

ally he is self-made, like Franklin and Lincoln; but he is a greater genius than either, because as a means to culture he has not needed to stoop to such vulgar aids as books and reflection. His chief mental diet is the column of "Slop-lets" in the *Evening Epigram*, and if you were to refer to "Paradise Lost" in his presence he would be apt to think that you referred to one of Bill Nye's classic essays.

Now, Silas Plumpkin is an occasional attendant at St. Melchisedec's Church, and it is a constant source of grief to him that the pastor is so dry a speaker and so inferior a scholar. The Rev. Philip Diefnbuch, D.D., is, to be sure, looked upon in certain scholarly circles as a man of great culture and eloquence; but Silas Plumpkin, with a wise shake of the head, declares that his sermons "Ha'n't got no depth, and I could preach better myself." Plumpkin's ideas of sermon-making are worth studying. He thinks that Paul and Dr. South are effete models for modern preachers. The end man at Grinnell and Splitson's is better, because more modern and spicy.

One Saturday last summer, in the early evening, the good doctor was seated under the big apple tree in his garden. Possibly he was merely resting in the shade while waiting for the supper bell. More probably he was gathering illustrations from the skilful manoeuvres of a general assembly of June bugs in the near vicinity. Plumpkin happened along just then, and concluded to have a chat with his pastor on "Reprobation." "Now's my chance," thought he, "to show the dominie how little he knows." And he proceeded to refute the preacher's well-known views by a learned quotation from a recent sermon on the "Genesis of the Ego" by Evangelist Bill, the Converted Slugger. Just as he was about to conclude with a brilliant illustration of the subject by a personal allusion, and his eye glistened with the triumph of having used up the minister, a most astounding incident occurred, the like of which is not, we are convinced, recorded in extant history. The minister's Jersey calf appeared upon the scene.

The needs of the ministerial baby had demanded a cow, and the cow had come to the glebe attended by a vigorous infant cow. John Fitzsimmons Diefnbuch, aged fourteen, was, at the moment of the theological argument, at the barn door, at the other end of the garden, engaged in the poetic employment of giving the first lesson to his calfship in drinking out of a pail—a momentous event, as every farmer's boy

knows, in the history of every respectable calf. Somehow Bossie's head got stuck in the pail, and he started at a 2.40 gait up the garden walk, head up and tail up, and with the pail over his nose like a muzzle, and the milk flying in every direction. After him in hot pursuit came Joha Fitzsimmons Diefnbuch. But to no avail. Theology of the dual number was standing with its twofold back to the barn, oblivious of approaching danger. Silas had raised his hand in gesture, and was heard to say with emphasis, "You're wrong; there ain't no reprobation"—when crash! the sportive calf struck the thin and light theological ribboner in the seat of the trousers, the head of the young brute shot between the legs of Silas Plumpkin, and the next instant the beast darted out of the open gate into the road, with the astonished Silas upon its back. Right down the village street toward the hotel the calf ran; and his rider, fearing the results of being too suddenly dismounted, clung desperately to the leather collar about his neck, roaring, "Help! help!" After this peculiar cavalry charge at a comfortable but troubled trot came the doctor, bareheaded, with the newspaper in one hand and the rocking-chair in the other, his good dame, the hopeful John Fitzsimmons, two small boys in the employ of the telegraph company, and thirty-one dogs of assorted tribes and colors.

The worst remains to be told. The calf (pail on nose) and his rider (pale of face) had whirled like the wind past the veranda of the Kent House, to the immense enjoyment of the lady guests, we grieve to say, and were going over the bridge which crosses the canal, when just at that point theological criticism lost its balance and rolled off into the canal.

It was fished out a few minutes later by a stalwart canaler, who lassoed it by the left foot and pulled it up to the tow-path toes first. The hero of the bovine ride walked thoughtfully homeward in dripping raiment.

The minister was quite used up with fright for a few minutes, but he soon recovered, and after supper began a sermon on "Let him that thinketh that he standeth," etc., which he finished at midnight, and which attracted wide attention the following Saturday in the columns of the *Pail and Suppress*. Thus ended the argument of Silas with the minister. And if this sketch has not reflected great glory upon the learning and dignity of that ambitious critic it is not our fault, but the fault of history, whose faithful chronicler we are.

G. F. G.