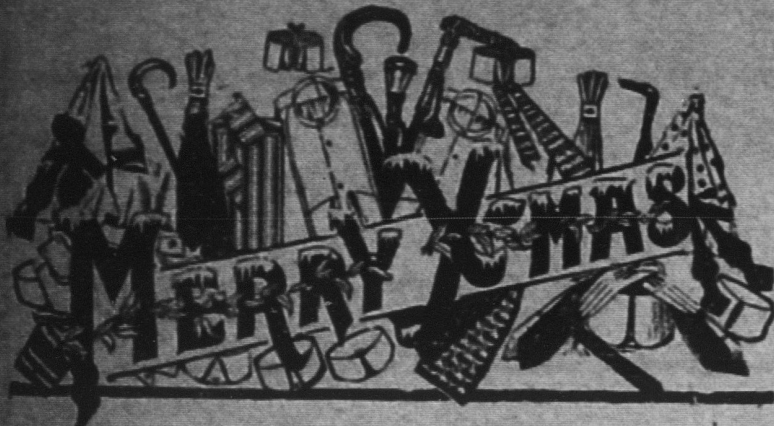


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Mr. Petgreave— Inventor

By CHARLES BATTALL LOOMIS
(Author of "Cheerful Americans," etc.)

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Mr. Petgreave was an inventor, but not of the Edison-Marconi-Tampson school. His inventions were never quite practical, and yet I doubt if any inventor ever experienced any more happiness than fell to the lot of Mr. Petgreave. He lived in and with his inventions, and when he had constructed a 21 day clock, whose winding took an hour and a half, he was superlatively joyful, and called in the neighbors to rejoice with him.

And, to their credit be it said, the neighbors did rejoice. Why, Mr. Elliphalet Farnham immediately ordered a similar clock and made his son custodian of it. He said it would be something in the nature of a disciplinary process for him to wind it. The boy hated the idea, after he had wound the clock once, and folks say he constructed a machine to do the winding in five minutes; but I don't like to believe it, for Mr. Petgreave had worked something like a year on the construction of his clock, and it showed a want of sympathy in a boy to try to improve on the invention of an old man.

Then there was the balloon that Mr. Petgreave invented for the purpose of making it easier for house painters to raise their ladders. It was about as big bodied as an elephant, and it cost something like \$50 to construct it. When the day for its exhibition came it was hitched by a hook to the top-most rung of the biggest ladder in town—one owned by the fire department, requiring two men to raise it ordinarily.

The balloon did all that was expected of it, and more. It took less than an hour to fill the big silk bag, and



THE VEHICLE MOVED.

after that, so well had Mr. Petgreave understood its capabilities, it did not take a minute for the ladder to begin to rise.

But Mr. Petgreave had been so intent on raising the ladder that he had not reflected on the balloon. He should have tied a rope to it in order to control it, but he had neglected to do so. So the balloon went on up with the ladder and stove a hole in the cupola of the town hall, and then sailed over toward East Dayton, and descended in Patterson's meadows, and they had to send the hook and ladder company after it in order to recover it.

Then there was his washing machine to save poor people from working too hard. He gave an exhibition of that in the town hall. Dayton people never derided Mr. Petgreave. He was a lovable, absent-minded old man, and I think he must have had a certain amount of magnetism about him, because whenever he announced in the Dayton Independent that he was going to give an exhibition of a new invention, he called out pretty much every man, woman and child in the three Daytons.

People knew that whatever might be lacking in his inventions, they would at least work. And so it was with his washing machine.

Mrs. Tom Beverly allowed him to wash the Beverly undergarments in his exhibition trial. The machine was constructed on much the same plan as the machines that have since come into general use, only it was much bigger. The cylinder was as big as a hoghead, and the motive power was Mr. Petgreave's old white mare, Nance.

There were ten in the Beverly family; two parents, and the rest children; and they had always found it hard to make both ends meet. It was really a kindly act in Mr. Petgreave to do their washing for them.

The clothes were put in, the soap and the boiling water were added, and then the lid was put on and Mr. Petgreave chirruped to his horse and he began to walk the length of the room; the rope to which he was hitched began to turn a windlass that was connected by what he called "multiple cogs" to the axle of the washing machine, and the cylinder revolved like lightning.

I remember that the exhibition was a complete success as far as the work was concerned. There were only two faults to be found with the machine; most poor people could not afford to buy a horse in order to run it—Mr. Petgreave admitted with a winning smile that he had not thought of that, owning a horse himself—and the clothes were reduced to fragments.

The Beverlys felt that they had contributed to the cause of science, and the Ladies' Aid society bought them new undergarments, and the old ones, perfectly clean, and consisting, when dried, of fragments not larger than a half dollar, were exhibited in the window of Barton & Hadley's drug store. They were white as snow—those that were not red, and there is no question but that they were absolutely clean.

It is my humble opinion that some one cribbed Mr. Petgreave's idea and modified it somewhat, for it was not a year after that before a clothes washer that did not need a horse to run it and that did not shred the clothes was on the New England market, and I understand that the inventor made a fortune out of it. But Mr. Petgreave did not care. He had enough to eat and enough to wear and all out doors to roam in when he was not working in his little shop; his head was in the clouds all the while.

At least five years before automobiles were an accepted fact it was rumored that Mr. Petgreave was at work in his brother's big barn on a wagon that would run over the roads without visible means of locomotion. At last Mr. Petgreave announced through the medium of the Dayton Independent that he would give an exhibition of his new "locomotorator" at the Oak Hill race track on Washington's birthday.

Pretty much everybody who was anybody and all who were nobodies went out to the race track the afternoon of the day appointed.

At last a great cheering announced the arrival of Mr. Petgreave and his locomotorator, which enormous and somewhat unwieldy vehicle was drawn to the track by two of his brother's farm horses. Mr. Petgreave had something of a sense of the dramatic fitness of things, and he did not wish to begin his exhibition too soon.

The old man had announced that the machine would go once around the track, so when he got opposite the judge's stand he unlatched the horses, which had been attached to the vehicle by means of a rope tightly bound around the body of it. The three selectmen, the pastor of the First church and old Dr. Wharton sat in the judge's stand. Dr. Wharton was an old sport and did not look out of place up there, but Rev. Mr. Melvil did. Perhaps that is why Mr. Petgreave with a smile invited him to come down and ride with him.

The pastor stepped into the "locomotorator," followed by the silver-haired inventor; the doctor gave the signal to start by firing off a pistol, and then, amid the silence of the assembled multitude, the machine—did not go.

There was not a person there who was not sorry for Mr. Petgreave at that moment.

But in about a minute the wish to see the locomotorator move was gratified. No smoke curled up from anywhere; no odor tagged behind; there was no whir of electricity. But the locomotorator began to move. There were internal noises, loud and heavy and possibly disconcerting to some of the women spectators, but the vehicle moved; and not only moved, but went at the rate of at least eight miles an hour.

Here at last was a complete triumph for the old man, said everyone to his neighbor. A fortune awaited him if the machinery did not prove to be too complicated. The vehicle was as big as a circus van, but that very fact made the triumph greater. If so big a thing could move so fast, a smaller one would go faster, unless the machinery were necessarily cumbersome. Everybody who was anybody, and all

the nobodies, cheered themselves hoarse, and Mr. Petgreave looked out of the coach window and smiled a happy smile that lasted all the way around the track.

The locomotorator returned to its place of departure, easily, swiftly and with no screw, nut or bolt loose. At that time automobiles were still largely things on paper, but here was an old man who had invented one! Dayton, all the Dayton, went wild. The inventor and the pastor stepped from the vehicle and were immediately surrounded by a howling crowd; men, women and children swarmed over the railing of the grand stand in order to inspect the machine at close range. The selectmen and the doctor came down the outside of the judge's stand in their eagerness to grasp the hand of the local great man. People shook hands with each other; men slapped women on the backs; small boys punched each other's heads and laughed over it, and Washington's birthday attained a new importance.

And then dear old Mr. Petgreave, his head more on one side than ever, his hair dancing on his coat collar, his eyes blazing with excitement, led the way to the locomotorator and said: "My friends, this is the happiest day of my life. There is no secret that I want to keep about the mechanism of this thing. It is perfectly simple. What I have made, others can make. The wonder is that no one ever thought of it before. I don't even mean to get out a patent. I give my invention to the American people!"

He stepped to the back of the vehicle and then he noticed for the first time that there was a big door in it. He put his hand into his pocket, drew out a key, unlocked the door and opened it. It was not steam; it was not gasoline; it was not electricity; it was not clock work that supplied the motive power.

It was a treadmill worked by Mr. Petgreave's old white mare, Nance.

Mother Earth Shaking Herself.

Mother Earth appears to be going through a series of lively tremors. The recent disastrous earthquakes in Italy have followed by a number of less serious perturbations, while Cuba, Jamaica and other places on this side of the hemisphere are having a lively shakeup. The connection which seems to exist between these manifestations at widely different points is a subject of great interest to students of seismology.

One Girl's Work.

Grace Wales, a 13-year-old farmer girl living near Sedgwick, is worth a trainload of butterflies that gad the street, flit and chirp gaily. This season she has cut 90 acres of grain, cultivated 20 acres of corn, ploughed 40 acres of wheat, harrowed 40 acres of ground and mowed 50 acres of hay.—Kansas City Journal.

Mine Under Ocean.

The Levant mine, situated near the Land's End, England, goes down vertically for 2,100 feet, and is worked laterally under the bed of the Atlantic, considerably over a mile from the foot of the cliffs. The mine gives employment to 515 men and 175 boys, and practically runs the village of St. Just.

The Russian Writer.

Mme. Maxime Gorky protests against the story so often told of her husband, that he was born in poverty and vagabondage. She insists that he was a son of well-to-do parents, and although he did not attend school, his grandfather, who was a painter, gave him lessons.

Arctic Post Office.

Served during the winter by dog teams a permanent post office has been established by the Canadian authorities at Fort McPherson, in the Arctic circle, 5,000 miles from Ottawa and 2,000 miles north of Edmonton, the capital of the new province of Alberta.

Iceland's Birth Customs.

In Iceland, that country of gentle and old-fashioned customs, it has always been the fashion to present to the baby when its first tooth appeared, a lamb, to be its very own, cared for and tended as no other pet could be, and never to be parted with.

Does Away with Soap.

Clothes-washing by electricity, without soap, is the idea of an Hungarian. The stream of electrified water is claimed to remove all pot and dirt, and the 300 garments held by the machine are washed in less than 15 minutes.

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Where Cats Are Eaten.
In northern Italy the cat is a favorite article of food, even though people are forbidden by law from partaking of the animal. Indeed, cats are fattened and grown for the market with great care and the Italians believe that they far surpass rabbits in every good quality. The method of cooking the animal is to roast it in an oven until brown, with onions, garlic, parsley, bay leaf, red wine and some fragrant herbs other than those mentioned.

Sex Against Sex.
He occupied the seat; she was swinging on a strap. She was trying to shame him into politeness; he wouldn't shame worth a cigarette. A lurch of the car threw her against him and in the scramble she landed on his feet with both heels.
"You're on my feet," he growled.
"If you had been on your feet it never would have happened," said she sweetly.—Detroit Free Press.

Misunderstanding.
"I beg your pardon, waiter," said the tourist in the railway restaurant. "Did you say that I had 20 minutes to wait or that it was 20 minutes to eight?"
"I said neither," answered the German attendant. "I said you had twenty minutes to eat, and that's all you had. Yer thrain's gone now!"—Cleveland Leader.

Expensive.
De Style—What is your son's college cry?
Gumbusta—For money, generally.—N. Y. Times.

Lumber in the South.
The cost of getting soft lumber has not increased in Mississippi, but the demand has to such an extent that the prices have been lifted a dollar a thousand feet. Since the forests of the northwest are very nearly depleted, supplies at stiffening prices must be drawn more and more from the southwest, which has all that will be wanted for many years and can keep up the supply by avoiding the mistake of cutting the timber recklessly. There is unlimited wealth in the forests and it can be made to last indefinitely by proper forestry.

The Business View.
"What do you think of our scenery?" asked the enthusiastic native.
"Well," replied the practical business man, "I don't know. What do you expect to do with it?"—Chicago Record-Herald.

Charitable.
First Parrot—I wish that canary over there would stop screeching!
Second Parrot—Oh, well, it's got to do something! Poor thing, it can't swear!—Detroit Free Press.

To Fit the Crime.
Woody Ritter—I've always thought it would be fine to be a poet.
Editor—It certainly should be fine, or imprisonment or both.—Philadelphia Press.

The Brute.
Mrs. Henpeck—Before I married you, you said you would die for me.
Mr. Henpeck—Yes, and now I wish I had.—N. Y. Times

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