

Joshua Billings' experiences

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Joshua Billings was born in a very secluded spot on the earth known as Shin-bone Centre, a town which had never been blessed with intellectual inhabitants, and consequently it was in about the same condition when our story opens as the day it was founded. Most of its inhabitants were farmers, ^{who} had never seen anything but a farm, and knew nothing but the usual routine of farm life. Joshua was not more brilliant than his fellow countrymen, still he had ambitions to see something of the outside world. He lived with his wife and family on their half acre, and became quite well to do, he being a trapper of wood chucks by profession. He always had a great desire to visit New York, the great metropolis of Pennsylvania. He had often heard his grand-mother's half brother speak of the many sights and amusements presented in this exceedingly small village; so by economical living, he managed to lay enough by to take this pleasure trip, and for several years he had been endeavoring to decide upon a day. At length, when a young man of 64-3/4 summers, he started out leaving his widow behind with her eighteen children. He took the night boat from Liverpool, which was then situated in Northern Pennsylvania, sailing down the Amazon river, he arrived in New York on August 34th. at sunrise at 4 o'clock in the afternoon 450 B.C. The atmosphere was quite cool, being about 140 degrees behind the back fence. When he was able to move his rusty joints enough to carry his aged frame from the river perambulator, he was astonished by the great commotion near at hand. It was only a group of anxious hack men eager to get a passenger. This was all he heard "Hack, hack, hack" "Cab, cab, cab" "Hack gent, hack gent, hack gent, hack". "Well I wonder ^{who} all these policemen are going to hack, guess I'll go around this side, so they wont see me". But their eyes were looking in all directions, and he was soon discovered. "Hack gent". "H-H-H-H-Hold on there, you got the wrong man, I just got off the boat from Shin bone Centre, I have'nt done anything". "Excuse me, my friend," said the shrewd fellow on business. "But wouldn't you like to ride right to the hotel, I presume you are a stranger in the city"? "Well you'r a pretty decent kind of a chap, I don't care if I do take a little ride, bein' you'r kind enough to ask me". Joshua and his baggage were soon loaded into the cab, which went jolting over the cobbled street. In a short time they came to a stop in front of a cheap hotel on the Bowery. "Well, much obliged for the lift" said Joshua, clambering out of the cab. "One dollar please" said the driver. "What, a dollar for what. You asked me to have a ride, and now you ask me to pay for it". "Come old hayseed out with your dollar now before I pick you all apart". Joshua half frightened to death handed over the dollar, and thus experienced his first swindle. "Wall, I suppose I might as well go in this heer hotel and get a little rest". So he ambled into the office, where a

tough looking young man perched on a high stool. As our hero entered, an amused smile came over his face. But rising he greeted him cordially "Well how are you, my old weather beaten hayseeder, hows craps, pretty busy now I suppose milking pigs and husking punkins and digging corn". Joshua was somewhat surprised by this greeting, but replied "Yes binn kinder peggin' along, but thought I'd take a little vacation and drop down to town". "Glad to see you, what can I do to make your lordship comfortable". Well I'd like a room on the first floor front with fire escape, brussels carpet, cherry bed room suite and latest improvements, and a mattress made from hair off a porcupine". "All right old man, got something that will just suit you". A bell boy was summoned. "Show this gentleman up to No.200". Joshua and his baggage was soon loaded into the elevator, which began to ascend rapidly. "What kind of an infernal boosting machine is this, why we'll go clean out of sight in a few minutes, hold on young fellow, I'll get out and walk if you'll tell me what street to take". But on up up it went, and when the 16th. story was reached Joshua was in a dead faint from fright. A horse doctor was summoned, and under his skillful treatment Joshua soon revived. But he spent a sleepless night, thinking all the time there was a burglar in the room, or that the hotel was on fire. The misquitoses also had a rare feast on his country blood. But everything has an end, so told this night. After a hasty breakfast of ham and eggs, he started out for what he called sight seeing. Walking over to third avenue he saw for the first time the elevated railway. "Wall if that don't take the cake, so they have the cars running on the second plan do they, and theres a run away horse car, (meaning a cable car). I wonder how the horses got lose; but the people dont seem to be a bit excited about it. Wall I must bring Betsy down and show her all these wonders". But while intently looking at the train over his head, he did not see a woman approaching with a baby in her arms, and consequently collided with her, knocking the child from her arms to the sidewalk, causing a fracture of the scalp. Joshua was duly arrested and spent the night behind the bars. The next morning he was arraigned before Justice Swellhead to answer a charge of breach of promise; but the plea of self defence was brought in, so he was discharged with thanks. "Wall I've heard so much about these theatres, guess I'll go see one to-night. The Black Crook happened to be playing in a theatre near by, and eight o'clock found Joshua in the top balcony. "Wall if this is'nt the funniest place I ever struck, why there are furnished rooms over there to let, I wonder when its going to start, pretty soon the curtain rose, and Joshua kept the audience for a radius of 50 feet in a constant roar by his eagerness and quaint remarks. Just look at these galls, if they aint dressed up like a lot of clowns. When I was a boy the women used to have sixteen buttons on their dresses and one on their gloves; now they have sixteen buttons on their gloves and one on their dresses. What is this world coming to. There

now that fellow has shot that nice looking young fellow because they both sparked the same girl, but she didn't care anything for that tough fellow. I wonder what they will do with him; they ought to hang him. O dear me, that girl has fell right into the river, why don't some one try to pull her out. Joshua was disgusted, and after the first act, ^{and} ~~was~~ fished out with the aid of an usher

I might tell you many more of his experiences, but if you will procure my latest edition of "travels" at any hardware store you will find this story complete. I am pleased to present this introduction to Peddie through the kindness of the editor of this paper.

Respectfully yours,

Rueben Glue, humorist,
Peddie Institute

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