

A correspondent calls our attention to the habit of arsenic-eating, as practiced by the Styrians and in parts of Lower Austria, and asks us to notice and criticize what Johnson says of it in his 'Chemistry of Common Life.'

Arsenic is employed by these people to make the body plump and rubicund, and to improve the breathing, all of which effects are apparently result. The rationale of its modus operandi is precisely the same as that of alcohol, tobacco, opium, or any other narcotic; and also like that of antimony, cod-liver-oil, iodine or other poisons, when given to fatten men or animals. They lessen the waste of the body, only by preventing degeneration and causing an accumulation of fatty or effluvia matter in the areolar tissue; and they produce a high color by the feverishness which attends the efforts of the organism to resist or get rid of poison, or "morbid poison," as our "up-town" Professors said in their late inaugurals.

Arsenic, alcohol, tobacco, antimony and various other poisons "improve the breathing" because, in defending itself against the poison, the decarbonizing and oxidizing processes are transferred in a measure from the lungs to the other emunctories.

This subject is fully treated in a small work now being published by Fowlers & Wells, entitled 'The Alcoholism Controversy.' The work in question is a review of a late article in the Westminster Review, under the head of "The Physiological Errors of Teetotalism." In this article, the Westminster Review enters into an elaborate argument to prove, by the power of logic, and on the authority of Liebig, Pereira and others, that alcohol is food; and he alludes to the arsenic-eating of the Styrians to sustain his argument, and assumes that arsenic has power, when taken in moderate quantities, to invigorate and even to rejuvenate a person.

His positions are all completely demolished and the prevailing fallacies in relation to the action or effects of arsenical, alcoholic and all other poisons, thoroughly exposed in this work. It will be ready in a few days, at 25 cents a copy.—Water-Cure Journal.

TRUTH STRANGER THAN FICTION.—A widow lady, advanced in life, now a resident of the City of Philadelphia, can tell with truth, the following story, showing what strange coincidences the current of events will sometimes bring to light. The lady owns real estate in Michigan, and the following facts were given to us by her attorney, who learned them from her own lips. This lady was born and brought up in the State of New Jersey, and upon being married removed to Michigan and settled in the county of Monroe. There her husband built a house, improved land, and they struggled together, as many a young couple has done before and since. Upon that farm this lady buried her first born child, and a few years after her husband died and was buried there. After his death she sold out everything and removed with her two sons back to New Jersey, where one of her sons died from the effects of a fall received on the passage across Lake Erie on the way home. The other son removed to Philadelphia with his mother, acquired property, and seeking to increase it, went to California in 1853. While there, desiring to return home, he exchanged property in Marysville with a man who owned property in Michigan for a farm, of which he took the deed, without knowing the situation or character of the property. While preparing to return to Philadelphia he was taken sick and died, leaving his mother sole heir. The deed of this property in Michigan came into her hands, and after a time she made a journey to visit it. Upon reaching the place she found it to be the very homestead which she and her husband had built more than thirty years before, and found in the wainscot her own initials, cut by herself years before. She now is again the possessor of her early homestead, the graves of her husband and eldest child.—Detroit Daily Advertiser.

A LOVE-LETTER.—The following is a true copy of a letter received by a truant lover in California from his 'Atlantic flame': "My dear, sweet Lachabod, how I want to see your big gray eyes. Oh, how horror-stricken I am at your long absence! I want to see you and hear your heart thump. Oh, sweet Lachabod, now do come home and let us get married if you love me. God bless you, if you are not sufficiently blest in being sweet. Oh, you marigold, you hollyhock, you tulip, you cabbage! Oh, you sweet owl, do come and comfort your dying, smitten Carolina! Oh, but I do love your big red lips! Oh, you trim, tall fellow, full of the manna of sweet love, how I do want to see your model of perfection! You have been gone two years, and to me it seems like a hundred years. Your dear presence would be more to me than the cooling springs to the thirsty traveler in the desert—more than the pebbly brook to the wretched dog—yes, more than butter and honey to buckwheat slapsacks. Why, then, will you not come? Yes, fly as swift as lightning to kiss the tears from the dimpled cheeks of your mad love! Oh, bleak and wild is the house and especially the tother room, and the woods and the world without thee! Oh, yes, bless thee, my dumplin, my jewsberry, my rooster my gentleman!"

THE POOR, RICH CHILDREN.—Butchers usually kill their victims before dressing them. Mothers frequently dress before killing them. We noticed an innocent little girl of about five years, in the street yesterday, dressed and pinched within an inch of her life. For health and comfort the mother's well have been in the embrace of an anecdote. But then, though the pattern was scant it was a love of a pattern, and the little creature wore a butterfly on her head, and of course it was all right and she was a darling. How would you manage to have a game of romps, think you, with such an anatomy of silk, and lace, and ribbons? One might as well attempt to romp with a fancy show-case. They have, passed a law, and a very good one, it is, to protect children. We want another, one to protect children. If they are afraid the race of quails will be destroyed, what are we saying of children? Why, there are places in this land of ours where one can see five hundred epitomes of humanity without seeing a single specimen of an old-fashioned, red-cheek, checked-aproned child.—Richmond American.

# THE AGITATOR.

Devoted to the Extension of the Area of Freedom and the Spread of Healthy Freedom.

COBB, STURROCK & CO., PUBLISHERS & PROPRIETORS. "THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM." VOL. 2. WELLSBOROUGH, TIOGA COUNTY, PA., THURSDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 20, 1855. NO. 22.

COULD YOU LEAVE THEM? Could you leave that father noble In whose breast dark sorrows roll And whose heart will never be so well For the boy he loved so well? Could you leave that mother stern, That to you will look for aid, Through the rough and stormy journey, That perhaps for them is laid? Could you leave that gentle sister Who would have a world for you, And who more on each year'll find one With a heart so good and true? And in after years you'll seek them In the land that gave you birth, Gone forever are the loved ones—Ay, forever passed from earth. In the church-yard on the hill-side, Father, sister, brothers sleep; Then cast a look there by the tombstone And in bitter anguish, weep.

## Interesting Narrative.

From The Independent.

### Austrian Despotism in America.

We are so accustomed to speak of ourselves as the only free nation on the face of the earth, that it may be well occasionally to have our eyes opened to a class of facts which are constantly and increasingly transpiring in our own country. We therefore beg leave to call the attention of our readers to a most extraordinary narrative, detailed in the following letter addressed by Miss Delia Webster to the Rev. Dr. Cheever:

WORCESTER, Friday, Oct. 19, 1855. Rev. Dr. CHEEVER—Dear Sir: Agreeably to your request I send you the following summary of facts.

In the year 1842, by the advice of physicians, I first went to Kentucky for the improvement of my health, in company with a clergyman and his wife from Ohio, and visited different portions of the State, and at length went to Lexington. Being short of funds I opened a painting class in that city to defray current expenses. It was not my purpose to remain there many weeks, but being repeatedly and urgently solicited by clergymen and other prominent men in the city to establish a permanent school for young ladies, at length I founded the Lexington Academy, which soon became one of the most interesting and flourishing institutions in the State—bringing me an income of about \$800 per year.

The climate being adapted to my constitution, my health had very greatly improved; and in 1844 my school numbered from 80 to 100 pupils, and I had the entire confidence of the people, notwithstanding it had been understood from the beginning that I was thoroughly Anti-Slavery.

No suspicions were entertained against me until after the arrest of Mr. Fairbank in September, 1844, when an anonymous letter was found upon his person addressed, it would seem, to some friend at a distance, and commencing "Dear Brother," and signed "A. A."

In this letter an allusion was made to a Miss W. This use of the initials of my name was entirely without my consent, knowledge, nor did I know aught of the existence of any such letter. Yet it resulted to my immediate apprehension at the midnight hour, without any form or warrant of law, and I was committed to close jail. Some time afterwards I was secretly charged with being accessory to the escape of the fugitive.

In December following this indictment was thrown away, and a new set of indictments was got up—a separate one for each member of the family—and the fourth for another man who escaped some time previous. In these I was charged as principal, instead of accomplice. I was tried only on one indictment, for the escape of the man Lewis.

Such were the excitement and prejudice which prevailed in the community, that a whole day was consumed in paneling a jury. The trial continued five days, during which time the jury were at large mingling and talking ad libitum with the excited populace.

On the fourth day of the trial the letter above referred to, contrary to all law, was introduced against me. The Court had repeatedly ruled it out as illegal testimony; but at last, the Commonwealth openly declaring they could make out no case without it, the Court admitted it to the jury, and they retired to consult of their verdict, taking the said letter with them. But failing to agree, they adjourned till the next day, when they compromised, and the foreman drew up a strong petition to the Governor praying for my immediate release, which petition was signed by every member of the jury, and presented to me by the foreman as they returned in the verdict. But before it was presented to the Governor he received a strong remonstrance signed by 120 of the most respectable citizens.

Several gentlemen then came forward and made strong affidavits in my behalf, upon which I asked a new trial, but the life of the Court being three eared if he granted it, the motion was overruled, and I was sentenced to two years confinement in the Penitentiary. Upon this, the Hon. Henry Clay, Gen. Leslie Combs and others of my counsel visited the Governor, laid before him the facts, and asked a respite of six months, that I might be tried upon the other three indictments. The Governor was very willing to grant the respite, but before the papers were completed, my enemies succeeded in secretly smuggling me into the Penitentiary under the cover of darkness.

I was now too late for the respite, and the Governor went himself to the warden and gave orders that I was not to be treated as a common prisoner.

Petitions soon came in from every part of the Commonwealth for my speedy release. The Legislature was in session and presented an urgent prayer to his Excellency in my behalf, signed by every member of that honorable body. Meantime I addressed a brief note to the Governor asking him to examine the evidence, and administer justice. He sent forthwith to Lexington for a copy of the testimony, which he carefully examined, and immediately thereupon sent me a pardon on the ground that I was convicted contrary to law and testimony.

At this date I had been in the Penitentiary six weeks, and in close confinement from thirty of my arrest one hundred and forty-eight days. I was now anxious for a trial upon the other indictments; but Gov. Owsley advised me not to insist upon it, saying that I had already trouble enough and a heavy bill of

expense, and he would see that these indictments were dismissed, that I need have no further annoyance. During the next term of court (March, '45), the Commonwealth's attorney motioned that all the remaining indictments against me "be struck off the docket," which was done by order of the Court.

After this I remained at the East a period of four years, during the whole of which time I was constantly beset with entreaties and the most urgent solicitations to return to Kentucky and resume my teaching. Some persons who, during the excitement, had been very bitter in their prejudice against me, acknowledged their error, and expressed a desire that some honorable reparation be made for the injuries I had received; and indeed some went so far as to offer to build an academy and present me with a deed of the same, to guarantee me a handsome salary for teaching, and to give me a city residence, or, if I preferred rural life, to present me with a fine farm, ready stocked, and an assistant in any way that I might need. Time after time did they manifest their confidence, to such a degree as to proffer me their servants by the year. Others, again, wished to bring an action against the State for my false imprisonment, and proffered me their gratuitous services.

In the Spring of 1847, they prevailed upon my brother-in-law to move with his family to Frankfort, (Ky.), and in 1848 my brother was also induced to accept certain propositions to move to Kentucky, and locate with his family near Georgetown. Early in 1849, the ex-Lieutenant Governor of Indiana was employed to visit me and lay before my mind inducements to return to that climate, and very soon thereafter some Kentucky friends (slaveholders) made a trip to Vermont, expressly to gain the consent of my parents to my returning with them, and I did return and located in Madison, Indiana, frequently visiting different portions of Kentucky, and was everywhere received with the utmost cordiality, and the same respect shown me as though I had never been an inmate of their State prison.

In 1853 I purchased a valuable farm, consisting of six hundred acres of fertile upland on the fertile banks of the beautiful Ohio, (south side,) directly opposite and overlooking the City of Madison. Here in my rural home I lived in peace until the Winter of 1854, at which time the persecutions were renewed with tenfold vigour. An anti-Webster meeting was appointed to be held at the Bedford Court House on the 6th of February, which was attended by a large crowd, and flaming and exciting speeches were made and plans concocted to drive me from the State. A set of resolutions were drawn up and discussed and adopted, the purport of which was as follows:

"Whereas, it is known that Miss Delia A. Webster has recently an off numerous slaves from Trimble County; therefore resolved, that it is the will and determination of the citizens of said county that Miss Delia A. Webster leave the State." A committee of fifty men, comprising the most respectable and wealthy citizens of the county, whose names were appended to the catalogue, were appointed to wait upon me next day to enforce the resolutions. This whole conspiracy was formed without my knowledge, and without any shade or color of provocation. And on the 7th of February, while quietly seated at my cheerful fireside, enjoying the peaceful retirement of my own little paradise, I was suddenly surprised by the arrival of a large force who had come to carry their plans into execution. It was a dark and dismal day, and the rain pouring down in torrents. Thoroughly drenched, and shivering with the cold, they were invited in to warm. The weather was severe and I ordered the fires recruited. They sat some three fourths of an hour before they broached the object of their visit, and at length the president introduced the secretary, who reluctantly drew forth a paper, and with a trembling voice read the weighty resolves.

When he had concluded I raised two objections to the resolutions. First, their illegality; and secondly, they savored too strongly of cowardice and mobocracy. I told them that I had chosen Kentucky for my home, and I told them that I expected to live and die there, notwithstanding their "determination." They then requested that I send in a written reply to the resolutions to be read at the next County Court, but bitterly and positively refused me a copy of the resolutions to which they required an answer. I however replied the best I could from memory, assuring them in very decided terms that I should exercise my right as a "free white citizen of the United States over the age of twenty-one years," to live where I chose; that I was not intimidated by their threats, and should stand my ground defenceless and alone; and when they should see fit to carry their threats into execution, they would not require so large an army to storm so weak a fortress as, waited upon me with their resolutions, thought they might require a larger one to hold it, &c.

This reply I sent to the Court, as requested. Soon after another committee, including the Judge himself, was appointed to wait upon me, and add another clause to the resolutions. Ashamed of the business, not a man of the former committee would serve on this. Next day, being the 7th of March, while engaged in my domestic pursuits, I was again suddenly surprised by the arrival of the committee, who had come to deliver the riotous message in substance as follows: "Unless you consent forthwith to sell us your plantation, and speedily leave the State, no more to return, you will be mobbed at a dead hour of the night, and the threats of the mass executed."

These threats they did not deem it necessary to enumerate, knowing I had previously been informed of their character, namely: "Your fences will all be torn down, your fine orchard ruined, your valuable timber destroyed, your cattle and horses slain before your eyes, your barns and out-houses burned, your dwelling-houses blown up, and yourself assassinated at the midnight hour." I told this venerable Committee to tell their constituents they could carry their nefarious threats into execution as soon as they saw fit; but they would find me at home, and though out a lone woman I should stand my ground. That I had invested my "little all" in that piece of land, had paid my taxes promptly, was a law-abiding citizen, and would sacrifice both liberty and life before I would be driven from the field; that I loved Liberty, that my motto was "Freedom or Death," and if necessary I would shed the last drop of my blood in defence of my constitutional rights.

I told them further that I supposed that they were perfectly aware of my position before they came, as that was the substance of the reply I sent to their former resolutions. They declared they had not heard a word of any reply, and until now were not aware I had replied. That it had all been concealed from them, and the general feeling was that I had treated their resolutions with silent contempt. Thus saying, they apologized, assured me of their respect and kind feelings, and tendering their good wishes, they bade me adieu; and I was once more left in quiet. On the morning of the 13th (same month) my premises were invaded by a gang of ruffians armed with pistols clubs, &c., and the whole day spent in industrious search, but not finding me they were constrained to believe the statements of my domestics, that having been ill for several days I had taken a trip to Cincinnati for my health, and to get some deeds acknowledged, and as soon as that business was completed would return. On the 14th I returned, but was still very feeble. I had not been home an hour before a band of men, headed by the High Sheriff, environed my house and demanded of my domestics that their mistress make her appearance instantly. I was in my dressing-room tending to the duties of the toilet, and sent them word to be seated in the parlor and I would be down in a few moments. Desperate, and unwilling to wait an instant, they got an ax, with which they were about breaking down the door, when one of them succeeded in tearing off the lock, and the Sheriff was ascending the staircase, followed by his ruthless gang, when I approached and requested them to return to the parlor and await my convenience. They apologized and withdrew to the parlor. In a few moments I went down and was formally introduced to the Sheriff, who handed me a warrant, which read to this effect:

"Whereas, John W. Coleman states under oath that he suspects Delia A. Webster has made an attempt to entice away Daniel McCarthy Payne's slave Tom, and divers other slaves from Trimble County; therefore I command that said Delia A. Webster be forthwith apprehended and brought before me to be dealt with according to law. (Signed) "ROBERT GRAY."

The sheriff said this move was only to appease the excitement of a few individuals, and after an examination before the Judge I would be discharged and return home. I told him plainly that I understood the whole plot, that the case was decided already, and that I should go to jail, and I wished to take with me some articles of wearing apparel. He assured me it was wholly unnecessary, as I would be back in a few hours; and thus they tore me away from home, not allowing me even a change of raiment. Nor was I permitted to send for my attorney, or to summon a single witness. Neither was I allowed a trial by jury. A score of witnesses and three attorneys were introduced against me, and I had a mock trial. Not the first particle of testimony was found to sustain their charge, and yet this County Judge placed me under \$10,000 bonds to leave the State and never return or go to the county jail; and there he some four months, and unless I could then prove a negative (a difficult thing for mortal man to prove in such a case, however innocent,) I must remain there during life, as the charge not being criminal or indictable I could not be sent to the Penitentiary even though it were sustained.

The prison was a log hut of rude construction, foul and filthy, having been used as a pen for the confinement of negroes during the time of collecting a sufficient gang to be transported down the river. The weather was cold, and the only means of having a fire was a rusty iron stove without a pipe. When persons in the vicinity remonstrated at the cruelty of keeping me without a fire, a fire was for some days kindled in the stove, which filled the cabin with smoke, and when this reached to the point of suffocation they dashed water upon it, and then it was confidently said that I had enjoyed a fire in my prison. Observing me standing up by the rude hole which served as a window endeavoring to write, the jailer nailed a board across which completely excluded the light. In vain I petitioned them to send for a change of clothing, and reduced as I was by sickness I was obliged to lie on a miserable bed with scanty covering for the greater part of my time.

A Kentucky lady, in the neighborhood, the wife of a large slaveholder, hearing of the indignities and hardships to which I was subjected, took up her carriage with a servant in the midst of a driving storm bringing with her in a basket a supply of clothing and other necessities suited to my suffering state. The jailer, however, doggedly refused to open the door or allow her to have an interview with me. He and his wife avon refused to convey

me to the comforts which were brought, saying that "my spirits had got to be subdued by hardships till I would be willing to give up and leave the State." Finding all importunities useless, she commanded her servant to take off the board from the window, and then resolutely stood by while he passed to me the contents of the basket, and when the jailer undertook to interfere, she told him "he would be made to feel her husband's influence on his position if he did not desist." I had found means to communicate with my lawyers and on the 8th of April, 1854, I was taken out on a writ of habeas corpus and tried before another Judge and discharged on the ground of entire innocence, this charge being pronounced groundless. I had now been confined in a most loathsome dungeon where I was forbidden a breath of fresh air for the period of 25 days.

After this I returned to my rural pursuits, and after superintending the plowing and planting of a hundred acres of corn, ten of potatoes, and the harvesting of my oats and other crops, I removed my dwelling-place across the river to Indiana. On the 16th of June I went over to the estate to see one of my tenants who was very sick. The day was excessively hot. I was overcome with fatigue and taken suddenly ill, and had to be carried to the house. I lay there helpless under the care of a physician until the 19th, when I was again arrested upon a warrant issued by a justice of the peace in the City of Lexington, commanding my immediate apprehension on account of the escape of the wife of Lewis Hayden, who with her family was missing ten years before. You will recollect that I was arrested and imprisoned for the same offense in 1844. The officers found me too sick to be removed, without endangering my life, and therefore stationed three armed men at the house to prevent my escape. Several other officers were stationed a little distance from the house to prevent the possibility of my being rescued by the Indians. In the course of the next day, however, I found means to escape into Indiana.

My pursuers had among them a man who, from certain reasons of his own, was my personal enemy. By his agency, immediately after this, through his intrigues three old indictments, which the Commonwealth attorney had stricken from the docket ten years ago, by order of the Court, were re-docketed, and warrants issued under them for my arrest. Knowing that this might appear an incredible thing in our country, I hold in my hands perfect documentary evidence of the fact, which I am able at any time to exhibit. The Governor of Kentucky, on the strength of these indictments, sent to the Governor of Indiana demanding me as a fugitive from justice. Without any inquiry as to the merits of the case, the Governor delivered me up. The Indians, indignant at such an outrage upon a peaceable citizen, hid me from my pursuers. Sometimes they secreted me in the city and sometimes in the country—in a hay-mow, in the woods, under brush heaps, in the rye-fields, in clefts of rocks—some times in one place and sometimes in another, until I was too feeble to be longer moved about.

While I lay prostrate with sickness, after some twelve days search, the officers got track of me, took me off from the bed, put me in an open buggy and drove me some fifteen miles under a scorching July sun, and after dark made a daring attempt to smuggle me across the river. Here again they were defeated, and took me secretly to Madison, where they confined me in jail, to await the arrival of the Kentucky officers. The vigilant Indians determined I should have the benefit of a "habeas corpus," and a large troop of volunteers stationed themselves around the jail to prevent my being kidnapped by the Kentuckians; and there I lay in close just 20 days before I was able to be taken out for trial. The evening prior to the trial, I, another requisition arrived demanding me upon another ten year old indictment.

On the evening of the 21st of July, 1854, both warrants having been tried, I was discharged from custody by the decision of Judge Walker of Madison, Ind. Again fortified, those slaveholding Kentuckians return to plunder my premises; and under the guise of law my house is robbed of its entire contents, my farming utensils are seized, my grain, hay, &c., are taken away, my cattle and other stock driven off, and I am deprived of my entire personal property, even to my wardrobe. Nothing whatever is left upon the place save the growing crops, the property seized amounting to \$6,000. At the next Circuit Court their writ of attachment is dismissed, and it becomes the duty of the officer to return the property to my possession. Instead of this, he secretly sells what had not before been destroyed, and the slaveholders pocket the money! Are they satisfied now? No. While on a visit to my aged mother in Vermont, they take advantage of my absence, steal and sell my crops, pocket the money; and when I return to make a payment of \$2,000 on my place, to I have nothing with which to make it—am bereft of my last dollar, the payment due, and I penniless.

This last Spring, to prevent my sending, on tenants to take care of the place, they broke open and demolished six of my dwelling houses, and burned the seventh. My close confinement in the four different prisons, amounts to 193 days, and the loss of property to \$11,000. You have here but the outline of my persecutions, and are at liberty to make such use of them, as your superior judgment shall dictate.

Respectfully and truly yours, DELIA A. WEBSTER.

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