American Volunteer.

BY JOHN B. BRATTON. "OUR COUNTRY—MAY IT ALWAYS BE RIGHT—BUT RIGHT OR WRONG, OUR COUNTRY." AT $2 00 PER ANNUM.

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OFFICE.—The office of the *American Volunteer* is in the second story of James H. Graham's new stone building, in South Hanover street, a few doors from Burkholder's hotel, and directly opposite the Post-office, where those having business will please call.

Poetical.

A GEM.

FROM THE PERSIAN.

Once from a cloud a drop of rain
Fell trembling on the sea,
And when she saw the wide-spread main,
Shame veiled her modesty.

"What place in this wide sea have I?
What room is left for me?
Sure it were better that I die
In this immensity!"

But while her self-abasing fear
Its lowliness confessed,
A shell received and welcomed her,
And pressed her to its breast.

And nourished there the drop became
A pearl for royal eyes—
Exalted by its lowly shame,
And humbled but to rise!

Miscellaneous.

THE MOTHER AND SON.

FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF A BARRISTER.

Dinner had been over about half an hour one Saturday afternoon—the only day on which for years I had been able to enjoy a dinner—and I was leisurely sipping a glass of wine, when a carriage drove rapidly up to the door, a load *rat tat* followed, and my friend Dr. Curtois, to my great surprise, was announced.

"I have called," said the doctor as we shook hands, to ask you to accompany me to Mount Place. I have just received a hurried note from Miss Armitage, stating that her mother, after a very brief illness, is rapidly sinking, and requesting my attendance, as well as that of a legal gentleman, immediately."

"Mrs. Armitage!" I exclaimed, inexpressibly shocked. "Why, it is scarcely more than a fortnight ago that I met her at the Rochford's in brilliant health and spirits."

"Even so. But you will accompany me? I don't know where to find any one else for the moment, and time presses."

"It is an attorney, probably, rather than a barrister, that is needed; but under the circumstances, and knowing her as I do I cannot hesitate."

We were soon bowling along at a rapid pace, and in little more than an hour reached the dying lady's residence, situated in the county of Essex, and distant about ten miles from London. We entered together; and Dr. Curtois, leaving me in the library, proceeded at once to the sick chamber. About ten minutes afterwards, the housekeeper, a tall foreign looking, and rather handsome woman, came into the room, and announced that the doctor wished to see me. She was deadly pale, and, I observed, trembling like an aspen. I motioned her to proceed me; and she, with unsteady steps, immediately led the way. So great was her agitation, that twice, in ascending the stairs, she only saved herself from falling by grasping the banister rail. The passage I drew from the exhibition of such overpowering emotion, by a person whom I knew to have been long not only in the service, but in the confidence of Mrs. Armitage, was soon confirmed by Dr. Curtois, whom we met coming out of the chamber of the expiring patient.

"Step this way," said he, addressing me, and leading to an adjoining apartment. "We do not require your attendance, Mrs. Bourdon," said he, as soon as we received it, to the housekeeper, who had swiftly followed us, and now stood staring with eager eyes in the doctor's face, as if life and death hung on her lips. "Have the goodness to leave us," he added tartly, perceiving she did not stir, but continued her fearful, scrutinising glance. She started at his altered tone, flushed crimson, then paled to a chalky whiteness, and muttering, left the apartment.

"The danger of her mistress has bewildered her," I remarked.

"Perhaps so, remarked Dr. Curtois. "Be that as it may, Mrs. Armitage is beyond all human help.—In an another hour she will be, as we say, no more."

"I feared so. What is the nature of her disorder?"

"A rapid wasting away, as I am informed. The appearances presented are those of a person expiring of atrophy, or extreme emaciation."

"Indeed. And so sudden too!"

"Yes. I am glad you are come, although your professional services will not, it seems, be required—a neighboring attorney having performed the necessary duty—something, I believe, relative to the will of the dying lady. We will speak further together by and by. In the meantime," continued Dr. Curtois, with a perceptible tremor in his voice, "I will do neither of us any harm to witness the closing scene of the life of Mary Rawdon, whom you and I twenty years ago worshiped as one of the gentlest and most beautiful beings with which the Creator ever graced his universe. It will be a peaceful parting. Come."

Just as, with noiseless step we entered the silent chamber, the last rays of the setting sun were falling upon the figure of Ellen Armitage—who knelt in speechless agony by the bedside of her expiring parent—and faintly lighting up the pale, emaciated, sunken features of the so lately brilliant, courted Mrs. Armitage! But for the ineffaceable splendor of her deep blue eyes, I should scarcely have recognized her. Standing in the shadow, as thrown by the heavy bed drapery, we gazed and listened unperceived.

"Ellen," murmured the dying lady, "come nearer to me. It is growing dark, and I cannot see you plainly. Now, then, read to me, beginning at the verse you finished with as good Dr. Curtois entered. Ay," she faintly whispered, "it is thus Ellen, with thy hand clasped in mine, and with the words of the holy book sounding from thy dear lips, that I would pass away!"

Ellen, interrupted only by her blinding tears, making sad stops complied. Twilight stole on, and threw its shadow over the solemn scene, deepening its holiness of sorrow. Night came with all her train; and the silver radiance kissed into ethereal beauty the pale face of the weeping girl, still pursuing her sad task. We hesitated to disturb by the slightest movement, the repose of a deathbed over which belief and hope, those only potent ministers, shed light and calm! At length Dr. Curtois advanced gently towards the bed, and taking the daughter's hand, said in a low voice, "Had you not better retire, my dear young lady for a few moments?" She understood him, and rising from her knees, threw herself in an ecstacy of grief upon the corpse, from which the spirit had just passed away. Assistance was summoned, and the sobbing girl was born from the chamber.

I descended, full of emotion to the library, where Dr. Curtois promised shortly to join me. Noiselessly entering the room, I came suddenly upon the housekeeper and a young man, standing with their backs towards me in the recesses of one of the windows, and partly shrouded by the heavy cloth curtains.—They were evidently in earnest conference, and several words, the signification of which did not at the moment strike me, reached my ears before they perceived my approach. The instant they did so they turned hastily round, and eyed me with an expression of flurried alarm, which at the time surprised me not a little. "All is over, Mrs. Bourdon," said I, finding she did not speak; "and your presence is probably needed by Miss Armitage." A flash of intelligence, as I spoke, passed between the pair; but whether indicative of grief or joy, so momentary was the glance, I should have been puzzled to determine. The housekeeper immediately left the room, keeping her eyes as she passed, fixed upon me with the same nervous apprehensive look which had before irritated Curtois. The young man followed more slowly. He was a tall and rather handsome youth, apparently about one or two and twenty years of age. His hair was jet black, and his dark eyes were of singular brilliancy; but the expression, I thought, was scarcely a refined or highly intellectual one. His resemblance to Mrs. Bourden, whose son indeed he was, was very striking. He bowed slightly, but courteously, as to an equal, as he closed the door, and I was left to the undisturbed enjoyment of my own reflections, ill defined and indistinct as they were, were anything but pleasant company. My reverie was at length interrupted by the entrance of the Doctor, with the announcement that the carriage was in waiting to reconvey us to town.

We had journeyed several miles on our return before a word was spoken by either of us. My companion was apparently even more painfully preoccupied than myself. He was, however, the first to break silence, "The emaciated corpse we have just left little resembles the gay girl for whose smiles you and I were once disposed to shoot each other!" The doctor's voice trembled with emotion, and his face, I perceived was pale as marble.

"Mary Rawdon," I remarked, "lives again in her daughter."

"Yes, her very image. Do you know," continued he, speaking with rapid energy, "I suspect Mary Rawdon—Mrs. Armitage, I would say—has been foully, treacherously dealt with!"

I started with amazement; and yet the announcement but embodied and gave form and color to my own ill defined and shadowy suspicions.

"Good heavens! How? By whom?"

"Unless I am greatly mistaken, she has been poisoned by an adept in the use of such destructive agents."

"Mrs. Bourdon?"

"No; her son. At least my suspicion point that way. She is probably cognizant of the crime. But in order that you should understand the grounds upon which my conjectures are principally founded, I must enter into a short explanation. Mrs. Bourdon, a woman of Spanish extraction and who formerly occupied a higher position than she does now, has lived with Mrs. Armitage from the period of her husband's death, about sixteen years ago. Mrs. Bourdon has a son, a tall good looking fellow, whom we have seen."

"He was with his mother in the library as I entered it after leaving you."

"Ah! Well hem! This boy in his mother's opinion—but that perhaps is somewhat excusable—exhibited early indications of having been born a "genius." Mr. Armitage, who had been struck by the beauty of the child, gradually acquired the same notion; and the result was that he was little by little invested—with at least her tacitly approval—with the privileges supposed to be the lawful inheritance of such gifted spirits; namely the right to be as idle as he pleased—geniuses, you know can according to the popular notion, attain any conceivable amount of knowledge *per saltum* at a bound—and to exalt himself in the stilts of his own conceit above the useful and honorable pursuits suited to the station in life in which Providence had cast his lot. The fruit of such training soon showed itself. Young Bourdon grew up a conceited and essentially ignorant puppy, capable of nothing but bad verses, and thoroughly impressed with but one important fact, which was, that he, Alfred Bourdon, was the most gifted and ill used of all God's creatures. To genius, in any intelligable sense of the term, he has in truth no pretensions.—He is endowed, however, with a kind of reflective talent, which is often mistaken by fools for *creative* power. The morbid fancies and melancholy scorn of a Byron, for instance, such gentry reflect back from from their foggy imaginations in exaggerated and distorted feebleness of whining versicles, and so on in other lights celestical or infernal. This, however, by the way, the only rational pursuit he ever followed, and that only by fits and starts, and to gratify his faculty of "wonder," I fancy, was chemistry.—A small laboratory was fitted up for him in the little summer house you may have observed at the further corner of the lawn. This study of his, if study at such desultory snatches at science may be called, led him, in his examination of vegitable bodies, to a smattering acquaintance with botany, a science of which Ellen Armitage is an enthusiastic student.—They were foolishly permitted to botanize together, and the result was, Alfred Bourdon, acting upon the principle that genius—whether sham or real—levels all merely mundane distinctions, had the impudence to aspire to the hand of Miss Armitage. His passion, sincere or simulated, has never been, I have reason to believe, in the slightest degree reciprocated by its object; but so blind is vanity, that when, about six weeks ago, an *eclaircissement* took place and the fellow's dream was somewhat rudely dissipated the untoward rejection of his preposterous suit was, there was every reason to belive, attributed by both mother and son to the repugnance of Mrs. Armitage alone; and to this idotic hallucination she has, I fear, fallen a sacrifice. Judging from the emaciated appearance of the body, and other phenomenas communicated to me by her ordinary medical attendent, a blundering ignoramus, who ought to have called assistance long before—she has been poisoned with *iodine*, which, administered in certain quantities, would produce precisely the same symptoms. Happily there is no mode of destroying human life which so surely leads to the detection of the murderer as the use of such agents; and of this truth the *post mortem* examination of the body, which takes place to morrow morning, will supply another vivid illustration.

* * * Legal assistance will no doubt be necessary, and I am sure I do not err in expecting that you will aid me in bringing to justice the murderer of Mary Rawdon?"

A pressure of the hand was the only answer.

"I shall sail for you at 10 o'clock," said he, as he put me down at my own door. I bowed, and the carriage drove off.

"Well?" said I, as Dr. Curtois and Mr. ——, the eminent surgeon entered the library at Mount Place the following morning after a long absence.

"As I anticipated," replied the doctor with a choaking voice; "she has been poisoned!"

I started to my feet. "And the murderer?"

"Our suspicions still point to young Bourdon; but the persons of both mother and son have been secured."

"Apart?"

"Yes, and I have dispatched a servant to request the presence of a neighbor—a county magistrate. I expect him momently.

After a brief consultation, we all three directed our steps to the summer house which contained young Bourdon's laboratory. In the room itself nothing of importance was discovered; but in an inclosed recess, which we broke open, we found a curiously fashioned glass bottle half full of iodine.

"This is it!" said Mr. ——; "and in a powdered state too—just ready for mixing with brandy or any other available dissolvent." The powder had some what the appearance of black lead. Nothing further of any consequence being found, we returned to the house, where the magistrate had already arrived.

Alfred Bourdon was brought in; and he having been duly cautioned that he was not obliged to answer any questions, and that what he did say would be taken down, and if necessary, used against him, I proposed the following questions:

"Have you the key of your laboratory?"

"No, the door is always open,"

"Well, then, of any door or cupboard in the room?"

At this question his face flushed purple; he stammered, "There is no"——and abruptly paused.

"Do I understand you to say there is no cupboard or place of concealment in the room?"

"No: here is the key."

"Has any one had access to the cupboard or recess of which this is the key, except yourself?"

The young man shook as if smitten with ague: his lips chattered, but no articulate sound escaped them.

"You need not answer the question," said the magistrate, "unless you choose to do so. I again warn you that all you say will, if necessary, be used against you."

"No one," he at length gasped, mastering his hesitation by a strong exertion of the will—"no one can have had access to the place but myself. I have never parted with the key."

Mrs. Bourdon was now called in. After interchanging a glance of intense agony, and, as it seemed to me, of affectionate intelligence with her son, she calmly answered the questions put to her. They were unimportant, except the last, and that acted upon her like a galvanic shock. It was this—"Did you ever struggle with your son on the landing leading to the bed room of the deceased for the possession of this bottle?" and I held up that which we had found in the recess.

A slight scream escaped her lips; and then she stood rigid, erect, motionless, glaring alternately at me and at the fatal bottle with eyes that seemed starting from their sockets. I glanced towards the son; he was also affected in a terrible manner. His knees smote each other, and a calmny perspiration burst forth and settled upon his pallid forehead.

"Again I caution you," iterated the magistrate, "that you are not bound to answer any of these questions."

The woman's lips moved. "No—never!" she almost inaudibly gasped, and fell senseless on the floor.

As soon as she was removed, Jane Withers was called. She deposed that three days previously, as she was, just before dark, arranging some linen in a room a few yards distant from the bedroom of her Late mistress, she was surprised at hearing a noise just outside the door, as if persons struggling and speaking in low but earnest tones. She drew aside a corner of the muslin curtain of the window which looked upon the passage or corridor, and there saw Mrs. Bourdon striving to wrest something from her son's hand. She heard Mrs. Bourdon says, "You shall not do it, or you shall not have it"—she could not be sure which. A noise of some sort seemed to alarm them; they ceased struggling and listened attentively for a few seconds; then Alfred Bourdon stole off on tip-toe, leaving the object of dispute behind, which witness could not see distinctly, in his mothers hand. Mrs. Bourdon continued to listen, and presently Miss Armitage, opening the door of her mother's chamber, called her by name. She immediately placed what was in her hand on the marble top of a side table standing in the corridor, and hastened to Miss Armitage. Witness left the room she had been in a few minutes afterwards, and curious to know what Mrs. Bourdon and her son had been struggling for, went to the table to look at it. It was an oddly shaped glass bottle, containing a good deal of blackish gray powder, which, as she held it up to the light, looked like black-lead!"

"Would you be able to swear to the bottle if you saw it?"

"Certainly I should."

"By what mark or token?"

"The name of Vulpy or Vulpy was cast into it—that is, the name was in the glass itself."

"Is this it?

"It is: I swear most positively."

A letter was also read which had been taken from Bourdon's pocket. It was much creased, and was proved to be in the hand writing of Mrs. Armitage. It consisted of a severe rebuke at the young man's presumption in seeking to address himself to her daughter, which insolent ingratitude, the writer said, she should never, whilst she lived, either forget or forgive. This last sentence was strongly underlined in a different ink from that used by the writer of the letter.

The surgeon deposed to the cause of the death—It had been brought on by the action of iodine, which, administered in certain quantities, produced symptoms of rapid atrophy, such as had appeared in Mrs. Armitage. The glass bottle found in the recess contained iodine in a pulverized state.

I deposed that, on entering the library on the previous evening, I overheard young Bourdon, addressing his mother, say, "Now that it is done it is past recall, I will not shrink from any consequences, be they what they may!"

This was the substance of the evidence adduced; and the magistrate at once committed Alfred Bourdon to Chelmsford jail, to take his trial at the next assize for "willful murder." A Coroner's inquisition a few days after also returned a verdict of "willful murder" against him on the same evidence.

About an hour after his commital, and just previous to the arrival of the vehicle which was to convey him to the county prison, Alfred Bourdon requested an interview with me. I very reluctently consented; but steeled as I was against him, I could not avoid feeling dreadfully shocked at the change which so brief an interval had wrought upon him. It had done the work of years. Despair—black, utter despair—was written in every lineament of his expressive countenance.

"I have requested to see you," said the unhappy culprit, "rather than Dr. Curtois, because he, I know, is bitterly prejudiced against me. But you will not refuse, I think, the solemn request of a dying man—for a dying man I feel myself to be—however long or short the interval which stands between me and the scaffold. It is not with a childish hope that any assertion of mine can avail before the tribunal of the law against the evidence adduced this day, that I, with all the solemnity befitting a man whose days are numbered, declare to you that I am wholly innocent of the crime laid to my charge. I have no such expectation; I seek only that you, in pity of my youth and untimely fate, should convey to her whom I have madly presumed to worship this message: 'Alfred Bourdon was mad, but not blood guilty: and to the crime laid to his charge he is innocent as an unborn child.'"

"The pure and holy passion, young man," said I, somewhat startled by his impressive manner, "however presumptous, as far as social considerations are concerned, it might be, by which you affect to be inspired, is utterly inconsistent with the cruel, dastardly crime, of which such damning evidence has an hour since been given,"——

"Say no more, sir," interrupted Bourdon, sinking back in his seat, and burrying his face in his hands; "it was a bootless errand; she *could not*, in the face of that evidence, believe my unsupported assertion! It were as well she did not. And yet, sir, it is hard to be trampled into a felon's grave, loaded with the maledictions of those whom you would coin in your heart to serve and bless! Ah, sir," he continued, whilst tears of agony streamed through his firmly closed fingers, "you cannot conceive the unutterable bitterness of the pang which rends the heart of him who feels that he is not only despised but loathed, hated, execrated by her whom his soul idolizes!—Mine was no boyish, transient passion; it has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. My life has been but one long dream of her. All that my soul had drunk in of her beauty in the visible earth and heavens—the light of setting suns—the radiance of the silver stars—the breath of summer flowers, together with all which we imagine of celestial purity and grace, seemed to be incarnated, concentrated, and combined! And now lost—lost for ever lost!" The violence of his emotion choked his utterance; and deeply and painfully affected, I hastened from his presence.

Time sped as ever onward, surely, silently; and justice, with her feet of lead, but hands of iron, closed gradually upon the quarry. Alfred Boudon was arranged before a jury of his countrymen, to answer finally to the accusation of wilful murder preferred against him.

The evidence, given before the committing magistrate, and the coroner's inquisition, was repeated with some addition, of passionate expressions used by the prisoner indicative of a desire to be avenged on the deceased. The cross-examination by the counsel for the defence was able, but failed to shake the case for the prosecution. His own admission that no one had access to the recess where the poison was found, told fatally against him. When called upon to address the jury, he delivered himself of a speech rather than a defence; of an oratorical effusion, instead of a vigorous and if possible, damaging commentary upon the evidence arrayed against him. It was a labored, and in part eloquent, exposition of the necessary fallibilty of human judgement, illustrated by numerous examples of erroneous verdicts. His peroration I jotted down at the time: Thus, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, it is abundantly manifest not only by these examples, but by the testimony which every man bears in his own breast, that God could not have willed, could not have commanded, his creatures to perform a pretended duty which he vouchsafed them no power to perform righteously. Oh, be sure that if he had intended, if he had commanded you to pronounce irreversible decrees upon your fellow-man, quenching that life which is his highest gift, he would have endowed you with gifts to perform that duty rightly! Has he done so? Ask not alone the pages dripping with innocent blood which I have quoted, but your own hearts! Are you, according to the promise of the serpent tempter, "gods knowing good from evil?" of such clear omniscience, that you can hurl an unprepared soul before the presence of its Maker, in the full assurance that you have rightly loosed the silver cord which he had measured, have justly broken the golden bowel which he had fashioned! "Oh, my Lord," he concluded, his dark eyes flashing with excitement, "It is possible that the first announcement of my innocence of this crime, to which you will give credence, may be proclaimed from the awful tribunal of him alone who cannot err! How if he, whose eye is even now upon us, should then proclaim, "I, too, sat in judgment on the day when you presumed to doom your fellow-worm; and *I* saw that the murderer was not in the dock, but on the bench!" Oh, my lord, think well of what you do, pause ere you incur such fearful hazard; for be assured, that for all these things God will also bring you to judgment!"

He ceased and sank back exhausted. His fervid declamation produced a considerable impression upon the auditory; but it soon disappeared before the calm, impressive charge of the judge, who reassured the startled jury, by reminding them that their duty was honestly to execute the law, and not to dispute about its justice. For, himself he said, sustained by a pure conscience, he was quite willing to incur the hazard hinted at by the prisoner. After a careful and luminous summing up, the jury, with very slight deliberation, returned a verdict of "Guilty." As the word passed the lips of the foreman of the jury, a loud piercing shriek rang through the court. It proceeded from a tall figure in black, who, with closely drawn veil, had sat motionless during the trial, just before the dock. It was the prisoners mother. The next instant she arose, and throwing back her veil, wildly exclaimed, "He is innocent, innocent, I tell ye! I alone"——

"Mother! mother! for the love of Heaven be silent!" shouted the prisoner with frantic vehemence, and stretching himself over the front of the dock, as if to grasp and retain her.

"Innocent, I tell you!" continued the woman. "I perpetrated the deed! He knew it not, suspected it not, till it was too late. Here," she added drawing a sheet of paper from her bosom—"here is my confession, with each circumstance detailed!"

As she waved it over her head, it was snatched by her son, and swift as lightning torn to shreds. "She is mad! Heed her not—believe her not!" He at the same time shouted at the top of his powerful voice; "She is distracted mad! Now, my lord, your sentence! Come!"

The tumult and excitement in the court room no language which I can employ would convey an adequate impression of. As soon as calm was partially restored, Mrs. Bourdon was taken into custody; the prisoner was removed; and the court adjourned, of course without passing sentence.

It was even as his mother said. Subsequent investigation, aided by her confession, amply proved that the fearful crime was conceived and perpetrated by her alone, in the frantic hope of securing for her idolized son, the hand and fortune of Miss Armitage. She had often been present with him in his laboratory, and had thus become acquainted with the uses to which agents could be put. She had purloined the key of the recess; and he, unfortunately too late to prevent the perpetration of the crime, had by mere accident discovered the abstraction of the poison. His subsequent declarations had been made for the determined purpose of saving his mother's life by the sacrifice of his own!

The wretched woman was not reserved to fall before the justice of her country. The hand of God smote her ere the scaffold was prepared for her. She was smitten with frenzy, and died raving in the Metropolitan Lunatic Asylum.—Alfred Bourdon, after a lengthened imprisonment, was liberated. He called on me by appointment, a few days previous to leaving this country forever; and I placed in his hands a small pocket bible, on the fly-leaf of which was written the word—"*Ellen!*" His dim eye lighted up with something of its old fire as he glanced at the characters; he then took the book, placed it in his bosom, and waving me a mute farewell—I saw he durst not trust himself to speak—hastily departed. I never saw him more.

Evening.

'Tis a holy hour. Bright clouds have cast their glory for a while on earth, but have vanished like the gentle dew before the rising sun. And yet their loviness was like the things above, too pure, too soft, too beautiful to fade. They have seemed sometimes to float around our earth in all their loviness, until they came so near us, as to feel the withering touch which sin has brought; and, fading by degrees, at last they sink to be among our streams of joy that lie far back in time's unending past.

NO BACKING OUT.—The Washington Globe is responsible for the following: The steamer Andrew Jackson, Captain Eckert, on a late trip from New Orleans, to Cincinnati, entered the canal at Louisville, and after passing through the locks, met another large boat in the canal, which filled it from side to side. The captain on either boat insisted on the other backing out; each refused; words ran high; each threatened the other to put on the steam and rush through first. At this moment the superintendent of the canal made his appearance, and decided that the Andrew Jackson should back down to the basin, and suffer the other to pass on into the locks, saying the other boat had entered by permission, and that the Jackson ought to have stopped at the basin. Capt. Eckert, after giving vent to his feeling, at the directions of the superintendent, reluctantly prepared to back the Jackson down to the basin. One of his deck hands, an Irishman, who, with flushed cheeks and heaving bosom, had witnessed the contest, here exclaimed: "Captain Eckert, this is your boat, you can back her if you choose," (and seizing a screw driver, and pointing to the figure head, a likeness of Gen. Jackson, carved in Hickory,) "but this old feller never backs." Applying the instrument, he began to unscrew the figure head from the bowsprit, with the declaration, "No man ever backed him while living, and while I can raise an arm, no man shall back him dead. So saying, he unscrewed the figure, took it upon his shoulder, carried it up to town, called his friends together, held a carousal over it, till the boat got through, then replaced it in its position, and resumed his accustomed place on the forecastle of the Andrew Jackson.

For the American Volunteer.

REPORT OF THE VISITERS OF THE COMMON SCHOOLS.

The undersigned, having been specially invited by the Board of Directors to attend the recent annual examinations of the Common Schools of this Borough, in accordance with past usage present to the public a Report of their views respecting it, and the system pursued. Some of us attended the examination of each school, and all of us were present at that of most of the Schools. The interest which was shown by the community, by the numbers present to witness the exercises, was very considerable. The high reputation which our Schools have acquired in this State induced some even from abroad to attend these assemblies, and we think it must have been fully sustained, and probably increased by what was there exhibited. The audiences were evidently much delighted, and the effect of so much public interest is encouraging the schools themselves we doubt not will be salutary.

The examinations were conducted not only by the Teachers of the respective Schools, but also to a more than common extent by the Directors and Visiters. It was manifestly fair and thorough, giving no opportunity for concealment even if it had been desired by any one, and most rigidly testing the actual attainments of the pupils.

As the result of our observations we have no hesitation in stating our conviction that these Schools are eminently worthy of confidence and encouragement. When we remember how brief has been the time during which the present system has been in operation, how limited the resources supplied for its support, and the little encouragement which has until recently been afforded to it by the public, we are only surprised that so much has been accomplished. It is due to the laborious and self-denying efforts of our Board of Directors to acknowledge that to them we are indebted for nearly all that is excellent in the present condition of our Schools. Without compensation, in the midst of much indifference and even opposition, and for many years, they have labored earnestly in this cause, and sustained a burden from which most persons would have shrunk with impatience. They have however generally had the countenance and the comparatively liberal support of a large portion of the public in the fulfilment and enlargement of their plans as the necessities of the system required. It is hoped that such a mutual confidence has now been secured, that these Directors will no longer have reason to distrust the cordial co-operation of their fellow citizens in every reasonable undertaking, and that the latter will supply them with sufficient resources for the improvement and extension of their operations as our population increases, and a higher degree of intelligence may demand it. Past experience has shown that no public expense is more profitably incurred than that which is applied to the proper education of the people. It has always promoted a more pleasant state of society, an increased ability to appreciate and enjoy other means of general instruction, a diminution of crime and poverty, and a disposition to aspire after all kinds of improvement. It draws out the native talents of youth, which might otherwise have been neglected or perverted, it increases the relative influence of a community, and elevates the mind above trifling and sordid pursuits. A well educated society, can avail itself of the lessons of history, of the requirements of art, and of the improvements of science. By comparing itself with less favored communities reasons are found for contentment, progress, and patriotism. By the diffusion of intelligence respecting public servants and public affairs its members are better qualified to perform the duties of freemen and to exercise the rights of suffrage. They learn to prize what is taught in the past history of our country and to feel an interest in the wise and good men whose example is therein recorded. As a mere matter of pecuniary benefit such an education has always promoted improvements in the soil and in modes of cultivation, objects and marts of trade have been created, new channels of wealth have been devised, and means of intercourse have been invented. We believe therefore that even where an individual expects no direct participation by himself or family in the exercises of our common schools, their indirect benefits are sufficient to warrant him in a liberal support to the means of intellectual and moral education.

The object however of common schools should not be made too extensive. It is not to afford such an education as can be obtained and can be used only by a few. They are intended to bestow those privileges, which like the air we breathe are the common wants of all. Hence the studies pursued in them, should be mainly, if not exclusively such as are adapted to the capacity and condition of every individual and needed in every station of society. What ever cannot be universally beneficial, it appears to us, should be confined to schools of a different character. Indeed, it is not possible, perhaps, for the course of studies pursued in them to embrace even all which might be universally beneficial, since neither the time of our youth, nor the resources possessed by the State are sufficient for this purpose.—A selection therefore of those branches which are of most general importance becomes indispensable. No one supposes that in our schools all is taught which it might be useful for every one to know, but the aim has been to introduce all which is actually attainable and practicable. The number of studies has been enlarged as fast as the resources and the opportunities offered by the public would permit. The temptation is indeed sometimes strong for both parents and teachers to encourage such as are curious and abstract, rather than those which are common and useful, since they are more likely to excite admiration and notoriety. But we have not discovered any such fault extensively prevalent in our Schools. In a few instances we did indeed notice an evident deficiency in the elementary and primary studies while a higher degree of excellence was shown in those which were more advanced. Some pupils who could answer all questions in the higher branches, had been evidently neglected in the primary departments and in those schools where reading, writing, and grammar were taught in their first stages, we could not but think in some instances that too little attention was paid to distinctness in examination, adaptation to the sentiment read, legibility in writing, and accuracy in spelling and punctuation. While nearly all were able to give by rote the principal rules which are laid down in their books, they did not in some instances appear to have understood them, nor to have acquired the habit of readily applying them. This suggested to us the importance of spending a short time every day, especially in the primary schools, to be employed in reading short lessons, in which no one should be permitted to proceed without a correct understanding and utterance of each word, and also in writing some familiar exercise upon the slate or blackboard, with a view of attending to the first principles of orthography, punctuation, and composition. We do not however suppose that universal accuracy in these respects can be attained.—There will be inequalities in the talents and acquirements of pupils here as well as in other studies. No system or diligence of teachers can entirely succeed in applying a remedy. We doubt not that our teachers have been quite as careful on these points as is usual. We only desire to direct the attention of those who have the charge of these studies to a *more than* ordinary diligence with regard to them. All observation and experience show that the consequences of a failure here can never be subsequently repaired, and none are more mortifying or embarrassing.—These too are studies peculiarly within the province of Common Schools, and should be considered as inferior in importance to no others.

The number of pupils and of studies in the Female High School, and the length of time necessary to the completion of the course there, seem to demand the establishment of another school between it and the grade next below it. It is difficult at present for many who seem qualified for the enjoyment of its privileges to obtain admission to it. The variety of studies which is crowded into the course must distract and fatigue the energies of both teacher and pupils. The bodily health and mental elasticity of both must necessarily be injured. Time cannot be given for exercise or recreation. Possibly more time might be given to an explanation of rules, and of the subjects studied, and the memory might be less burdened with the mere words of the author in such studies as history, rhetoricks, and moral philosophy, if such an intermediate school were established, or the number of studies were reduced. Some of us noticed also that in a few schools the seats of the smaller children were without backs and were otherwise inconvenient, and that there appeared to be a deficiency in the apparatus of globes and outline maps needful for the illustration of geography. The slight additional expense which might be incurred by the adoption of these improvements we cannot doubt would be cheerfully sustained by a community which now appears so urgently to call for them.—The more perfect our system of schools becomes, the more necessary will be a frequent enlargement of its operations. They will present such advantages that a large number of persons will be induced to share them, and a higher range of studies will be attempted. When private schools offered superior opportunities many entered them who are now found in these, and a corresponding addition must be made to our system.

There is one subject in relation to which an extreme difficulty has been felt by all our Directors, Teachers, and Visiters. We refer to the moral character of the Pupils. In spite of all that has hitherto been done, (and we are assured that this is by no means inconsiderable) to secure a guardianship over the conduct of such as attend our schools there is yet found in them a state of morals which is a subject of very general complaint. Profanity and rudeness, are said to prevail to a lamentable extent, even among some whose attainments are in other respects excellent. Accessible as our schools are and ought to be to all classes, it is perhaps impossible to find a remedy for this evil. We have no idea that it can be applied by the teachers alone. The censurable conduct is never probably exhibited to their direct observation, and they have no adequate means of obtaining the information from others.—The rewards which they may sometimes think it best to bestow on those who they think are superior in good conduct, be of but little avail. The study of Scriptures and of Moral Philosophy, and the various occasions which daily life may afford, supply opportunities for admonition and instruction which we have reason to believe are not usually neglected.—Whether an increased prominence might not be given to them we are not able to decide. But we are satisfied that all these and every other instrumentality in the hands of teachers will never perceptibly diminish the evil so long as they have not the co-operation of those who control and influence the children when out of school. At present there are many parents, guardians and others, who do not co-operate, and some whose example and influence is decidedly opposed to that of the teacher. In such circumstances not only are the children affected by their corruption, but these become powerful instruments in injuring their companions. The responsibility for this result cannot be fastened wholly or principally upon the teachers. In the moral education of children no earthly power can resist, or be equal to that of a parent. And if the energies of parents are not combined with those of teachers, the efforts of the latter are likely to be comparatively fruitless. A proper regard for the reputation of our schools, and for the purity and honor of those pupils who might otherwise be uncontaminated, demands that those who have the control of the hours and places of amusement, and the associations of these children, should exercise a most watchful vigilance over them in these respects. Then, by faithfully assisting teachers in properly estimating and forming the moral habits of the pupils, much could be accomplished in this important matter. Should parents also more frequently show their interest in the schools, by consulting with the teachers, and by friendly visits at suitable times, should they listen less to rumor and interested complaints, and always sustain the reasonable discipline of the school, the effect we think would be very perceptible and salutary.

In other parts of our country, much has been accomplished by means of Conventions of teachers and friends of education, in which the improvements and experience of the more favored individuals and sections of our land are made common to others. We know of no reason why such Conventions might not be of equal benefit should they be called and held at stated intervals in this vicinity and county, and should our Directors and Teachers take initiative steps in this matter, we doubt not they would find themselves ultimately sustained by many others. A sound intelligence might also be imparted to the minds of many who are now indifferent to the whole subject of Common Schools.

In these remarks and suggestions, we do not imagine we are presenting anything new to the minds of our Board of Directors, or conflicting with their past policy. On the other hand we desire rather to encourage and sustain them by what we believe to be the voice of public sentiment, and the often expressed wishes of their own hearts.

Respectfully,

Conway Wing, Wm. B. Knox, J. N. Hoffman, A. Kramer, J. H. Weaver, Jas. S. Brown, S. Elliott, J. Hyer, Jacob Shrom, W. Riley, S. Ensminger, C. S. Stevenson, John Lyon, David Smith, Henry S. Ritter, Henry Harkness, T. Messersmith, Joseph Wilson, Wm. Butler, M. M'Clellan, Jacob Duey, James A. Davisney.

Equal Rights for the Girls.

The *Sun*, of this city, says the *N. Y. Despatch*, advocates the establishing of a free academy, or educational Institute for girls. This is a proposition which shall have our hearty support, provided the professoresses are to finish or instruct these M. A. D.'s "*Maidens of Arts Domestic*," in the duties of wives and mothers, and not to making them a set of useless philosophers in petticoats aspiring to seats in Congress, to govern men and guide the State. Suppose the free school built, and the chairs distributed thus:

Mrs. Grundy, Prof. on the art and mystery of cooking plain dishes, broiling beef steaks, baking pork and beans and pumpkin pie, with daily experiments in the art of pickling, preserving fruits, &c. and the making of gooseberry and other domestic wines. *Practical experiments* daily at 6 A. M. on the economy of marketing, the nature of weights and measures, the purchase of dry goods, and their manufacture into articles of domestic utility suitable to the families of mechanics, clerks, or storekeepers, whose income is to be taken at $500 per annum, as the maximum.

Mrs. John Jones, *Prof.* on the nature, temper and capabilities of children, their best mode of treatment, with daily experiments in the nursery. A sufficient number of *babies* always to be provided by the *Ten* Governors for the use of the *sopho and pianofore* class.

Mrs. John Smith, Prof. on the philosophy of managing servants, once termed help, but which term is now abandoned, as there is no help in them. Daily experiments in housewifery and polishing mahogany, with *elbo grease*, to show the mode of living practised by our mothers in their system of domestic economy.

Mrs. Caudle, Prof. on the philosophy of governing husbands, and to give daily lectures and experiments on the best mode of treating those animals when caught, with illustrations of their propensity to tyrannize over the softer part of our species.

Will our luminous cotemporary second the programme for the *role* of the Female High School?

SCOURGING A LADY.—A Hungarian lady who was the means of delivering some Austrian officers into the hands of the Magyars, has been tried by court martial, at Presburg, and sentenced to be publicly scourged. This is the most brutal act on record.

"If you don't give me a penny," cried a young hopeful to his mama, "I know a boy that's got the measles, and I'll go and catch 'em, so I will."