

AN OVERBURDENED CONSCIENCE.

PORTLAND, April 22d, 1881.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE WEST SHORE:

It is never too late to do good, even though one may have led a previously vicious and unprofitable existence, and it is with this feeling uppermost in my heart that I sit down to unlimber an overburdened conscience.

I was born in Connecticut and received the benefits of a good common school education, coupled with that wholesome tuition in religious matters which is a part of New England home-stead life. Had my revered parents ever entertained one thought that their son would have entered upon a vocation which though not amenable to criminal prosecution still merits all the censure of just men they would hardly have watched over my cradle with such fond solicitude. Scorning all the temptations to become a burglar and a forger which beset my path when I first arrived in Oregon, in 1872, I became a dairyman.

At first I sold "straight milk" from seven fine cows, purchased by the savings of my wages as a laborer in Yamhill county. But as the demand for the lacteal fluid increased I was suddenly taken with the desire to become as wealthy as D. O. Mills, the great awill-milk apostle of San Francisco, whose cans and pumps have made him a successful railroad contractor in British Columbia and an opulent telegraph speculator in New York. It grew upon me from day to day till I finally bought a rotary pump and began obtaining money through false pretences.

To aid me in this remorseless career of crime I spared no pains that ingenuity could devise. The white cliffs of Dover yielded their chalk to color the insipid fluid for which the average verdant Portlander paid me four bits per gallon. The oat fields of Polk and Marion contributed their glutinous meal to assist the work of dissemblance. And even the little calves which patriotically shed their blood for their country's *ava*, also parted with their brains which I powdered up and mixed with the pellucid waters of the Tualatin, that my customers in the Webfoot metropolis might have milk in their coffee.

The cheese which I produced was a wonder of imperviousness to the trenchant blade of the alleged servant girl, as it were. Had the devoted battle-

ments of Sumpter been constructed of that impenetrable material the Gascon swash buckler, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, would have seen his iron missiles hurled back harmless from its (Sweitzer) casemates and felt that his hopes of immortality were nipped in the bud. And the only mistake of the illustrious Ericsson was that he did not use my Wapato cheese for the defensive armor of his monitors. I have seen my cheese tested thoroughly by rats—and when I say "rats," like Col. Jack Gambill, I mean all the rats—and have beheld the ambitious rodents retire from the contest as sad examples of that vaulting ambition which overleaps itself. I sold this cheese for Cheshire, but a ship carpenter who purchased some of it remarked that "planksheer" would be a more appropriate name for it. But as he was of Holland ancestry I forgave the covert sneer. He converted it into cork fenders for river steamers for which purpose it was a marked success.

And then the butter which I made. It was fair to look at in the cool days which preceded the vernal equinox, but when the August days of canine rabies came around I could say with Hamlet's uncle (so called because the Prince of Denmark was given to spouting at his residence), that "it smelt to Heaven." It contained some cream, of course, but it might as well have been cream of tartar as anything else. Some censorious people would have called it "bull butter," I suppose, but even when butter is made from cream, which practice is already ranked among the lost arts, the proprietor of the powder horns and other jewelry is but an indirect contributor to the grand result. Hence my fervent protest in behalf of the bull. Let the cows bear the blame. In matters like the Christianity scandal it is the way of the world to "stone the woman and let the man go free."

Trifling causes often lead to total revolutions, and my evil career was changed by a very unimportant occurrence. Last Summer I was coming down the Columbia on the R. R. Thompson, in company with some sixty or seventy other passengers. Unfortunately I missed getting a seat at the first table and was obliged to take breakfast with several persons who paid for their meals. Opposite me sat a man whose features betokened that he

was of foreign birth. In fact, I think he was a Missourian.

He was about to drink a cup of coffee and noticed that the fluid wore its normal color. He called the waiter and said:

"Please get me more milk."

"Can't do it, sah," replied the son of Ham, "de milk's all out."

"But haint yer got no more down in the cellar, Snowball?" pleaded the disciple of Pap Price.

"I done tole yer de milk all used up at de fustest table," retorted the Louisiana Returning board.

"Look a here, contraband, suppose you ch-a-lk us out a little, can't yer?"

The pangs of a guilty conscience smote me to the quick. I knew he meant the remark for my ears, for he looked at me instead of the unbleached American. Instantly my resolution was taken, and I was determined to lead a more honorable life, if it were even not so profitable. I came home and sold off my cows and pump to a blarsted Englishman, who put up a sign on his front gate "Milk of the First Water sold here." He was an unsuccessful diamond hunter from the Cape of Good Hope, and if he don't take down that sign he'll be walking around with an alpaca duster on, next Christmas day.

I feel already a lighter heart and a clearer conscience. With the money realized from the sale of my dairy I bought two picks, three crowbars and a ton of giant powder, and am now an honest miner. I am engaged in running a tunnel under First street, the alleged terminus of which is under the vault of the First National Bank. If there is no failing in my undertakings, I shall soon be in possession of countless shekels, enough to enable me to live upon Dry Monopole and Eastern oysters for the rest of my days. Then I can take little children on my knee and inculcate into their youthful minds the lessons contained in that sublime maxim of Rochefoucauld, that "half a loaf is the best policy, and honesty is better than no bread."

Yours, truthfully,

A REFORMED DAIRYMAN.

We put up with folly more patiently than we do with injustice.

Much as he loves roast beef, John Bull is continually getting into Irish stews.