

ALLOWING TO THE SOIL.

JOHN MOSSBACK, OF WAYBACK, TELLS SOME TALL STORIES.

Dear Leg: Grow into a Frame House in One Night and Everything Else Kept From A Fleck of Sheep Grow So Mysteriously That John Had to Leave.

"Why, hello, John," said a man who seemed to be passing along the road to John Mossback, of Wayback, whom he met, "how come you in this section of the country? The last I heard you was in Arcostock county, Me., and here I find you way down here; what caused you to leave that place? I hear that it is the garden of Maine."

"Well, you see, mister, that it got too healthy for me up there, and I had to leave."

"Too healthy! How do you make that out? I did not suppose that you could find a place that was too healthy to live in."

"Well, yer see, mister, 'at it is this way, although I don't hardly like ter tell yer for fear 'at yer will think 'at I'm a liar, but I'll risk it anyway, and tell yer a few facts, and then yer'll discover wot I mean by bein' too healthy."

NOT BUILT WITH HANDS.

"Wen I fust went up there I tuck up a farm on wot I supposed was about th' richest soil in the county, and I found arter a while that my judgment was not far out o' th' way. Th' fust day 'at I got there I looked around and selected th' spot where I was goin' to build my house, and as I couldn't find any stones for underpinin' I thought 'at I would build my house, which was a log one, on th' ground, hoping that it would stand until I could build a better one. It was pretty late when I got at work, and I only got the four bottom logs together when I had ter quit, an' I had ter go about a mile ter th' house where I was boardin' until I could get my house ready ter move into. Th' nex' mornin' I started ter go ter my work, an' wot was my surprise ter find th' four logs 'at I had laid for th' foundation for my house had taken root an' grown into a two story frame house, with all and out-buildings attached, all shingled and clapboarded and ready to move into. I mentioned the fact ter my host, an' he said that was nothin'; 'at th' soil allers did that when it was fust broke, but that I'd get used ter it arter a while."

"I sent for my family the next day, which consisted of my wife an' a 10-year-old boy, an' in about two weeks they come up there, an' all went well until I set my boy ter harrowin'; he bein kind o' lazy, lay down and went to sleep on th' fresh ground. In about two hours he come up ter th' house an' we didn't know him. Grown? Well, I guess so. Wen he went away he was about the size o' any 10-year-old boy, and wen he come back he was plump six foot tall and weighed 225 pounds."

"Wen it come time ter shoot deer my hired man started out ter see if he couldn't get one. Well, sir, he started a drove and drew 'em out inter one o' my fields and shot three of 'em, an' every one of 'em fell on a piece of broke up 'at we had plowed that week, an' as he couldn't get 'em ter the house alone he came for help, an' my son and I together with a warden who had just got therer. My house started back ter get them, an' sir, you may believe it or not, but wen we got there we found that them three deer had grown into three moose, an' it cost that man \$100 a piece for the two moose which he had, more'n the law allowed him."

GROWTH OF RAILROADS AND MORTGAGES. "Are they goin' to build that railroad, did you say? No, I don't think they will, for jest as soon as the sleepers strike the site the blamed things would grow until the whole country would be covered with railroads. I member one of my neighbors held a mortgage on one of the farms 'an' he happened, to lose it, and didn't find it for two days, an' when he did find it it had grown until it had a mortgage of a whole town, an' they sent him down the river, even it was all the falt o'."

ostock county is a nice all yer have ter do is and they will grow Why I have known a cent and clear often-potatoes, one potato to a small one of the debts profits. I lin' ma- crown a year, crown a year, ter pay I'll tell you out one they had morn'n I and one o'

my neighbors had lost his whole stock, which, strange to say, had drowned, as he never found 'em, but he said that I got 'em, and he made it so uncomfortable for me that I had ter leave. Well, good day, mister, I've got ter leave, as I got ter strike the next town afore night, as my time for leaving the state expires then."—Bangor News.

An Impressive Society Initiation.

In one of the secret societies at college the victim is led into the hall blindfolded. The room is perfectly dark, so that he could not see anything if the bandages were removed. He is then taken by two strong men, put into a regulation graveyard coffin, with holes bored in the lid so that he will not suffocate, and the cover is screwed down tight. The building has a shaft to the cellar, and the coffin, with the victim in it, is slowly lowered. It is a truly horrible experience, and several young men with shaky nerves have fainted during the ceremony. In the cellar, which is fitted up with all sorts of ghostly appliances, the coffin is put on an altar of logs, such as is supposed to have been built in olden times for Isaac's benefit. The cover is removed and the bandage loosened, so that it can be easily removed. There is a horrible groaning and clanking of chains, and suddenly the altar, which has been saturated with harmless chemicals, blazes up, and the bandage is removed from the seophyte's eyes.

As he raises himself up in the coffin—provided he has nerve enough left—he sees about the room two or three skeletons, which have been rubbed with phosphorus and glow vividly in the darkness. They are rigged with pulleys and ropes, and slowly they raise their bony fingers and point them at him, while a supernatural voice bids him get out of the coffin. With a show of courage, not at all warranted by his feelings, he obeys. A single taper is lighted, and he sees in the dim ray several masked figures in white robes standing about him. The cold, clammy body of a dead snake is then put in his hand, and he is made to swear upon it that he will keep the secrets of the order to his dying day, and defend them with his life if necessary.

A Joke Misunderstood.

The cynical humor and eccentric sayings of Beau Brummel were not always received by the auditors in the manner which their originator anticipated or desired. At one time Brummel was a member of Watier's club, in London, which was then the most noted gambling house in the metropolis. Among his fellow members was a man named Bligh, whose eccentricity amounted at times to mild insanity. One evening the Beau, having lost a considerable stake, affected in his farcical way a very tragic and suicidal air, and cried out, "Waiter, bring me a candlestick and a loaded pistol!"

Upon which Bligh, who was sitting opposite to him, calmly produced two pistols from his pocket, and placing them upon the table said, "Mr. Brummel, if you are really desirous to put a period to your existence I am extremely happy to offer you the means without troubling the waiter." The effect upon those present may be easily imagined, for it was apparent to all that the good natured offer was sincerely meant. A few judicious words from the Beau, now all seriousness, induced the other to re-pocket the weapons, but the incident somewhat dampened the spirits of the card party, which quickly broke up and separated.—New York World.

Medical Prevarication.

"You can't imagine what a prevaricator I have become since I have been in the hospital," said a pretty girl, a nurse at one of the local hospitals. "The doctors tell me I must deceive the patients sometimes, and I have to obey their orders whether I want to or not. But my conscience doesn't hurt me especially. I am asked many times a day by sick people here questions that I must not answer truthfully. For instance, one will inquire: 'How do I look?' 'Is my face much wasted?' 'Am I very feverish?' 'Am I very sick?' Of course I have to say all I can to encourage the patient, telling him sometimes that he is doing very well or looks much improved when he is in fact very near death. I think the recording angel will blot out with a tear these marks against me."—Exchange.

A Count with a Mighty Arm.

There are stories of strong men who did not appear in public. A butcher lived in South Holland who killed calves by strangling them. A Dutch count, in a private entertainment, bent an iron bar by beating it with his right hand against his left arm, protected by a leather bandage, bending it afterward straight again by beating it the other way.—Chambers Journal.

School Days.

Visitor—Do you like going to school, my little man? Little Man—Yes'm, I like goin', but I don't like stayin'.—Good News.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE PLATYPUS.

A Wonderful Mammal Which Cost the British Association Over \$10,000.

The platypus, a small molelike beast of Australia, has been voted the palm for being the most extraordinary mammal in the known world. For the last twenty years its skin has been highly prized as an article of commerce, yet during all of that time scientists have been trying to settle the question whether it is born alive or hatched from an egg. During the summer of 1885, a cablegram was sent from Sydney, Australia, to London, by Professor Liveridge to the effect that Mr. W. H. Caldwell, who holds the Balfour traveling fellowship of Cambridge, had at last settled the matter. Mr. Caldwell was sent out to Australia by the British association for the express purpose of studying the life history of this wonderful creature, a mission which was finally rewarded in the year above mentioned by the discovery of the eggs and nest of this living contradiction of nature.

Gerard Krefft, a gentleman sent out by the British scientific societies about 1880, offered as high as \$500 for an egg of the platypus without being able to obtain one. Still the Bushmen of the region inhabited by the creature positively declared that the animal did lay eggs, even if they had failed to produce one at the request of the scientists, stimulated by the promise of \$1,000 if they would produce a pair of freshly hatched young. During Krefft's tour of investigation numbers of platypus were caught, many in the pairing season, and dissected, yet no traces of eggs were found. Whereupon scientists were inclined to believe that the creatures had been misrepresented when spoken of in connection with the eggs, and that they were really viviparous.

The body of the platypus resembles the mole, and is covered with a close, short, grayish brown fur. Like the beaver, its tail is broad and flattened. A horny extension of the jaws forms a beak like that of a duck, their margins being sheathed with horn and supplied with transverse horny plates, two in each jaw, but these are not true teeth. The toes are united by a membrane or web, so that the animal is enabled to swim with great ease. It inhabits small streams and ponds, living principally, if not wholly, on insects. When the young are hatched they are blind and quite naked. The method by which they obtain milk from the mother is still obscure, as the creature has no nipples, only a flat surface; nor is there any marsupial pouch. The beak of the young is wholly unlike that of an adult.

It cost the British association over \$10,000 to ascertain the above facts. First, the instruments and apparatus with which Mr. Caldwell was fitted out cost £1,000. Besides that, he spent over fourteen months in Australia before he was able to take the coveted peep at the rare creature's eggs.—St. Louis Republic.

No Demand for Old Clocks.

There is no longer the demand for what used to be called "grandfather's clocks" that there was three or four years ago, but when a genuine old one can be secured there are always a score of buyers ready to pay a fair price for it. The clock of this type stands on the floor, as the song says, and although it may not go ninety years without blundering it will keep good time, and its works are apparently indestructible. As there are factories which turn out "old" china to order, so there are places where "eighteenth century clocks" are manufactured.

There is no great difficulty about the works and weights, except that it takes a long time to make them, but the cases used to puzzle the smartest of them. Now, however, there are places up in Michigan where wood is so prepared as to look as though it might have been cut out of the same blocks Noah used when constructing the ark. The fraud is a very innocent one, as the imitation is probably an improvement on the original. But the connoisseur only buys a really second hand one, and he can see by the wear of the works how old it is.—Interview in St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Cheap Lagging for Steam Pipes.

According to the Revue Industrielle some of the waste products resulting from the manufacture of paper furnish excellent material for cheap and efficient lagging for steam pipes. The waste products in question are chiefly those coming from the different cleaning and sorting machines which are of a fibrous nature. These, when dry, are mixed with potter's earth in the proportion of four to one, enough water being afterward added to form a plastic compound. This is spread by hand over the surfaces to be protected in thin successive layers. When dry the coating is said to adhere firmly, and is not easily broken. Its cost is practically no more than the cost of mixing and applying.

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A MOTHER'S LOOK.

The Touching Incident in the Life of a Jesuit Father.

"I have known a student, whose desolate and wicked life had caused him to be cast into chains and locked up in the Ehrenbretstein. His father was long since dead. His mother, therefore, had to bear alone the grief caused by her degenerate child. It is difficult to express how keenly it gnawed on the mother's heart; in the soul of the criminal, however, it was and remained as dark as in the prison where he was chained; not the least sign of repentance.

"Seeing the hour of dissolution approach, the mother sent a petition to the commander of the fortress to bring her child once more before her dying bed. He granted her request. The next day the son appeared, escorted by armed soldiers, at the bed of his mother. But she, pale and consumed with grief, spoke no word—no, not a word, but long and piercingly she looked at him, and having penetrated him long and deeply, she turned her face to the wall and gave the signal to lead away the son.

"As he came, so he went—cold and sulky, like as if there was in him an incarnate obstinacy. But in the prison it came upon him. The look of his haggard, dying mother, thin and wasted, and with this look everything—reproach, punishment, abomination, entreaty, mother's anxiety, mother's love! Had she spoken to him a whole month long, unceasingly, she could not have spoken so earnestly and thrillingly to his heart as she did with her dumb look from her death-bed. What a storm of emotion agitated the soul of the wretched youth! As never before he was moved, and broke forth in such vehement ejaculations, that one would think his heart must break.

"We need not be astonished that, all at once, he struck his brow, burst into tears, and loudly exclaimed: 'O, God! to what have I come!' He stopped not with this cognition—no; he was converted sincerely; he even entered a monastery and became a Jesuit and a missionary, and now you see him—the young criminal—here, standing before you in the pulpit!" It was Father Hasslacher himself, the celebrated German Jesuit, who died in 1876.

MILLET'S "ANGELUS."

Final Chapter in the Romance of the Famous Picture.

The final chapter in the romance of Millet's famous picture, the "Angelus," has been written. The great work is now safely treasured in the private gallery of McCauley in Paris, where it will surely remain so long as that gentleman lives at least. The history of the picture has been eventful.

It was sold by the painter for about \$850. Later it changed hands for nearly double that sum. Then it was sold for \$1,500. The next sale brought \$75,000. The American Art Association purchased it for \$110,000. Its present owner paid \$160,000.

The theme of the composition is a very simple one, but full of power and expression. Two peasants—a man and a woman—are at work in the fields when they hear the "Angelus." They cease work, and rising, stand in devout attitude by the implements of their labor, their heads bent in reverent devotion, and the man holding his peasant's cap in his hand as he recites aloud: "Angelus Domini Nunciavit Maria."

COLUMBUS'S BEATIFICATION.

The Church Does Not Regulate Her Rites on Centenary Anniversaries.

The Rome correspondent of the New York "Catholic News" says it is untrue that the cause of the beatification of Christopher Columbus is to be taken up for examination by the Sacred Congregation of Rites this month, and that his beatification will take place in 1892. The Catholic Church does not regulate her rites on centenary anniversaries. However, the Pope is to address a letter to the episcopates of America, Spain and Italy in relation to the celebration. This pontifical document will not appear before the end of autumn, though the Pope has already spoken on the subject with several prelates. If this year the Sacred Congregation of Rites received the ordinary process of the local curia, where rest the ashes of Columbus, and a considerable number of letters requesting the beatification. It might be possible, thanks to a special Papal permission to obtain for 1892 the discussion as to the introduction of the cause in ordinary congregational season, though it would be wholly out of the usual routine of that Sacred Congregation, and therefore scarcely probable.

Miss Catherine M. Drexel, daughter of the late F. A. Drexel, who has been at the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburg for about a year and a half, made her profession on the 12th inst. at the house of the Order in Pittsburg.

Shorthand I

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