THE APPRENTICESHIP OF HORACE GREELEY.

The following chapter in the life of this distinguished editor, is from "The Life of Horace Greeley. By James Pastor," which is shortly to be published by Mason Brothers, New York.

It was a fine spring morning in the year 1826, about ten o'clock, when Mr. Amos Bliss, the manager and one of the proprietors of the Northern spectator, 'might have been seen' in the garden behind his house planting potatoes. He heard the gate open behind him, and, without turning around, became dimly conscious of the presence of a boy. But the boys of country villages go into whosesoever garden their wandering fancy impels them, and supposing this boy to be one of his own neighbours, Mr. Bliss continued his work and quickly forgot that he was not alone. In a few minutes, he heard a voice close behind him, a strange voice, high pitched and whining.

It said "Are you the man that carries on the printing office?"

Mr. Bliss then turned, and resting upon his hoe, surveyed the person who had thus addressed him. He saw standing before him a boy apparently about 15 years of age, of a light, tall, and slender form, dressed in the plain farmer's cloth of the time, his garments cut with an utter disregard of elegance and fit. His trowsers were exceedingly short and voluminous; he wore no stockings; his shoes were of the kind denominated high-lows and much worn down; his hat was of felt, one of the old stamp with so small a brim, that it looked more like a two-quart measure inverted than any thing else; and it was worn far back on his head; his hair was white, with a tinge of orange at its extremities, and it lay thinly upon a broad forehead and over a head, rocking on shoulders which seemed too slender to support the weight of a member so disproportional to the general outline. The general effect of the figure and its costume was so *outre*, they presented such a combination of the rustic and ludicrous, and the apparition had come upon him so suddenly, that the amiable gardner could scarcely keep from laughing.

He restrained himself, however, and replied "Yes, I'm the man."

Whereupon the stranger asked, "Don't you want a boy to learn the trade?"

"Well," said Mr. Bliss, "we have been thinking of it. Do *you* want to learn to print?"

"I've had some notion of it," said the boy in true Yankee fashion, as though he had not been dreaming about it and longing for it for years.

Mr. Bliss was both astonished and puzzled—astonished that such a fellow as the boy *looked* to be, should have ever thought of learning to print and puzzled how to convey to him an idea of the absurdity of the notion. So with an expression in his countenance, such as that a tender-hearted dry-goods merchant might be supposed to assume, if a bod carrier should apply for a place in the lace department, he said 'Well, my boy—but, you know it takes considerable learning to be a printer; have you been to school much?"

"No," said the boy, "I haven't had much chance at school. I've read some."

"What have you read?" asked Mr. Bliss.

"Well, I've read some history, and some travels, and a little of 'most everything."

"Where do you live?"

"At Westhaven."

"How did you come over?"

"I came on foot."

"What is your name?"

"Horace Greeley"

Now it happened that Mr. Amos Bliss had been for the last three years an Inspector of Common Schools, and in fulfilling the duties of his office—examining and licensing teachers—he had acquired an uncommon facility in asking questions, and a fondness for that exercise which men generally entertain for any employment in which they suppose themselves to excel.—The youth before him was in the language of medical students—a 'fresh subject' and the Inspector proceeded to try all his skill upon him, advancing from easy questions to hard ones, up to those knotty problems with which he had been wont 'to stump' candidates for the office of teacher. The boy was a match for him. He answered every question promptly, clearly and modestly. He could not be 'stumped' in the ordinary school studies, and of the books he had read he could give a correct and complete analysis. In Mr. Bliss's own account of the interview, he says, "On entering into conversation, and a partial examination of the qualifications of my new applicant, it required but little time to discover, that he possessed a mind of no common order, and an acquired intelligence far beyond his years. He had had but little opportunity at the common school, but 'he said he had read some,' and what he had read he well understood and remembered. In addition to the ripe intelligence manifested in one so young and whose instruction had been so limited, there was a single-mindedness, a truthfulness and common sense in what he said, that at once commanded my regard."

After half an hour's conversation with the boy, Mr. Bliss intimated that he thought he would do, and told him to go into the printing office and talk to the foreman. Horace went to the printing-office, and there his appearance produced an effect on the tender minds of the three apprentices who were at work therein, which can be much better imagined than described, and which is most vividly remembered by the two who survive. To the foreman Horace addressed himself, regardless certainly, oblivious probably, of the stare and the remarks of the boys. The foreman, at first, was inclined to wonder that Mr. Bliss should, for one moment, think it possible that a boy got up in that style could perform the most ordinary duties of a printer's apprentice. Ten minutes talk with him however, effected a partial revolution in his mind in the boy's favor, and as he was in want of another apprentice, he was not inclined to be over particular. He tore off a slip of proof-paper, wrote a few words upon it hastily with a pencil, and told the boy to take it to Mr. Bliss. That piece of paper was his fate. The words were:—*Guess we'd better try him.*' Away went Horace to the garden, and presented his paper. Mr. Bliss, whose curiosity had been excited to a high pitch by the extraordinary contrast between the appearance of the boy and the real quality, now entered into a long conversation with him, respecting his history, his past employments, his parents, their circumstances, his own intentions and wishes; and the longer he talked, the more his admiration grew. The result was, that he agreed to accept Horace as an apprentice, provided his father would agree to the usual terms; and then, with eager steps, and a light heart, the boy took the dusty road that led to his home in Westhaven.

"You are not going to hire that townhead, Mr. Bliss, are you?" asked one of the apprentices at the close of the day. "I am," was the reply, "and if you boys are expecting to get any fun out of him, you'd better get it quick, or you'll be too late.—There's something in that tow-head, as you'll find out, before you are a week older."

A day or two after Horace packed up his wardrobe in a small cotton handkerchief. Small as it was, it would have held more; for its proprietor never had more than two shirts, and one change of outer clothing, at the same time, till he was of age. Father and son walked side by side, to Poltney, the boy carrying his possession upon a stick over his shoulder.

At Poltney, an unexpected difficulty arose. which for a time made Horace tremble in his high-low shoes. The terms proposed by Mr. Bliss, were that the boy should be bound for five years, and receive his board and twenty dollars a year. Now, Mr. Greeley had ideas of his own on the subject of apprenticeship, and he objected to this proposal, and to every particular of it. In the first place, he had determined that no child of his should ever be bound at all. In the second place, he thought five years an unreasonable time; thirdly, he considered that twenty dollars a year and board was a compensation ridiculously disproportionate to the services which Horace would be required to render; and finally, on each and all the points, he clung to his opinion with the tenacity of a Greeley. Mr. Bliss appealed to the established custom of the country; five years was the usual period; the compensation offered was the regular thing; the binding was a point essential to the employer's interest. And at every pause in the conversation, the appealing voice of Horace was heard: "Father, I *guess* you'd better make a bargain with Mr. Bliss;" or, "Father, I guess it won't make much difference;" or, "Don't you think you'd better do it, Father?" At one moment, the boy was reduced to despair. Mr. Bliss had given it as his *ultimatum* that the proposed binding was absolutely indispensable, he "could do business in no other way." "Well, then, Horace," said the father, "let us go home." The father turned to go; but Horace lingered; he could not give it up; and so the father turned again; the negotiation was re-opened, and after a prolonged discussion, a compromise was effected. What the terms were that were finally agreed to, I cannot positively state, for the three memoirs which I have consulted upon the subject give three different replies. Probably, however, they were—no binding and no money for six months; then the boy could, if he chose, bind himself for the remainder of the five years, at forty dollars a year, the apprentice to be boarded from the beginning. And so the father went home, and the son went straight to the printing-office and took his first lesson in the art of setting type.

A few months after, it may be as well to mention here, Mr. Greely removed to Erie county, Pennsylvania, and bought some wild land there, from which he gradually created a farm, leaving Horace alone in Vermont. Grass now grows where the little house stood in Westhaven, in which the family lived longest, and the barn in which they stored their hay and kept their cattle, hens forward like a bleeding elephant, and lets in the daylight through ten thousand apertures. But the neighbours point out the tree that stood before their front door, and the tree that shaded the kitchen window, and the tree that stood behind the house, and the tree whose apples Horace liked, and the bed of mint with which he regaled his nose.—And both the people of Westhaven and those of Amherst assert, that whenever the Editor of the Tribune revisits the scenes of his early life, at the season when apples are ripe, one of the things that he is sure to do, is to visit the apple trees that produce the fruit which he liked best when he was a boy, and which he still prefers before all the apples of the world.

The new apprentice took his place at the font, and received from the foreman his "copy," composing stick, and a few words of instruction, and then he addressed himself to his task; he needed no further assistance. The mysteries of the craft he seemed to comprehend intuitively. He had thought of his chosen vocation for many years; he had formed a notion, how the types *must* be arranged in order to produce the desired impression, and therefore, all he had to acquire was manual dexterity. In perfect silence, without looking to the right hand or to the left, heedless of the sayings and doings of the other apprentices, though they were bent on mischief, and tried to attract and distract his attention. Horace worked on, hour after hour, all day: and when he left the office at night, could set type better and faster than many an apprentice who had had a month's practice. The next day he worked with the same silence and intensity. The boys were puzzled. They thought it absolutely incumbent on them to perform an initiatory rite of some kind, but the new boy gave them no handle, no excuse, no opening.—He committed nogreenness, he spoke to no one, seemed utterly oblivious of everything save only his own copy and his type.—They threw type at him, but he never looked around. They talked saucily at him, but he threw back no retort. This would never do. Towards the close of the third day, the oldest apprentice took out of the rack two black balls with which the printers used to *dab* the ink upon the type, and remarking that in his opinion, Horace's hair was of too light a hue for so black an art as that which he had undertaken to learn, applied the ball well inked to Horace's head, making four distinct dabs.

The boys, the journeymen, the pressman and the editor, all paused in their work to observe the result of this experiment.—Horace neither spoke nor moved. He went on with his work as though nothing had happened, and soon after went to the tavern where he boarded, and spent an hour in purifying his dishonored locks.—And that was all the "fun" the boys "got out of their new companion on that occasion. They were conquered. In a few days the victor and the vanquished were excellent friends.

THE PUZZLED PIG.—The *Knickerbocker*, a New York magazine, has the following piece of drollery :—'One of our western farmers, being very much annoyed last summer by his best sow breaking into the cornfield, search was instituted in vain for a hole in the raillence. Failing to find any, an attempt was next made to drive out the animal by the way of her entrance; but of course, without success. The owner then resolved to watch her proceedings; and posting himself at night in a fence-corner, he saw her enter at one end of a hollow log, outside the field, and emerge at the other end within the enclosnre. "Eureka!" cried he, "I have you now, old lady." Accordingly, he proceeded, after turning her out once more, to so arrange the log (it being very crooked) that both ends opened on the outside of the field. The next day, the animal was observed to enter at her accustomed place, and shortly emerge again. "Her astonishment," says our informant, "at finding herself in the same field whence she had started, is too ludicrous to be described. She looked this way, and then that; grunted her dissatisfaction; and, finally returned to the original starting-place, and after a deliberate survey of matters, to satisfy herself that it was all right, she again entered the log. On emerging yet once more on the wrong side, she evinced even more surprise than before, and turning about, retraced the log in an opposite direction. Finding this effort likewise in vain, after looking long and attentively at the position of things, with a short, angry grunt of disappointment, and perhaps fear, she she turned short round, and started off on a brisk run; nor could either coaxing or driving ever after induce her to visit that part of the field. She seemed to have a superstition concerning the spot."

ANECDOTE OF DE QUINCY.—An American in England, describing a visit to De Quincy, gives a glimpse of the heart of one of the greatest living writers: "There was a moment's pause in the 'table-talk,' when one of the daughters asked our opinion of Scotland and the Scots. De Quincy had been in a kind of reverie, from which the question aroused him. Turning to us, he said, in a kindly, half-parental manner, 'The servant that waits at my table is a Scotch girl. It may be that you have something severe to say about Scotland. I know that I like the English church, and dislike many things about the Puritanical Scotch; but I never utter anything that might wound my servant. Heaven knows the lot of a poor servant-girl is hard enough, and if there is any person in the world, of whose feelings I am especially tender, it is of those of a female compelled to do for us our drudgery. —Speak as freely as you choose, but please reserve your censure, if you have any, for the moments when she is absent from the room."

A BROKEN HEART.—The late Robert C. Sands sued for damages in a case of breach of promise of marriage. He was offered two hundred pounds to heal his broken heart. "Two hundred!" he exclaimed; "two hundred for ruined hopes, a blasted life! Two hundred for all this? No—never! Make it three hundred and it's a bargain.

A COMPLIMENT TO THE LADIES.—Walter Savage Landor, now residing at Bath, England, in his 81st year, became acquainted with Lady Blessington, in Florence in 1825. In Madden's Life and Correspondence of that lady, just published, we find several letters of Landor's. We make the following extract from one of them. He writes to Lady B. "Cannot you teach those about you to write somewhat more purely? I am very fastidious. Three days ago, I was obliged to correct a friend of mine, a man of fashion, who so far forgot the graces, as to say of a lady, 'I have not often been in her company.' "Say *presence*" we are in the company of men, in the presence of angels and of women."