

Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY;—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

BY JOHN G. GIVEN.]

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MISCELLANEOUS.

JOHN TAYLOR.

THE
TINOM OF THE BACKWOODS BAR AND PULPIT.

BY CHAS. SUMMERFIELD.

I can never forget my first vision of John Taylor. It was in the court house at Lewisburg, Conway co. Arkansas, in the summer of 1838.

The occasion itself possessed terrible interest. A vast concourse of spectators had assembled to witness the trial of a young and very beautiful girl, on an indictment for murder. The judge waited at the moment for the sheriff to bring in his prisoner, the eyes of the impatient multitude all centered on the door; when suddenly a stranger entered, whose appearance riveted universal attention.

Here is his portrait: a figure, tall, lean, sinewy and strait as an arrow; a face, sallow, bilious, and twitching incessantly with nervous irritability; a brow, broad, soaring, massive, seamed with wrinkles, but not from age—for he was scarcely forty; eyes, reddish yellow, like the wrathful eagle, as bright and piercing; and finally, a mouth with lips of cast iron, thin curled cold and sneering, the intense expression of which looked the living embodiment of an unbreathed curse. He was habited in a suit of new buck-skin, ornamented after the fashion of Indian costume, with hues of every color of the rainbow.

Elbowing his way slowly through the crowd, and apparently unconscious that he was regarded as a phenomenon, needing explanation, this singular being advanced, and with the haughty air of a king ascending the throne, seated himself within the bar, thronged as it was with disciples of Coke and Blackstone, several of whom, it was known, esteemed themselves as far superior to those old and famous masters.

The contrast between the outlandish garb and disdainful countenance of the stranger, excited, especially, the risibility of the lawyers; and the junior members began a suppressed titter, which grew louder, and soon swept around the circle. They doubtless supposed the intruder to be some wild hunter of the mountains, who had never before seen the interior of a hall of justice. Instantly, the cause and object of the laughter perceived it; turned his head gradually, so as to give each a laughing look; his lips curled with a killing smile of infinite scorn; his yellow eyes shot arrows of lightning; his tongue protruding through his teeth literally writhed like a serpent, and ejaculated its asp-like poison in a single word: "Savages!" No pen can describe the defiant force which he threw into that term, no pencil can paint the infernal furor of his utterance, although it hardly exceeded a whisper. But he accepted every letter as if it were a separate emission of fire that scorched his quivering lips; laying horrible emphasis on *Si*, both at the beginning and end of the word: "Savages!"

It was the growl of a red tiger in the hiss of a rattlesnake. "Savages!"

The general gaze, however, was immediately diverted by the advent of the fair prisoner, who then came in, surrounded by her guard. The apparition was enough to drive a saint mad. For hers was a style of beauty to bewilder the tamest imagination, and melt the coldest heart, leaving in both imagination and a heart gleaming picture, enameled in fire and fixed in a frame of gold from the stars.—It was the spell of an enchantment to be felt as well as seen. You might feel it in the flashes of her countenance, clear as a sunbeam, brilliant as the iris; in the contour of her features symmetrical as if cut by the chisel of an artist; in her hair of rich auburn ringlets flowing without a braid, softer than silk, finer than gossamer; in the eyes, blue as the heaven of southern summer, large, liquid, beamy; in her motions, graceful, swimming, like the gentle waltzes of a bird's wing in the sunny air; in the figure, slight, ethereal—a sylph's or a seraph's; and more than all, in the everlasting smile of the rosy lips, so arched, so serene, so like starlight, and yet possessing the power of magic or of magnetism to thrill the beholder's heart.

As the unfortunate girl, so tastefully dressed, so incomparable as to personal charms, calm and smiling, took her place before the bar of her judge, a murmur of admiration arose from the multitude, which, the prompt interposition of the court, by a stern order of "Silence," could scarcely repress from swelling to a deafening cheer.

The judge turned to the prisoner; "Emma Miner, the court has been informed that your counsel, Col. Linton is sick, have you employed any other?"

She answered in a voice sweet as the warble of the nightingale, and clear as the song of the sky-lark: "My enemies

have bribed all the lawyers—even my *own* to be sick; but God will defend the innocent!"

At this response, so touching in its simple pathos, a portion of the auditors buzzed applause, and the rest wept.

On the instant, however, the stranger, whose appearance had previously excited such merriment, started to his feet, approached the prisoner, and whispered something in her ear. She bounded six inches from the floor, uttered a piercing shriek, and then stood trembling as if in the presence of a ghost from Eternity; while the singular being, who had caused her unaccountable emotion addressed the court in his sharp ringing voice, "sonorous as the sound of bell-metal."

"May I please your honor, I will assume the task of defending the lady."

"What!" exclaimed the astonished judge "are you a licensed attorney?"

"The question is irrelevant and immaterial," replied the stranger with a venomous sneer. "as the recent statute entitles any person to act as counsel at the request of a party."

"But does the prisoner request it?" inquired the judge.

"Let her speak for herself," said the stranger.

"I do," was the answer as a long drawn sigh escaped, that seemed to rend her very heart strings.

The case immediately progressed; and as it had a tinge of romantic mystery, we will epitomize the substance of the evidence.

About twelve months before, the defendant had arrived in the village, and opened an establishment of millinery. Residing in a room connected with her shop, and all alone; she prepared the articles of her trade with unwearied labor and consummate taste. Her habits were secluded, modest and retiring; and hence she might have hoped to avoid notoriety, but for the perilous gift of that extraordinary beauty, which too often, and to the poor and friendless always, proves a curse. She was sought after by all those glittering fire-flies of fashion, the profession of whose life, every where, is seduction and ruin. But the beautiful stranger rejected them all with unutterable scorn and loathing. Among these rejected admirers was one of a character from which the fair milliner had every thing to fear. Hiram Shore belonged to a family, at once, opulent, influential and dissipated. He was himself licentious, brave and ferociously revengeful—the most famous duellist of the South-west. It was generally known that had made advances to win the favor of the lovely Emma, and had shared the fate of all other wooers—a disdainful repulse.

At nine o'clock on Christmas night, 1837, the people of Lewisburg were startled by a loud scream, as of one in mortal terror, while, following that, with scarcely an interval, came successive reports of fire arms, one, two, three; a dozen deafening roars. They flew to the shop of the milliner, whence the sounds proceeded; pushed back the unfastened door, and a scene of horror was presented. There she stood in the centre of the room, with a revolver in each hand, every barrel discharged, her features pale, her eyes flashing wildly, but her lips parted with a fearful smile. And there at her feet, weltering in his warm blood, his bosom literally riddled with bullets, lay the all-dread duellist, Hiram Shore, gasping in the last agony. He articulated but a single sentence: "Tell my mother that I am dead and gone to hell!" and instantly expired.

"In the name of God, who did this?" exclaimed the appalled spectators.

"I did it," said the beautiful milliner, "I did it to save my honor."

As may be readily imagined, the deed caused an intense sensation. Public opinion, however, was divided. The poorer classes, crediting the girl's version of the facts, lauded her heroism in terms of measureless eulogy. But the friends of the deceased, and of his wealthy family, gave a different and darker coloring to the affair, and denounced the lovely homicide as an atrocious criminal. Unfortunately for her, the officers of the law, especially the judge and sheriff, were devoted comrades of the slain, and displayed their feelings in a revolting partiality.—The judge committed her without the privilege of bail, and the sheriff chained her in the felon's dungeon!

Such is a brief abstract of the circumstances developed in the examination of witnesses. The testimony closed and the pleading began.

First of all, three advocates spoke in succession for the prosecution; but neither their names nor their arguments are worth preserving. Orators of the blood and thunder genus, they about equally partitioned their howling eloquence between the prisoner and her leather-robed counsel, as if in doubt who of the twain was then on trial. As for the stranger, he seemed

not to pay the slightest attention to his opponents, but remained motionless, with his forehead bowed on his hands, like one buried in deep thought or slumber.

When the proper time came, however, he suddenly sprang to his feet, crossed the bar, and took his position almost touching the jury. He then commenced in a whisper, but it was a whisper so wild, so clear, so unutterably ringing and distinct, as to fill the hall from floor to galleries. At the outset, he dealt in pure logic, separating and combining the proven facts, till the whole mass of confused evidence looked transparent as a globe of glass, through which the innocence of his client shone, brilliant as a sunbeam; and the jurors nodded to each other signs of thorough conviction: that thrilling whisper, and fixed concentration, and the language, simple as a child's, had convinced all.

He then changed his posture, so as to sweep the bar with his glance; and began to tear and rend his legal adversaries. His saw face glowed as a heated furnace; his eyes resembled living coals; and his voice became the clangor of a trumpet. I have never, before or since, listened to such murderous denunciations. It was like Jove's eagle charging a flock of crows; it was like Jove himself hurling red-hot thunderbolts among the quaking ranks of a conspiracy of inferior gods!—And yet, in the highest tempest of his fury, he seemed calm; he employed no gesture save one—the flash of a long, bony fore-finger direct in the eyes of his foes. He painted their venality and unmanly meanness, in coalescing for money, to hunt down a poor and friendless woman, all a shout of stifled rage arose from the multitude, and even some of the jury cried, "Shame!"

He changed his theme once more. His voice grew mournful as a funeral song, and his eyes filled with tears, as he traced a vivid picture of man's cruelties and woman's wrongs, with particular illustrations in the case of his client; till one half of the audience wept like children. But it was in the peroration that he reached his zenith, at once, of terror and sublimity.—His features were livid as those of a corpse; his nerves shook as with a palsy; he tossed his hands wildly towards heaven, each finger stretched apart and quivering like the flame of a candle, as he closed with the last words of the deceased Hiram Shore: "Tell my mother that I am dead and gone to hell!" His emphasis on the word *hell* embodied the acme and ideal of all horror—it was a wail of immeasurable despair. No language can depict the effect on us who heard it. Men groaned; females screamed, and one poor mother fainted, and was borne away in convulsions.

The whole speech occupied but an hour.

The jury rendered a verdict of "Not Guilty," without leaving the box; and three cheers like successive roars of an earthquake, shook the old court house from the dome to the corner-stone, testifying the joy of the people.

After the adjournment, which occurred near sunset, the triumphant advocate arose and give out an appointment: "I will preach in this hall to-night at 8 o'clock." He then glided off through the crowd, speaking to no one, though many attempted to draw him into conversation.

At 8 o'clock the Court House was again thronged, and the stranger, according to promise, delivered his sermon. It evinced the same attributes as his previous eloquence of the bar; the same compact logic, the same burning vehemence, and increased bitterness of denunciation. Indeed misanthropy revealed itself as the prominent emotion. The discourse was a tirade against infidels, in which class the preacher seemed to include every body but himself; it was a picture of hell, such as Lucifer might have drawn, with a world in flames for his pencil.

But one paragraph pointed to heaven, and that only demonstrated the utter impossibility that any human being should ever get there.—*Great West.*

"A young man recently having succeeded, after persuasion, in getting a kiss out of a girl went and told of it. One of her acquaintances met her, and said—'So, Sally, John says that you let him kiss you?' 'I did let him after he had teased me an hour, but it was a tight squeeze even then.'"

"So ho!" exclaimed the other—he did not mention that. He only spoke of the kiss, but did not say anything about the squeeze."

"What can a man do," asked a green un yesterday, "when the sheriff is seen coming up to him with a writ in his hand?" "Apply the remedy," said another one gruffly. "Remedy! what kind of a remedy?" "Heel-ing remedy, you goose—run like a quarter horse."

A Landlord Gratified.

A Yankee—but whether he was a trader or not I can't say—stood at a tavern, "away up north" in the State of New York, called for "fixins", and after swallowing a pretty considerable bill, retired. Meanwhile the landlord and interlopers were busily engaged in conversation.—By and by, Yankee and Yankee tricks were discussed. The landlord informed the bar-room company there was a live Yankee in the house, and if there were possible he would have a trick or two out of him before he left, while the aforesaid hangers-on were to be witnesses. After "pleasant smile," all round, at the landlord's expense, they left.

Next morning landlord and company were ready to snap at Mr. Yankee, as soon as he made his appearance. Breakfast being over, in walks Jonathan, with an air peculiar to folks "deoun east," paid his bill, and was to depart, when the landlord accosted him with:

"You it is plain to see, sir, are a Yankee. Can or will You oblige us with a trick or two, for I assure you we are willing to be tricked if you can do it."

"Wall, donno about that. Hev done a few in my time, but donno as I kin dew anything, smart this mornin'."

"Oh do. Lets have a trick," cried the eager crowd.

"Wall, seein' it's you I'll dew it jest to pleas yer; but I swow, you mustn't git mad."

"Oh no, not at all!" says the landlord. "I'll go his security," chimed old rumnose.

"I reckon," says Jonathan, "yew sell a prodigious sight of liquor in these parts, and good tew. Yew've a pipe of wine down celler, eh?"

"Oh, rale stuff, too, I can tell you."

"Wall," says Jonathan, "come along, all yeen that want to behold the mirical performed; and down they went into the cellar. The said pipe was pointed out. "Neow," says the Yankee, "gentlemen, yew see that pipe of wine, dew yew? A nod of assent went the rounds of the crowd. "Wall, neow, I can take brandy out of one end, and gin out of t'other."

"Do it, and you can take my head for a football," exclaimed the landlord.

Jonathan coolly drew from his pocket a large gimlet, and bored a hole in one end of the pipe, which hole the landlord was requested to cover with his thumb. He did so, and soon a hole was bored in "t'other end" Jonathan kept a sober phiz during the operation, and requested the landlord to stop up t'other while he went after somthin' to put the durned stuff in. The landlord complied with his request, and stretched across the pipe, resembling a man-o-war's man about to receive a dozen with the "cat." Jonathan meanwhile decamped, he did. The landlord's back began to ache, and he began to think the Yankee was a long time getting vials to put the liquor in. Soon the vials of his wrath began to boil over, and words too deep for human ears were struggling for utterance, and he holding on endeavored to keep the wine from leaking out. Soon the hoax began to leak from the outsiders. By and by, one gave a laugh, and guessed the landlord was done a leetle the brownest of anything he'd ever seen; and then didn't the walls of the old cellar ring again with bursts of laughter? Well, they did.

The landlord raved and swore almost—no, he was a deacon in the church!—And at last he broke forth with "Dog my eternal cats, if I ain't been tricked by the confounded Yankee." He tried to get some one of the crowd to supply his place, but old rumnose never let a good opportunity slip; he thought it would be well, inasmuch as the landlord had allowed himself to be tricked by Mr. Yankee Doodle, that he (the landlord) should vent all hands, which having promised faithfully to do, they released the landlord from his treacherous position after losing his patience and some of his wine.

"There was a man once imprisoned in a very high tower, and how do you suppose he got down? By his hair! It had grown long during the captivity; he cut it off, and uniting one hair with another by a little knot, he let down the gossamer line into the ditch of the tower, where a friend of his tied a fine silken end to it. He drew it up, and to the end of the silk was tied a thread. To the thread a piece of twine and finally a good strong rope, by means of which he finally reached the ground."

"They have some 'tall' specimens of mosquitoes in California, and their suction powers are enormous. They are said to be so strong-limbed, too, that one will take hold of your bed blanket in his teeth at night, and raise it up, so that another may creep under and bite. Fever-and-ague 'ain't a circumstance."

Late from Mexico.
Correspondence of the Pennsylvanian.
Murder of a U. S. Officer at Mazatlan.
U. S. SHIP FALMOUTH,
MAZATLIN, March 8, 1850.

I sit down to give you a hasty sketch of a most deplorable circumstance that occurred a few days since. At about 1 o'clock on the morning of the 5th inst., Lieut. White and a party of officers came on board, bringing with them the dead body of Midshipman Blucher H. Tabb, who was most foully murdered about half past eleven of the same night. Poor boy, he had just returned from a concert, full of bright dreams and gay projects, and with several other officers was waiting on the Mole for a boat to return to the ship, when a fight occurred some distance from them, between some persons unknown. It is supposed he was attracted by the noise of the quarrel, and curiosity led him to the scene of conflict. The struggle lasted but a few moments, and all the parties were seen to run. The youngster was no doubt close to the combatants, became frightened, and endeavored to fly to his friends; but alas! he was destined never to see them. He was overtaken, surrounded by a party of four or five dastardly scoundrels, armed to the teeth, who in spite of his being a perfect boy, and totally incapable of defending himself, most inhumanly put him to death. God! that such monsters should be permitted to roam the earth, and a bright boy like that, with his promise and noble aspirations, should be cut off in the spring-tide of his youth, seems almost incredible. That men, possessing one spark of humanity, could even in a moment of the most delicious excitement, be guilty of so base, so cowardly, so atrocious a deed, appears to me impossible. After the fight had terminated, one party of officers who were eye witnesses of the difficulty, started up the Mole to procure a light for their segars, when one of them accidentally stumbled upon the body of the unfortunate boy—he was quite a lad, only a little over fifteen, and by his joyous disposition, manly conduct, and generous heart, has endeared himself to all on board. When the news reached the ship the excitement was intense; and if the opportunity offers, his death will be most signally avenged. The next day, we, in company with the officers of the British frigate "Inconstant," followed his remains to the grave. May they rest in peace. I have no heart to write more.

Scenery on the Chagres River.

There is nothing in this world comparable to these forests. No description that I have ever read, conveys an idea of the splendid overplus of vegetable life within the tropics. The river broad, and with a swift current of the sweetest water I ever drank, winds between the walls of foliage that rise from its very surface. All the gorgeous "growths of an eternal summer are so mingled in their impenetrable mass that the eye is now bewildered. From the rank jungle of canes and gigantic lilies, and the thickets of strange shrubs that line the waters, rise the trunks of the mango, the celba, the cocoa, the sycamore and the superb palm. The zapote, with a fruit the size of a man's hand—the gourd tree, and other vegetable wonders attract the eye on all sides. Blossoms of crimson purple and you, of a form and magnitude unknown in the north, are mingled with the leaves, and flocks of paroquets, and brilliant butterflies circle through the air like blossoms blown away. Sometimes a spike of scarlet flowers is thrust forth like the tongue of a serpent, from the head of some convoluted unfolding leaves, and sometimes the creepers and parasites drop tails and streamers of fragrance from boughs that shoot half way across the river. Every turn of the stream only discloses another and more magnificent vista of leaf, bough and blossom. All sight of the landscape is lost under this deluge of vegetation.—No trace of the soil is to be seen; lowland and highland are the same; a mountain is but a high swell of the mass of verdure. As on the ocean you have a sense rather than a perception of beauty. The sharp clear lines of our scenery at home are wanting. What shape the land would be if cleared, you cannot tell. You gaze upon the scene before you with a never satiated delight till your brain aches with the sensation, and you close your eyes, overwhelmed with the thought that all these wonders have been from the beginning—that year after year takes away no blossom that is not replaced, but that the sublime mystery of growth and decay is renewed forever.—*J. Bayard Taylor.*

The Tobacco Crop in Missouri is very large this year. They have invented a new plug, which they call the "Bentonian twist." It is said to be a puzzle to chewers.

Time flies swiftly.

Society in California.

An intelligent correspondent of the Journal of Commerce, gives the following picture of the California Society:

"This mining business runs a man wonderfully and yet I find more literary men engaged in it than of any other class. In fact the mines are well stocked with lawyers, doctors and schoolmasters. The first of these have little in their calling to attend to—the second plenty of physic-ing, but no pay—the third undoubtedly find gold digging a much more agreeable occupation than ramming ideas into thick skulls, or belaboring the unfeeling backs of stubborn urchins. Of ministers the number is not a great deal, nor the demand—every effort here to get up Sabbath meetings has failed. The best we can do is to hold a prayer or conference meeting among 3, 5, 6 or more professing Christians of different denominations. The ravines are from 1 to 6 miles apart, with high hills intervening, and the cabins are even more scattered. Sunday too, as I have heretofore told you, is washing day, mending day, prospect hunting and gale day. There is no marrying to do—no children here to baptize—no sacramental feast—no females to exert a hallowed influence—no homes to tie men down. Such a state of society, I venture to assert, has never before existed in the world's history. I am impatient to get back to some spot where the thirst for gold has not drunk up the nobler qualities of the human heart, and made men brutish, selfish and unholly. I admit there are some exceptions, but generally speaking, men here are not what they were at home. All restraints are removed, and the cloven foot was boldly displayed."

Professor Webster.
The Boston Post of Wednesday, says the report from the jail on the previous evening represented Dr. Webster as exhibiting signs that he had begun to realize his true condition. He was disposed to converse on the serious topics appropriate to his unhappy situation.

The Herald says that his appearance is that of deep dejection. His time is mostly occupied in reading his favorite authors and in writing. A writer in the Bee states that Professor Webster has been among the most strenuous opponents of the abolition of capital punishment.

A despatch from Boston, dated April 4th says: There was a report this morning that Dr. Webster's eldest daughter had become raving crazy, but it is contradicted on reliable authority.

The story which was circulated relative to a student having seen Dr. Webster over the dead body of Dr. Parkman, arose in this way: A clergyman did state a case to the Attorney General before the conclusion of the Webster trial, but it did not relate to a case which will probably be made yubild shortly.

Don't want to Quarrel.—There is a noted mail contractor in Rumney, N. H., who can tell as big a story as most of 'em, and who possesses one of the best natured and most accommodating dispositions in the world.

"I was passing through New Jersey," said he, "a few years ago, and there came by us in the air a flight of crows, nine miles long, and so thick was the flock, you could not see the sun for 'em."

The contractor told this in a tavern, where several persons were standing about, one of whom—a coarse limed, heavy featured son of the granite State—ventured to query the correctness of the assertion.

"How long did you say, neighbor?" "Nine miles, sir."

"Don't b'lieve it," was the reply.

"Wal, look 'ere, you," said the contractor, "you're a stranger, and I don't want to quarrel with yer. So to please you, I'll take off a quarter of a mile from the thinnest part."

The stranger was satisfied.

Definition of Dogmatism.

"Robert, my dear," said Jenny with the deferential air of a scholar, "Robert, what did Mr. Carraways mean when he said he hated dog—dogmatism?" "Topp was puzzled, "Robert, my dear," Jenny urged, "what—what in the world is dogmatism?" Now it was the weakness of Topp's never to confess ignorance of anything soever to his wife. "A man should never do it," Topp had been known in a convivial season to declare, "it makes 'em conceited." Whereupon Topp prepared himself, as was his wont, to make a solemn, satisfying answer. Taking off his hat and smoothing the wrinkles of his brow, Topp said, "Humph! what is a dogmatism! Why, it is this, of course, dogmatism is puppyism come to its full growth."

"They say," is positively the greatest liar known.