

Custer County Republican

D. M. ANSBERRY, Editor and Publisher

BROOKING, NEBRASKA

We are beginning to hear from the persons that invested real money in surreal Texas oil wells.

The British Empire has passed another island to the edge of its map. "It is rich in phosphate," explains why.

People generally would have had a better opinion of "our great navy" if the Schley inquiry had never been begun.

Scientists are discussing the question as to how the age of a fish may be determined. Its weight, of course, can be told by the scales.

Every man would rather have a tooth pulled than sit for his photograph. He goes to the gallery early and often just to show that he is brave.

A Western woman wants a divorce because her husband refuses to kiss her. Her application ought to be accompanied by a photograph.

Appropos of the money question, many a man in public life or out has not developed a scheme which will give everybody all the money he wants.

Mr. Shoukair, of Assyria, says "everything is upside down here." If Mr. Shoukair will try standing on his head he may obtain a better view of things.

A physician has found that the smoke of burning leaves will cure consumption. This indicates a way in which a multitude of recently published books might be made useful.

Laurent Tailhade, the Paris anarchist, describes bomb throwing as "a beautiful posture." Another beautiful gesture would be the foot of law and order at M. Tailhade's coat tails.

At Gotia, in Saxony, persons who did not pay their taxes last year are published in a list which hangs up in all restaurants and saloons of the city. Those that are on the list can get neither meat nor drink at these places, under penalty of loss of license.

Only one ex-President survives, but there are four widows of Presidents still living. Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Garfield, Mrs. Harrison and Mrs. McKinley. The wives of several Presidents did not live until their husbands reached the White House. Human life reveals the same uncertainties in all walks of life.

"A lawyer in a courtroom may call a man a liar, scoundrel, villain or thief and no one will make a complaint when court adjourns," says a contemporary. If a newspaper prints such reflections on a man's character there is a libel suit or a dead editor. This is owing to the fact that the people believe what the editor says. What the lawyer says cuts no figure.

In these days of progress, of advancement in every line of trade, business, science and skilled labor it is more than ever true that the man who can rise to the top because of his own ability and qualification is ever the man who must win in the final contest. Mere mediocrity stands but a poor chance. There is always room at the top, but the room is for those who win their way there, not for those who wait for a lucky chance to land them in this coveted place. Competency, ability, industry, fidelity—these are the qualities that land a man, young or old, at the top.

One of the inquiries to which scientific investigation might be profitably turned would be to find a suitable substitute for anthracite coal. The use of this coal, especially for domestic purposes, is of such necessity, and the price at which it is sold has so advanced, that invention should be stimulated. In large cities doubtless gas might be produced at practically competitive prices, but gas is only available where population is dense. The increasing price of anthracite is partly due to increased cost of production because of deeper mining, but in larger measure to monopoly of output and distribution. It will soon become a luxury out of the reach of the poor.

Had Daniel Webster been present at the Dartmouth commemoration of his graduation he would have welcomed the mention of certain humble friends of his whose faithfulness never failed. The cattle, into whose eyes he loved to look, are to be seen in the picture which the speakers drew of the statesman's life and times. Unlike some smaller souls, he cherished the recollections of country life, and had none of the real or feigned indifference to rural influences which characterizes those who seem to be ashamed that they were born at a distance from gas-works and police precincts. The attachment to simple ways, and to scenes far removed from listening Senates or thronged court-rooms, brings near the man, although the defender of the Constitution may still seem to dwell apart from ordinary humanity.

A young lady of small stature recently fainted at a dinner given in her honor. It was then found that she had not been able to touch either her feet to the floor or her back to the chair, and the restricted circulation and prolonged discomfort had finally overcome her. An antiquarian traces the present mania for high seats to the fact

that at the old French court sets of handsome furniture were ranged along the walls for effect, but never occupied. The chairs and sofas actually used were much lower. Furniture makers of to-day copy the more showy pieces, and further enhance their inutility by spring cushions. The dictum of a famous cabinetmaker is that in choosing chairs the knee of a person standing should come clear above the seat he intends to occupy. More even than homes, churches and assembly rooms, the great railway stations, in spite of their sumptuousness, offend against the comfort of nine-tenths of their occupants.

The apparent epidemic of crime cannot be ascribed to hard times. Work is plentiful at good wages in nearly every department of industrial activity. Such crimes as safe cracking in banks, post-offices and stores, in fact, are never attributable to hard times. This is the work of the "professionals," whose depredations have no relation to industrial conditions. They are not seeking employment in any legitimate industry. They would spurn it if it were offered them. They are experts with the jimmy and nitroglycerin and have no other trade. The sudden increase of criminality is more likely the result of the apparent infrequency of convictions for such crimes. The public hears very little about convictions, and the thieving gentry gather the impression that few burglars and thieves are being sent to jail. The commission of such a burglary as the one at the Chicago postoffice excites much attention and discussion, while the sentencing of a burglar to the penitentiary is an event that passes unnoticed. The only remedy is more vigorous and effective work on the part of the prosecuting machinery and detective forces in each county. Punishment swift and sure must follow conviction, and pettifogging lawyers must not be permitted by the courts to defeat the ends of justice or delay the prosecutions.

James Eads How, a St. Louis millionaire, has promulgated the doctrine that it is wrong for one man to live on the profits of another man's labor. Now he is on the road, doing odd jobs, seeing how other people live and striving to earn his board and lodging purely by his own efforts. He carried in coal at Chillicothe, Mo., and husked corn in another town, and is still tramping and working. The trouble with many self-selected reformers, who desire to tip over the entire industrial and social system, is that they are not content to do all the good possible under existing conditions. They establish model cities and mourn because the independent American workman prefers to live somewhere else. The average citizen, no matter whether he digs ditches or studies the stars, will dig out his own salvation if he is given plenty to do and fair wages for doing it. He'll educate himself and his children. He'll keep pace with the progress of humanity. He will have a better home and more comforts as fast as his means warrant it. He will not complain because another profits from his labor if he is sufficiently well paid himself. He doesn't want to be coddled. Mr. Eads How and the other industrial revolutionists can only help labor when they assist labor to help itself. Rotted down, that means furnishing work for men who want to work and paying them fair wages for doing it. The men ask nothing more. It ought to be a simple proposition for the young man who is tramping and left his million dollars behind in St. Louis. It wouldn't contain much romance, but it would be practical.

It is announced that the kangaroo walk is done for. Any girl who clings to that style of movement after this will subject herself to the ridicule of those who are devotees of fashion and who know style when they see it. The Pleadilly walk is the only permissible thing now. This is to be adopted especially by girls who golf or indulge in other outdoor exercises, and, of course, the girls who don't do that are not worth considering—so, at least, we are informed by one of the arbiters of fashion. The girl who wishes to exhibit the Pleadilly walk must square her shoulders, bend slightly forward from the waist and hold her arms curved like the front legs of a bulldog or the hind ones of a man who was permitted to walk too soon. It is, in fact, so our fashionable contemporary declares, "the exact walk of the London boulevard." All fashionable American ladies who have been in London this year are said to have brought the Pleadilly walk home with them, hence the woman who hasn't it at once serves notice to the public that she has not been abroad, poor thing. It may be early to pass judgment on the Pleadilly walk. Perhaps it will serve to make the ladies move along more gracefully than they could hope to proceed without it, or it may give them an awkwardness that will be distressing. In any event, however, it cannot be any more deadly to gracefulness than the kangaroo walk was, and for this reason we welcome it. There are ladies who must affect some outlandish kind of a walk, no matter what local conditions may be, and to these the Pleadilly may be well adapted. Let us at least hope so. Make way for the girl with the square shoulders and the projecting elbows.

Pardons in North Carolina. The Governor of North Carolina has notified the people of his State that all petitions for the pardon of convicts must first be advertised for some length of time in the newspapers of the locality where the offender lived or where the crime was committed.

Whistling is one of the few bad habits that is not expensive.

PASSING OF THE OLD YEAR.



A NEW YEAR, old year! We've journeyed on together in a day's time, And now behold the parting of our ways. Is very near; With thoughts of mingled gladness and of dread, I see the winding way that I must tread To Future Lands; For these awaits the realm of shadows deep— The Silent Land of years that he asleep With folded hands.

The Christmas Prize Sled.

BY WELDON J. COBB.

THEIR were about twenty boys in Brookdale, and they were divided into two "crowds." Fully two-thirds swore fealty to Bruce Morrison, and as Bruce was a prime leader in liveliness, sport and mischief, the coteries

filled, "you don't mean the Christmas load?" declared Ned, emphatically, and tenderly he caught up the frail little mite, and planted her, crutches and all, on the top of a fence post.

Her eyes danced and she trambled with delight. It was the greatest load of joy, surprise, rich and rare magnificence coming nearer, nearer, ever was; boxes and bundles, crates and barrels, burlaped rocking horses and cotton-wrapped dolls. Oh! she could guess them all! And lying on top of the great wagon box was a green, gorgeous pine tree, straight as an arrow, and with spreading stout limbs ready to hold the heaviest gifts in Christendom.

To Ned and to Eunice it was a royal procession. They held their breath as it quite passed by.

"Look!" exclaimed Ned, pointing to a dashing article lightly strapped to the rear.

"Oh, Ned!" breathed little Eunice, in a rapture.

"That's the prize," said Ned—"and isn't it a beauty? Yes, Eunice," he repeated, a longing, yet half-saddened expression in his face, "that's the prize to the most popular boy in town."

"Well, isn't that you?" demanded Eunice, smiling radiantly.

"No," responded Ned, practically, "because Bruce Morrison has got the most fellows in his crowd. Don't see, though?" declared Ned, with a philosophical toss of his head. "I'm solid with my friends! They're old and true, and his fellows, huh! I'd like that sled, though. Look at the upholstered seat, and the hand-pushers. Oh, I'd like that sled—for you, Eunice!"

Little Eunice knew as better than to cry at this, because she saw that Ned felt bad, and he went a little dimly down the road. A load of hay had upset in the ditch a few days before. The boys had famous fun playing in it. Ned engaged himself kicking free his manacles of snow, expecting some of his fellows along pretty soon. Suddenly—

"Hi! What you doing? Brer! I've got you!"

Another Santa Claus than the tramp appeared. There was music, some recitations, and then the generous gift-giving. Finally, the beautiful prize sled was drawn out upon the stage.

"As I announced a week ago," said Mr. Ames, "this sled will go to the boy voted most popular, and I hope you will select the best behaved boy, as well, and—"

"Ned!"

"Our Ned?"

"Ned Throop?"

And amid blushes and congratulations, and a pleased nod from Mr. Ames himself, Ned found himself the happiest boy ever was.

"Because I give it to Eunice," he said. "Of course it's all luck, for the other fellows stayed away, somehow, or I wouldn't have got the votes. But Eunice should have it—poor, dear, patient little cripple—and angul!"

About midnight it was known in Brookdale how and why Bruce Morrison's crowd had not been present at the festival.

They had been up to mischief, as usual. It seemed, Mr. Ames was going the next day to Bayview to see about a new teacher, and if he found one, school would begin earlier the next week than suited Bruce and his friends.

They knew he would drive over in his old-fashioned close carriage. Just as dark they got into his stable and pulled the vehicle out.

It was jolly enough fun, once free of the town, dragging the carriage through the woods, and five miles beyond into a swamp. Just as they were about to abandon it where it could not be possibly found for several days, and hurry back to the festival, the door of the vehicle was pushed open.

There sat the old white-haired tramp. He had been sleeping in the cozy cushioned carriage regularly. The startled boys explained. "Santa Claus" coolly informed them he could not think of walking back to town!

They had to pull him back. They groaned and tugged and quarreled. They were tired, disgusted and, worst of all,

GODFREY PETTIGREW'S CHRISTMAS GIFTS.



GODFREY PETTIGREW was driving along the pike toward the country town, the grays going at a brisk rate.

"There's that young Evans walking," he said to himself. "He is dressed up as if he was going to catch the train."

"Going up the road, Bob," he said, as he passed the younger man. "I'm bound for town."

"I was going down by the train, but don't mind riding behind your grays," laughed the other, climbing in. "That is, if you'll agree to bring my stuff back."

"What'll your load be?" he asked Bob, as the hard mud flew from under the horses' feet.

"Not much weight," laughed his companion. "Christmas gifts. This is the time when a little money buys a lot of things to warm the heart."

"So," said Farmer Pettigrew, "when you're as old as I am you won't be spending money for Christmas. There's no one but me and mother now. We'd look fine making Christmas presents."

"That you would," replied Evans heartily, "and it would make good old Aunt Pettigrew feel ten years younger. I wish you would."

"Now, Bob," exclaimed the older man, "are you in earnest?"

"Never was more so. She is often lonesome since your daughter moved west. She would be not only surprised, but happy."

"What are you going to get Addie?"

"Me? O, I've been planning for months. A new dress for one thing. Books she wanted and some little knick-knacks. Nothing is too good for my wife. She deserves more than I can ever give her. But I'm getting some things for mother,

A LABOR OF LOVE.



found itself in hot water most of the time.

It was two days before Christmas, and Ned Throop, the leader of the other faction, stood looking up the road and then down the road in front of his house. It had been snowing by fits and starts since morning, promising not the traditional howling, pelting, drift-raising tempest that shakes the railroads and shoves people into their homes full of old memories and cozy winter stories of a time gone by, but a soft, fleecy mantling of the landscape, suggestive of just surface enough to encourage gay sleighing parties, happy beaux, bright-eyed belles and light snow-balling.

Ned was poor—he was so poor, in fact, that he did not even own a fifty-cent "bob," and the realization made him a little sour and cynical.

"Wish it wouldn't snow at all," he soliloquized. "Snow's no good for poor folks. They call this 'an open winter' so far. Wish it would keep open. Good deal more fun in the clear, open fields than wading through drifts, and—Gracious! she's coming!"

At the head of the road a top-heavy, portly, wobbly load came laddling into view. A second stare Ned took, uttered a joyful "Hurrah!" and darted down the road on a "two-ferny" run.

He used no ceremony in dashing through the open gateway of even a meaner house than his own. He burst open his door with a rush.

"Eunice—little Eunice!" he shouted excitedly. "Quick! quick! She's coming! Open the front parlor!" Unconcerned four there peeped a girlish head, a white-faced, pale-eyed little girl of ten hurrying on her crutches.

"Ned!" she gasped, eager and wonder-

Ned's foot was seized, the hay rustled. Then, still holding to him, up amid the wintry mass arose—a man.

At first Ned thought he must be "a phantom." He was a tramp in dress, but he had a long white beard and snowy white hair, and made Ned think of "pariahs."

He had been sleeping in the hay, and Ned had stepped on him. He complained a little, yawned, and asked Ned if he could "get a poor fellow something to eat."

Ned took him to Eunice's. She gave him a meal, and while he was eating whispered to Ned:

"Isn't he the very picture of Santa Claus?"

"Say!" ejaculated Ned, with a start; "that makes me think of something great! Keep him here till I come back!"

The man had told Ned he wanted work. Ned had thought of Mr. Ames. He was the school trustee, and the great friend of the boys who had gotten up the present big holiday festival.

This happened; he hired the august-looking tramp for three days. He was to sleep in his barn, and Christmas eve was to "play Santa Claus" in the distribution of the gifts—the crack prize sled—to the most popular boy in Brookdale," along with the rest.

A flutter of joy and expectation possessed the throng in the little old school house. It stubbed as Mr. Ames stepped to the platform. His watch was in his hand and he looked quite nervous.

"We have waited beyond the time appointed for our Christmas exercises," he said. "Our Santa Claus has disappointed us, and twenty of our boys have disappointed."

too late to vote on the Christmas Prize Sled!

Christmas and New Year.

King Christmas sat in his house of ice And looked across the snow.

"Hail, my little man!" he cried, "New, whether coat thou get?"

"I go, my Lord, along this way That all thy kin have gone. Where thou, my Lord, shalt follow me Before another dawn."

"Right away," cried the Christmas King. "The days of grief, the days of joy, Are they who ride with me."

"God keep thee, merry little man; Go whisper them that mourn How surely comes again the day When 'Christ the Lord' was born."

"And he not sad, my little man, But when thou, too, art old And look'st the wintry aster you come, A wreny man and cold."

"Right cheerily, I pray thee, then, To keep this gracious street, And leave the weary burden here Where cares grew light, with Christ."

"Now, bid thy gallant company Ride onward without fear, For I, the king of Christmas, Have blessed the glad New Year."

—The Decease.

A Sort of Endless Chain.

"Christmas comes but once a year," "Glad you think so. What with sisters and cousins and aunts it has come to me four hundred and forty-seven times already with waiters, bootblacks, barbers and office boys to hear from."

Joy and Expense.

"Eunice! Eunice, what is the Christmas spirit?" "It is that grand joy you feel when you discover that you have money enough to go abroad!" —Chicago Herald.

too. I wouldn't forget her. We'll go over tomorrow afternoon and see how happy she'll be over our presents."

"I never did give anything except a little candy to the children on Christmas," said the old man.

About the middle of the afternoon Bob Evans hurried into the big dry goods store after numerous bundles. He was surprised to see old Farmer Pettigrew sitting at a counter near the front, while an obsequious clerk was holding up fields of gray silk. Bob was so glad that he stopped to sid in the selection, and then went on his way. It was nearly dark when the two men met at the livery stable. Farmer Pettigrew was as excited as a boy.

"Say, Bob, I bought her a chair, too, and a comb, and candy, and I'm kind of ashamed to give them to her. And I sent Minnie ten dollars, registered letter, you know."

Bob shook the old man's hand.

"I'll tell you about it, Bob."

But he did not introduce the subject when Bob went over the next week. The young man followed him out to the barn lot and asked him about the gifts. Old Godfrey Pettigrew looked at him long and solemnly, a sort of quiver about his mouth.

"Well, when I laid them out by her bed Christmas morning, Bob, I just stopped out. She didn't come out, and I got awfully peeped in through the crack, and—she was on her knees by them when I didn't calculate it was going to have any such effect, Bob."

Bob's eyes grew watery.

"I went in then, and she rose up and came to me, and she said 'Pa, you've done for the first time in ten years, Bob—"