THE ERIE OBSERVER.

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Erie Weekly Observer.

A. P. DURLIN & CO. PROPRIETORS

B. F. SLOAN, Editor.

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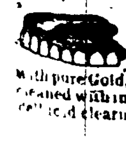

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Poetry and Miscellany.

MY MOTHER'S VOICE.

My mother's voice! how often creeps
Its cadence on my lonely hours,
Like healings sent on wings of sleep,
Or dew upon the unconscious flowers.
I might forget her melting prayer
While pleasure's pulses madly fly;
But in the still unbroken air,
Her gentle tones come stealing by—
And years of sin and manhood flee,
And leave me at my mother's knee.

The book of nature, and the print
Of beauty on the whispering sea,
Give still to me some lineament
Of what I have been taught to be.
My heart is harder, and perhaps
My manliness has drunk up tears,
And there's a mildew in the lapse
Of a few miserable years—
But nature's book is open yet,
With all my mother's lessons writ.

I have been out at eventide,
Beneath a moonlight sky of spring,
When earth was garnished like a bride,
And night had on her silver wing—
When bursting buds and diamond grass
And waters leaping to the light,
And all that makes the pulses pass
With wilder fleetness throng'd the night.
When all was beauty, then have I,
With friends on whom my love is flung,
Like myrrh on wings of Araby,
Gazed up where evening's lamp is hung.

And when the beautious spirit there,
Flung over me its golden chain,
My mother's voice came in the air,
Like the light dropping of the rain.
And resting on some silver star,
The spirit of a bended knee,
I've poured her deep and fervant prayer
That our eternity might be
To rise in heav'n—like stars at night
And tread a living path of light.

From the Morgan (Ill.) Journal

THE BACKWOODSMEN'S DUEL.

Among the early settlers of the central districts of the Prairie State, were two men, whom we shall designate by the names of Fowler Saxton, and Peregrine Powell; the former was a native of Pennsylvania, the latter hailed from Wales. Saxton was a middle-aged, noble looking man—tall and athletic,—and possessed of as large a share of the milk of human kindness as, probably, ever falls to the lot of one man. His family consisted of himself and wife—the amiable counterpart of himself, and five or six sons and daughters. Though not a wealthy man, Saxton was in much better circumstances than were the mass of Western emigrants. He could not only boast of a goodly portion of stock of the usual description kept by farmers, but had nearly a thousand dollars in gold and silver. A very rich man did his brother emigrants consider him; and of course, they treated him with corresponding respect.

The western pioneers were, generally speaking, hard-working, frugal, honest men, but withal very poor.—Many of them, in order to secure the lands on which they had squatted from the grasp of the avaricious, eastern land speculator, had to pay the most exorbitant interest on the sums advanced them by unprincipled, heartless capitalists, (most of whom were pharisees of the *strictest sect*, rigid members of the church, who worshipped their Creator, but despised His creatures,) frequently forty or fifty per cent. and even more.

Among the applicants whom Saxton was able to gratify by small loans—*without interest*—was Peregrine Powell his next neighbor. Though possessed of as irrascible a temper as any of his Cambrian ancestry, in the main, Powell was considered a very good member of society. He was much better educated than the majority of his neighbors, which was something in his favor; was more free from national prejudice, (except when irritated) than the old country folks commonly are; but above all, he was blessed with a pretty good fund of native wit, of quaint dry humor, and a never-failing stock of anecdote, with which he was ever ready to treat his delighted listeners. In short he was the oracle of *the settlement*. On such terms of intimacy did these two families live, that a week was seldom permitted to pass, without an interchange of visits between them; besides which, something more than a common-place, speaking regard for each other existed between Perry Powell, junior, a handsome, warm-hearted and intelligent youth of twenty, and the eldest daughter of Saxton,—Emma a perfect beauty, with lips and cheeks of the deepest red, and eyes as black as "*before creation.*" Although Cupid had not paid such marked attention to Joshua, Saxton's eldest son, and Flora, the only daughter of Powell, as to the couple just noticed, still he had not totally neglected them. Josh admired Flora, but his admiration was so tainted with a certain nondescript kind of feeling, between veneration and fear, that, like Sir Walter Raliegh, he dreaded to make overtures to *his queen*. *Poor Josh!* good reason had he for fearing the issue of an open declaration to his mistress, for not only was he deaf as a door post, but he was a very poor scholar, while Flora, in addition to her personal charms, which were of a high order, was well educated, and tolerably accomplished for a girl in her sphere of life. Powell either was, or fancied himself descended from one of the ancient Princes of Wales, and gloried in his ancestry as none but an Old Castillian, or perchance, a genuine son of the *Pilgrim Fathers*, know how to glory. No wonder, then, that nearly the whole of his income should be lavished on his children's education.

Flora, however, inherited none of her father's pride and vanity; she might have pitied the unlettered rustics around her, but she was far from despising them. Her's was no fashionable boarding school or *straight waistcoat* education; her knowledge, and the principles which governed her conduct, had been imbibed from an accomplished and pious widow lady, who had undertaken the tuition of a half dozen girls, more to beguile the tedium of her lonesome hours, than from necessity, and who made common sense one of the cardinal studies in her miniature college.

Though Flora felt no *particular* regard for young Saxton, handsome, manly and generous hearted as he unquestionably was, she always treated him with kindness; nay even with sisterly familiarity. She had no suspicions of the nature of his sentiments for her, for although she had, on various occasions, observed certain little symptoms of embarrassment about him, she had attributed them to his keen sensibility with regard to his unfortunate loss, or want of hearing. Flora's extra kindness on such occasions, like Captain Bragg's extra grape, at the battle of Buena Vista, did wonderful execution; it fanned the flame with the mischievous little god had kindled, *en passant*, in the youth's heart, and signed the death warrant of another innocent deer, as will be more fully explained in its place.

The farms of Saxton and Powell were separated from each other by a creek, which during a portion of the year was dry. Their dwelling houses were situated about a mile apart.

Besides being a good farmer, Saxton was a first rate hunter, and spent such a portion of his time as he could spare from the duties of his farm, in killing deer and other game, which abounded in those regions. Powell never hunted. This, probably, was attributed to his want of skill in the use of a rifle. As he was passionately fond of venison, it was no unusual thing for the young Saxton, for reasons other than those of common-place, neighborly regard, to take him a deer.

It was on a most delightful morning, in the second autumn after his arrival in Illinois, that Saxton, with his rifle thrown over his shoulder; and his little son, Warren, by his side, sallied forth in quest of such game as Providence might throw in his way. He had not proceeded more than a quarter of a mile, before his attention was drawn towards the sound of a woodman's axe on a tree, a short distance in advance. It was a singular circumstance, certainly, for he was still on his own grounds. Who the trespasser was, he was puzzled to imagine. He quickened his pace, and soon discovered the individual to be Powell. Saxton, though surprised to see his friend felling one of his trees without having apprised him of his attention, was not in the least irritated, but an unlucky whim suddenly urging him to enjoy a little merriment at his friends expense, he inflated his lungs to their utmost capacity, and in clear, stentorian tones that made the forest ring, vociferated:

"St. George was an Englishman, and dearly loved roast beef,
St. Taffey was a Welchman born, and sure he was a thief."

He was interrupted by a scream or a yell from the Welchman, that completely paralized him.

"H-h-roo-oo! St. Tavit! What—what—what's that sir-r?"

"Hallo, Perry! is that you? What's what, my friend?"

"What was that you were singing about me, sir-r?"

"About you! Nothing about you, my friend. Your name is not St. Taffey, Perry! Come, here's my hand, my friend."

"Tavil: pit! tevil a pit, sir! Your rascally insinuations were meant for me, sir-r! Shade of St. Tavit! a thief—a thief did you say, Mr. Saxton? Let me inform you, *sir*, that since the *creation of the World, no thief or* other dishonorable character has never dared to usurp the name of Powell, sir-r-r!

"I believe you, my friend, I believe you. I know you are an honorable man; as honorable as the great King Llewellin Ap—I forget his name—that you have often told *me you descended from*. *I meant no harm*, whatever, by the silly words you heard just now. They only happened to come into my head and spout out of my mouth before I could stop them. Here's my hand and heart, Perry; give us your fives."

"Take them then, and welcome, sir-r!" screamed Powell, as he aimed a blow at Saxton's face. This however, the latter parried. Enraged at being thus foiled, Powell seized his axe, and would doubtless, soon have made minced meat of the Pennsylvanian, had not that individual's coolness and great bodily strength saved him. Seeing the infuriated little Welchman bent on mischief, Saxton disarmed him; and then catching him up in his arms, held him there, like a mouse in a vice. Powell made the most violent efforts to disengage himself; at the same time yelling, whooping, cursing and screaming like a demented Frenchman or Indian. Saxton, finding that his mode of treatment, instead of cooling the madman's fever, tended to aggravate it, released him, merely observing as he did so, "Come Powell, you have said and done enough. I am at the end of my row, now; I want you to behave yourself." "Mr. Saxton," said Powell, "the tevil has made you a larger man than I am, and endowed you with greater brute force than I possess; I being a man, and not a brute, sir-r! but *if* you have the smallest pretensions to the character of a *shentleman*, you won't refuse to give me satisfaction for the gross manner in which you have insulted, slandered and belied me, sir-r! There isn't much of me, I confess, sir; but what there is, is true ancient British, sir-r! Yes, sir-r! *Ancient British*, sir-r! None of your base-born, mongrel Anglo-Saxon preed, nor any of your piggarly, *Chickasaw Anglo Indian*, either, Mr. Fowler Saxton.—So, sir, I repeat it, if you are not a *coward*, as you are a *rascal* and a *liar*, sir, you will give me the satisfaction due from one shentleman to another, sir! The motto of my great progenitor Llewellin Ap Gwyder Ap Meredith, was: "*Nemo me impune lacessit*," to which my great-grandfather added that of "*Semper paratus*," Mr. Saxton, You understand me, sir."

Though no way allied to the *chivalry*, Saxton's dander was up, and he very readily agreed to give Powell all the satisfaction he desired. It was forthwith arranged that the billigerants should repair, the next morning, at or before daylight, to that part of the forest where the road between their dwellings, was intersected by the creek, which was then dry. Every advantage which "God and nature" gave them might freely be used: and they were at liberty to blaze away with their rifles, at each other, as long as they pleased, or until their wounded honor was healed, by the death of both body and soul, of either or both combatants.

These arrangements having been made, the late bosom friends separated for their respective homes. On their way, Saxton cautioned his son Warren, to be silent with regard to what had just transpired. Before evening he put his rifle in the best possible order, and carefully loaded and primed it, after which, it was consigned to the rack over the outer door.

Saxton—so far from being a coward as Powell had asserted, was as brave a man as ever bore his Maker's image. He was not afraid to meet death in any *legal* manner, but he had always considered duelling as silly and criminal in the highest degree; and to deprive a fellow creature of that life which emanated from the Most High, and which *no other power* could bestow, was what, he had always felt assured, he could never bring himself to. Unfortunately, however, like too many other nominal Christians, Saxton could dictate laws for others; and when his moral courage was put to the test, it failed:—when called upon to practice his precepts, he—as himself expressed it—"could'nt come *it*." In the *present* age, when religion has doffed her rags, and is in no danger of leading her votaries to a cross, or a stake, but walks securely in her silver slippers, how very easy is it for the thousand of her wealthy and fashionable disciples, who are scattered broad cast over the land to follow in her train! But when trials beset them—when called upon, not to seal their faith with their blood—but simply to forgive some real or imaginary injury—to follow the example of their *meek*, their *lowly*, their *forgiving* Lord and Master, and to *return good for evil*—how many do we not see, who, like Saxton, are afraid to do their duty; and like him are willing to stake their hopes of salvation, to gratify their pride, their hatred and their ridiculous notions of honor!

But let us return to the narrative; Saxton and his conscience had a terrible time of it that night, for he was a professor of religion; but about one or two o'clock of that awful morning that might seal his doom through eternity, he had settled down into the conviction that his case was a hard one. It would be hard to fight a duel—hard to kill a brother, or to be killed himself—very hard to disobey his God, and dare his displeasure; but it would be much harder—it would be *impossible* to live under the odium of cowardice. Better to commit murder, or to be shot, and to be tormented through the endless ages of eternity, than to be pointed at and stigmatized for a few brief years, though a crown of glory, with felicity beyond the power of man even to conceive, should at the end of that time, be his reward; so fight he must, and fight he would.

It having been arranged that Josh should go to mill the following day, the young man set his wits to work to hunt up some present for Powell's daughter. Not being able to stumble on anything suitable for her, he concluded, at least, he would take the family a deer: it would gratify the father, and give him the opportunity of a *tete à tete* with Flora. No sooner had the labors of the day ceased, than Josh silently took down the rifle, and bent his steps towards a certain *salt lick*, which was much resorted to by deer, at nights. He was unsuccessful, however; he had seen but one deer, and that he had fired at and missed. This having happened on his return home, the gun was replaced in its rack without being reloaded.

Saxton having slept but indifferently, arose an hour before daylight. Hastily dressing himself, he swallowed a *horn*, took down his gun, and left the house. As this was quite a customary thing, of course it excited no suspicion. On approaching the battle-field, he made use of the utmost caution, lest his adversary might have got the start of him, and should take him by surprise. He succeeded, however, in reaching a certain stub, a hollow trunk of a large oak, that had been taken off about twenty feet above the ground. He had marked this tree the previous day. It was completely shrouded in grape vines of luxuriant growth. Having ascertained that he was not observed, Saxton secured his rifle on his person, and dexterously ascended, by the vines to the top of the stub. The descent into the interior, was easily effected by the aid of one of the stoutest vines. About three or four feet above the base of the tree, a hole had been cut some time previously, to aid some hunter in his search for the *critter* or *varmint* which was suspected of being secreted there. This aperture served as an excellent port-hole for Saxton's artillery; accordingly, its muzzle was protruded through it. In this masked battery, he patiently awaited the appearance of the enemy. During the half hour that succeeded, he and his conscience had another *skirmage*—as he himself termed it—in which the good Spirit partially prevailed. His conclusion was, that he would not take the life of Powell. He was conscious of his own superior skill as a marksman, and though if he could merely send the ball through some part of the Welchman's *dress, or even touch him gently* about some fleshy part, the desired end might be accomplished. Compromises to spare the effusion of human blood, can be as well made in a hollow tree, as in Congress—and with much less clamor.

No sooner had our Hero made this magnanimous resolve, than peeping *through his port hole*, he observed the dim figure of Perry emerge from the forest, and glide swiftly to a [illegible] stone about the size of an ordinary barrel that reared itself above the now dry creek, behind which he ensconced himself. Saxton's first impulse was to blaze away at him, but it was checked by the good spirit. There was not sufficient light to enable him to distinguish the precise mark he wished to strike. Daylight soon made its appearance, and the sight of Perry's head, cautiously raised above the rock, was followed by a sharp crack—no, click of Saxton's rifle. Down went the head behind the rock, quicker than if a ball from the Pennsylvanian's gun had passed through it. There was no danger of any such catastrophe taking place very soon, for not only was Saxton's rifle as empty as Josh had left it the previous night, but, in all probability, it would remain so until his return home; for in his haste to be early at the battle-field, he had overlooked his ammunition, and the thought was not likely to occur to him, of trying to supply himself from the Welchman's magazine. No sooner did he of the hollow-tree discover the dilemma in which he found himself, than a council of war was called. After due deliberation and much argument, it was unanimously resolved that as the impression made on the enemy by the first click, was favorable, to continue clicking until he should be compelled to evacuate the fort or to capitulate.

The arrival on the battle field of a third party, suddenly caused a suspension of hostilities. The new-comer was Josh, on his way to mill. When he came up to the stub that concealed his father, and saw the profusion of grapes by which it was covered, the thought struck him that a wagon load of grapes would be a better present for his *dulcinea* than nothing at all; so ordering a halt, and jumping out, he set to work to tear away the vines from the stub, with wonderful alacrity. In doing this, he unluckily, either pulled away or broke the vine by which his father had lowered himself into the tree. It was, in vain that the personage endeavored to make his son sensible of the mischief he was perpetrating. Josh knew nothing of the state of affairs in his father's citadel, but having filled his waggon, he jumped into it, and drove away at a furious rate, alternately singing and whistling in the exuberance of his joy.

Soon after Josh had disappeared, the clouds, which had threatened rain, commenced pouring down a heavy deluge; and, as a natural consequence, the creek began, rapidly, to fill. Poor Perry found his situation becoming every moment, not only increasingly uncomfortable, but critical in the extreme. What to do he knew not. If he remained where he was five minutes longer, he must inevitably be drowned or swept away by the torrent.—There was little time left for deliberation. As death was certain if he did not instantly evacuate his fort, and there was a chance—however remote, that Saxton might miss him if he fired, he promptly concluded to abandon the post and retreat as fast as possible. Previously to taking this step, however, he once more advanced his head, in order to endeavor to ascertain the whereabouts of Saxton. A click from that individual's gun instantaneously followed, and thus gave him the desired information.—But Perry, instead of dodging, as he had previously done, boldly stood his ground. At that instant his eye rested on the port-hole in the tree, with the rifle protruding from it. No sooner was this discovery made, than, bringing his shot gun to his shoulder, he levelled it and banged away. The discharge of the gun was immediately followed by something between a scream and a groan from the tree. Perry thought it a cry of mortal agony, but almost any other person would have construed it differently. Had Perry's blood been of the right temperature—had he been as collected as Old Rough and Ready himself, and had he taken deliberate aim at the port hole, or at Saxton within it, he would not have missed them; but as it was, the fluid in his veins had fallen to zero, while his brain was on fire—and his cold bath had given him such an ague fit, that he shook like a South American earthquake, and his teeth chattered like castanets. No wonder then, that instead of lodging his balls—for his gun was charged with three or four—in Saxton's body, he had missed the entire tree, by at least twenty feet. However, he now considered his *wounded honor*, and *felt perfectly satisfied*.

As soon as he found himself once more on *terra-firma*, he faced about, and in a voice of real emotion, though in an almost unknown jargon, hailed Saxton:

"Hi, Fow, f-f-fowly!"

"Hallo!"

"Wha-wha-what's the matter, Fowl-owl-owly? have I kilt you, Fowly, my tear f-f-frient!"

"I'm pretty *pad* off, that's cer-cer-tain Taf, I mean Perry!"

"My tear, tear friend! Can you ever forgive me!—I'm quite satisfied, now, Fowl-owl-owl-owly?"

"Are you! Well—so am I. But I should feel much more so, if you would come over and give me a little of your help—I'm in pretty much of a *fix*, I tell you."

"Py St. Ta-ta-vit! that I will, my friend, even if I f-f-f-f—pshaw! (I can't get the t—mt word out,)—f-f-f-free-fre—freeze." So saying, or trying to say, Perry dashed his gun to the ground, while he floundered into the creek, which with the utmost difficulty, he succeed in crossing. The hands of the two friends soon met through the port hole, and were squeezed and shaken with mutual good will. Perry's eager inquiries were soon satisfactorily answered. As he had fancied he had wounded Saxton, that person thought proper not to undeceive him. He showed a scar on his cheek which he had received in getting into the stub, and permitted Perry to infer that it had been inflicted by him. In spite of the violent ague by which the Welchman was shaken, he gave vent to the most extravegant mirth at the truly awkward predicament in which he found his late mortal foe, but now bosom friend. By Saxton's advice, he lost no time in getting to that individual's house, and sending second son, Elijah, to his assistance, who by enlarging the hole in the tree, soon set his father at liberty.

When the friends met at Saxtons, the family were informed, with certain modifications of the whole affair, and the innocent learned that the cause of the quarrel was a bee tree.* All the boys who were capable of using an axe were dispatched to the forest to cut down the tree and bring home the honey; while Emma and Rosa very joyfully undertook the task of going in quest of Perry's wife and daughter. Never did a happier group meet around a western hearth, than those who were assembled in Saxton's commodious and comfortable log-house that day. The whiskey stew, and the song and the laugh went round, and the hands of the friends were once more squeezed, and eternal friendship pledged between them, while a perfectly satisfactory understanding existed between the younger members of the families. Saxton and Powell, during a long and useful career, were patterns of the truly christian virtues of forbearance and love. They had the happiness of seeing their families brought into closer alliance with each other, by the union of young Perry and Flora, and Josh, (whose deafness was radically cured by and old Indian medicine man) and Emma; and at the present day their grandchildren form a band of the most enterprising, virtuous and happy citizens of our Prairie State.

*A bee tree, when discovered in the woods, was always considered a lawful prize to the finder. The practice still prevails in some portions of Illinois, and other Western States.

Man's Food.—What do you really live upon? The answer will be various enough. The Guacho, who in the wild pampas of Buenos Ayres, managing his wild horse with incredible dexterity, throws a lasso, or bolas, to catch the ostrich, the guanaco, or the wild bull, consumes daily ten or twelve pounds of meat, and regards it as a high feast day when in any hacienda, he gains a variety in the shape of a morsel of pumpkin. The word bread does not exist in his vocabulary. The Irishman, on the other hand, regales himself in careless mirth on his "potatoes and point," after a day of painful labor, he who cannot help making a joke even of the name he gives to his scanty meal. Meat is a strange idea to him, and he is happy indeed, if four times a year, he can add a herring to season the mealy tubers. The hunter of the prairies lays the buffalo with sure bullet, and its juicy, fat-streaked hump, roasted between two hot stones, is to him the greatest of delicacies. Meanwhile, the industrious Chinese carries to market his carefully fattened rats, delicately arranged upon white sticks, certain to find a good customer among the epicures of Pekin; and in his hut, smoky hut, fast buried beneath the snow and ice, the Greenlander consumes his fat, which he has just carved, rejoicing over the costly prize, from a stranded whale. Here the black slave sucks the sugar-cane, and eats his banana; there the African merchant fills his wallet with sweet dates, his sole sustenance in a long desert journey; and there the Siamese crams himself with a quantity of rice from which a European would shrink appalled. And wheresoever over the whole inhabited earth we approach and demand hospitality, in almost every little spot a different kind of food is set before us, and the "daily bread" offered in another form.

A Dutch Sermon.—The following admirable production, deliverered before a company of volunteer soldiers, during our revolutionary struggle, upon the eve of going "forth to glorious war," was calculated to inspire them with Herculean strength and courage: Mine friends, ven first you comed here, you poor, and now, friends, you is proud; and you's gotten on your unicorns, and dem vits you like a donge on a hog's pack; now, mine friends let me dell you dis, a man is a man if he's no pigger as my thumb. Ven Tavid went out to fight Goliah, he dook noting vid him but one sling; now don't mistake me, mine friends, it was not a rum sling; no; nor a gin sling; no, nor a mint vater sling; no, it was a sling mate vit a hickory stick. Now, ven Goliah sees Tavid coming, he says, "you little tamp scoundrel, does you come to fight me? I will give you to the birds of the fielt, and the peasts of the air!" Tavid says, "Goliah, Goliah, the race is not always mit the shwift, nor is the battle mit the sthrong; and a man is a man if he's no pigger as my thumb." So Tavid he fixes a sthrone in his sling, and he drows it at Goliah, ant knocke him rite in the vorehead, and den Tavid takes Goliah's swort and cuts off his head—and den all the perty caals comed out and strewed flowers in his way, and sung, "Saul is a croat man, for he has kilt dousands, but Tavid is a creater as he, for he has kilt Goliah." Now, mine friends, when you comes out to vight mit the tamp British, remember what I dell you, dat a man is a man if he's no pigger as my thumb.

Dow Jr's. Faith.—I believe that kicking against custom, and spitting in the face of fashion, is a futile and fool's endeavor. Both may need correction—but they must and will have their own way.

I believe that if the devil be the father of liars, he has a plagued large family to look after, and that it is rapidly increasing.

I believe girls are like kittens—gently smooth them the right way, they rub and *purr* most affectionately; but give them the contrary brush, and their back is up in the most disdainful manner. They like to be kissed, but sham a delicacy about the operation.

I believe human flesh is hard to digest. Jonah didn't sit easy on the stomach of the whale.

I believe that simple honesty, the naked truth, pure virtue, and a straight up and down way of dealing with the world, have as much advantage over the vices, tricks and stratagems in the long run, as a good square-trotting horse has over a prancing pony or a rackey that goes his mile or two like the mischief, and is done for the rest of the journey.

A Smart Boy.—A little boy, "well in his boots," for the first time, and very proud of them, said to his mother, after reading his customary chapter in the "Family Bible" in the morning:—"Mother, why did'nt Moses wear boots?"

"Why, my son, what makes you ask *that* question?—Perhaps he *did* wear boots, my dear; we don't know."

"No, mother, he did'nt, because the Bible says that the voice that came out of the burning bush told him to take off his *shoes*."

There was no rejoinder to this "clincher."

A Broad Hint.—At a party, the other evening, the conversation turned, as it naturally does among the young folks, upon marriage, the other convenient subject besides the weather, when every other fails. One of the belles, addressing a beau, quite unconsciously, (as she explained) said;—"If I were you, and you me, I would have been married long ago!"

Natural Affinity.—An outside passenger of a coach had his hat blown over a bridge, and carried away by the stream.

"Is it not very singular," said he to a gentleman who was seated beside him, "that my hat took that direction?"

"Not at all replied the latter; it is natural that a *beaver* should take to the water.

☞ A young woman alighted from a carriage at our depot the other day, when a piece of ribbon detached itself from her bonnet and fell into the bottom of the carriage. "You have left your *beau* behind," said the driver. "No I aint, *he's gone a fishing*," innocently replied the damsel, and stepped into the Captain's sitting-room

GEN. PIERCE AND HIS ASSAILANTS.

A NOBLE VINDICATION BY AN OFFICER OF THE U. S. ARMY.

We find in the Albany *Argus*, of the 15th, a letter from Major Wessells, of the U. S. Army, called out by the repeated and disgraceful attacks of the whig press upon the character and soldierly bearing of Gen. Pierce while in Mexico. In this letter Major Wessells fully and unreservedly repells these dastardly attacks, and bears honorable testimony in behalf of the Democratic nominee. We would like to find room for the whole letter, but it is impossible; we must therefore content ourself with that portion devoted to a history of the battles before the walls of the city of Mexico, in which it is alledged, by the whig press, Gen. Pierce "*fainted*" through fear, and "fell from his horse." The letter is dated Troy, N. Y., July 13th, 1852, and the writer says:

"My acquaintance with Gen. Pierce dates from the period at which the American army became concentrated in the 'Basin of Mexico.' I was ordered to report to him for duty, as the chief of the staff of his brigade, but the day before the army commenced its movements around the south side of Lake Chalco, on to the city of Mexico. The order was anything but agreeable to me, at first, as it removed me from the staff of one of the ablest and most distinguished generals of the Mexican war, and from duty with a brigade of the best troops in the army; and as I had, until joining this splendid corps, been constantly on duty with new troops ever since the close of the campaign on the lower Rio Grande, it was with no little disappointment and chagrin that I found myself compelled to quit my old companions in arms, with whom I was anxious to share the honors which, all could see, were soon to be won; and to take my chances for laurels with a corps of raw recruits, who, with the exception of some skirmishing with the "guerillas," had never been under fire. But in compensation for this disappointment, I was most agreeably surprised and delighted with the manner and bearing of my new commander,—whom I now saw for the first time, and who received me with an open, manly and soldierlike frankness and cordiality which completely charmed me, and I made me forget that we had not been comrades of a dozen campaigns. After an interval of general conversation, the all-absorbing topic of the army, relative to the war in which we were engaged, naturally came in review. The motives he assigned for taking a part in the war were peculiarly characteristic, and were so different from any *of those which were generally supposed to have actuated* the mass of our citizens, who rushed by thousands and tens of thousands to the theatre of action, that I could not but be struck with them.

He said, in substance, as nearly as I can now recollect, that in his section of the Union, the war was very unpopular; that he, nevertheless, was among those who believed it to be a just one, and that, whether just or not, now that it had commenced, it ought to be prosecuted with vigor to a favorable termination. After so decided a stand, as he had taken, in behalf of the policy of the government, and on the subject of the justice, the expediency, and the necessity even of the war, he knew, he said, that it would never do for him to shrink from any of the legitimate consequences of the views he had urged upon his fellow countrymen; adding, what I then readily believed, and of which I am now more than ever convinced, that he had not the least disposition to avoid those consequences, although he had nothing to play for in the great game of war which was then going on—having already declined higher honors than it were possible for him, at his time of life, to win in another and an untried career. When, therefore, New England was called upon to furnish her quota of men for the war, he felt bound, *in consistency*, not only to offer his own services, but to exert his influence in obtaining those of his fellow citizens.

From this conversation, I at once became satisfied that the leading motive of General Pierce in coming to Mexico was *patriotism*, pure and undefiled by any one selfish or sordid motive; and believing this, I should have respected him, though his military career had been a total failure. But his military career was not a failure, as there is an abundance of evidence to prove—His march from Vera Cruz to Puebla, is conceded on all hands to have been of the most brilliant and successful of the war, and drew from the whole army, from the General-in-Chief to the lowest subaltern, a generous and unqualified commendation. This march was performed in midsummer, under a burning tropical sun; through a country infested with innumerable bands of "guerillas," and singularly favorable for their operations. With these active and ferocious banditti, the General had several skirmishes; in one of which, in particular, he displayed no less courage and gallantry as a soldier, than capacity and conduct as a commander. At the "Puente Nacional," in leading on a party of his men against a barricade on the bridge, he received a bullet through his hat, whilst another grazed his cheek; producing no material damage, fortunately in either case, but proving, at the same time, that he was not more backward in making himself acquainted with the arguments of war than those of the law.

The same gallant and soldier-like bearing marked the conduct of the General on an occasion which came under my own observation. It was during the evening attack upon the enemy's entrenched camp at Contreras, that Pierce's Brigade was ordered to the support of Smith's, in an attempt upon the front of the Mexican position.—The route which these troops were obliged to pursue, *for some three-quarters of a mile*, lay along a rough and narrow road through the *Pedregal*, and under fire from the Mexican batteries. It is well known to military men that, there are none more dreaded by raw recruits than a storm of heavy shot and shells. In this species of warfare, (a favorite one, by the way, with the Mexicans,) General Pierce *was as inexperienced as the new levies* he commanded; but he weathered the iron tempest like an old veteran, and well knowing the effect of a word, fitly spoken, in a crisis like this, he posted himself conspicuously in the line of the enemy's heaviest fire, which was then concentrated upon Magruder's battery, and addressing his men as they defiled *past him, in language* so appropriate and spirit-stirring that none but the veriest coward and poltroon that ever skulked from danger, could have resisted the eloquent appeal he made to the pride and patriotism of those whom he was went to call his "brave New England boys." The effect of his words was magical, especially upon the New Englanders, nearly all of whom, were personally known to him, and almost worshipped him. It was here that the General, in attempting to cross the Pedregal, (an enormous bed of volcanic rocks,) on horseback, was violently thrown to the ground, in consequence of his horse stepping into a concealed fissure of the rocks, and falling with, and partly on his master. The effect of the shock was such as, for a time, to render the General almost insensible, and his injuries were so serious that it was with great difficulty he could be lifted into his saddle and kept there while the troops were retiring to their bivouac, for the night.

The night of the 19th of August 1847, will ever be remembered by the Americans who were then in the valley of Mexico, and especially by those who passed it on the field of Contreras. It was as dark as Erebus, and a cold drenching rain came on which soaked us to, and even through the skin. The only thing in the shape of a shelter from the deluge which was pouring down upon us, consisted of the wagons of the engineer company and of the light batteries which chanced to be on the field, and these were filled with the wounded. The General managed, however, to find a partial cover in or under