CONVERSAZIONE.

Extracted with Difficulty.

The taciturnity of backwoodsmen used to be much illustrated by American writers, but now, perhaps because backwoodsmen are too few to form as conspicuous a national element as formerly, their peculiarities are not often mentioned. From Canada, which still has vast areas of almost unbroken forest, we received the following verbatim report of a conversation between a city sportsman and his backwoods guide, Bill Buckshaw:

"You have killed a moose, Bill, I suppose?" "Some."

"Any big bulls?" "Some."

"Where?" "Back yonder."

"Were you ever charged by one?" "Onct."

"How was that?" "He come at me."

"Had you wounded him?" "Yas."

"How did he come?" "Acrost the swale."

"Couldn't you stop him with another shot?" "Hadn't on'y a muzzle-loader."

"Did he get close to you?" "Clost as you be."

"Then you killed him?" "No."

"What then?" "I clumb up."

"Where?" "On the root."

"What root?" "The big pine root."

"A fallen pine?" "Yas."

"What did he do?" "Lammed into it."

"Into what?" "The root."

"How?" "Lickety pelt. Head first. Twict."

"Did he go off then?" "I near did."

"He shook the root, eh?" "You bet."

"But you held on?" "Sure."

"Were you sitting?" "Stannin'."

"How could you hold on?" "Branches to root."

"Well, what then?" "I fetched him."

"Oh, you had another shot?" "Got loaded up."

"Then you killed him?" "You could 'a' killed him yourself then."

"With that," says the sportsman, "I gave up the questioning, and imagined the details. After a long silence Bill said: "'That cured me of muzzle-loaders.'"

Garfield's First Drill.

When President Lincoln issued his first call for volunteers Garfield was a member of the Ohio Senate. It was a matter of patriotism and of State pride that Ohio should have her quota of the 75,000 men promptly in the field. Garfield was asked to raise a regiment from his district. He needed no great urging. He knew nothing about military matters, he said, but "it was never too late to learn." A legislative "drill squad" was organized, and at ten o'clock the same night about 60 representatives and senators assembled under the dome of the Capitol rotunda.

The "position of the soldier" was minutely explained, amid general merriment, and "marking time" followed, and then an advance of three paces to the halt. The alternative orders, "Left! Right!" had been executed fairly well, when Garfield suddenly broke the silence.

"Say, general, why don't you go off with the right foot first? That strikes me as good sense."

"Senator," said the adjutant-general, "you are the first sergeant of the company. I will give you a chance to explain your own method presently. 'Never too late to learn,' you know."

With that a musket was sent for and handed to the senator.

"Now," said the adjutant-general, "before you begin your instructions we must have at least one exercise with the gun. I will keep out of your reach, but when I give the order, 'Charge bayonet!' you will advance one step and strike out as if you meant to run me through."

The charge was ordered and executed with vigor.

"Hold, sergeant, that will never do," said the adjutant-general. "The whole company is watching you. You advance the left foot first. Remember your own instructions. Ready! Charge bayonet!"

A shout went up from the whole company as Garfield attempted to obey the order, right foot first. He enjoyed the fun as well as any of them, and as the senators and representatives dispersed, shouts of "Left! Right!" resounded through the corridors of the Capitol.

Garfield told the story many years afterward, and the man who was then adjutant-general now sends it to The Youth's Companion.

The Bible for Statesmen.

The Bible is the statesman's manual. Why? Because its histories unfold to us the divine, and so eternal, constitution of the nation. If the nation were a creature of human device, a conscience, we might tolerate special legislation: we might possess our souls in view of a mild species of jobbery and political cunning. But when we turn to this Word and read there the exhaustive record of God's own kingship over his chosen nation, which he called and established; writing with his own finger its fundamental law; dictating a code of practical legislation, which has passed like life blood into every nation of acknowledged vitality: when we read of "the powers that are ordained of God": when we turn to the course of Providence and see that the nation is the consummation of the world's long travail toward order and righteousness, we then are compelled to acknowledge that the nation is a relization in time of that eternal government of God which covers all things visible and invisible from the beginning. This Word of God, therefore, lays its finger with awful significance upon the sources of authority, saying righteousness, righteousness, eternal, simple righteousness which has forever and forever stood by the throne of the Almighty. In the high places of power we need no black-letter wisdom but only the clear seeing of a pure heart. We may be positively sure then, that when our legislation begins to grow wily and sinuous, "speaking low out of the dust as one that hath a familiar spirit," we have fallen from that high consciousness of divine origin which alone can establish a nation.—[James H. Ecob, D.D.

Books, Then and Now.

Experts are predicting that the books of to-day will fall to pieces before the middle of the century. The paper in the books that have survived two or three centuries was made by hand, of honest rags, and without the use of strong chemicals, while the ink was made of nut galls. To-day much of the paper for books is made, at least in part, of wood pulp, treated with powerful acids, while the ink is a compound of various substances naturally at war with the flimsy paper upon which it is laid. The printing of two centuries ago has improved with age; that of to-day, it is feared, will, within 50 years, have eaten its way through the pages upon which it is impressed.—[The Paper World.

COULDN'T REACH THE ROOF.

Insufficient Ladder Equipment for the Fire Brigade.

The Firemen Drilled—Unsafe Condition of the Extension Ladder—An Aerial Apparatus Needed.

At 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon the fire alarm at the corner of Wellington and Dundas streets was sounded by a deputation of aldermen — No. 3 Committee members. They had given instructions to Chief Roe at the last meeting to exercise the firemen at ladder drill, and this occasion was a public test on the McCormick Company's high building. All three brigades were on the spot in good time. The antiquated truck of No. 1 brigade was relieved of its longest ladder, which was placed in position. Then the extension was run up, making its total height 50 feet. This only reached the top windows, while the roof was 10 or 15 feet higher. One of the firemen scaled the height for the edification of the civic solons. The ladder was taken down and put up three or four times for practice; then it was replaced in the truck, the hose wagons and the men returned to their quarters, and the crowd of onlookers dispersed, thinking they had been made the victim of an April fool's trick.

The test was important in one respect: it showed clearly the inadequacy of the present ladder equipment. The extension ladder bent under the weight of one man; but in case of a fire it would take at least four men to carry up the hose to the top. Add to this the weight of the hose when charged with water, and a fireman could not make the ascent, except at the risk of his life. The ladder is an old one, and its timbers have lost their original strength. It has been previously tried on the McClary buildings, and though it touched the top windows it could not reach the roof. Suppose a fire broke out at McClary's, at the Tecumseh House, in Reid Bros.' establishment, in McKay's cigar factory, in the Granite block, in the large wholesale stores on Richmond street or in any of the tall structures that abound in the business portion of the city? If it became necessary to throw a stream in the fourth story window, the extension ladder would have to be used, and there is a strong probability that the attempt would result disastrously. The other ladders may be all right for the purpose they serve. The longest of them is 29 feet. The remedy suggested is the purchase of an aerial truck. This question was considered by the committee and action was deferred until they should have an opportunity of seeing what could be done with the present ladders.

Another thing that needs renewal is the ladder truck. This ancient vehicle has a decided sag in the middle, and some day it will probably split in two on the way to a fire if used much longer. One of the wheels flew off quite unexpectedly some time ago, and it was lucky that no ladders were required at the fire. If an aerial ladder truck is purchased the old one can be dispensed with.

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