized, and hurried up to the State House, where the meeting was in session. He entered, and as the audience were on the climacteric of expectancy to know what Mr. Choate's sympathies were, fat gent's appearance red as a lobster in a new suit of vermilion, with a paper in his hand, produced a round of applause. Fat gentleman subsided into a chair, and wiped his face with a square yard of cambric, while Secretary arose, adjusted his spectacles and neck-tie, pulled up his shirt collar precisely three-quarters of an inch higher, and then unfolded the document. When he did so, he blushed scarlet, returned paper to fat gent, and sat down. Audience began to hiss, while fat gent soon saw that instead of the Choate letter, he had brought with him, by mistake, an architectural design. The house then went into an uproar. As it was too late to read the letter, while the Secretary stated the facts of the case, our fat friend returned to Col. Jones, to enlist his sympathies. While the Colonel was thus listening to his chubby friend's narrative comes a Dutch carpenter, with a planed board under his arm, sawed in angles innumerable. Dutchy looked irate, and as a matter of course, his employer wished to know why.

"Why, Chones, I must give up this chob, and has nothin' more to do mit it, dat ish all."

"Why not?" was the surprised rejoinder.

"Yes, why not?" added fat gent, quite interested in the man's manner.

"Well, because it takes too much stutf, and too much work; and I loosh money on it pesides."

"Why, you get all you ask, don't you?" inquired the Colonel.

"Yes; but you tell me the diagram was plain, and you send me on dat ish different every ten foot, and as hard to make as teryuelf."

"Why, that's odd," says the Col. "Let's look at it."

"Dere, by tonder!" said Dutchy, producing the paper and spreading it on the table. "Shoost dell me how you dinks I make dat for six tollars."

"Thunder and Mars!" exclaimed fat gentleman, "he's been making a cornice by that d—d Choate letter!"

Such was the case. The carpenter, a newly arrived Leipsiger, had by some mistake got hold of the fat gentleman's treasure, and supposing it to be the Colonel's draft of a "tam Yankee's cornice," had faithfully endeavored to saw out a pattern. It was a most unexampled case of perseverance under difficulties, as Col. Choate's manuscript looks very much like a Virginia worm fence must appear to a gentleman upon a hard spree.

DISQUALIFICATION OF UNIVERSALISTS.—The Supreme Court of North Carolina has confirmed the decision of Judge MANLY, that members of the Universalist Church are incompetent to testify in courts of justice, according to the laws of that State. This is certainly taking a huge leap backward. The Universalist is thus outlawed, as the Quakers and other dissenters were in England before the passage of the Toleration Act. For over two centuries British legislation tended to the advancement of religious freedom, the amelioration of the political situation of Protestant dissenters, the disavowal of all interference with the peculiar views and doctrines adopted by different divisions of Christians, and the recognition of a general profession of belief in the Holy Scriptures, as all that the State pretended to concern itself about, and in that country all legal interference with or cognizance of diversity of Christian opinion is abolished. Perhaps the action of the North Carolina Court will have the same effect that the atrocious attempts of Lord SIMONDS, to fetter the liberties of Protestant dissenters, had in the early part of this century, and bring about a Toleration Act.—*Phila. Sun.*

OLD TIMES.—By looking over a file of the *Elizabethtown Journal* for 1793, says a New Jersey exchange, we find that the people of that time were much more liberal towards "gentlemen of color," than they are at this day. That journal says that at the election for the Borough of Easton, Pa., in that year, "a colored man was elected to the responsible office of town clerk." The editor congratulates the people of Easton for their "liberality in paying no regard to the distinction of race or color, but judging of a man by his mental and moral qualities."

Reading is supplied better and cheaper by a newspaper than by any other means.