

THE MAN WITH THE GRIP.

His Peregrinations in the Vicinity of Omaha.

STILL AGITATING THE CLUB.

Another Versifying Tourist - Returned the Cheese - A Dissertation on the American Sin of Exaggeration - Samples.

Sent in Your Stories.

The commercial travelers of this state have shown their appreciation of THE BEE's efforts to afford them, every Monday intelligence peculiarly interesting and instructive to the craft. They have contributed to our columns freely in the past, and during March more communications have been received for our commercial travelers' department than ever before in a given time. There are, however, a variety of subjects which have not been discussed by them in THE BEE, and there are hundreds whose personal reminiscences on the road would make interesting reading.

To induce members of the craft to contribute regularly to our columns, it is proposed to offer a thousand mile ticket, good on Nebraska lines, under certain conditions. The ticket will be purchased by THE BEE over the line chosen by the successful competitor, who must either represent a Nebraska house or travel exclusively in this state for an outside firm. He must present a letter from his house certifying that he is a regular traveling representative of such house.

A thousand-mile ticket will be presented, under above conditions, to the commercial traveler who shall be first to contribute 6,000 words worthy of being printed in THE BEE. He can count only that which appears in print. Don't be afraid that your communications will not be acceptable. We want the groundwork of your ideas or anecdotes or biographies, personal gossip (or anything that will interest the craft) and we will tone it up if necessary and put it in proper shape for the printer. The second best man will be given a year's subscription to the daily. Each competitor must clip all of his communications as fast as they appear in THE MONDAY BEE, forward them to this office, and sign his full name and the house he represents.

NANNETTE.

O my beautiful love! My fair Nannette! Thy years have flown I can ne'er forget The night of the dance, when first we met, When I looked in your eyes of glowing jet, And gazed on your royal splendor.

And that other time, 'twas a night like this, The stars that night did their matins miss To look upon us and share in our bliss, As I clasped you close with a rapturous kiss, Whilst your eyes shone, soft and tender.

But alas, for the words that we then spoke, They've faded, and no heart brooke, Tho' that small cause for wonder.

For my beautiful love, my fair Nannette, With a heart full of love, my Nannette, Was naught but a guileless, gay coquette Who never was caught, nor in Cupid's debt For dart from his fairy quiver.

And I, alas, if the truth were told, Was a flirting man, ray in days of old, A man of a true and honest heart, To merchants and maids alike singing "bold," As I floated down "Time's river."

Exaggeration.

Englishmen who visit our country and become slightly acquainted with our people, customs, and institutions, tell us that one of our most distinctive characteristics is the habit of exaggeration. At the Delmonico banquet Herbert Spencer said that we were in too much of a hurry, that we seemed to have steam and electricity not only in our factories and mills but in the very muscles and brain of our people. He said that both charges are true to some extent. We are in so much of a hurry in our business that we do not have time to search for the exact facts, and in speaking we generally make statements long enough and broad enough to compass the truth, the whole truth and anything that might be true. We live in a great country, and a great age. Our mountains are so high, our rivers so long and wide, our territory so boundless, our inventions so marvelous and the progress of our towns and cities so rapid and astonishing that the idea of bigness is born with us. Our surroundings stimulate our imagination. An Englishman living on a narrow strip of country, out of which we could make a nice Indian reservation does not have to strain his imagination to take in his country, or to express ideas suggested by its surroundings. Exaggeration is the chief element in our wit. Statements which transcend all bounds of truth, at which a Scotchman would be appalled, we call humor. Mark Twain will never be a humorist as long as he lives. He is a pleasant exaggerator. Trim their writings down to truth and they are dull. He was a true American who witnessed the volcanic eruptions of Vesuvius that made a fine lurid remark to a friend that Niagara could put her out in two minutes.

Our newspapers reflect our sentiments and feelings. In almost every heading there is a leap beyond the truth. A grass fire in Dakota becomes "A most destructive conflagration that lays bare the country. Thousands of homes in ashes and millions of property destroyed." An ordinary killing becomes "A horrible deed of atrocity." A dozen or two men go to Washington to seek office and we are told of "The most violent scramble for place ever known in the annals of our country. The city of Washington overrun with patriots." A little private party is "A splendid assembly of beauty and wit."

Our merchants show the same tendency. Where is the store that has not the largest and the cheapest prices? How frequent are such signs as "Great reduction in prices that you have never known." "Terrible slaughter of our entire stock." "Positively selling under cost." The slow German soon catches on and tries to keep up with the procession, and over his saloon is painted a large glass overflowing with effervescence and under it the sign, "A great big beer for 5 cents." It is questionable whether such methods of advertising are of any value. Continued overstatement becomes weakness. The public long used to misrepresentations have little faith in the sign of a merchant that he is slaughtering his entire stock at half cost. The weakest way a fact can be stated is to load it down with cumbrous superlatives. Truth is strongest when neatly dressed, but not disguised, by art.

The propensity to exaggerate reaches

its height with the real estate dealer. His art is to go on without crossing the line where exaggeration becomes humor. It is easy to double the population of a town because very few people know the exact number of residents and every inhabitant is disposed to believe what is favorable. It is still easier to picture the possibilities of the future. We have seen cities spring up where we least expected a town, and who knows but that Crosby's Cross Roads may rival Omaha, for the railroad is the life of the West. Kearney is a plucky town, with advantages and possibilities of which few other towns in the state can boast. Yet there is something of the humorous in the advertisement of her real estate agents, and the fact that Kearney is exactly midway between Boston and San Francisco. The artful association of Kearney with San Francisco and Boston suggests the remark of the rooster in the stable with the chickens: "Gentlemen, let us not tramp on each other's toes." Kanopolis, Kan., we are told, is bound to be a city because it is the exact geographical center of the United States. Mark Twain says that the horse in the center of the world because that was a very advantageous place for him to be born, and it cannot be proved that he was born at any other place.

For many years an exaggerated value has been put on the horse and a tremendous pressure forced the opening. Our people love novelty, license, and that which is forbidden. The desire is heightened by mystic orders and strange signs. The thousands of people who have gone there may in a short time, say with the poet: "The priceless thing so fiercely sought Hath lost half its value by being caught."

Uncle Sam will have to open the rest of the Indian Territory to satisfy them. In school boys' parties we are not displeased at a little exaggeration. We expect grandiloquence and we are disappointed if we do not get it. Every one has laughed at the brilliant sketch of the schoolboy who pictured the American eagle as the proud bird standing with one foot on the Allegheny the other on the Rocky mountains, with one wing dipped in the turbid waters of the Atlantic, the other in the blue waters of the Pacific, with her head resting on an iceberg at the north pole and fanning with her tail the soft breezes of South America. But in a grave legal argument anything approaching what the boys call a cur is as distasteful to the penetration of one of the speeches in the King trial contained more bombastic, high-flown eloquence than any smart school boy would have been guilty of. It does the jury no credit to say that they were in a mood to be maudlin and sentimental. We do not look for a deep-seated reverence for law or a very high estimate upon human life in a new state where but recently cowboys shot men down on small provocation and men were hung to the nearest tree for stealing cattle. Yet the sober sense of the people of Nebraska will say it were better had that jury plucked a feather from the wing of their sympathy and stuck it in the tail of their judgment.

As we get further away from our civil war the desire to magnify all the little incidents becomes almost a mania. Many a gray haired veteran wearing a blue and marked with wounds, may, under a grim countenance, tell a story that will startle credulity itself. And the story once told around a camp fire loses none of the particulars.

"The flying rumor gathers as it rolls, They've ended something in the kitchen, And all who hear it make enlargement, too!"

No wonder General Sherman said, in a recent number of the North American Review, that he had heard so many stories about what happened in the "march to the Sea," that he had begun to think some other fellow by the same name conducted that campaign. We are so much in the habit of exaggerating, that at the present time, when the population of Norfolk is given as 1949, O'Neill is given 13. Chadron is put down as just a postoffice. Omaha is credited in black type with 18,836. It is not that the statistics are wrong on the last census. It may flatter Rhode Island and Vermont to quote the population ten years ago, but it won't do for a growing state like Nebraska. Can you not perform the office of the Lumberman in the State of Nebraska? The population of Norfolk is given as 1949, O'Neill is given 13. Chadron is put down as just a postoffice. Omaha is credited in black type with 18,836. It is not that the statistics are wrong on the last census. 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