

WEEKLY COMMERCIAL.

THOMAS LORING, Editor and Proprietor; BENJAMIN I. HOWZE, Corresponding Editor.—ONE DOLLAR Per Annum, invariably in Advance.

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ADVERTISEMENTS.
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OBSERVATIONS AND ODDITIES.

No. 8.
Night travel—Erie—The first Steam Boat—Mrs. Reid and the Boss Builder—The Gulf—The Quaker's pretty daughter—Fredonia.

MR. EDITOR:

It was far in the night, and we were rolling along over the hard and even road most pleasantly, when the clear mellow notes of the Driver's Bugle (they are too enlightened here to use the old fashioned tin Horn) announced our approach to some large Town, and in a short time we were dashing at a rapid rate up the broad and well lighted streets of Erie. I was in this, as I have been in many similar instances, amused by the strong passion for display evinced by the coachman—for miles we had him going along at a very modest pace, but the very moment the first lights of the Town were reflected from the windows of the coach, crack went the whip, and away dashed the Horses, as though old Nick himself was at their heels. There's nothing like making a fuss in the world, for in nine cases out of ten, men will take you rather as *what you seem to be than at what you are*; and I presume that it is in this view of the case that Stage Drivers whip up so sharply on entering a Town, for they know enough of human nature to suppose that a bystander, seeing a tired jaded team come creeping in, would at once say, that the line was not well kept up else the Horses would be in better plight.

Erie is a town of some importance, and although by no means famous as a market, it is yet a place of considerable trade.

Many years ago, Ex-Governor Reed of Pennsylvania, built, at this place the first Steam Boat ever launched upon Lake Erie, and I have frequently heard my grandfather mention a circumstance which transpired at that time which had nearly immortalized the Governor, I suppose the wife of a Governor should be styled. The circumstance was this. The hands employed in the construction of the Boat numbered about thirty, and at meal times, the old Lady, who was remarkably nice in her cookery, found that no small hole was made in her store of provisions. In vain she fretted and fumed, meal times would come, and her food as a matter of course was bound to go—at length she hit upon an expedient and the next morning the hands sat down to *sour bread*. Many grum looks were cast towards her end of the table, but the good old creature, all unconscious of any wrong, was extremely busy in pouring out the *Corn Coffee*, and attending to her manifold duties as matron.

So matters continued for a week, until a general meeting of the hands was called, and it was agreed that the boss should make a public complaint the next meal. Dinner time came, and all were seated around the table, when the boss, quietly holding up his bread, remarked, Mrs. Reed, your bread is sour. Sour! cried the old lady, evidently surprised. Yes, madam, sour; my wife is certainly a better cook than you are, for she never gives us sour bread. The old lady peered for a moment through her spectacles at the audacious man, and then broke fourth, sour! Yes sir, I know it's sour; I made it sour a purpose; how long d'ye think good sour bread would last among such a gang of hands as this is? There was a universal roar of laughter at the good woman's expense, and ever after that the hands had sweet bread to eat.

From Erie east nothing of importance occurred, except that I improved my opportunity and formed an intimate acquaintance with my sweet little neighbor. She was really a lovely creature—her eyes were black, oh, black as midnight, or charcoal, her hair was ditto, and hung in long, graceful curls over a neck as white as a ray of moonlight reflected from a tinted roof; her cheek was of a rosy red, and when she laughed, as she often did, was indented by the softest and prettiest dimple imaginable. Her form I can't venture to describe, but let it suffice to say, that if nature, in some gentle mood, had tried to mould a form of perfect symmetry, and lend it to her most effective charm, the grace of motion, she would have blushed, when her work was completed, to find that

the little Quakeress exceeded her most perfect conception.

Late in the evening of the ensuing day we halted upon the brink of a gulf, which was about an eighth of a mile in width, and descended to a depth of many hundred feet. The descent was so abrupt, and the narrow road, winding downward among the jagged and irregular rocks, seemed so unsafe, that my fair companions insisted upon getting out and crossing the chasm on foot; I, of course, accompanied the lovely pedestrians, and away we started at a run, leaving the less nervous father to snooze at his ease. It is a very pleasant thing for a man to find two or three charming creatures dependent upon him for guidance and protection; it invests him for the time with a new and holy character; he feels possessed, as it were, of the fire of Hector, coupled with the wisdom of Nestor, at once a brother and a father. Well sir, pretty much in that same way did I feel as I was racing with those sweet confiding girls, down down, down into that infernal chasm which for a long time seemed to open deeper before us the farther we went. At length we reached the bottom, and how different from what we anticipated! There was a narrow valley, carpeted with green and shaded by overhanging trees, so still, so beautiful, so like a rare and delicate painting, that but for the melodious voices of a thousand birds which were singing in the boughs above, mingling their notes with the soft murmurings of the purling brook which flowed through the midst, no sound of life could have been heard; and then the soft voices of the fair beings beside me, mingled with the sweet notes of the birds, and the singing of the brook, until that very music found an echo within me and beauty and music so filled my heart that I absolutely fell into the stream, which I had approached without perceiving its proximity.

It's a right dangerous thing for a young fellow to become so interested in a pretty girl as to watch her face for a smile; it leads him into all sorts of scrapes; makes him get into frequent brown studies,

"Grow Rosy with hope,
Or lean with jealousy,
Or pallid with despair,"
To lose his spirits and his appetite,
His love of pleasure and his fear of pain,
And, be in fact more than a man, and less.
"Oh! woman! thou should'st have few
"Sins of thine own to answer for,
"Thou art the author of such a Book
"Of follies in a man that it would
Take all the tears of all the Angels
"To blot the record out." *Lindsay.*

When the stage came down, I was right glad to get in, for there's a wide difference between running down and walking up hill, and in about half an hour after, we changed horses at a post house which stood upon the state line, half in Pennsylvania and half in New York. We were soon traversing the latter State and I grew momentarily more silent—I could not talk—not because I was in love, or thoughtful, or like the Irishman, "say sick from ridin in the coach," but simply because I was tired, sleepy, and most awfully hungry. It was ungentle and very ungentle I know, but I could not help it, and in the natural course of things I was shortly fast asleep. I don't know how long I had slept when I was awakened by a heavy irregular pressure upon my breast which I found to be the head of my enchanting companion, quietly pillowing itself there, as if nature had assigned its proper resting place. I am by no means superstitious, nor am I a believer in dreams and omens, but this circumstance coupled with a dream which was yet fresh upon my mind, induced me to think that Providence intended us for each other, and

"On that hint I spoke;"
I told her of my loneliness, and unsatisfactory wanderings; I described to her my Father's pleasant home on the banks of the Cape Fear; I invested all connected with myself with a poetical ideal interest, until
"She loved me for the sorrows I'd endured,"
and then she turned her soft lips up to mine, and gave me one long clinging confiding kiss; oh! it was nectar, while it lasted, but gracious powers! it left a taste like that of the beautiful fruit which grows on the borders of the Dead Sea, so bitter and nauseous, that I came near vomiting. Let me whisper it to you; my rare exotic, my sensitive plant, my Bird of beauty, my incomparable Innamorata, *Cherred Tobacco*—hush!

Now I was in a pickle; I had made a declaration, she had accepted; and worst of all, the old man was in the coach. What could I do? there was no sort of a chance to back out without subjecting myself to the prospect of a severe thrashing; I finally managed the matter, by getting the driver

to drop me at the last post house, and carry my baggage on to Fredonia.

Next day, I put up at the little Hotel in the Village of Fredonia. And as I remained here for sometime, enjoying the pure breeze which came in fresh from the Lake, and sporting among the village Belles, I must perforce make a gap in my narrative, and for the present, cease to trouble you with further details. I shall have much more to relate and some observations to make upon matters and things at home—one thing at a time however—first, that which few here have seen, and afterwards what all see, but few heed.

PETER SNAPPS.

From the Home Journal.

GHOST KNOCKINGS.

The damage to the renting of a house by the knowledge that there have been mysterious noises heard in it, and the unwillingness of most persons to become subjects of public conjecture and curiosity, would prevent the making public of most of the instances—supposing that spirit-knockings were now becoming general and frequent. Chancing, ourselves to know of three cases, the publicity of which is carefully avoided for these reasons, (and not seeing how or why we should know more of such things than our neighbors,) we feel justified in thinking it probable that the phenomenon—whatever it be—is more common than has been supposed. It is not two ghosts nor twenty, who have the monopoly of it—not two impostors nor twenty, (if imposture it be,) who have hit on the same trick, with the same manner of performing it, in different and very distant places. Let it turn out what it will, the topic is one so much discussed, that all which throws light upon it is interesting, and we will 'scop up' for our readers the bubble or so that has floated from the general stream into our eddy editorial.

The first story we have to tell is rather to the disparagement of ghosts, and goes to show that the mind may remain pretty much the same, for a while, after death, weakness and all. It was narrated in a letter to a private gentleman in this city, by an English friend with whom he is in familiar correspondence. Names cannot be given, for the reason we specified in the first sentence of this article, and it was written with no thought of publicity—but the writer is a man of remarkable mind and attainments, and the correspondence is mainly upon topics of religious and moral progress. We briefly give the facts:

"The wife and children of Mr. W. had been very much disturbed for some months, by unaccountable knockings. An occasional and inexplicable waving of their bed curtains was another phenomenon which troubled them.—They occupied an old house, of which Mr. W. had a long lease; but, as he wished to dispose of his lease and move to another part of London, and as he thought these phenomena were tricks that would be explained, he forbade a mention of the circumstances, as likely to prejudice the lease, and they were a family secret accordingly. Though not a physician, he was a man of considerable medical knowledge, and a female cousin being subject to fits of epilepsy, he had tried experiments of animal magnetism for her case. These had been partially successful, when, on magnetizing her, in one of her fits, she changed from a passive state to a look of intelligence.

"What a singular old woman is in the room!" she suddenly exclaimed.

No one being present but Mr. W. and his wife, he questioned the epileptic, getting gradually a description by which they recognized his grandmother, who had been dead several years. He requested her to ask the old lady what she wanted.

"She is most anxious to speak to yourself," was the reply.

Farther parley induced the venerable ghost to open her mind through a second person. She was distressed at the neglect with which her dresses and ornaments were treated, her favorite and valuable things left to mould in out-of-the-way corners, in a way that was insufferable, even where she was.

increased rapidly as they broke in, from time expressed displeasure; and, at the last allusion and its reproach there was a perfect storm of rappings. Mr. W. then bade his grandmother good night, and went to bed—since which the knockings have been no more heard.

Trill as this is, it is narrated with perfect sincerity by a strong-minded and highly educated man, and we call on the reader to credit thus much—though he may put what construction he pleases on the circumstances it details for facts. Supposing it true, it would suggest a query reasonable enough, viz.—whether those who were wedded most exclusively to this life and its trivialities are not those who cling most to it after death, and are not most eager and most likely to stumble on some way to speak to us. Ghosts have continually appeared, to see about property, buried money, and such mere matters of this world, whereas no intelligent ghost (that we ever heard of, at least) has once put his nose back, through the dropped curtains of time and desire, to tell us a single thing that is either useful or agreeable. And yet, that all ghosts, gentle and simple, see things with their new eyes, which it would be most interesting for us to know, can scarcely be doubted. It is possible that none but a 'low' ghost would have any communication with us? The reader will follow out the idea.

To give a second instance:—

A gentleman of our acquaintance, who had been a politician for many years, (and, of course, had no nerves that anything unsubstantial could much worry,) heard of a farm which could be bought cheap, because 'the house was haunted.' Feeling simply obliged to the ghosts for the accommodation, he became the proprietor, and moved there with his family for summer quarters. His wife had no objection to the disqualification of the place, for she was a Swedenborgian, and was willing to see any spirit who had an errand to her. They had been there but a short time when the 'knockings' commenced. The new tenant was a famous cross-examining lawyer, and would believe nothing on plausibilities. He set all his wits to work to discover how the ghosts did their pounding—for they were the blows of a sledge hammer apparently—and the house being a wooden one, the disturbance to sleep and comfort amounted to a serious nuisance. He was wholly unsuccessful. Three days ago he told the writer of this that it was still a complete mystery. His wife, (to her own belief) has seen a spirit walk through the locked door of her bed-room, but as it made no communication, they remain in the dark as to its object. The place has no history beyond crops. It has been occupied always by such people as none but very illiterate ghosts could have had any acquaintance with.

One instance more:—

A family of young people, whom we knew very well, moved into a new three-story brick house, in the upper part of this city, last year. Spirits are supposed to haunt only antiquated dwellings, but here, they even got the start of rats, cockroaches, and other nuisances, for unaccountable knockings were heard before the coming in of the bill for the first quarter's rent. They sent down to order the servants to stop pounding, on the evening when they first heard it, but the work was alone and had done nothing of the kind. They lit candles at night, and again and again, ransacked the house from garret to cellar, to find out what that confounded knocking could be, and discovered nothing that would any way explain it. Being young people, full of health, and with no unsettled accounts worth a dead man's while to come back about, they are getting gradually indifferent to it, already alluding to the matter with more fun than terror.

It is a point gained, (as riddance of fright on such subjects) even if we may reasonably question whether all ghosts, are respectable enough to be worthy of notice. It is indeed, a new and intelligent medium of electricity is to be subjected to our service—if spirits who will, now, at command move tables and chairs, are to be put under the control of the living—they are, of course inferior to the spirits still in the body. Is it a class of the damned who are about being turned to account? Was there not wanted in the progress of the world, an intelligent slave, to play the messenger between our intellects and the clearer perceptions of the spirit world, and has not Providence given us a clue to communication with this new agent in these electric knockings which may be the first lessons in an alphabet of spirit language?

Of course there will be much less sinning, when a ghost can be put on the stand for a witness; and, indeed, it is in this view, mainly, that we fear it to be a thing for which the world is not quite ready. That spirits are coolly looking on and listening, whatever we do and say, is a fact that has not hitherto been much of an embarrassment to us—but, when they can go and tell—virtue becomes inevitable! The pulpit's duty—encourage them to these knockings—is very clear; but will it be popular, on the whole, to know things easier than at present, and will people be willing to see established, (which seems very likely,) a system of communication between the other world and this, for a trifling postage, as now between cities for a trifling postage; news by ghost easy as news by post? It is a subject which, as Bulwer says, 'opens up.'

A DARK DEED.—The Niles (Mich.) Republican learns that the negro to whom was entrusted all the property of the colored settlement of Cass county, has fled the county with three or four thousand dollars, leaving the settlement quite desolate.

Horrible Slaughter of Indians.

From the Alta California.
We have just received particulars of the recent slaughter of a large body of Clear Lake Indians, by an expedition sent against them from the U. S. Garrison at Sonoma and Benicia. The tribe that incurred this terrible punishment comprises the natives of Sonoma and Napa valleys, and has maintained, in general, undisturbed peaceful relations with the white settlers of that section of California. Last summer, however, a stubborn family Indian offered an indignity to the wife of one Kelsey, who had resided in the country some nine years, for which he was taken before a magistrate and sentenced to receive one hundred lashes. After this punishment, on the same day, we are informed, Kelsey sought the wretched offender and laid him dead at his feet, shooting him in the presence of several gentlemen, who remonstrated with him on the barbarity of the deed. This man Kelsey was afterwards murdered, as was also a brother-in-law, by the Indians of the neighborhood. Since then repeated acts of violence have been visited upon the natives, and our readers will remember the accounts which we published a few months since, of outrages committed in Sonoma and Napa, by a party of desperate white men. The Indians were driven to the mountains and subsequently made deprecatory incursions upon their old masters, driving away cattle, and indulging their natural propensity to steal. Complaints were made,—doubtless the accounts of their conduct highly colored,—to the garrisons at Benicia and Sonoma, and on the 1st of the month an expedition was fitted out against them, composed of a detachment of Infantry, and a company of Dragoons, under command of Lieut. Davidson, (75 in all) with orders to proceed against the Clear Lake Indians, and exterminate if possible the tribe.

The troops arrived in the vicinity of the Lake, and came unexpectedly upon a body of Indians numbering between two and three hundred. They immediately surrounded them and as the Indians raised a shout of defiance and attempted escape, poured in a destructive fire indiscriminately upon men, women and children. "They fell," says our informant, "as grass before the sweep of the scythe." Little or no resistance was encountered, and the work of butchery was of short duration. The shrieks of the slaughtered victims died away, the roar of muskets that ceased, and stretched lifeless upon the sod of their native valley were the bleeding bodies of these Indians—nor sex, nor age was spared; it was the order of extermination fearfully obeyed. The troops returned to the stations, and quiet is for the present restored.

TOUCHING INCIDENT.

A lady, who arrived here from the South, Saturday evening, found when she left New Haven, that her nurse, a colored woman and slave was missing. She could not account for it, and her friends suggested that the woman had availed herself of the opportunity to secure her freedom; but she did not believe it, and thought the train on Monday would bring her. And sure enough, on Monday she appeared. It seems that in changing cars at New Haven, she went back after something that one of the children had forgotten, and so was left behind. And the faithful creature, finding herself left, and only intent on reaching her mistress, immediately started off, following the Railroad track as her guide, and sleeping out that night, pushed on all day Sunday, and slept out the next night, and reached here Monday morning about 11 o'clock, having traveled the whole sixty miles on foot. *Springfield Repub.*

A freak of Electricity from the clouds yesterday, came well nigh demolishing our telegraphic office. The batteries were much injured and one of the machines entirely unfit for use. By the ingenuity and perseverance of the Superintendent Mr. Taylor, another battery and instrument was replaced and communication was had with Macon, but the electricity beyond, was so great, that the wires would not operate. We were therefore without our regular telegraphic despatches.—*Savannah Georgian, Monday.*

Sad Accident at Hollidaysburg, Pa.

The Philadelphia papers contain the particulars of a sad accident which occurred at Hollidaysburg (Pa.) on the 4th instant. The correspondent of the Pennsylvania says: "A most distressing casualty, attended with loss of life, occurred yesterday. It has shrouded our generally quiet town completely in gloom. Bannan & Kelly's Menagerie exhibited here yesterday. During the performances in the ring of the elephant Ann, and while the audience were collected on the seats, a sudden gust of wind and rain, accompanied by hail, sprung up. It struck the pavilion—razing the entire structure to the ground. The pole unfortunately fell upon that part occupied by the audience, killing one person, a stranger of the name of Moore, and severely injuring many others by the falling of the seats—one or two small children so much that very little hopes are entertained of their recovery.—At the same time a terrible howling was set up by the different animals, which, together with the screams of the women and children, produced a scene of indescribable confusion. It was a heart-rending and appalling scene."

FURTHER ACCOUNTS OF THE FIRE.

Additional accounts to those published in another column of the fire in Philadelphia, inform us that the whole number of houses was three hundred and fifty four. Seventeen dead bodies have been found. It was, indeed, a terrible calamity.

Proclamation of the Supreme Judge of New Mexico.

[Translated from the Spanish.]
SANTA FE, March 13, 1850.
My Esteemed Friend—The arrival of a commissioner from Texas has been advertised, and we have received the address from the Governor of said State ordering to the inhabitants on the east side of the Rio del Norte the organization, under the Government of Texas, of the counties. All the right of this affair devolves on the people, who have the right by the constitution to move peaceably and to deny absolutely all their obedience and regard to the doings, orders or proclamations of the commissioners of Texas.

The Government under whose control we are living, and the civil officers who are administering our laws, have been constituted a superior power, and these laws and these officers we are all bound to support, until the Government at Washington make other and more permanent arrangements for the better management of our Government.

We should be neither loyal nor disobedient to Texas. Any attempt from that Government to the unjust usurpation of our land and boundaries we are in duty bound to resist; but if every thing can be obtained by a firm and decided will of the people, although of a pacific character, it will be rather better than to come to the facts through the medium of hostilities.

After having taken the advice of the best friends of the country, I consider it to be my duty to charge in the name of those friends, and of mine also, that every country immediately put in use of their rights which are already warranted to them by the laws, to come forward and to express with unity and firmness, and in the form of resolutions, their opinions on so very interesting an affair for us all.

And that when such thing—the resolutions—shall be done, they may be forwarded to Santa Fe for their publication, with the request that such meetings as ours shall take place on the first day of the week next.

The following rules are to be embodied in the people's mind: Not to the election polls which shall be opened by the commissioner, not to approve, neither to strengthen any one of his acts or doings, and not to contribute to him any kind of obedience or respect.

If the people keep strictly to this plan in their conduct the present mission of the commissioner of Texas will be as useless as that of Judge Baird last year.

This very interesting affair is already in the hands of the people. The military power neither helps, hinders, nor intrudes itself in favor nor against the claims of Texas.

The General Government is very culpable for its neglect in the arrangement of the boundaries of New Mexico; but we are waiting every-day for news from our delegate, and feel well founded hopes of the complete success of his mission, while we also are true and faithful to ours. Your fellow-citizen and servant,
J. HOUGHTON.

Interesting from Oregon—Rescue of Fifty Women and Children.

Governor Lane, of Oregon, has, by energetic means, succeeded in getting from the Indians nine of the murderers engaged in the massacre of Rev. Mr. Whitman's family in 1847.

Among them are said to be two Catholic priests. They were to be tried before the legislature, which met May 13th, and they have probably been put to death. Major Ogden had previously pursued the Indians, killed a number of them, and rescued about fifty women and children, taken captives at the time of the murder of Dr. Whitman's family. The women had been compelled to become the wives of some of the chiefs.

Lately, some friendly Indians have given information in Oregon, that the wives and children of some families, who journeyed over this route last season, are now prisoners among the Digter Indians—the men having been murdered. The Oregonians are highly incensed at these outrages, and it is thought they will not be satisfied until the offensive Indians are exterminated.

The Kickapoo and Calippe Indians have offered their services to Gov. Lane against the hostile Indian tribes. It is thought that with these and the forces of the territory, Gov. Lane will be able to open a safe overland communication with California.

THE CALIFORNIA BLOCK.

A block of California gold-bearing quartz, has reached New York, being the contribution of that State for the Washington National Monument.—It was brought on in charge of Hon. John Bidwell and Judge Schoolcraft.

This block of gold-bearing quartz is from the Mariposa diggings, near Fremont's mines, and weighs about 125 lbs. In shape it is irregular, approaching a square, its sides varying from eighteen to twenty inches in length. It averages in thickness nine inches—across its surface diagonally it is twenty-one inches by measurement. Very little gold is perceptible to the naked eye, but it is estimated to contain about eighty dollars worth.

SERIOUS EXPLOSION—Loss of Life. A quantity of percussion caps, stored in the umbrella factory, of Charles King, on Cedar street, N. Y., exploded on Tuesday, blowing off a portion of the roof, shattering the wall, and injuring several workmen. One of them, John Perry, was fatally wounded, his face, chest and body being perfectly riddled with the caps, which fill the skin like small shot. The damage to the building is \$5,000. It is not known what caused them to explode.

DISGRACEFUL. A disgraceful riot occurred at Pikehand township, Chester county, Pa., in a church on Sunday last. The minister, Rev. A. B. Shinkin, it seems, is unpopular with the sovereigns of that region, and while he was preaching they attacked him with damaged eggs and other missiles. Several persons were arrested.