MARSHALL PINCKNEY WILDER

THE WIT AND HUMOR OF AMERICA, VOLUME V

Marshall Pinckney Wilder

The Wit and Humor of America, Volume V

Wilder M.

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Содержание

Various
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THE MARRIAGE OF SIR JOHN SMITH

By Phœbe Cary

Not a sigh was heard, nor a funeral tone,
As the man to his bridal we hurried;
Not a woman discharged her farewell groan,
On the spot where the fellow was married.

We married him just about eight at night,
Our faces paler turning,
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the gas-lamp's steady burning.

No useless watch-chain covered his vest,
Nor over-dressed we found him;
But he looked like a gentleman wearing his best,
With a few of his friends around him.

Few and short were the things we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow,
But we silently gazed on the man that was wed,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we silently stood about,
With spite and anger dying,
How the merest stranger had cut us out,
With only half our trying.

Lightly we'll talk of the fellow that's gone,
And oft for the past upbraid him;
But little he'll reck if we let him live on,
In the house where his wife conveyed him.

But our hearty task at length was done,
When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
And we heard the spiteful squib and pun
The girls were sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we turned to go,—

We had struggled, and we were human;
We shed not a tear, and we spoke not our woe,
But we left him alone with his woman.

THE SPRING BEAUTIES

By Helen Avery Cone

The Puritan Spring Beauties stood freshly clad for church;
A thrush, white-breasted, o'er them sat singing on his perch.
"Happy be! for fair are ye!" the gentle singer told them;
But presently a buff-coat Bee came booming up to scold them.
"Vanity, oh, vanity!
Young maids, beware of vanity!"
Grumbled out the buff-coat Bee,
Half parson-like, half soldierly.

The sweet-faced maidens trembled, with pretty, pinky blushes,
Convinced that it was wicked to listen to the thrushes;
And when that shady afternoon, I chanced that way to pass,
They hung their little bonnets down and looked into the grass.
All because the buff-coat Bee
Lectured them so solemnly—
"Vanity, oh, vanity!
Young maids, beware of vanity!"

GOING UP AND COMING DOWN

By Mary F. Tucker

This is a simple song, 'tis true—
My songs are never over-nice,—
And yet I'll try and scatter through
A little pinch of good advice.
Then listen, pompous friend, and learn
To never boast of much renown,
For fortune's wheel is on the turn,
And some go up and some come down.

I know a vast amount of stocks,
A vast amount of pride insures;
But Fate has picked so many locks
I wouldn't like to warrant yours.
Remember, then, and never spurn
The one whose hand is hard and brown,
For he is likely to go up,
And you are likely to come down.

Another thing you will agree,
(The truth may be as well confessed)
That "Codfish Aristocracy"
Is but a scaly thing at best.
And Madame in her robe of lace,
And Bridget in her faded gown,
Both represent a goodly race,
From father Adam handed down.

Life is uncertain—full of change;
Little we have that will endure;
And 't were a doctrine new and strange
That places high are most secure;
And if the fickle goddess smile,
Yielding the scepter and the crown,
'Tis only for a little while,
Then B. goes up and A. comes down.

This world, for all of us, my friend
Hath something more than pounds and pence;
Then let me humbly recommend,
A little use of common sense.
Thus lay all pride of place aside,

And have a care on whom you frown;
For fear you'll see him going up,
When you are only coming down.

THE SET OF CHINA

By Eliza Leslie

"Mr. Gummage," said Mrs. Atmore, as she entered a certain drawing-school, at that time the most fashionable in Philadelphia, "I have brought you a new pupil, my daughter, Miss Marianne Atmore. Have you a vacancy?"

"Why, I can't say that I have," replied Mr. Gummage; "I never have vacancies."

"I am very sorry to hear it," said Mrs. Atmore; and Miss Marianne, a tall, handsome girl of fifteen, looked disappointed.

"But perhaps I could strain a point, and find a place for her," resumed Mr. Gummage, who knew very well that he never had the smallest idea of limiting the number of his pupils, and that if twenty more were to apply, he would take them every one, however full his school might be.

"Do pray, Mr. Gummage," said Mrs. Atmore; "do try and make an exertion to admit my daughter; I shall regard it as a particular favor."

"Well, I believe she may come," replied Gummage: "I suppose I can take her. Has she any turn for drawing?"

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Atmore, "she has never tried."

"Well, madam," said Mr. Gummage, "what do you wish your daughter to learn? figures, flowers, or landscape?"

"Oh! all three," replied Mrs. Atmore. "We have been furnishing our new house, and I told Mr. Atmore that he need not get any pictures for the front parlor, as I would much prefer having them all painted by Marianne. She has been four quarters with Miss Julia, and has worked Friendship and Innocence, which cost, altogether, upwards of a hundred dollars. Do you know the piece, Mr. Gummage? There is a tomb with a weeping willow, and two ladies with long hair, one dressed in pink, the other in blue, holding a wreath between them over the top of the urn. The ladies are Friendship. Then on the right hand of the piece is a cottage, and an oak, and a little girl dressed in yellow, sitting on a green bank, and putting a wreath round the neck of a lamb. Nothing can be more natural than the lamb's wool. It is done entirely in French knots. The child and the lamb are Innocence."

"Ay, ay," said Gummage, "I know the piece well enough—I've drawn them by dozens."

"Well," continued Mrs. Atmore, "this satin piece hangs over the front parlor mantel. It is much prettier and better done than the one Miss Longstitch worked of Charlotte at the tomb of Werter, though she did sew silver spangles all over Charlotte's lilac gown, and used chenille, at a fi'-penny-bit a needleful, for all the banks and the large tree. Now, as the mantel-piece is provided for, I wish a landscape for each of the recesses, and a figure-piece to hang on each side of the large looking-glass, with flower-pieces under them, all by Marianne. Can she do all these in one quarter?"

"No, that she can't," replied Gummage; "it will take her two quarters hard work, and maybe three, to get through the whole of them."

"Well, I won't stand about a quarter more or less," said Mrs. Atmore; "but what I wish Marianne to do most particularly, and, indeed, the chief reason why I send her to drawing-school just now, is a pattern for a set of china that we are going to have made in Canton. I was told the other day by a New York lady (who was quite tired of the queer unmeaning things which are generally put on India ware), that she had sent a pattern for a tea-set, drawn by her daughter, and that every article came out with the identical device beautifully done on the china, all in the proper colors. She said it was talked of all over New York, and that people who had never been at the house before, came to look at and admire it. No doubt it was a great feather in her daughter's cap."

"Possibly, madam," said Gummage.

"And now," resumed Mrs. Atmore, "since I heard this, I have thought of nothing else than having the same thing done in my family; only I shall send for a dinner set, and a very long one, too. Mr. Atmore tells me that the *Voltaire*, one of Stephen Girard's ships, sails for Canton early next month, and he is well acquainted with the captain, who will attend to the order for the china. I suppose in the course of a fortnight Marianne will have learned drawing enough to enable her to do the pattern?"

"Oh! yes, madam—quite enough," replied Gummage, suppressing a laugh.

"To cut the matter short," said Mr. Gummage, "the best thing for the china is a flower-piece—a basket, or a wreath—or something of that sort. You can have a good cipher in the center, and the colors may be as bright as you please. India ware is generally painted with one color only; but the Chinese are submissive animals, and will do just as they are bid. It may cost something more to have a variety of colors, but I suppose you will not mind that."

"Oh! no—no," exclaimed Mrs. Atmore, "I shall not care for the price; I have set my mind on having this china the wonder of all Philadelphia."

Our readers will understand, that at this period nearly all the porcelain used in America was of Chinese manufacture; very little of that elegant article having been, as yet, imported from France.

A wreath was selected from the portfolio that contained the engravings and drawings of flowers. It was decided that Marianne should first execute it the full size of the model (which was as large as nature), that she might immediately have a piece to frame; and that she was afterwards to make a smaller copy of it, as a border for all the articles of the china set; the middle to be ornamented with the letter A, in gold, surrounded by the rays of a golden star. Sprigs and tendrils of the flowers were to branch down from the border, so as nearly to reach the gilding in the middle. The large wreath that was intended to frame was to bear in its center the initials of Marianne Atmore, being the letters M.A. painted in shell gold.

"And so," said Mr. Gummage, "having a piece to frame, and a pattern for your china, you'll kill two birds with one stone."

On the following Monday, the young lady came to take her first lesson, followed by a mulatto boy, carrying a little black morocco trunk, that contained a four-row box of Reeves's colors, with an assortment of camel's-hair pencils, half a dozen white saucers, a water cup, a lead-pencil and a piece of India rubber. Mr. Gummage immediately supplied her with two bristle brushes, and sundry little shallow earthen cups, each containing a modicum of some sort of body color, massicot, flake-white, etc., prepared by himself and charged at a quarter of a dollar apiece, and which he told her she would want when she came to do landscapes and figures.

Mr. Gummage's style was to put in the sky, water and distances with opaque paints, and the most prominent objects with transparent colors. This was probably the reason that his foregrounds seemed always to be sunk in his backgrounds. The model was scarcely considered as a guide, for he continually told his pupils that they must try to excel it; and he helped them to do so by making all his skies deep red fire at the bottom, and dark blue smoke at the top; and exactly reversing the colors on the water, by putting red at the top and the blue at the bottom. The distant mountains were lilac and white, and the near rocks buff color, shaded with purple. The castles and abbeys were usually gamboge. The trees were dabbed and dotted in with a large bristle brush, so that the foliage looked like a green frog. The foam of the cascades resembled a concourse of wigs, scuffling together and knocking the powder out of each other, the spray being always fizzed on with one of the aforesaid bristle brushes. All the dark shadows in every part of the picture were done with a mixture of Persian blue and bistre, and of these two colors there was consequently a vast consumption in Mr. Gummage's school. At the period of our story, many of the best houses in Philadelphia were decorated with these landscapes. But for the honor of my townspeople I must say that the taste for such productions is now entirely obsolete. We may look forward to the time, which we trust is not far distant, when the elements of drawing will be taught in every school, and considered as indispensable to education as a

knowledge of writing. It has long been our belief that *any* child may, with proper instruction, be made to draw, as easily as any child may be made to write. We are rejoiced to find that so distinguished an artist as Rembrandt Peale has avowed the same opinion, in giving to the world his invaluable little work on Graphics: in which he has clearly demonstrated the affinity between drawing and writing, and admirably exemplified the leading principles of both.

Marianne's first attempt at the great wreath was awkward enough. After she had spent five or six afternoons at the outline, and made it triangular rather than circular, and found it impossible to get in the sweet-pea, and the convolvulus, and lost and bewildered herself among the multitude of leaves that formed the cup of the rose, Mr. Gummage snatched the pencil from her hand, rubbed out the whole, and then drew it himself. It must be confessed that his forte lay in flowers, and he was extremely clever at them, "but," as he expressed it, "his scholars chiefly ran upon landscapes."

After he had sketched the wreath, he directed Marianne to rub the colors for her flowers, while he put in Miss Smithson's rocks.

When Marianne had covered all her saucers with colors, and wasted ten times as much as was necessary, she was eager to commence painting, as she called it; and in trying to wash the rose with lake, she daubed it on of crimson thickness. When Mr. Gummage saw it, he gave her a severe reprimand for meddling with her own piece. It was with great difficulty that the superabundant color was removed; and he charged her to let the flowers alone till he was ready to wash them for her. He worked a little at the piece every day, forbidding Marianne to touch it; and she remained idle while he was putting in skies, mountains, etc., for the other young ladies.

At length the wreath was finished—Mr. Gummage having only sketched it, and washed it, and given it the last touches. It was put into a splendid frame, and shown as Miss Marianne Atmore's first attempt at painting: and everybody exclaimed, "What an excellent teacher Mr. Gummage must be! How fast he brings on his pupils!"

In the meantime, she undertook at home to make the small copy that was to go to China. But she was now "at a dead lock," and found it utterly impossible to advance a step without Mr. Gummage. It was then thought best that she should do it at school—meaning that Mr. Gummage should do it for her, while she looked out the window.

The whole was at last satisfactorily accomplished, even to the gilt star, with the A in the center. It was taken home and compared with the larger wreath, and found still prettier, and shone as Marianne's to the envy of all mothers whose daughters could not furnish models for china. It was finally given in charge to the captain of the *Voltaire*, with injunctions to order a dinner-set exactly according to the pattern, and to prevent the possibility of a mistake, a written direction accompanied it.

The ship sailed—and Marianne continued three quarters at Mr. Gummage's school, where she nominally affected another flower-piece, and also perpetrated Kemble in Rolla, Edwin and Angelina, the Falls of Schuylkill, and the Falls of Niagara, all of which were duly framed, and hung in their appointed places.

During the year that followed the departure of the ship *Voltaire* great impatience for her return was manifested by the ladies of the Atmore family,—anxious to see how the china would look, and frequently hoping that the colors would be bright enough, and none of the flowers omitted—that the gilding would be rich, and everything inserted in its proper place, exactly according to the pattern. Mrs. Atmore's only regret was, that she had not sent for a tea-set also; not that she was in want of one, but then it would be so much better to have a dinner-set and a tea-set precisely alike, and Marianne's beautiful wreath on all.

"Why, my dear," said Mr. Atmore, "how often have I heard you say that you would never have another *tea*-set from Canton, because the Chinese persist in making the principal articles of such old-fashioned, awkward shapes. For my part, I always disliked the tall coffee-pots, with their straight spouts, looking like light-houses with bowsprits to them; and the short, clumsy teapots, with their twisted handles, and lids that always fall off."

"To be sure," said Mrs. Atmore, "I have been looking forward to the time when we can get a French tea-set upon tolerable terms. But in the meanwhile I should be very glad to have cups and saucers with Marianne's beautiful wreath, and of course when we use them on the table we should always bring forward our silver pots."

Spring returned, and there was much watching of the vanes, and great joy when they pointed easterly, and the ship-news now became the most interesting column of the papers. A vessel that had sailed from New York to Canton on the same day the *Voltaire* departed from Philadelphia had already got in; therefore, the *Voltaire* might be hourly expected. At length she was reported below; and at this period the river Delaware suffered much, in comparison with the river Hudson, owing to the tediousness of its navigation from the capes to the city.

At last the *Voltaire* cast anchor at the foot of Market Street, and our ladies could scarcely refrain from walking down to the wharf to see the ship that held the box that held the china. But invitations were immediately sent out for a long projected dinner-party, which Mrs. Atmore had persuaded her husband to defer till they could exhibit the beautiful new porcelain.

The box was landed, and conveyed to the house. The whole family were present at the opening, which was performed in the dining-room by Mr. Atmore himself—all the servants peeping in at the door. As soon as a part of the lid was split off, and a handful of the straw removed, a pile of plates appeared, all separately wrapped in India paper. Each of the family snatched up a plate and hastily tore off the covering. There were the flowers glowing in beautiful colors, and the gold star and the gold A, admirably executed. But under the gold star, on every plate, dish and tureen were the words, "This in the Middle!"—being the direction which the literal and exact Chinese had minutely copied from a crooked line that Mr. Atmore had hastily scrawled on the pattern with a very bad pen, and of course without the slightest fear of its being inserted *verbatim* beneath the central ornament.

Mr. Atmore laughed—Mrs. Atmore cried—the servants giggled aloud—and Marianne cried first, and laughed afterwards.

SUPPRESSED CHAPTERS [1]

By Carolyn Wells

Zenobia, they tell us, was a leader born and bred;
Of any sort of enterprise she'd fitly take the head.
The biggest, burliest buccaneers bowed down to her in awe;
To Warriors, Emperors or Kings, Zenobia's word was law.

Above her troop of Amazons her helmet plume would toss,
And every one, with loud accord, proclaimed Zenobia's boss.
The reason of her power (though the part she didn't look),
Was simply that Zenobia had once lived out as cook.

Xantippe was a Grecian Dame—they say she was the wife
Of Socrates, and history shows she led him a life!
They say she was a virago, a vixen and a shrew,
Who scolded poor old Socrates until the air was blue.

She never stopped from morn till night the clacking of her tongue,
But this is thus accounted for: You see, when she was young—
(And 'tis an explanation that explains, as you must own),
Xantippe was the Central of the Grecian telephone.

[1] By permission of Life Publishing Company.

OLD GRIMES

By Albert Gorton Greene

Old Grimes is dead, that good old man
We never shall see more:
He used to wear a long black coat
All button'd down before.

His heart was open as the day,
His feelings all were true;
His hair was some inclined to gray—
He wore it in a queue.

Whene'er he heard the voice of pain,
His breast with pity burn'd;
The large, round head upon his cane
From ivory was turn'd.

Kind words he ever had for all;
He knew no base design:
His eyes were dark and rather small,
His nose was aquiline.

He lived at peace with all mankind,
In friendship he was true;
His coat had pocket-holes behind,
His pantaloons were blue.

Unharm'd, the sin which earth pollutes
He pass'd securely o'er,
And never wore a pair of boots
For thirty years or more.

But good old Grimes is now at rest,
Nor fears misfortune's frown:
He wore a double-breasted vest—
The stripes ran up and down.

He modest merit sought to find,
And pay it its desert:
He had no malice in his mind,
No ruffles on his shirt.

His neighbors he did not abuse—

Was sociable and gay:
He wore large buckles on his shoes,
And changed them every day.

His knowledge hid from public gaze,
He did not bring to view,
Nor made a noise town-meeting days,
As many people do.

His worldly goods he never threw
In trust to fortune's chances,
But lived (as all his brothers do)
In easy circumstances.

Thus undisturb'd by anxious cares,
His peaceful moments ran;
And everybody said he was
A fine old gentleman.

MISS LEGION

By Bert Leston Taylor

She is hotfoot after Cultyure;
She pursues it with a club.
She breathes a heavy atmosphere
Of literary flub.
No literary shrine so far
But she is there to kneel;
And—
Her favorite bunch of reading
Is O. Meredith's "Lucile."

Of course she's up on pictures—
Passes for a connoisseur;
On free days at the Institute
You'll always notice her.
She qualifies approval
Of a Titian or Corot,
But—
She throws a fit of rapture
When she comes to Bouguereau.

And when you talk of music,
Why, she's Music's devotee.
She will tell you that Beethoven
Always makes her wish to pray,
And "dear old Bach!" his very name,
She says, her ear enchants;
But—
Her favorite piece is Weber's
"Invitation to the Dance."

HAVE YOU SEEN THE LADY?

By John Philip Sousa

"Have I told you the name of a lady?
Have I told you the name of a dear?
'Twas known long ago,
And ends with an O;
You don't hear it often round here.

Have I talked of the eyes of a lady?
Have I talked of the eyes that are bright?
Their color, you see,
Is B-L-U-E;
They're the gin in the cocktail of light.

Have I sung of the hair of a lady?
Have I sung of the hair of a dove?
What shade do you say?
B-L-A-C-K;
It's the fizz in the champagne of love.

Can you guess it—the name of the lady?
She is sweet, she is fair, she is coy.
Your guessing forego,
It's J-U-N-O;
She's the mint in the julep of joy."

THE FUNNY LITTLE FELLOW

By James Whitcomb Riley

'Twas a Funny Little Fellow
Of the very purest type,
For he had a heart as mellow
As an apple over-ripe;
And the brightest little twinkle
When a funny thing occurred,
And the lightest little tinkle
Of a laugh you ever heard!

His smile was like the glitter
Of the sun in tropic lands,
And his talk a sweeter twitter
Than the swallow understands;
Hear him sing—and tell a story—
Snap a joke—ignite a pun,—
'Twas a capture—rapture—glory,
And explosion—all in one!

Though he hadn't any money—
That condiment which tends
To make a fellow "honey"
For the palate of his friends;
Sweet simples he compounded—
Sovereign antidotes for sin
Or taint,—a faith unbounded
That his friends were genuine.

He wasn't honored, may be—
For his songs of praise were slim,—
Yet I never knew a baby
That wouldn't crow for him;
I never knew a mother
But urged a kindly claim
Upon him as a brother,
At the mention of his name.

The sick have ceased their sighing,
And have even found the grace
Of a smile when they were dying
As they looked upon his face;
And I've seen his eyes of laughter

Melt in tears that only ran
As though, swift dancing after,
Came the Funny Little Man.

He laughed away the sorrow,
And he laughed away the gloom
We are all so prone to borrow
From the darkness of the tomb;
And he laughed across the ocean
Of a happy life, and passed,
With a laugh of glad emotion,
Into Paradise at last.

And I think the Angels knew him,
And had gathered to await
His coming, and run to him
Through the widely-opened Gate—
With their faces gleaming sunny
For his laughter-loving sake,
And thinking, "What a funny
Little Angel he will make!"

MUSICAL REVIEW EXTRAORDINARY

By John Phoenix

San Diego, July 10th, 1854.

As your valuable work is not supposed to be so entirely identified with San Franciscan interests as to be careless what takes place in other portions of this great *kentry*, and as it is received and read in San Diego with great interest (I have loaned my copy to over four different literary gentlemen, most of whom have read some of it), I have thought it not improbable that a few critical notices of the musical performances and the drama of this place might be acceptable to you, and interest your readers. I have been, moreover, encouraged to this task by the perusal of your interesting musical and theatrical critiques on San Francisco performers and performances; as I feel convinced that if you devote so much space to them you will not allow any little feeling of rivalry between the two great cities to prevent your noticing ours, which, without the slightest feeling of prejudice, I must consider as infinitely superior. I propose this month to call your attention to the two great events in our theatrical and musical world—the appearance of the talented Miss Pelican, and the production of Tarbox's celebrated "Ode Symphonie" of "The Plains."

The critiques on the former are from the columns of the Vallecetos Sentinel, to which they were originally contributed by me, appearing on the respective dates of June 1st and June 31st.

From the Vallecetos Sentinel, June 1st

> Miss Pelican.—Never during our dramatic experience has a more exciting event occurred than the sudden bursting upon our theatrical firmament, full, blazing, unparalleled, of the bright, resplendent and particular star whose honored name shines refulgent at the head of this article. Coming among us unheralded, almost unknown, without claptrap, in a wagon drawn by oxen across the plains, with no agent to get up a counterfeit enthusiasm in her favor, she appeared before us for the first time at the San Diego Lyceum last evening, in the trying and difficult character of Ingomar, or the Tame Savage. We are at a loss to describe our sensations, our admiration, at her magnificent, her super-human efforts. We do not hesitate to say that she is by far the superior to any living actress; and, as we believe that to be the perfection of acting, we cannot be wrong in the belief that no one hereafter will ever be found to approach her. Her conception of the character of Ingomar was perfection itself; her playful and ingenuous manner, her light girlish laughter, in the scene with Sir Peter, showed an appreciation of the savage character which nothing but the most arduous study, the most elaborate training could produce; while her awful change to the stern, unyielding, uncompromising father in the tragic scene of Duncan's murder, was indeed nature itself. Miss Pelican is about seventeen years of age, of miraculous beauty, and most thrilling voice. It is needless to say she dresses admirably, as in fact we have said all we can say when we called her, most truthfully, perfection. Mr. John Boots took the part of Parthenia very creditably, etc., etc.

From the Vallecetos Sentinel, June 31st

> Miss Pelican.—As this lady is about to leave us to commence an engagement on the San Francisco stage, we should regret exceedingly if anything we have said about her should send with her a *prestige* which might be found undeserved on trial. The fact is, Miss Pelican is a very ordinary actress; indeed, one of the most indifferent ones we have ever happened to see. She came here from the Museum at Fort Laramie, and we praised her so injudiciously that she became completely spoiled. She has performed a round of characters during the last week, very miserably, though we are bound to confess that her performance of King Lear last evening was superior to anything of the kind we ever saw. Miss Pelican is about forty-three years of age, singularly plain in her personal appearance, awkward and embarrassed, with a cracked and squeaking voice, and really dresses quite outrageously. *She has much to learn—poor thing!*

I take it the above notices are rather ingenious. The fact is, I'm no judge of acting, and don't know how Miss Pelican will turn out. If well, why there's my notice of June the 1st; if ill, then June 31st comes in play, and, as there is but one copy of the Sentinel printed, it's an easy matter to destroy the incorrect one; *both can't be wrong*; so I've made a sure thing of it in any event. Here follows my musical critique, which I flatter myself is of rather superior order:

The Plains. Ode Symphonie par Jabez Tarbox.—This glorious composition was produced at the San Diego Odeon on the 31st of June, ult., for the first time in this or any other country, by a very full orchestra (the performance taking place immediately after supper), and a chorus composed of the entire "Sauer Kraut-Verein," the "Wee Gates Association," and choice selections from the "Gyascutus" and "Pike-harmonic" societies. The solos were rendered by Herr Tuden Links, the recitations by Herr Von Hyden Schnapps, both performers being assisted by Messrs. John Smith and Joseph Brown, who held their coats, fanned them, and furnished water during the more overpowering passages.

"The Plains" we consider the greatest musical achievement that has been presented to an enraptured public. Like Waterloo among battles; Napoleon among warriors; Niagara among falls, and Peck among senators, this magnificent composition stands among Oratorios, Operas, Musical Melodramas and performances of Ethiopian Serenaders, peerless and unrivaled. *Il frappe toute chose parfaitement froid.*

"It does not depend for its success" upon its plot, its theme, its school or its master, for it has very little if any of them, but upon its soul-subduing, all-absorbing, high-faluting effect upon the audience, every member of which it causes to experience the most singular and exquisite sensations. Its strains at times remind us of those of the old master of the steamer McKim, who never went to sea without being unpleasantly affected;—a straining after effect he used to term it. Blair in his lecture on beauty, and Mills in his treatise on logic, (p. 31,) have alluded to the feeling which might be produced in the human mind by something of this transcendentally sublime description, but it has remained for M. Tarbox, in the production of "The Plains," to call this feeling forth.

The symphonie opens upon the wide and boundless plains in longitude 115 degrees W., latitude 35 degrees 21 minutes 03 seconds N., and about sixty miles from the west bank of Pitt River. These data are beautifully and clearly expressed by a long (topographically) drawn note from an E flat clarionet. The sandy nature of the soil, sparsely dotted with bunches of cactus and artemisia, the extended view, flat and unbroken to the horizon, save by the rising smoke in the extreme verge, denoting the vicinity of a Pi Utah village, are represented by the bass drum. A few notes on the piccolo call attention to a solitary antelope picking up mescal beans in the foreground. The sun, having an

altitude of 36 degrees 27 minutes, blazes down upon the scene in indescribable majesty. "Gradually the sounds roll forth in a song" of rejoicing to the God of Day:

"Of thy intensity
And great immensity
Now then we sing;
Beholding in gratitude
Thee in this latitude,
Curious thing."

Which swells out into "Hey Jim along, Jim along Josey," then *decrescendo*, *mas o menos*, *poco pocita*, dies away and dries up.

Suddenly we hear approaching a train from Pike County, consisting of seven families, with forty-six wagons, each drawn by thirteen oxen; each family consists of a man in butternut-colored clothing driving the oxen; a wife in butternut-colored clothing riding in the wagon, holding a butternut baby, and seventeen butternut children running promiscuously about the establishment; all are barefooted, dusty, and smell unpleasantly. (All these circumstances are expressed by pretty rapid fiddling for some minutes, winding up with a puff from the orpheclide played by an intoxicated Teuton with an atrocious breath—it is impossible to misunderstand the description.) Now rises o'er the plains, in mellifluous accents, the grand Pike County Chorus:

"Oh we'll soon be thar
In the land of gold,
Through the forest old,
O'er the mounting cold,
With spirits bold—
Oh, we come, we come,
And we'll soon be thar.
Gee up Bolly! whoo, up, whoo haw!"

The train now encamp. The unpacking of the kettles and mess-pans, the unyoking of the oxen, the gathering about the various camp-fires, the frizzling of the pork, are so clearly expressed by the music that the most untutored savage could readily comprehend it. Indeed, so vivid and lifelike was the representation, that a lady sitting near us involuntarily exclaimed aloud, at a certain passage, "*Thar, that pork's burning!*" and it was truly interesting to watch the gratified expression of her face when, by a few notes of the guitar, the pan was removed from the fire, and the blazing pork extinguished.

This is followed by the beautiful *aria*:

"O! marm, I want a pancake!"

Followed by that touching *recitative*:

"Shet up, or I will spank you!"

To which succeeds a grand *crescendo* movement, representing the flight of the child with the pancake, the pursuit of the mother, and the final arrest and summary punishment of the former, represented by the rapid and successive strokes of the castanet.

The turning in for the night follows; and the deep and stertorous breathing of the encampment is well given by the bassoon, while the sufferings and trials of an unhappy father with an unpleasant infant are touchingly set forth by the *cornet à piston*.

Part Second.—The night attack of the Pi Utahs; the fearful cries of the demoniac Indians; the shrieks of the females and children; the rapid and effective fire of the rifles; the stampede of the oxen; their recovery and the final repulse, the Pi Utahs being routed after a loss of thirty-six killed and wounded, while the Pikes lose but one scalp (from an old fellow who wore a wig, and lost it in the scuffle), are faithfully given, and excite the most intense interest in the minds of the hearers; the emotions of fear, admiration and delight: succeeding each other, in their minds, with almost painful rapidity. Then follows the grand chorus:

"Oh! we gin them fits,
The Ingen Utahs.
With our six-shooters—
We gin 'em pertickuler fits."

After which we have the charming recitative of Herr Tuden Links, to the infant, which is really one of the most charming gems in the performance:

"Now, dern your skin, *can't* you be easy?"

Morning succeeds. The sun rises magnificently (octavo flute)—breakfast is eaten,—in a rapid movement on three sharps; the oxen are caught and yoked up—with a small drum and triangle; the watches, purses and other valuables of the conquered Pi Utahs are stored away in a camp-kettle, to a small movement on the piccolo, and the train moves on, with the grand chorus:

"We'll soon be thar,
Gee up Bolly! Whoo hup! whoo haw!"

The whole concludes with the grand hymn and chorus:

"When we die we'll go to Benton,
Whup! Whoo, haw!
The greatest man that e'er land saw,
Gee!
Who this little airth was sent on
Whup! Whoo, haw!
To tell a 'hawk from a handsaw!'
Gee!"

The immense expense attending the production of this magnificent work, the length of time required to prepare the chorus, and the incredible number of instruments destroyed at each rehearsal, have hitherto prevented M. Tarbox from placing it before the American public, and it has remained for San Diego to show herself superior to her sister cities of the Union, in musical taste and appreciation, and in high-souled liberality, by patronizing this immortal prodigy, and enabling its author to bring it forth in accordance with his wishes and its capabilities. We trust every citizen of San Diego and Vallecetos will listen to it ere it is withdrawn; and if there yet lingers in San Francisco one spark of musical fervor, or a remnant of taste for pure harmony, we can only say that the Southerner sails from that place once a fortnight, and that the passage money is but forty-five dollars.

THE RUNAWAY BOY

By James Whitcomb Riley

Wunst I sassed my Pa, an' he
Won't stand that, an' punished me,—
Nen when he was gone that day,
I slipped out an' runned away.

I tooked all my copper-cents,
An' clumbed over our back fence
In the jimpson-weeds 'at growed
Ever'where all down the road.

Nen I got out there, an' nen
I runned some—an' runned again
When I met a man 'at led
A big cow 'at shooked her head.

I went down a long, long lane
Where was little pigs a-play'n';
An' a grea'-big pig went "Booh!"
An' jumped up, an' skeered me too.

Nen I scampered past, an' they
Was somebody hollered "Hey!"
An' I ist looked ever'where,
An' they was nobody there.

I *want* to, but I'm 'fraid to try
To go back.... An' by-an'-by
Somepin' hurts my throat inside—
An' I want my Ma—an' cried.

Nen a grea'-big girl come through
Where's a gate, an' telled me who
Am I? an' ef I tell where
My home's at she'll show me there.

But I couldn't ist but tell
What's my *name*; an' she says well,
An' she tooked me up an' says
She know where I live, she guess.

Nen she telled me hug wite close

Round her neck!—an' off she goes
Skippin' up the street! An' nen
Purty soon I'm home again.

An' my Ma, when she kissed me,
Kissed the *big girl* too, an' *she*
Kissed me—ef I p'omise *shore*
I won't run away no more!

THE DRAYMAN

By Daniel O'Connell

The captain that walks the quarter-deck
Is the monarch of the sea;
But every day, when I'm on my dray,
I'm as big a monarch as he.
For the car must slack when I'm on the track,
And the gripman's face gets blue,
As he holds her back till his muscles crack,
And he shouts, "Hey, hey! Say, you!
Get out of the way with that dray!" "I won't!"
"Get out of the way, I say!"
But I stiffen my back, and I stay on the track,
And I won't get out of the way.

When a gaudy carriage bowls along,
With a coachman perched on high,
Solemn and fat, a cockade in his hat,
Just like a big blue fly,
I swing my leaders across the road,
And put a stop to his jaunt,
And the ladies cry, "John, John, drive on!"
And I laugh when he says "I caun't."

Oh, life to me is a big picnic,
From the rise to the set of sun!
The swells that ride in their fancy drags
Don't begin to have my fun.
I'm king of the road, though I wear no crown,
As I leisurely move along,
For I own the streets, and I hold them down,
And I love to hear this song:
"Get out of the way with your dray!" "I won't!"
"Get out of the way, I say!"
But I stiffen my back, and I stay on the track,
And I don't get out of the way.

BILL'S COURTSHIP

By Frank L. Stanton

I

Bill looked happy as could be
One bright mornin'; an' says he:
"Folks has been a-tellin' me
Mollie's set her cap my way;
An' I'm goin' thar' to-day
With the license; so, ol' boy,
Might's well shake, an' wish me joy!
Never seen a woman yit
This here feller couldn't git!"

II

Now, it happened, that same day,
I'd been lookin' Mollie's way;—
Jest had saddled my ol' hoss
To go canterin' across
Parson Jones's pastur', an'
Ax her fer her heart an' han'!
So, when Bill had had his say
An' done set his weddin' day,
I lit out an' rid that way.

III

Mollie met me at the door:—
"Glad to see yer face once more!"
She—says she: "Come in—come in!"
("It's the best man now will win,"
Thinks I to myself.) Then she
Brung a rocker out fer me
On the cool piazza wide,
With her own chair right 'longside!

IV

In about two hours I knowed
In that race I had the road!
Talked in sich a winnin' way
Got her whar' she named the day,
With her shiny head at rest
On my speckled Sunday vest!
An', whilst in that happy state,
Bill—he rid up to the gate.

V

Well, sir-ee!… He sot him down—
Cheapest lookin' chap in town!
(Knowed at once I'd set my traps!)
Talked 'bout weather, an' the craps,
An' a thousan' things; an' then—
Jest the lonesomest o' men—
Said he had so fur to ride,
Reckoned it wuz time to slide!

VI

But I hollered out: "Ol' boy,
Might's well shake, an' wish me joy!
I hain't seen the woman yit
That this feller couldn't git!"

THE WOMAN WHO MARRIED AN OWL

By Anne Virginia Culbertson

When the children got home from the nutting expedition and had eaten supper, they sat around discontentedly, wishing every few minutes that their mother had returned.

"I wish mamma would come back," said Ned. "I never know what to do in the evening when she isn't home."

"I 'low 'bout de bes' you-all kin do is ter lemme putt you ter baid," said Aunt 'Phrony.

"Don't want to go to bed," "I'm not sleepy," "Want to stay up," came in chorus from three pairs of lips.

"You chillen is wusser dan night owls," said the old woman. "Ef you keeps on wid dis settin'-up-all-night bizness, I boun' some er you gwine turn inter one'r dese yer big, fussy owls wid yaller eyes styarin', jes' de way li'l Mars Kit doin' dis ve'y minnit, tryin' ter keep hisse'f awake. An' dat 'mines me uv a owl whar turnt hisse'f inter a man, an' ef a owl kin do dat, w'ats ter hinner one'r you-all turnin' inter a owl, I lak ter know? So you bes' come 'long up ter baid, an' ef you is right spry gettin' raidy, mebbe I'll whu'l in an' tell you 'bout dat owl."

The little procession moved upstairs, Coonie, the house-boy, bringing up the rear with an armful of sticks and some fat splinters of lightwood, which were soon blazing with an oily sputter. Coonie scented a story, and his bullet pate was bent over the fire an unnecessarily long time, as he blew valiant puffs upon the flames which no longer needed his assistance, and arranged and rearranged his skilfully piled sticks.

"Quit dat foolishness, nigger," said 'Phrony at last, "an' set down on de ha'th an' 'have yo'se'f. Ef you wanter stay, whyn't you sesso, stidder blowin' yo'se'f black in de face? Now, den, ef y'all raidy, I gwine begin.

"Dish yer w'at I gwine tell happen at de time er de 'ear w'en de Injuns wuz havin' der green-cawn darnse, an' I reckon you-all 'bout ter ax me w'at dat is, so I s'pose I mought ez well tell you. 'Long in Augus' w'en de Injuns stopped wu'kkin' de cawn, w'at we call 'layin' by de crap,' den dey cu'd mos' times tell ef 'twuz gwineter be a good crap, so dey 'mence ter git raidy fer de darnse nigh a month befo'han'. Dey went ter de medincin' man an' axed him fer ter 'pint de day. Den medincin' man he sont out runners ter tell ev'b'dy, an' de runners dey kyar'd 'memb'ance-strings wid knots tied all 'long 'em, an' give 'em ter de people fer ter he'p 'em 'member. De folks dey'd cut off a knot f'um de string each day, an' w'en de las' one done cut off, den dey know de day fer de darnse wuz come. An' de medincin' man he sont out hunters, too, fer ter git game, an' mo' runners fer ter kyar' hit ter de people so's't dey mought cook hit an' bring hit in.

"W'en de time come, de people ga'rred toge'rr an' de medincin' man he tucken some er de new cawn an' some uv all de craps an' burnt hit, befo' de people wuz 'lowed ter eat any. Atter de burnin', den he tucken a year er cawn in one han' an' ax fer blessin's an' good craps wid dat han', w'ile he raise up tu'rr han' ter de storm an' de win' an' de hail an' baig 'em not ter bring evil 'pun de people. Atter dat, dey all made der bre'kfus' offen roas'in'-years er de new cawn an' den de darnse begun an' lasted fo' days an' fo' nights; de men dress' up in der bes' an' de gals wearin' gre't rattles tied on der knees, dat shuk an' rattled wid ev'y step.

"De gal whar I gwine tell 'bout wuz on her way home on de fo'th night, an' she wuz pow'ful tired, 'kase dem rattles is monst'ous haivy, an' she bin keepin' hit up fo' nights han' runnin'. She wuz gwine thu a dark place in de woods w'en suddintly she seed a young man all wrop up in a sof' gray blankit an' leanin' 'gins' a tree. His eyes wuz big an' roun' an' bright, an' dey seemed ter bu'n lak fire.

Dem eyes drord de gal an' drord de gal 'twel she warn't 'feared no mo', an' she come nearer, an' las' he putt out his arms wrop up in de gray blanket an' drord her clost 'twel she lean erg'in him, an' she look up in de big, bright eyes an' she say, 'Whar is you, whar is you?' An' he say, 'Oo-goo-coo, Oo-goo-coo.' Dat wuz de Churry*kee* name fer 'owl,' but de gal ain' pay no 'tention ter dat, for mos' er de Injun men wuz name' atter bu'ds an' beas'eses an' sech ez dat. Atter dat she useter go out ter de woods ev'y night ter see de young man, an' she alluz sing out ter him, 'Whar is you, whar is you?' an' he'd arnser, 'Oo-goo-coo, Oo-goo-coo.' Dat wuz de on'ies wu'd he uver say, but de gal thought 'twuz all right, fer she done mek up her min' dat he 'longed ter nu'rr tribe er Injuns whar spoke diff'nt f'um her own people. Sidesen dat, she love' him, an' w'en gals is in love dey think ev'ything de man do is jes' 'bout right, an' dese yer co'tin'-couples is no gre't fer talkin,' nohow.

"De gal's daddy wuz daid an' her an' her mammy live all 'lone, so las' she mek up her min' dat it be heap mo' handy ter have a man roun' de house, so she up an' tell her mammy dat she done got ma'ied. Her mammy say, 'You is, is you? Well, who de man?' De gal say 'Oo-goo-coo.' 'Well, den,' sez her mammy, 'I reckon you bes' bring home dish yer Oo-goo-coo an' see ef we kain't mek him useful. A li'l good game, now an' den, 'ud suit my mouf right well. We ain' have nair' pusson ter do no huntin' fer us sence yo' daddy died.'

"'Mammy,' sez de gal, 'I'se 'bleeged ter tell you dat my husban' kain't speak ow' langwidge.'

"'All de better,' sez her mammy, sez she. 'Dar ain' gwine be no trouble 'bout dat, 'kase I kin do talkin' 'nuff fer two, an' I ain' want one dese yer back-talkin' son-in-laws, nohow.'

"So de nex' night de gal went off an' comed back late wid de young man. Her mammy ax him in an' gin him a seat by de fire, an' dar he sot all wrop up in his blinkit, wid his haid turnt 'way f'um de light, not sayin' nuttin' ter nob'dy. An' de fire died down an' de wind blewed mo'nful outside, an' dar he sot on an' on, an' w'en de wimmins went ter sleep, dar he wuz settin', still. But in de mawnin' w'en dey woked up he wuz gone, an' dey ain' see hya'r ner hide uv 'im all day.

"De nex' night he come erg'in and bringed a lot er game wid 'im, an' he putt dat down at de do' an' set hisse'f down by de fire an' stay dar, same ez befo', not sayin' nair' wu'd. Dat kind er aggervex de gal's mammy at las', 'kase she wuz one'r dese yer wimmins whar no sooner gits w'at dey ax fer dan dey ain' kyare 'bout hit no mo.' She want son-in-law whar kain't talk, she git him, an' den she want one whar kin arnser back. She gittin' kind er jubous 'bout him, but she 'feared ter say anything fer fear he quit an' she git no mo' game.

"Thu'd night he come onct mo' wid a passel er game, an' she mighty cur'ous 'bout him by dat time. She say ter husse'f, 'Well! ef I ain' got de curisomest son-in-law in dese diggin's, den I miss de queschin. I wunner w'at mek him set wid his face turnt f'um de fire an' blinkin' his eyes all de time? I wunner w'y he ain' nuver onloose dat blankit, an' w'y he g'longs off 'fo' de daylight an' nuver comes back 'twel de dark.'

"'Oh, mammy,' sez de gal, sez she, 'ain' I tol' you he kain't speak ow' langwidge, an' I 'spec' he done come f'um dat wo'm kyountry whar we year tell 'bout, 'way off yonner, an' dat huccome he hatter keep his blankit roun' him. I reckon he git so tired huntin' all day, no wunner he hatter blink his eyes ter keep 'em open.'

"But her mammy wan't sassified, 'kase hit mighty hard ter haid off one'r dese yer pryin' wimmins, so she go outside an' ga'rr up some lightwood splinters an' th'ow 'em on de fire, dis-away, all uv a suddint." Here the old woman rose and threw on a handful of lightwood, which blazed up with a great sputtering, and in the strong light she stood before the fire enacting the part of the scared Owl for the delighted yet half-startled children.

"An' w'en she th'owed hit on," Aunt 'Phrony proceeded, "de fire blaze an' spit an' sputter jes' lak dis do, an' de ooman she fotched a yell an' cried out, she did, 'Lan' er de mussiful! W'at cur'ous sort er wood is dish yer dat ac' lak dis?' De Owl he wuz startle' an' he look roun' suddint, dis-a-way, over his shoulder, an' de wimmins dey let out a turr'ble screech, 'kase dey seed 'twa'n't nuttin' but a big owl settin' dar blinkin'.

"Owl seed he wuz foun' out, an' he riz up an' give his gre't, wide wings a big flop, lak dis, an' swoop out de do' cryin' 'Oo-goo-coo! Oo-goo-coo!' ez he flewed off inter de darkness." Here Aunt 'Phrony spread her arms like wings and made a swoop half-way across the room to the bedside of the startled children. "An'," she continued, "de wind howl mo'nful all night long, an' seem ter de gal an' her mammy lak 'twuz de voice of po' Oo-goo-coo mo'nin' fer de gal he love."

"And didn't he ever come back?" said Ned.

"Naw, suh, dat he didn'. He wuz too 'shame' ter come back, an' he bin so 'shame' er de trick uver sence dat he hide hisse'f way in de daytime an' nuver come out 'twel de dusk, an' den he go sweepin' an' swoopin' 'long on dem gre't big sof' wings, so quiet dat he ain' mek de ghos' uv a soun', jes' looks lak a big shadder flittin' roun' in de dusk. He teck dat time, too, 'kase he know dat 'bout den de li'l fiel' mouses an' sech ez dat comes out an' 'mences ter run roun', an' woe be unter 'em ef dey meets up wid Mistah Owl; deys a-goner, sho'."

"But how could they think an owl was a man?" asked Janey.

"Well, honey, de tale ain' tell dat, but I done study hit out dis-a-way, dat mo'n likely de gal bin turnin' up her nose at some young Injun man, an' outer spite he done gone an' got some witch ter putt a spell on her so's't de Owl 'ud look lak a man an' she 'ud go an' th'ow husse'f away on a ol' no-kyount bu'd. Yas, I reckon dat wuz 'bout de way. An' now y'all better shet up dem peepers er you'll be gittin' lak de owls, no good in de day time, an' wantin' ter be up an' prowlin' all night."

MR. DOOLEY ON EXPERT TESTIMONY

By Finley Peter Dunne

"Annything new?" said Mr. Hennessy, who had been waiting patiently for Mr. Dooley to put down his newspaper.

"I've been r-readin' th' tistimony iv th' Lootgert case," said Mr. Dooley.

"What d'ye think iv it?"

"I think so," said Mr. Dooley.

"Think what?"

"How do I know?" said Mr. Dooley. "How do I know what I think? I'm no combi-nation iv chemist, doctor, osteologist, polisman, an' sausage-maker, that I can give ye an opinion right off th' bat. A man needs to be all iv thim things to detarmine annything about a murdher trile in these days. This shows how intilligent our methods is, as Hogan says. A large German man is charged with puttin' his wife away into a breakfas'-dish, an' he says he didn't do it. Th' on'y question, thin, is Did or did not Alphonse Lootgert stick Mrs. L. into a vat, an' rayjooce her to a quick lunch? Am I right?"

"Ye ar-re," said Mr. Hennessy.

"That's simple enough. What th' coort ought to've done was to call him up, an' say: 'Lootgert, where's ye'er good woman?' If Lootgert cudden't tell, he ought to be hanged on gin'ral principles; f'r a man must keep his wife around th' house, an' whin she isn't there, it shows he's a poor provider. But, if Lootgert says, 'I don't know where me wife is,' the coort shud say: 'Go out, an' find her. If ye can't projooce her in a week, I'll fix ye.' An' let that be th' end iv it.

"But what do they do? They get Lootgert into coort an' stand him up befure a gang iv young rayporthers an' th' likes iv thim to make pitchers iv him. Thin they summon a jury composed iv poor, tired, sleepy expressmen an' tailors an' clerks. Thin they call in a profissor from a colledge. 'Profissor,' says th' lawyer f'r the State, 'I put it to ye if a wooden vat three hundherd an' sixty feet long, twenty-eight feet deep, an' sivinty-five feet wide, an' if three hundherd pounds iv caustic soda boiled, an' if the leg iv a ginea pig, an' ye said yesterdah about bicarbonate iv soda, an' if it washes up an' washes over, an' th' slimy, slippery stuff, an' if a false tooth or a lock iv hair or a jawbone or a goluf ball across th' cellar eleven feet nine inches—that is, two inches this way an' five gallons that?' 'I agree with ye intirely,' says th' profissor, 'I made lab'ratory experiments in an' ir'n basin, with bichloride iv gool, which I will call soup-stock, an' coal tar, which I will call ir'n filings. I mixed th' two over a hot fire, an' left in a cool place to harden. I thin packed it in ice, which I will call glue, an' rock-salt, which I will call fried eggs, an' obtained a dark, queer solution that is a cure f'r freckles, which I will call antimony or doughnuts or annything I blamed please.'

"'But,' says th' lawyer f'r th' State, 'measurin' th' vat with gas,—an' I lave it to ye whether this is not th' on'y fair test,—an' supposin' that two feet acrost is akel to tin feet sideways, an' supposin' that a thick green an' hard substance, an' I daresay it wud; an' supposin' you may, takin' into account th' measuremints,—twelve be eight,—th' vat bein' wound with twine six inches fr'm th' handle an' a rub iv th' green, thin ar-re not human teeth often found in counthry sausage?' 'In th' winter,' says th' profissor. 'But th' sisymoid bone is sometimes seen in th' fut, sometimes worn as a watch-charm. I took two sisymoid bones, which I will call poker dice, an' shook thim together in a cylinder, which I will call Fido, poored in a can iv milk, which I will call gum arabic, took two pounds iv rough-on-rats, which I rayfuse to call; but th' raysult is th' same.' Question be th' coort: 'Different?' Answer: 'Yis.' Th' coort: 'Th' same.' Be Misther McEwen: 'Whose bones?' Answer: 'Yis.' Be Misther Vincent: 'Will ye go to th' divvle?' Answer: 'It dissolves th' hair.'

"Now what I want to know is where th' jury gets off. What has that collection iv pure-minded pathrites to larn fr'm this here polite discussion, where no wan is so crool as to ask what anny wan else means? Thank th' Lord, whin th' case is all over, the jury'll pitch th' tistimony out iv th' window, an' consider three questions: 'Did Lootgert look as though he'd kill his wife? Did his wife look as though she ought to be kilt? Isn't it time we wint to supper?' An', howiver they answer, they'll be right, an' it'll make little diff'rence wan way or th' other. Th' German vote is too large an' ignorant, annyhow."

LECTURES ON ASTRONOMY

By John Phoenix

Introductory

The following pages were originally prepared in the form of a course of Lectures to be delivered before the Lowell Institute, of Boston, Mass., but, owing to the unexpected circumstance of the author's receiving no invitation to lecture before that institution, they were laid aside shortly after their completion.

Receiving an invitation from the trustees of the Vallecetos Literary and Scientific Institute, during the present summer, to deliver a course of Lectures on any popular subject, the author withdrew his manuscript from the dusty shelf on which it had long lain neglected, and, having somewhat revised and enlarged it, to suit the capacity of the eminent scholars before whom it was to be displayed, repaired to Vallecetos. But, on arriving at that place, he learned with deep regret, that the only inhabitant had left a few days previous, having availed himself of the opportunity presented by a passing emigrant's horse,—and that, in consequence, the opening of the Institute was indefinitely postponed. Under these circumstances, and yielding with reluctance to the earnest solicitations of many eminent scientific friends, he has been induced to place the Lectures before the public in their present form. Should they meet with that success which his sanguine friends prognosticate, the author may be induced subsequently to publish them in the form of a text-book, for the use of the higher schools and universities; it being his greatest ambition to render himself useful in his day and generation by widely disseminating the information he has acquired among those who, less fortunate, are yet willing to receive instruction.

JOHN PHOENIX.

San Diego Observatory, September 1, 1854.

Lectures on Astronomy—Part I

CHAPTER I

The term Astronomy is derived from two Latin words,—*Astra*, a star, and *onomy*, a science; and literally means the science of the stars. "It is a science," to quote our friend Dick (who was no relation at all of Big Dick, though the latter occasionally caused individuals to see stars), "which has, in all ages, engaged the attention of the poet, the philosopher, and the divine, and been the subject of their study and admiration."

By the wondrous discoveries of the improved telescopes of modern times, we ascertain that upward of several hundred millions of stars exist, that are invisible to the naked eye—the nearest of which is millions of millions of miles from the Earth; and as we have every reason to suppose that every one of this inconceivable number of worlds is peopled like our own, a consideration of this fact—and that we are undoubtedly as superior to these beings as we are to the rest of mankind—is calculated to fill the mind of the American with a due sense of his own importance in the scale of animated creation.

It is supposed that each of the stars we see in the Heavens in a cloudless night is a sun shining upon its own curvilinear, with light of its own manufacture; and as it would be absurd to suppose its light and heat were made to be diffused for nothing, it is presumed farther, that each sun, like an old hen, is provided with a parcel of little chickens, in the way of planets, which, shining but feebly by its reflected light, are to us invisible. To this opinion we are led, also, by reasoning from analogy, on considering our own Solar System.

The Solar System is so called, not because we believe it to be the sole system of the kind in existence, but from its principal body, the Sun, the Latin name of which is *Sol*. (Thus we read of Sol Smith, literally meaning the *son* of Old Smith.) On a close examination of the Heavens we perceive numerous brilliant stars which shine with a steady light (differing from those which surround them, which are always twinkling like a dewdrop on a cucumber-vine), and which, moreover, do not preserve constantly the same relative distance from the stars near which they are first discovered. These are the planets of the Solar System, which have no light of their own—of which the Earth, on which we reside, is one—which shine by light reflected from the Sun—and which regularly move around that body at different intervals of time and through different ranges in space. Up to the time of a gentleman named Copernicus, who flourished about the middle of the Fifteenth Century, it was supposed by our stupid ancestors that the Earth was the center of all creation, being a large, flat body resting on a rock which rested on another rock, and so on "all the way down"; and that the Sun, planets and immovable stars all revolved about it once in twenty-four hours.

This reminds us of the simplicity of a child we once saw in a railroad-car, who fancied itself perfectly stationary, and thought the fences, houses and fields were tearing past it at the rate of thirty miles an hour;—and poking out its head, to see where on earth they went to, had its hat—a very nice one with pink ribbons—knocked off and irrecoverably lost. But Copernicus (who was a son of Daniel Pernicus, of the firm of Pernicus & Co., wool-dealers, and who was named Co. Pernicus, out of respect to his father's partners) soon set this matter to rights, and started the idea of the present Solar System, which, greatly improved since his day, is occasionally called the Copernican system. By this system we learn that the Sun is stationed at one *focus* (not hocus, as it is rendered, without authority by the philosopher Partington) of an ellipse, where it slowly grinds on for ever about its own axis, while the planets, turning about their axes, revolve in elliptical orbits of various dimensions and different planes of inclination around it.

The demonstration of this system in all its perfection was left to Isaac Newton, an English Philosopher, who, seeing an apple tumble down from a tree, was led to think thereon with such gravity, that he finally discovered the attraction of gravitation, which proved to be the great law of Nature that keeps everything in its place. Thus we see that as an apple originally brought sin and ignorance into the world, the same fruit proved thereafter the cause of vast knowledge and enlightenment;—and indeed we may doubt whether any other fruit but an apple, and a sour one at that, would have produced these great results;—for, had the fallen fruit been a pear, an orange, or a peach, there is little doubt that Newton would have eaten it up and thought no more on the subject.

As in this world you will hardly ever find a man so small but that he has someone else smaller than he, to look up to and revolve around him, so in the Solar System we find that the majority of the planets have one or more smaller planets revolving about them. These small bodies are termed secondaries, moons or satellites—the planets themselves being called primaries.

We know at present of eighteen primaries, viz.: Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars, Flora, Vesta, Iris, Metis, Hebe, Astrea, Juno, Ceres, Pallas, Hygeia, Jupiter, Saturn, Herschel, Neptune, and another, yet unnamed. There are distributed among these, nineteen secondaries, all of which, except our Moon, are invisible to the naked eye.

We shall now proceed to consider, separately, the different bodies composing the Solar System, and to make known what little information, comparatively speaking, science has collected regarding them. And, first in order, as in place, we come to

THE SUN

This glorious orb may be seen almost any clear day, by looking intently in its direction, through a piece of smoked glass. Through this medium it appears about the size of a large orange, and of much the same color. It is, however, somewhat larger, being in fact 887,000 miles in diameter, and containing a volume of matter equal to fourteen hundred thousand globes of the size of the Earth, which is certainly a matter of no small importance. Through the telescope it appears like an enormous globe of fire, with many spots upon its surface, which, unlike those of the leopard, are continually changing. These spots were first discovered by a gentleman named Galileo, in the year 1611. Though the Sun is usually termed and considered the luminary of day, it may not be uninteresting to our readers to know that it certainly has been seen in the night. A scientific friend of ours from New England (Mr. R.W. Emerson) while traveling through the northern part of Norway, with a cargo of tinware, on the 21st of June, 1836, distinctly saw the Sun in all its majesty, shining at midnight!—in fact, shining *all* night! Emerson is not what you would call a superstitious man, by any means—but, he left! Since that time many persons have observed its nocturnal appearance in that part of the country, at the same time of the year. This phenomenon has never been witnessed in the latitude of San Diego, however, and it is very improbable that it ever will be. Sacred history informs us that a distinguished military man, named Joshua, once caused the Sun to "stand still"; how he did it, is not mentioned. There can, of course, be no doubt of the fact, that he arrested its progress, and possibly caused it to "stand *still*";—but translators are not always perfectly accurate, and we are inclined to the opinion that it might have wiggled a very little, when Joshua was not looking directly at it. The statement, however, does not appear so very incredible, when we reflect that seafaring men are in the habit of actually *bringing the Sun down* to the horizon every day at 12 Meridian. This they effect by means of a tool made of brass, glass, and silver, called a sextant. The composition of the Sun has long been a matter of dispute.

By close and accurate observation with an excellent opera-glass we have arrived at the conclusion that its entire surface is covered with water to a very great depth; which water, being composed by a process known at present only to the Creator of the Universe and Mr. Paine, of Worcester, Massachusetts, generates carburetted hydrogen gas, which, being inflamed, surrounds the

entire body with an ocean of fire, from which we, and the other planets, receive our light and heat. The spots upon its surface are glimpses of water, obtained through the fire; and we call the attention of our old friend and former schoolmate, Mr. Agassiz, to this fact; as by closely observing one of these spots with a strong refracting telescope he may discover a new species of fish, with little fishes inside of them. It is possible that the Sun may burn out after a while, which would leave this world in a state of darkness quite uncomfortable to contemplate; but even under these circumstances it is pleasant to reflect that courting and love-making would probably increase to an indefinite extent, and that many persons would make large fortunes by the sudden rise in value of coal, wood, candles, and gas, which would go to illustrate the truth of the old proverb, "It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good."

Upon the whole, the Sun is a glorious creation; pleasing to gaze upon (through smoked glass), elevating to think upon, and exceedingly comfortable to every created being on a cold day; it is the largest, the brightest, and may be considered by far the most magnificent object in the celestial sphere; though with all these attributes it must be confessed that it is occasionally entirely eclipsed by the moon.

CHAPTER II

We shall now proceed to the consideration of the several planets.

MERCURY

This planet, with the exception of the asteroids, is the smallest of the system. It is the nearest to the Sun, and, in consequence, can not be seen (on account of the Sun's superior light), except at its greatest eastern and western elongations, which occur in March and April, August and September, when it may be seen for a short time immediately after sunset and shortly before sunrise. It then appears like a star of the first magnitude, having a white twinkling light, and resembling somewhat the star Regulus in the constellation Leo. The day in Mercury is about ten minutes longer than ours, its year is about equal to three of our months. It receives six and a half times as much heat from the Sun as we do; from which we conclude that the climate must be very similar to that of Fort Yuma, on the Colorado River. The difficulty of communication with Mercury will probably prevent its ever being selected as a military post; though it possesses many advantages for that purpose, being extremely inaccessible, inconvenient, and, doubtless, singularly uncomfortable. It receives its name from the God, Mercury, in the Heathen Mythology, who is the patron and tutelary Divinity of San Diego County.

VENUS

This beautiful planet may be seen either a little after sunset or shortly before sunrise, according as it becomes the morning or the evening star, but never departing quite forty-eight degrees from the Sun. Its day is about twenty-five minutes shorter than ours; its year seven and a half months or thirty-two weeks. The diameter of Venus is 7,700 miles, and she receives from the Sun thrice as much light and heat as the Earth.

An old Dutchman named Schroeter spent more than ten years in observations on this planet, and finally discovered a mountain on it twenty-two miles in height, but he never could discover anything on the mountain, not even a mouse, and finally died about as wise as when he commenced his studies.

Venus, in Mythology, was a Goddess of singular beauty, who became the wife of Vulcan, the blacksmith, and, we regret to add, behaved in the most immoral manner after her marriage. The celebrated case of Vulcan *vs.* Mars, and the consequent scandal, is probably still fresh in the minds of our readers. By a large portion of society, however, she was considered an ill-used and persecuted

lady, against whose high tone of morals and strictly virtuous conduct not a shadow of suspicion could be cast; Vulcan, by the same parties, was considered a horrid brute, and they all agreed that it served him right when he lost his case and had to pay the costs of court. Venus still remains the Goddess of Beauty, and not a few of her *protégés* may be found in California.

THE EARTH

The Earth, or as the Latins called it, Tellus (from which originated the expression, "Do tell us"), is the third planet in the Solar System, and the one on which we subsist, with all our important joys and sorrows. The San Diego Herald is published weekly on this planet, for five dollars per annum, payable invariably in advance. As the Earth is by no means the most important planet in the system, there is no reason to suppose that it is particularly distinguished from the others by being inhabited. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that all the other planets of the system are filled with living, moving and sentient beings; and as some of them are superior to the Earth in size and position, it is not improbable that their inhabitants may be superior to us in physical and mental organization.

But if this were a demonstrable fact, instead of a mere hypothesis, it would be found a very difficult matter to persuade us of its truth. To the inhabitants of Venus the Earth appears like a brilliant star—very much, in fact, as Venus appears to us; and, reasoning from analogy, we are led to believe that the election of Mr. Pierce, the European war, or the split in the great Democratic party produced but very little excitement among them.

To the inhabitants of Jupiter, our important globe appears like a small star of the fourth or fifth magnitude. We recollect, some years ago, gazing with astonishment upon the inhabitants of a drop of water, developed by the Solar Microscope, and secretly wondering whether they were or not reasoning beings, with souls to be saved. It is not altogether a pleasant reflection that a highly scientific inhabitant of Jupiter, armed with a telescope of (to us) inconceivable form, may be pursuing a similar course of inquiry, and indulging in similar speculations regarding our Earth and its inhabitants. Gazing with curious eye, his attention is suddenly attracted by the movements of a grand celebration of Fourth of July in New York, or a mighty convention in Baltimore. "God bless my soul," he exclaims, "I declare they're alive, these little creatures; do see them wriggle!" To an inhabitant of the Sun, however, he of Jupiter is probably quite as insignificant, and the Sun man is possibly a mere atom in the opinion of a dweller in Sirius. A little reflection on these subjects leads to the opinion that the death of an individual man on this Earth, though perhaps as important an event as can occur to himself, is calculated to cause no great convulsion of Nature or disturb particularly the great aggregate of created beings.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.