

Queer Dreams of Those Who Invent

More extraordinary members of society turn up at the patent office in one hour than in all the other public buildings of the city in a month, relates the Washington Post. They hail from all parts of the globe and they are richer than the trusts. Except in comparatively few instances, these gifted members of society do not loudly proclaim the genius that is in them. They do not have to. It is placarded in their whiskers, in the horizontal creases of their trousers, in their secretive and confidential manner, their superb condescension, and, above all, in their mysterious inventions. The patent office becomes either their bosom confidant and inspiration or their deadly enemy, according to the verdict on their new ideas.

Although Morse himself stated that there is no instance on record of a great invention completed by one man, the geniuses refute his statement in the most emphatic terms, and cite countless numbers of remarkable cases of rapid inventions, chiefly in the line of perpetual motion.

"I am the man," pervades every sentence they utter. Be their invention a new and useful manner of shoeing flies off, a new and useful cow tail holder, or a cat and rat scarer, it is bound to be of vital importance to the universe, and the unspeakable glory of "I am the man who did it" brightens even the musty gloom of the patent office corridors as the geniuses promenade through.

Last week was a rather gala week for the geniuses, for a large bunch of them landed together and took the office by storm. They were what the irrepressible clerks designate as "honeys."

The first "honey" looked something like Uncle Sam. He wore a stovepipe broad-brimmed hat and a long, rusty, black clerical coat. He carried a Josiah Pumpkin umbrella, and wore a Father Time beard and spectacles. He stood up in the office of the draughtsmen's division, and, raising his right arm, addressed the assembled company:

"I am just as old as railroad in the United States," he began, and stopped for applause. None came.

"I am just as old—" he began once more, and the assembled company, or rather a part of it, acting through necessity as audience, nodded approval.

"And for every year that's in my life there been some saving done. Want to know how? Say, come here," and he lowered his voice. "Is this between ourselves? All right, sir, then I will tell you all I know. I have made the most remarkable discovery that has ever been made in the United States, sir. I have invented a tobacco quid protector, sir, by which tobacco may be kept in the mouth without spitting, sir, and by which the quid may be preserved for any length of time without spoiling, sir. Saves money, saves health, saves morals," whereupon he produced a large clam-like box made of pine wood. He directed drawings to be made of it and the facts published to the world.

But he was nothing to the party from Green Bay, Wis., who, before he became a genius, had perhaps been a middle-class experimenting farmer. He tiptoed in very quietly and confidentially, took a chair by the center desk, laying his sun-browned derby with its roller-coaster brim on top of the ink bottles. He then clasped his hand as in meeting.

"I am from Bay City," he started, "and I have made the most remarkable discoveries that have ever been made in the history of the world," whereupon he began a list of them. The first was actually a cow tail holder of the most phenomenal device, consisting of a regular derrick to be constructed on the animal's hindquarters at great expense and trouble, and a pig iron clasp to grip the tail. Apparently the gentleman had had some bitter experience while milking resultant from switching tails of the bovine genus, and he had counted ties to get his troubles relieved. The next discovery on the list was equally gigantic in frame, and consisted of a clock alarm fashioned with special reference to scaring cats out of the milkpans. It consisted of a heavy iron weight attached to a rope made to fall into a tin pan placed on a stool beneath the clock, the whole chiefly designed for noise. He wound up his list of inventions with the invariable "perpetual motion," the hobby, the craze, the fascination of all inventors since invention began, and then narrated his history and all his personal affairs. He had been something of an explorer in his youth, and had crossed the plains with the Pathfinder of the west, Fremont. Then he had "taken to inventing" after a pastoral existence on a Wisconsin farm.

A clerical individual was the next in line, a Presbyterian minister from Richmond. He commenced with an "Ahem," and proceeded by gentle degrees to unfold his plan for the benefaction of humanity. It was a guide to keyholes!

"I am surprised, sir," remarked the gentleman at the desk, "that you of all men should have invented this." The minister was perturbed.

"Well," said he apologetically, "one very often finds, on returning home late in the evening, that the keyhole is—ah, extremely—"

"We understand perfectly," returned the office force and the gentleman retired blushing.

A stout old gentleman with whiskers and a wide-brimmed slouch hat next sauntered in. He hailed from the Hoosier state, and

apparently was one of the gods of the town hall, and accustomed to rapid-firing arguments. With one hand in his pocket and the other to brandish, while his whiskers swept the deck, he demanded the drawing of an eight-inch shell on a 2x4-inch paper. Nothing else would satisfy him, and he departed in thunderous disgust.

One of the regular visitors is a ministerial gentleman with mutton chops and a black tie and a coat that has seen better days. He has a newer and wilder invention on each visit, and invariably spreads the plans on the desk, eloquently calling the attention of the office and announcing gravely and with considerable dramatic force: "A little child can work it."

The office force feeling its dullness perceptible, squirms and feels foolish, so commiserating a look for them has the old inventor as he pronounces again with yet more emphasis when they fail to comprehend: "Why, a little child can work it."

One of the most thrilling inventions, however, is the new and improved fire escapes. The inventor was a portly individual who trod as though the floor were rotten eggs and gazed suspiciously on all the clerks. He desired to be assured that the patent office would not steal his invention, and, when so assured, accused the gentlemen of being liars, thieves and blackguards. Then he proceeded in melting tones to relate the tale of his new and improved fire escape. It was an umbrella which one must adjust beneath his chin and around his neck by a leather device more adjustable than a hang rope. Then, attiring his feet in soft-soled shoes, while the flames were mounting upward and the smoke envelops him, he jumps! It was very dramatic. The office beamed its comprehension, its approval for the use of the inventor in question.

One of the funniest incidents concerns another minister, who was addicted to a fondness for whisky and evolved a remarkable and original means of gratifying his taste surreptitiously. It was a new sort of liquor flask, very new, and was actually patented. It consisted in making the outer covering of the flask in the form of a book marked "Legal Decisions." The book was large enough entirely to cover the bottle, including the neck and stopper. The shell had a hole in the covering beneath the bottom of the flask, so that it could be pushed upward and the neck would project through the top.

Gave Him a Boost

Michael Joseph Dowling, speaker of the house of representatives of the Minnesota legislature, is a remarkable man. He is the product of a Minnesota blizzard, relates the Chicago Record. December 14, 1880, he was lost in a roaring blizzard in Yellow Medicine county and so badly frozen that it was necessary to amputate one leg above the knee, the other above the ankle, one arm at the elbow and all the fingers of the right hand. When the doctors had done with him all he had left of the ten fingers and ten toes generally assigned to humanity was the stump of a thumb amputated at the second joint. Twenty years later to a day he had won a victory in a hard contest for speaker, a victory so overwhelming that when the legislature met not a single opponent was left. The two decades had converted a poor, seemingly hopelessly crippled farmer's boy into a strong, self-reliant, well-educated gentleman, a successful newspaper man, an engaging writer and a consummate politician.

Few men have undergone the humiliation and suffering that Dowling has seen. When the blizzard had done its work and left him a mere physical reminder of his former self he was so poor that he became a public charge, being without means and so helpless that he could not feed himself. The county commissioners of Yellow Medicine deliberated what to do with him. Two members thought that the county in the absence of a poor house should pay some one to care for him. A third was of the opinion that it would be better to appropriate a larger sum of money and use it to provide Dowling with artificial limbs and one year's schooling. But the majority objected that after this had been done the chances were that he would still be a public charge. The boy was present while his fate was being decided. He seized the right opportunity and pleaded eloquently for a chance to make something of himself. His plea won the day, but he was compelled to sign an agreement not to return to the county after he had been equipped with artificial limbs and benefited by one year's schooling. The hard-fisted commissioners felt that in making this contract they had saved the county the expense of maintaining a cripple indefinitely.

But Dowling was determined and ambitious, and that tells the rest of his life story in brief. He got a good education, became an adept on artificial legs, returned to Renville, a county adjoining the one from which he had been so ignominiously excluded, got a small local public office, worked into the ownership of a weekly newspaper; then appeared in the sessions of the state legislature as a clerk, next became secretary of the National League of Republican Clubs, being nominated to that position as the "frozen son of Minnesota." He secured recognition as a man of executive ability and a good campaigner. Next he turned up as a newspaper correspondent in the Philippines, where he visited all the principal islands from Luzon to the Sulus. Dowling's success in obtaining an inter-

view with the Sulu sultan was characteristic. He was admitted to the barbaric presence, but not a word could he extract from the taciturn potentate. Dowling promptly proceeded "to take himself to pieces." Off came a leg. The sultan leaned forward to look. Off came another leg. The sultan was now alert with interest and satisfactorily voluble. Dowling got his interview as he proceeded to replace his artificial anatomy.

Returning from the Philippines Dowling reached the United States in time to attend the republican national convention. His peaked Filipino hat was one of the sights of Minnesota headquarters at Philadelphia. Later he became a candidate for the legislature on the republican ticket, won easily and immediately announced himself as a candidate for speaker.

Mr. Dowling is a man of culture, enjoys a comfortable and well-appointed home, with a most charming wife and finds more pleasure and satisfaction in life than most persons.

To Join the G. A. R.

Arrangements are being made for the early initiation of Senator Mark A. Hanna as a member of the Grand Army of the Republic. Senator Hanna has signified his willingness to join the ranks of the veterans, reports the Washington Post, although it was not without considerable difficulty that leading members of the organization who solicited his membership a few days ago gained his consent. Senator Hanna has quite an army record as a member of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Ohio volunteer infantry during the civil war. This regiment was mustered in at Cleveland, O., on May 5, 1864, several years after the opening of hostilities between the north and south. Senator Hanna is of Quaker origin and has always held to the tenets of that religious faith. He avoided enlisting in the army therefore until he thought that his services were absolutely necessary. He is an exceedingly modest man on the subject of his war record, and has not even deigned to mention it in his biographical sketch in the congressional directory. When Mr. Hanna enlisted in the One Hundred and Fiftieth Ohio the war had reached a crucial stage and troops were wanted for an emergency of 100 days to enable General Grant to carry out his Virginia campaign. The Ohio regiment in which Senator Hanna was a second lieutenant was loaded on cars as soon as mustered in and brought to Washington, where it was distributed along the fortifications near by, relieving more seasoned troops, which were hurried into the Wilderness campaign. While Lieutenant Hanna was with his regiment in front of Washington General Early made his raid to within sight of the capitol dome. President Lincoln went out to see the One Hundred and Fiftieth help repulse the confederate advance.

When General Rasseur, commander-in-chief of the Grand Army, was in Washington a few days ago the subject of the Ohio senator's war record happened under discussion during a conversation between two gentlemen. General Rasseur jocularly called Senator Hanna "comrade," and then seriously asked him why he did not join the Grand Army of the Republic. Mr. Hanna declined, but General Rasseur insisted, until finally Mr. Hanna consented.

Slightly Mixed

During the recent convention of the Woman's Christian Temperance union in this city, relates the Washington Star, members of the reception committee were on duty at the railroad passenger stations for the purpose of according a proper welcome to incoming delegates. Among those assigned to the work at the Pennsylvania depot was a particularly attractive young woman, who was as ambitious as she was inexperienced as regards the work of greeting strangers.

A train rolled in, and as the passengers alighted therefrom the attractive young woman was all in a flutter. She scanned the stream of humanity as it filed through the big gate, and at length espied a well-dressed gentleman, who not only wore a silk hat, but also a white ribbon attached to the lapel of his coat.

The attractive young woman rushed to meet the well-dressed gentleman as eagerly as though he were her long-lost brother.

"So glad to see you," she exclaimed. "Come right along and I will conduct you to comfortable quarters."

The wearer of the silk hat and the white ribbon was rendered speechless for a moment. He finally managed to gasp:

"Beg pardon, miss, but isn't this a mistake?"

"Can't be a mistake," the attractive young woman hurriedly declared. "You see, we both wear the white ribbon."

"And what does yours represent?" the stranger wanted to know.

"Why, it's the badge of the Woman's Christian Temperance union, of course."

"Well, mine is the color of the winning horse in the last race at the Benning race track this afternoon," smilingly explained the well-dressed gentleman.

Consternation and apologies followed.

Works at a Forge

A Kansas girl residing at Cawkee City, Esther Searle by name, has struck out in a new career for members of her sex who desire to be self-supporting. For two months her brother, a blacksmith, was absent from home and Esther took his place at the forge. She took hold of whatever there was to do with a heartiness and vim which astonished everyone. Her prowess

at the anvil became the common theme of conversation in the vicinity.

The Searle smithy became the rendezvous for those who had heard of the girl blacksmith's fame and curious people from far and wide drifted into the little city to see the prodigy for themselves. Miss Searle seemed to be unconscious that she was the object of so much attention and continued her duties at anvil or bellows just as if she were doing nothing extraordinary.

Long before the return of her brother from his vacation Miss Searle received the most satisfactory proof of the advantage to be derived from hard manual labor. Her biceps were so developed that she could swing the heaviest hammer in the shop with comparative ease. Her chest measurement had increased two inches in the same period and she was capable of sustaining the hardest and most protracted labor.

At the same time she was as lively as ever and enjoyed her games when out of the shop with all the zest of her girl companions.

These soon found that where the game required any extra endurance of strength Esther Searle had very much the advantage of them, her wrists being as hard as steel in comparison with their own.

The local belles were not so slow to perceive the advantage which her training in the smithy had given pretty Esther Searle, who had been rather a delicate girl, and many of them envied her the opportunity which she possessed for taking just such exercise as the swinging of the hammer and other duties necessitated.

The various movements coincide almost exactly with those called for by the most advanced rules of physical culture, calling into play almost all of the important sets of muscles, including those of the back, the arms, the thighs and the chest.

The Southern Mammy

The black mummies of the picturesque regime before the war, relates the Birmingham Herald, are so fast disappearing that a loan exhibit of these dear old types ought to be arranged by those who still claim the devotion of the few remaining types in typical homespun frocks and bandannaed heads. There is a typical mammy in Birmingham who figured recently at the wedding of a young woman to whose mother and grandmother she had been maid.

The wedding was a quiet one, despite mammy's entreaties to have a "big wedding."

"Hit's er shame," said mammy, "ter marry dat chile off'n enny sich way. Her mudder an' old mistiss, too, bof had big weddin's, and now dis her chile gwine ter be put off wid a reg'lar po' white folks' weddin'. Ain't er gwine ter have no supper, no bakin' o' cakes. I never seed a bride whut didn't have a bride's cake."

The old creature begged the young bride-to-be to at least arrange for a wedding supper and offered to bake all the cakes.

"My ole hands," she said, "neber will give out a'long as I can work for young mistiss' chillen. I'ze gettin' along, but I'ze dun live ter see all de chillen get mar'ed, an' now I wants ter cook one mo' weddin' supper 'fo' I die."

And sure enough, she did. The mistress of the house, going below stairs the morning preceding the wedding, noticed the unusual appearance of the kitchen at so early an hour. "Dear me," she said, "mammy, everything looks as if you had been up all night!"

And mammy, in a freshly starched homespun apron, a white handkerchief wound about her head, stood in the doorway. The kitchen was as shining as the pans upon the shelves. The face of the old negress glowed contentedly. Her withered old hands told the story of years of hard work.

"Mistiss," she began, "I sho' is ben up all night. I'ze ben er cookin' some weddin' cake for de baby. Lawdy, I couldn't 'low dat chile ter marry 'dout plenty weddin' cake. I don't keer whether dar's enny folks to eat it or not. I dun cook 'em for dat chile."

And, leading the way to the pantry, she showed the result of her night's work. There were rows of cakes, elaborately embossed, at which she gazed in silent admiration.

Her mistress, looking at the ebony-hued face before her, at its kindly, broad-seamed lines, was in that mood when a smile is dangerously akin to tears.

A Phenomena

The Marine Review holds that dry coal is less liable to spontaneous combustion than wet. The paper says:

"The case in point has to do with a fire which occurred on the coal-laden ship Walter H. Wilton, and Prof. Threlfall was commissioned to inquire into the probable cause. He shows pretty conclusively that wet coal is not the dangerous cargo it has been considered. . . . There is nothing to differentiate the firing of the cargo of the Walter H. Wilton from other instances of spontaneous combustion among coal cargoes. The Board of Trade submitted a number of inquiries to experts entrusted with the case. From a learned disquisition on the subject of pyrites in coal it was demonstrated that no single instance of spontaneous combustion had ever been shown to be due to this cause either on land or sea. On the action of moisture in facilitating spontaneous combustion Prof. Threlfall was equally explicit. He said: 'It is the almost universal opinion among coal shippers and seamen that wet coal is more likely to fire than dry coal. I shall, however, show that this is the exact opposite of the truth and is the result of want of

chemical knowledge and of believing what 'one was told when one was young.' He proves that water reduces the initial temperature of the coal and so retards any heating process, and, secondly, that if the coal does heat, a great portion of this heat will be absorbed by evaporating the water or moisture occurring among the coal. The conclusive part of his argument lies in the fact that two cubical bins, each holding 245½ tons, were loaded with dry small coal. In one bin the coal was drenched with a hose as it was shoveled into the bin. In sixty days the dry coal reached a temperature of 200 degrees C., and was on the point of firing, while the moist coal in the other bin had reached a temperature of only 35 degrees C. The lesson is obvious."

Breezy Tale

Charles B. Hanford, while playing in a Texas town, relates the New York Telegram, was approached by a young man in typical cowboy costume, who said:

"Are you the manager of this play that comes tonight?"

Mr. Hanford said he was.

"Do you want to hire a man to help act?"

"No. My company is complete."

"Want to hire a man to count money?"

"No."

"Want to hire a man to get out in the back of the theater and holler and applaud?"

"Not this tour. The audience is attending to that very satisfactorily."

"Want anybody for anything on earth?"

"Not that I think of at present."

"Well, that's just our luck. We've got a man here who recites pieces in consideration of being treated. If he doesn't get treated he'll hang around and make the bar-room unpleasant for hours. We don't want to hurt him, for he's a good sort, in the main. But he only knows three pieces—'Marc Antony's Oration,' 'Hamlet's Soliloquy' and 'Rienzi's Address to the Romans.' We thought that if you could flatter his mind into the belief that he's a great genius and haul him around the country two or three trips, so that he can learn a few new pieces from you, we'd be willing to make up a purse that would come mighty near making it worth while."

Necessaries of Life

There are really four necessaries of life—air, water, food and clothes, in the order named. To the first, and by long odds the most important, we pay no attention. It is the most plentiful substance in nature, yet the most absolutely indispensable, and we never think of it until man or beast renders it disagreeable. Without it we can live a few minutes, without water a few days, without food a few months, and without clothes forever and a day. Death by suffocation is horrible, but quick; by thirst it is appalling and long-drawn out. To find a substitute for water is to offset and, indeed, to control nature. Lieutenant Edward S. Farrow, when scouting for the Nez Percés in Idaho in 1878, suffered intensely because of a lack of water, until the friendly Indians taught him to peel the bark from a pine and suck the moisture out of the velvety white inner skin. In a short time he and his soldiers were quite independent of aqua pura. With a pocketful of pine bark they could go for days without drinking. Perhaps this is a small contribution to science, or, at least, to the economy of nations.



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