

# The Bradford Reporter.

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## Bradford Reporter.

### SILAS WRIGHT.

"Some men are born to greatness, some men achieve greatness, and some men have their greatness thrust upon them." The truly great are those who become so by a wise choice of opportunities, seconded by ability, will, and moral principle, without which conjunction all effort is vain.

What is greatness? As understood by many, it is great capacity, extraordinary talent, vast intellect, and thus we bestow this appellation upon a host whose names will be examples through all time. We say great, because they have attained proud positions in the world, and were authors of results which more or less influence men and things at the present. But too much have we worshipped genius and talent, and too little have we regarded the better qualities of the heart in our estimate of character, and in the honor we accord to many who have a place in the history of the past. Shining qualities, brilliant achievements, enlist all our sympathy, and we forget in their grand and show, the useful and the good. We judge of those who have gone before us, as we do of those who are present with us, and are loth to ascribe greatness to any character who has not founded a great empire or won a great battle, or shed a great sea of blood, or performed some great act which strikes us with admiration and awe.

There is no nation, ancient or modern, (the fact may be spoken without an idle boast,) with a history so brief as our own, that may count so many examples of real, true greatness. Whatever may be our definition, our roll is well filled, and we may safely challenge any nation to the comparison of the last hundred years. In the senate, in the field, in arts and in arms, in literature and in science, our record is full.

In August, 1847, there died suddenly in his own house, in a little village of less than a thousand inhabitants in one of the northern counties of the Empire State, in the fifty-third year of his life, a man, who as much as any one of his age and period, deserved the appellation of great. He was born to poverty and with his own hand earned the means to carry him through college. Without patron, or friends, or family influence, without other aid than his own indomitable energy and will, he became a college graduate, a student at law, a country magistrate, a surrogate of the country, a state senator, Comptroller of the State, Senator in Congress, and Governor of the Empire State. He refused nearly as many offices as he filled, to wit: a place in the Cabinet, a Foreign Minister, a Vice Presidential nomination, and a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. This man was SILAS WRIGHT.

For four years he was State Senator. It was during a period when party spirit ran high, yet his political honesty was never doubted. As a member of the Court for the correction of Errors, he acquired the happy gift or faculty of discovering truth, though encumbered with error, and that power of clear analysis, which ever after was a most valuable guide in the arena of national politics. After a service of four years in the Senate, he became again the village lawyer, and though solicited by partial friends to remove to the city where a broader field invited, he refused. But the State of his adoption now sought to do him further honor. He was called in a period of great monetary disaster to manage her finances, and though surrounded with difficulties he succeeded. He adhered strictly to a literal construction of State law, avoided in every respect a creation of new state debts, and in so doing, acquired the epithet of barn-burner. His term of office as Comptroller was not finished when the Legislature elected him Senator in Congress. He was now in the zenith of his fame. The village lawyer had become a member of the most distinguished political body known to the American Constitution, and in some respects, to the world—a loftier position save one than that occupied by any other individual—the compeer of the talented and renowned of the Western Continent. How well he discharged his senatorial duties let the journals speak; let them say too how liberal his construction of Constitutional law, and how strictly he adhered to the Democratic principle, and above all let them declare how close and compact his argument in debate.

He had served nearly sixteen years as Senator in Congress when the great struggle between Clay and Polk for the Presidency came on. It was felt by all that the vote of New York would determine the result, and it was also felt that Polk could not carry it alone. The National Convention that nominated Polk had turned its

back on Van Buren, refusing him a nomination, the canal policy, the state debt the anti-union question,—matters with which he had been disconnected for years were brought into the canvass, and he was forced into direct antagonism with many with whom he had previously acted in concert. It was a great mistake and so he felt it, but the party intent on its own salvation only, forced him into the leadership, and although he was elected by ten thousand majority, five thousand greater than Polk's, yet this same party selfishness insured his defeat two years later.

tion through the machinery of the two-third rule, in consequence of his Texas letter; and yet, it had to use his friends to succeed. A nomination to the Vice Presidency was therefore given to Mr. Wright. He refused it promptly, and at length, was persuaded to give up his place in the Senate, and receive the nomination for Governor of the state for the sole and only purpose of securing it to Mr. Polk. This was a great sacrifice for Mr. Wright. By accepting the nomination of Governor he became again mixed up with New York local

This was the glorious era of Democrats and Whigs, of Barn-burners and Hunkers, of Locofocos, of Free-soilers, of Hard shells and Soft shells, of Anti-slavery, Anti-Rum, and now and then an ancient fossilized Anti-Mason—there were presses and platforms and promises and pledges, canons, conventions and conferences, each party had an organization and nearly each man a candidate. But when a man of known talent and probity was brought out for office, it was often the case that those of different shades of opinion would unite in his support and thus secure his election. In this manner Mr. Wright was successful in the first canvass he made for Governor. But if such combinations sometimes result in the choice of the right man, other combinations may in that of the wrong one, and in this way he was defeated in the last. Mr. Wright lost his election on the second trial by the anti-union vote. His opponent, John Young, a shrewd, talented man, made fair promises, and in some counties he received an overwhelming support. Mr. Wright had also vetoed the canal bill and as a consequence many Hunkers deserted him. That bill, had it become a law, would have re-inaugurated the spendthrift policy, and have enabled thousands to grow fat upon the public treasure. The State owes him much for his firmness. It was this selfishness of his party which consigned him to private life, for notwithstanding the anti-union defection, he would have been successful had the Hunkers been faithful.

After his term of Governor had expired, Mr. Wright retired to his farm of thirty acres in St. Lawrence county, and there in the peaceful pursuits of private life forgot the excitement of political and the tumult of partisan strife. He plowed and sowed, and reaped and mowed, and planted and harrowed. The rising sun found him abroad in the field—he hoed his row and kept his swath with his hired man—he harnessed his team and drew his fuel and cut it for use, he went to mill and to the blacksmith shop, to the store and post-office, to trainings, and meetings, and gatherings of the people. In fact, he was one of them in all respects, engaged in the same pursuits, enjoying the same pastime, and sympathizing in all their interests. What stranger would recognize in the rather stout, full chested, full faced, sun-burnt man in frock and trousers, leading the field of mowers in a hot sunny day, Silas Wright, ex-Governor and ex-Senator, whose great speech had so charmed him in the reading, and which had established on a sure basis the true policy this great Nation?

What faculty of the mind made Silas Wright the man he undoubtedly was? It was the power of ANALYSIS. He could examine and inquire, and from thence there flowed forth by an irresistible logic the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. You could no more dispute his conclusion than you could the simplest problem in mathematics. You were taken by surprise and convinced against your will. In the American Senate, where he won his great victories, he was assured of a triumph upon equal ground. Long before other minds had found a basis of action, his had gone over the whole field of inquiry, and by an almost intuitive analysis had unburied the truth. Other minds there were, undoubtedly, in some respects, superior to his; but for correct logic, close analysis, overwhelming argument, none his equal. His true position was that of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Once more,—his excellence lay not alone in his intellect. Silas Wright was an honest man—his path lay straight before him, and the end he sought was pure, and just. He never descended to the arts of the mere politician, he despised the low jugglery and chicanery which constitutes the only stock in trade of some successful men. Thomas H. Benton of Missouri, called him the Cato of America, an appellation well earned and merited by a long and distinguished career, which if not as brilliant, was yet as useful to his country, as that of those who sought, by questionable ends, mere personal aggrandisement. It was said of him that he had refused more offices than he had filled. It is certain that when he withdrew from the national arena to secure his own State to the Democracy, he stood most prominent,

yea, foremost on the list of those to whom the nation would look after the pending election, for a Presidential candidate. We may say even more, we may say, and it is believed, with truth, that at this very moment Mr. Wright held in his own hands the means to become the candidate of the party in place of Mr. Polk, and that it was his chivalrous devotion to Mr. VanBuren, that staid their exercise.

But why lengthen out this humble tribute to the excellence of a good man? Why offer it at all? Alas, personal ambition is the bane of American Statesmen. It has already shed rivers of blood and divided a people, one in origin, in language, and law, bound to each other by the memories of common dangers, sacrifices and successes,—now hostile and belligerent. May those who are yet to stand in our Legislative halls, and whose voice will from thence go out through our land as conservators of our interests, and guardians of our liberties, remember him whose example is so feebly portrayed in the foregoing sketch, and that "An honest man is the noblest work of God."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

New Orleans, March 17, 1865.

MR. EDITOR:—Oil flows. To the dreamer, language can not express the sweetness of these words; sweeter than happiness and life; these give them that which will secure happiness and can render life sweet. The excitement is great. Stocks rise as spring torrents; marshy, worthless lands are worth millions, and the holders are mad with realization of dreamy desires. Formerly the sleepers waited, yearning; now, sure of all they saw, they blindly follow any scheme. Over confident, they are ready and eager to stake their all on the chance of grasping fabled fortunes.

Among the most eager, most heedless, most grasping, is the victim. He has no remembrance of being a farmer. Oil flows, and all other things vanish from his thoughts. And the fever has passed to the

## IRRETRIEVABLE STAGE.

The prominent symptom is headache. Not the mere throbbing of the nerves of the head caused by a diseased stomach, nor the many-formed nervous headache; but the headache, a burning of gas, a bursting, a throbbing, which increases as the victim approaches oil, yet urges him to seek it, to smell of it. You notice him with one of his headaches; he writes in the extreme of agony, contorting his countenance. Yet he wanders off in diseased dreams, forgets all but his desire. A word on the theme calls him and his agonies back. And again he sleeps.

Daily you will find him when they had an explosion, looking at the charred timbers of the derrick where the gas had been, turning every stone and chip to see if any grease spot or trace of one can be found, smelling of the fresh mud and sand to know if there be any prospect of a trace of grease. He will tell you he found a thin scum on the pools of water, a strong scent of gas on the stones and chips, and that the sand felt real oily. He often visits his swamp. One day he saw bubbles rise and he thinks there is oil. You will see him trudging through the mud and water, seeking for the bubbling. Miry bogs are no trouble to him; they seem like a soft velvet carpet. And, after a vain search till darkness, or famishing, drives him home, he still knows he saw the bubbles and smelled the gas; he returns cheered, confident, dressed in purple, not desponding, muddy.

And he loves to sit on jutting crags. Back to the chaotic time when earth was smoldered and the rocks yawned to receive the liquid, back he wanders and gazes down upon the tempting deposit of the region around. To his keener sense of smell, there are gases rising, thin, subtle gases, yet gases from the hidden store-house. Dream leads to longer dreams, sitting, gazing from the crags.

Old salt wells attract. One of his chief enjoyments is to visit them, to smell the gas, to watch the fast following bubbles rise; then he is carried off by sleepy fancy. He penetrates to the lakes of fluid hidden deep down below the rocks, liberates the golden liquid, and it rises higher, gazing on its graceful curves and showers of spray, drinking in the searching, irritating gases, his soul loses itself in the realms of forgetfulness. But how keen is his delight while viewing the real flowing oil. He smells of it, tastes to see if salt be there, feels, and is happy. How nicely it gushes forth! Gold, happiness, and ease, and almost life itself, gushes forth with the new found stream.

Tired of seeing the princely treasure so freely wasted, he follows the winding stream, stops at each little eddy where the liquid strives to tarry, examines every stone on which may be found a trace of the blood of earth, wanders on till all is absorbed again, and wishes all, and more, were his. Gazing on this golden stream, thought is followed by big thought, and the brain faints under the weary load. Fancy, free, carries him into unseen realms, a region yet more airy, where faint sounds of sirens touching golden shells, lulls the soul to slumber. When his headaches begin, he wanders off to one of these new haunts. And the deep thrill of delight keeps him till darkness or hunger warn.

This is the sober man. But how transformed. Once a steady farmer, now all the

past is a dream and his visions are realities. Living on a farm, eating of the grain he worked night and day to raise, spending in stocks the grain he sold, walking through his swamp, muddily, tired, hungry, he is not a farmer, has forgotten that he ever was. All things seem different now. He is rich; though walking through mire and over crags, he walks on velvet; though living in the old house (a pile of bricks), it seems a palace in the centre of broad domains, and he is lord of all he sees.

We hope to speak of what we gain and what we lose, in our next. J. G. H.

Camp of 5th New York Cavalry, Winchester, March 27th 1865.

DEAR SISTER:—I received your most welcome letter last evening, and was very glad to hear again from home. You know that letters, to a soldier's life, are like stars in a dark sky, and every mail is watched in a fever of anxiety. I supposed you had heard of my return from the raid, as I wrote home the next day, and furthermore, I do not think you read the papers much, or you would have seen an account of our doings. Well we started from here, Feb. 27th, with Gen. Sheridan, and proceeded with him as far as Waynesboro', where the fight took place between Gen. Custer and Gen. Early, the result ending in the capture of Early's whole army, wagons, artillery, and everything belonging to his command, and he only "escaped by the skin of his teeth," by taking to the mountains. His army consisted of only about one thousand three hundred men, which we guarded safely back to Winchester. We were four days going and six coming back, the distance being one hundred and twenty miles, the road with the exception of twelve miles was very good, being a macadamised pike, and that twelve miles was the worst road I ever traveled without any exception. The mud was knee deep to our horses, and you can imagine how the prisoners looked wading through this mud. Occasionally a poor fellow would fall flat on his face, and half a dozen men run over him. I felt sorry for the misguided rascals. They were mostly well dressed—altogether the best looking lot of "Johnnies" I have ever seen; some of them expressed themselves stiff Scotch—others said they were glad they were taken.

Although we had no hand in capturing the prisoners, we had the satisfaction of cleaning out some of Rosser's men who had gathered together with the intention of rescuing their fellows, and had been following in our rear all the way from Stanton, every day getting more men until they had got three hundred men of all kinds, the most of them officers; and when we arrived at the Shenandoah valley, we found we were surrounded by guerrillas, could see them all around us, and they attempted to hold the river so that we could not cross, but they did not do it. While we were crossing the prisoners, the rebels thought they could drive the rear guard into the river, and probably kill or drown them, but the 5th N. Y. was there as rear guard, what there was of us—only about two hundred men—and we let the Rebs come upon a charge to within about twenty rods of us, when we gave them a volley and returned the charge with such fury that they were obliged to make good their escape as best they could, not however without leaving ten men killed and twenty prisoners. After that they were contented to let us come on in peace, and did not bother us any more. There are some interesting accounts in the papers of Sheridan's raid. They printed a paper in Charlottesville, advertising for "their Jule, land my boy Rosser," describing them as "runaways."

The Johnnies in this valley are terribly afraid of Sheridan's cavalry, it is a perfect terror to them. Little Custer is the man to lead them a dash and a yell, and the Rebs fly before them.

"Charge, was the Captain's cry. Theirs not to make reply, Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do or die. As into the jaws of death Rushed those brave hundreds."

Often I have thought of those words when going into a fight, "Ours but to do or die," but we think we can see the end; when Sherman comes up on Lee's rear there will be no alternative for him but to submit, and Lee's army once destroyed, the rebellion is crushed; and ere another campaign ends, or before another harvest is come, the war will be over, and we shall have an honorable and lasting peace, and we shall all be sent home to dear friends, there to enjoy the blessing of one of the best governments that ever existed on the face of the earth. And we shall be proud to know that we have stood by our country and defended the dear old Stars and Stripes.

We have meetings, spelling schools, prayer meetings, &c., at the chapel, which are well attended. The wind to-night is blowing a perfect hurricane. The weather has been delightful for the last few days. The grass is beginning to look quite green, the leaves are bursting out in the warm genial sunlight, the air is full of sweet song of birds, and everything tells us that spring has again come to gladden the earth. Write at your earliest convenience.

Your Affectionate Brother,  
L. HURSTON CASE.

No human heart is vacant. It has as inhabitant—either an angel or a devil.

## Selected Poetry.

### THE PRESENT.

Do not crone to-day, and worship  
The old Past, whose life is fled,  
Hush your voice to tender reverence;  
Crown'd he lies, but cold and dead:  
For the Present reigns our Monarch,  
With an added weight of hours,  
Honor her, for she is mighty!  
Honor her, for she is ours!

See the shadows of his heroes  
Girt around her cloudy throne,  
And each word she speaks is strengthened  
By great hearts to him unknown;  
Noble things the great Past promised,  
Holy dreams, both saint and new:  
But the Present shall fulfil them,  
And he promised, she shall do.

She inherits all his treasures,  
She is heir to all his fame,  
And the light that lightens round her  
Is the lustre of his name;  
She is wise with all his wisdom,  
Living on his grave she stands,  
On her brow she bears his laurels,  
And his harvests in her hands.

Coward, can she reign and conquer  
If we thus her glory dim?  
Let us fight for her as nobly  
As our fathers fought for him,  
God, who crowns the dying ages,  
Bids her rule, and us obey—  
Bids us cast our lives before her,  
With our loving hearts to-day!

### OUR LITTLE FRIEND.

Our little friend is in his grave;  
The sod is green with April rain.  
We weep for him. What would we have?  
To him at least our loss is gain.

We lose the hope of future years—  
Our child, our gallant little man;  
But he, the future's pain and tears,  
We will be happy if we can.

Or, if not happy, still content  
God takes away the gem he lent  
To set it with the star-beans fair.

## Miscellaneous.

[From the St. James Magazine.]

### DOWN A FREIBURG SILVER MINE.

A whole village of miners exist around the shaft. "The hands" employed at this one mine number nearly 1,500. My friend's house seemed to consist of one large room, serving as parlor, tap-room, cellar and bed-room; for behind a curtain was the "state-bed," and numerous children snored in all kinds of indescribable contrivances round the wall. The beer (no fear of that growing dead which never had a spark of life) was contained in huge stone jars, uncovered, from whence his wife drew for us into nogginns exactly like "Luther's drinking-cup" in the Dresden Museum. I could not forget that his birth place was not far off; that, however, "Churpitz," or "Konigsvon Schwab" or "reigning family" might turn political Papists, these poor miners would be staunch. Yes, there he was on the wall, "neatly framed and glazed," and inscribed in the formal German way, much as if our immortal bard were entitled "W. Shakespeare, Esq., 'Mr. Martin Luther.' Who, looking round at that humble parlor, could doubt that the poet was expressing his countrymen's feelings, when, indignant at Luther's best being shut out of the Wallah, or German 'Westminster Abbey' for great benefactors of their nation, he exclaimed, 'Der Held in den Herzen; wozu noch in Stein?'—'Why need we a bust when he lives in our hearts?'

But return to the miners. They came dropping in, one or two at a time, till some dozen were collected, drinking beer and eating black bread and slices of sugar sausage. The room, like all German rooms, was very hot to begin with, and now became so insupportable, that I wondered how "mine hosts" eldest daughter, (who, amidst the outstretched bodies of her brothers and sisters, was washing cups and passing occasional jokes with the company) could endure the thick Berlin wool jacket in which the upper part of her figure was encased. However, by the time I had been rigged out in full miner's garb, much to my own satisfaction and to the infinite amusement of the lookers-on, the word was given to start, and I and my guide stepped out into the cold, rainy night. We soon reached the mouth of the shaft, and after a preparatory descent into a work-shop, where we got lanterns fixed to our girdles, we bade farewell in good earnest to "all beneath the sun." Oh, that first ladder! I shall never forget the resigned feeling with which I jumped down step after step behind my guide; the grasp work; the damp, grave-like air; above all, the roar and din from the huge water-wheel and engines constantly at work to keep the mine in anything looking order. Truly, "I heard the wash of waters, but nothing could I see"—save vast slimy boards moving slowly up and down at my elbows. At first I naturally enough took these colossal piston-rods for the firm walls of the chimney, down which I was creeping. I was set by one grazing my hip, and making me shrink within myself, like the man who saw the prison walls closing in around him.

After reaching the first landing place all unpleasant feelings vanished, or were exchanged for a fear that some miner (we began to meet them as we got lower down) might, in his more rapid descent, come unaware upon my fingers. This was all but realized in the ascent; the guide had forgotten to give the cry which should stop that flight to all down comers until we had passed; and as I blindly worked my way up, my first intimation of danger was some clumped foot coming rudely in contact with my miner's cap.

Of the depth to which I descended I can form no notion. My guide-book says the ladder is from 24 to 30 fms. Of these I was told there are sixty in the Himmelfart. Indeed, my cicerone persuaded me I had gone down forty-two of them. However this may be, the depth of "Birch wood shaft" stands in the guide-book as over 1,300 fms; and the "Murder Mine" is still deeper. The passages are generally very low; an exceedingly unpleasant stoop had to be maintained in traversing them. Generally the walls were plain gneiss, or

quartz, often discolored with red muddy water from iron springs; but here and there the veins were so rich, that even our dim lights sufficed for a magic illumination.—This was especially the case in the "new-vein," the great discovery of the year, sufficiently painful to creep through, but repaying all by its brilliancy. The gallery seemed to round almost to the same point here our descent had ceased. Going up the forty-two ladders was weary, tiring work. However, we were cheered at each landing by the "Gluckauf" from parties of descending miners, to whom we duly replied "Macht gesund Schicht!"—"Well speed thy task?" for these people have conventional phrases, which are as indispensable as the mixed jargon of French and English peculiar to certain circles at home.

In ascending I noticed the excellent ventilation, managed by trap-doors at the different landings. There is always an official moving about to see to this. In England we leave this important duty to mere children. The floors and trap-doors were also in my eyes admirable preservatives against what might occur with such very perpendicular ladders—viz: a fall right through from top to bottom. After a weary climb we got within sound of the eternal anti-dagger bell, and at length emerged into the cold rain. When we descended, the children in the "schools" were singing their evening hymn, and "mine hosts" parlor was full of grave omnivorous guests; but now all was silent; the cabaret deserted by all except one man, who had been some years among our Cornish Mines, and spoke a little English—a drunken fellow, who had wanted to accompany me below, and foiled in this, had waited above, in hopes of more beer—and for one or two more, for whom the "swipes and sausage" seemed to have never-ending attractions.

While we were divesting ourselves of our leathern integuments, I had an opportunity of testing the honesty of my guide. It is strictly forbidden—I know not why—to sell or give away any specimens of the ore; all such must be obtained by special permission at the Bergmeister's office. We were alone in our dressing room, several really beautiful pieces of fluor, quartz, and silver crystals, etc., were round, but nothing could tempt him to let me do more than touch them. It was too late to go and visit the Amalgam Works or any other wonders, even had I been duly provided with permits; so there remained nothing for it but to kill time till the hour for the elwaggen's return; I therefore waited till the change of relays (they have three in the twenty-four hours). This brought a number of worthy miners to the "mine hosts" for beer, washwasser, and putzen" (beer, washing water, and toilet). The English speaker now went into his turn, and I was left with some eight or ten, all burning to know whence I came, and why. I told them the fact, that I was from "aus Ireland," and not being strong in geography, they shook their heads, till one started "Island" (Iceland) as an emendation; and forthwith I was set down as a countryman of the geysers, and doubtless connected with legends of the iron-working Norsemen.

I was urged the swords of Rollo and Harold Haarfager. This was too good to last, and the murder came out through my own folly. Each miner wears a belt, to which are attached two curious knives, and a lead pencil of most primitive construction. This I coveted, and began bargaining with one of my friends for the fee simple of his property. At once the shrewdest of the party cried out, "Ach Gott, der Her ist ein Engländer," and up went the price of the belt, and my "little bill" for the beer and sausages was swelled, doubtless, to three times its true dimensions. Nevertheless, I got some good information about the hydraulic apparatus, and was told that, in spite of it, the mine nearest to this (the "Prince Elector's level") could only be worked to two-thirds its real depth. The miners were fine tall fellows, not a bit bent by their work; grave even beyond their countrymen of grave Saxon land, never surprised into anything beyond a lengthened "Wiech?" whereby in their broad dialect they politely expressed an incredulous "No, you don't say so?" The lowest gages are from three to five newgroshen (some five pence to seven pence a day); men get about seven, and master workmen up as high as fifteen (i. e., about one shilling and ten pence). However, we must remember that in matters of food, money is worth nearly twice, and in the consideration which it gives the possessor full five times as much as in England.

WALKING-LEAVES OF AUSTRALIA.—Almost everybody has heard of the wonderful walking-leaves of Australia. For a long time after the discovery of that great island, many people really believed that the leaves of a certain tree, which flourishes there, could walk about the ground. The story arose in this way: Some English sailors landed upon the coast one day. After roaming about until they were tired, they sat down under a tree to rest themselves. A puff of wind came along, and blew off a shower of leaves, after turning over and over in the air, as leaves generally do finally rested upon the ground. As it was mid-summer, and everything quite green, the circumstance puzzled the sailors considerably.

But their surprise was much greater, as you may well suppose, when after a short time they saw the leaves crawling along on the ground toward the trunk of the tree. They ran at once for their vessels, without stopping to examine into the matter at all, and set sail away from the land where everything seemed to be bewitched. One of the men said that he "expected every moment to see the trees set to dance a jig."

Subsequent explorations in Australia have taught us that these walking leaves are insects. They live upon trees. Their bodies are very thin and flat, their wings forming large leaf-like organs. When they are disturbed their legs are folded away under their bodies leaving the shape exactly like a leaf with its stem all complete. They are of bright green color in the summer, but they gradually change in the fall, with the leaves, to the brown of frost-bitten vegetation. When shaken from the tree, they lie for a few moments upon the ground as though they were dead, but presently they begin to crawl along towards the tree, which they ascend again. They rarely use their wings, although they were pretty well supplied in this respect.

## THE VITAL PRINCIPLE.

What is animal life? This question has perplexed the world for ages; and is still in dispute. If the medical faculty could solve it they would have a key to the origin of all diseases, and no longer treat us by guess, as they too frequently do now.—"The life is in the blood," we are told on high authority; but the grand problem in medical philosophy is not where is it? but what is it? The priests of Chaldea and Egypt consulted the stars upon the subject, but obtained no answer of any practical value. The Greeks studied the laws of nature thoughtfully, but failed to fathom the great secret. Modern doctors have argued the point very learnedly and given us a multitude of theories thereupon, but the common sense of mankind is not entirely satisfied with any of them. Neither the subtle logic of the metaphysician, nor the theories of the anatomist has been able to determine positively what animal life is.

Pythagoras and most of the ancient sages believed the vital spirit to be invisible fire. Epicurus—who, by the way was a man of immense mind, and not, as many suppose, a two legged pig who grovelled in the mire of sensualism—instituted that it was compounded of heat and gas. Among the moderns, John Wesley, Dr. Priestly, Sir Humphrey Davy, Abernethy, and many others, maintained that electricity or magnetism is the animating element. The late Dr. Metcalf, one of our own distinguished men of science, held caloric or latent heat to be the basis of vitality, and supposed electricity its emanation, to be the active vital principle.

That atmospheric heat is intimately connected with this principle, is evident from its influence in the production of innumerable forms of animal and vegetable existence.

Of the million and a half of animal and vegetable species which the earth is estimated to contain, probably three-fourths inhabit regions where there is no water.—The whole tropical ocean may be said to be alive, while within the arctic circle life is sparsely scattered, and what there is of it is comparatively sluggish. Summer in all latitudes is the nurse, if not the parent, of myriads of existences, and it is obvious that if the world were deprived of solar heat, every living thing would die. We know that the vital spark has been apparently extinguished in fish and reptiles by the action of cold, it can be re-kindled by the application of heat. Fish that have been frozen stiff and remained in that condition for twelve months, may be thawed back to life. This feat has been accomplished by a European professor, who is now soliciting permission to congeal a few criminals condemned to death. He says that after keeping them under the seal of Jack Frost for a year or two, he could warm them up, and see them going again as good as new. Of course, nobody believes him. It may be possible to recall a frozen tadpole to life, but it is beyond the power of science to summon back to its earthly tabernacle a departed soul.

The sum and substance of the whole matter is, that although heat and electricity are apparently essential to the development of animal life and to its revival after temporary suspension, its principle is beyond the scrutiny of man. The laws of life and motion we may investigate and determine, but their origin is a divine mystery which reason cannot penetrate.

THE DISCOVERER OF AMERICA.—Not long since, writes a correspondent, Mr. A. the master of one of the public schools in East Boston, while making a call in the room of his assistant, Miss B., requested the boys who could tell him of the discoverer of America to hold up their hands. A large number at once complied, but, to assist the rest, he said—

"Don't you remember that adventurous navigator who had so much trouble with his crew, who wanted to throw him overboard?"

Here a small boy held his hand up very high, and made every effort to attract the master's eye.

"There," said Mr. A., "that boy knows who discovered America. See his eyes snap. Now, let us again call on the boys who don't know, you may tell who it was." "Jonah!" screamed the little fellow, at the top of his voice.

Mr. A. has not probably examined that class in history since.

THE SKY AN INDICATION OF THE WEATHER.—The color of the sky, at particular times, affords wonderful good guidance. Not only does a rosy sunset presage good weather, and a ruddy sunrise bad weather, but there are other tints which speak with equal clearness and accuracy. A bright yellow sky in the evening indicates wind; a pale yellow, wet; a neutral grey color constitutes a favorable sign in the evening, and an unfavorable one in the morning.—The clouds are again full of meaning in themselves. If their forms are soft, undefined, and full feathery, the weather will be fine; if their edges are hard, sharp and definite, it will be foul. Generally speaking, and deep unusual hues betoken wind or rain; while the more quiet and delicate tints bespeak fair weather. These are simple maxims; and yet not so simple but what the British Board of Trade has thought fit to publish them for the use of seafaring.—Scientific American.

HUMAN NATURE.—Some wise man sagely remarked, "there is a good deal of human nature in many of the creatures of the world." One of the urchins in the School Ship Massachusetts, who was quite sick, was visited by a kind lady. The little fellow was suffering acutely, and his visitor asked him if she could do anything for him. "Yes," replied the patient, "read to me." "Will you have a story?" asked the lady. "No," answered the boy, "read from the Bible; read about Lazarus;" and the lady complied. The next day the visit was repeated, and again the boy asked the lady to read. "Shall I read from the Bible?" she inquired of him. "No," he replied, "I'm better to-day; read me a love story!"

CONTRABAND TOM, who has come into Sheridan's lines, says the rebels are having a "right smart talk" about arming the colored men, and the negroes are talking about it themselves, but the blacks are about equally divided on the matter. Says Tom—"But half de colored men tink dey would run directly over to de Yankees wid de arms in der hands, and tudder half tink dey would jiss stand ar' fire a few volleys to de rear fust, fore dey run—dat's all de difference."

Lady Caroline Lamb had, in a moment of passion, knocked down one of her pages with a stool. The poet Moore, to whom this story was told, observed, "Oh, nothing is more natural for a literary lady to double down a page." "I would rather," said one of the company, "advise Lady Caroline to turn over a new leaf."

"Mr. Smith, you said you boarded at the Columbian Hotel for six months—did you foot your bill?" "No, sir, but it amounted to the same thing—the landlord footed me!"