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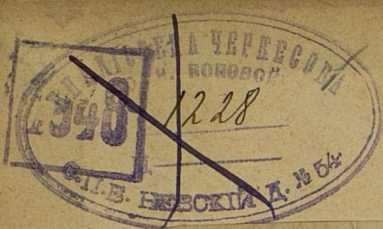
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BY

GEORGE HORACE LORIMER.

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By the same Author,

LETTERS FROM A SELF-MADE MERCHANT TO HIS SON . 1 vol.

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Англ.  
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# OLD GORGON GRAHAM

MORE LETTERS FROM A SELF-MADE  
MERCHANT TO HIS SON

L90

BY

GEORGE HORACE LORIMER

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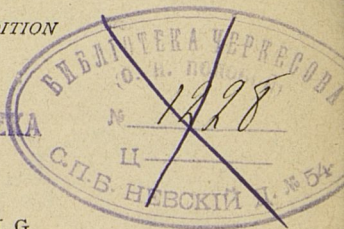
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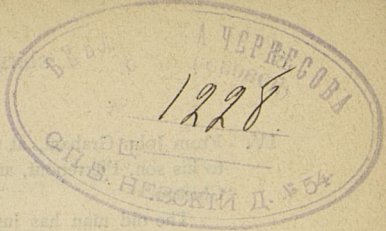
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FROM A SON  
TO HIS FATHER.



FROM A SON  
TO HIS FATHER





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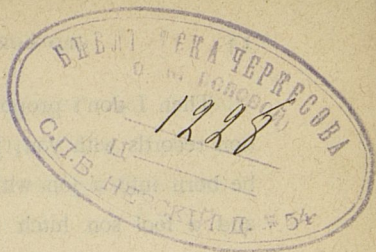
## I.

FROM John Graham, head of the house of Graham & Company, pork packers, in Chicago, familiarly known on 'Change as Old Gorgon Graham, to his son, Pierrepont, at the Union Stock Yards.

The old man is laid up temporarily for repairs, and Pierrepont has written asking if his father doesn't feel that he is qualified now to relieve him of some of the burden of active management.

It was John Graham head of the house of Graham &  
Company, both bankers in Chicago, minutely known  
to change as old John Graham, to his son Peter  
from the Union Stock & Bond

and out was a bid on Thursday for the  
and that day he was seen in his latest look  
and that he was qualified now to return him of some of  
the history of the company.



OLD GORGON GRAHAM'S LETTERS  
TO HIS SON.

---

I.

CARLSBAD, October 4, 189—.

DEAR PIERREPONT: I'm sorry you ask so many questions that you haven't a right to ask, because you put yourself in the position of the inquisitive bull-pup who started out to smell the third rail on the trolley right-of-way—you're going to be full of information in a minute.

In the first place, it looks as if business might be pretty good this fall, and I'm afraid you'll have your hands so full in your place as assistant manager of the lard department that you won't have time to run my job, too.

Then I don't propose to break any quick-promotion records with you, just because you happened to be born into a job with the house. A fond father and a fool son hitch up into a bad team, and a good business makes a poor family carryall. Out of business hours I like you better than anyone at the office, but in them there are about twenty men ahead of you in my affections. The way for you to get first place is by racing fair and square, and not by using your old daddy as a spring-board from which to jump over their heads. A man's son is entitled to a chance in his business, but not to a cinch.

It's been my experience that when an office begins to look like a family tree, you'll find worms tucked away snug and cheerful in most of the apples. A fellow with an office full of relatives is like a sow with a litter of pigs—apt to get a little thin and peaked as the others fat up. A receiver is next of kin to a business man's relatives, and after they are all nicely settled in the office they're not long in finding a job for him there, too. I want

you to get this firmly fixed in your mind, because while you haven't many relatives to hire, if you ever get to be the head of the house, you'll no doubt marry a few with your wife.

For every man that the Lord makes smart enough to help himself, He makes two who have to be helped. When your two come to you for jobs, pay them good salaries to keep out of the office. Blood is thicker than water, I know, but when it's the blood of your wife's second cousin out of a job, it's apt to be thicker than molasses—and stickier than glue when it touches a good thing. After you have found ninety-nine sound reasons for hiring a man, it's all right to let his relationship to you be the hundredth. It'll be the only bad reason in the bunch.

I simply mention this in passing, because, as I have said, you ain't likely to be hiring men for a little while yet. But so long as the subject is up, I might as well add that when I retire it will be to the cemetery. And I should advise you to anchor me there with a pretty heavy monument, because it



wouldn't take more than two such statements of manufacturing cost as I have just received from your department to bring me back from the graveyard to the Stock Yards on the jump. And until I do retire you don't want to play too far from first base. The man at the bat will always strike himself out quick enough if he has forgotten how to find the pitcher's curves, so you needn't worry about that. But you want to be ready all the time in case he should bat a few hot ones in your direction.

Some men are like oak leaves—they don't know when they're dead, but still hang right on; and there are others who let go before anything has really touched them. Of course, I may be in the first class, but you can be dead sure that I don't propose to get into the second, even though I know a lot of people say I'm an old hog to keep right along working after I've made more money than I know how to spend, and more than I could spend if I knew how. It's a mighty curious thing how many people think that if a man isn't spending his money their way he isn't spending it right, and that if he



words that you'd mixed in for flavouring. They think that the old boys have corraled all the chances and have tied up the youngsters where they can't get at them; when the truth is that if we all simply quit work and left them the whole range to graze over, they'd bray to have their fodder brought to them in bales, instead of starting out to hunt the raw material, as we had to. When an ass gets the run of the pasture he finds thistles.

I don't mind owning up to you, though, that I don't hang on because I'm indispensable to the business, but because business is indispensable to me. I don't take much stock in this indispensable man idea, anyway. I've never had one working for me, and if I had I'd fire him, because a fellow who's as smart as that ought to be in business for himself; and if he doesn't get a chance to start a new one, he's just naturally going to eat up yours. Any man can feel reasonably well satisfied if he's sure that there's going to be a hole to look at when he's pulled up by the roots.

I started business in a shanty, and I've ex-

panded it into half a mile of factories; I began with ten men working for me, and I'll quit with 10,000; I found the American hog in a mud-puddle, without a beauty spot on him except the curl in his tail, and I'm leaving him nicely packed in fancy cans and cases, with gold medals hung all over him. But after I've gone some other fellow will come along and add a post-graduate course in pork packing, and make what I've done look like a country school just after the teacher's been licked. And I want you to be that fellow. For the present, I shall report at the office as usual, because I don't know any other place where I can get ten hours' fun a day, year in and year out.

After forty years of close acquaintance with it, I've found that work is kind to its friends and harsh to its enemies. It pays the fellow who dislikes it his exact wages, and they're generally pretty small; but it gives the man who shines up to it all the money he wants and throws in a heap of fun and satisfaction for good measure.

A broad-gauged merchant is a good deal like

our friend Doc Graver, who'd cut out the washer-woman's appendix for five dollars, but would charge a thousand for showing me mine—he wants all the money that's coming to him, but he really doesn't give a cuss how much it is, just so he gets the appendix.

I've never taken any special stock in this modern theory that no fellow over forty should be given a job, or no man over sixty allowed to keep one. Of course, there's a dead-line in business, just as there is in preaching, and fifty's a good, convenient age at which to draw it; but it's been my experience that there are a lot of dead ones on both sides of it. When a man starts out to be a fool, and keeps on working steady at his trade, he usually isn't going to be any Solomon at sixty. But just because you see a lot of bald-headed sinners lined up in the front row at the show, you don't want to get humorous with every bald-headed man you meet, because the first one you tackle may be a deacon. And because a fellow has failed once or twice, or a dozen times, you don't want to set him down



as a failure—unless he takes failing too easy. No man's a failure till he's dead or loses his courage, and that's the same thing. Sometimes a fellow that's been batted all over the ring for nineteen rounds lands on the solar plexus of the proposition he's tackling in the twentieth. But you can have a regiment of good business qualities, and still fail without courage, because he's the colonel, and he won't stand for any weakening at a critical time.

I learned a long while ago not to measure men with a foot-rule, and not to hire them because they were young or old, or pretty or homely, though there are certain general rules you want to keep in mind. If you were spending a million a year without making money, and you hired a young man, he'd be apt to turn in and double your expenses to make the business show a profit, and he'd be a mighty good man; but if you hired an old man, he'd probably cut your expenses to the bone and show up the money saved on the profit side; and he'd be a mighty good man, too. I hire both and

then set the young man to spending and the old man to watching expenses.

Of course, the chances are that a man who hasn't got a good start at forty hasn't got it in him, but you can't run a business on the law of averages and have more than an average business. Once an old fellow who's just missed everything he's sprung at gets his hooks in, he's a tiger to stay by the meat course. And I've picked up two or three of these old man-eaters in my time who are drawing pretty large salaries with the house right now.

Whenever I hear any of this talk about carting off old fellows to the glue factory, I always think of Doc Hoover and the time they tried the "death-line-at-fifty" racket on him, though he was something over eighty when it happened.

After I left Missouri, Doc stayed right along, year after year, in the old town, handing out hell to the sinners in public, on Sundays, and distributing corn-meal and side-meat to them on the quiet, weekdays. He was a boss shepherd, you bet, and he didn't stand for any church rows or such like non-

sense among his sheep. When one of them got into trouble the Doc was always on hand with his crook to pull him out, but let an old ram try to start any stampede-and-follow-the-leader-over-the-precipice foolishness, and he got the sharp end of the stick.

There was one old billy-goat in the church, a grocer named Deacon Wiggleford, who didn't really like the Elder's way of preaching. Wanted him to soak the Amalekites in his sermons, and to leave the grocery business alone. Would holler Amen! when the parson got after the money-changers in the Temple, but would shut up and look sour when he took a crack at the short-weight prune-sellers of the nineteenth century. Said he "went to church to hear the simple Gospel preached," and that may have been one of the reasons, but he didn't want it applied, because there wasn't any place where the Doc could lay it on without cutting him on the raw. The real trouble with the Deacon was that he'd never really got grace, but only a pretty fair imitation.

Well, one time after the Deacon got back from