POLK COUNTY ITEMIZER.

ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY,

—BY—

GEORGE E. GOOD.

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THE DOUBLE HOUSE.

The double house was not a double house, in the ordinary sense of the word, for the two divisions had been planned at different times, and built without any regard to harmonious union; consequently, although the older part was low-roofed, cottage-like, and unpretentious, the newer overtopped it by a story, and assumed corresponding airs of distinction.

The double house stood upon a hillside, in dear old New England, and looked out over the busy town of Fairweather, across a shining perspective of river. It had kept military state in its great garden, for years, until Fairweather, suddenly waking to a sense of neglected possibilities, began to send up stacks of black chimneys, to resound with the noise of the grinding, and to stretch out arms on all sides, like an exaggerated polypus; and new streets even crept across the river, threatening to reach and embrace the double house itself, at no distant epoch.

It was while Fairweather was in this transition state, between town and city, that Margaret Ralston came to live there, with her mother and little sister, and the three set their simple household gods, in the cottage part of the double house. The stately lier portion had been occupied for some time, by a single gentleman and his servants.

"This place would be just perfection but for one thing," said Margaret to her mother.

The two were sitting in a little porch, which overlooked the river and the town, and the summer day was closing. Far off, in the reft between the hills, the sun had just gone down, leaving the sky and the river golden with lingering reflections; the town, embosomed in trees, looked, at that distance, as if it too, had abandoned itself to the spirit of repose. Margaret's eyes, wandering over this picture, had been dreamy with calm content; but, on her sudden, a spark kindled in their dark depths. Her glance had fallen by chance upon two figures, visible at little distance—the figures of a man and a dog, sauntering down toward the river. The odor of cigar smoke, too, was in the air. Margaret's brow contracted, Margaret's lips unclosed to utter the words which stand written. There was a slight dash of pettishness in her tone.

"What do you [illegible] to, dear; the mills and the lake?" Mrs. Ralston asked, turning a pair of languid eyelids lazily in her daughter's direction.

"Oh, no, mamma; I can't hear the noise of the mills, and the smoke becomes picturesque, at this distance. I like them both; I like to think of them, and the results of work. There is no fault to find with the township, only with the house. I wish anybody else lived in the other half—don't you see Mr. Elmering, over, with that great dog of hollowing at his heels, like a fair spirit? I was looking at him."

"Well, you know, Margaret, we couldn't get another place as pretty, and quiet, and cozy-like, as this is for the same money; and there are drawbacks everywhere."

"True enough, mamma; isn't life itself, one great drawback, to lone women like us? But it does seem as if we might have had some more comfortable house to carry with this house, than Mr. Elmering; for instance, a leaky roof; a knocking and groaning book; a neighbor with a propensity to borrow and never return," said Margaret, making a whimsical grimace, which turned into a smile.

"I don't see why you dislike the man so much; has never troubled you."

"He does trouble me, continually. I never see him, that I don't feel painfully aware of having been slighted in the balance and found wanting; besides, those black looks of his will bring us bad luck yet, I certainly."

"There, he is out of sight; somebody again."

"I really don't imagine what you mean, Margaret."

Margaret laughed, and settled herself more comfortably in her chair. She was a bright, dark, fascinating girl, whom plenty of people were ready to pronounce beautiful, though the charm of her face lay in its mobility, and in expression, than in any regularity of coloring, or outline. She had, you, in spite of herself, could not help liking to be near her; where she was, something fresh, and genuine, was. She was the possible contrast to her middle woman, with a tired and worn character fate had, and by dint of much illusion, all the starch, and every thing, to be shaken out; that, as circumstances had Margaret had long been the of the small household. Gentleman, strolling down the river, had seen, without see, the two ladies seated the porch, and was, at that moment, thinking of them, not very flatteringly.

"Well, well," he said to himself, "if one woman was enough to destroy the original Paradise, I need not be surprised at the effect upon mine, of a whole family of petticoats. Confound it! why need an affliction have taken precisely that shape?"

In justice to him, Mr. Elmering was writing a book, and wanted to be quiet. In a place where nobody knew him, and people were too busy to be curious, he flattered himself that he had attained the perfection of his wishes; prematurely, for the Ralstons came. The elder lady was certainly inoffensive; but the young lady and the little girl! Margaret played and sang, taught her sister music, and compelled Fanny to practice two hours a day, with a relentlessness that seemed to their neighbor simply inhuman. There were also daily lessons in elocution; and the Ralstons had a great many friends in Fairweather, who were always coming to see them, and occasioning so much talk and laughter, and additional music, that the unfortunate man, who was trying to embody his ideas, began to think the ancients had never shown their good taste more plainly than by consecrating altars to the genius of silence. Mr. Elmering could not very well sue his neighbors, on such grounds, and he did not care to move away; he merely fled from the commodious and sunny front chamber to a corner room, much given to cobwebs and damp, and revealing, through its one window, a perspective of potato patches and unfinished buildings.

Nor did he incline the more toward the Ralstons, when he heard that Margaret was "the Miss Ralston, so well known for her gift of reading and recitation." He deprecated any kind of career for women which brought them before a crowd for miscellaneous criticism; and for the women themselves, who coveted such careers, he had small charity. Margaret was probably a disagreeable creature, eaten up with vanity, and love of notoriety; and as he carefully avoided all communication with the Ralston household, he had no opportunity of correcting his ideal portrait by a comparison with the original.

This unsocial behavior was certainly no way to recommend himself to the good graces of a family of ladies. But Margaret had a grievance of her own. Two or three years before, some over-officious friend had called her attention to a magazine article, reflecting severely, not to say savagely, upon some modern theories of womanly independence. It contained a great deal of truth, and a great deal of injustice, and was far too cleverly written to laugh at. The injustice hurt Margaret more than the truth consoled her. She would have liked to challenge the author's arguments, with some chapters out of her own experience, and out of other lives she knew of. She took pains to ascertain his name; and, presently, in the course of events, she found herself living under the same roof with him.

When it became apparent that Mr. Elmering did not intend to notice his neighbors, Margaret took this loftiness to herself as a personal slight.

"For We are not living in a hotel, or in a French flat, but here in this isolated house," thought Margaret, with some bitterness. "He knows I am one of the women he finds fault with, and considers me strong minded and horrible, I suppose. I should like to ask him what he would have had me do. I am sure, I never wanted to appear in public; but one can't stand upon ceremony forever, in a world where one is liable to starve to death. I am not sorry he has turned out to be such a disagreeable person; not that his opinion of me would have mattered, in any case. I don't care what it is."

So the partition between the two halves of the double house, though only the thinnest of lath and plaster, might as well have been impenetrable granite, for all the difference it would have made to either of the households it separated. The very servants declined to know each other. Mr. Elmering's Paul and Mary Ann, being on the aristocratic side of the house, looked down with scorn on the modest Kate, in Mrs. Ralston's kitchen; and not to be behindhand with them, Kate lost no oppertunity of disparaging those "fine city servants," and of hinting darkly that, as likely as not, their master would be found murdered in his bed, some morning. What was worse, nobody expected a change in this condition of things; for where neither party is willing to conciliate, or be conciliated, the way to an amicable understanding is tolerably well blocked. But there is a factor, potent in human affairs, called accidental.

Long after Mr. Elvering had disappeared from sight, that evening, Margaret and her mother remained sitting on the porch, talking softly together, or silently watching the light fading out of the sky. A sound of trampling and panting, and a rush of feet on the steps, startled them both; and the great, black head of Mr. Elmering's dog was thrust up between them, almost at Margaret's elbow.

"That dreadful dog!" cried Mrs. Ralston, deserting her place with a small shriek of dismay, and darting into the house. Margaret rose, too; but with lips growing white. Her glance had passed over the dog, had seen his master following behind, hatless and coatless, and discerned what burden he carried in his arms. She hurried out to meet him, but she could not speak; she could only look up in his face.

"Don't be frightened; the child is safe," said Mr. Elmering, answering the terror in Margaret's eyes. "She has had a great shock—she is very weak yet; that is all. She should not be allowed to wander out alone, Miss Ralston; the river is too near. I wonder you permit it."

"She has been forbidden to go to the river alone. I thought she was up stairs," Margaret said, simply, receiving the dripping child into her own arms. She did not, at the moment, observe that she was being scolded. "Fanny, Fanny, how could you be so naughty? Mamma will be so frightened. Oh, Mr. Elmering, I don't know how to thank you, but I shall never forget—"

Margaret's eyes, uplifted, and shining with tears, made the broken words eloquent.

"My dog deserves the chief credit," said Mr. Elmering. He was touched, in spite of himself. "A plunge in the water hurts nobody, in July. Your little sister will be herself again in the morning, ready for another adventure, if you don't watch her well."

"I don't think she will disobey me again," said Margaret. "And pray take care of yourself, Mr. Elmering. You are very wet. Come, Fanny. You reckless little creature, how could you? What if we had lost you, you wicked, unlucky, precious, precious darling?"

And kissing and scolding Fanny, whom her fright had brought to a state of repentance, that reproaches could scarcely heighten, Margaret led her into the house. Mr. Elmering entered his own door. She was a prettier girl than he had thought, that over-independent Miss Ralston; and, with more of the household light than the stage meteor, in her appearance. He would really like to know something more of her, thought Mr. Elmering, inconsistently enough.

But he was "not at home," when the two ladies from the other side of the house called, next day. So Mrs. Ralston sent him a note, rather incoherent, but full of gratitude; and received, later, a polite message, inquiring for Fanny. Mr. Elmering's intrenchments of reserve appeared impregnable. Mrs. Ralston conjectured that he was a hero of the Jarndyce type—too sensitive to bear any allusion to the service he had done them; but, Margaret thought, "He doesn't want to have anything to do with us, and so he keeps out of our way;" and hid her mortification in silence.

Neither of them was right. Mr. Elmering had been feeling tired and depressed for several days, and, on the morning after the adventure in the water, he awoke with a racking headache. After sending away his breakfast untasted, and trying in vain to sit up at his desk, where all the manuscripts looked crazed, he threw himself down on a sofa, and admitted the agreeable conviction that he must be really ill. It was a fine, bright summer day; but Mr. Elmering felt chilled to the bone. Even the cheerful wood fire, which Paul kindled at his master's desire, failed to impart its warmth to his shivering frame; and he lay languidly looking at it, for hours together, too apathetic to change his position. Evening came, and Mr. Elmering was no better.

"I'm afraid I must see a doctor," he said to Paul, later. "I don't know one in Fairweather, but you may bring the nearest; I dare say he'll do."

"And if the doctor should be asking me, sir, what you thought was the matter with you," suggested Paul, the prudent, "should I say a cold, or a fever, now?"

"I don't care; you can say small-pox, if you like," said Mr. Elmering, shutting his eyes, in weary indifference to all things, himself included. "I was in a house where there was a case of it, not long ago."

Mr. Elmering had no idea that this speech would be taken for anything more than idle words. If he had but seen the horror-stricken countenance which Paul took out of the room, and into the kitchen!

"What on earth is the matter with you, man? And what are you snatching at your hat like that for? Is the master worse?" inquired Mary Ann.

"Worse? He couldn't be worse. He thinks he's got the small-pox. There's a train leaves for New York in thirty minutes—I've just time to reach the depot. I didn't engage to be a hospital nurse—not much. You'd better get him a doctor," cried Paul, vanishing out of the back door, into the twilight.

"Small-pox! And me a girl, with a complexion to ruin! The heathens there are in this world!" shrieked Mary Ann; and, braving danger enough to run up to her room and secure her best parasol and bonnet, she also vanished from the house, as her fellow-servant had done.

A little later Mr. Elmering heard, as in a half-dream, the distant whistle of the locomotive, on its way to New York, quite unconscious that it was bearing away his two faithless domestics behind it. It was only after he had rung his bell, and called their names, many times in vain, that he began to suspect he was deserted, and allowed himself to get angry. Hour after hour passed away, and no one came. Restless and in pain, dozing at intervals, and awaking himself, with a moan and a start, he got through the long night somehow, and saw the first glimmer of daylight, struggling at his window, with the darkness. He made an effort to descend to the lower rooms, but was forced to turn back, sick and giddy, at the top of the stair-case, which had lost its usual solid character, and was reeling and quivering in the tipsiest manner. Mr. Elmering crept back to his sofa, so exhausted with the exertion he had just made that he knew there was no use in attempting to repeat it. What was going to become of him, he wondered. Was he to be left there alone to die? The sun mounted higher and higher; the day wore on; and the empty rooms about him remained silent as the tomb.

"Have you noticed, Margaret, that there is nobody to be seen about Mr. Elmering's to-day?" said Mrs. Ralston to her daughter, that afternoon. "I am really afraid something is wrong."

"What could be wrong, mamma? Mr. Elmering is probably absent. He often is."

"But he leaves his servants, Margaret. Kitty says the kitchen-door stands open; but she has seen nothing of the servants all day. Don't you think we should send somebody in, to find out what the matter is?"

"And perhaps have Mr. Elmering resent our officiousness as a liberty. I advise you not to meddle, mamma."

Margaret felt, secretly, a little uneasy herself. She remembered Kate's ominous predictions, concerning the "fine city servants," and the horrors of the morning paper returned freshly to her mind. Could she ever forgive herself for remaining coldly inactive, if anything really had happened to Mr. Elmering, and they owing him so great a debt of gratitude? But, though Margaret was not usually wanting in moral courage, she shrank before the image of Mr. Elmering, with sarcastic eyebrows, and half-suppressed smile, receiving the apologetic explanations of a deputation which had invaded his premises to ascertain whether he were alive or dead; and regarding the romantic raid as one of the natural vagaries of a pack of women, imbued with stage tendencies. While she was hesitating, the postman rang the bell, and Fannie came in a few moments afterward.

"A letter, mamma—only one; for you."

"Read it, will you, Margaret? It's very odd, that my glasses are always out of the way, when I want them. Why, for Heaven's sake, child, what is the letter about? What is it?" cried Mrs. Ralston, as Margaret started up, with flashing eyes and heightened color.

"Who ever heard of such baseness? Mamma, the letter is from Mr. Elmering's Paul. He says his master is ill with the small-pox, and that he and Mary Ann have left, and he hopes that we will see that Mr. Elmering is provided with a doctor. What dreadful creatures! They left him all alone, and told nobody. Why, he has been alone, ever since last night. I will go over there, this minute, and you must send Kitty for Dr. Allison."

"Margaret! Margaret!" moaned Mrs. Ralston.

"He saved Fanny's life," cried Margaret, and ran out of the room.

Mr. Elmering, ill and faint, and half delirious with thirst, was roused from a vivid fancy of cool water rippling over the stones, by sound of a footstep flying along the corridor outside, and pausing at different doors.

"Thank God, there is somebody at last," he said aloud, with a sense of relief that was almost over-powering. He would have been glad to see even one of his recreant servants; but when his door flew open, it was Margaret Ralston that stood upon the threshold, and whose dark eyes, bright with mingled sympathy and indignation, met his.

"Oh, Mr. Elmering, I am so sorry!" she exclaimed, coming to his side. "We only knew, five minutes ago, of your being ill and alone here. I hope there is some law for punishing those wicked servants of yours. Poor fellow! how you must have suffered!"

"Yes—but I think I am better, now," he answered vaguely, turning away his head to hide the tears that rushed to his eyes, as Margaret's hand fell, for a moment, soft as a snowflake, on his forehead. That she, of all people, to be the one to answer his longing for the sight of a human face, might have struck both of them, at another time, as a fine bit of retributive justice. But Margaret thought of nothing but making the sick man comfortable, and he submitted, with a sort of wondering gratitude, to let her perform a variety of little offices for him—to bring him water and bathe his head, and arrange the disordered room and manuscripts. He never remembered once that this ministering angel, with the bright, sweet, energetic ways and looks and ways, was the Miss Ralston who gave readings. Indeed, I believe Mr. Elmering fell in love with Margaret, then and there, though he did not find it out immediately.

In due time the doctor arrived, and pronounced him ill of nothing worse than a severe influenza; and the phantom of small-pox having thus been laid to rest, Mrs. Ralston at once joined her daughter, and there was henceforth no lack of kind services about the invalid. Indeed, as his strength returned, and his nurses slackened in their assiduities, he almost began to regret the days of his illness, when the double house had been virtually a single house. He felt ashamed of his former attitude of stately isolation; nothing, he vowed, should force him to resume it; not even the little airs of cool reserve which Margaret seemed to cultivate, from the moment her patient was really convalescent. They had discussed many things, by that time, and each had been surprised to find an unexpectedly congenial companion in the other; but not a word had been uttered on the subject of Margaret's profession, or Mr. Elmering's antipathy to women who sought "careers."

But one morning Mr. Elmering happened to come into Mrs. Ralston's little parlor, and find Margaret alone.

"I did not see you yesterday," he said, almost in the tone of a man who has a right to complain of something.

"I was away all day," answered Margaret. "To be frank, Mr. Elmering, I was obliged to see the manager of a lecturing bureau, about my winter's engagements. Business is business, you know."

She looked up at him a little defiantly, and a little curiously, glad to have broken the ice at last.

"I thought you had given up that sort of thing," was all he said.

"I don't know why I should."

"You like your profession so much?"

"It is not a question of liking, with me, Mr. Elmering; but of bread and butter and self respect," said Margaret, looking her proudest. "To be sure, mamma is better off than when I began my readings, but our circumstances are far from justifying me in remaining idle. And one must do what one can do; not always what one would. I know what you think of me, Mr. Elmering; but if you knew in what straits we have been, and what mountains of difficulty my one poor little talent has helped us over, even you would not blame me."

Even you! Mr. Elmering winced.

"You are mistaken, Margaret," he said slowly. "You don't know what I think of you."

"I read your article in the —— Monthly, two years ago."

"Indeed! But Margaret, that was written before I met you."

I suppose Margaret was satisfied with Mr. Elmering's opinions, as modified to suit her own case; for sometime afterward she became Mrs. Elmering.

"But I really and truly suspect," said Margaret, laughing, as she told me this story, not long ago, "that he married me for the sake of restoring one woman to the domestic sphere. A man must have faith in a theory, who makes such an immense sacrifice to it as himself!"

CAN THE END OF THE WORLD BE NEAR?

The World's London cable says: The comet is all the talk in scientific circles at present, and it is being regarded with considerable apprehension. Richard A. Proctor, who denied that it was the comet of 1843 and 1880, now finds that he made a mistake in his calculations, and so has withdrawn his statement. More cautious astronomers than he have no doubt of the identity of the comet, and believe that it will return, at the latest, in October, 1883, and will then fall into the sun, with results that will enable us to dispense with the future publication of the newspapers of the world. I am assured that this is the opinion of the most eminent scientists of the day, C. Piazzi Smythe, the clever Astronomer Royal for Scotland, in particular, having made no secret of his belief that the end of the world is at hand.

Shiloh's Vitalizer is what you need for Constipation, Loss of Appetite, Dizziness and all symptoms of Dyspepsia. Price 10 and 75 cents per bottle. For sale by Jas. R. Miller, Dallas.

A WOMAN'S EXPENSE ACCOUNTS.

The Atlanta Constitution gives the following as a woman's manner of keeping her expense account. We are particular to give the name of the paper, so that our lady friends may know where to throw the stove-stick:

It is a touching sight to see a woman begin to make up her expenses; having firmly resolved to put down every cent she spends, so as to find out how to economize, and where all the money goes. Procuring a small book, she makes an entry, and on the Monday after the first Saturday on which her husband brings home his pay, she carefully tears the margin off a newspaper, and, with a blunt pencil, strikes a trial balance something in this way:

John brought me home $48 50, and $1 43 I had is $49 93, and $1 09 I lent Mrs. Dixon is $51 02, but, hold on, I ought not to enter that, because when she returns it, it'll go down. That was $49 93, and what have I done with that?

Then she puts down the figures, leaving out the items to save time—a process which enables her to leave most of the items to where a round sum is involved, on the supposition that they have already been set down. As thus:

Six dollars and fourteen cents for meat and 10 cents for celery, and ten cents on the street cars, and a bad 5-five cent piece I got in exchange, and $2 81 I paid the milkman—who owes me 19 cents—that $3, and 15 cents at church, and the groceries—they were either $16 50 or $16 60, and I don't remember which they are, but I guess it must have been $16 60, for the grocer said if I would give him a dime he would give me half a dollar, which would make even change, and I couldn't, because the smallest I had was a quarter—and $2 75 for mending Katie's shoes, which is the last money that shoemaker ever gets from me, and 10 cents for celery—no, I put that down.

Finally she sums up her trial-balance sheet, and finds that it foots up $64 98, which is $15 more than she had originally. She goes over the list several times and checks it carefully, but all the items are correct, and she is just about in despair when her good angel hints that there may be a possible mistake in the addition. Acting upon the suggestion, she foots up the column and finds that the total is $44 28, and that, according to the principles of arithmetic, she ought to have $5 65. Then she counts her cash several times, the result varying from $1 40 to $1 97, but then she happily discovers that she has been mistaking a $2 gold piece for a cent, and remembers that she gave the baby a trade dollar to cut its gums with. On the whole she has come within eighty-cents of a balance, and that, she says, is close enough, and she enters in one line of the account book, "Dr.—By household expenses," so much; and is very happy till she remembers, just after going to bed, that she has omitted $2 75 for her husband's hat.

A STORY FOR THE MARINES.

There was one Russian fellow that had a sand-pit all of his own, right in front of our trenches. I never saw anybody so persevering as that man was. Early in the morning he'd be popping away, and there he'd stay until nightfall, taking his food with him into the pit. He seemed to take a real pleasure in it, and as he was a very fine shot, and never let us get much of a chance at him, he was not a popular character in the advanced trenches. Many a good fellow he sent to glory. It got such a nuisance that we dropped shells at him now and again, but he minded them no more than if they had been so many oranges. One day I was down in the trenches, when Col. Mancor, of the Forty-eighth — a splendid shot and a great man for sport—came along. A party with a sergeant were at work, and just as the colonel came up, one of them dropped with a ball through his head. "Deuced good shot! Who fired that?" says the colonel, putting up his eye-glass. "Man in the rifle pit to the left, sir," answers the sergeant. "Never saw a neater shot," says the colonel. "He only showed for a moment, and wouldn't have shown then only the edge of the trench is a bit worn away. Does he often shoot like that?" "Terrible dangerous man," replies the sergeant; "kills more than all the guns in the Redan." Now, major," says the colonel, turning to another officer who was with him, "What's the odds against my picking him off?" "In how long?" "Within ten minutes." "Two to one, in ponies." I'll give you," says the major. "Say three and it's a bargain." "Three to one in ponies," answered the major, and the bet was made. He was a great man for measuring his powder, was the colonel, and always emptied out a cartridge and then filled it up again according to his taste. He took about half his time getting the sergeant's gun loaded to please him. At last he got it right and the glass screwed well into his eye. "Now, my lads," says he, just push poor Smith here up over the trench. He's dead enough, and another wound will make very little difference to him." The men began to hoist the body up, and the colonel stood, maybe 20 yards off, peering over the edge with eyes like a lynx. As soon as the top of Smith's shako appeared, we saw the barrel of the gun come slowly out of the sand pit, and when his poor dead face looks over the edge, whizz comes a bullet right through his forehead. The Russian, he peeps out of the pit to see the effect of his shot, and he never looks at anything again until he sees the everlasting river. The colonel fired with a sort of chuckle, and the rifleman sprang up into the air, and ran a matter of ten or twelve paces toward us, and then fell on his face, as dead as a door nail. "Double or quits on the man in the pit to the right," says the colonel, loading up his gun again, but I think the major had dropped money enough for one day over his shooting, for he wouldn't hear of another try. By the way, it was handed over to Smith's widow, for he was a free-handed gentleman, was the colonel, not unlike yourself, sir.

HE EXPLAINED THE ROUTE.

Now and then a chronic grumbler from the Eastern States finds himself starring as a tourist out west, and learns the purchasing power of growls is not unlimited in that section.

"Where do we take dinner?" querulously demanded such a character of a conductor on the Northern Pacific railroad, traveling from Fargo to Bismarck.

"At Jamestown," courteously replied the conductor.

"At what hour?"

"At 11:22," answered the conductor.

"Can't you stop somewhere and let me get a cracker?"

"Not very well, sir. There are no opportunities between here and Jimtown."

Finding himself treated in such a gentlemanly fashion, the tourist turned loose and cursed the road from St. Paul to Glendale creek, and after finishing his dinner, he took in the Duluth branch, and wound up with the officers and train men, consigning the whole business to the bitterness and wrath eternal. The conductor made every effort to pacify him, but his exertions only stimulated the volume of abuse until the train stopped at Bismarck.

"Can't I see you a moment?" asked the conductor, taking the tourist by the elbow and leading him to the quadrangle back of the Sheridan House. "You don't seem to understand this railroad system. Now here's Duluth!" and he spanged the tourist in the left eye. "And here's St. Paul!" planting his fist in the other optic with terrible force. "The two lines meet here at Brainard!" which he mapped out on the bridge of the passenger's nose. "Then the trunk line runs along to Jimtown, where you get your dinner!" and he brought him a terrific one on the mouth. "From there to Bismarck is only a short run!" planting a crusher on the victim's chin, landing him in a mud-puddle, doubled up like a stomach-ache, and howling for mercy. "You will notice that the vigilant officials are carefully scanning all points of the road!" and he marched up and down, before his prostrate student, who was yelling for help.

"What's the matter, Jim?" inquired a friend whose attention had been attracted by the controversy.

"Showing a bloke the advantages of our railroads over the eastern outfit," replied the conductor. "They never explain things where he lives, and I'm fixing it for him so he won't feel like grumbling another time he travels over our line. Wait until I point out the school section and the railroad grant!"

But the tourist had eeled out of the puddle and gained the office of the hotel, to the disgust of the conductor and his friend, who were prepared to display all the attractions of the country rather than see a stranger depart dissatisfied.

If a man wants to be abusive in that part of the republic he wants to write out his views and mail 'em to his family. Careless expressions are very apt to pan disagreeable explanations.—Brooklyn Eagle.

Thursday evening a Chinaman boarded the down train, and only having enough money to pay his fare to Barnhart's, and failing to borrow of other Chinamen on the train, the conductor ordered him to get off at that station. But instead of waiting till he got there, while the train was passing through a rock cut below Daniels', he jumped off against the rocks while the train was in full motion. But a Chinaman is hard to kill, and he turned up safe and sound next morning, without a scratch or injury from his dangerous leap.—East Oregonian.

"Yes sir," said Mr. Gallagher, "it was funny enough to make a donkey laugh. I laughed till I cried."

THE POWER OF THE PRESS.

One of the old-time editors of Michigan was boasting that he had never been sued for libel, or attacked in his sanctum, but he could recall many narrow escapes. Twenty-five years ago he was running a red-hot paper on the line of the Michigan Central railroad. A man named Carson, who was running for some county office, was given a bad racket, and the editor received a note that if he had anything more to say he might expect to receive a good pounding. He had a still more bitter attact the next week, and the paper was hardly mailed before in walked Carson, the candidate, accompanied by a brother and two cousins. The four were strapping big fellows, and each was armed with a horse-whip. The two compositors and the "devil" got out with all speed, leaving the editor without support. He realized the situation at once, and began:

"Walk in, gentlemen; I presume you have come to horsewhip me?"

"We have," they answered.

"Very well. Have you thoroughly considered this matter?"

"It doesn't need any consideration," replied Carson. "You have lied about me, and I'm going to lick you within an inch of your life!"

"Just so, my friend, but first hear what I have to say. Did you ever hear of the press being stopped because the editor was cowhided?"

"I dunno."

"Well, you never did. Lick me all you choose and my paper comes out week after week just the same. The power of the press is next to the lever which moves the universe. It makes or breaks parties, builds up or tears down, plants or destroys. Aggravate the editor and the press becomes a sword to wound and kill. Wollop me if you will, but next week I'll come out more bitter than ever."

There was an embarrassing silence right here, and the face of each horse-whipper had an anxious look.

"It will go out to the world—to America, Canada, England, France—aye! clear to Jerusalem, that the Carson family of this county live on roots and johnny-cake; that they stole a dog from a blind man; that they murdered a peddler for a pair of 2-shilling suspenders; that the women are club-footed and the men work their ears when they sing; and the——"

"What is the regular subscription price to the Herald?" interrupted Carson.

"Only 12 shillings a year."

"Put us four down."

"Very well—$6—that's correct. Run in and see me—all of you, and if any of you want to see any of my Detroit exchanges I shall be only too glad to serve you."—Detroit Free Press.

TWINS OVER NINETY.

Barnard Keplar and his twin brother, John N. Keplar, were born in Plumsted Township, Bucks county, on March 27, 1792, over ninety years ago, on the spot where they have resided to this day. "This old house," said Barnard Keplar yesterday, "from which brother John and I, in the natural course of events, must be taken to the grave, has sheltered us for nearly a century;" and he might have added that from that little strip of land hand in hand they have seen the country pass through three great wars, generations apart, without ever having seen a soldier; have lived within the shadow of their hill-side home while one of the greatest countries of the world had grown up in magnificence with its mighty network of steel highways, and have yet to take their first ride in a railway car or hear the tick of the telegraph instrument.

These two singular old men are the sons of John Kepler, who died in 1841. They were born on March 27, 1792, on their father's little farm, one mile and a half from Gardenville. They are bachelors, and have never been separated from each other even for a day at a time. Once only they visited Philadelphia, a quarter of a century ago, when the first mutterings of the political storm which was about to burst into a civil war were heard, and they returned home convinced that the country was on the verge of dissolution. Bernard, who notwithstanding the weight of 90 years, is hale-looking and retains a wonderful memory, says that he voted for Madison in 1813, and has voted for every Democratic Presidential candidate since then. "And so has brother John," he added, turning to his twin, who sat near him. Evidently Bernard has been the stronger in mind, as he has been the larger in physique of the two. John is a small man, not much over a boy's size, and looks ten years older than his brother.

"A great many people come to see us," said the former, "and the census man always makes a special report. We are the oldest twins in the United States, according to the census reports. Some time ago two old ladies who are twins, and live at Solesbury, came over to compare ages. They were only 80," added the old man, somewhat contemptuously, "and we are over 90."

Benton Lesder: Mr. Mack Porter, one of our substantial farmers, living at the Buttes, about eight miles from town, has probably the finest colt in Oregon. It is a yearling filly weighing 1150 pounds, and sired by the well known horse Larry. The colt took the sweepstakes for its class at the State Fair this fall. Farmers who take pains to thus improve their stock are not only entitled to credit, but put money into their own pockets.