Courier

THE ST. LANDRY CLARION.

"Here Shall the Press the People's Rights Maintain, Unawed by Influence and Unbribed by Gain."

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THE RIGHTS OF THE AMERICAN BOY

They Are Being Tampered With By Legislators and Educational Reformers.

By JOHN HAZELDEN. *Pictures by Carl Werntz.*

SOME ONE should organize a Society for the Preservation of the Liberties and Privileges of the Small Boy. The small boy is now the victim of the experimenting reformer and the fool law-tinker. Learned educators and bald-headed theorists are calling conventions at which the small boy is put under a microscope and picked to pieces as if he were a six-legged beetle. The boy is helpless. He cannot resist.

There seems to be a very general desire to convert the boy into an angel. These educational reformers seem to forget that nature intended a boy to be a boy and not a parlor ornament.

One of the Blessed Memories of Childhood.

Show me a boy who prefers fancy work to baseball, who never twisted a cat's tail or threw a mud ball, and I will show you a boy who will grow up to rob a building association and then try to sneak out on the plea of insanity.

The boy who is meek and gentle and who smiles sadly when some other boy butts him off the sidewalk is the kind of model youth who grows up and gets side whiskers and allows his wife to support him by taking in boarders or keeping a millinery store.

It is well to remember that a boy has all the attributes of a skittish colt, together with the sensibilities of a human being, and his pleasures cannot be those of a man of 40, who lacks iron in his blood and has been disappointed in politics two or three times. The boy wants to enjoy life in his own way, and I maintain that he has certain rights which should be respected. Those rights are about to be taken away from him.

The most cruel measure ever conceived in the brain of a crusty old bachelor is the so-called "curfew law." It is a relic of medieval days, and will doubtless be repealed as soon as the present generation of boys grows up. Within the past four years the curfew law has spread throughout the western states. And what is this law? A bell rings at nine o'clock, and immediately every boy under a certain age (usually 14) must go home and go to bed. Think of it! Nine o'clock! Why, at this time of the year, darkness is just beginning to settle down at nine o'clock.

The purpose of this law is to compel a boy to have all of his fun in broad daylight, so that people may see him. No more moonlight excursions, no more putting "tick-tacks" on windows, no more sitting in the darkness to tell ghost stories, no more climbing over the back fences to sample the early fruit, no more "jack-o'-lanterns." What dreary memories of childhood these curfew children will have! The man brought up under the curfew system will never be permitted to lean back in his chair and say: "Bill do you remember the night we went down to old man Judson's melon patch and the dog got after us and you fell in the ditch? Didn't we have a lot of fun that night? Ah, those were 'appy days, Bill."

It is a remarkable fact that nine out of ten are rather proud of the fact that they were bad boys. Of course, these men don't blow about it when their own children are around, but you take one of them when he is in a company of his friends, and note how proudly he relates his adventures as a bad boy.

"I'll tell you, when I was about 13, I was a holy terror," he will say. "I owned a bulldog that could lick anything in the neighborhood, and I used to take him around with me, looking for a fight. He chewed up so many dogs that the neighbors complained to my father, so father chained up the dog, and told me I mustn't take him out of the barn. Next day one of the boys said he had a dog that could lick mine. I told him it wasn't so, but I didn't dare to let mine fight. Then he told me I was afraid, and dassn't, and kept it up until I got mad and couldn't stand it, so I went home and got Bill and met this other boy back of the planing mill, and we had the blamedest dog fight anybody ever heard of. His dog was killed, and that settled it for me. Father heard about it, and he gave me a licking that I'll remember if I live to be a hundred years old."

Then the story-teller leans back and laughs until he aches. He is actually proud that he was an "ornery" boy who fought bulldogs and disobeyed his parents. Isn't it a fact?

Did you ever hear a man say: "I tell you I had lots of fun when I was a boy. I always obeyed my father and mother and kept my clothes clean and learned Scripture verses and went to bed at sundown. Ah, those were happy days."

You don't hear that kind of talk, do you? It is sad but true that most people have a sneaking affection for the bad boy. The parent punishes his son for making fun of the old maid across the street, and then he goes down to the store and repeats what the boy said and feels flattered when some one tells him that the boy is a "chip of the old block."

The Legislature Prohibits Even This Innocent Amusement.

Nearly every man takes real delight in telling how he was whipped in school. That suggests the fact that another privilege has been taken from the youth of our country. Teachers are no longer permitted to wield the rod. Corporal punishment has become synonymous with assault and battery and the law stands between teacher and pupil. The teacher is supposed to rule by love. Did you ever take a restless, red-headed boy, full of innate deviltry, and try to rule him by love?

I maintain that every boy in school is entitled to an occasional licking, so that he will have something to talk about when he grows up. It will hurt some at the time, but think of the hours and days of happiness he will derive from thinking of these more exciting episodes of his school days. So far as I can observe, the man who was never licked in school seems rather ashamed of his past.

Another attack on the liberties of the rising generation is found in the effort to compel boys to remain dressed up and wear their shoes all summer. In our cities and larger towns there are thousands of boys rapidly approaching young manhood who never knew the pleasure of going barefooted. These boys can never be statesmen or millionaires, because we know that every great man begins his career as "a barefooted boy." Yet there are mothers who will sacrifice both the comfort and the future of their sons in order to have them be in style.

Do you remember the beautiful poem beginning: "Barefoot boy with cheek of tan?" Doesn't that sound more poetical and appropriate than "Tanshoe boy with cheek so pale?"

The liberties of youth are being abridged in other ways. In most of our towns and cities the boy who climbs a tree is pursued by a policeman. If he wants to get out and roll, he encounters a sign, Keep Off the Grass. He cannot go in swimming within a mile of the city limits.

But of all cruelties ever inflicted on the young, a law passed by the last legislature of Indiana is the most outrageous. In the state of Indiana all fishing with hook and line is strictly prohibited during the months of May and June. Any boy who dares to put a worm on a hook and drop his line into a tempting deep hole under a willow will be gathered up by a constable, hauled into a court as if he were an ordinary criminal and made to pay a fine to the state.

Now, if there is any time during the year when a boy hankers to fish it is during May and June, especially if there is a law against fishing.

The legislature, in passing this law, professed a desire to save the young fish from extermination. But it is evident that the real purpose was to lay another hardship on the abused and suffering youth of the state. This is certainly the refinement of cruelty—to permit a boy to stand on the bank of a "crick" and watch the "goggle-eyes" passing around the mossy niches in the stream, and then tell him that if he dares to throw in his hook, the law will punish him.

What is to become of the old-fashioned boy who fished, swam and climbed trees and fought hornets' nests? He had stone bruises on his feet, sunburn on his back, gravel in his hair, warts on his fingers, a live snake in one pocket and four "aggy" marbles in the other. He played "hookey" and was licked at both ends of the line, home and school, and the only effect of the licking was to arouse him to new and more original methods of making trouble for everyone.

Are we going to allow the legislators, the educational reformers and the fashionable mammas to eliminate the typical American youth? Is the day coming when a boy will wear a clean waist and polished shoes all day? Will he cease to swim and fish and climb trees? Will he be petted by his parents and coddled by his teachers? Will he go to bed at sundown, when a bell rings? Will he always be clean and polite and love his teacher? Will he long to be a minister or an editor instead of a cowboy?

Let us hope not. By all means, let us get together and organize the Society for the Preservation of the Liberties and Privileges of the Small Boy.

JOHN HAZELDEN.

DIAMONDS ARE "NIPPED"

Thieves Have a Handy Little Instrument That Makes the Stealing Easy.

"When we speak of a crook 'nipping' a diamond stud, we use the word advisedly," said a central station detective. "It's not a case of idle slang. In fact, nearly all the words used in a slang way by thieves and police officers come nearer expressing the exact idea of what we mean to illustrate than most people think. Take, for instance, the phrase, 'stick a diamond.' That's all right in a way, but there's a hundred or more ways in which diamonds may be stolen, so it gives us no clew as to the particular method of operation. But when we are told that some crook has 'nipped' a spark, we know exactly how he did it, and have a fair sort of lead to work on.

"To 'nip' a spark means to cut off a diamond from a man's shirt front. The phrase originated in the style of the instrument used by the thief. Diamonds lost in this way are not unscrewed or pulled out from a shirt front, as some people believe. The diamond nipper carries a small instrument made like a pair of nippers. It can be carried between the fingers and kept concealed in that way, and has a little cup into which the diamond falls when cut from the gold mounting. When the nipper sees a stone that pleases his fancy, he simply slips his little instrument to the front, jostles and shoves past his victim, perhaps curses him for 'treading on his toes,' and having distracted his attention, slips the hand close to his bosom. A simple move, a pressure of the finger, the sharp jaws clutch the shank of the pin or stud, the diamond drops into the cup-like receptacle, and the nipper is gone. So is the diamond."—Chicago Inter Ocean.

A Perfect Example.

Tom Dick—Say, old man, can you give an example of an irresistible force meeting an immovable body?

Hardy Upton (sadly)—Can I? You bet! Miss Gotrox' father says I can't marry her until I pay my debts; and I can't pay my debts until I marry her!—Puck.

573,995,000 ACRES

That Is the Size of Uncle Sam's Farm Aside from Alaska and Our New Possessions

JUST think of a farm of 573,995,000 acres. It is almost too big to imagine anything like the extent of it, and yet that is the size of Uncle Sam's garden patch which he is offering to give away in small sections to worthy applicants.

In other words, the public domain of the United States, the land that is open to settlement, amounts to the enormous acreage of 573,995,000 acres. More than 30 per cent. of the entire territory of the nation is still unclaimed by settlers and the title for this vast territory still remains with the general government. This is exclusive of the land reserved for the Indians, for forests, for reservoir sites, for military purposes and for national parks. In all of these there are 145,122,000 acres, much of which will in time be open to settlement as the Indians pass away.

Neither does this include any of the vast area of Alaska or any of our new possessions, in all of which there are vast tracts of government land that will some day be offered to colonists. Taking in these the total of the public domain of the United States would amount to no less than 1,000,000,000 acres.

But in addition to the great total there are some interesting figures in connection with the public land of the country. Without stopping to think of the subject or investigating it a little one would not imagine that there is a state or territory in the United States in which seven-eighths of the land was still United States property, yet such is the case in Nevada, where there are 61,358,000 acres of land open to settlement. Again in Idaho less than one-fifth of the territory has passed out of the hands of the government, and there are now 44,207,000 acres of land there which the government is willing to give to settlers practically for the asking. In Montana only about one-fourth of the land of the state has ever passed out of the hands of the government, and there are to-day in that state 71,567,000 acres still vacant.

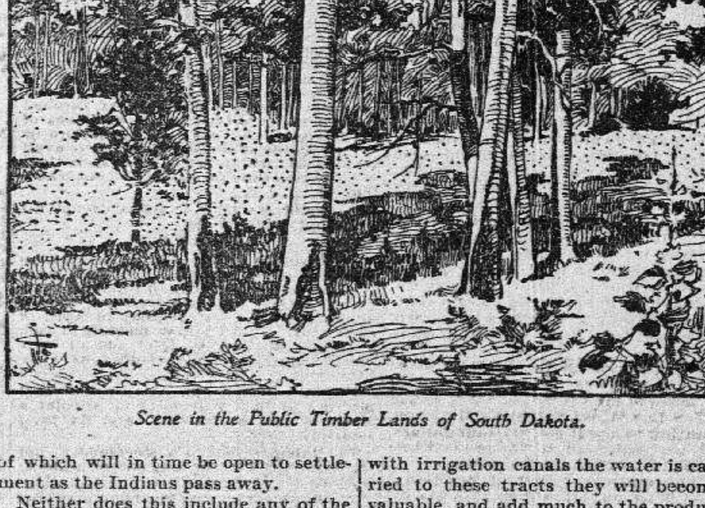
So it goes throughout a large number of the western states, both north and south. The following table shows the land open to settlement in each of the states of the union, and the percentage of the area of the entire country:

States and Territories.	Unappropriated and unreserved. Acres.	Per cent.
Alabama	522,373	1.60
Arizona	51,734,783	71.07
Californa	8,696,990	11.02
Colorado	42,443,028	42.72
Florida	39,708,551	59.81
Idaho	1,757,275	4.96
Kansas	44,207,949	82.68
Louisiana	1,060,383	2.02
Michigan	755,545	2.62
Minnesota	505,895	1.87
Mississippi	5,720,236	11.07
Missouri	382,950	1.29
Montana	445,911	1.02
Nebraska	71,567,296	75.12
Nevada	10,548,450	21.47
New Mexico	61,358,600	87.38
North Dakota	54,550,795	69.76
Oklahoma	20,574,683	45.82
Oregon	7,007,222	88.81
South Dakota	35,897,809	58.25
Utah	784,426	26.55
Washington	370,058	83.43
Wisconsin	2,582	31.49
Wyoming	49,0795	1.17
		78.84
Total, exclusive of outlying territories	573,994,8[illegible]	
Alaska	369,526,04[illegible]	96.21
Hawaii	1,772,640	100.00
		71.71
Total	945,293,515	

But all of these vast tracts of land are not adapted to productive uses. Some of it is good agricultural land, upon which crops of all kinds might be grown; more of it is suitable for grazing purposes chiefly; more is woodland and forests, valuable chiefly for the timber on it; another percentage is mountainous and valuable only for the minerals which it may contain, and a very large percentage is desert land, practically devoid of vegetation of any kind.

Irrigation possibilities may in time make much of this desert land valuable for both grazing and agricultural purposes. Results of this kind are being obtained each year in the western states, but it is limited by the supply of water obtainable, and the water supply is insufficient to reclaim all of the land of this character.

Much of this desert land contains all of the elements of fertility excepting water, and when the day comes when with irrigation canals the water is carried to these tracts they will become valuable, and add much to the productive capacity of the country.



Scene in the Public Timber Lands of South Dakota.

Absolutely correct figures as to the possibilities of irrigation cannot be given, but conservative estimates by competent government officials place it at close to 100,000,000. This estimate takes into consideration financial as well as engineering possibilities, and it is expected that this amount of land will be under cultivation within a few years.

What the future possibilities of the western United States are no one can even guess. With the discovery of new water sources, with the demand for additional agricultural territory, will come stronger efforts to reclaim the deserts of the western states, and the time may come when all of this vast tract of desert land will be under cultivation.

Of the public land open for settlement about 166,000,000 acres are timber lands. Much of this is extremely valuable for the lumber which it will produce, and once cleared of the timber the greater part of this territory now covered with heavy timber will no doubt be valuable for agricultural purposes. Of the remainder 374,000,000 acres are grazing lands, suitable for stock raising. Much of this will undoubtedly in time be divided into half sections of 320 acres each for stock farming and dairy purposes. But little of it is now valuable for other agricultural purposes than stock grazing, and will probably never be valuable agricultural land in a general sense.

A Colorado Farm Home Built on Irrigated Land.

Much of this grazing land, while still belonging to the government, is in use at the present time, as the government permits grazing on the public domain. Should the greater part of this land ever be appropriated, as it certainly will be, it will practically put an end to the vast herds of cattle now feeding on the western plains, unless the land is purchased from the settlers.

There are still other interesting figures in connection with the public land in the different states. In Kansas, for instance, there is but two per cent. of the total area of the state open for settlement at the present time. The number of acres is 1,060,000. This land is nearly all in the western end of the state, and most of it is suitable for grazing purposes only. What little land there is that has not been appropriated in the eastern portion of the state is of poor quality, unsuitable for much of any purpose.

In Minnesota there are still 5,720,000 acres of land open for settlement. This land is nearly all in the northern part of the state, near the Red Lake Indian reservation, and is principally timber land. On it are found pine, spruce, poplar, and nearly all of the hard woods common to the northern states. There is, however, some excellent agricultural land in the same section, the only objection to which is the lack of transportation.

Michigan has 505,000 acres of vacant public land scattered throughout the upper peninsula and the northern end of the lower peninsula. That in the upper peninsula is nearly all timber land, but in the lower peninsula it is principally agricultural land of a fair quality.

Wisconsin contains 413,000 acres of unappropriated public land, lying along the northern tier of counties, nearly all of which is covered with timber, both pine and the harder woods.

Missouri has 445,000 acres of public land in the southern and southeastern parts of the state, principally in the Ozark mountains. Much of it is suitable for agricultural purposes, and much of it is specially adapted to fruit farming. But a lack of needed transportation prevents its settlement at the present time.

Both of the Dakotas have large tracts of public land still open for settlement. In North Dakota there are 20,574,000 acres, or nearly as much unappropriated land as has been appropriated by settlers. But much of this land is practically useless without irrigation. There is some excellent timber land still open for settlement, the only fault that can be found with it being a lack of close transportation lines. Nearly all of the vacant land of the state is in the western portion, the eastern portion, where there is an abundance of water, being well filled up soon after it was opened to settlement.

South Dakota has 12,784,000 acres of public land still open, but much of it is arid and mountainous, and will be practically useless until such time as it is properly irrigated.

There are four of the southern states in which there is public land open to settlement. These states are Florida, Alabama, Arkansas and Louisiana. In Florida there are 1,757,000 acres of public land still vacant, or nearly one-fifth of the entire land area of the state. Much of it is swamps or timber, but occasional small tracts of fairly good agricultural land is found in various parts of the state. About one-third of the entire amount of public land in the state is in the northwestern portion between Alabama and the Gulf of Mexico. While most of this is swamp or timber land there is some that will bear cultivation.

Alabama has 522,000 acres of public land scattered throughout the state in small tracts. Most of it is either mountainous or timber land, but it is said that there is some excellent agricultural land within 100 miles of Mobile, near lines of transportation and lying between two navigable rivers. The timber land of the state is covered principally with southern pine.

A Western Irrigation Canal.

Louisiana has 775,000 acres of vacant public land. The larger part of this is covered with southern pine, but in the western part of the state, near the Texas boundary, is some good rolling prairie land.

Arkansas has 3,696,000 acres of public land to dispose of. Like the other southern states it is principally timber and swamps, but scattered through all parts of the state are some good agricultural lands which need only a means of transportation to make them valuable. In both Arkansas and Louisiania there is some agricultural land lying along the Mississippi river which settlers have been afraid to try to build homes upon because of the spring floods.

In addition to the public lands in the United States there are almost innumerable acres of our outlying dependencies. Alaska has never been surveyed, and while the land there will be of but little account for agricultural purposes, yet some of it in the southern portion of the territory may be used in this way.

In Hawaii the general government has 1,772,640 acres of public land, which is not open to settlement at the present time, however. About 70,000 acres of this land is considered excellent coffee land; 25,000 acres of it is suitable for the production of sugar cane; 1,000 acres of rice land; 451,000 acres of grazing land and 681,000 acres of forest land. The remainder is mountainous and practically useless. Two-thirds of this land is on the island of Hawaii, and the rest scattered throughout the group.

While the government has acquired some public land in Porto Rico, and large quantities of it in the Philippines, it is not as yet known the extent of the public land in either of these new colonies.

MAX OWEN.

Honest Folks in Sweden.

In certain parts of Sweden, where the most absolute confidence is reposed in the honesty of the people, a very informal postal system is in vogue. As the mail steamer reaches a landing place a man goes ashore with the letters, which he places in an unlocked box on the pier. Then the passer-by who expects a letter opens the box, turns over the letters and selects his own, unquestioned by anyone.

MUSHROOMS OUTDOORS.

How a Profitable Crop Can Be Raised Outside Both in the Spring and Autumn.

First dig out a trench five feet wide and 14 to 16 inches deep, sloping towards the center. Mix together manure and soil, and form a bed in the trench high enough to be nine inches above the level when well tramped down. The shelter is formed with three by four hemlock for a span roof, allowing the north side rafter to overlap the south eight inches. The lengthwise boards overlap like a shingle roof to turn water. The north side boards may be nailed fast, and the south side left movable, leaving in the south side six inches of space for ventilation at the top, where the overhanging rafters of the north keep rain out.

OUTDOOR MUSHROOM BED.

When gathering mushrooms, the south side boards may be taken off to allow space to reach in freely. The only attention a bed of this kind needs is a slight watering when the crop is being cut, and a covering of litter or long manure to keep off sun and frost. The bed must not be water-soaked, and to prevent this the ground has to be carefully graded, so as to turn water. During July and August, the bed is allowed to become dry on the surface, and is not watered to start the crop again until September.—Rural New Yorker.

CARE OF YOUNG TREES.

Without a Good Root or Stem a Plant Makes But Little Progress in Growth.

A large proportion of the trees that are lost in resetting die because they have been injured when they were taken up. Without a good root or stem a tree can make but little progress in growth. In digging up trees the surface soil should be removed to the root system, then a trench dug around the tree outside the mass of roots; then by cutting under the roots with a sharp spade on each side, the tree may be loosened from the soil with a good supply of young growing roots. If the tree is large, the trench must be made around the roots to the depth of the lowest, and the roots gradually loosened and freed from the soil.

No matter how carefully a tree is dug, many of the young feeding roots will be injured or destroyed. Thus only a small amount of sap can be supplied to the branches and buds, which nevertheless continue to evaporate a large amount of water; thus the tree often starts very slowly and sometimes fails entirely. By removing the branches and buds in proportion to the injury of the roots, a balance is maintained. All injured roots should be cut off clean with a knife and the wounds of large roots should be painted over with some waterproof covering.

When trees are planted the roots should have a fine mellow bed of soil, which should be pressed firmly in contact with every fiber, leaving no air space around them, and all should be spread out in natural position. The soil should be pressed very firmly around all the roots, so that the new roots will be encouraged to make a rapid growth. If the soil in which the tree is planted is the same as the one from which it was taken, the tree should be set the same depth as it was before it was removed. If the soil is heavier, the tree should be shallower; if lighter, it should be placed deeper. The surface of the soil which is over the roots should be fine and light because the capillarity is then broken up and the moisture cannot escape.—W. H. Moore, in Farmers' Voice.

Watercress for Marketing.

A good deal of money may be secured from many small streams where watercress either grows naturally or could be made to do so by judicious seeding and planting. The cress seeds abundantly after its season of growth is over, and when a stream is once stocked with it the growth of the plant is apt to increase. In some places gardeners have made artificial beds which they have planted with the cress, running from the stream into little coves which can be easily kept under water. The first cress of the season brings fancy prices at the large hotels and restaurants. The cress has a sprightly spicy taste that is almost universally liked, and it is believed by many that it has medicinal virtues that give it especial value as a tonic to the stomach at the time when it first makes its appearance.

Tramp and Millionaire.

Mayor Jones, of Toledo, O., in a recent article takes the ground that the idle tramp and the idle millionaire should each contribute to the welfare of the country. He thinks that the capitalist should invest some of his money in road building and the idle vagabond should contribute some of his time and strength. These services, in his opinion, would be as patriotic and as worthy of the love of men as to risk one's life in battle.

Don't get your cows into the habit of eating while being milked.