

# THE JEFFERSONIAN.

Devoted to Politics, Literature, Agriculture, Science, Morality, and General Intelligence.

VOL. 13.

STROUDSBURG, MONROE COUNTY, PA. SEPTEMBER 1, 1853.

NO. 45.

## Published by Theodore Schoch.

TERMS—Two dollars per annum in advance—Two dollars and a quarter, half yearly—and if not paid before the end of the year, Two dollars and a half. No papers discontinued until all arrearages are paid, except at the option of the Editor.  
Advertisements not exceeding one square (ten lines) will be inserted three weeks for one dollar, and twenty-five cents for every subsequent insertion. The charge for one and three insertions the same. A liberal discount made to yearly advertisers.  
All letters addressed to the Editor must be post-paid.

## JOHN PRINTING.

Having a general assortment of large, elegant, plain and ornamental type, we are prepared to execute every description of

## FANCY PRINTING.

Cards, Circulars, Bill Heads, Notes, Blank Receipts, Juniors, Legal and other Blanks, Pamphlets, &c. printed with neatness and dispatch, on reasonable terms.

AT THE OFFICE OF  
THE JEFFERSONIAN.

## THE WELL IN THE WILDERNESS. A Tale of the Prairie, founded on fact.

BY MRS. MOODIE.

Richard Steel was the son of one of those small landholders who are fast disappearing from merry old England.—His father left him the sole possessor of twenty-five acres of arable land, and a snug little cottage, which had descended from father to son, through many generations.

The ground plot, which had been sufficient to maintain his honest progenitors for several ages, in the palmy days of Britain's glory and independence, ere her vast resources passed into the hands of the few, and left the many to starve, was not enough to provide for the wants of our stout yeoman and his family; which consisted at that period, of three sons and one daughter, a lovely, blooming girl of ten years or thereabouts. Richard and his boys toiled with unceasing diligence; the wife was up late and early, and not one moment was left unemployed; and yet they made no headway, but every succeeding year found them in arrears.

"Jane," said the yeoman, one evening, thoughtfully to his wife, after having blessed his homely meal of skimmed milk and brown bread, "couldst thee not have given us a little treat to-night? Hast thee forgotten that it is our Annie's birthday?"

"No, Richard, I have not forgotten; how could I forget the anniversary of the day that made us all so happy? But times are bad; I could not spare the money to buy sugar and plums for the cake; and I wanted to sell all the butter; in order to scrape together enough to pay the shoe-maker, for making our darling's shoes. Annie knows that she is infinitely dear to us all, though we cannot give her luxuries to prove it."

"It wants no proof, dear mother," said the young girl, flinging her round, but sunburnt arms about her worthy parent's neck. "Your precious love is worth the wealth of the whole world to me. I know how fond you and dear father are of me, and I am more than satisfied."

"Annie is right," said Steel, dropping his knife and holding out his arms for a caress. "The world could not purchase such love as we feel for her, and let us bless God that, poor though we be, we are all here to-night, well and strong, ay, and rich, in spite of our homely fare, in each other's affections. What say you, my boys? And he glanced with paternal pride on the three fine lads, whose healthy and honest countenances might well be contemplated with pleasure, and afford subjects for hopeful anticipations for the future.

"We are happy, father," said the eldest, cheerfully.

"The cakes and spiced ale would have made us happier," said the second.—"Mother makes such nice cakes!"

"So she does," cried the third. "It seems so dull to have nothing nice on Annie's birthday. I should not care a fig if it were Dick's birthday, or Owen's, or mine; but not to drink Annie's health seems unlucky."

"You shall drink it yet," said Annie, laughing.

"In what?" asked both the boys in a breath.

"In fine spring water!" And she filled their mugs.

"Better God never gave to his creatures. How bright it is! How it sparkles! I will never from this day ask a finer drink. Here is health to you my brothers, and may we never know what it is to lack a draught of pure water!"

Annie nodded to her brothers, and drank off her mug of water; and the good natured fellows, who dearly loved her, followed her example.

Oh, little did the gay hearted girl think, in that moment of playful glee, of

the price she was one day destined to pay for a drink of water!

The crops that year were a failure, and the heart of the strong man began to droop. He felt that labor in his native land would no longer give his children bread, and, unwilling to sink into the lowest class, he wisely resolved, while he retained the means of doing so, to emigrate to America. His wife made no opposition to his wishes; his sons were delighted with the prospect of any change for the better, and if Annie felt a passing pang at leaving the daisied fields, and her pretty playmates, the lambs, she hid it from her parents. The dear homestead, with its quiet rural orchard, and trim hedgerows, fell to the hammer, nor was the sunburnt cheek of the honest yeoman unmoistened with a tear when he saw it added to the enormous possession of the lord of the manor.

After the sale was completed and the money it brought duly paid, Steel lost no time in preparing for his emigration. In less than a fortnight he had secured their passage to New York, and they were already on their voyage across the Atlantic. Favored by wind and weather, after the first effects of the sea had worn off, they were comfortable enough. The steerage passengers were poor, but respectable English emigrants, and they made several pleasant acquaintances among them. One family especially attracted their attention, and so far engaged their affections during their tedious voyage, that they entered into an agreement to settle in the same neighborhood. Mr. Atkins was a widower, with two sons, the ages of Richard and Owen, and an elder sister, a primitive, gentle old woman, who had been once both wife and mother, but had outlived all her family. Abigail Winchester, (for so she was called,) took an especial fancy to our Annie, in whom she fancied that she recognized a strong resemblance to a daughter whom she had lost. Her affection was warmly returned by the kind girl, who, by a thousand little attentions, strove to evince her gratitude to Abigail for her good opinion.

They had not completed half their voyage before the scarlet fever broke out among the passengers, and made dreadful havoc among the younger portion. Steel's whole family were down with it at the same time, and, in spite of the constant nursing of himself and his devoted partner, and the unremitting attentions of Abigail Winchester, who never left the sick ward for many nights and days, the two youngest boys died, and were committed to the waters of the great deep before Annie and Richard recovered to a consciousness of their dreadful loss. This threw a sad gloom over the whole party. Steel said nothing, but often retired to some corner of the ship to bewail his loss in secret. His wife was wasted and worn to a shadow, and poor Annie looked the ghost of her former self.

"Had we never left England," she tho't "my brothers had not died." But she was wrong; God, who watches with parental care over all his creatures, knows the best season in which to reclaim His own; but human love in its yearnings is slow in receiving the great truth. It lives in the present, lingers over the past, and cannot bear to give up that which now is for the promise of that which shall be.—The future separated from the things of time, has always an awful aspect. A perfect and childlike reliance upon God can alone divest us of those thrilling doubts and fears which at times shake the firmest mind, and urge the proud, unyielding spirit of man to cleave so strongly to kindred dust.

The sight of the American shores, that the poor lads had desired so eagerly to see, seemed to renew their grief, and a sadder party never set foot upon a foreign strand than our emigrant and his family.

Steel had brought letters of introduction to a respectable merchant in the city, who advised him to purchase a tract of land in the then new State of Illinois.—The beauty of the country, the fine climate, and fruitful soil, were urged upon him in the strongest manner. The merchant had a scrip to dispose of in that remote settlement, and as is usual in such cases, he consulted his own interest in the matter.

Steel thought that the merchant, who was a native of the country, must know best what would suit him, and he not only became a purchaser of land in Illinois, but induced his new friends to follow his example.

We will pass over their journey to the Far West. The novelty of the scenes

through which they passed contributed not a little to raise their drooping spirits. Richard had recovered his health, and amused the party not a little by his lively anticipations of the future. They were to have the most comfortable log house, and the neatest farm in the district. He would raise the finest cattle, the largest crops, and the best garden stuff in the neighborhood. Frugal and industrious habits would soon render them wealthy and independent.

His mother listened to these sallies with a delighted smile; and even the grave yeoman's brow relaxed from its habitual frown. Annie entered warmly into her brother's plans; and if he laid the foundation of his fine castle in the air, she certainly provided the cement and all the lighter materials.

As their long route led them further from the habitations of men, and deeper and deeper into the wilderness, the stern realities of their solitary locality became hourly more apparent to the poor emigrants. They began to think that they had acted too precipitately in going so far back into the woods, unacquainted as they were with the usages of the country. But repentance came too late; and, when at length they reached their destination, they found themselves upon the edge of a vast forest, with a noble open prairie stretching away as far as the eye could reach in front of them, and no human habitation in sight, or indeed existing for miles around them.

In a moment the yeoman comprehended all the difficulties and dangers of his situation; but his was a stout heart, not easily daunted by circumstances. He possessed a vigorous constitution and a strong arm; and he was not alone.—Richard was an active, energetic lad, and his friend Atkins, and his two sons, were a host in themselves. Having settled with his guides, and ascertained by the maps, that he had received at Mr. Steel's office, the extent and situation of his new estate, he set about unyoking the cattle which he had purchased, and securing them, while Atkins and his sons pitched a tent for the night, and collected wood for their fire. The young people were in raptures with the ocean of verdure, redolent with blossoms, that lay smiling in the last rays of the sun before them; never did garden appear to them so lovely, as that vast wilderness of sweets planted by the munificent hand of Nature with such profuse magnificence. Annie could scarcely tear herself away from the enchanting scene, to assist her mother in preparing their evening meal.

"Mother, where shall we get water?" asked Annie, glancing wistfully toward their empty cask; "I have seen no indications of water for the last three miles."

"Annie has raised a startling doubt," said Steel; "I can perceive no appearance of stream or creek in any direction."

"Hiss! father, do you hear that?" cried Richard. "The croaking of those frogs is music to me just now, for I am dying with thirst," and seizing the can, ran off in the direction of the discordant sounds.

It was near dark when he returned with his pail full of clear, cold water, with which the whole of the party slaked their thirst, before asking any questions.

"What delicious water—as clear as crystal—as cold as ice! How fortunate to obtain it so near at hand!" exclaimed several in a breath.

"Ay, but it is in an ugly place," said Richard, thoughtfully. "I should not like to go to that well at early day, or after night-fall."

"Why not, my boy?"

"It is in the heart of a dark swamp, just about a hundred yards within the forest; and the water trickles from beneath the roots of an old tree into a natural stone tank; but all around is involved in frightful gloom. I fancied I heard a low growl as I stooped to fill my pail, while a horrid speckled snake glided from between my feet and darted, hissing and rattling its tail, into the brake. Father you must never let any of the people go alone to that well."

The yeoman laughed at his son's fears, and shortly after the party retired into the tent, and, overcome with fatigue, fell asleep.

The first thing that engaged the attention of our emigrants was the erection of a log shanty for the reception of their respective families. This important task was soon accomplished. Atkins preferred the open prairie for the site of his; but Steel, for the nearer proximity of wood and water, chose the edge of the forest; but the habitations of the pioneers were so near that they were within call of each other.

To fence in a piece of land for their cattle, and prepare a plot for wheat and corn, for the ensuing year, was the next thing to be accomplished; and by the time these preparations were completed the long, bright summer had passed away, and the fall was at hand. Up to this period both families had enjoyed excellent health; but in the month of September Annie, and then Richard, fell sick with intermittent fever, and old Abigail kindly came across to help Mrs. Steel to nurse her suffering children. Medical aid was not to be had in that remote place, and beyond simple remedies, which were perfectly inefficacious in their situation, the poor children's only chance for life was their youth, a good, sound constitution, and the merciful interposition

of a benevolent and overruling Providence.

It was towards the close of a sultry day that Annie, burning with fever, implored the faithful Abigail to give her a drink of cold water. Hastening to the water cask, the old woman was disappointed by finding it exhausted, Richard having drunk the last drop, and was still raving in the delirium of fever for more drink.

"My dear child, there is no water." "Oh, I am burning, dying with thirst! Give me but one drop, dear Abigail—one drop of cold water."

Just then Mrs. Steel returned from milking the cows, and Abigail proffered to the lips of the child a bowl of new milk, but she shrank from it with disgust, and sinking back in her pillow, murmured, "Water! water! for the love of God give me a drink of water!"

"Where is the pail?" said Mrs. Steel; "I don't much like going alone to that well, but it is still broad day, and I know that in reality there is nothing to fear; and I cannot bear to hear the child moan for drink in that terrible way!"

"Dear mother," said Richard, faintly, "don't go, go, father will be in soon; we can wait till then."

"Oh! the poor, dear child is burning!" cried Abigail; "she cannot wait till then; do, neighbor, go for the water, I will stay with the children and put out the milk while you are away!"

Mrs. Steel left the shanty, and a few minutes after the patient, exhausted by suffering, fell into a profound sleep. Abigail busied herself scalding the milk-pans, and in her joy at the young people's cessation from pain, forgot the moulder altogether. About half an hour had elapsed, and the mellow light of evening had faded into night, when Steel returned with his oxen from the field.

The moment he entered the shanty he went up to the bed which contained his sick children, and, satisfied that the fever was abating, he looked round for his supper, surprised that it was not, as usual, ready for him upon the table.

"No water in the cask," he cried, "and supper not ready! After working all day in the burning sun, a man wants to have things made comfortably for him at night. Mrs. Winchester, are you here? Where is my wife?"

"Merciful goodness!" exclaimed the old woman, turning pale as death, "is she not back from the well?"

"The well!" cried Steel, grasping her arm, "how long has she been gone?"

"This half hour or more."

Steel made no answer—his cheek was as pale as her own—and taking his gun from the beam to which it was slung, he carefully loaded it with ball, and without uttering a word, left the house.

Day still lingered upon the open prairie, but the moment he entered the bush it was deep night. He crossed the plain with rapid strides, but as he approached the swamp his step became slow and cautious. The well was in the centre of a jungle, from the front of which Richard had cleared away the brush to facilitate their access to the water. As he drew near the spot, his ears were chilled by a low, deep growling, and the crunching of teeth, as if some wild animal were devouring the bones of its prey. The dreadful truth, with all its shocking, heart-revolting reality, flashed upon the mind of the yeoman, and for a moment paralyzed him. The precincts of the well were within range of his rifle, and dropping down upon his hands and knees, and nerving his arm for a clear aim, he directed his gaze to the spot from whence the fatal sounds proceeded. A little on one side of the well a pair of luminous eyes glared like green lamps at the edge of the dark wood; and the horrid sounds which curled the blood of the yeoman became more distinctly audible.

Slowly Steel raised the rifle to his shoulder, and setting his teeth, and holding his breath, he steadily aimed at a space between those glowing balls of fire. The sharp report of a rifle awoke the far echoes of the forest. The deer leaped up from his lair, the wolf howled and fled into the depths of the wood, and the panther, for such it was, uttering a hoarse growl, sprang several feet into the air then fell across the mangled remains of his victim.

Richard Steel rose from the ground; the perspiration was streaming from his brow; his limbs trembled and shook; his lips moved convulsively, and he pressed his hands upon his heaving breast to keep down the violent throbbings of his agitated heart. It was not fear that chained him to the spot, and hindered him from approaching his dead enemy. It was horror. He dared not look upon the mangled remains of his wife—the dear partner of his joys and sorrows—the companion of his boyhood—the love of his youth—the friend and counsellor of his middle age—the beloved mother of his children. How could he recognize in that crushed and defiled heap his poor Jane? The pang was too great for his agonized mind to bear. Sense and sight alike forsook him, and staggering a few paces forward, he fell insensible across the path.

Alarmed by the report of the rifle, Atkins and his sons proceeded with torches to the spot, followed by Abigail, who, unconscious of the extent of the calamity, was yet sufficiently convinced that something dreadful had occurred. When the full horrors of the scene were presented

to the sight of the terror-stricken group, their grief burst forth into tears and lamentations. Atkins alone retained his presence of mind. Dragging the panther from the remains of the unfortunate Mrs. Steel, he beckoned to one of his sons, and suggested to him the propriety of instantly burying the disfigured and mutilated body before the feelings of her husband and children were agonized by the sight.

First removing the insensible husband to his own dwelling, Atkins and his sons returned to the fatal spot, and conveying the body to the edge of the prairie, they selected a quiet, lovely spot, beneath the wide-spreading boughs of a magnificent chestnut tree, and wrapping all that remained of the wife of Richard Steel in a sheet, they committed it to the earth in solemn silence—nor were prayers and tears wanting in that lonely hour to consecrate the nameless grave where the English mother slept.

Annie and Richard recovered to mourn their irreparable loss—to feel that their mother's life had been sacrificed to her maternal love. Time, as it ever does, softened the deep anguish of the bereaved husband. During the ensuing summer, their little colony was joined by a hardy band of British and American pioneers.—The little settlement grew into a prosperous village, and Richard Steel died a wealthy man, and was buried by the side of his wife, in the centre of the village church-yard, that spot having been chosen for the first temple in which the emigrants met to worship in His own house, the God of their fathers.

## The Pestilence at New Orleans.

Down among the Dead Men.

From the Crescent, Aug. 11.

To verify the many horrible reports of the doings among the dead, we the other day visited the cemeteries. In every street were long processions, traoping to solemn tunes of funeral marches. In the countenances of the plodding passengers were the lines of anxiety and grief, and many a poor was festooned with black and white hangings, the voiceless witnesses of wailing and sorrow. On the one hand slowly swept the long corteges of the wealthy, nodding with plumes and drawn by prancing horses, rejoicing in their funeral vanities; on another, the hearse of the citizen soldier, preceded by measured music, enveloped in warlike panoply, and followed by the noisy tread of men under arms; while there again the pauper was trundled to his long home on a rickety cart, with a boy for a driver who whistled as he went, and swore a careless oath as he urged his mule or spavined horse to a trot, making haste with another morsel contributed to the grand banquet of death. Now among the steep fumes was heard the chiming of bells, as of Ghoulies up there, mingling their hoarse voices in a chorus of gratulation over the ranks of fallen mortality. Anon from some lowly tenement trilled the low wail of a mother for the child of her affections, while from the corner opposite burst the song of some low bacchanal, mingling ribaldry with sentiments, or swearing a prayer or two, as the humor left him.

The skies wore a delusive aspect. Above was all cloudless sunshine, but little in keeping with the black melancholy that enveloped all below. Out along the highways that lead to the cities of the dead, and still the tramp of funeral crowds knew no cessation. Up rolled the volumes of dust from the busy roads, and the plumes of the death-carriages nodded in seeming sympathy to the swaying cypresses of the swamp, enveloped in their dun appareling of weeping moss—fit garniture for such a scene.

At the gathering points carriages accumulated, and vulgar teamsters, as they jostled each other in the press, mingled the coarse jest with the ribald oath; no sound but of profane malediction and of riotous mirth, the clang of whip thongs and the rattle of wheels. At the gates, the winds brought intimation of the corruption working within. Not a puff but was laden with the rank atmosphere from rotten corpses. Inside they were piled by files, exposed to the heat of the sun, swollen with corruption, bursting their coffin lids, and sandering, as if by physical effort, the ligaments that bound their hands and feet, and extending their rigid limbs in every *outré* attitude. What a feast of horrors! Inside, corpses piled in pyramids, and without the gates, old and withered crones and fat laxter women, fretting in their own grease, dispensing ice creams and confections, and brushing away, with brooms made of brushes, the green butterflies, that hovered on their merchandise, and that anon buzzed away to drink dainty inhalation from the green and festering corpses. Mammon at the gates was making thrift outside by the hands of his black and swearing minions, that tendered sweet meats and cooling beverages to the throngs of mourners or idle spectators, who, inhaling the fumes of rotting bodies, already "heaved the gorge;" while within the "King of Terrors" held his Saturnalia, with a crowd of stolid laborers, who, as they tumbled the

dead into the ditches, knocked them "about the mazzard," and swore dread oaths intermingled with the most dreadful sounds of demonic jolity.

Long ditches were dug across the human charnal. Wide enough were they to entomb a legion, but only fourteen inches deep. Corpses laid in them showed their tops above the surface of the earth. On these was piled dirt to the depth of a foot or more, but so loosely, that the myriads of flies found entry between the loose clods, down to the cracked seams of the coffins, and buzzed and blew their *ovaria*, creating each hour their new hatched swarms.

But no sound was there of sorrow within that wide Ghenna. Men used to the scene of dissolution had forgotten all touch of sympathy. Uncouth laborers with their bare shock heads, stood under the broiling heat of the sun, digging in the earth; and as anon they would encounter an obstructing root or stump, would swear a hideous oath, remove to another spot, and go on digging as before. Now and then the mattock or the spade would disturb the bones of some former tenant of the mould, forgotten there amid the armies of the accumulated victims, and the sturdy laborer with a give would hurl the broken fragments on the sward, growl forth an energetic *d—n*, and chuckle in his excess of glee. Skull bones were dug up from their long sepulchre, with glistenings starting out.

"From each lack-lustre, eyeless hole," without eliciting an "Alas, poor Yorick," and with only an exclamation from the digger, of "room for your better!"

Economy of space was the source of calculation in bestowing away the dead men. Side by side were laid two of gigantic proportions to the size of Titans. The central projections of their coffins, left space between them at their heads and heels. How should the space be saved? Opportunely the material is at hand, a cart comes lumbering in, with corpses of a mother and her two little children. Chuck the children in the space at the heads and heels of the Titans and lay the mother by herself, out there alone! A comrade for her will be found anon, and herself and babes will sleep not the less soundly from the unwonted contact!

The fumes rise up in deathly exhalations from the accumulating hecatombs of fast-coming corpses. Men wear at their noses bags of camphor and odoriferous spices—for there are crowds there who have no business but to look on and contemplate the vast congregation of the dead. They don't care if they die themselves—they have become so used to the wreck of corruption. They even laugh at the riotings of the skeleton Death, and crack jokes in the horrid atmosphere, when scarcely they can draw breath for utterance.

The stoical negroes, too, who are hired at five dollars per hour to assist in the work of interment, stagger under the stifling fumes, and can only be kept at their work by deep and continued potations of the "fire water." They gulp deep draughts of the stimulating fluid, and reel to their tasks, hold their noses with one hand, while with the other they grasp the spade, beat on the mould, and rush back to the bottle to gulp again.—It is a jolly time with these ebony laborers, and with their white co-workers—as thoughtless and as jolly, and full as much intoxicated as themselves.

And thus, what with the songs and obscene jests of the grave diggers, the buzzing of the flies, the sing-song cries of the huckster women vending their confections, the hoarse oaths of the men who drive the dead carts, the merry whistle of the boys, and the stifling reek from scores of blackened corpses, the day wears apace, the work of sepulture is done, and night draws the curtain.

## Encounter with a Whale.

A boat's crew of five men, prosecuting the whale fishery at St. Mary's Bay, after a long pursuit, harpooned a calf whale on the morning of Monday, the 11th ult. The monster, directly upon being wounded, rushed in every direction with the utmost velocity, giving the men a warning to be cautious and prompt; at one time the fish darted furiously towards the boat. These exciting and hazardous manœuvres continued a considerable time, when the dam of the young whale, an immense animal, suddenly rose to the surface close to the boat, in an infuriated state, and elevating its tail to a considerable height, it struck the boat amidships and cleft her in two. The men luckily escaped destruction, but were precipitated in all directions into the sea, where they succeeded in keeping themselves afloat by holding on by the oars and broken boat. For a considerable time they were thus exposed in this perilous situation, until some persons came in a small boat to their assistance. Directly after they got into the small boat, nothing daunted by the recent hair breadth escape, they renewed their chase, and finally succeeded in capturing their prize. Who will say they were not brave, manly fellows? *St. John's (N. F.) Courier.*

He who hates his neighbor, is miserable himself and makes all around miserable.

Beauty eventually deserts its possessor, but virtue and talents accompany him even to the grave.