

THE WEEKLY ADVANCE

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By
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Editor and Manager.

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AS TO RETRACTION.

By Herbert Peele.

As my readers have doubtless already noted, from the front page of this issue, W. O. Saunders, editor of the Independent, on last Friday served notice upon me demanding retraction of and apology for my open letter of last week to the Democratic voters of this county.

A newspaper is not like a magazine or a book. The editor's thoughts fly from his pen into type as fast as they are put on paper. It is not strange, then, that errors are sometimes made which have to be corrected.

As often as it makes such errors, the Advance is glad to retract and apologise for them. When they occur in the editorial column, or under the editor's name, I am personally responsible for them and am always glad to make personal apology for them.

The article to which Saunders refers began to take shape in my mind last Wednesday. Before I began to put it on paper, however, my attention was attracted by the story of the strange disappearance of Oliver Layden from Belvidere, and having been unable to get satisfactory details, the matter I took a special trip to Hertford last Thursday and drove out to Belvidere, where I interviewed young Layden's brother as to the matter. Returning home on the four o'clock train Thursday afternoon after a rather strenuous drive, I had first to write the news story and then the "open letter." I found the printer when I got to the office with hook about clean and he took the "copy" about as fast as it came from my typewriter. I would not be strange if, in such an article, I had made some minor errors. Let us see.

My first charge against Saunders is that he fears not God neither regards man. The first part is true by Saunders' own confession, and I hold that where there is no fear for God there is no regard for man. Besides, in his Down Homer, I found laughing his Down Homer I found him laughing the people of this section to scorn because some of them had not discovered him to be an infidel. When I see him on the eve of this campaign honey-fogging with this same element, I take it as excellent evidence that he cares as much for men as he can get out of them.

My second charge against W. O. Saunders is that I believe him a demagogue. I stated that as a personal opinion, giving reasons for my belief. I have nothing further to say on this point.

My third charge against W. O. Saunders is that he is always accusing others of fighting unfairly; when he is really guilty himself of the very thing that he charges against others. Because I spoke in generalities, some of which he considered applicable to himself, he declared that I was shooting him in the back. At the same time, in his paper, he was insinuating charges that he knew were not true; and when taxed with them, denying that he had ever made them.

My fourth charge against Saunders is that his attacks are made upon those against whom he holds personal spite or grudge. As he has himself stated that his paper lets those alone who let it alone, I do not see why I have anything to retract on this count.

I hold my next charge; i. e., that Saunders is always posing as a martyr or a hero as made sufficiently evident in last week's paper. I have nothing to retract on that score.

I am opposed to W. O. Saunders, I have stated, because he does not know how to tell the truth. Perhaps in this case some little revision of my statement may be necessary. I is evident that I am not able to speak with

authority as to whether Saunders is able to tell the truth or not. There are dormant possibilities in every man, we are told, of which others little dream. What I should have said, then, is that W. O. Saunders does not seem to me to know how to tell the truth. I am bound to declare that I have seen him display exceedingly small evidence of ability in that line.

Saunders also takes especial exception to my statement that no man wants to attack a skunk in his den, or handle a buzzard bare-handed, or grapple with a devil-fish. If he wants to do any of these things I have no objection; but I believe that most people will agree with me that either one of the three is a nasty job.

That I have published anything falsely of W. O. Saunders I do not believe. And I do not believe that he will wish to attempt to show in court that I have done so.

If he does press the matter, I shall go no further in retraction or apology than I have already done. If I have been unwise I have not been dishonest; if I have technically violated the law, I shall yet feel that I have told the truth.

Perhaps, after all, I am wrong about owing nobody further apology. The skunk, the buzzard, and the devil-fish are all as the Lord made them; and so are not responsible for their repulsive appearance.

But I believe Saunders claims to be self-made. I was quite sure all along that the Lord was not responsible for the job. "Children of their father, the devil," is the way Jesus described hypocrites.

Mr. and Mrs. Watkins Roberts were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Melick Sunday.

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