

TERMS OF THE "AMERICAN."
HENRY B. MASSER, PUBLISHER AND
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H. B. MASSER, Editor.

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SUNBURY AMERICAN.

AND SHAMOKIN JOURNAL.

Absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of Republics, from which there is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism.—JEFFERSON.

By Masser & Eiseley.

Sunbury, Northumberland Co. Pa. Saturday, August 13, 1842.

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From the Richmond Star.
A Fragment.

WRITTEN Improvisata by Ephraim.
The light of a sixteenth Summer glance
From an eye of azure blue—
A heart to love's soft pulses throbb'd
In a bosom mild and true—
A lip in its pouting richness, red,
Gave rest to an angel smile,
And a flute-like sweetness told
Of a spirit free of guile—
A form of grace in budding bloom,
A foot like the fleeting gazelle,
A cheek like the dewy blossom's blush
Where the soul its tale would tell—
A being brightly beautiful—
A maid of a sunny clime—
A creature of spirit innocent
Whom to love would not be crime.
In her father's house
One summer morn,
When still as a mouse
Was the dewy lawn,
Sat quietly down
In a rocking chair—
In calico gown,
And with straggling hair—
At the kitchen door,
While a chatting hen,
On the old barn floor,
Scratched head for grain,
First turning her gaze
To her stocking blue,
She stared at the place
Where the toe came through.
Then raising her eyes
She opened them wide—
And filled with surprise
With a shriek she cried,
Good gracious!—O dear!
O me!—dud zickens!
O, Ma! come here—
If our fennel old speckled hen haint
hatched out every single one of
her CHICKENS.

Robert Tannehill, a Scotch poet, is the author of a pretty little epigram on woman:

"Nature, impartial in her ends,
When she made man the strongest,
In justice then to make amends,
Made woman's tongue the longest."

THE CENTURY PLANT.—A great curiosity.

We learn with great pleasure that our enterprising friend, Bernard Duke, has in his possession the largest specimen of the Century Plant, or One Hundred Year Flowering Aloe, (*Agave Americana*) in America. While the report of the rarity of the plant now shooting up its flower stem, at the Patron's green house in Albany has excited the astonishment of all America, Mr. Duke has quietly suffered his doubly splendid specimen to pass on to Florence without a comment, completely stealing a march on our good citizens, who would have overrun his extensive grounds to witness this wonderful production of nature. The plant which is over 25 feet in circumference, is now in full perfection, the flower stem being upwards of 20 feet in height and covered on every branch with thousands of rich deep yellow blossoms. Its appearance is singular, grand and curious, and will no doubt excite the astonishment of the whole of the nation and beauty of our city.

But three specimens of the *Agave* as yet have flowered in America, the first of which, a small plant, blossomed on the grounds of Wm. Hamilton, Esq. at the Woodlands, where it was visited by upwards of 20,000 persons, and the second, which bloomed at Lemon Hill was exhibited in Philadelphia Orphan's Asylum, to about 35,000 visitors. The present plant, which will be exhibited at the Masonic Hall, is now 95 years of age, and was originally grown by the same gentleman at his conservatory. It has been since his death the property of the McCauley family, and is now in the hands of Mr. Duke. An opportunity to view the Aloe seldom occurs, and as there is no sufficiently large plants in the country to bloom, will not occur again the present century. Mr. Duke will realize a large sum from the singular freak of nature which has brought this plant into perfection. It dies immediately after its florescence is terminated.

Phila. Inquirer.

Current tea, says a German Journal, has been extensively used in Russia for some years back, being considered slightly sudorific and anti-febrile. It is agreeable to taste, and is made in the following manner: Red or white currants are placed to dry—the red have usually the preference—on sheets of paper, in an oven slightly heated, or in a furnace of a kitchen, from which the great heat has departed. A small piece of the currants thus dried is infused, as is done in common tea-making, and the water is allowed to stand for some time. This liquor is said to be good for the gout.

As Pat Hogan sat enjoying his connubial bliss upon the banks of a southern creek, he espied a turtle emerging from the stream.

"Och honey!" he exclaimed solemnly "that iver I should come all the way to America to see a snuff box walk!"

"Whist!" said his wife, "don't be after making fun of the birds."

LAUGHABLE DUEL WITH HARPOONS.

Perhaps some of our readers may have heard of the story of the duel between old Captain Lovett, of New Bedford, and the English officer in Demerara. It has been variously related, but the only true version is as follows:

Capt. Zacharia Lovett, after having performed several whaling voyages to the Pacific, found himself in command of a small brig belonging to New York, on a voyage to Demerara. He was a worthy man, and a specimen of a Yankee sailor—his heart was full of the milk of human kindness, but he possessed a noble spirit, and would neither give nor take an insult.

While his brig *Cinderella* lay at anchor in Demerara river, Capt. Lovett one afternoon went into the coffee-house, where he met a friend—and they amused themselves by knocking the balls about the billiard room. Soon after, and before the game was half finished, some English military officers entered, one of whom Captain Bigbee, stepped up to Captain Lovett, who was arrayed in a very plain, not to say ordinary costume, and with a bullying air demanded the table, as himself and brother officers wished to play a match.

Captain Lovett, gave the red coated gentleman a stern look, but replied with courtesy, that he and his friend had engaged the table, and would play out their game; after which, if the gentlemen wished to play, it was at their service.

"But we can't wait," said Captain Bigbee, in an insolent tone.

"You must wait," coolly replied Captain Lovett. "But we shall do no such thing," exclaimed the surly Briton. "We came here to play billiards, and have no idea of being disappointed by a couple of fellows who hardly know a mace from a cue, or a ball from a pocket. It will take you all the afternoon to finish the game—so clear out."

Captain Lovett and his friend played on. "Come continued the other, 'enough of this—marker place the balls.'"

Saying which in the most impudent air, he seized one of the balls which Capt. Lovett's opponent had just driven into the pocket, and caught up another one which was near him.

The matter was growing serious. Captain Lovett's eyes flashed fire—for although he had mingled a good deal among Quakers, and respected that moral sect for their moral demeanor, he was no non-resistant man himself. He dropped his cue, and doubled up a fist of potent size. "Put those balls upon the table, you scoundrel," exclaimed he, imperatively, "and leave the room!"

"Who do you call a scoundrel, you yankee blackguard. Do you know you are talking to one of his majesty's officers! Take that for your impudence," at the same time snatching the cue from the table, and giving Captain Lovett a smart rap across his shoulder with his cue. But in an instant he received a blow on his forehead, exactly where the phrenologists locate the organ of eventuality—which would have killed an ox; and submissively acknowledged the favor, by measuring his length on the floor.

His brother officers who were with him, had the good sense to see that Bigbee was to blame—and although they looked rather black at the Yankees, they wisely forbore to molest them further—but assisted the stunned bully to another room, where by the help of some restoratives, he soon recovered his senses. His rage and mortification at the result of the rencontre knew no bounds, and with many a bitter oath, declared he would have satisfaction.

Before Capt. Lovett left the coffee-house, a billet was handed him, by Lieut. James, which proved to be a challenge—a peremptory challenge from Capt. Bigbee, in which it was insisted that arrangement should be made for an early meeting, that he might have an opportunity to wipe off that affront he had received, in Capt. Lovett's heart's blood.

Capt. Lovett smiled when he saw such manifestations of Christian spirit. "Tell Captain Bigbee," said he, "that I will not baulk him. He shall have the opportunity he seeks. Although not a fighting man, I am familiar with the duel laws—add if he will meet me to-morrow morning on the banks of Green Canal, near the South Quay, rather a secluded spot, he shall have satisfaction to his heart's content."

Lieut. James bowed politely and withdrew; Capt. Lovett went on board the *Cinderella* soon after, and he ordered his mate, Mr. Starbuck, also a veteran whale hunter, to select the two best harpoons he had in his possession, and fitted—as an opportunity might offer on the morrow of striking a porpoise. Mr. Starbuck obeyed his superior officer with alacrity, although he wondered not a little why Captain Lovett expected to find porpoises in Demerara river.

The next morning, as soon as all hands were called, Capt. Lovett ordered the boat to be manned, and requested Mr. Starbuck to take the two harpoons, to each of which some eight

or ten fathoms of rattling stuff were attached and accompany him on shore. "In a few moments they reached the South Quay, where Captain Lovett was met by several of his countrymen, who had been attracted to the spot by the rumor of the duel, as well as several merchants and other inhabitants of the place. They one and all remonstrated with Capt. Lovett for his folly in consenting to fight with the English military bully, who was represented as a practised duelist—an expert swordsman, and an unrivalled marksman with a pistol, being sure of his man at twelve paces; Capt. Lovett, however, showed no inclination to back out; but, on the contrary, seemed more eager for engagement—"I'll give that quarrelsome fellow a lesson," said he "which will be of service to him—and which he will never forget as long as his name is Bigbee."

The challenger with his forehead ornamented with a large patch to cover the impression left by the Yankee's knuckles, and his swollen eyes dimly twinkling with anger and mortification through the two huge, lived circles accompanied by his second, soon made his appearance. He was followed by a servant with a pistol case, and an assortment of swords. He bowed stiffly to Capt. Lovett, and Lieut. James approaching the Yankee, asked him if he was willing to fight with swords—"if so," said he, "I believe we can suit you. We have brought with us the small sword a neat gentlemanly weapon—they cut and thrust, good in a *meler*, and which will answer indifferently well in a duel—and the broadsword or cutlass, which is often preferred by those who are deficient in skill in the use of arms. My friend, Capt. Bigbee is equally expert with either. You have only to choose. As the challenged party you have an undoubted right to select your arms."

"Of that privilege I am well aware," replied Capt. Lovett, "and I mean to avail myself of it. I shall not fight with swords."

"I expected as much," resumed Lieutenant James, and I have brought with me a beautiful pair of duelling pistols, with long barrels, rifle bores, and hair triggers. What distance shall I measure off?"

"Eight paces," replied Capt. Lovett.

"Only eight paces!" cried Lieut. James, a little surprised. "O, very well"—and placed his man at his post. Then advancing to Capt. Lovett he presented him with a pistol.

"Do not fight with pistols!"

"Not fight with pistols after having refused to fight with swords! What brought you here then?"

"To fight," shouted Lovett in a thundering voice, which made the British officer start. "I am the challenged party and have the right to choose my weapons, according to the laws of *duello*, all the world over—and you may rely upon it, I shall not select weapons with which my antagonist has been practising all his life. Such a proceeding on my part is not only required by the rules of honor, which after all is a mere chimera, but would be contrary to all the dictates of common sense. No—I shall fight with weapons of honorable warfare, with which I have ever been accustomed. Swords and pistols indeed?"

"But my dear sir," cried the astonished Lieutenant, "we must proceed according to rule in this business. What weapons have you fixed upon?" And in fancy's eye he beheld before him a huge *Munderbus*, loaded with buckshot.

Capt. Lovett said nothing—but beckoned to Mr. Starbuck, who approached him with great alacrity, bearing two harpoons. He seized one of the formidable weapons, and thrust into the hands of Bigbee, who seemed actually paralyzed with astonishment.

"My weapon," said he, is the *javalin*—such as the Grecian and Roman knights often fought with in olden times—a weapon which no man who challenges another, can refuse to fight with at the present day, unless he possesses a mean and craven spirit."

Thus saying, he took the station which had been assigned him, eight paces distant from his startled antagonist. He coolly bared his sinewy arm, grasped the harpoon and placed himself in an attitude. "I'll bet," said he, casting a triumphant look upon his friend, "a snaking herring against a whale, that I'll drive the harpoon through that fellow's midriff at the first throw—and will finish him without the aid of a lance. Mr. Starbuck," fiercely continued Capt. Lovette, in a loud and rough voice, such as is seldom heard except on board a Nantucket whaling vessel when a shoal of whales are in sight, "stand by to haul that fellow in!"

The mate grasped the end of the line, his eyes beaming with as much expectation and delight, as if he was steering a bow on to an eighty barrel whale, while Capt. Lovett poised his harpoon with both hands, keenly eyed the British Captain—shouted in a tremendous voice, "Now for it!"—and drew back his arms as if in the act of throwing the fatal iron!

The Englishman was a brave man—which is not always the case with the bullies—and he

had often marched without flinching, up to the mouth of a cannon. And if he had been met in a single combat with an adversary armed with a sword or a pistol, or a dagger or a Queen's arm, he would have borne himself manfully. Indeed! he had already acquired an unenviable notoriety as a duelist and killed his man. But the harpoon was a weapon with which he was altogether unacquainted—and the loud and exulting tone of the Yankee Captain's voice sounded like a summons to his grave.

And when he saw the stalwart Yankee raise the polished iron—and pause for an instant, as if concentrating all his strength to give the fatal blow, a panic terror seized him—his limbs trembled—his features were of ghastly pallor, and the cold sweat stood in large drops on his forehead. He had not strength to raise his weapon; and when his grim opponent shouted "Now for it," and shook his deadly spear, the British officer, forgetting his vows of chivalry—reputation as an officer, and honor as a duelist, threw his harpoon on the ground, fairly turned his back upon his enemy—and fled like a frightened courser from the field, amid the jeers and jibes, and the hurrahs of the multitude assembled by this time on the spot.

Capt. Bigbee's duelling days are over. No man would fight with him after his adventure with the Yankee. He was overwhelmed with insult and ridicule—and soon found it advisable to change into another regiment. But his story got there before him—and he was soon sent to Coventry as a disgraced man. He was compelled, although with great reluctance to quit the service—and it may with great truth be said, that he never forgot the lesson he had received from veteran whaler, so long as his name was Bigbee.

COAL IN AUGUSTA.—We have seen Mr. Porter, and conversed with him in relation to the Bituminous Coal which has been found on his land. It was found eight feet below the surface, instead of eighty, as we were informed. The coal was found after passing through a slate formation, which was on the top, was broken up and loose, and after that unbroken for about six feet; after descending about eight feet, he came to the coal. In the seams of the slate particles of coal were found before he reached this depth. He then tried some ten or twelve bushels of the coal which he took from the place where he was digging, which burned freely; and, from appearance, he thinks the prospect is, that there is still better quality below. He intends soon to make a thorough examination, and, if he succeeds, a mine of wealth will be opened to this region. It is a fact worthy of notice that there has never been found before this, any slate rock in this section, as Mr. Porter informs us. As soon as Mr. Porter makes his examination, we shall give the result to our readers.—*Roman Citizen.*

A SINGULAR SPECIES OF SMALL CHANGE.—At Queretaro, one of the States of the United Mexican Confederacy, and in the towns of that State a recent traveller states that much amusement was occasioned by our receiving lumps of soap as small change of silver. In other states, current only within their boundaries, are copper coins, having a stamp peculiar to each state, dividing the bit (real) into eights (octaves) and fourths (quartitos).—But here, in lieu of copper coins—for the state of Queretaro has none—pieces of soap, with a stamp on them, are employed. Yet so strictly are they local in their use, that the current soap of one village is refused at places not half a mile distant—well illustrating one of the modes by which substitutes for a metallic currency should be checked in their amount, and the means, however awkward, that will be resorted to in order to satisfy the necessity of a currency.—Some of our men found the value of this small change not at all diminished after washing with it, and, probably, the excess of any issue is usually washed up.—*Boston Times.*

BRIBERY.—Mr. Ducombe recently confessed in the House of Commons, that he had expended £30,000 at five elections. Bribery, indeed, was admitted in more cases than one. In the borough of Sudbury, says the New York Commercial, "the corruption was open and notorious; it was scarcely an attempt to conceal it. The successful candidates were Mr. Frederick Villiers, a younger son of Earl of Jersey, and a Mr. Dyce Sombre. The latter is an East Indian, his father an Englishman, his mother a Hindoo lady of high rank and immense wealth, all which he inherited. Having lately arrived from the East Indies, he felt an inclination to go into Parliament. At Sudbury he was utterly unknown—probably not one of the electors had ever seen him—but he rode down, at the time of the election, with a box of gold in his carriage, remained a few days, and then went back to London, his box empty, but having M. P. tacked to his name. These facts are stated without denial, in several of the London papers

The last number of Kendall's interesting sketches of incidents connected with the Santa Fe Expedition is as follows:

The morning of the 3d September broke bright and cloudless, the sun rising from out the prairie in all his majesty. Singular as it may appear nearly every shower we had come in the night from the time we left Austin until we reached the Mexican settlements. Again we spent a couple of hours drying our blankets, then saddled up and pursued our journey, and still in the northwest direction.

We had scarcely gone six miles before we suddenly came upon an immense rent or chasm in the earth, far exceeding in depth the one we had so much difficulty in crossing the day before. No one was aware of its existence until we were immediately upon its brink, when a spectacle, exceeding in grandeur anything we had previously witnessed, came suddenly in view. Not a tree or bush, no outline whatever marked its position or course, and we were all lost in amazement and wonder as one by one we left the double-file ranks and rode up to the verge of the yawning abyss.

In depth it could not have been less than eight hundred or a thousand feet from three to five hundred yards in width, and at the point where we first struck at the sides were nearly perpendicular. A sickly sensation of dizziness was felt by all as we looked down, as it were, into the very depths of the earth. Below an occasional spot of green relieved the eye, and a small stream of water, now rising to the view then sinking beneath some huge rock, was bubbling and fuming along. Immense walls, columns in some places what appeared to be arches were seen standing, worn by the water undoubtedly, and so perfect in form that we could with difficulty be brought to believe that the hand of man was not upon them. The rains of centuries, falling upon an immense prairie, had here found a reservoir, and their workings upon the different veins of earth and stone had formed these strange and fanciful shapes.

Before reaching the chasm we had crossed numerous large trails leading a little more to the west than we were travelling, and we were at once convinced that they all centered at a common crossing close by. In this conjecture we were not disappointed, for a trot of half an hour brought us into a large road, thoroughfare along which millions of Indians, buffalo, and mustangs had travelled for years. Perilous as the descent looked we well knew there was no other near. The lead mule was again started ahead, the staidier and older horses were next driven over the sides, while the more skittish and untractable brought up the rear. Once in the narrow path which led circuitously down the deep descent there was no turning back, and our maddened animals finally reached the bottom in safety. Several large stones were loosened from their fastenings by our men during the frightful descent. They would leap dash and thunder down the precipitous sides and strike against the bottom far below us with a terrific crash.

We found a running stream at the bottom, and on the opposite side a romantic dell covered with short grass and a few scattering cotton woods. A large body of Indians had encamped on this very spot but a few days previous, the wild limbs of the trees and other "signs" showing that they had made it a resting place. We, too, halted a couple of hours, to give our horses an opportunity to graze and rest themselves. The trail which led up on the opposite side was discovered a short distance above us, to the south, winding up the steep and ragged sides of the precipice.

As we journeyed along this dell all were struck with admiration at the strange and fanciful figures made by the washing of the waters during the rainy season. In some places perfect walls, formed of a reddish clay, were seen standing, and were they any where else it would be impossible to believe that other than the hands of men had formed them. The vein of which these walls were composed was even thickness, very hard, and ran perpendicularly; and when the softer sand which had surrounded them was washed away the veins still remained standing upright, in some places one hundred feet high and three or four hundred in length.

Columns, too, were there, and such was their architectural order, and so much of chaste grandeur there about them that they were lost in wonder and admiration. In other places the breastworks of forts would be plainly visible, then again the frowning turrets of some castle of the olden time. Cambrous pillars of some mighty pile raised to religion or royalty were scattered about, regularly was strangely mixed up with ruin and disorder, and Nature had done it all. Niagara has been considered one of her wildest freaks; but Niagara sinks into insignificance when compared with the wild grandeur of this awful chasm. Imagination carried us back to Thebes, to Palmyra, and to ancient Athens, and we could not help thinking that we were now among their ruins.

Our passage out of this place was effected with the greatest difficulty. We were obliged to carry our rifles, holsters and saddle-bags in our hands, and in clambering up a steep pitch one of the horses, striking his shoulder against a projecting rock, was precipitated some fifteen or twenty feet directly upon his back. All thought he must be killed by the fall; but singularly enough he rose immediately, shook himself, and a second effort in climbing proved more successful—the animal had not received the slightest apparent injury!

By the middle of the afternoon we were all safely across, after spending five or six hours completely shut out from the world. Again we found ourselves upon the level prairie, and on looking back, after proceeding some hundred yards, not a sign of the immense chasm was visible. The waste we were then upon was at least two hundred and fifty miles in width, and the two chasms I have mentioned were the reservoirs and at the same time the conductors of the heavy quantity of rain which falls upon it during the wet season to the running stream. The prairie is undoubtedly the largest in the world, and the chasms are in perfect keeping with the size of the prairie.

At sundown we halted by the side of a water hole and encamped for the night. By this time many of them were entirely out of provision, while those who still had a little beef left had saved it by stinting themselves on the previous days. The worst of our sufferings had now commenced.

RATTLESNAKES IN TEXAS.—The following is from G. W. Kendall's history of the Santa Fe Expedition:

I neglected to mention in my last troublesome visitor we had in camp on the night of the 4th of July. It rained on first reaching camp, inducing the moss to which I was attached to raise a tent. The wet grass without probably drove a rattlesnake to more comfortable quarters, and the first intimation we had of his vicinity he was crawling over one of us inside the tent in the endeavor to effect a lodgement under some of the blankets. A more disagreeable companionship cannot well be imagined, even if a person had the entire pick of every living, moving, creeping, flying, running, swimming and crawling thing, and to say that any of us felt perfectly easy and at home with such a neighbor among us, would be saying what is not true. For myself, fearing to move lest I might molest his snakeship, I rolled myself head and all under my blanket, and lay perfectly quiet until daylight next morning. Where the intruder went to no one could tell, and we had the very pleasant satisfaction of seeing no more of him.

Very frequently, on the great prairies, a man wakes up in the morning and finds that he has had a rattlesnake for a sleeping partner; but there is not one excellent trait in the character of these reptiles—they never bite unless disturbed, and will get out of the way as soon as possible except, perhaps, in the month of August, when they are said to be blind and they may snap at any thing and every thing they may hear about them.

TAX ON DOLLS.—The Washington correspondent of the North American tells the following:

While the Tariff bill was under discussion on Friday, Mr. Gamble, of Georgia, rose and with great pleasantness of manner, said that at the suggestion of some of his bachelor friends, he would move to strike out the duty on dolls, casting a furtive glance at some of the most incorrigible of that *Saltus cum solo* genus. The motion did not prevail. The talented and witty Mrs.—— who was present in the gallery, whispered to her young friend, the beautiful Miss—— "I hope my dear the duty will not be removed, the prettiest and most animated dolls in the world are made in the West. We must protect this species of the home manufacture." Miss——laughingly replied that they had better impose an *ad valorem* duty of 50 per cent on the whole antiquated anti-Cupid tribe of bachelors. "Ah, my dear, said Mrs.—— if it were to be an *ad valorem* duty, there would be no revenue, for bachelors are of no value to themselves, to us or the country. I confess that I would give my vote for a tax of \$100 per *caput*. How long this dialogue was kept up by the fair speakers, I know not, having been obliged to leave the gallery.

"John, how I wish it was as much the fashion to trade wives as it is to trade horses!"

"Why so Peter?"

"I'd cheat somebody most shockin' bad before I'd trade my wife."

A German authority gives the population of China as 252,000,000.