

# THE PENNY DIP.



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## CROFF'S WAR DANCE! AT THE INSTITUTE.

There was a large audience in the Mechanics' Institute last Monday evening to hear Mr. Croff discourse on the Imagination. The people who gathered on that occasion to hear a lecture got something more in the shape of entertainment, something which they did not bargain for, and which some of them, strange to say, did not seem to appreciate. Mr. Croff managed to combine in the brief limits of a single hour, a lecture, a gymnastic performance, acting, singing, drinking, and various other feats of a similar character. The effect was electrifying. Some, indeed, went out early in the performance and refused to hear any more from a man who, as they expressed it, was making a fool of himself. Others drew their brows into a sullen frown and refused to laugh at all, even when Mr. Croff made himself most ridiculous. But the majority of the audience, after ineffectual efforts to look grave, abandoned themselves to the contagious emotions of the hour, and laughed until their sides fairly ached. So lasting was the spell that Croff put upon them, that for the next twelve months most of that audience will laugh whenever his name is mentioned.

The lecture itself was probably well enough, if any one had possessed ears long enough to hear it all, for most of it was taken from very common books. One of its best sentences, that education is an intellectual grindstone, is so ancient that it was probably remarked by Noah to Japhet in the ark. But this would have been pardoned had Croff been content to read his discourse in a decent and proper tone of voice. The audience would have gone away, some saying that Croff's lecture was dry, and others that it was old, but none of them would have said that Croff was a fool.

Even now we cannot bring ourselves to believe that Croff is an absolute fool, although the evidence looks strong against him. We are willing charitably to say that he is a man who has set up a mistaken ideal, and tried to act up to it. It is true that he wears long hair, which we take to be an almost conclusive proof of weakness of mind, but then there are some men who wear their hair long because they think it makes them look like poets and men of genius. Spencer, the bung-hole poet, is a conspicuous example of this form of weakness. Croff has heard somewhere of lecturers who acted rather than spoke, and in trying to imitate them he has fallen into absurdities. He has heard of lecturers who declaimed in an elevated and grand tone, and in attempting to imitate their mode of speaking, he descended into rant and highfalutin. The result of this artistic error on the part of Croff was that the only persons among the audience who refused to admit that the lecturer was crazy were those who charitably suggested that he was drunk.

"Didn't you notice," remarked one lady, "how he always got worse after he took a drink out of that goblet."

The goblet in question was a neat little piece of silver to which the lecturer applied himself every three or four minutes. It certainly did appear to have a very stimulating effect upon him, although we refuse to believe that it contained anything stronger than water. Water certainly has a very stimulating effect on some men, especially men who drink very little of it.

The persons most to be pitied in connection with Mr. Croff's performance were the President of the Institute and one of the Directors, who were forced to sit for an hour on the platform, in full view of the audience, without laughing once. It has been calculated by the most eminent medical authorities that to suppress laughter is one of the most hurtful exercises of the will, so that we would not be at all surprised to hear of these two worthy men paying the penalty of their stoicism in a fit of sickness. The fat little organist, not feeling himself bound by the same bands of official etiquette as the Directors, laughed to his heart's content, and no doubt feels much better for it. The good-looking Corresponding Secretary, who usually graces the platform, did

not venture upon it last Monday, but having taken a pain in his stomach early in the lecture, went home, and so missed its most striking passages.

We shall never forget the look of alarm that came over the features of the President when Croff assumed his brigand hat and cloak and went rushing across the stage with a carving knife in his hand. Our artist has depicted in the engraving what might have been the sequel of such a demonstration.

In conclusion, we can only remark that we doubt whether Mr. Croff will again have the privilege of lecturing before a St. John audience in the Institute Course. His style is too striking, too unique, to be altogether acceptable, and his rash mode of handling knives, together with the suspicion that he is not quite sane, made the duties of chairman far from agreeable. We counsel Mr. Croff to retire from the lecture field and turn his powerful mind to some less exciting pursuit, such as the planting of cabbages,—an humble employment, but one infinitely more useful than the writing of bad lectures.



### Base Ingratitude.

We would have thought that the noble efforts of Dr. Waters, on behalf of St. David's church, would have insured him at least decent treatment from his congregation. But it appears not. At a meeting of the congregation held on Thursday evening, they unanimously passed a resolution affirming that it was Dr. Waters that burnt down St. David's church. Here is the resolution:

*Resolved*, That the congregation of St. David's church desire to put on record their sense of the obligations under which they lie, and their gratitude to all those friends who have aided them in rebuilding the Church destroyed by the fire on the 20th June last, through the efforts of our pastor—Rev. Dr. Waters.

This accusation is the more absurd, because it is notorious that Dr. Waters was not in St. John when St. David's was burnt down. He can prove a clear *alibi*. It is not to be supposed that he left in the church, when he went away, anything of so combustible a nature as to burn the church down.

### The Bay of Fundy.

This is what Edward Abbot thinks of the Bay of Fundy:

"Passamaquoddy Bay is an appurtenance of the Bay of Fundy, as is also the island of Grand Manan; but to describe the Bay of Fundy without mention of the fogs that harbor in it, would be as grave a short-coming as to write a scientific treatise on fog without analysis of the article as found in the Bay of Fundy. Fogs, we may say, are never missed in the Bay of Fundy, though *mist* is a feeble word to denote them. To see the Bay of Fundy, in fact, in some weathers, one might about as well look on the map, and go no further.—*Harpers for March*."

The performance at the Mechanics' Institute last evening, the programme of which is given on another page, was a treat to the lovers of good music. It will be repeated to-morrow evening with an entire change of programme.

Miss Wiley and Miss Cayvan visit Frederickton next Monday, when it is to be hoped they will have a good house.

### "PENNY DIP" SNUFFINGS.

To become round—Et square meals.—Josh Billings.

Motto for a cat show—Come to the scratch.—[New York Commercial.]

Punch notices that the baldheaded men comb their heads with towels.

A photographer may be described as one who makes his living by all manner of miens.—[Commercial Advertiser.]

The Turkish God is a bloody myth  
Born in Arabian story—  
Perhaps not quite a figure of speech,  
But a sort of Allah-gory.—[Graphic.]

Before accepting Mr. Beecher's theory we would like to hear from some of the politicians who have gone before.—[Oil City Derrick.]

The man who swore off is beginning to observe with great feeling, "We've got but one life to live, anyway."—[Danbury News.]

If the man who writes anonymous letters has never stolen sheep, it is probably the fault of the sheep.—[Bridgeport Standard.]

More life-saving stations are to be established along the coast, *i. e.*, several new ones have been wrecker-men-dead.—[New York Commercial Advertiser.]

It is said of the Chicago banks that thirteen out of eighteen are opposed to silver. Silver is too bulky to run away with.—[New Orleans Picayune.]

Mr. Barnum's acknowledgement that "nobody can cheat the Almighty" embodies the concentrated experience of a long and peculiar career.—[New York Sun.]

Kentucky beats them all. She now furnishes a case where a man eloped with the whole family except the old man, who had a lame back, and couldn't get to the depot in time.

There was a young man of Toronto, He said, "I shall go where I want to," So he hoisted all sail, And went right into jail, Because none his bail bond would go.

A reward of \$500 has been offered at Harrisburg for the recovery of a missing member of the Legislature. And every old maid in Pennsylvania now looks under her bed before retiring.—[New York Star.]

A Vassar College graduate went out to Cheyenne to lecture on "Woman's Mission," and she lost all faith in the nobility of mankind, when some admirer in the audience pomaded her curls with a lame egg.

Now listen. Why are the journals that run down Mark Twain like a Michigan town? Well, as you may not have a map of this State handy, we will give the solution, which is that they all Mount Clemens.

A Hoboken person, evidently a very young lady, writes: "Where does the fire go when you put out the candle?" We don't know. It must light out somewhere. You're up to snuff now, ain't you, dear?"—[New York Herald.]

Moment-ous.—Lord Coleridge says it has been calculated that every moment occupied in his court costs the country 10s. "Time is money," says the proverb; and who, after this, will be inclined to deny the statement. But that moments should be as precious as this, seems also rather to indicate that such an expensive legal instrument as Lord Coleridge's court is a precious shame.