

My name's Henry Smithson, a minister's son
I was borne in the year eighteen eighty one
In the great alleghanies, the panhandle state
 Where summer is seldom and often comes late.
Where farmers plant corn in the moon by the signs
And the sun rises wrong by the cucumber vines.
 But without any signs and a very poor hoe
I weeded the young corn and helped it to grow.
 But at last that dull life grew rather too tame
I felt it was time I was hunting big game.

 So I struck for a job with J. Costilo Baber
A shrewd business man though an excellent neighbor,
I helped with the milking and knocked bout the farm
Ever careful of straining my small slender are.
 I here learned an art, I'd not known in the past
When I struck a good layout, of making it last.

 But Baber would josh till I really was mad
The things that he said were rather too bad,
But before I could ask if my time has expired
He gave me my cheque, I'd really been fired.

 The next job I struck was real up to date
We were picking up chestnuts, and never worked late.
 A jolly old bachelor, both he and I
Would pick and sort chestnuts and spread them to dry.
 When the season was over, he gave me my dough
And shipped his chestnuts to Buffalo.

 The next on my string was the best of a snap
The finest big farm that's laid off on the map.
 Twas run by the Robinson Bros. Of note,
And that day in Nov. You'd have off to vote,
 I had a great time while I stayed on that ground
And earned a small pittance, my washing and found.
 I could climb through the orchard or play with the cat
Scoff peaches and apples, or throw at my hat
No boatswain to holler "keep off of that paint,"
No strict army discipline and little restraint.

But in time on the very best job we will tire
If you can't believe it, prove which is the liar,
And you with some others may think me insane
When for personal reasons I went home again.

But my humble old home was quite common to me
I'd seen the great circus and memag e rie
I'd been to the railroad, and seen the fast train
And had worked on a thrasher that measured the grain.

Well, Richwood was boomed in less than a year
And again I left home without money or fear.

Walking to Richwood, I soon made a hit
With a heavy sledge hammer some sandstones to split.
Here I worked rather hard, but at night We'd crack jokes
And blow in the money for cider and smokes.

I had long been construction this big sawmill shed
And had scarcely been earning my washing and bread,
So I met the head "push" at the big company barn
Begged leave of absence, walked out to the farm.

I'd been on this farm in my earlier life
Only left when I feared I'd be taking a wife.

Well one day my ageing boss sauntered out to the shade
"With, young man here's a cinch that will be to you aid
Twenty dollars a month, just from any old date
From the best man I know in the Centennial state."

We drove to the station in the highest of glee
For dinner, fried oysters were plenty and free.
Then he bade me farewell, and griping my hand
He returned, and I left on the great "overland".
At Cincin. I changed to the great big Four
Though I couldn't afford a sleeping car
I pronounced that road a first class ling
For we reached St Louis on good time.

I got off the car and went through the gate
Finding I had two hours to wait.
At length I heard the voice of the crier
"train on track six, a regular flier
For Kansas City and Omaha
Train on "Hardaport" from a runners jaw,
"All hands on deck, rig in the sail
"Lively there "lively "clear the rail,
Stand by for a ram" roared captain Bell
"This way, this way gents for the Palace Hotel"

Well I found that flier rather phoney
Couldn't outrun a buckskin pont,
And no one would push when she did get slow
So were late in reaching the next depot.

As I left Kan. City, I took in the plains
As I looked o'er the corn field I had many pains
For far's I could see o'er the whole blooin bot
I could see not one tree nor the least shady Spot.

Our engine was throbbing and getting on fine
Till we came to the Kan. And Col-rado line
When soon she went loco-n I though of my chum,
Who said all things got it, that didn't use rum.

But we rolled into Pueblo one morning quite dry
Where I cooled off my temper with coffee near by
To late to catch the morning train
So my peacefull temper rose again.

I waited there for seventeen hours
To catch a train for La Veto bowers
I abused the road till she came in sight
Just twenty minutes past midnight.

I went to sleep as a seat I took-
The next I knew I was gently shook
And heard my fellow seat mate say
"You'd better jump, We're under way"
So grabbing shoes and large valise
I jumped before the speed increased.
The waiting room was little used
With long and undivided pews
On one of these I made my bed-The railroad people thought me dead
For when I woke they were bustling round
Preparing to put me in the ground.

I went to the stable and asked the charge
Of a few minutes run with a dry land barge
Said he, "A dollar at the drop of you hat",
Said I, "I can walk out cheaper'n that."

I heaved up the anchor, and shouldered my grip
And tacked to the port for a short breezy trip
Till I came to the reef where by Robinsons chart
I must go hard-a-starboard and make a fresh start.

I had pleasant dreams as I crossed the wide field
Of good times and pleasures, that great ranch must yield,
I had pleasant thoughts as I came to the yard
And while climbing the fence I thought long of my pard

Who by his great kindness, had found me this “cinch”
Why I swore there I’d help him in any old pinch.

When I knocked at the door, I was cheerfully met
and crossing the threshold I took off my hat,
For the true hearted chaplain was paying a call
And he kindly addressed me, but made me feel small.

Then the ranchman came in and had looked at my card
Shook hands with me warmly and asked of my pard,
Then I told of my arm which began to feel sore
Fresh vaccination just five days or more.
After dinner was served he examined my arm
And asked if I cared to look over the farm,
We’d look through the cattle and see the calves play
“Yes we’d go on the wagon and handle some hay”.

The days were quite long, and were stretched, in the morning
I’d go to the barn with a lantern adoring,
And feed a few horses, and milk all the cows
Then we’d hood to the wagon and fill up the nows.

He also was butchering, selling some meat
Making plenty to do, and abundance to eat.

On butchering nights I’d go up to bed,
My shadow would ask “have the horses been fed?”
As we passed on the stairs, No I was not dreaming
For breakfast was ready, the hot coffee steaming.

Then we’d wake up the cattle so haggard and worn
From sheer loss of sleep, not the absence of corn
And throw out the hay, while they sighing and pineing
Would grumble at breakfast with all the stars shining.

Then load in the wagon and cover with carpet
The firm frozen beef, and send it to market.

When the last snow had melted, we cleaned out the ditch
and spread out the water that makes these men rich.

I soon learned to reef in the big canvass dams
For I liked irrigating, ‘twas like digging clams.

But we laid by the shovel and picked up the fork
And again things assumed the image of work.

Then along came July with her great holiday
And our boss paid us off, that we might have some play.
But so long at this job Joe and I had been staying
For the Fourth would be Stop? No we kept right on haying.

But Joe better known as Old Barney McCoy
Soon got enough dough and went down to Pomeroy
Where hayforks were stranger and straw ricks were few
The nights were much long, not near so much dew.

It seemed rather rough, but I'd hung up my hat
So I stayed on that ranch for the age of a cat.

But now I'm not there, I've shipped in the navy
To be kicked about by Tom, Dick, and Davy.
And while in the Barracks and on Men-o-war
I think of the ranch and it's pleasures once more.

Some think of this navy, as something sublime
But for me it's composed of old fever and chills
Strong gargles and tablets and quinine pills.

I'm now going home on the collier Nero
My body impaired, and my mind, not a zero.
And if hospital life doesn't tread on my pedal
For second enlistment, I'll ne'er win a medal.

Henry Woodson Smithson
Alias- Bill Woods

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