The Democratic Watchman.

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The Watchman.

EQUAL AND EXACT JUSTICE TO ALL.

HENRY HAYS, WIEN FORNEY, } Editors.

THE ONLY ENGLISH DEMOCRATIC NEWSPAPER IN CENTRE COUNTY, IS PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN BELLEFONTE, EVERY WEDNESDAY MORNING, BY HENRY HAYS.

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Democratic State Central COMMITTEE,

At a Meeting of the Democratic State Central Committee, held November 1st, 1855, at the Merchant's Hotel Philadelphia, the following Resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That the Democratic State Convention of 1856, be held on the 4th day of March next, in Harrisburg, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

In pursuance of the above Resolution the Convention will assemble at Harrisburg, for the purpose of selecting Delegates to the Democratic National Convention, and nominating a candidate for Canal Commissioner, Auditor General and Surveyor General.

JAMES P. JOHNSTON
Chairman State Central Committee.

H. A. Gildea, Jacob Zieglen, } Secretaries.

BELLEFONTE, PENNA.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1856.

THE DEMOCRATIC REVIEW.

To give our friends an idea of the manner in which this periodical is conducted, we select the following article. It is well-written, terse, and evinces an ability ample to control the pages of a sound Democratic Review:

Two months have elapsed since the Thirty-fourth Congress assembled in Washington City. Not a step has been taken in the department of legislation. The people have looked in vain to their law-givers for such action upon the great questions of the day as seemed to be absolutely demanded, and, six months ago, universally anticipated. The news of the delay of the organization of Congress has travelled over the ocean, and the circles of legitimacy abound in the welcome gossip—The wheels of the Great Republic move not.

In the Senate, innumerable petitions have been presented by naval officers, aggrieved by the decision of the late board. Whether that board acted most judiciously in the premises, time must determine: the allotted task was a difficult one to perform, and no one would have been surprised at the omission in a vast number of instances to do equal and exact justice. We incline to the opinion, however, that much of the action of the members of the naval board was hasty, partial, and contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of their delegated powers. The whole question will be subjected to a rigid examination, and a vast number of the errors committed, will, it is hoped, be corrected. For the present, we forbear comment.

Our relations with Great Britain, it is evident, from the discussions in the Senate, are of a very delicate character. The subject has already been handled with masterly ability by Messrs. Clayton, Cass, and others, who have proved to the satisfaction of the American people that it is time for us to assert our rights on this continent as opposed to the unfounded assumptions of the government of Britain. As an inheritance, Central America is ours; whenever the title to this vast region shall pass from the natives of the soil, we must see that it pass into no other hands than our own. What right has a "holy alliance," or an Anglo-French alliance, or any other European alliance of despots against the people, to prescribe the Bounds of our territorial progress, or the character of our domestic policy? If population and power—as is the creed in the old world—confer the right to "balance" the destinies of nations, certainly the United States can claim the privilege of regulating the affairs of continental America. It is too late in the day for us to kneel like suppliant slaves at the foot of thrones, and ask "what we shall do to be saved?" We have the power, and it is to be hoped we shall not long be wanting in the spirit to declare ourselves the judges, and the sole judges of our rights in the western world. It is enough that England possesses, or is *permitted* to possess, a title to all the land between Lake Erie and the "open polar sea;" she should not task *our forbearance by an attempt to limit our* march towards the distant South. We have never gained anything by concession, and having nothing to hope for but in a bold and manly policy, such as every Democratic President has urged us to pursue. Let us plant ourselves upon high ground; let us rewrite the laws of nations; let us abrogate, by an American dash of the pen, the dull and time-worn rescripts of constitutional and monarchical Europe. The American people are ripe for a revision of the stale dogmas of the long past; we all desire a new text-book—something that is not moth-eaten, and damp from the unfrequented crevices of ancient castles; we have had enough of documents, which, repudiated at home, cross the Atlantic in search of a market. America seems fated to become the receptacle of all the trans-Atlantic political heresies of the world's history; our own vast mine of liberalism and common sense is just beginning to be wrought.

Our Revolution was the result, of an organic convulsion, which defied all the rules of books and all the wisdom of kings; it was an isolated instance of reform unheralded by politicians, and unstained by ambition. The great moral eruption of 1789, in France, was, it is true, a consequence of the storm of 1776, but in the former case the upper classes were humbled, while in the latter, the lower classes were elevated; in France, there was a leveling down, while in America there was a leveling up: the French agitators designed to destroy kings and the nobility; the revolutionists of America labored to make monarchs of the masses.

But this is not the place for abstract reflections upon our policy as a nation. We have confidence in the Senate. Strongly Democratic, its action, upon every great subject, will be distinguished by moderation, but also by firmness—by that sound discretion and that progressive wisdom which have won for our national counsels the admiration of mankind.

Two months have elapsed, and the House of Representatives is not yet organized. We indulge a just pride in referring to the conduct of the Democratic members. The gallant seventy-four have not surrendered; neither the threats nor promises of the majority have availed to place them in the attitude of suppliants. Well can these men afford to maintain their position; their record thus far is unsullied, and will be one of which their children in after times will be proud; let them stand, as did the Senate of Latium in antiquity, and defy the surrounding tempest. Why should the Democratic party—that party which does in reality "carry the flag and keep step to the music of the Union"—why should such a party, after having weathered the storms of fourteen years, bow the knee to the goddess of faction!—No! *Democracy has won more laurels upon* this continent than she can afford to sacrifice upon the altar of dismion. Let the tempest rage, but let patriots be true.

The Effect of Railways on the material prosperity of a State is visible in the recent census returns of Illinois. Before the construction of railways was commenced there, the progress of settlement was comparitively slow. The tide of emigration had acquired an impetus in other directions, and Illinois seemed to struggle along with a speed far behind that of some newer States. But with the construction of an extended system of railways in the State, a wonderful awakening of enterprise seems to have occurred. In the year 1850, the population was 851,470, and in 1855 it was 1,300,000. These figures speak louder than words. A city of 22,000 inhabitants in 1850, has now become a metropolis of 100,000. Whole wildernesses have been put under cultivation, and flourishing towns have sprung up where none before existed. Could Pennsylvania complete her railway system with the same rapidity as Illinois, we also should see our interior wilds peopled. But, alas! we tarry by the way, and are outstripped even by those whom we once thought far behind us in enterprise. We must bestir ourselves while we have such formidable competitors in the field against us.

Mr Buchanan and the Presidency.—The *Pennsylvanian* publishes the following extract of a private letter from Mr. Buchanan, in which he states his position in regard to the Presidency:

"This I neither desired nor expected. The movement in my favor has, therefore, originated without my previous knowledge or consent, and I should be quite satisfied should another be selected. The next will be the most important and responsible Presidential term since the last war with England, or, perhaps, since the origin of the government. Both our foreign and our domestic affairs will require the guidance of an able, firm, and skillful pilot to steer the vessel of State clear of the breakers. I pray Heaven that the best man may be selected for the crisis! and to me it is a matter of indifference whether he comes from the North or the South, the East or the West."

An Hour a Day.—Andrew Johnson, the present Governor of Tennessee, at the age of thirty was a journeyman tailor, and could neither read nor write. Sensible of his ignorance, he made his wife read to him while he was at work and she at leisure. An hour each day she taught him his letters and the use of his pen. He constantly improved his one hour a day, although very poor, and not able to spare the time; and a little over two years ago at the age of forty he was made Governor of Tennessee by a large majority.

Wolves in Sheep's Clothing.—The *Tribune* states that in one portion of the city of New York there are no less than four "bogus Sunday Schools," with a large number of collectors who raise from $1000 to $5000 per annum "to carry on the operations of the schools," of which about ten per cent goes to keep up the schools and the other ninety to support a set of lazy hangers on.

How Kansas is Being Settled.—A physician named Bowen, who has been to Kansas and become a citizen of that territory, but who is now in Ulster county, N. Y., settling up his business in order to return there with his family, writes a long letter to the New York *Tribune*, relative to the condition of affairs in Kansas. He says that the Emigrant Aid Societies have been so miserably mismanaged that they have proved humbugs, and as a means of colonizing the territory and influencing its votes they have failed. He says that plenty of Free State men go there to get homes for their families of their own free will, uninfluenced by Societies. Much the larger portion of them are from the Western an South Western States. They are opposed to negroes both free and slave, and this fact became manifest at the recent election. He says that they receive constant accessions from the ranks of their opponents. Their sufferings have been unparallelled since the early history of the original Atlantic Colonies. Sickness to an extent which in a ten years residence in a new country he had never seen equalled had borne heavily upon them in consequence of the unusual severity of the winter, aggravated by the miserable houses they were obliged to live in. Many of these houses were deficient in even the poor defence of mud chinking. He was the only physician on his feet during the sickly season in a large portion of the western settlements of Kansas, and he witnessed an amount of distress from disease, privation, want of attendance, and lack of the most ordinary comforts of life, which he says "was enough to move a heart of stone." From what he writes, it would seem that the course of settlement has already reached as far west as the Buffalo range, thus indicating that the people keep as far as possible from the vicinity of the border ruffians.

Revenge of a Lover—Cutting off a Girl's Nose.—We have learned from Mr. Warner, says the *La Crosse (Wis.) Democrat*, some of the particulars of a most diabolical outrage, that occurred last week about three miles below this landing, on the Mississippi. It appears that a Dutch widower living at that place, has a family of grown-up-girls, which he is anxious to get rid of. The oldest, a good-looking girl of 21, is living with a neighbor, and has lately attracted the attention of an Italian, who has been staying about there, and wanted to marry her. His suit was backed up by the old man, but the girl has steadily refused to marry him. Last week the fellow called at the house, and requested to see her at the door; when she appeared he seized her by the end of the nose, and with his pocket-knife cut it off close up to the bridge. The poor girl screamed and fainted, and while the family rushed to her assistance, and tried to staunch the blood, the ruffian took leg bail across the Mississippi, and has not since been heard of.

Tobacco Packed in Lead Poisonous.—It seems from recent medical researches (see *American Journal of Medical Science* for January, 1846) that the moisture contained in Tobacco will oxydize the lead with which it remains long in contact, forming a peculiar poisonous salt. The tobacco becomes covered with a layer of acetate, carbonate, chloride, and sulphate of lead, amounting to from six to thirty grains in a half pound. The presence of lead in tobacco is detected by burning the tobacco in a crucible, treating the ashes resulting with hydrochloric acid, then evaporating the mixture, and treating the redesolved residum with the ionide of potassium, sulphate of soda and sulphurated hydrogen.

A New Dodge.—In one of the interior towns of Michigan, a grocery keeper was tried for violating the liquor law. On the trial several witnesses were called, who testified that they had drank brandy and paid ten cents a drink, but they considered themselves partners, and put their dimes in as so much capital, and there were about 400 subscribers to the stock of the company to the amount of a dime and upwards. The dodge wouldn't go, and the defendant was made to suffer the penalty.

The British Lion.—In the commencement of the American revolution, when one of the British king's thundering proclamations made its appearance, the subject was mentioned in a company in Philadelphia; a member of Congress who was present, turning to Miss Livingstone, said, "well, Miss, are you not greatly terrified at the *roaring of the British Lion?*" "Not at all, sir" she replied, "for I have learned from natural history that that *beast roars loudest when he is most frightened.*"

A Wealthy Proprietor.—A large portion of the rich valley of Genessee, in New York State, is owned by James Wadsworth. He owns 8,000 acres in one town, as many more in Genessee, about 6,000 more in the adjoining town of Rush, 8,000 or 6,000 in the town of Caledonia and a great many thousand in other towns and counties. His landed possessions exceed 50,000 acres: it is nearly all good land—the best in the State, and constantly increasing in value.

Charitable Bequests.—The New York Legislature has passed a law that no religious or benevolent society shall receive any bequest or devise, the annual income of which is over $10,000, and it must have been made at least two months before the death of the testator. In no case shall the bequest be more than one-fourth of the estate.

SHARPENING THE SCYTHE.

In the heart of a table-land that overlooks many square leagues of the rich scenery of Devonshire, the best scythe-stone is found. The whole face of the enormous cliff in which it is contained is honeycombed with minute quarries; half-way down there is a wagon road, entirely formed of the sand cast out from them. To walk along the vast soft terrace on a July evening is to enjoy one of the most delightful scenes in England. Forests of fir rise overhead like cloud over cloud; through openings of these there peep the purple moorland stretching far southward to the Roman Camp, and burrows from which skulls are dug continually. Whatever may be underground, it is all soft and bright above with health and wild flowers, about which a breeze will linger in the hottest noon. Down to the sand road the breeze does not come; there may we walk in calm, and only see that it is quivering among the trees. From the camp the Atlantic can be seen, but from the sand road the view is more limited, though many a bay and headland far beneath, show where the ocean of a past age rolled. Fossils and shells are almost as plentiful within the cliff as the scythe-stone itself, and wondrous bones of extinct animals are often brought to light.

All day long, summer and winter, in the sombre fir-groves may be heard the stroke of the spade and click of the hammer; a hundred men are at work like bees upon the cliff, each in his own cell of the honeycomb, his private passage. The right to dig in his own burrow each of these men has purchased for a trifling sum, and he toils in it daily. Though it is a narrow space, in which he is not able to stand upright and can scarcely turn—though the air in it that he breathes is damp and deadly—though the color in his cheek is commonly the hectic of consumption and he has a cough that never leaves him night or day—though he will himself remark that he does not know amongst his neighbors one old man—and though all marrying early, few ever see a father with his grown up son, yet, for all this, the scythe-stone cutter works in his accustomed way, and lives his short life merrily, that is to say, he drinks down any sense of care that he may have. These poor men are almost, without exception, sickly drunkards. The women of this community are much healthier. It is their task to cut and shape the rough-hewn stone into those pieces wherewith "the mower whets his scythe." The particles are pernicious to the lungs, but, as usual, it is found impossible to help the ignorant sufferers by anything in the form of an idea from without. A number of masts and respirators have been more than once provided for them by the charity of the neighboring gentry, but scarcely one woman has given them her countenance.

The short life of the scythe-stone cutter is also always liable to be abruptly ended. Safety requires that fir-poles from the neighboring wood should be driven in one by one on either side of him, and a third flat stake be laid across to make the walls and roof safe, as the digger pushes his long burrow forward. Cheap as the fir-poles are, they are too often dispensed with. Those is scarcely one of the hundred mined entrances of disused caverns here to be seen, through which some crushed or suffocated workman has not been brought out dead. The case is common. A man cannot pay the trifle that is necessary to buy fir-poles for the support of his cell-walls; the consequence is, that sooner or later, it must almost inevitably happen that one stroke of the pickaxe shall produce a fall of sand behind him, and set an impassable barrier between him and the world without. It will then be to little purpose that another may be working near him prompt to give the alarm and get assistance; tons upon tons of heavy sand divide the victim from the rescuers, and they must prop and roof their way at every step, lest they too perish.

Such accidents are, therefore, mostly fatal. If the man is not at once crushed by a fall of sand upon him, he has been cut off from the outer air, and suffocated in his narrow worm-hole. Whiteknights is a small village at the foot of this cliff, inhabited almost entirely by persons following the scythe-stone trade. The few agricultural laborers there to be met with may be distinguished at a glance from their brethren of the pits: the bronzed cheeks from the hectic, the muscular frames from the bodies which disease has weakened, and which dissipation helps to a more swift decay. The cottages are not ill built, and generally stand detached in a small garden; their porches may be seen in an evening thronged with dirty, pretty children, helping father outside his cavern by carrying the stone away in little baskets, as he brings it out to them.

Besides the Luta rivulet, which has pleasanter nooks, more flowery banks, and falls more musical than any stream in Devon; besides this brook, and parted by a little wood of beeches, and wild laurel from the village, is a very pearl of cottages. Honeysuckle, red rose and sweet briar, hold it entangled in a network; they fall over the little windows, making twilight at midnoon, yet nobody has ever thought of cutting them away or tying up a single tendril. Grandfather Markham and his daughter Alice, with John Drewit, her husband and master of the house, used to live there, and they had three little children, Jane, Henry and Joseph.

A little room over the porch was especially neat. It was the best room in the cottage, and therein was lodged old Markham, who had, so far as the means of his children went, the best of board as well. He was not a very old man, but looked ten years older than he really was, and his hand shook through infirmity more grievous than age. He was a gin drinker. John Drewit had to work very hard not only to keep his own household in food and clothing, but also his poor father-in-law in drink.

John was a hale young man when I first knew him, but he soon began to alter. As soon as it was light he was away to the sand-cliff by a pleasant winding path through the beech wood, and up the steps which his own hand had cut. One or two he had made broader than the rest, at intervals, where one or two might willingly sit down to survey the glory spread beneath; the low, white thatched farm-houses gleaming like light amongst the pasture lands; the little towns, each with its shining river; and the great old city in the hazy distance; the bright Beacon hill, the woods, and far as the eye could see, the mist that hung over the immense Atlantic. This resting on the upward path, at first a pleasure, became soon a necessity, and that, too, long before the cough had settled down on him; few men in Whiteknights have their lungs so whole that they can climb up to their pits without a halt or two.

The old man helped his son-in-law sometimes; he was a good sort of old man by nature, and not a bit more selfish than a drunkard always must be. He ground the rough stones into shape at home, minded the children in his daughter's absence, and even used the pick himself when he was sober. John, too, was for his wife's sake tolerant of Markham's infirmity, though half his earnings went to gratify the old man's appetite. At last necessity compelled him to be, as he thought, undutiful. Print after print had vanished from the cottage walls; very little ornament, not actually necessary furniture, was sold; absolute want threatened the household, when John at last stated firmly, though tenderly, that grandfather must give up the gin bottle, or find some other dwelling. Alice was overcome with tears, but when appealed to by the old man, pointed to her dear husband, and bowed her head to his wise words.

For months after this time, there were no more drunken words nor angry tongues to be heard within John's pleasant cottage. Nothing was said by daughter or son-in-law of the long score at the public house that was being paid off by instalments; the daughter looked no longer at her father with reproachful eyes, and the children never again had to be taken to bed before their time—hurried away from the sight of their grandfather's shame. At last, one Sunday evening in July, the ruling passion got again the mastery; Markham came home in a worse way than ever; and in addition to the usual debasement, it was evident that he was possessed also by some maudlin terror, that he had no power to express.

Leaving him on his bed in a lethargic sleep, John sallied forth as usual at dawn; his boys, Harry and Joe, carrying up for him his miner's spade and basket. Heavy-hearted as he was, he could not help being gladdened by the wonderful beauty of the landscape. His daughter told me she saw him stand so long looking at the country—he seemed unwilling to leave the sun-light for his dark far-winding burrow. His burrow he had no reason to dread. Poverty never had pressed so long upon John Drewit as to induce him to sell away the firm props that assured the safety of his life. Often and often had his voice been loud against those men, who, knowing of the mortal danger to which they exposed their neighbors, gave drink or money in exchange for them to the foolhardy and vicious.

Great, therefore, was his horror when he went into his cave that morning and found that his props had been removed. They had not been taken from the entrance, where a passer-by might have observed their absence; all was right for the first twenty yards, but beyond that distance down to the end of his long toil-worn labyrinth, every prop was stripped away. Surely, he knew at once it was not an enemy who had done this; he knew the wretched old man, who lay stupified at home, had stolen and sold his life-defence for drink. All that the poor fellow told his boys was that they should keep within the safe part of his digging while he himself worked into the rock as usual. Three or four times he brought out a heap of scythe-stones in his basket, and then he was seen alive no more.

Harry, his oldest son, was nearest to the unpropped passage when the sand cliff fell. When he heard his father call out suddenly, he ran at once eagerly towards the candle where the miner worked, but on a sudden all was dark; there was no light from the candle or from the sun—before and behind was utter blackness, and there was a noise like thunder in his ears. The whole hill seemed to have fallen on them both, and many tons of earth parted the father from his child. The sand about the boy did not press on him closely. A heavy piece of cliff that held together was supported by the narrow walls of the passage, and his fate was undetermined. He attended only to the muffled sounds within the rock from which he knew that his father, though they might be the sounds of his death struggle, still lived.

To the people outside, the alarm had instantly been given by the other child, and in an incredibly short space of time the laborers from field and cave came hurrying up to the rescue. Two only could dig together; two more propped the way behind them foot by foot; relays eagerly waited them at the entrance; and not an instant was lost in replacing the exhausted workmen. Everything was done as quickly, and at the same time as judiciously, as possible; the surgeon had been ridden for at full speed to the neighboring town; brandy and other stimulants, a rude lancet—with which many of the men were but too well practised operators—bandages and blankets, were all placed ready at hand; for the disaster was so common at Whiteknights that every man knew at once what was proper to be done. Those who were not actively engaged about the cave, were busy in the construction of a litter—perhaps a bier—for the unhappy victim.

How could this have happened? was the whispered wonder. John was known to be far too prudent a man to be working without props, and yet fresh ones had to be supplied to the rescuers, for they found none as they advanced. The poor widow—every moment made sure of her bereavement—stood a little way aside; having begged for a spade, and been refused, she stood with her two children hanging to her apron, staring fixedly at the pit's mouth.

Down at the cottage there was an old man invoking Heaven's vengeance on his own gray head, and reproaching himself fiercely with the consequences of his brutal vice; he had stolen the poles from his son's pit the previous night, to provide himself with drink; and on that very day, even before he was quite recovered from his yesterday's debauch, he was to see the victim of his recklessness brought home a lifeless heap. He saw John so brought in, but with the eyes of a madman; his brain, weakened by drunkenness, never recovered from the shock.

Basket and barrow had been brought full out of the pit a hundred times; and it was almost noon before from the bowels of the very mountain, as it seemed, there came up a low moaning cry. "My child, my child," murmured the mother; and the digging became straightway even yet more earnest, almost frantic in its speed and violence. Presently into the arms of Alice little Harry was delivered, pale and corpse-like, but alive; and then a shout as of an army was sent up by all the men.

They dug until after sunset—long after they had lost all hope of finding John alive. His body was at last found. It was placed upon a litter, and taken under the soft evening sky, down through the beech wood, home. Alice walked by its side, holding its hand in hers, until after her father's death, how her dear John was murdered. She used to wonder why the old man shrank from her when she visited him, as she often did, in his confinement. The poor widow is living now, though she has suffered grief and want. Her daughter Jane has married a field laborer, and her sons, by whom she is well supported, have never set a foot in a pit since the day they lost their father.

THE DEAF AUNT AND DEAF WIFE.

I had an aunt coming to visit me for the first time since my marriage, and I don't know what evil genius prompted the wickedness which I perpetrated toward my wife and ancient relative.

"My dear," said I to my wife, on the day before my aunt's arrival, "you know Aunt Mary is coming to-morrow; well, I forgot to mention a rather annoying circumstance with regard to her. She's very deaf; and although she can hear my voice, to which she is accustomed, in its ordinary tones, yet you will be obliged to speak extremely loud in order to be heard. It will be rather inconvenient, but I know you will do everything in your power to make her stay agreeable."

Mrs. S. announced her determination to make herself heard, if possible.

I then went to John T——, who loves a joke about as well as any person I know of, and told him to be at the house at 6 P. M. on the following evening, and felt comparatively happy.

I went to the railroad depot with a carriage next night, and when I was on my way home with my aunt, I said;

"My dear aunt, there is one rather annoying infirmity that Anna (his wife) has, which I forgot to mention. She's very deaf, and although she can hear my voice, to which she is accustomed, in its ordinary tones, yet you will be obliged to speak extremely loud in order to be heard. I am very sorry for it."

Aunt Mary, in the goodness of her heart, protested that she rather liked speaking loud; and to do so would afford her great pleasure.

The carriage drove up—on the steps was my wife—in the window was John T——, with a face as utterly solemn as if he had buried all his relatives that afternoon.

I handed out my aunt—she ascended the steps.

"I am delighted to see you," shrieked my wife, and the policeman on the opposite sidewalk started and my aunt nearly fell down the steps.

"Kiss me, my dear," howled my aunt, and the hall lamp clattered and the windows shook as with the fever and ague. I looked at the window—John had disappeared. Human nature could stand it no longer, I poked my head into the carriage, and went into strong convulsions.

When I entered the parlor my wife was helping Aunt Mary to take off her hat and cape; and there sat John with his sober face.

Suddenly, "Did you have a pleasant journey?" went off my wife like a pistol, and John nearly jumped to his feet.

"Rather dusty," was the response in a warwhoop, and so the conversation continued.

The neighbors for blocks around must have heard it; when I was in the third story of the building I heard every word.

In the course of the evening my aunt took occasion to say to me—...

"How loud your wife speaks, don't it hurt her?"

I told her all deaf persons talked loudly, and that my wife being used to it, was not affected by the exertion, and that Aunt Mary was getting along very nicely with her.

Presently my wife said, softly.—

"Alf, how very loud your aunt talks."

"Yes, said I, "all deaf persons do. You're getting along with her finely; she hears every word you say." And I rather think she did.

Elated by their success at being understood, they went at it hammer and tongs, till everything on the mantle-piece clattered again, and I was seriously afraid of a crowd collecting in front of the house.

But the end was near. My aunt being of an investigating turn of mind, was desirous of finding out whether the exertion of talking so loud was not injurious to my wife. So—

"Does not talking so loud strain your lungs?" said she, in an unearthly whoop, for her voice was not as musical as it was when she was young.

"It is an exertion," shrieked my wife.

"Then why do you do it?" was the answering scream.

"Because—because—you can't hear if I don't," squealed my wife.

"What?" said my aunt, fairly rivaling a railroad whistle this time.

I began to think it time to evacuate the premises, and looking round and seeing John gone, I stepped into the back parlor and there he lay, flat on his back, with his feet at right angles to his body, rolling from side to side, with his face poked into his vest and a most agonizing expression of countenance, but not uttering a sound. I immediately and involuntarily assumed a similar attitude, and I think that, from the relative position of our feet and head, and our attempts to restrain our laughter, apoplexy must have inevitably ensued, if a horrible groan, which John gave vent to in his endeavor to suppress his risibility, had not betrayed our hiding place.

In rushes my wife and aunt, who, by this time, comprehended the joke, and such a scolding as I then got I never got before, and I hope never to get again.

I know not what the end would have been if John, in his endeavors to appear respectful and sympathetic, had not given vent to such a groan and a horse laugh that all gravity was upset, and we screamed in concert.

I know it was very wrong, and all that, to tell such falsehoods; but I think that Mrs. Opie herself would have laughed if she had seen Aunt Mary's expression when she was informed that *her* hearing was defective.

Doing a Dun.—"I have a small bill against you," said the pertinacious looking collector, as he entered the store of one who had acquired the character of a hard customer.

"Yes sir, a very fine day indeed," was the reply.

"I am not speaking of the weather, but your bill," replied Peter in a loud key.

"It would be better if we had a little rain."

"Confound the rain," continued the collector, and raising his voice "Have you any money to pay on the bill?"

"Beg your pardon, I'm hard of hearing. I have made it a rule not to loan my money to strangers, and I really don't recognize your voice."

"I'm collector for the Philadelphia Fire Extinguisher, sir, and I have a bill against you," persisted the collector at the top of his voice, producing the bill and thrusting it into the face of his debtor.

"I've determined to endorse for no one, you may put that note back in your pocket book, I really can't endorse it."

"Confound your endorsements—will you pay it."

"You'll pay it, no doubt, sir, but there's always a risk about these matters you know, so I must decline it."

"The money must be mine to-day."

"Oh, yes—ninety days, but I would not endorse for you for a week; so clear out of my store. It's seldom that I'm pressed upon for an endorsement, even by my friends; on the part of a stranger, sir, your conduct is inexplicable. Do not force me to put you out; leave the premises."

And the bill was returned to the Extinguisher office, endorsed—"so confounded deaf that he couldn't understand."

Militia in the United States.—We have from a document from the War Department, which was laid before the House of Representatives yesterday, that the militia in the States and Territories amounted to the aggregate of 2,460,725 men. This does not embrace the militia of the State of Iowa or of the Territories of Oregon, Washington, Nebraska, Kansas, and New Mexico, from which, we presume, no returns have been received. The returns do not appear to be at all complete, as the estimates of the force of some of the States are based upon data furnished several years since, in one instance—that of Delaware—as far back as 1837. The militia force of the District of Columbia is given for the year 1852; and is stated at 8,201.

Bad for Eels.—The Nantucket Inquirer says the excessive cold weather has been particularly severe upon the eels on the coast, who had not sufficient warning to retire into their winter quarters of mud, and consequently were overtaken by the frost and frozen stiff as pokers. Hundreds of bushels of them were driven ashore, and raked up on the beach, and, after being packed in barrels, shipped for the city market.