The Montrose Democrat.

Devoted to Politics, News, Literature, Agriculture, Science, and Morality.

S. B. & E. B. CHASE, PROPRIETORS — MONTROSE, PA., THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 1852. — VOLUME IX. NUMBER 13

Poet's Corner.

The Way to be brave.

Speak kindly to that poor old man,
Pick up his fallen cane,
And place it gently in his hand,
That he may walk again.
His bundle too, replace with care
Beneath his trembling arm;
Bear all the taunts that you may hear,
To give his life a charm.

A braver deed than scorners boast
Will be your triumph then.
A braver deed than annals tell,
Of some distinguished men.
Yes, leave that thoughtless, sneering crowd;
Dare to be good and kind;
Then let them laugh as laugh they may,
Pass on; but never mind.

Pass on; but think once more of him
The wreck that you have seen,
How once a happy boy like you
He sported on the green.
A cloudless sky above his head,
The future bright and fair,
And friends all watching o'er his couch,
To breathe affection's prayer.

But ah, the change. He wanders now,
Forsaken, lone, and sad—
Thrice blessed is the task of those
Who strive to make him glad.
Speak kindly to that poor old man,
Pick up his fallen cane,
For that will ease his burdened heart,
And make him smile again.

From the Binghamton Democrat.

Father's and Mother's Voices.

BY JESSIE JONES.

Father's and Mother's voices!
Thank God! I hear them now,—
Though Time has dimmed their vision,
And with wrinkles seamed each brow;
The change is only outward,
No change doth Love allow.

Father's and Mother's voices!
When in childhood's helpless years,
How oft their kindly accents
Dispelled my rising fears,
And loving—watchful—ever,
Gave sunshine to my tears.

And when upon youth's threshold
My wayward feet did stand,
And the temptress siren, Error,
Grasped my too willing hand,
They, like life's good Evangel,
Held me in Love's strong band.

Father's and Mother's voices!
Now that I'm in my prime,
Seem like rich notes of music,
Sung to some olden rhyme;
And pleasant, as when summer flowers
Are sent in winter time.

Father's and Mother's voices!
Hearts speak your gratitude!
That midst the wrecks of earthly bliss,
Thou'rt spared earth's greatest good;
That thy Eden's gate, is not unlocked
For sorrow to intrude.

Father's and Mother's voices!
God help me, in that day
When the word from Death's dread angel
Shall summon them away,
And leave me helpless, hopeless,
To tread life's stormy way.

Oh then! with agony unmeasured,
I'd pray to Death, our foe,
To "loose" at once the "silver cord,"
And let my spirit go.
Since life for me would have no more
Of pleasures to bestow.

Binghamton, N. Y.

Address.

LODERSVILLE, Pa., March 23, 1852.

MR. WESTON—*Dear Sir*:—We would respectfully request you to forward to the undersigned a copy of the address made by you at the Lyceum of this place, on the evening of the 8th inst., for the purpose of publication in the newspapers of this county.

Very respectfully your ob't serv'ts,
M. DOOLITTLE,
D. BALDWIN.

LODERSVILLE, March 24, 1852.

GENTLEMEN:—The article to which you refer was written only at the request of the Society of which you speak, and it will lack many qualities that should belong to a printed essay; but should you deem that anything of utility could result from its further publicity, it is at your disposal.

Very truly your ob't serv't, E. A. WESTON.

Messrs. M. DOOLITTLE,
D. BALDWIN.

To the Gentlemen of the Lodersville and Great Bend Lyceum:

"What is truth" is one of the most important inquiries ever instituted. The solution of the problem in more or in less particulars is a matter essential to the happiness of every human being. Man has but one sure beacon-light by which to direct his course on the troubled ocean of time, and that is the pure and cheerly ray—the divine emanation of Truth. Hence his investigations less pleasing than laborious. Endowed with powers of research and possessed of an innate curiosity which we are ever impelled, we return from every exploration in the realm of fact with every new delight, and feel an added satisfaction at every acquisition to the store of knowledge. Truth has a beauty—an intrinsic charm which clings to naught beside. Upon it the mind rests with a happy security. "The eternal laws of God are here."

But the discovery and perception of truth, though the grand requisite; and an interchange of views and discussion of differences among the most individuals may be made a powerful auxiliary. Hence it is that disquisition, oral or other, derives its utility. But in order to subserve any beneficial purpose, it is necessary, first of all, that the constant undeviating object of discussion be to elicit and maintain the truth, not to achieve a futile triumph over opposing argument. The latter is to the former as vanity is to reality—as inanity to substance. If a mere wordy conquest be the thing aimed at, then the effect is far more likely to be pernicious than good. If the influence upon others be not injurious, the ardent, enthusiastic champion may permanantly imbibe a fatal error as the consequence of its advocacy. The heat and excitement of debate may leave upon his mind impressions and biases which cooler and more reflecting moments may fail to efface. The mind is thus constituted. It fortifies itself and nerves its energies against opposing forces, until the wrong may assume the semblance of right. Hence it is requisite to be guided only by principle, by judgment and strict integrity.

Nor are the manner and spirit in which argumentation is conducted, of much less consequence than is the motive. As one should not bar his own mind against truth's conviction, so he should not stir up the hostility and repugnance of others by presenting it in a wilfully forbidding and unnatural garb. Dogmatical and dictatorial positiveness on the part of the utterer, will often insure aversion to and rejection of what might otherwise be considered and received. The thought of man's fallibility should ever temper the enforcement of his sentiments and opinions, unless he would act the part of an injudicious advocate who by his magisterial assurance injures his own cause, though it be the cause of verity. It has been truly said:—

"Men must be taught as if you taught them not,"
And things unknown proposed as things forgot."

It was to this ingenious modesty and courtesy that our immortal Franklin who tamed and controlled the thunderbolt and played with the lightnings of heaven, attributed his chief power to sway the minds and wills of his fellow men.

But the labor of investigation in search of truth increases the ability to investigate. The intellectual powers like the physical are strengthed and improved by exercise. Facility and grace in the use of our own native tongue, though a high invaluable attainment, is not the only lofty object promoted by properly conducted verbal disputation. Language is but the dress—the drapery of thought. Its only value—its only beauty even consists in the worth of the thing it decorates and sends abroad. The assertion that "it matters not so much what is said as how 'tis said" may to a great extent be true; yet 'tis true only in consequence of the vast modifying influence of manner over matter, or over the true import.—In a word it is the alleged "how 'tis said" that very much makes up the "what is said."—Hence, after all, 'tis chiefly the substance, not the medium—the freight not the vehicle, which demands and receives regard. And this, as well as the means of its communication, is the fruit of mental toil—the result of intellectual culture. The development of the powers and resources of the human mind is a worthy—a grand pursuit. For what else were they conferred upon man? That the mind—the thinking, the moral, the immortal principle in man, is the most noble part of his nature, is as trite and commonplace as it is true. What proficiency—what sublime and astonishing achievements is this principle capable of reaching! To what magnificent deeds—what lofty heights of grandeur is it able to soar! The mighty march of advancement in the sciences and useful arts within the last half century attests. Oceans are crossed and continents are traversed with a velocity which almost sets at defiance time and space. Antipodes have become neighbors. The electric messenger starts off on his attenuated track, with speed that outstrips the wings of the wind, and more than keeps pace with the wheels of time which bear our earth onward in ceaseless revolution. He darts along his wiry road from city to city, from province to province, and even from shore to shore, wading the waters of the deep without impediment. Mankind are united in brotherhood by frequency of intercommunication. Their interests are bound together with iron bands of more than iron strength, and they become one great family.—Portraits are drawn in the fair rich beauty of light itself, and in all the exactness with which nature is wont to perform all the operations, mocking the practiced, elaborate skill of the sculptor and limner.—These are but a few of the more astonishing of inventions and improvements innumerably various, which have been effected in every department of knowledge and discovery, from the etherial fields on high where planet after planet has been added to the number of the known world's Solar system, down to the lock and the safe which defy pillage and fire, or the *pen*, and the phonographic celerity which enables it to run an even race with the talker.

And yet present indications render it probable that we are on the eve of the accomplishment of results still more astonishing. The supposition that aerial carriages may become common—that we may furnish ourselves with swift pinions and skim through the regions above, we would set down as an idle extravagant vision, by far more *airy* than the supposed flight itself; and still should this feat be witnessed before the expiration of the next fifty years, it would perhaps be no more surprising than what has been seen in the past.

That the noisy snorting horse which is now harnessed to our rail-road cars, puffing with his ponderous load, may, within that time, be superceded by a mute, more magic and more mettled steed, is not unlooked for. Indeed, the wonderful agent Electro-magnetism seems destined to become a great revolutionizer.—We know not how extensively this mysterious principle is instrumental in all the operations that transpire in the universe; nor do we know how intimately it is connected with, or how essential it is to our own lives. Mesmerists, and believers in the so-reputed "spiritual manifestations" so much noised at the present day, claim for it still more amazing powers; the truth or the falsity of which claim, time must determine. But though theorizers may expatiate too largely in the field of speculation, assuming ground not well substantiated, still the experiments of the few past years have demonstrated that this subtle fluid pervades all matter, and that its influence and agency in our world are very great.

But notwithstanding all these splendid triumphs of human intellect and genius, and their attainment to this profundity of knowledge—is not man far, far inferior to what his Creator designed him? Has he not wofully perverted and degraded the noble faculties with which a munificent Maker so kindly endowed him? Physically, mentally and morally, how far is he from what he might be—from what he should be? How radically wrong and corrupt are the education and habits of society? From infancy, and from childhood with its too frequent pernicious confinement and restraint, its severities and its overtasks, its oft injudicious strictures and requirements of what to more advanced age might seem, and indeed to that might be propriety—from this earliest period on to manhood and its decline, how many are the customs of mankind whose sole effect is injurious. In man's puerile years, how often by misjudging kindness and regard are his ambition and energies stunted and crushed and left to shoot off in a perverse direction, instead of being drawn out and encouraged, and guided in the proper channel by an affectionate hand. Compelled to the revolting task to study what he does not understand and what no one tries to explain—his liberties abridged—the impulse, the positive demand for almost constant agility and muscular motion curtailed and suppressed, or, on the other hand, his growing strength overtaxed by requisitions too laborious—thus he sets out, and on he goes in the school of perversion making characteristic progress and improvement.

Physically the half of mankind are but the subjects of disease and suffering and untimely death; and a majority of the other half are the degenerate enfeebled wreck of the strong-nerved, robust, vigorous frames which nature would gladly confer upon them. The benign Author of all things, in his wisdom and goodness, has made ample provision to supply the wants and secure the happiness of all the beings he has created. He has furnished for every creature its appropriate food and drink in abundance. Brutes eat this food and drink this drink, and enjoy the felicitous consequences of obeying the laws of their constitutions—the laws of God. Except occasional instances among animals under the control of man, they are never known to drag out a painful, miserable life, and die prematurely, unless it be the result of accident. Domestic animals subject to the dictation of man, sometimes suffer the consequences. Even the cow has been made to depart so far from nature as to become fond of flesh. Cases of this kind have occurred on ship board. But let alone, beasts and reptiles and meaner things obey and enjoy.

But man disregards the dictates of nature, and takes the matter into his own hands. He says virtually, "I know better than the All-wise." He pursues his own course, dictating to himself upon what he will subsist, and how his life shall be led. He forms and entails upon himself vitiated tastes hard to be eradicated. It has been remarked that to subdue a kingdom is easy compared to overcoming a perverted appetite. These corrupted tastes and appetites become man's second nature, and he follows them fatally supposing it is the voice of pristine nature's self. The boasted lord of creation the brute might instruct. He refuses to learn, save it be, neglecting to receive admonition from the more noble and sagacious of beasts and the more beautiful of song and plumage among birds, he turns him and but badly copies the instincts of the hyena and the wolf, the vulture and the owl. Custom aside, who would think of cutting down an innocent inoffending animal to obtain his daily meal? And yet this is by no means the greatest of our perversions.

Sickness and suffering and premature dissolution follow, and all these evils are charged upon the Supreme whose laws have been trampled under foot, whose kind care and regard for man's welfare have been spurned.—They are, indeed, His chastening dispensations, and yet they are but the consequences of violated law. Physical evils accrue from the transgression of physical laws, and moral evils, from the infraction of moral laws. Both have their certain penalties; both are immutable and sure. Else the beautiful harmony and order which now prevail throughout nature's wide domain might soon end in the midnight darkness of chaotic confusion. Else the same means and instrumentalities by which the delicate flower now springs up, might, when the genial breath of Spring shall again sweep over our land, produce a viper or a monster in its stead. Else "seed-time and harvest, summer and winter" might come or not in their annual round. Else the food that affords sustenance and nourishment at one time, might at another prove a deadly poison.—Has the Almighty been more propitious to the lower ranks of animate beings than he has to the master-piece of his terrestrial works? Have his care and providence been exercised so largely to ensure the physical well being of of beast and bird while he has placed the same beyond the reach of man? Or has He given to the brute the power to determine what shall be for its own best good, and yet withheld that power from man? And shall finite minds presume to amend the doings of the Infinite? Man has lofty powers conferred for exalted purposes, but when he thinks to rectify the perfect wisdom of Nature, wretched consequences will ensue, and he will only earn the unavailing worthiness to have it said of him:—"God made man *upright* but he has sought out many *inventions*." Hereditary transmission of disease or of predisposition thereto; the use of unnaturally stimulating viands, of condiments and spices, of tea, coffee, tobacco and opium; excess in quantity of food owing to its improper qualities which create and excite morbid, perverted, unnatural tastes and appetites; and hurried rail-road speed in despatching it, that precludes the possibility of mastication; the habitual breathing of impure, confined air; modes of dress which cramp, and prevent and *destroy* the functions of the vital organs—these with a host of other, palpable and flagrant departures from the simplicity of nature, and the requirement of her laws, leave to man but a scanty impaired remnant of vitality and mental force. And even this meager residue another arch-foe, alcohol, in cases deplorably many, stands ready to devour and consummate its destruction.—The horse, the ox or the most hardy of inferior animals could not endure and survive a moiety—a tithe of the abuse and infringement of constitutional laws, to which man subjects himself. But his eyes are blinded by familiarity and custom and he stops not to think or reflect. In by far too broad a sense, he takes it for granted that "whatever is, is right."—Whatever a vitiated misused appetite craves, he deems to be a "good creature" made for the identical purpose, never imagining but that everything in God's wide universe was expressly adapted to his omniverous stomach, or designed solely to be appropriated in some way to his use.

Here, then, in the sad debasing influence of these things upon the intellect and the morals, do we find one great cause for the dwarfishness of the one and the depravity of the other—a cause which cries for removal. Mind and body are so closely inter-related that the condition of the one powerfully affects that of the other. The former is enervated when the latter is sick. Nor are the moral faculties of mind beyond the pale of this mutual influence. They likewise may become sympathetically diseased and soured, and rendered more prone to evil. More temporary as well as confirmed conditions, too, have their control. Ardent spirits may make a man *a* fool—a fiend. And can it be supposed that this substance is the only one capable of producing effects?

In view of all these things what wonder is it that, compared with what they might be, the mass of mankind are but "The dwindled sons of dwindled men."

Another outrage upon man's welfare, and an insurmountable barrier to his elevation consists in the unequal distribution and the excesses of bodily labor—in enervating idleness on the one extreme, and incessant toil and drudgery on the other. Man has a two-fold nature, an animal and an intellectual.—The true end and design of his being, namely his happiness, require the harmonious exercise of both these. The body demands—it must have exercise and activity to retain and promote its healthfulness and vigor. Without these it languishes; and mental debility as well as debility of body ensue. The mind needs labor also. Every property it possesses points to the fact, and renders it necessarily true that it is constituted and intended for progress and improvement—intended to put forth its energies and augment its strength.—Both these—the preservation and development of corporeal efficiency, and mental expansion should be pursued together. They are to each other reciprocal aids. Neither can be neglected without the most disastrous consequence, either to the attainment of man's real greatness and majestic position, or to his physical well-being, or to both. None should toil all the time; all should labor some. The necessity which compels so many to a life of unremitting bodily effort and hardship, is lamentable; and the avarice which compelis so many more, is execrable. The squeamish slave to sluggish affluence and luxury who scorns all muscular exertion, whose sensibility is shocked at the very thought of a labor-soiled hand, and who would hire a lackey to breathe for him were it possible, is a miserable burlesque upon humanity—a reprobate to every characteristic of manhood.

In our own loved country compared with most others, there is but little of this inequality—this baneful evil. But even in this land of freedom there is *much* that is sadly wrong.

Industry is a fundamental virtue. In doing good to himself or others should every one be constantly engaged. The exercise and training of man's bodily, mental and moral powers, are his employment kindly assigned to him for his benefit; for in the wise economy of Heaven, a rational being without employment would sink to the level of the senseless brute, or the inanimate stone.

Every individual on earth, unless from some cause disabled, should supply his own wants with his own hands. Were the wealthy, the aristocratic and the proud—were all constrained to do so, it would be a blessing to themselves and to the race. It would afford to the many liesure for intellectual avocations, and an opportunity to fulfill their noble destiny.—He who spends his life in constant corporeal labor, toiling from morning till night at his daily task, thwarts the grand design of a beneficent Creator—injures himself, and injures mankind. He who, on the other hand, engages only in intellectual pursuits—whose mind "Preys on itself and is destroyed by thought," inflicts an equal or a greater wrong upon himself and his fellow man, and must as surely fail of intellectual worth or greatness. And he who does neither—Who works not with body or mind but leads a life of inert indolence and sloth, is a curse to himself and a double nuisance to society. Every individual has, by God-given right, a claim to a spot of earth—to land, as to air and water, sufficient for his sustenance. Crime only can suspend his title. 'Tis tyranny and oppression, 'tis downright injustice which debars him from it. And either upon this employed in its tillage, or in some other way his own muscular exertions should minister to his necessities. The ample residue of time should be devoted to the study of countless objects of interest and wonder—to enterprises of a mental moral or philanthropic character. Were this but so, how vastly would our condition be embettered. Nerved by the sweet luxury of refreshing toil, the mind would rise to its high level and enfold its native powers. Nor could such a state of things fail to be conducive to moral melioration and reform. It would banish many of the vices of which *idleness* and *ignorance* are the parents. The minds of the over-wrought multitudes depressed and bound down, and the worse degraded groveling minds of the indolent, would stretch away to worthy attainments.

I have briefly noticed what seemed to me to be among the causes operative in degrading man, obstacles which oppose his elevation to his appropriate sphere. My limits have allowed me little more than to hint at them, but they lie under the observation of every one. Their prevalence only prevents them from being notorious.

Wrongs like these, and they are many and monstrous, ask the earnest attention and the energetic action of every admirer of excellence, of every lover of mankind, of every patriot. Nor need the prospect to him appear cheerless. Public regard is being turned to these things. Physiological truths are being disseminated, and favorably received, and some practical respect paid to their inculcations.—Many are discarding adherence to *fashionable follies* which have contributed so largely to deprive man of the possession of "a sound mind in a sound body." And while Liberty seems to be about to grant her blessings upon down-trodden nations, Reform stands ready to bestow many propitious gifts.

These prospects form the beams of a morning star which has arisen, and which seems to foretoken the dawn of a brighter day in which gigantic evils shall be corrected. To hasten the advent of this glorious era—this "golden age," may the Members of this association ever lend their influence and their aid.

Gentlemen, it has been said that the object of every public address should be to instruct or to please. I must fail of the former, and lest I miss the latter also, I hasten to my most attractive *point*.

☞ A LATE PHILOSOPHER says that speech was given to man that he might wrangle with his neighbour. Whether it's really given for that purpose we can't say—that it is used for that purpose no one doubts who has lived next door to a pettifogger.

☞ An *exchange* infers that Dryden was not opposed to mint-juleps, from a remark he once made, that "Straws may be made the instruments of happiness."

Interesting Reminiscence.

An old man communicates an article for the Syracuse Star, on the olden time, from which we copy the following reminiscence of Washington and Franklin.

On the 27th of September, 1789, if I am correct as to the exact time, the convention in that city agreed upon the Constitution of the United States. This instrument is next in importance to the declaration of independence, and many of its noble signers were members of the convention, and General Washington was President.

During that interesting time, the general, when walking the streets, was alone, and in deep study. If a person met him and made a very obsequious bow, he was careful to touch his beaver, but keep his head in the studied mood. One morning he came into the state house, where the convention sat. He passed through the crowd in that manner. He was then dressed in a plain citizen's dress—blue coat, cocked hat, hair queued, and hanging down his back, head powdered, as was the fashion. He went into the Convention.—Presently the venerable Franklin was brought into his sedan by two men; they set him down in the hall of the state house, opened the door and helped him out. He had the palsy, and could not raise his feet off the floor, but shuffled along to the convention, and took his seat as a member. He was not a speaker, but in the debates upon a knotty question he would illustrate his ideas by comparisons—for instance:—"We must do as the joiners do when they want to make a good joint, take a little off one side and a little off the other." He was of middle size, pretty thick set, had large features, and always, I suppose, wore spectacles.

When General Washington was inaugurated for the second term as President of the United States, Congress sat in Philadelphia. Long before the hour of inauguration the senate-chamber and house was crowded. The ladies were in the Senate-chamber. A space directly at the end of the senate-chamber was kept open. Three chairs in front of the crowd were kept free. About 12 o'clock M., the word passed from the door to the chamber—'He's come! he's come?' His chariot and pair drove up to the senate-house door. The general walked through the crowd with as much ease as if no person were near him. The crowd opened and closed after him. He took the middle chair, Chief Justice Cushing, a spare, venerable person, with a large white wig, the right, and Senator Langdon, of New Hampshire, then president pro tem. of the Senate, and an elegant person, took the left chair. After they were seated a little time, Senator Langdon rose upon his feet, faced General Washington, in the most respectful manner, and asked him if it was his pleasure to take the oath of office as the President of the United States. The general then, with a small paper in his left hand, made a short address. Then the chief justice rose with a large open bible and held it to him. He placed his right hand upon the book, and repeated the oath after the chief justice. When the general repeated his own name after the chief-justice, 'I George Washington,' it seemed like an electric shock; my blood ran cold. When this business was finished the general sat down. After a few minutes he rose up, made a graceful *conge* to the right and left of the chamber. The ladies and gentlemen kept their seats for some time, and the crowd left the house as if they were leaving a church. During the pause, while the general was seated, I looked around to see if all eyes were riveted on him—I can't say that I saw a single person looking another way.

At this time he was in deep mourning for a nephew, Major Washington, who lived at his house in Mount Vernon—he had a mourning small sword. He had lost much of his long hair, and what was left was tied in a little black silk bag with a rosette on it, which shows over his shoulder in his portrait, which is supposed to be taken from his position at this interesting time. I did understand that many persons wanted him to ride to the state house in a coach and four or six and a life guard in uniform, but his good sense and sound heart prompted him to put a veto on all such pageantry. I don't believe that we had a traitor in the American ranks at that time. Some may say you have forgotten the notorious Arnold. He is never to be forgotten "while the earth bears a plant or the sea rolls its waves." But our ambition was great, and some wished and thought it good policy to make as dignified an appearance as the Europeans, but not mixed with royalty.

SINGULAR HISTORICAL FACT.—The *New York Express* brings to light a singular historical fact which is not generally known. It says that in 1817 a Russian of eminence, M. Pozzo de Borgo, being then in Paris, proposed in a memoir addressed to his Court on the importance of replacing South America under the dominion of Spain, that the United States should be subjugated. He said that "Founded on the sovereignity of the people, the Republic of the United States of America was a fire, of which the daily contact with Europe threatened the latter with conflagration; that, as an asylum for all innovators, it gave them the means of disseminating at a distance their writings and by the authority of their example, a poison of which the communication could not be questioned, as it was well known that the French revolution had its origin in the United States, that already troublesome effects were felt from the presence of the French refugees in the U. States."

The Russian Ambassador went on to state and argue that the conquest of the United States was an easy enterprise: that the degree of power to which the Americans had risen made them objects of fear to the European monarchical Governments, &c.

The editor of the *Express* came in contact with this curious paper in the State Library at Albany, in an old file of the Missouri Republican, printed more than thirty years ago.

☞ The best anecdote of Lorenzo Dow is, that being one evening at the hotel kept by one Bush, in Delhi, N. Y., the residence of the celebrated Gen. Root, he was importuned by the latter gentleman, in the presence of the landlord, to describe Heaven.

'You say a great deal of that place,' said the General, 'tell us how it looks.'

Lorenzo turned his grave face, and long waiving beard, towards Messrs. Root and Bush, and replied with imperturble gravity—

'Heaven, friends, is a vast extent of smooth, rich territory—there is not a *root* nor a *bush* in it, and there never will be.'

☞ NEVER purchase love or friendship by gifts; when thus obtained thy are lost as soon as you stop payments.

Postal Affairs.

The New York Post-Office in Olden Times.

BY W. B. TAYLOR.

[A paper read before the New York Historical Society, October 7, 1851.]

MR. W. B. TAYLOR, who has been connected with the Postoffice Department more than thirty-five years, thirty of which has been passed in this city, contributed a paper of original research on the New York Postoffice, narrating many curiosities of the early history of the country, notices of the subject by the General Court Records of Massachusetts in 1639, of the care of foreign letters in charge of "Richard Fairbanks, *his house* in Boston;" of Virginia regulations in 1657 and '58, providing a messenger to convey the despatch to the next plantation on the route, and so on from one to the other, till it reached its destination, with the greatest speed, under a penalty of *one hogshead of tobacco*. In 1683 William Penn established a Postoffice, and appointed Henry Waddy of Sacking, Postmaster, with authority to "supply passengers with horses from Philadelphia to New Castle, or to the Falls of Delaware." He fixed the rates of postage thus; "Letters from the Falls of Philadelphia, 8d.; to Chester, 6d.; to New Castle, 7d.; to Maryland, 5d." The post went once a week, and its movements were regularly published "on the meeting house door and other places."

The first regulation providing for the transmission of letters by post in the province of New York, bears date 10th December, 1672, when Governor Lovelace established "a post to go monthly" from New York to Boston and back again. This regulation purported to be in obedience to his Majesty's commands, "who enjoynes all subjects, in their distinct colonies, to enter into a strict allyance and correspondence with each other, as likewise for the advancement of Negotiation, Trade, and Civil Commerce, and for the speedy intelligence and Dispatch of affayres." It gave notice that a messenger should start on 1st January, 1672 and 1673. "If any, therefore, have any small letters or portable goods, to bee conveyed to Hartford, Connecticut, Boston, or any other parts on the road, they shall be carefully delivered according to the directions by a sworne Messenger and Post, who is purposely employed in that affayre. In the interim, those that bee disposed to send letters, lett them bring them to the Secretary's office, where, in lockt box, they shall be preserved till the Messenger calls for them. All persons paying the Post before the bag bee sealed up." In various patents granted subsequently for lands along this route, a condition was inserted, obliging the patentee to ferry the postman over gratis. Matters continued in this position until Dongan's arrival, when he recommended setting up post houses along the coast, from Carolina to Nova Scotia. He was authorized to farm the privilege to any undertaker for three or five years, the profits of all the post-offices within his Majesty's dominions, whether foreign plantations or in Europe, being claimed by the Duke of York. (Lond. doc. iv.) Accordingly, an order in council was passed on the 2d March, 1684-5, establishing a postoffice for the better correspondence between the Colonies of America. The rates of riding post was fixed at 3d. per mile; the postage on every single letter not above 100 miles was to be 3d., if more proportionably (Coune. Min. v. 106.) In 1636, 14th September, an order was made for the delivery of ship letters in these words: "That no letters be delivered in any place whatsoever except the Custom House in this city; paying for every packett or double letter nine pence, for every single letter four pence half penny; the one moyety of which moneys shall be given to such poor as shall be nominated by the Capt. General and Council, the other half to the officer of the Custom House, which is to continue until further order." In January, 1691-2, letters patent were issued under the great seal, granting unto Thomas Neal, his executors and assigns, authority to erect post-offices in America for the period of twenty-one years. He appointed Colonel Andrew Hamilton, of New Jersey, Postmaster General for the colonies. In 1692 the latter brought the subject before the Council at New York, and the consequence was an act establishing a postoffice in that city. The rates established were: For every single letter to New York, 9d.; from Virginia to New York, 12 d.; and for eighty miles and under, four pence half penny. (Bradford's Laws, Ed. 1694.) The charge was found, in the following year, to exceed the profits fourfold, and an aid of fifty pounds was voted, which was renewed in 1695. The above act was renewed by the Legislature from time to time, yet for ten years after this the post from New York went eastward no further than Boston, and westward only to Philadelphia. "There is no other post upon all this continent," writes Lord Cornbury, in 1704. "If I have any letters to send to Virginia or to Maryland, I must either send an express, who is often retarded for want of boats to cross those great rivers they must go over, or else for want of horses; or else I must send them by some passengers who are going thither. The least I have known any express take from hence to Virginia, has been three weeks. Col. Nicholson and Col. Seymour have wrote me word they will be here in September, and I do then intend to propose to them the settling of a post to go through Virginia." (Lond. Doc. xvi.) In 1710, Hamilton having sold his privilege to the Crown, the postoffices of Great Britain, Ireland and America were placed under one direction, by the 9th of Queen Anne. (See Holmes's Annals, ii. 78.) The department of America was put under a Deputy Postmaster General to which office Benjamin Franklin was appointed in 1753. The books of the Department were then kept by Benjamin Franklin himself, and are still preserved among the archives of the department, in his own hand writing, when the whole force of the department was the Postmaster General, at a salary of $1000 per annum. The present Postmaster General is assisted by nearly two hundred subordinates in the Department, and nearly thirty thousand scattered throughout the country.

From all this it is plain that New York was the first colony in America that made legal provision for the transmission of letters by post.

Of an old and memorable Postmaster in this city, General Bailey, who filled the office from 1804 to 1828, Mr. Taylor's paper presented some agreeable reminiscences, from the pen of Mr. Francis Hall of the Commercial Advertiser.

"You ask me," says Mr. H., "to furnish you with some reminiscences of those times when our City Postoffice was under the direction of our good friend, General Bailey. I will go no further back than 1805, when the 'General Postoffice,' as it was then called by many, was located on the corner of Garden and William streets, in a small room, not large enough for a cigar shop at the present day.—The house was what is now termed a 'three-quarter house;' the General's family occupying the south end, which consisted of two good-sized parlors, and on the north the Post-office. So far as my memory serves me, the office was about twelve feet wide and twenty in length. On the front, on William street, was a small recess for the accommodation of those who were waiting for letters. The only boxes for subscribers were placed in this small space, which, for some years, answered very well. In the interior was a table in the centre, leaving space enough to get round and 'box the letters' for the mails. Around the sides were boxes or pigeon-holes for the letters to be placed in after they had been marked. On the north wall the 'Printers' boxes' were placed, some half dozen at that time. At the west end of the room, between the end of a 'long table' and the Franklin fireplace, the mail-bags were deposited, both those coming in and those going out. By and by, a little more room (table-room) was wanted, and our good General ordered his carpenter, Mr. Crane to put a small circular board at the second window on Garden street. This was a great relief for a time, as it answered both as a writing stand for the General, and for the opening of the small mails. The march being onward, more room was demanded, and the General was compelled to give up his little back parlor, adjoining the office. This, again, was a great relief, affording sufficient space for all the letter-carriers to assort their letters. Here were Mr. Davie, Mr. Lynch, and then Mr. Forrester, and one or two others whose names have escaped me. About this time there were only three or four regular clerks, Messrs. Stephens, and John and Robert Bailey, sons of the General. A third son assisted occasionally. Soon after, Mr. McCready and Mr. Wiley came into the office, both exceedingly active. I never knew men more active in 'boxing letters' than those gentlemen. The newspapers were generally assorted by Mr. Lang of the Gazette, Mr. Butler of the Mercantile, Mr. Burnham of the Post, or the writer of this. In after time we were joined by Mr. Noah. The writer of this might be termed a regular assistant, as he had taken the oath then required, and was generally at the office morning and evening, especially when a 'British mail' arrived, or a merchant vessel from England.—The British mail was then monthly. When the mail arrived it was taken to the office of agent Moore, and after passing his inspection was sent to the Postoffice. The letters by the merchants' ships were sometimes numerous, especially by the favorite ships. I think Captain Isaac Waite brought the largest number of any ship before the 'Black Ball' line was established. We had then no steamboats; and for some time after they were established the mails were not sent by them. They were carried in a bag which the steward of the boat brought to the Postoffice, and received two cents for each letter. The largest mails then received and sent were the eastern and southern; the latter at that time taking all mail matter for the western States, which were comparatively few. If the 'great mail' filled more than one portmanteau, including papers and letters, it was an extraordinary circumstance. I believe you have now two sets of clerks in the office, one for the day, the other for the night. At my earliest recollection there was but little night work, except the arrival of a ship, or the waiting for a mail. It was not a very easy task, sometimes, to get all the letters ready for the morning mails.—The letter carriers that could be found were called to assist. Mr. Lynch, residing not a great way off, was generally at his post. One resided as far up as Spring street, and that great distance assured his safety from a call on an extra occasion. The General was always with us, and we then always knew what was going on in the political world. Every daily paper was represented on most evenings; besides these, we frequently had two or three of the following gentlemen: Governor George Clinton, De Witt Clinton, Samuel Osgood, Daniel Smith, Dr. S. L. Mitchell, Dr. John A. Graham, Dr. Walker, Judge Miller, Pierre Van Wyck, Judge Tallmadge, General Tallmadge, John Ferguson, William Van Hook, Richard Riker. If these gentlemen wanted a good glass of wine, or an excellent cigar, they knew either could be obtained in the 'back parlor of the Postoffice.'

"General Bailey was succeeded in the Post-office by Samuel L. Governeur, the son-in-law of ex-President Monroe. He was appointed by John Quincy Adams, and held the office for about eight years. In 1836 Congress passed a law requiring Postmasters to be appointed for four years only, at the expiration of which period a re-appointment or a new appointment must be made. Where a Postmaster's compensation exceeds $1,000 per annum, he is appointed by the President, 'by and with the advice and consent of the Senate; but the 'small fry,' whose 'name is legion,' are appointed by the Postmaster General.

"Those Postmasters who are appointed by the President and Senate are not always certain to retain their places till the Commission expires; for if a new administration of opposite politics comes into power, they are decapitated' speedily, as several instances have occurred in the history of the Postoffice.

"In 1836 John I. Coddington, Esq., was appointed by President Jackson, and re-appointed in 1840 by President Van Buren. In 1843 Col. John L. Graham was appointed by President Tyler. In 1845 Robert H. Morris was appointed by President Polk. Mr. Morris served a full term of four years. He was succeeded by our present much respected Postmaster, William V. Brady, Esq., who was appointed in May, 1849, by Gen. Taylor.

"In a period, then, of sixty years, there have been only *seven* Postmasters, including the present incumbent, for this city; all of whom, except Col. Bauman and Gen. Bailey, are still living in this city, with the exception of Mr. Governeur, who resides on his farm in Virginia. Mr. Jefferson's celebrated saying has been fully verified in this brief history of our Postmasters—*that few die, and none resign*. It is said that Gen. Bailey was the first Postmaster who put up boxes in the Postoffice for the accommodation of merchants and others in this city. I have been credibly informed, that when the suggestion was first made to him to put up such boxes—say 100 or 200—he declined on the ground that enough could not be rented to pay for their being made; but being further pressed, and an offer being made to indemnify him against loss, a few boxes were put up, which number has been increased from time to time, till it has reached nearly