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Legislative Action.

In behalf of Agriculture—why has it not been more liberal and far seeing? What have been the chief obstacles in the way of executing such action?

1. One of the leading and most prominent obstacles in the way of receiving legislative action in this matter, has been the want of entire unanimity among the friends of such action as to precisely what is most desirable. They have been divided among themselves, as to the specific measures they would recommend. Under these circumstances it is not strange that such results have followed—that our legislators have been slow to legislate what has been recommended by the few, which they were disposed, from this very circumstance of the case, to regard as somewhat utopian. But this state of things has, in a great measure, passed away, and the intelligent cultivators of the soil have become very unanimous in their opinions as to what should be done. The discussions, by the Board of Agriculture, and their reports have largely contributed to this result, which it is hoped, and confidently believed, will not be without its effect on future legislators.

Another, and a most formidable obstacle to the attainment of such action, has been the utter indifference of the great mass of the farmers, throughout the entire State, to the whole subject of agricultural improvement. They have been like a sleepy man, exceedingly averse to being disturbed, and when the subject has been pressed home upon their minds, they have said, "Let us alone. This is all we ask. We get to living out of our farming operations. Do not disturb and perplex us about improvement in this matter." Or they daily refuse to listen to what may be said, and utterly oppose every proposition looking towards improvement. Hence efforts for legislative action, in this work, has been wanting in the moral force of numbers, although not deficient in that of character. For in point of personal character, moral worth, intelligence, and agricultural skill, enterprise and success, the friends of such action have ever stood in the foremost rank—they have numbered in their ranks the greater portion, if not the entire body of this class of men throughout the State. But, from not having the mass with them, the disposition has been to regard the efforts as those of a mere fraction of a class, forming a kind of agricultural aristocracy. But this state of things is rapidly passing away, and we may hope that in the future no further trouble may arise from this source.

Another and the most effective obstacle to the action desired, has been the unreasonable opposition of farmers who happen to be members of the legislature. A very large share of this class have opposed every measure proposed to foster agriculture in the State with the most malicious obduracy, while most of the professional men in that body have always been friendly to what has been asked. But few of them have been disposed to push such measures through against the opposition of the representatives of the very class most directly interested in their passage. But this state of things has been gradually passing away, till it has come to pass that some of the most resolute and persevering advocates of measures to foster agriculture by that body, are members from the class of practical farmers. This is both a prophecy and a pledge that the day is not far distant when our legislature will do justice to the great interest of agriculture.

But, notwithstanding all the progress that has been made, there is a feeling in some quarters against this whole business of legislation on this subject, which, although it does not take the form of positive and unqualified opposition, is, nevertheless, productive of indifference to the whole matter. This feeling is indicated by the question—What has been accomplished by legislation in behalf of agriculture and all the money expended by the various agricultural societies in the State?

The implication is, in such a question, that nothing has been accomplished, in a practical way, by all this machinery and expenditure of money. In some cases this is positively affirmed. In view of all the facts, it can hardly be doubted that there is a lurking apprehension in the community, that no progress has been attained by all this effort.

This feeling seems to arise from two sources mainly—many apprehensions as to what is to be immediately effected by legislation, and a want of information in relation to the facts in the case. These two points will receive a brief consideration.

1. There is no more common occurrence than for men to expect too much of every new move in behalf of any cause, and for them to imagine, because all, and precisely what they expected, is not accomplished, nothing has been effected. Because results are not effected precisely in the way they anticipated, or in the degree, many men are ready to conclude nothing has been accomplished. This is especially the case when results are attained by a reflex influence, and are attained by slow degrees. Most men fail to appropriate everything which does not assume a grossly material form, and grow up like building a railroad embankment, a tangible thing they can see and feel.

We think this is the state of the case in relation to efforts in behalf of agricultural improvement. Many persons are looking for a kind of results and of a magnitude, from their efforts, which are impossible to be realized. Because they do not see the farm crops of the State at once increased, so that the most careless observer, without weighing or measuring, can see it, and compelled to acknowledge the fact, they are ready to affirm that nothing has been gained in a practical way in behalf of agriculture.

The ultimate end to be gained by legisla-

tive action, and our agricultural societies, and all the raised means put in requisition to secure agricultural improvement, is to enhance profitable production on the farm. But this result is a reflex influence from these agencies, not an immediate and direct effect. The meeting and discussions of the Board of Agriculture, the premiums offered by our agricultural societies, the statements of competitors, reports of committees, and the addresses before them, no matter how well-timed or effective, do not operate directly to make any man's corn, potatoes, wheat, and other crops, grow any more rank or produce any more abundantly. These things do not operate in any such direct manner on those crops, nor is it to be expected, if any man's crops are benefited by these things, it is by an indirect influence. It is by giving him information that will enable and induce him to improve his practices, and modes of cultivation, and kinds of crops, that it will effect and increase production.

What then should we look for as the results of legislative action in behalf of agriculture, with the varied agencies connected therewith? How are they to work out practical results? What should legislative action aim at, as its immediate object?

We think every one who has given the subject any tolerable degree of attention, must see, that all that can be sought through legislative action, as an immediate object, is the collection and diffusion of agricultural intelligence. If this is effected then the legislation, our agricultural societies and all our varied machinery are doing their appropriate work, and all we can expect of them. And if we wish to determine whether our legislation and the action of our agricultural societies are of the right kind, they should be tried by this test: Are they collecting and diffusing agricultural intelligence among our farmers? If they are doing this, it is all that can be expected of them. If they are not doing this, then it is time a change should be effected in their line of policy and mode of action, or they should be cast aside as of no account.

That these agencies have worked out all they might and ought to have done in this direction, no one will pretend. So far as the legislature is concerned, the facts annually accumulated in the Secretary of State's office, it utterly neglected to diffuse among the farmers of the State, for twenty long years, as the law directed. But this was not the fault of the system, but of its administrators, though that was sufficiently defective. But much of this is now corrected, and it only remains to improve as the light of experience may direct, to secure all that can be accomplished in this direction.

2. But defective as have been our machinery for the accumulation and diffusion of agricultural information, and shabby as it has been worked, has nothing been effected in a practical way on the ultimate and aimed at—the increase of profitable agricultural production? Have not these agencies had the effect to awaken an interest in agricultural improvement, and inquiries after agricultural knowledge? The most casual observer cannot fail of perceiving, that the agricultural mind of this State never was so much aroused as now, or such a desire manifested for the attainment of agricultural knowledge, by the great mass of our farmers. What has caused all this? Such things do not come to pass without a cause, or spring up spontaneously, like weeds. They are the fruit of toil and effort. The existence of such a multitude of well-sustained agricultural newspapers, the sale of agricultural books, farm clubs, and the earnest conversation and inquiries about agricultural matters, are proof enough that something has been done in this direction.

But has all this had any effect on production? Has it made agricultural pursuits any more profitable? These questions can only be answered, so far as this State is concerned, by an appeal to the figures; for our government has made no provision for the obtaining of agricultural statistics, as it seems to us it should. Had the assessors of each town and plantation in this State, been required, for the last ten years, when they took their annual valuations, to have ascertained the number of acres each farmer planted and sowed of each of the several kinds of crops cultivated, and the number of bushels of each produced, a comparison might be instituted between the production per acre between the years 1836 and 1846, which would demonstrate whether progress had been made in this direction or not. It would show by facts and figures, whether or not all our expenditures and efforts in accumulating and diffusing agricultural information has been in vain.

But we have not the means of such a comparison. We must therefore seek other means of information on this point, which cannot be so satisfactory, because they are not of that demonstrative character, of statistics. We confidently appeal to the general aspect of things around us, in all parts of the State, as proof that agricultural pursuits are becoming more and more productive, and consequently profitable. Do we not everywhere see improvement going on in farm buildings, and everything about the farm? Has not everything in our rural districts a growing aspect of thrift and comfort? Do not farmers generally have more money in their pockets, pay cash down for more they buy, and find it less difficult to meet the demands against them promptly, than they did a few years ago? Has not a very great change come over farmers in these respects, within a few years?

How has all this come to pass, if agricultural pursuits have not become more productive and profitable than formerly? We know this can be partly explained by the extraordinary price of farm produce during the last two or three years; but it does not

fully explain it. It accounts for it only in part. It is only on the supposition of increased production, as well as increased prices, that fully accounts for all we see.

But we may go a step further, and with confidence appeal to the farms and crops themselves. Who does not see, almost everywhere, more thorough cultivation and liberal manuring, and a more vigorous growth of almost all crops planted and sowed? Who does not know, that while the number of acres put under cultivation is not very materially increased, that almost every farmer has more potatoes, corn, beans and the different kinds of grains, and more forage in his barns, than a few years since? There may not be a very great increase individually. The number of additional bushels of the several crops cultivated, produced by each farmer may be small—it may be but ten or twenty bushels of the whole; but in the aggregate, it amounts to a great deal. There are 46,700 farms in this State, and if there was only an average increase of production to a farm of but ten bushels, the aggregate would amount to 467,000 bushels, which would much more than pay in one year all that has ever been expended to foster agricultural improvement. And who can doubt there has been this average increase?

If such a general view of things be correct, what has produced this result, but diffusion of agricultural information among the farmers of the State? How has this knowledge been accumulated and diffused? Accumulated by the action and influence of our agricultural societies, whose success if not their very existence has been secured through the fostering care of legislative action in their behalf. And this information has been diffused partly by the interchange of thought and the facts exhibited at our agricultural shows; partly by the newspaper press; and partly by publications under the authority and at the expense of the State; though but little has yet been done by the State in this way.

In view of what has been suggested, it must be apparent to every reflecting mind, that legislative action meager and grudging, as it has been, has played a very conspicuous part in securing the progress that has been made. Had it been more liberal and far-seeing, we have a right to conclude, the results would have been as much greater and more marked and obvious. And it is to be hoped, that the experience of the past will serve to encourage a more liberal policy in the future on the part of our legislature. This is demanded by a becoming regard to the pecuniary interests of the State, as well as its progress in civilization and all that ennobles and elevates the race.

Education for Farmers.

Every true patriot must be gratified to see the awakened interests in all matters relating to the economy of the farm, which has been manifested in the five years past. It is demonstrably certain that the power and prosperity of a nation are largely with the activity of improvements in its agriculture. We need go no farther than to Virginia and Maryland, to satisfy ourselves that the depletion of the soil is ever attended by the decay of towns and cities. Any one can see how *wasteful farming* ruins a family; how, by degrees, the receipts from crops and stock becomes less each year; how expenses multiply as the family increases; how buildings become dilapidated and need constant repairs, and ultimate ruin; how accidents of various kinds cut away the small fund in the bank; how the constant export of grain and animals, and the waste of fertilizers, are fast reducing the farmer to bankruptcy; and it is not an easy matter to multiply this isolated experience by that of every such farmer in the United States, and thus learn the decay of the nation. Are not the States of the Union one great family, and are not the experiences of the one farmer's household, those of the mightier household miniature? What has in many individual cases changed worthless farms into fertile ones, can equally transform a weak nation into a mighty one.

Now it needs not that any extended argument should be undertaken, to prove that the above position is true; each man can realize it himself, when it is so manifest. How, then, seeing we are suffering from the evil, can we ameliorate our condition? It is to be accomplished, first, by studying the laws which govern the development of vegetable and animal existence; and, principally, by applying our knowledge when acquired. As we have said in a former number, the farmer's son should not only be well educated in general literature and science, but, if to be himself a farmer, he should receive special instruction in the branches adapted to throw light upon his business. The sciences having special relation to agriculture, as chemistry, geology, and the laws of vegetable and animal life, should be more widely diffused. We have lectures on everything else, why not on these?

The great reason why more is not accomplished by Agricultural Colleges, Professors of Chemistry, Botanists, &c., is, that they merely fill the mind of the young farmer with learned names and promising theories, without showing how they may be used in the every day affairs of the farm. We see, in the Circulars and Prospectuses of these Institutions and Professors, courses of study proposed, which embrace numerous branches of useful and ornamental knowledge, and the term of instruction extends over two or three years. One would suppose, therefore, that a graduate should be able to compete with our most renowned sages, and each individual member of the graduating class be competent to accomplish the entire renovation of whatever barren district he chose to give his attention to. But, because of the great preponderance of theoretical, supererogatory studies, over those having a direct, practical bearing upon farm experience, a class of dreamy theorists, in place of *working farmers*, is made. It would be unwise to rail against science, because incompetent teachers imparted such diluted portions of its useful branches to a student, that his confused brain was unable to apply it to practice; it would be far wiser to rail against the methods of instruction, and look about for better ones. A young farmer of ordinary intelligence, may be made to comprehend in a single day, the great fundamental truths of the composition of the atmosphere, and its general influence upon plants and animals, but we could not wonder if weeks and months were wasted in vain attempts to teach him the subtle theories of the subtle elements of magnetism, and its influence upon the vitality of animals and vegetables. The object of a farm school should be, to prepare the student for study at home, and not to fill his head with fine sounding phrases, to be repeated with the understanding of an ordinary parrot, and turn him off at the end of his course, like some boarding-school Miss, with effluent polish, but very questionable solidity of information. At school, he can learn the grand principles underlying the phenomena of plant and animal life; the composition of each crop as the farm, and the proper ingredients to add to the soil, when deficient in them, to insure maximum returns for labor expended. He may study the methods for renovating worn out land, and how they may be applied with greatest economy; the insects propitious, and injurious to vegetation, how to encourage or arrest their attacks. But, unless the student have the inclination, and ability, to apply this knowledge when he returns to the farm, he is not benefited to any great extent by his studies.

There is a pressing want in our country for Farm Schools, Male Farms, and Agricultural Colleges. The semi-barbarous Empire of Russia had already, in 1851, not fewer than sixty such, and in civilized Europe there were some six or six hundred. With twenty-five millions of inhabitants, and more freedom than any other land, the United States can only boast of *five or six*. We have promises of some few more, but there is need for thousands; at least one should be in every county in each State. The Legislature of New York have appropriated \$10,000 towards the establishment of an Agricultural College. Connecticut is moving in the right direction on this subject. Ohio has already advertised an agricultural course of instruction at Cleveland. Other States, we trust, will take early and efficient measures to secure to their agricultural populations, thorough instruction in all the modern branches of practical husbandry. [New York Observer.]

Indian Corn Meal and Corn Bread.

It is said that more people would eat corn bread, if they knew how to cook it. An experienced housekeeper, has furnished us with some good receipts, which we commend to inexperienced housekeepers. A bushel of corn contains more nutriment than a bushel of wheat. The latter is not generally considered fit to eat unless ground very fine and bolted. It is a mistake, however, Indian corn treated in the same way is nearly spoiled. It never should be ground fine. Let that be remembered. Fine meal may be eaten when fresh ground, but it will not keep sweet. The broken oil globules become rancid and bitter.

Corn Cakes, made of meal and water with a little salt, mixed into a stiff dough very thoroughly, and baked on a board, before a hot fire, or in a hot oven, or in little cakes on a griddle, till entirely done, are very sweet, wholesome food.

Corn and Wheat Bread is wholesome and nutritious, and easily made, if you know how. Stir two tea-spoons of white meal in a pint of hot water for each loaf; free it of lumps, and let it stand twenty-four hours. Boil two or three potatoes, peel and slice, and mash in a pint of water, which thicken with flour till it is stiff batter, and then add half a tea-spoon of bakers' yeast. You will use about one-third as much meal, scalded as above, as you do of flour; knead the meal and yeast, and sponge, and add a little salt with the flour all together, and work it well, and make in pans to rise moderately, and then bake, at first, in a hot oven. This bread will be moist, and more nutritious and more healthy than if it were all flour.

Broken Corn Cakes are improved by adding corn meal, prepared in the same way, in about the same proportion as for bread. A little wheat flour may be added to advantage. Don't let your batter over-ride and sour, and never use saleratus if it does.

Corn Meal Pudding may be made of yellow meal stirred into scalded milk till as thick as gruel, and when cooled, add ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, and sweetening to suit the taste, and a little fine-cut suet, and some raisins, or dried peaches, or a fine-cut apple. It should bake an hour or more—according to size.

You who do not believe anything made of corn can be good, will please try this recipe for a pudding. [N. Y. Tribune.]

The Telegraph states that there was a fight in Brunswick, on Tuesday, at the polls. About fifteen were engaged in it. No serious damage done.

The Providence Journal shrewdly remarks: "We have known Democratic Presidents to turn out worse than they promised; but we never knew one of them to turn out better. We do not expect to find the first example in Mr. Buchanan."

POETRY.

LINES.

BY FANNY FORRESTER.

I gazed down life's dim labyrinth
A willing mate to see,
Crossed o'er by many a tangled clue,
And wild as wild could be;
And as I gazed in doubt and dread,
An angel came to me.
I knew him for a heavenly guide,
I knew him even then,
Though meekly as a child he stood
Among the sons of men—
By his deep spirit I felt him,
I knew him even then.
As I leaned my weary head
Upon his proffered breast,
And seemed the peril haunting wild
From out my place of rest,
I wondered if the shining ones
Of Eden were more blest.
For there was light within my soul,
Light on my peaceful way,
And all around the blue above
The clustering starlight lay;
And softly I saw appeared
The gently gates of day.
So, hand in hand we trod the wild,
My angel love and I—
He lifted wing all quivering
With tokens from the sky,
Sawage my dull thought could not divine,
"Twas lifted but to fly.
Again down life's dim labyrinth,
I groped my way alone,
While wildly through the midnight sky,
Black, hurrying clouds, were blown,
And quickly in my tangled path
The sharp, bare thorns were shown.
Yet firm my foot, for well I knew
The goal cannot be far,
And ever, through the riled clouds
Shines out my steady star—
For when my guide went up, he left
The gently gates ajar.

MISCELLANY.

A CROOKED INSURANCE CASE.

BY A RETIRED ATTORNEY.

It is singular how, sometimes, several events, entirely disconnected, will blend together, and work out a strange unexpected result. One of the most remarkable cases of this kind came under my observation in the fall of 1856, which I propose to relate.

One morning when I went to my office I found there a young man awaiting my coming. He looked like a disappointed person, and just then a face indicated that he had been on a "spree" quite recently. He wore a sheepish expression, as though he was ashamed of himself, and I soon learned that such was the fact.

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?"
"Is this Mr. Skinner?" he asked.
"That is my name."

"I want your assistance in a little affair. The fact is, I have got into a scrape," he added, with a great deal of embarrassment.

He was no rogue, it was evident, and whatever the scrape, he was sincerely penitent over it. I pitied him, because I saw that, in spite of his appearance, he had a good heart, and was ashamed of his errors.

"Well, sir, I shall be happy to serve you if it is in my power."

"Thank you, sir; but it is proper for me to say at the outset that I shall not be a very profitable client. To tell you the truth, sir, I have no money at all."

"And you want legal advice?"
"I came more because you have a kind heart than because you are learned in the law. But I pledge you my honor that I will pay your bill with the first money I can earn."

"We will not differ about that. State your case. You have got into a scrape you say."

"Yes, sir. I whipped a young man pretty severely night before last, and I am in dread of the consequences. I expect to be taken up, and I want you to defend me."

"Perhaps you had better wait until you are taken up."

"I do not mean to be taken up, unless I have a reasonable assurance of getting clear. I thought that perhaps you might prevent my being taken up."

"I cannot prevent the law from taking its course."

"No; but you might prevent a complaint being made against me."

"Tell me the circumstances, and then I will decide what can be done."

"My father died several years ago, and since then I have supported my mother and sister in part by my labors—"

"Come right to the point."

"You must hear all my story in order to understand the case. I will not detain you more than a few minutes."

"Go on, then."

"My mother's health is very poor, so that she can do but little; my sister, however, is a book fender, and does very well; yet, without my assistance they could not get along at all. Four or five years ago I got in the habit of drinking too much; the dependency of my mother cured me, and till day before yesterday I have not drunk a drop for over a year."

Good feelings and a warm heart, as I had supposed, and by this time I was deeply interested in him.

"What induced you to commence again?"
"You shall hear, sir. For a year I have been in the employ, as a salesman, of Skinner, who keeps a dry goods store in Washington street. I worked hard for him. I was at the store early and late, and did the best I knew how for him. But day before yesterday he discharged me."

"What for?"
"He gave me no reason, only that he did not want me any longer. It was a heavy blow to me. You know how hard the times are, and how difficult how next to impossible it is to get a situation."

"I know that to be true."
"I thought of the matter a while, and could see nothing to hope for. My sister had no work, and another idle hand in the house would be the ruin of us. I was discouraged at the prospect, and as a great many foolish men do, I went to the grog-shop for consolation. I drank long and deep."

"And got intoxicated?"
"Yes, but not very bad. While in this situation, I encountered a young man with whom I was partially acquainted. His name was Binker; his father is President of the Salamander Insurance Company."

"I know him very well."
"Well, Binker said something disparaging of my sister, as we were walking away from the bar-room—something which I would have resented in the same manner if I had been sober. I struck him down, and I have been by the paper that he is severely injured."

"Just so."
"His father is rich, and I am poor. Of course, the chances are against me."

"But his father is a very honorable man."
"I am glad to hear that," replied he, with a feeling of satisfaction which shone in his face. "No man would hear his own flesh and blood slandered as he slandered my sister without resenting it. He called her a—no matter what. You understand me?"

"His father would be the last man in the world to justify him."
"I cannot pay a fine, and if I am imprisoned, my mother and sister will be the sufferers, not myself. If you think I can get clear I will go about my business, if I can get any to go about, if not, I must go to York, or somewhere else, and send what I can earn home to my mother. What do you think?"

"I will see Binker. He will not sustain his son, I am sure. Probably I can induce him not to complain of you."

"That is precisely what I want."
"How happened it that you were not arrested on the spot? Where were the watchmen?"

"I ran away, and avoided the pursuit."
"Where did you go—home?"

"No, I was sure the officers would find me there. I happened to have in my pocket a private key to the back door of Skinner's shop, and I decided to enter and pass the night there."

"Skinner? Wasn't he burnt out a day or two ago?"

"He was—that very night, and while I was in the shop."

"Indeed! I hope you did not set it on fire."

"No! It is said that a man was seen coming out of the store just as the flames burst out. I am that man; but Skinner came out after I did."

"What?"
"He burnt the shop himself, and I now see why he discharged me then."

"This is a strange story."
"Strange, but true. I had not been in the shop ten minutes before Skinner came in himself by the back door."

"Didn't he discover you?"
"No; I hid myself under the counter. He opened the trap door which led to the cellar, and went down. The trap was behind the counter, and within a foot of where I lay."

"Well, what did he do?"
"He took the shovel and dug a great hole in the bottom of the cellar, into which he put a large box."

"Could you see him?"
"Yes; I lay upon the floor, with my head over the trap; he had a lantern which enabled me to see all he did."

"What then?"
"He then came up stairs, and carried down a lot of silks, laces, gloves, and other valuable articles, and placed them in the box, put the lid on and covered it with earth. After this he piled up a great heap of straw, paper and shavings and set them on fire."

"When I saw him doing this, I crept on my hands and knees to the door and escaped."

"Keep still about this, Mr. —, what is your name?"
"Cottle."

"I will see Mr. Binker to-day, and you may be sure that when he knows the circumstances he will decline to proceed against you."

He thanked me heartily and took his leave, promising to call again in the afternoon.

He had not been gone an hour when the President of the Salamander Insurance Co., entered my office.

"Ah, Mr. Binker, you are just the man I wish to see."

"A singular coincidence. I came up to see you about a case of ours. Skinner was burnt out night before last, claims five thousand dollars on his stock."

I rubbed my hands with delight. "Skinner was insured at the Salamander?"

"Just so. Why shouldn't he? It was a total loss; nothing saved."

"I am positive the scamp set fire to the store himself."

"Indeed!"
"I have got a man who thinks it was Skinner that came out of the store just as the fire was discovered."

"Thinks? Does he know it? Will he swear to it?"

"There is the trouble; but Skinner is the biggest scamp that ever went unhung."

"That may be; but you must prove what you allege."

"The lawyer must do that."

"Give me the testimony, then."

"Wish I had it. I would give a thousand dollars to convict the scamp; for I am sure he did it. These are hard times; goods don't sell well, and he has made a good sale of them."

"Just so; leave the matter to me; I will convict him."

He looked at me with astonishment.

"I will give you a thousand dollars if you will," he added, eagerly.

"Leave that to me. You have a son, Mr. Binker?"

"Yes, Fred; a sad dog."

"He got whipped the other night?"

"Badly, and the villain who did it shall suffer to the extent of the law."

"Fred was to blame."

"Eh?"

I told him the provocation, and, as I had anticipated, my statements entirely altered his view of the case. I told him the young man's condition, and he readily agreed not to enter a complaint, which he had intended to do as soon as Fred was able to give evidence.

"Cottle did right," added Mr. Binker with a glow of generous emotion. "I shall talk to Fred about it."

"He was clearly to blame."

"So he was; he shall apologize to Cottle. He is a sad dog. We want a secretary for our office, and I intended to put Fred in; but he is so wild I am afraid to do so. Do you know of a good man?"

"When do you want him?"

"I will stay two months longer."

"I know of one. What do you pay?"

"Twelve hundred."

"Don't fill the place till you hear from me."

"Right; I will not. Now look out sharp for the Skinner case."

"I will. We will skin him before we get through with him."

Binker left me pacing the room with excitement. It was strange that all these things connected themselves together as they did. I almost believed that I was a wizard, and had the power to bring great events out of nothing at all. To sum up: I had got Cottle out of his scrape; I had got Skinner into one; and I had devised a plan for making the widow and her little family happy and beyond the reach of hard times.

Cottle called in the afternoon, and I made his heart glad by my communicating to him the result of the interview with Binker.

"Now, sir," I added, "you have got out of this difficulty, but I entreat you never to touch the cup again."

"I never will."

"You may become a useful and prosperous man, if you choose. You have been well educated, I perceive."

"Tolerably," and he went on to say that he was a competent book-keeper, that he had read a good deal, and that, if he had not injured himself by intemperance, he might have been in a better situation than he filled in Skinner's store.

"You have a chance to redeem yourself now."

"I will make the most of it. I have a situation for a few weeks to copy some old records. By that time I hope to find steady employment."

"Do not engage yourself until you have seen me."

He was surprised, and I changed the topic to Skinner's case, telling him to hold himself in readiness to testify in Court when called upon, and to keep entirely silent.

He promised to observe my directions, and took his leave with a lighter heart, than when he had visited me in the morning.

I advised the Insurance Company not to pay Skinner's claim. They did not and he sued, confidently expecting to recover.

In opening for the defense, I stated what I expected to be able to prove—that Skinner had burnt the store himself.

The raised was filled with indignation, and found him a tiger. I was on the point of calling my witness, when the court had a recess of half an

