

"John, give me back that book." These words, spoken in a harsh tone by his father, caused John Morton to start in affright.

"Please, father, I was only—" "No words," interrupted the father—"give me the book!"

With tearful eyes and trembling hands John passed the book to his father, who immediately threw it into the fire.

"Now, sir, go and finish chopping that brush, and remember, if you quit it again before it is all done, I'll give you a whipping."

Mr. Morton was a small farmer, who lived a few miles from the village of M—, in Massachusetts. A man of no literary taste, himself, he could not endure it in others; and for this reason was an unkind and often unjust father towards John, his second son, who loved books better than anything else in the world.

John was not a lazy boy, but as a farmer boy knows no such thing as leisure, he was obliged to do his reading at such times as he could steal from his work, when his father was not by. George, his elder brother, was his opposite in every respect; he was a good farmer, but the dunce at school. "I tell you what it is, John," he would say, "I wouldn't give a snap of my fingers for all your book-learning; but if you like it, go in, if the old man will let you; but as for me, I am bound to stick to the farm."

John had been saving his money for some time, to buy a fine edition of Cooper's works complete, which an acquaintance had bought at auction in a neighboring town, and not caring much for it, had offered it to him for half price.

The night before our story commences, John had procured the long-coveted treasure, and in the morning had commenced to read as soon as it was light. From this he was soon called by his father to chop a load of brush he had just brought in.

Reluctantly John left the book and went to the task, but the departure of his father after another load was too much for him; he left the brush heap, and was soon absorbed in his book.

Mr. Morton had gone but a short distance, when he remembered some directions which he had forgotten to give George, and returned. As he neared the house, he missed the sound of the hatchet. When he entered the house, there sat John comfortably before the fire, completely lost in his book. It was this that made him angrily burn the book. With a bursting heart John went to the brush heap again and commenced his work. He worked steadily all day, but spoke not a word to any one.

George, seeing how bad he felt about it, good naturedly said to him:

"Never mind, Jack, I wouldn't care—let it go, and the next time I go to the city I'll get you another."

"And what if you do?" replied John, sadly, "he will not let me read it. I tell you, George, it's no use; I'm going away where I can have a chance to study as much as I please."

"Oh, nonsense, Jack," said George, "you will soon get over it. As for my part, I can't see what you find so interesting in books. I'd rather go into the corn-field and work the hottest day in summer than to have to get one lesson of any kind."

"I know that," said John, "it's your nature, but I can't do the farm work, it isn't in me. I was never meant for it, and therefore, to-morrow morning I'm going, come what may."

George tried to change his mind for some time, but finding him determined, helped him to get ready to the best of his ability, forcing him to accept all his spare pocket money, telling him that he could repay it when he got rich.

"But one thing, Jack," said he, "whatever you do, be an honest man. You'll make a smarter man than ever I shall, I am sure of that. And remember, I expect to be here as long as I live. So if at any time the world goes hard with you, don't forget home."

The next morning at breakfast, John was missed. An examination of his room showed that he had taken his little bundle of clothes, and gave evidence to his father that he had gone for good.

"Never mind," said he, "he'll soon be back."

Thirteen years have passed since John Morton left the old homestead, and contrary to his father's prediction, he had not come back.

In the meantime, things had not gone so smoothly at the farm. Farmer Morton had given up the whole charge of the farm to George, who had married a girl in the neighborhood, and was now the father of five children. Years before, in a case of emergency, Farmer Morton had mortgaged the farm to a small amount, and ever since the marriage of George, in spite of all his exertions, the mortgage had been gaining ground, until now the place must be sold, as he could not meet the terms of agreement.

This was a terrible blow to George and the old man, but there was no help for it; their friends and neighbors were no better off than themselves, and therefore could not help them had they been ever so much inclined.

It was a bitter cold night in December, and they were seated around the kitchen fire. It was to be their last night at home, for the next day would be the sale, and then they would be houseless. Farmer Morton sat with his head buried in his hands. At times he would raise it up and gaze upon some cherished article, as if to take a last farewell, and then bowing it again, would sob aloud.

"Come, come, father," said George, "don't be so down-hearted. Cheer up, cheer up. I am young yet; and if I live, and hard work will do it, you shall come back to the old place yet."

"I cannot hope for it, George," returned the old man. "It will require years of successful labor; and I am old and cannot last long. I had hoped to die in the old house, but I am afraid it cannot be. Sixty years I have passed here, boy and man, and it is hard to leave now."

They were interrupted by a knock at the door, and upon opening it, there entered a young man very shabbily dressed. For a moment he stood surveying the group, with tears in his eyes, and then reached forth his hand, exclaiming: "George, do you not recognize me?" "Father, it is John," exclaimed George, joyfully seizing his hand, and leading him towards his father.

The old man arose, and turning towards him, exclaimed: "John, my son!" at the same time stretching forth his arms—then suddenly drawing himself up to his full height, he said, "John, for thirteen years you have been a stranger to me; during that time we have known neither where you were, nor what you were doing; can you give me the hand of an honest man?"

"I can, sir," replied John, proudly, and the next moment he was folded in his father's arms.

Next followed inquiries from John as to how things had gone in his absence; and he soon learned the whole story.

"As for you," said George, "I do not need to ask how the world has gone with you—that coat speaks for itself. But never mind; I have some better clothes up stairs, and you are welcome to take your pick. But what have you been doing, Jack; trying to get a living by books?"

"Yes," replied John, "I have lived entirely by books."

"And a poor living you have had, I'll be bound," said the old man; "I never knew a book-worm yet, who ever turned out much."

"But it seems that we shall be equals to-morrow, father," said John, pleasantly.

"That's very true," answered his father, rather testily, "but had you stuck to the farm with George, this had not been!"

"Never mind, father," said John, "go to bed now, and George and I will try and make some provision for the future."

After the old man had left them, John said he was rather fatigued, and believed that he would retire also.

"But," said George, "you have not inquired as to our future prospects. Do you not wish to know?"

"No," said John, rather shortly, "not to-night; I don't feel interested." And taking his light, with a yawn, he left the room.

George felt hurt. "After all," thought he, "he has changed. He don't seem to care what becomes of us. Never mind—poor fellow, no doubt he has seen hard times, until they have hardened even his heart."

The next morning found John Morton engaged in a noisy romp with the whole of his brother's children. Indeed, so far did he carry it, that he received a cutting rebuke from his father, for his heartlessness.

"I can't help it, father," he replied, "everything reminds me so much of childhood, that I cannot realize that I am a man."

At twelve o'clock the auctioneer appeared, in company with those who were disposed to bid for the place. Immediately upon their arrival, John took the auctioneer aside and conversed with him earnestly for a few moments. Soon after the auctioneer mounted upon the steps, and said:

"Gentlemen, I have been requested by the celebrated author, Morton J. Hall, of Boston, to bid upon this place for him as high as thirty-five hundred dollars. If any of you feel disposed to bid higher than that we will proceed, otherwise, there is no need."

As no one seemed disposed to make any advance upon that bid, the place was declared sold, and soon the family was again left alone.

"Well," said the old man at dinner, "the worst is over; and I shouldn't wonder if we could hire the place from this Mr. Hall, who seems to be a city man."

"Oh, yes," said John, "I know you can. He don't care anything about farming. I know him well."

"Don't say any more!" cried George, jumping up, and seizing both his brother's hands, "that one expression betrays you; 'he don't like farming.' John, you John, you are like Morton J. Hall! I half-suspected it this morning; for you never was hard-hearted when a boy, and you didn't act the part very well."

The old man cried for joy. "I see now, John," said he, "I did not understand you as a boy. I thought books would be your ruin; but, instead, they have saved me from want."

"You are right, father," said John, "I am worth, to-day, ten thousand dollars, all earned by my pen; while, had I stayed by the farm, I should have been as poor—yes, poorer than I found you; for you and George are good farmers, while I could never fix my mind upon it; in fact, it is evident that I was not born to be a farmer."

Who wrote "Cotton is King?"—This inquiry has been made in our Justice, says the New York Express. The phrase "Cotton is King" has been attributed to the late Governor Hammond, of South Carolina. This is an error. It originated with the author of a book bearing that title, first published in 1855, and advocating the preservation of the Union as essential to the prosperity of the country. Many were urging that the South had become a burden upon the North, and that, "by kicking the South out of the Union," the North would become vastly more prosperous and powerful. The author presented the economical relations of the two sections, in their true light, for the first time. The exports of the country were shown so as to represent the several commodities entering into our foreign commerce. From this it appeared that the North never supplied, of the products of the soil, more than about \$35,000,000 to \$45,000,000 in value, while the South supplied more than thrice that amount.—To dissolve the Union, the author argued, would so diminish our foreign commerce as to be ruinous to the country. Dissolution, he therefore concluded, would be treason to the best interests of the nation. But he went further, and demonstrated that, from the results of emancipation, everywhere else, the abolition of slavery, in its economical results, would be quite as ruinous as dissolution upon our foreign commerce.

The author of that work is Professor David Christy, then of Cincinnati, but now of New York City. It will be determined, in a few years, whether his deductions were not correct.

**A Remarkable Adventure.**

The following story, incredible as it may appear, and doubtful as it may be regarded by some people, is related in a Northern paper with a circumstantiality which is well calculated to impress a certain class of readers with a conviction of its truth: I was traveling in Africa, says the hero, and one morning, armed with my gun, I entered a forest, thinking to shoot some game for breakfast.

Suddenly I beheld an elephant approaching, and so terrified was I by the sight that I dropped my gun and stood transfixed to the spot. While shivering with fear, the elephant advanced rapidly and with his mouth seized my right leg; at the same instant a ferocious lion bounded toward me, and did the same office to my left leg. Then a tiger leaped upon the elephant's back and closed his teeth like a vice upon my right elbow, while a vulture simultaneously alighted upon my left hand and seized me by the wrist.

Just as the combined strength of the elephant and the lion were exerted to raise me from the ground, a huge boa constrictor made its appearance on the ground before my fright-distended eyes, and in a moment thereafter had coiled itself about my body.

My position was horrible, and I at length came to about the most desperate resolution that ever entered the mind of a man—I resolved to sneeze!

Yes, reader, to put in motion that wonderful magnetic influence which runs throughout animated nature, and binds all created beings in one chain of mysterious sympathy.

Such is sneezing. Its symptoms are of a highly magnetic character. A fearful convulsion, shaking the entire frame like an earthquake, darting with the speed of a telegraphic message, from the extreme top of the nose all down the backbone, even to the top of the feet, and, above all, communicating such a powerful sympathetic shock to all hearers, that they are for the moment startled, and frequently jump clean out of their seats.

Can such an effect as this be produced by other than magnetic influences? Certainly not, and as I came to this conclusion I resolved to test the efficacy of this wonderful power to rescue me from my complicated dangers.

Accordingly, gathering together all the strength that reposed in the various portions of my elegantly-carved frame, I suddenly sneezed with that terrific power and artistic finish for which my family have been distinguished from time immemorial.

The effect was instantaneous—magical! The forest shook with the portentous sound, a violent convulsion seized every one of my enemies and they all loosened their hold of me simultaneously. The lion fell back with clattering teeth, the elephant likewise recoiled, as if struck by a cannon ball; the tiger fell off the elephant's back in strong convulsions; the boa-constrictor shivered so fearfully as to shuffe off the mortal coil he had wound round me; and lastly, the vulture fluttered, with a wild shriek, to the ground.

All this occurred in, as near as I could calculate, the fifteenth part of a second; I failed not to take advantage of the panic, and my various supports being thus removed, I fell to the ground and made off with marvelous rapidity, breathing an inward blessing on the man who first invented sneezing.

The consequences were just as I had calculated. None of the animals attempted to follow me, as the whole of them were for the moment completely paralyzed; and when they recovered they became so mutually enraged at the escape of their prey, that they began attacking each other with great ferocity.

The vulture flew at the snake, who wound himself round the elephant, who crushed the tiger under foot; while the lion attacking all indiscriminately, struck out right and left for dear life and expensive death.

Which of them first "tapped the claret," and which was the last to survive, it is impossible to say; but, according to the indications presented on the spot the next morning, the elephant must have swallowed the vulture and part of the boa-constrictor, several coils of which were twisted round the lion, and occasioned the death of that regal quadruped, who had bitten the tiger's head off before departing in peace. It was the most confusing conglomeration of anatomy that I had ever witnessed.

AM EDITOR SUEB.—The editor of the Muscatine (Iowa) Courier was sued the other day. He took it philosophically: The dim recesses of our dark sanctum, says he, were illuminated yesterday by the rubicund ringe of our friend Constable Scott. Our hair stood on end as with tears in his eyes he proceeded to read a very nicely printed blank on which our name figured conspicuously with that of Justice Klein. To cut short a long article—we were sued. Were you ever sued, reader? Yes? Nice, ain't it? We put our pen behind our ear and looked wide at the officer. He trembled a little, for the idea of suing an editor was new to him. He never imagined that anything could be got out of "them fellers" by suing—we didn't, either. We don't now. The art of suing is a science. Young lawyers anxious for suits sometimes bring them for fun. Old ones, however, never do anything of the kind unless they can get something. We never knew anybody to get anything where there wasn't anything to be had. We hope they'll get a judgment against us, then we hope they will take out an execution, and lastly, we hope they'll execute it. If we've got any property we'd like to know it. They might garnishee a lot of other fellows we owe around town. We guess they will. If they are sharp they'll commence on Geo. Schneider. We owe him for a glass of lager beer. If they get that it would help a little. Failing in this we recommend them to attach a box of soiled paper collars we have on hand. They haven't been turned yet, and they might use the clean side. If this won't do, we are unable to help them.

—A young lady the other evening astonished the company by asking for the loan of a diminutive argenteous, truncated cone, convex on its summit, and semi-perforated with indentations. She wanted a thimble.

—The fire should burn brightest on one's own hearth.

**Asa Hartz on Oysters.**

An oyster is something good to eat, but can't register and vote. He grows in out of the way places, where the tide ebbs and flows as often as it wants to in twenty-four hours, and he seems to like it.

He has a curious and at the same time playful habit, at certain times, of opening his shell and attracting to his presence the hungry raccoon. On such occasions the cuss of a raccoon superstitiously inserts his paw into the open shell to haul the oyster out; whereupon the latter clamps down on him like the devil, and holds him there till the tide rises and drowns him.

I don't know what he does it for, but I have the authority of several editions of natural history—with colored plates—for saying that such is the fact, and also that no raccoon has ever been known to survive this hyphatic treatment.

The oyster must be of an extremely social disposition. They sleep numerously in one bed, and nobody ever heard of one kicking another out. They are a quiet set, and though they open their mouths, they have nothing to say. A great many self-important politicians of the present day are suffering with the same complaint.

Their religious principles are strikingly evident in the fact that they all belong to the Hardshell persuasion, and although strictly addicted to cold water, as a general thing, the principles of that creed are often seen when a dozen of them are found clustered around the neck of an old empty bottle which some mean white man has emptied and thrown overboard.

In this moral state the oyster is quiet, and anything but tussy, but when brought into a broil or a stew, and although McCool himself would be unable to close his "eye," the poor thing suffers muchly from this getting into hot water.

His temperance proclivities will make him take even salt water when he can't get fresh, and his diet, outside of that raccoon toible mentioned above, is exceedingly light.

People eat oysters. Some are preferred in the live state and some in the cooked. They are dog on'd good both ways. The most approved and highly satisfactory way of eating an oyster is to do it after the shell has been opened. I have known people to fail signally who tried it the other way.

Oysters flourish in all the months of the year in which the letter "r" occurs, and the larger colonies of them are to be found on St. Charles street, both sides, from September once to the very last day of April next. There are occasions when they may be found in large communities at Barataria. These are of a higher order, and their acquaintance eagerly sought after by simple natives.

There are two ways of making an oyster open unto you. One is to knock him like the mischief with a brick until he can't help it, and the other is to tickle him with a thing like a bowie knife. The first named plan will always succeed, but the oyster doesn't like it, and the result is not satisfactory to the man who does it.

I tried the other process once, and succeeded in taking off one half of my left thumb with the bowie-kniferous instrument used for tickling. I have not tried it since. Not many people know how to do it expertly.

You then put pepper-sauce on him, if lemons are ten cents apiece. They are both good if you like it.

I don't know how many oysters I can eat in a given time; but am willing, after due notification, to try it for the benefit of any unprejudiced individual who has a barrel or two on hand and expert to use the opening instrument.

In conclusion, the oyster is like a clam only a little more that way. He can hold on tighter, is more hefty in his general build, and there is more diversity in his style of architecture.

I think I shall go out and get some. P. S.—I should have stated that some people eat oysters in August; but they are principally illiterate persons who spell the month "Orgenst." A. H.

THE RAVEN AND THE RING.—In a village near Warsaw, in Poland, there lived a pious peasant of German parentage.

Without any fault on his part, he had come short in the payment of his rent, and the landlord had threatened to turn him out of his house and home, even although it was in the middle of the winter. The peasant went several times to the cruel-hearted landlord to entreat him for forbearance, but in vain: on the next day, he with his wife and children, were to leave their home.

During the evening he was conducting family worship, and whilst reading a portion of Holy Scripture there was a knock at the window. It proceeded from an old friend, a raven, which Dorby's father had taken from the nest, and trained. Dorby opened the window; the raven popped in, having in its beak a ring set with costly stones. At first Dorby thought of disposing of the ring, but on reflection he took it to the minister. The latter at once recognized the ring as one belonging to the King Stanislaus, to whom he went immediately and told the story.

The King sent for Dorby and rewarded him, so that at once he was relieved of want, and the next year he made him a present of a new house and garden. Above the door a table was erected, with the bible text inscribed thereon: "Thou callest in trouble and I delivered thee," Ps. lxxxix. 7.

AGREEMENT.—A well-known minister in the West Highlands, distinguished for his vein of humor and sarcastic observation, meeting the other day a zealous minister of the Free Church, said, "I am told that you are thinking of coming back to the Establishment again." "Heaven forbid," exclaimed the other; upon which the minister rejoined, "Well, it is seldom you and I agree on such matters, but those are just the very words I used when I heard the report."

PAYING LIKE A SINNER.—"Do you charge ministers of the gospel?" inquired a traveler of his landlord when presenting his bill.

"Are you a minister," inquired the landlord, with surprise, "that is strange. You did not pray to God when you retired, nor when you arose this morning; nor did you return thanks at your meals—and if you eat like a sinner, and sleep like a sinner, I expect you to pay like a sinner."

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