

Uncle John and Ebenezer Sprout on Politics.

"What is Politics?" I asked Uncle John the other evening, as he sat smoking his pipe before a glowing grate of coals in the dining room of his comfortable farmhouse. He took his pipe out of his mouth (which he invariably does when he attempts to expound a knotty question,) and looked steadily at the fire for a few moments. I roused him up by repeating the question.—"What is Politics, Uncle John?"

"It's rather a queer question, Eb; nevertheless, I'll try to answer you. In the first place, I think that grate of coals is a good illustration of Politics."

"It's a first-rate fire," said I, glancing at the grate, "but I don't see what it has to do with Politics." "Well, I'll tell you; every lump of coal in that grate will represent some party or sect. For instance, do you see that large, red, flaring lump on the top of the grate?"

"Yes, I see it, Uncle John."

"Well, that lump will represent the 'No Nothings,' as they appear to be in the ascendancy at present. That large black cinder that has partially fallen into ashes by the side of it, will represent the old 'Democratic' party, and that piece of coal at the back part of the grate, half black and half white, will illustrate the 'Abolitionists.' Those two partially ignited pieces in this corner, will represent the 'Hard Shells' and 'Soft Shells,' and those small pieces jumbled together in that corner will represent the 'Fusionists,' and so on. As I said before, every lump of coal will represent some party or sect. Why, Eb., you have only to look into the grate, and the whole political world is before you."

I did look into the grate, and saw it all just as Uncle John had said.

"Now, Eb., to answer your question again, I think I may say that Politics is a 'free fight,' in which might makes right—Might in Politics is composed of money and influence; and they invariably go together; for, if a man has plenty of money, he has plenty of influence; but if he has little money, his influence is in proportion. Therefore, as I said before, might in Politics is made up of money and influence, energy, and a free use of the unruly member, or as the old saying goes, a 'gift of gab.'"

"I had a little experience in Politics when I was a young man, but as I hadn't a superfluous quantity of the 'needful,' and was not much addicted to blowing my own trumpet, of course I didn't succeed. It was just after I had been admitted to the bar, and like all young lawyers, I had a great opinion of the profession generally, and of myself in particular. About two months preceding the election, I was waited upon by the nominating committee of the Whig party, and tendered the nomination for County judge. Of course I was only too glad to accept it. I gave the committee a hundred dollars to defray the expenses of the election, and they departed. But in about two weeks they came back again, and told me that an independent candidate had taken the stump, and as he was a very rich man, who had lately come into the country,—unless I was very liberal, they thought he would be elected."

So I gave them another hundred dollars, to procure independent voters; though I must confess I looked at the money twice before I paid it away. Another two weeks had hardly elapsed, before my constituents came back again, with the story that the independent candidate was spending money like a Cæsar, and they must have another hundred to secure my election. But I told them plainly that I'd see them hanged before I'd disburse another red cent; and the election might go to the devil.—I did not say where, but I thought of it. So they left me, saying they feared I would lose the election. At last, the auspicious day arrived, and of course the independent candidate was elected, and I afterwards found out that he had expended fifty dollars more than myself; so the odd fifty secured his election.

"Take my advice, Eb., and have nothing to do with Politics, further than to deposit your vote in the ballot-box for the best man, regardless of party or sect."

I like to hear Uncle John's opinions, though I am not always convinced by them. So allow me to repeat the question again, dear reader,—What is Politics? EBENEZER SPROUT.

[Confusion and corruption.]

A NOBLE SPIRIT.—The Chicago Press tells a capital anecdote of two little, forlorn-looking girls, who entered a house in that city, a few days since, to offer matches for sale. The servant girl, in the benevolence of her Irish heart, suggested to her mistress that the poor little things were probably hungry, and they would probably be glad of some cold victuals.

"Oh, yes," said the lady, "if they want them." Whereupon they were questioned as to their needs. They conferred together a moment in whispers; when the younger one replied with a childish dignity,—

"No, ma'am; thank you, we work for a living."

DANGERS OF A HIGH PILLOW.—Bolstering up the head at night is declared a dangerous habit. The vessels through which the blood passes from the heart to the head are always lessened in their cavities when the head is resting in the bed higher than the body; therefore, in all diseases attended with fever, the head should be pretty nearly on a level with the body; and people ought to accustom themselves to sleep thus to avoid danger.

TO PROTECT POLISHED METAL.—Lime-seed oil varnish is perhaps the best that can be used for protecting polished articles of steel.

The Turpentine Tree.

The State of North Carolina contains upwards of two million acres of wild swampy land, which is covered principally by a heavy growth of pitch pine timber. The trees are generally of very great size, and extend in unbroken forests for miles and miles. These forests are more valuable to the State than all its mines of golden ore, for they produce immense quantities of tar, pitch, turpentine and rosin. The writer of a letter to the Hampshire Gazette gives an interesting description of the manner in which the rich juices of these trees are procured and manufactured. The first process, he says, is to cut in the trunk of a tree, near the ground, a deep hole, or cavity, of the capacity of about three pints. Above this, in various places, incisions are made in the tree, and a shallow groove is cut in the bark leading from every incision to the hole, so that all the sap escaping from the wounds will flow down to the reservoir designed for its reception.

This process of chipping is repeated every week or two, to give a fresh surface from which the juice exudes, until after a few years the trees are blazed on every side to a height of ten or twelve feet. Large forests of dead trees are constantly seen, standing tall and erect, without branch or bark, resembling a large ship-yard filled with tall dismantled masts. Into the boxes near the ground, the juice, a crude turpentine, begins to flow, about the middle of March, slowly at first, but more rapidly as the warm season advances, and slowly again in autumn, until it ceases altogether in winter. The liquid, about the consistence of honey, as it flows, is removed from the excavations as they are filled, and transferred to barrels, where it becomes a soft solid. The average yield of these trees, as I was informed, is about five gallons each a year.

A barrel of this sap contains usually seventeen per cent. of oil or spirits of turpentine, and this is distilled from it by means of a rude distilling apparatus, consisting of a large iron retort capable of containing two or more barrels. The turpentine is placed in the retort, the oil driven off by the process of distillation, and stored away, and rosin is left as the residuum. But the uses of the pine tree do not cease with its life.

In the tree of the long-leaved pine, the resinous matter becomes concentrated in the interior layers of the wood, when its vegetation ceases. This dead wood, known throughout the south as light wood, is then selected for the manufacture of tar. The tree is cut into billets of a convenient size, which are placed together in a pile and covered with earth, in much the same manner that wood is placed in a charcoal kiln, in New England. This stack of wood is built however upon a mound of earth prepared for the purpose, the summit of which declines from the circumference to the centre, where a cavity is formed, connected by a little canal with a ditch which surrounds the mound. After the pile is ready to be ignited, fire is placed in the center of the top, and a slow combustion maintained until all the resinous matter is melted, running into the central cavity, and from that into the outer ditch, where it is collected, the tar of commerce, and placed in barrels for exportation.

MANUFACTURE OF NEEDLES.—The number of processes through which a needle goes in its manufacture is as follows: 1, wire received; 2, weighed; 3, gauged; 4, cut; 5, rubbed; 6, counted; 7, pointed; 8, washed; 9, cut back; 10, pointed at the other end; 11, examined; 12, counted; 13, washed; 14, weighed; 15, annealed; 16, stamped; 17, pressed; 18, spitted; 19, piled; 20, broken; 21, heads piled; 22, oil burnt off; 23, soft straightened; 24, evened; 25, counted; 26, hardened; 27, evened; 28, stropped; 29, tempered; 30, weighed; 31, examined; 32, picked for crooks; 33, hard-straightened; 34, counted; 35, scoured with seven emeries, washed and evened between each; 36, washed and dried; 37, weighed; 38, evened; 39, headed; 40, weighed; 41, ground at the point; 42, weighed; 43, scoured with one emery, and glazed; 44, weighed; 45, washed and dried; 46, weighed; 47, evened; 48, headed; 49, picked for waste set; 50, weighed by count; 51, set; 52, examined; 53, weighed for drillers; 54, blued; 55, drilled; 56, rubbed; 57, weighed from drilling; 58, examined; 59, rounded by finishing; 60, finished once; 61, rubbed; 62, finished again; 63, rubbed; 64, examined; 65, counted in 25's; 66, papered; 67, labelled; 68, tied up; 69, collected; 70, packed up.

CURIOUS AND USEFUL INSTITUTION.—A society exists in France for the express purpose of acclimating or naturalizing useful plants and animals of other countries. France, through this society, has come into possession of the yaks of Thibet, which combine the utility of the cow, the ass, and the sheep; of certain species of fish peculiar to Germany and Switzerland; of milk-worms from Piedmont; of goats from Algeria; of nutritious tubers and plants from South America, &c., &c.

In a recent sitting, strong recommendations were made that the ass of Arabia, which, in addition to the qualities of the European ass, possesses speed; the ewes of Arabia, which feed on little, and give abundant milk; the sheep of Kollo, which produce a vast quantity of wool; and the zebra, shall be naturalized in Western Europe.

TOBACCO.—It is a singular fact, that man is the only creature that delights in tobacco and ardent spirits—he is the only creature that will even taste them; so far as he placed above, or so much does he sink himself below the brute creation. Few even learn to use tobacco in any way, without at first suffering the most distress-

ing sickness; and were it called medicine, and administered by a physician's advice, a second dose would never very willingly be taken.

John Quincy Adams says: "I have often wished that every individual of the human race afflicted with this artificial passion, could prevail upon himself to try, but for three months, the experiments which I have made,—[giving it up after years of smoking and chewing]—I am sure that it would turn every acre of tobacco land into a wheat-field, and add five years of longevity to the average of human life."—Cottage Library.

SCENE AMONG THE DRUSES OF LEBANON.—Half an hour passed away, and I tried to rest. I was just dozing off, and I knew my wife was asleep, for I heard her snore distinctly: suddenly I seemed to awake to the perception of a very distant, very imperfect, very uncertain sound; and though for the life of me I could not at that moment remember what it was, I knew I had heard it somewhere before. Another second, and the sound was repeated, still distant and indistinct, but beyond all doubt the same as I had heard before: I raised my head gently from my pillow, and leaning it upon the palm of my hand, tried vainly to recall to mind where I had heard that horrid sound before, or why it made my heart leap so with anxiety and vague alarm. A third time the thing came louder and more distinct than ever, floating like ice upon that silent night-air, and freezing my blood as it sped by. I instantly jumped up and ran out of doors; and there, where half an hour before I had silently contemplated the intensely quiet picture, what a change had come over the scene! A red glare shot up on every mountain height, and was instantly answered by dozens of minor beacons in all directions; so that the whole firmament seemed to have taken fire, the reflection of which was peculiarly bright on the snow. As beacon light after beacon light spread the alarm, the cry arose for warriors and horsemen to arm themselves; criers ran up to the mountain tops and those perspicacious places where the beacons glared, and thence they summoned their creedsmen to arms. Catching at the words wafted from hill top to hill top, I ran to our own village beacon and instantly kindled it. This aroused all the villagers, and I summoned them in the names of our chiefs and elders to buckle on their swords and seize their lances, for the Philistines were advancing against us. It was an attack of Maronites; but so perfect was the organization of that martial community, that, within twelve hours, twelve thousand Druses had assembled to repel them. They were victorious, and the war-cry was not for a long time heard again on the mountains.

The Druses of the Lebanon number at present about 29,000. Though not the most numerous, they are acknowledged to be the most warlike and courageous people inhabiting the Lebanon; and occupying all the southern portion, the western slope of Anti-Lebanon and Gibleh Sheik, they have upwards of forty large towns and villages inhabited exclusively by themselves, and nearly two hundred and thirty villages occupied by a mixed population of Druses and Christians; whilst in Anti-Lebanon they are also possessed of nearly eighty exclusively Druse villages. The country about these parts may be said to be almost uniformly successive hillock and vale, every position affording a means of security, and excluding the fear of invasion.—[Chasseaud, a French traveler.]

THE BUTTER TREE OF AFRICA.—The African tree from which butter of the most excellent kind is obtained, is called the Shea tree, and is found near Kaaba, on the banks of the Niger. These trees grow in great abundance all over that part of Bamarra. They are not planted by the natives, but are found growing naturally in the wood; and in clearing woodland for cultivation, every tree is cut down but the Shea. The tree itself very much resembles the American oak, and the fruit from the kernel of which, being first dried in the sun, the butter is prepared by boiling the kernel in water, has somewhat the appearance of a Spanish olive. The kernel is enveloped in a sweet pulp, under a thin green rind, and the butter produced from it, (besides the advantage of its keeping the whole year without salt), is whiter, firmer, and of a richer flavor, than the best butter from cow's milk. The growth and preparation of this commodity seems to be among the first objects of African industry, and constitutes a main article of their inland commerce.

THE LIFE-SUSTAINING PRINCIPLE OF FOOD.—The oils or fats alone do not sustain life, neither does starch or sugar alone. With both of these classes of substances, as we have seen, a certain proportion of gluten is associated in all our grains, fruits, and nutritive roots. Hence arrowroot, which is only a variety of starch, cannot give strength without an admixture of gluten in some form or other. To condemn a prisoner to be fed on arrowroot alone, would be to put him to certain death by a lingering, torturing starvation. The same is true, to a less extent, of tapioca, and of most varieties of sago, all of which consist of starch, with only a small and variable admixture of gluten. Even gluten, when given alone to dogs, has not kept them alive beyond a few weeks; so that no vegetable production, it may be said, and no kind of artificially prepared food, will support life, in which starch and gluten at least are not united.—[Chemistry of Common Life.]

TREATMENT OF WOUNDS OF THE EYE.—In the treatment of wounds of the eye, the great principle adopted at the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, is to keep the injured organ entirely at rest. On the patient's first application, the eye is carefully inspected; foreign matters are removed; the lids are then closed, padded with layers of cotton wool, and confined by strips of adhesive plaster; a mild dose of aperient medicine is given, and a low diet enjoined. Unless made necessary by urgent symptoms, the dressings are not removed or replaced until about a week.

QUARRELING.—If anything in the world will make a man feel badly, it is unquestionably quarrel. No man ever fails to think less of himself after than before. It degrades him in the eyes of others, and what is worse, blunts his sensibilities on one hand, and increases the power of passionate irritability on the other. The truth is, the more peaceably and quietly we get on, the better for our neighbors. In nine cases out of ten the better course is, if a man threatens you, quit dealing with him; if he is abusive, quit his company; and if he slanders you, take care to live so that nobody will be a victim. No matter who he is, or how he misuses you, the wisest way is to let him alone, for there is nothing better than this cool, calm, and quiet way of dealing with the wrongs we meet with.

ANTIDILUVIAN WELL.—Not long since, as some workmen were engaged in excavating a well, about two miles north of Round Grove, in this country, they came on the remains of an old well, about thirty-seven feet below the surface. The mouth of this ancient pit was covered over with earth, and removing this they found it walled around with a stone and lime wall, about eight feet deep. There was about five feet of water in the bottom, which was found to be pure. What increases the mystery is the fact that the ground seemed perfectly solid from the mouth of the well to the surface of the ground. The material removed was stiff, blue clay, closely compacted. This is the version of the story as we have heard it, and we have it from a reliable source.—[Fulton City (Ill.) Investigator.]

WHALING GROUNDS.—The sperm whale is a warm water fish. The right whale delights in cold water. The torrid zone is to the right whale as a sea of fire, through which he cannot pass—that is, he cannot cross the equator. The sperm whale has never been known to double the Cape of Good Hope, although he doubles Cape Horn. The right whale of the northern hemisphere and that of the southern are two different animals.—[Lieut. Maury.]

INDEPENDENT IN RELIGION.—The Liverpool (England) Albion relates the following:—"A friend of ours met his neighbor's coachman looking remarkably facetious one Monday. As the man touched his hat, he said to him: 'Well, John, what has happened to make you look so pleasant to-day?' 'Why, sir,' was the reply, 'what do you think? We are a pretty lot at our house—that we are! I started with five of us in the old carriage yesterday morning. First of all, I drove the young mistress to the church, and then old master to the Wesleyans; next, I took young master to the Romans; my wife went to the Ranters; and when I had put up the horse, I took a turn myself with the Calvinists.'"

REMEDY FOR SCALDS AND BURNS.—The American Medical Gazette, for March, calls attention to an unfailing remedy for scalds and burns. It says:—

A few pounds of wheat flour could be promptly applied to the wounds made by fire, and repeated until the inflammatory stage has passed. We have never known a fatal case of scalding or burning in which this practice has been pursued, during more than thirty years experience, and having treated hundreds in both public and private practice. Flour is the remedy, and the only one, in severe cases of scalding and burning casualties which else so often destroy life.

FOREIGN ITEMS.—We are given to understand, says the 'Citizen' of the 10th of February, 1824, (East India paper,) that the famous car of Juggernaut, of Mahes, near Serampore, was totally destroyed by fire on the night of Monday last, and the 'odekuries,' or proprietors of Juggernaut, have been merged in grief, attributing the accident to the fury of the god for causes of which they are not cognizant.

THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT CONTEMPLATES having engaged in the war during the year 1855, not less than 263,594 men of all ranks in both the services, land and sea, and that the sum necessary to support and render efficient this body of men and the ships to be manned by them, for a single year, will be more than one hundred and thirty-eight millions of dollars.

TO SORTEN OLD PUTTY.—In removing old broken panes from a window, it is generally very difficult to get off the hard, dry putty that sticks round the glass and its frame. Dip a small brush in a little nitric or muriatic acid (to be obtained at the druggists) and go over the putty with it. Let it rest a while, and it will soon become so soft that you can remove it with ease.

MEN AND BRUTES.—"Now, gentlemen," said a nobleman to his guests, as the ladies left the room, "let us understand each other: are we to drink like men or like brutes?"

The guests, somewhat indignant, exclaimed "Like men, of course."

"Then," replied he, "we are going to get jolly drunk, for brutes never drink more than they want."

A SINGLE POUND OF FLAXEN THREAD, intended for the finest specimens of French lace, is value at six hundred dollars, and the length of the thread is about two hundred and twenty-five miles. One pound of this thread is more valuable than two pounds of gold.

MURDERS IN NEW YORK.—According to the City Inspector's report of deaths for the year just closing there were twenty-five murders committed in New York since the 1st of January last. The year previous there were but fifteen.

John Pigg, fourteen years old, shot and killed a man named William Piles, who insulted his mother, a widow, at Camp Point, Illinois. The lad surrendered himself.