

All the citizens present had long since voted, and there being no response, the officer said, "We are about to turn the box. Are there any objections?"

Neither party dared longer to risk the possibility of the wrong man's coming, and consequently no one made any objection. The constable then turned the box, and the votes were counted.

All the men and boys had again assembled on the floor, and as Constable Stone rose to his feet to make the declaration, not a sound was heard.

"Gentlemen," said he, "the whole number of votes cast for town representative is twenty-seven. Thomas Stoughton has thirteen and Medad Hitchcock fourteen. Medad Hitchcock is therefore elected by one majority." The Federalists had it!

The barn was soon nearly deserted; but while the men were yet standing before the doors, congratulating each other, or wearing a sombre expression, according to whether they were Federal or Democratic, a man was seen with his coat on his arm, hurrying along the path from the north, very much out of breath. It proved to be Frost, the missing Democrat. Then the Federalist faces grew long, and underjaws fell, while the Democratic faces became expectant.

Scarce a minute later three men were seen hastening up from the south. They proved to be Stebbins and the men who went for him. And now the Federalist chins came up again, and their mouths broadened into a grin, and a shadow fell upon the visages of the Democrats. The men had gone to Stebbins's house, and, after much talk, persuaded his wife Susan to tell what she knew of the matter. It took some time to do this; for she at first took them to be the officers of whom Stoughton had told them.

Neither Federal nor Democrat could say much. One party had played a trick, and the other party had made it "tit for tat" without knowing it; thus the election would have resulted the same if neither party had made their attempts to outwit the other.

Stebbins was half starved, and both he and Frost thought they ought to have some whiskey for their sufferings. The others concluded to have some more with them—the defeated party to cheer their spirits, the victors to honour their victory.

Thus was the purity of the Westfield ballot-box maintained, and the Federal preponderance established on the Canada line.—*M. W. Farman, in the New England Magazine.*

FACTS, FEARS AND IMAGINATION.

THE country on the west of Narragansett Bay has been abundantly favoured with unnatural phenomena, and also to a remarkable degree with the means for investigation of their origin. One amusing incident which came under the writer's observation a few years ago, was the means of arousing an interest which has been kept alive ever since.

A certain house had the reputation of frequently changing tenants. Some of these, upon being asked their reasons for removal, would say the house was haunted, while others, well knowing that to admit such a reason for removal would provoke only jeers and laughter, wisely refrained from such an excuse by pleading other reasons. Enough, however, was known. So it came about that when the last new tenant had vacated the house, that the common remark was, "They have seen the ghost." Becoming myself curious to see it, I one day asked an old woman, who had lived in the neighbourhood a great many years, how long these things had been going on. She was very talkative, and gave a long story about the matter, which was briefly as follows:—

The house had been let for a number of years to tenants whose character was not reputable. About three years previous a man was seen to enter, but was never known to have left the house. The night following his arrival was spent in revelry. The language heard by the passer-by that evening was not as courteous nor as chaste as it might have been, and the revel broke up in a fight.

From these circumstances the old woman had formed a theory that the man had been murdered, and that his spirit still hovered around there.

In passing by the house I observed that the two wires of the telegraph ran very close to the end windows, under the roof, and

that the wind had the usual privilege of exercising its genius upon the wires. Stepping beside one of the poles, my companion and I found that it was then doing finely in the way of providing weird music. Learning that the key of the house was kept in the next dwelling, the favour of entering the haunted precincts was solicited. When the custodian learned our reasons for wishing to inspect the house, he laughed, and remarked that we ought to know that it was the news they were sending over the wires that was making the noise, and not the wind. On being asked his reasons for so thinking, he said that a cousin of his had a friend who once worked in a telegraph office, and he had so stated.

"Very well," was the reply. "Wind or news, that is the true ghost. If we can get into that house, we can prove it."

This appeared to interest him. We then inquired if there had been any trouble before the wires had been put up; to which he answered that there had not.

"The trouble, then, has come with the wire, and will continue as long as that wire runs so close to that window," we added.

He brought the key, and together we went over the house. The investigation fully bore out our theory. I then remarked that this music would seem very different in the night to what it did now—that it would not require much imagination to hear fiddling and dancing, and screams and groans, and everything necessary upon which to build a fine ghost story. I then said to the custodian that if he would come there with me that night, we would find every word of my theory to be true, and, besides, we would have a free entertainment.

The result was, we went that night to the house, and had just such an experience as I had anticipated.

Another source from whence many a story of groans and screams have arisen, while not so readily seen at first, is still as easy to understand when once known. Let wind pass through crevices, especially if in those crevices there happens to be splinters, and one not versed in such matters will be surprised to discover what weird and unnatural sounds will be produced. Many persons of good understanding, even, ignorant of the peculiar mechanical conditions which are the cause of the alarming sounds, are sometimes thrown into a great horror by the mysterious manifestations.

It is a notable fact that most of the haunted houses in the country are those which have become more or less uninhabitable, and are consequently more open to the action of the wind than those in good repair. This consideration at once solves the mystery of many haunted houses.

In the Narragansett country there is another source of phenomena that is readily comprehended when the explanation is once brought to the attention of a reasoner. Whether so common in other parts of New England, we know not, but presume it is not; for if it is so common elsewhere, it must have been remarked upon. Electrical storms are and have been of frequent occurrence here. Those who delight in nature's works can nowhere find grander pictures. We will instance a case where one of these storms was turned to advantage, and with it close this paper.

During the winter of 1816-17 a great revival occurred in this region, and hundreds professed religion, and many expressed a wish to be baptized. The weather was cold, and ice covered the surface of the rivers and ponds. Instead of waiting for warm weather, it was proposed to run the risk of taking cold, rather than imperil the soul by delay. The night before the baptism was to take place, some interested parties repaired to the place where the baptizing was to be, and cut the ice, opening a space sufficient for the purpose. In order to keep the opening from freezing over, the water was to be frequently agitated during the night with poles. The next morning those who had taken upon themselves this task had a wonderful story to tell. The water had not shown any inclination to freeze over during the night, although the weather was intensely cold. All that night music was heard in the air, as if troops of angels were hovering overhead, and had come to this place to bestow, in their celestial way, a blessing on the work to be there so soon accomplished.

This story was by many implicitly believed. Old members of the church confirmed the story, and testified that in going home from meeting that evening the heavens seemed to them filled with