

A MODEST FUNNY MAN.

HOW A HUMORIST CLIMBED TO AN EMINENT PLACE.

Country Boys Who Have Become Famous in Journalism—Prominent Business Men Who First Saw Daylight in the Rural Districts—A Long List.

Whoever reads about a funny man suspects fun in what he is reading, but no fun is intended when I say that Nye is modest. He is almost painfully so. He is himself the best person he ever talks about—the last whom he tries to push along. It was in the minds of most men present on the evening when he was introduced to the guild he has himself distinguished, to regard him as interesting because he is an outsider come to New York. Not only that, because he has leaped from Wyoming territory over the heads of so many of us here and into a salary of \$5,000 a year. That is the broad fact about his life. The lesser details are known to few. Born in New England, he went west while young, but, like the typical American, was not so much either an eastern or a western man, but that he could strongly identify himself with other sections, as he did with Asheville, N. C. He is a lawyer, but disconnected newspaper work was his main reliance until one day he ceased serious writing, discovered his own humorous vein, founded a paper in Laramie City, Wyo., named it The Boomerang, after a mule that he owned, and saw it fall for lack of subscribers, while every newspaper office in the country prized it and riddled it with sneers. Then he had an offer of the position he now occupies, and his success excites remark among his co-laborers because, as they say, "he is a country boy who has climbed to eminence over the shoulders of the New Yorkers."

Was there ever such nonsense unpunished? The very men who have made this remark to me are countrymen born and reared. In that room, listening to Nye, there was only one born New Yorker—himself a curiosity in the profession on that account. In the little circle that Nye joined on that night are the managing editors of six daily newspapers, and not one of them is a New Yorker. There were leader writers, critics, city editors and reporters, and only one New Yorker. Was there ever such a thing heard of? New York is instructed, entertained, advised and informed by countrymen manning every one of its newspapers.

And pray tell me in what walk of life in Gotham would Bill Nye be any more of an exception to the rule than he is in journalism? Wall street, ruled by Gould, who came with a beautiful, expressive grown up the Tribune or S. V. White, who is a country looking today as the obelisk in the park, and who hails from a farm; or Cyrus W. Field, of the little hamlet of Stockbridge, Mass. Would Bill Nye have broken the rule had he come here to practice law with Horace Conkling, of Utica, who was a rank provincial in dress, habits and manners when he started anew at middle age in this city a few years ago, with Joseph H. Choate, who was a country boy with Laha Root, who hails from the Adirondack region, or William F. Howe, the English immigrant, or ninety-nine in a hundred other lawyers? Would Edgar Wilson, Western Dr. Coyley, and all the others, among whom only two that I know of are city men? Here and there you will find in the roll of city doctors the name New York, inheriting the father's business, but the leading doctors and the mass of doctors are of the farms of the country. And pray where is it not the same, from our country born mayor to the last figure in the last line of girls in Rice's Barbecue company?

Our best politician, Alex. Williams, is a New Englander, and our best lawyer, John H. Mitchell, began his law career over the rocks of Westchester as a boy, our Harry Hill was a country bumpkin in England once, our Mercutio, whom the boys irreverently call "the macaroni millionaire," was a country boy in Italy, and Russell Sage would not get over being "country" or swapping horses or wearing boots if he lived a thousand years. Francis W. Moran was born in Toronto, so that he is not a countryman, but neither is he a New Yorker. It is the same in the art world. The only New York born artist that I know of is Charles J. Taylor, of Puck. In politics there are several New Yorkers, though they form only a drop in the bucketful of countrymen who rule this town.

But to turn the subject and view it from the other side, let us see whether any New Yorker occur to the mind as having a fame sufficient to rank them in importance with the country boys who are forever pouring into town and shouldering every one before them and out of their way? Yes, there is Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Bergh and Bury Wall, the ex-mayor of New York, and William Waldorf Astor, and I think, Judge Hilton, the heir of A. T. Stewart, and James Gordon Bennett, Tony Pastor, Pierre Lorillard and Edward Harrigan. Of those who were born here and are quite famous in town there are many of the heirs of old established business houses, among which Mr. Bennett and Mr. Lorillard belong, as do the Appletons and Harveys, but through their establishments are famous abroad in the land the individuals are mainly unknown outside the city. If you include the Knickerbockers and other landed families of long established residence here you will add possibly 2,000 men, women and children to the list, though not all the Knickerbockers (by which is meant descendants of the Dutch) are city folks. Every one of the Vanderbilts of the first, second and third generations, dating forward from the old commodore, was born a countryman and farmer's son.—Julian Ralph's New York Letter.

Farragut and His Son.

"While at a station on the lower Mississippi Admiral Farragut gave orders for the crews of the gunboats to get their fresh meat from the country. One day a boat from the Tallahatchie landed and the men went ashore and shot a fine steer, dressed it and brought it aboard. Admiral Farragut and his staff were then making the regular tour of inspection and were on board his vessel, anchored near by. Capt. Linnekin sent him a quarter of this beef, and received a very cordial acknowledgment in return. It may not be out of place here to relate the following anecdote of the bluff old admiral, which Capt. Linnekin gives as follows: "Loyal Farragut was on the deck of his father's vessel during an engagement, and the shot and shell were flying around pretty thick. Loyal would duck his head when he heard the shells coming, while his father paced the deck calm and erect. By and by the admiral turned to the boy and said, 'Stand up, sonny, you can't dodge God almighty.'"—Cor. Brooklyn Eagle.

A bit of soft paper is recommended by an English doctor for dropping medicines into the eye, as being equally effective as brushes, glass droppers, etc., and far less likely to introduce foreign substances.

WIVES IN THE CITY.

LITTLE REDDRESS FOR WOMEN DESSERTED BY THEIR HUSBANDS.

Marital Troubles Brought to Light in the Police Courts of New York City—Choice Between Pauperism and Starvation. Delinquent Husbands.

Men tired of their wives occupy more than a fair share of the time and attention of the police magistrates. The law gives very little redress to women deserted by their husbands. Before a magistrate can interfere at all in behalf of the woman she is obliged to apply to the commissioners of charities and petition for a requisition to the magistrate in the district in which she resides. This requisition empowers, or rather orders, the magistrate to issue a warrant for the arrest of the delinquent husband. Before obtaining the order of the magistrate the applicant is obliged to swear that she is without means of support, and that she will be obliged to call on the city to support her if her husband is not compelled to provide for her. If she asks for any of the luxuries of life she will not get them, because, having secured the arrest of her husband, she merely occupies the position of a witness in the police court. She has sworn that she will have to be supported by the city if the city does not compel her husband to provide for her; therefore the city takes charge of the unfortunate woman's affairs, and takes the husband into custody merely to protect itself from having another pauper to support.

FIVE DOLLARS PER WEEK. This being the case, the woman is rarely allowed more than \$5 per week by the magistrates for the support of herself and perhaps two or three children. If she has no children and can do work, or her children who are able to work, and who turn any of their earnings over to her, those facts are taken into consideration and the amount the husband is ordered to pay her is correspondingly lessened.

The husband may have made the wife's life so miserable that she cannot live with him. He loudly announces, however: "I never refused to live with her. She left me. I am willing to take her home with me now and support her."

"How is this? Is he telling the truth?" the magistrate inquires.

"I could not live with him. He abused me, called me all manner of vile names and said he wished I would leave him," the woman answers.

Although the magistrate may believe every word the woman says he is powerless to do anything but tell her to go home with the husband, and, if he abuses her, to come back and have him arrested for disorderly conduct or assault. If the woman refuses to do so, she is ordered to leave the house or become a pauper, supported by the city.

Many of these applicants for support have not been actually abandoned, but have been doing more than their share toward maintaining the household, while the delinquent husband has been turning a mere pittance of his earnings into the house, drinking up the remainder and abusing his family every time he got drunk.

"If you would only give him a talking to and make him promise to do better, judge," the wife says. "Don't look him up. The little money I get from him is better than none, and if he is locked up he can't earn anything."

LECTURING THE DELINQUENT. The magistrate thus appealed to delivers a lecture to the delinquent and dismisses him with the threat of protracted imprisonment if he does not treat his family better. The magistrate, however, rarely believes that this will have any lasting effect, and it very rarely does. In most instances the man is so firmly convinced that ever that his family are unable to get along without him, and he feels sure that an abuse wife will not dare to desert him again, that he will continue to live on the street through fear that the little income will be still further decreased by his imprisonment. Accordingly, he usually acts worse than before. If he continues to give some little support to his family his wife bears his abuse as best she can.

Some of these men become so reckless that they refuse to be of the slightest benefit to their families and are locked up. The law is made powerless with men whose income will allow them to live apart from their wives. If such men choose to contribute to the support of their wives they may abandon them at will and a police magistrate can do nothing to aid the deserted wife. Many wives are unable to support truthfully that they are able to become paupers. Many others will not submit to the humiliation of swearing so even if it is true.

Many reform, well educated women submit to all the humiliating preliminaries to securing the abandonment warrants, because of their just indignation at being abandoned for women whose physical charms are superior to their own. Such applicants are surprised to learn that the law is not framed to punish such offenses, but merely to prevent an increase of the number of paupers. The delinquent is merely called upon to give bonds to give his wife a certain amount each week.

Rare indeed do such men face their injured wives, even once a week. Some places have to be provided for the receipt and delivery of the weekly stipend. This has led the sergeants of the various police courts to assume a duty, which has of late grown to such proportions that it has become decidedly onerous. Sergeants of the police courts have more than fifty men on their lists who are thus handing in their weekly installments. These are passed over to the deserted wives, and respectively. In many of the busier courts this list will include from 100 to 150 names.—New York Evening Sun.

Harpooning Boards at the Docks. Among the boats of our docks jammed boards are often found in considerable numbers. The other day an Italian fisher found them very systematically just above the foot of Desbrosses street. He used a round piece of heavy wood, about three inches in diameter and eighteen long. One end of this was armed with a sharp pointed spike, while the other end was attached about twelve feet of clothesline. Taking the stick in his hand, the Italian darted the spike into the end of a board, much as a sailor would harpoon a whale, and then carefully drew it up so that he could reach it with his hands and pull it up on the dock. The spike would sometimes pull out when the board was almost within reach, and one particularly attractive one had to be harpooned a dozen times before the Italian could call it his own. The man drew the boards thoroughly, then chops them into kindling wood, which his wife sells. He is said to be making a fair living out of the business.—New York Evening Sun.

The Main Point Vividly Indicated. A little Sunday school girl, whose lesson had been about the story of the fiery furnace, was telling her mother about it. "And, mamma," she said, "that naughty king heated an oven just as hot as he could get it, put three good men in and they wouldn't cook a bit!"—Syracuse Herald.

Quite Another Matter. A Wisconsin court has decided that a husband may open his wife's letters. That is all very well so far as it goes, but what this country wants is a law to protect a husband who forgets to mail his wife's letters.—Omaha World.

HUNTING FOR RIVER THIEVES.

Creeping in a Boat Along the Wharves and Piers of New York City.

It was a poor night for river thieves to be abroad. They generally come out when fog and rain and mist are thickest. Jose and Cregan bent to their oars with a short arm and shoulder stroke, the kind that would drive Bob Cook wild, but is the best in the world for this kind of work. Past the silent colony of canal boats off Jeannette park the boat shot along awhile, then halted.

Slowly and silently the men paddled close to the outer edge of the fleet. On one of the furthest boats could be seen a man handling a long ladder. They watched him, satisfied themselves that he was all right, then moved away. They crept close to the edges of the wharves and piers, biding in the friendly shadows as to spring out unexpectedly on any crooked work that might be going on. They rowed among the fishing smacks at Fulton Market basin. Baskets, coils of rope and hawsers lay around in the bright moonlight. Not a soul was on guard. It seemed strange that none of the gangs came around to steal until you remembered the constant fear they are in of the harbor police. The river was as quiet as a country graveyard on a stormy winter day. A Catherine ferry boat stole with noiseless wheel out of her slip. Not even the warning whistle was sounded as she silently started on her way. Into the basin between the twin "Dover docks" crept the police boat. Giant floats laden with freight cars rose and fell slowly with the tide, like sea monsters asleep. A shanty on a small float was visited. There wasn't a sign of life about it. "Old McDonald isn't doing any work to-night," said one. "He's a speculator," and sometimes people come here to sell him things between midnight and daylight." McDonald's dummy looking rowboats were moored close by. They bobbed up and down and made queer noises when the little waves broke on their sides, as if they were gazing the officers for not finding any one to arrest.

Foul, pungent and mysterious low tide odors, suggestive of old, dark, tumbled, bearded men under the pier. Slowly the men rowed their boat up between the slimy, gray timbers. Jose flashed the light through the dim recesses and scanned every cranny with care. "Sometimes they hide a boat or two in there with a nice little jug of sugar," he said, "and snake it out lively when they think we're not looking." There was nothing to be seen this time, though. Up past the bridge the boat skimmed, each man keeping his "weather eye lit" for amphibious crooks. The vast roadway in the air hung far aloft, like some fairy creation of silver. Its stout cables and heavy guy ropes looked like unsubstantial cobwebs from the river.

Through and under all the open piers the police boat crept its way. Ships and marks and bridges lay at their moorings on every hand with not a man on guard on their decks. And why? Because ship captains in this port know that river piracy is a thing of the past. The harbor police and Recorder Smythe have made this charming style of crime so costly that the tough gentlemen who used to have sworn on every hand with not a man on guard on their decks. And why? Because ship captains in this port know that river piracy is a thing of the past. The harbor police and Recorder Smythe have made this charming style of crime so costly that the tough gentlemen who used to have sworn on every hand with not a man on guard on their decks. And why? Because ship captains in this port know that river piracy is a thing of the past. 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