

## FORWARD.

Let me stand still upon the height of life;  
Much has been won, though much there  
is to win;  
I am a little weary of the strife.  
Let me stand still awhile, nor count it sin  
To cool my hot brow, ease the travel pain,  
And then address me to the road again.  
Long was the way, and steep and hard the  
climb;  
Sore are my limbs and faint I am to rest;  
Behind me lie long sandy tracks of time;  
Before me rises the steep mountain crest;  
Let me stand still; the journey is half done,  
And when less weary I will travel on.  
There is no standing still! Even as I pause  
The steep path shifts and I slip back  
space;  
Movement was safety; by the journey laws  
No help is given, no safe abiding place,  
No idling in the pathway hard and slow,  
I must go forward, or must backward go.  
I will go up, then, though the limbs may  
tire;  
And though the path be doubtful and un-  
seen;  
Better with the last effort to expire  
Than lose the toil and struggle that have  
been,  
And have the morning strength, the upward  
strain,  
The distance conquered, in the end made  
vain.  
Ah, blessed law! for rest is tempting sweet,  
And we would all lie down if so we might;  
And few would struggle on with bleeding  
feet;  
And few would ever gain the higher  
height  
Except for the stern law which bids us know  
We must go forward, or must backward go.  
—Susan Coolidge in the Independent.

## SANTA CLAUS IN THE MINES.

A California mining town, away up  
amid the snow clad, rock-bound peaks  
of the Sierra Nevada mountains.  
The town was irregularly laid out,  
and was scattered along a creek which  
emptied into the Cosumnes river sev-  
eral miles below. Both the dwellings  
and business houses—or, more properly  
speaking, cabins—were constructed of  
unhewn pine logs, the crevices between  
the timbers being “chinked” and  
plastered with mud. The town con-  
tained at least a dozen saloons, or  
saloons and gambling houses combined,  
and in these shells much of the hard-  
earned money of the miner parted  
company with him to take up its tem-  
porary abode in the saloon till or the  
pocket of the professional gambler.  
The dwellings of the town were scat-  
tered along the creek or built on the  
side of the adjacent mountain, the ma-  
jority of them being rough “bachelor  
dens,” for women were scarce in the  
newly discovered diggings.  
In a small cabin near the upper end  
of the town sat a woman, in widow's  
weeds, holding upon her knee a bright-  
eyed, sunny-faced little girl, about five  
years old, while a little cherub of a boy  
lay upon a bear skin before the open  
fireplace. It was Christmas eve, and  
the woman sat gazing abstractedly into  
the fireplace. She was yet young, and  
as the glowing flames lit up her sad  
face they invested it with a weird  
beauty.  
Mary Stewart was the widow of Aleck  
Stewart, and but two years before they  
had lived comfortably and happy, in a  
camp on the American river. Aleck  
was a brawny miner, but the premature  
explosion of a blast in an underground  
tunnel had blotted out his life in an in-  
stant, leaving his family without a  
protector, and in straitened circum-  
stances. His daily wages had been their  
sole support, and now that he was gone,  
what could they do?  
With her little family Mrs. Stewart  
had emigrated to the camp in which we  
find them (all western mining towns  
are called “camps”), and there she  
earned a precarious livelihood by wash-  
ing clothes for the miners. Hers was a  
hard lot, but the brave little woman  
toiled on cheered by the thought that  
her daily labors stood between her  
darling little ones and the gaunt wolf of  
starvation. Their clothes were patched  
and shabby and their food plain, and  
sometimes scant, yet they were never  
reduced to absolute suffering.  
Jack Dawson, a strong, honest miner,  
was passing the cabin this Christmas  
eve, when the voice of the little girl  
within attracted his attention. Jack  
possessed an inordinate love for chil-  
dren, and although his manly spirit  
would abhor the sneaking practice of  
eavesdropping, he could not resist the  
temptation to steal up to the window  
just a moment to listen to the sweet  
prattling voice. The first words he  
caught were:  
“Before papa died we always had  
Christmas, didn't we, mamma?”  
“Yes, Totty, darling, but papa earned  
money enough to afford to make his  
little pets happy at least once a year.  
You must remember, Totty, that we are  
very poor, and although mamma works  
very, very hard, she can scarcely earn  
enough to supply us with food and  
clothes.”  
Little bright faced Benny raised his  
curly head from its soft nest in the  
warm bear skin and cheerfully said:  
“Des' wait till I dit to be a man,  
mamma, an' 'oo won't have to wort. I's  
doin' to be a dreat bid miner, like papa  
was, an' dit 'oo ever so much money,  
but I won't do near 'em hateful blast-  
in' fings an' dit tilled 'ike papa did.”  
“Jack Dawson still lingered upon the  
outside. He could not leave, although  
he felt ashamed of himself for listen-  
ing.”  
“Why bless my little man, what a  
brave future he has planned! I do  
hope and pray, darling, that you will  
grow up a strong and good a man, and

one who will be blessing and a comfort  
to mamma when she gets old.”  
“We hung up our stockings last  
Christmas, didn't we, mamma?” ques-  
tioned the little girl.  
“Yes, Totty, but we were poor then,  
and Santa Claus never notices real poor  
people. He gave you a little candy  
then, just because you were such good  
children.”  
“Is we any poorer now, mamma?”  
“Oh, yes, much poorer. He would  
never notice us at all now.”  
Jack Dawson detected a tremor of  
sadness in the widow's voice as she ut-  
tered the last words, and he wiped a  
suspicious dampness from his eyes.  
“Where's our clean stockings, mam-  
ma? I'm going to hang mine up, any-  
how; maybe he will come like he did  
before, just because we try to be good  
children,” said Totty.  
“It will be no use, my darling. I am  
sure he will not come,” and tears gath-  
ered in the mother's eyes as she thought  
of her empty purse.  
“I don't care, I'm going to try, any-  
how. Please get one of my stockings,  
mamma,” pleaded the little girl.  
“Your clean stockings are on the  
line outside, and I can't go out and  
hunt for them this bitter cold night.  
You may hang up your old ones, but  
oh, darling, I fear you will be so terri-  
bly disappointed in the morning! Please  
let it go till next Christmas, and then  
we may be richer!”  
“No, mamma, I'm going to try any-  
how.”  
Jack Dawson's great generous heart  
swelled until it seemed bursting from  
his bosom. He heard the pattering of  
little bare feet upon the cabin floor as  
Totty ran about hunting her's and  
Benny's stockings, and after she had  
hung them up heard her sweet voice  
again as she wondered over and over  
if Santa really would forget them. He  
heard the mother, in a choking voice,  
tell her treasures to get ready for bed;  
heard them lip their childish prayers,  
the little girl concluding: “And, oh,  
Lord, please tell good Santa Claus that  
we are very poor, but that we love him  
as much as rich children do, for dear  
Jesus' sake—Amen!”  
After they were in bed, through a  
small rent in the plain white curtain he  
saw the widow sitting before the fire,  
her face buried in her hands, and weep-  
ing bitterly. On a peg, just over the  
fireplace, hung two little patched and  
faded stockings, and then he could  
stand it no longer. He softly moved  
away from the window to the rear of  
the cabin, where some objects flutter-  
ing to the wind met his eye. Among  
these he searched until he found a little  
blue stocking which he removed from  
the line, folded tenderly and placed in  
his overcoat pocket, and then set out  
for the main street of the camp. He  
entered Harry Hawk's gambling hall,  
the largest in the place, where a host of  
miners and gamblers were at play.  
Jack was well known in the camp, and  
when he got up on a chair and called  
for attention the hum of voices and  
clicking of ivory checks suddenly  
ceased. Then in an earnest voice he  
told what he had seen and heard, re-  
peating every word of the conversation  
between the mother and her children.  
In conclusion he said:  
“Boys, I think I know you, every  
one of you, an' I know just what kind  
o' metal yer made of. I've an idee  
that Santa Claus knows just whar the  
cabin's situated, an' I've an idee he'll  
find it afore mornin'. Hyar's one of  
the little gal's stock'n's thet I hooked  
off'n the line whar I heard the widdar  
say she'd hung 'em with the washin'.  
The daddy o' them little uns was a good  
hard working miner, an' he crossed  
the range in the line o' duty, just as any  
one of us is liable to do in our danger-  
ous business. Hyar goes a \$20 piece  
right down in the toe, and hyar I lay  
the stockin' on this card table—now  
chip in much or little, as ye kin afford.”  
“Hold them checks o' mine on the  
ace-jack,” said Brocky Clark, a gam-  
bler, and leaving the faro table he picked  
the little stocking up carefully, looked  
at it tenderly, and when he laid it down  
another twenty had gone into the toe to  
keep company with the one placed there  
by Dawson.  
Another and another came up until  
the foot of the stocking was well filled,  
and then came the cry from the gam-  
bling tables:  
“Pass her around, jack.”  
At the word he lifted it from the  
table and started around the hall. Be-  
fore he had circulated it at half a dozen  
tables it showed signs of bursting be-  
neath the weight of gold and silver  
coin, and a strong coin bag, such as  
he used for sending treasure by express,  
was procured and the stocking placed  
inside of it. The round of the large  
hall was made, and in the meantime  
the story had spread all over the camp.  
From various saloons came messages  
saying:  
“Send the stockin' 'round the camp;  
boys are a-waitin' for it!”  
With a party at his heels, Jack went  
from saloon to saloon. Games ceased  
and tipplers left the bars as they en-  
tered each place, and miners, gamblers,  
speculators, everybody, crowded up to  
tender their Christmas gift to the  
miner's widow and orphans. Any one  
who has lived in the far western camps  
and is acquainted with the generosity  
of western men will feel no surprise or  
doubt my truthfulness when I say that  
after the round had been made the lit-  
tle blue stocking and the heavy canvas  
bag contained over \$8,000 in gold and  
silver coin.  
Horses were procured and a party  
despatched to the larger town down on  
the Cosumnes from which they re-  
turned near daybreak with toys, cloth-  
ing, provisions, etc., in almost endless  
variety. Arranging their gifts in proper  
shape, and securely tying the mouth of  
the bag of coin, the party noiselessly

repaired to the widow's humble cabin.  
The bag was first laid on the step, and  
the other articles piled up in a heap  
over it. On the top was laid the lid of  
a large pasteboard box on which was  
written with a piece of charcoal:  
“Santy Clause doesn't allow Giv  
poor Folks The shake in This camp.”  
Christmas dawned bright and beau-  
tiful. The night had been a stinging  
cold one, and when the rising sun peep-  
ed over the chain of mountains to the  
east, and shot its beams upon the west-  
ern range, the sparkling frost flashed  
from the snow-clad peaks as though  
their towering heads were sprinkled  
with pure diamonds.  
Mrs. Stewart arose, and a shade of  
pain crossed her handsome face as the  
empty little stockings caught her ma-  
ternal eye. She cast a hurried glance  
toward the bed where her darlings lay  
sleeping, and whispered:  
“Oh, God! how dreadful is poverty!”  
She built a glowing fire, set about  
preparing the frugal breakfast, and  
when it was almost ready she approach-  
ed the bed, kissed the little ones until  
they were wide awake and lifted them  
to the floor. With eager haste Totty  
ran to the stockings, only to turn away  
sobbing as though her heart would  
break. Tears blinded the mother, and  
clasping her little girl to her heart she  
said in a choking voice:  
“Never mind, my darling; next  
Christmas I am sure mamma will be  
richer, and then Santa Claus will bring  
us lots of nice things.”  
“Oh! mamma!”  
The exclamation came from little  
Benny, who had opened the door and  
was standing gazing in amazement upon  
the wealth of gifts there displayed.  
Mrs. Stewart sprang to his side and  
looked in speechless astonishment. She  
read the card, and then, causing her  
little ones to kneel down with her in  
the open doorway, she poured out her  
soul in a torrent of praise and thank-  
sgiving to God.  
Jack Dawson's burly form moved  
from behind a tree a short distance  
away, and sneaked off up the gulch,  
great crystal tears chasing each other  
down his face.  
The family arose from their knees  
and began to move the stores into the  
room. There were several sacks of  
flour, hams, canned fruits, pounds and  
pounds of coffee, tea, and sugar, new  
dress goods, and a handsome, warm  
woolen shawl for the widow, shoes,  
stockings, hats, mittens, and clothing  
for the children, a great big wax doll  
that could cry and move its eyes for  
Totty, and a beautiful red sled for  
Benny. All were carried inside amidst  
alternate laughs and tears.  
“Bring in the sack of salt, Totty, and  
that is all,” said the mother. “Is not  
God good to us?”  
“I can't lift it, mamma, it's frozen to  
the step!”  
The mother stooped and took hold of  
it and lifted harder and harder, until  
she raised it from the step. Her cheek  
blanched as she noted its great weight,  
and breathlessly she carried it in and  
laid it upon the breakfast table. With  
trembling fingers she loosened the  
string and emptied the contents upon  
the table. Gold and silver—more than  
she had ever thought of in her wildest  
dreams of comfort, and almost buried  
in the pile of treasure lay Totty's little  
blue stocking.  
We will not intrude longer upon such  
happiness, but leave the joyful family  
sounding praises to Heaven and—Santa  
Claus.  
The whole story soon reached Mrs.  
Stewart's ears. She knew Jack Daw-  
son by sight, and when she next met  
him, although the honest fellow tried  
hard to push by her, she caught hold  
of his coat and compelled him to stand  
and listen to her grateful thanks. The  
tears shed were not all hers, for when  
Jack moved away there were drops of  
liquid crystal hanging to his ready  
cheeks.  
Four months from that “Merrie  
Christmas” Mrs. Stewart became Mrs.  
Jack Dawson, and every evening, when  
the hardy miner returns from his daily  
labor to his comfortable and happy  
home, Totty and Benny will climb  
upon his strong knees and almost  
smother him with kisses, while they  
lovingly address him as “Our Santa  
Claus papa.”—[Williamsport Breakfast  
Table.

## Married the Wrong Twin.

Portland Oregonian.  
A remarkable story comes to light  
from St. Helen, which is well vouch-  
ered for. About six months ago twin broth-  
ers—Alfred and Henry Grove—arrived  
from Kansas and settled near St. Helen.  
There was a very strong resemblance  
between them, in fact so strong that in-  
timate friends could scarcely tell one from  
the other. Henry was married, but his  
wife was living in Kansas. He soon  
made the acquaintance of the family  
of John Avery, living near, including  
their daughter, Lottie Avery, aged 19.  
One night about five weeks ago in jest  
he asked her to become his wife, and to  
his utter surprise she accepted, inform-  
ing her mother immediately. The  
mother, in a practical way, broached  
the subject of the date of the marriage,  
etc., and before Grove could recover  
from surprise the details had been ar-  
ranged. He immediately went to his  
brother Alfred, told his story, and  
asked for advice. Alfred volunteered  
to personate his brother and stand for  
him. The ceremony took place Octo-  
ber 12, the couple remaining at the  
home of the bride's parents. Alfred  
fell in love with the girl, and a week  
after the marriage told of the decep-  
tion. In her indignation she ordered  
him from the house. She then in-  
formed her parents, and the father  
started after the son-in-law with a  
shotgun and has followed Alfred to  
this city, where he is supposed to have  
fled.

## THREE SOLDIERS' CHRISTMAS.

From the New York Sun.  
As the guests were rising from a din-  
ner table which had been covered with  
the good things of the season, one of  
them said to the hostess: “No one  
could enjoy a dinner more than I have  
enjoyed this.”  
“John will not agree with you,” turn-  
ing to her husband; “he insists that he  
helped to cook and eat a dinner that  
tasted better than any I ever prepared.”  
The guests joined in requesting the  
husband to tell the story of that dinner,  
and after they had moved to the sitting  
room and were comfortably seated,  
John began:  
“On the last Thursday of November,  
1864, three of us sat in a shebang in the  
prison stockade at Florence, South  
Carolina. Shebang was the prison  
word for a dwelling constructed in this  
way: An excavation about seven feet  
in length, six feet in breadth, and two  
feet in depth was made. The earth  
taken out was banked up perpendicu-  
larly on the edge of the excavation in-  
side; outside the surface was sloped.  
Two crotched sticks driven firmly into  
the ground, a ridge laid in the crotches,  
army blankets stretched over the ridge  
pole and fastened to the earth slope  
with wooden pins, a mud chimney at  
one end and a hole for a door at the  
other finished the building.  
“It was in the afternoon. We had  
received our daily rations—about three  
tablespoonfuls of gookas or cow-peas,  
and a little over a pint of corn-meal—  
had cooked and eaten them, and were  
sitting on the ground floor of the she-  
bang, our eyes listlessly turned towards  
a rude bus-relief upon the chimney,  
which was meant to represent a human  
figure. In a moment of art enthusiasm  
one of us, a Kentucky cavalry man, had  
fashioned it when the chimney was put  
up. It would have made a tobacco-  
ist's Indian split its sides with laugh-  
ter. But our thoughts were as shallow  
as our faces.  
“After a time the Iowa man spoke:  
“Boys, it must be Thanksgiving day at  
home, and my folks are just through  
their dinner. I don't believe they cared  
much for it.”  
“We were silent for a while. I was  
the first to speak:  
“Well, boys, we mustn't think about  
home, or any one there. We all know  
what that means if we kept it up—death  
and a place in the trench. I want my  
bones laid in New York, where I was  
born. I know we have had a mean  
Thanksgiving dinner, and it does seem  
as though we had to look around a lit-  
tle to find something to be thankful for,  
but we are alive yet, and we may yet  
get home after all Thanksgiving's gone,  
but if we live until Christmas we can  
have a dinner, and won't be hungry  
after we have eaten it.”  
“How?” inquired my two comrades  
eagerly.  
“We won't feel much hungrier than  
we do now if we each put by a spoon-  
ful of meal and a spoonful of gookas  
every day from now until Christmas,  
and I think our savings will make a  
dinner that will be satisfying.”  
“After some discussion as to the rel-  
ative strength of our appetite and our  
wills, it was decided to lay by our six  
spoonfuls of food every day, all agree-  
ing that the spoonfuls should not be  
heaped, but even. I dreamed that night  
of feasting on all the good things in  
the way of food that I had ever heard  
of or eaten. The next morning we  
made two bags of generous size. In  
the afternoon, when our rations came,  
we put three spoonfuls of gookas in  
one bag and three spoonfuls of meal in  
the other. Every succeeding day the  
bags received their portion, and were  
fed of affectionately, to find out how  
much they contained.  
“Christmas morning, 1864, after  
being long waited for, came at last.  
The faint light of the morning found  
us stirring. We had hoarded our fuel,  
saving a little every day. It was not  
an easy thing to do, for the daily fuel  
ration of ninety men was three sticks  
of cordwood of average size. To this  
supply we had added by picking up  
every splinter as large as a toothpick  
and every chip as large as a ten cent  
piece that we discovered in our wander-  
ings about the stockade.  
“The occupants of a shebang near  
our own, in addition to the usual cook-  
ing utensils—quart bottles and tin-cups  
or sheet-iron pans—possessed a gun-  
boat. This was a piece of old roofing  
tin, made into a pan more than a foot  
long and about six inches deep and  
wide. The corners where the tin had but  
cut off or turned were soldered with cor-  
meal. It was not sightly, but was con-  
venient. We had bargained before for  
the use of this gunboat.  
“The fire was lighted. The gookas  
had been soaked the night before, and  
were now put in the gunboat covered  
with water, and the gunboat was set  
over the fire upon two mud bricks made  
for the occasion. A watched pot may  
not boil, but a watched gunboat did,  
for three heads bent forward and six  
eyes gazed intently upon the contents  
of the vessel over the fire, until the  
water was bubbling and the peas car-  
ing in and out among the bubbles.  
“At short intervals a few peas were  
taken out in a spoon and allowed to  
cool, and a pea was tasted by each of  
us and judgment given as to its being  
done. Finally we were unanimous in  
the opinion that the gookas were cooked  
enough. Meal was brought forth and  
stirred in, and the pudding was allowed  
to remain on the fire until it had thick-  
ened, so that there was danger of its  
being scorched.  
The peas were dark skinned, and had  
given the pudding a purplish hue. The  
gunboat was lifted off and set on the  
ground to cool. While we were wait-  
ing the fire was renewed. Corn meal  
saved for the purpose was put in and  
thoroughly dried and browned. This

corn coffee was divided into three por-  
tions, put into three quart kettles and  
boiled.  
“At last our dinner was ready. The  
gunboat was put on the ground in the  
center of the shebang, and we sat  
around it. Two of us had small tin  
pans, and one a flat piece of sheet iron  
for plates, and each had a spoon. Not  
one of us would have been called a re-  
ligious man, but we hesitated, looked  
at another, bowed our heads and were  
still. But it was only for a moment,  
and then the Kentuckian volunteered  
to act as host and helped us and him-  
self.  
“When that dinner was over the con-  
tents of the gunboat and quart cup had  
vanished, and it was just noon. After  
such unusual exertion we lay down,  
drew our blankets over us and slept.  
We were awakened near night by a  
neighbor, who called us that we might  
get our rations. After returning to the  
shebang the Iowa man said: ‘Boys, I'll  
think of that dinner as long as I live.  
Why, I ain't hungry yet.’”

## The Future of America.

London (Eng.) Times.  
These last seven years have given oc-  
casion to the Americans and to their  
foreign friends to give utterance to  
many congratulations about the happy  
result of that struggle of a century ago  
(the war of independence). Every one  
has been saying, with all degrees of  
eloquent emphasis, that never since the  
world began has there been such pro-  
gress such as has been seen between  
the Atlantic and Pacific shores since  
then. People point to maps of a hun-  
dred or fifty, or twenty years ago, and  
show us with exultant wonder the differ-  
ence between each pair. With the  
peace of Paris the United States reached  
out to the Mississippi, and included  
New Orleans and Florida; and vast re-  
gions of that tract were uninhabited  
and uncultured. We need not dwell on  
the change that each year, each week,  
has brought forth; on the extension o'  
territory westward and northward, o'  
the hundreds of great cities, the my-  
riads of towns, the tens of thousand  
of railway, the mines, the manufac-  
tures, the machinery. All that is fa-  
miliar to every one. What is less ob-  
vious is the goal to which the vast ma-  
terial progress is tending; a question  
which has perplexed reflecting minds  
since De Tocqueville's day, and which  
is exercising America not a little at  
this moment. The United States have  
now formed and established themselves,  
not without one struggle of tremendous  
proportions; the material resources are  
procured to them; they are safe for a  
long time to come against many of the  
trials which must befall the older civil-  
ization of Europe. But it is already al-  
most a commonplace to say that their  
real trials are only just beginning.  
When the era of settlement is over that  
of internal development will begin.  
What will be the moral and intellect-  
ual aspect of it? What will be the  
gift of America to the common  
stock of ideas? The question is one  
that can only be vaguely asked as yet;  
time alone can answer it. But mean-  
while it would be vain to deny that the  
century old republic is giving every in-  
dication of a future as remarkable in  
the region of morals and of ideas as in  
the material region. Literature is be-  
ginning to take a character, and a very  
charming character, of its own; in art  
the Americans are showing, if not in-  
dependence, at least an extraordinary  
facility which must lead them to better  
things before long. They are eager for  
all that Europe can send them in the  
way of letters, the drama, or pictures.  
There is no “evacuation of New York”  
on the part of English actors, or Eng-  
lish writers. The keen American mind  
is turning with eagerness, not unin-  
formed with criticism, toward the best  
that the modern world can give it. The  
intellectual future of such a race is not  
likely to disappoint the most sanguine  
of the prophets.

## The Well Had Run Dry.

Boston Globe.  
Uncle Bill and Uncle Jeff, two well-  
known old men of this city, met at the  
corner grocery store in Dover, New  
Hampshire, the other day, and got to  
talking of their younger days to a big  
crowd of eager listeners, when Uncle  
Jeff spoke up: “Say, Bill, do you re-  
member the trip we made to Port-  
smouth, eh?”  
“Shet up!” said Uncle Bill, at which  
Jeff laughed heartily.  
The boy tumbled and “knew he  
could a tale unfold.”  
“Tell us, Uncle Jeff,” was the cry.  
Uncle Bill flitted a little on his chair,  
but finally said: “Give it to 'em, Jeff.”  
“Well, boys,” Uncle Jeff commenced,  
“Bill and me started for a ride to  
Portsmouth one day, and, as it was  
rather cold, we put a jug in the tail of  
the wagon. Well, we got thar all right  
and had started for home. Of course  
we had samped the jug purty often, as  
it was awful cold. Now, boys, you  
know Bill is a leetle near-sighted and  
every time we passed a watering trough,  
Bill had to get out and give the boss a  
drink. Well, we had got putty nigh  
home, and also to the bottom of the  
jug when Bill got out at what he  
thought was a well, to give the boss  
another drink. I warn't payin' much  
attention to him. Arter he'd been  
turnin' for some time he hollered to  
me: ‘Uncle Jeff, this 'ere well 'pears  
to have gone dry!’ I looked up and  
commenced to laff. ‘What are you  
laffin' at?’ said he. ‘Why,’ said I,  
‘you darned old fool, how do you ex-  
pect to get water out of an old grind-  
stone?’ Bill looked, then clambered  
into the wagon. He never spoke till  
he got into town; then he said, ‘Say,  
Jeff, don't give it away and I'll treat.’  
And boys, this is the first time I've  
ever mentioned it since.”