F
104
.W65W3

Class F104
Book .W65W3

THE

Battle of the Frogs,

AT

WINDHAM, 1758,

WITH VARIOUS ACCOUNTS

AND

THREE OF THE MOST POPULAR BALLADS ON THE SUBJECT,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY WILLIAM L. WEAVER.

PUBLISHED BY
JAMES WALDEN,
WILLIMANTIC, CONN.
1857.

THE

Battle of the Frogs,

AT

WINDHAM, 1758,

WITH VARIOUS ACCOUNTS

AND

THREE OF THE MOST POPULAR BALLADS ON THE SUBJECT,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY WILLIAM L. WEAVER.

PUBLISHED BY
JAMES WALDEN,
WILLIMANTIC, CONN.
1857.

.0745

F 109
.N5 W3

INTRODUCTION.

CELEBRITY OF THE AFFAIR.

The town of Windham has been rendered famous for all time, by a memorable event which occurred within its borders about a hundred years ago, when the inhabitants were greatly alarmed and frightened by some unusual demonstration among the bull-frogs.

This really singular affair has obtained a wide-spread notoriety, and the story of the Windham Frogs is well known all over the country. Indeed, the fame of it has been so extended, that a citizen of the town can hardly go so far from home, but he will hear something about bull-frogs if his place of nativity is known.

This occurrence has been celebrated in song, and sung in rhyme and doggerel of all kinds of measure and metre; it has found a place in grave history; the most exaggerated accounts have obtained credence in some quarters; various traditions and anecdotes in relation to it, have been remembered with remarkable tenacity, while it has afforded an inexhaustible theme for the indulgence of wit and pleasantry at the expense of the inhabitants of the town.

We may presume the actors in the scene did not wish to hear much about it, nor always relish the jokes and jibes to which they were subject, but their descendents have received the ridicule which has been showered upon them from all quarters, with great good nature. They have laughed with those that laughed at the ludicrous aspects of the affair, and have not been disposed to get angry with those who were inclined to "poke fun" at them on this account. In fact, they have accepted the bull-frog as a device, have stamped his

image on their bank-bills, and were it in the days of chivalry, their heraldic devices and coats of arms would blazon with bull-frogs.

WINDHAM AND THE FROG POND.

Before noticing the different accounts and traditions relating to the affair, or attempting any explanation of it, a few facts will render the subject more intelligible to those unacquainted with the geography and topography of the town.

Windham is situated in the eastern part of Connecticut, about thirty miles from Hartford, and was at the time of the occurrence, (1758,) and for many years subsequent, the most important town in that section of the State. It had been settled about sixty years and contained a thousand or more inhabitants.

The village of Windham is located on a hill or considerable elevation, which rises to its highest point a short distance east of the public green, called "Swift Hill," because the residence of the celebrated Judge Swift was situated on it.

From the summit of this hill, the ground gradually descends eastward to the Frog Pond, which is just a mile from Windham village on the Scotland road. The intervention of this hill, may in a measure explain the confusion of noises heard at the time of the alarm, which appeared to many to be in the air. The Frog Pond, or rather pond of frogs, at the time of the occurrence, was a moderate sized mill-pond, caused by damming a small stream. The pond is somewhat larger now than formerly, caused by raising the dam, and when full, covers a surface of about twenty acres. This pond was of a marshy kind, well adapted to the taste of frogs, and must at the time, have contained a large number, of all sorts and sizes, with excellent voices. It is not necessary, however, to suppose it contained as many as Peters, in his History of Connecticut, would have us believe; for, at a moderate estimate, his account would give more than *five millions;* but there were enough to make a great deal of "noise and confusion" when they became excited. There are not probably as many frogs in the pond now as formerly, yet there are a "few left." A

friend, sometime since, fishing in its waters, had a powerful bite, when he "hauled in" and found he had caught a big bull-frog.

THE ALARM OF THE TOWN.

It was, according to most accounts, in the month of June or July, 1758, on a dark, foggy night, the wind easterly, with an atmosphere favorable to the transmission of sound, that the event happened. It was past the midnight hour, and the inhabitants were buried in profound sleep, when the outcry commenced. There were heard shouts and cries, and such a variety of mingled sounds, which seemed to fill the heavens, that soon roused the people from their slumbers and thoroughly alarmed the town.

To the excited imaginations of the suddenly awakened and startled inhabitants, it is not strange that some thought the day of judgment was at hand, while others supposed that an army of French and Indians was advancing to attack the town.

We are not about to draw upon the imagination, to depict the scenes that then and there transpired, as others have done, our only object being to give such facts and incidents, as will enable the reader to arrive at a correct solution of the affair. But the alarm and turn out of the whole town at the dead hours of night, the darkness and confusion in consequence, the cries and screams of the terror-stricken women and children, the running hither and thither of the half-naked inhabitants, the continuance of the strange and perfectly unaccountable noises, must, without any exaggeration, have produced a scene, in common phrase, "more easily imagined than described."

It should be remembered, that it was then comparatively a new country, and during the time of the French and Indian war that resulted in the conquest of Canada. Col. Dyer* had

* Col. Eliphalet Dyer, the same for whom the frogs called so loudly, was one of the most eminent men in the town and State. He was agent for the Colony to England, member of the first and second Congress, Chief Justice of the State, &c. It is related of him, that on one occasion his arrival in the city to attend Congress was greeted with shouts of laughter; when alighting, he discovered the cause of merriment to be a monstrous bull-frog, dangling from the hinder part of his carriage, appended probably by some wag on his route.

just raised a regiment to join the expedition against Crown Point, and many of the brave men of the town belonged to it, and were at this time on the banks of Lake George, under the heroic Putnam, battling with their savage foes.

Many incidents of the fright are related, and the names of some of the prominent men of the town have been immortalized by this affair, but we do not choose to give any, except such as are brought out in the following accounts and ballads, and those are probably pure fictions, or greatly exaggerated.

Towards morning, the sounds began to die away, and order and quiet was restored to this unusually peaceful town. To those who took the trouble to go to the pond—and we presume many did go next day—the scene of the disturbance was manifest. Dead frogs by hundreds, some say thousands, were lying on the shores of the pond or floating on its surface, either killed in battle, or by some dire catastrophe. The mortification and chagrin of the citizens, when the facts became known, may well be imagined, and we presume they never heard the last of it. To be frightened half out of their senses by a parcel of contemptible bull-frogs, was too ludicrous an affair not to make them the butt of ridicule ever afterwards.

ACCOUNT OF PETERS.

That the people of Windham were aroused from their midnight slumbers; that the town was thoroughly alarmed and many terribly frightened; that there was great confusion and consternation, caused by some extraordinary tumult among the frogs, as has been stated, all this is undoubtedly true; but the occasion of this unusual outcry in frogdom, the *why* and *how* of it are not so clear, there being many versions and explanations of the affair.

The account of Peters, given in the following pages, in his *veracious* History of Connecticut, which has probably been more widely published than any other, is that the frogs finding their pond becoming dry, left it in a body for the river, and were so numerous that, in his own language, "*They filled a road forty yards wide four miles in length*," and the noise and clamor made by them in passing through the town at midnight, caused the alarm. This account has obtained ex-

tensive belief, especially abroad, and the first ballad following, is founded upon it. The absurdity and evident exaggeration of this statement, are truly laughable, and were it not that his narration has been, and still is considered by many, a veritable history of the affair, it would be unworthy a moment's notice.

Mr. Peters resided at Hebron, Conn., only about a dozen miles from Windham, soon after the occurrence; he had evidently been in the town and describes its appearance; he might then have easily obtained the facts; his account is *apparently* candid, and were there nothing else incorrect or untrue in his book, his statements, however wonderful, would seem to be *founded* on fact.

But his whole book is most grossly and unpardonably inaccurate and reckless in its statements, besides its downright falsehoods. As a specimen or two of his incorrectness, he says, the Frog Pond is *five miles* from Windham, whereas it is only *one;* that it is *three miles* square, when it never was a fourth of a mile in extent.

From this and other exaggerated statements with which his book abounds, it is plain that no reliance whatever can be placed on his account, clergyman though he was, unless sustained by other testimony, and his object probably was to make out a *large story* to add to the attractions of his book.

OTHER ACCOUNTS.

There are, however, some traditions that the frogs left the pond and started *towards* the town and were met by the armed men," and a battle, or rather a massacre *did* take place, when the frogs were slaughtered without mercy by the enraged inhabitants, whose slumbers had been so much disturbed. But these accounts seem to be all founded on the statement of Peters, or ballads based on the same.

The other and more favorite theory is, that there was simply and literally a "battle of the frogs," or a fight among themselves, caused by a short supply of water, owing to a severe drought which had prevailed. This view of the matter is fully set forth, suitably embellished, in the account given in the following pages, and first published as a preface to the

song, entitled "Lawyers and Bull-frogs." It is probably more generally believed by the present inhabitants of the town than any other, as giving the most rational explanation of the affair; yet it is not by any means established, as we shall see.

TRADITIONS IN THE FOLLETT FAMILY.

Supposing the facts and particulars would be better known, and the traditions more reliable by those living in the immediate vicinity of the pond, we have taken some pains to learn the views of those on the spot, as obtained from their fathers, living at the time of the occurrence.

The Frog Pond was then owned by a Follett family, and the premises have been in possession of their descendants ever since. The privilege is now owned by Abner Follett, Esq., who has very kindly given the writer of this article his views of the affair, founded on traditions preserved in the family. He says that his father, though young, remembered the occurrence, was on the ground at the time, and he has often heard him relate it.

These traditions are briefly as follows: The event occurred in the month of JUNE, though whether O. S. or N. S., Mr. Follett does not know. The pond was not dry, nor had there been any drought, as is so generally believed; there was plenty of water at the time in the pond, it being supplied by a never failing stream. The frogs did not leave the pond, as many now suppose, and there was no evidence of fighting, though many dead frogs were found about the pond next morning, yet without any visible wounds. The outcry was loud and very extraordinary, the noises seemed to fill the heavens, and are described as thunderlike. Some near by declared that they could feel their beds vibrate under them, yet knowing from whence the sounds came, and that they were made by the frogs, they were not frightened, as were the inhabitants of the village. The real cause of the outcry is unknown. Various opinions were entertained at the time; some attributed it to disease, as so many dead frogs were found on the shores of the pond.

Such is the substance of Mr. Follett's statement, and coming so direct, and from such a source, is entitled to the greatest

weight. To those who know Mr. F., it is unnecessary to say that nothing exaggerated or savoring of romance would be stated or entertained by him. No man has had better opportunities to learn the facts; no one, we think would be more likely to discard all fiction, and if these statements can not be credited, we can place no reliance on any traditions relating to the affair.

CAUSE OF THE OUTCRY.

From the lapse of time since the occurrence, the few reliable facts preserved, and the conflicting accounts, it is not so easy to decide positively, as to the cause of the disturbance.

It occurred when newspapers were scarce, and no account, so far as we can learn, was published at the time. It is very certain that the sounds heard were not the *ordinary* croakings of the frogs, for their usual notes could hardly be heard a mile, under favorable circumstances; besides, their common sounds would not have caused alarm, or attracted any particular attention. It must have been something unusual and very extraordinary to have produced such an excitement.

The statement of Peters, and others, that the frogs left the pond, is rejected, not only from its inherent improbability, but as not warranted by the circumstances, or sustained by the most reliable traditions.

The other and more favorite theory is, as has been stated, that owing to a severe drought, there was a short supply of water, and that the frogs fought among themselves for the enjoyment of what remained.

The writer, with many others, has believed that the frogs *did* have a fight, that they "fought like dogs," and that many did not live to fight another day.

This view would certainly seem to be inconsistent, or at least not sustained, by the account of Mr. Follett. If the occurrence was in June, it is not probable that there was a drought so early in the season, and if there was no drought, the cause universally assigned as the origin of the fight did not exist. Yet notwithstanding these statements, we think the possibility of a fight is not absolutely precluded, though rendered less probable. But if the frogs did not have a fight, what caused

them to make such a terrible outcry? Was it disease, as suggested by some, at the time? It is hardly probable that an epidemic would have been so sudden in its attack, have produced so great mortality, and have been so soon over.

Was there a shock of an earthquake, or some convulsion of nature in connection with the affair, that proved such a catastrophe to the frogs? The jarring thunder-like sounds would indicate that it is possible, yet there are no facts or traditions besides, to warrant such a supposition. Were there thunderings and lightnings, and were the frogs somehow affected and killed by electricity? There is nothing to justify such a conclusion. What was it then that killed the frogs? The two facts undisputed are, that there was an unusual outcry and a large quantity of dead frogs found about the pond next morning, which, taken together, we think plainly indicates that the noise had some connection with the death of the frogs. It has been suggested that when frogs make the most noise, they are in the highest state of enjoyment, and if the traditions are correct, the sounds made were of the same *kind* as heard from frogs on ordinary occasions. This would show that they were having a high time, were very happy, and therefore vociferous; perhaps striving with all their might to excel each other. But in this case, what killed the frogs? Is it possible that it was the excitement or over-exertion on that memorable night?

We may tax the imagination to any extent, yet if the frogs did not fight among themselves, we are left entirely to conjecture as to the cause of the disturbance. But, will frogs fight? We believe they are not naturally very belligerent, yet like other inoffensive creatures, they *can* and sometimes *do* fight, and it is also said that the big ones will destroy and eat up the little ones. Some facts with regard to the habits and peculiarities of frogs, would be interesting, and perhaps help solve the difficulty, but we can only allude to them.

That a frog is not exactly a fighting animal, is shown from the fact that he is not possessed of any formidable means of offense or defense, and has no teeth, only a hard membranous gum, extending around the mouth. Their mode of combat is peculiar. They grapple each other with the fore paws, get

hold with their mouth, and when firmly fastened together, will kick with their hind feet at the most vital parts. Besides their capacity for making their usual sounds, they will, when injured, at times, utter a cry like that of a young child. We should suppose that in this mode of fighting they would make a good deal of fuss and noise, and it *is* a fact that while so engaged they do sometimes cry out or "squall" as a person remarked who had often observed them. In such a contest the strongest would most likely prove the victor, and as the frog is rather tough-hided, death by such a process might not leave any visible wound on the victim. It has been suggested that had there been a battle, there would have been profound silence, but we have it on good authority, that frogs do at times, when engaged in fighting, make more or less noise; yet whether they would, or did, make such a racket as was heard on this occasion, while having a general melee, is a question. But as frogs *will* fight, and do sometimes make a noise when engaged in combat—even if there was no lack of water in the pond, and no cause known for a conflict—can we not more rationally account for the outcry, and the dead frogs, by supposing that for some reason or other, there *was* a battle, than on any other hypothesis?

But we can devote no more space to the consideration of this "strange eventful history." It was certainly one of the most remarkable events that ever occurred in the country, the like of which was never known before or since. With the facts and speculations given above, and the accounts following, we leave our readers to form their own opinions of the occurrence, and its cause.

As many have a desire to preserve the old songs and traditions relating to this affair, the writer has collected the following accounts and ballads, which are "Curiosities of Literature" in their way, and presents them as amusing relics of the olden time, in a style and form suitable for preservation.

THE WINDHAM FROGS.

BY REV. SAMUEL PETERS.

[The following marvelous account of the Windham Frogs, is extracted from Dr. Samuel Peters' General History of Connecticut.

Mr. Peters resided at one time in Hebron, Conn., previous to the Revolutionary War, and living so near the scene described, and it being so soon after the event happened, it is rather strange that he should give such an exaggerated account of the affair.

But Dr. Peters was a decided Tory, and found it convenient to leave for England soon after the breaking out of the war. In 1781, he published in London, his famous History of Connecticut, in which he attempted to show up the people of the colony, with their manners, customs, laws, &c., in no very enviable light. This extract is a fair specimen of its correctness. No wonder President Dwight called it "a mass of folly and falsehood."]

"Windham resembles Rumford and stands on the Winnomantic River. Its meeting-house is elegant, and has a steeple, bell and clock. Its court-house is scarcely to be looked upon as an ornament. The township forms four parishes, and it is ten miles square. Strangers are very much terrified at the hideous noise made on summer evenings by the vast number of frogs in the brooks and ponds. There are about thirty different voices among them; some of which resemble the bellowing of a bull. The owls and whip-poor-wills complete the rough concert, which may be heard several miles. Persons accustomed to such serenaders are not disturbed by them at their proper stations; but one night, in July, 1758, the frogs of an artifical pond, three miles square, and about five from Windham, finding the water dried up, left the place in a body, and marched, or rather hopped, towards Winnomantic River. They were under the necessity of taking the road and going through the town, which they entered about midnight. The bull-frogs were the leaders, and the pipers followed without number. They filled a road forty yards wide, for four miles in length, and were for several hours, in passing through the town, unusually clamorous. The inhabitants were equally perplexed and frightened; some expected to find an army of French and Indians; others feared an earthquake and dissolution of nature. The consternation was universal. Old and

young, male and female, fled naked from their beds with more shriekings than those of the frogs. The event was fatal to several women. The men, after a flight of half a mile, in which they met with many broken shins, finding no enemies in pursuit of them, made a halt, and summoned resolution enough to venture back to their wives and children; when they distinctly heard from the enemy's camp these words, *Wight*, *Hilderken*, *Dier*, *Pete*. This last they thought meant treaty; and plucking up courage, they sent a triumvirate to capitulate with the supposed French and Indians. These three men approached in their shirts, and begged to speak with the general, but it being dark, and no answer given, they were sorely agitated for some time betwixt hope and fear; at length, however, they discovered that the dreaded inimical army was an army of thirsty frogs going to the river for a little water. Such an incursion was never known before nor since; and yet the people of Windham have been ridiculed for their timidity on this occasion. I verily believe an army under the Duke of Marlborough would, under like circumstances, have acted no better than they did."

[The following ballad is from an old Providence Gazette, and appears to be founded on Peters' account of the affair:]

THE FROGS OF WINDHAM,

AN OLD COLONY TALE, FOUNDED ON FACT.—BY ARION.

When these free States were colonies
  Unto the mother nation,
And, in Connecticut, the good
  Old Blue Laws were in fashion,

A circumstance which there occurred,
  (And much the mind surprises
Upon reflection,) then gave rise
  To many strange surmises.

You all have seen, as I presume,
  Or had a chance to see,
Those strange amphibious quadrupeds,
  Call'd bull-frogs commonly.

Well, in Connecticut 'tis said,
By those who make pretensions
To truth, those creatures often grow
To marvelous dimensions.

One night in July, '58,
They left their home behind 'em,
Which was an oak and chestnut swamp,
About five miles from Windham.

The cause was this:—the summer's sun
Had dried their pond away there
So shallow, that to save their souls,
The bull-frogs could not stay there.

So in a regiment they hopp'd,
With many a curious antic,
Along the road which led unto
The river Willimantic.

Soon they in sight of Windham came,
All in high perspiration,
And held their course straight t'wards the same
With loud vociferation.

You know such kind of creatures are
By nature quite voracious;
Thus they, impelled by hunger, were
Remarkably loquacious.

Up flew the windows, one and all,
And then with ears erected,
From every casement, gaping rows
Of night-capped heads projected.

The children cried, the women scream'd,
"O Lord have mercy on us!
The French have come to burn us out!
And now are close upon us."

A few upon the first alarm,
Then arm'd themselves to go forth
Against the foe, with guns and belts,
Shot, powder-horns, and so forth.

Soon all were running here and there,
In mighty consternation;
Resolving of the town to make
A quick evacuation.

Away they went across the lots,
Hats, caps, and wigs were scatter'd;
And heads were broke, and shoes were lost;
Shins bruis'd and noses batter'd.

Thus having gain'd a mile or two,
These men of steady habits,
All snug behind an old stone wall
Lay, like a nest of rabbits.

And in this state, for half an hour,
With jaws an inch asunder,
They thought upon their goods at home,
Exposed to lawless plunder.

They thought upon their hapless wives,
Their meeting-house and cattle;
And then resolv'd to sally forth
And give the Frenchmen battle.

Among the property which they
Had brought with them to save it,
Were found two trumpets and a drum,
Just as good luck would have it.

Fifteen or twenty Jews-harps then
Were found in good condition,
And all the longest winded men
Were put in requisition.

Straightway, in long and loud alarm,
Said instruments were clang-ed,
And the good old one hundredth psalm,
From nose and Jews-harp twang-ed.

Such as were arm'd, in order ranged,
The music in the center—
Declar'd they would not run away
But on the French would venture.

There might have been among them all,
Say twenty guns or over—
How many pitchforks, scythes and flails,
I never could discover.

The rest agreed to close the rear,
After some intercession,
And altogether made a queer
And curious procession.

Some were persuaded that they saw
The band of French marauders;
And not a few declared they heard
The officers give orders.

These words could be distinguish'd then,
"Dyer," "Elderkin," and "Tete,"
And when they heard the last, they thought
The French desired a treaty.

So three good sober-minded men
Were chosen straight to carry
Terms to the French, as ministers
Plenipotentiary.

These, moving on, with conscious fear
Did for a hearing call,
And begged a moment's leave to speak
With the French general.

The advancing foe an answer made,
But (it was quite provoking,)
Not one of them could understand
The language it was spoke in.

So there they stood in piteous plight,
'Twas ludicrous to see;
Until the bull-frogs came in sight,
Which sham'd them mightily.

Then all went home, right glad to save
Their property from pillage;
And all agreed to shame the men
Who first alarm'd the village.

Some were well pleas'd, and some were mad,
Some turn'd it off in laughter;
And some would never speak a word
About the thing thereafter.

Some vow'd, if Satan came at last,
They did not mean to flee him;
But if a frog they ever pass'd,
Pretended not to see him.

* * * * * *

God save the State of Rhode Island
And Providence Plantations;
May we have ever at command
"Good clothing, pay, and rations."

One good old rule, avoiding strife,
I've follow'd since my youth—
To always live an upright life,
And tell the downright truth.

THE FROG BATTLE.

ANONYMOUS.

[The following account of this singular event is undoubtedly much nearer the truth than the narration of Peters. It was first published as an introduction to the ballad following.

The latter is said to have been composed by Master Ebenezer Tilden, of Lebanon, father of the somewhat noted Col. Tilden, of the same town. The most ancient looking copy the writer can find, has the following long and rather quaint title: "A true relation of a strange battle between some Lawyers and Bull-Frogs, set forth in a new Song, written by a jolly farmer of New England." In the one following, which appears to be a revised edition, seven new verses are added and three omitted from the old copy, supposed to be the original. We have been unable to ascertain who wrote the subjoined account, or revised the ballad, or to find the date of their first publication, but it was many years ago. This song, under the titles of "Lawyers and Bull-Frogs," and "Bull-Frog Song," has been extensively published, and has been very popular. In fact, it has been considered *the* Bull-frog song. In it an attempt is made to hit off some of the magnates of the town, and we presume it was not very well relished by them on its first publication.

The *cause* assigned in it for the disturbance among the frogs, is of course, purely fanciful, and the description of the scenes occasioned by the alarm, probably contain more poetry (or rather rhyme) than truth.]

"On a dark, cloudy, dismal night in the month of July, A. D., 1758, the inhabitants of Windham, a small town in the eastern part of Connecticut, (family prayer having been duly and reverently performed around each altar,) had retired for rest, and for several hours, all were wrapt in profound repose—when suddenly, soon after midnight, the slumbers of the peaceful inhabitants were disturbed by a most terrific noise in the sky, right over their heads, which, to many, seemed the yells and screeches of infuriated Indians, and others had no other way of accounting for the awful sounds, which still kept increasing, but by supposing that the day of judgment had certainly come, and to their terrified imaginations, the awful uproar in the air seemed the immediate precursor of the clangor of the last trumpet. At intervals, many supposed they could distinguish the calling out of the particular names, as of Col. Dyer, Elderkin, two eminent lawyers, and this increased the general terror. It was told me by my reverend

grandmother, and I do not doubt the fact in the least, as it has been confirmed by many other aged and venerable *standbys* of the town, both male and female, that the minister of the parish, surrounded by his trembling family, fell on his knees in an agony of prayer, and, (as expressed in the verses which follow,) in his garden among the bean-poles, (but this probably is an embellishment of the poet,) and that by a simultaneous movement, a great proportion of the inhabitants resorted to the same expedient for succor. But soon there was a rush from every house, the tumult in the air still increasing. Old and young, male and female, poured forth into the streets, "*in puris naturalibus*," entirely forgetful, in their hurry and consternation, of their nether habiliments, and with eyes upturned, tried to pierce the almost palpable darkness. My venerable informant, who well recollects the event, says, that some daring spirits, concluding there was nothing supernatural in the hubbub and uproar over head, but that rather they heard the yells of Indians commencing a midnight attack, loaded their guns and sallied forth to meet the invading foes. These valiant heroes, on ascending the hill that bounds the village on the east, perceived that the sounds came from that quarter, and not from the skies, as at first believed; but their courage would not permit them to proceed to the daring extremity of advancing eastward, until thy should discover the real cause of alarm and distress which pervaded the whole village.

"Towards morning the sounds in the air seemed to die away, and the horror-stricken Windhamites, discovering that no Indians made an attack, and that for that time they had escaped from being called to their account, (a general impression prevailed for a time among the females and the more timid of the male population, that the day of judgment was at hand,) retired to rest, but not until the two robust Colonels had planted sentinels in every place where there was the least danger of an attack from the Indians.

"In the morning, the whole cause of alarm, which produced such distressing apprehensions among the good people of the town, was apparent to all who took the trouble to go to a certain mill-pond, situated about three-fourths of a mile eastward

of the village. This pond—hereafter in the *annals* of *fame* forever to be called the FROG POND—in consequence of a severe drought which had prevailed for many weeks, had become nearly dry, and the Bull-Frogs it was densely populated with, fought a pitched battle on the sides of the ditch which ran through it, for the possession and enjoyment of the fluid which remained. Long and obstinate was the contest maintained. Several thousands of the warrior hosts were found dead on both sides of the ditch the next morning. It had been remarkably still for several hours before the battle commenced, but suddenly, as if by a pre-concerted agreement, every frog on one side of the ditch raised the war cry, COL. DYER! COL. DYER! *and at the same instant*, from the opposite side shouted the adversaries, ELDERKIN TOO! ELDERKIN TOO!

"Owing to some peculiar state of the atmosphere, the awful noises and cries appeared to be directly over their heads; and considering all the circumstances, it is not at all surprising that many ludicrous, and even distressing events, should have occurred on that eventful night, among the affrighted inhabitants of the city of 'BULL-FROGS.'"

BULL-FROG SONG,

ORIGINALLY ENTITLED "LAWYERS AND BULL-FROGS."

Good people all, both great and small,
Of every occupation,
I pray draw near and lend an ear
To this our true relation.

'Twas of a fright happened one night,
Caused by the bull-frog nation,
As strange an one as ever was known
In all our generation.

The frogs we hear, in bull-frog shire,
Their chorister had buried;
The saddest loss, and greatest cross
That ever they endured.

Thus being deprived, they soon contrived,
Their friends to send to, greeting,
Even to all, both great and small,
To hold a general meeting.

Subject and lord, with one accord,
Now came with bowels yearning,
For to supply, and qualify,
And fit a frog for learning.

For to supply immediately,
The place of their deceased,
There did they find one to their mind,
Which soon their sorrow eased.

This being done, the glorious sun,
Being down and night advancing,
With great delight they spent the night,
In music and in dancing.

And when they sung, the air it rung,
And when they broke in laughter,
It did surprise both learned and wise,
As you shall find hereafter.

A negro man, we understand,
Awoke and heard the shouting,
He ne'er went abroad, but awak'd his lord,
Which filled their hearts with doubting.

They then did rise, with great surprise,
And raised the town or city,
Although before unto the poor
They ne'er would show pity.

With one accord they went abroad,
And stood awhile to wonder,
The bull-frog shout appears no doubt
To them like claps of thunder.

Which made them say, the judgment day,
Without a doubt was coming;
For in the air, they did declare,
Was very awful drumming.

Those lawyers fees would give no ease,
Though well they're worth inditing;
To pray they kneel—alas! they feel
The worm of conscience biting.

Being thus dismayed, one of them said,
He would make restitution—
He would restore one-half or more—
This was his resolution.

Another's heart was touched in part,
But not pricked to the centre,
Rather than pay one-half away,
His soul, he said, he'd venture.

Then they agreed to go with speed,
And see what was the matter;
And as they say that by the way
Repenting tears did scatter.

They traveled still unto the hill,
With those men they did rally,
Then soon they found the doleful sound
To come out of the valley.

Then down they went, with one consent,
And found those frogs a singing,
Raising their voice for to rejoice,
This was the doleful ringing.

Home those great men returned then,
Now filled with wrath and malice,
And mustered all, both great and small,
From prison and from palace.

Swearing, I say, thus in array,
To be revenged upon them;
Thinking it best, I do protest,
To go and fall upon them.

Then armed all, both great and small,
With guns and swords and hatchets,
The Indian king could never bring
An army that could match it.†

*Old Stoughton he ran and charged up his gun,
And flourished his sword in the air,
"But not being stout," he at last gave out,
And fell on his knees to prayer.

Then armed with fury, both judge and jury,
Unto the Frog-Pond moved;
And as they say, a fatal day
Unto the frogs it proved.

*This terrible night the Parson did fright
His people almost to despair,
For poor Windham souls, among the bean-poles,
He made a most wonderful prayer.

---

† The following are the verses here omitted in this edition, but in the original

Being I say, thus in array
Upon the mountains early,
These Lawyers they, did send away
With them to hold a parley!

Who did demand, I understand,
Of them what was the reason
That they did cry, so hideously
Saying it was high treason!

The bull-frogs brave, the reason gave
And their own cause defended!
Telling their case, before their face,
As it was apprehended.

*Lawyer Lucifer called up his crew,
Dyer and Elderkin, you must come too.
Old Col. Dyer you know well enough;
He had an old negro, his name was Cuff.

*Now massa, says Cuff, I'm now glad enough,
For what little comfort I have,
I make it no doubt my time is just out,
No longer shall I be a slave.

*As for Larabie, so guilty was he,
He durst not stir out of the house;
The poor guilty soul crept into his hole
And there lay as still as a mouse.

*As for Jemmy Flint, he began to repent,
For a Bible he never had known,
His life was so bad he'd give half he had
To old Father Stoughton for one.

Those armed men, they killed them,
And scalped about two hundred;
Taking, I say, their lives away,
And then their camp they plundered.

Those lusty frogs, they fought like dogs,
For which I do commend them;
But lost the day, for want, I say,
Of weapons to defend them.

Then with a shout they turned about,
And said we've now been crafty,
Our city's peace shall now increase,
And we shall dwell in safety.

Home those great men returned then,
Unto the town with fury,
And swore those frogs were saucy dogs,
Before both judge and jury.

I had this story set before me
Just as I have writ it,
It being so new, so strange and true,
I could not well omit it.

Lawyers I say, now from this day,
Be honest in your dealing,
And never more increase your store,
While you the poor are killing.

For if you do, I'll have, you know,
Conscience again will smite you,
The bull-frog shout will ne'er give out,
But rise again and fight you.

*Now Lawyers, Parsons, Bull-frogs, all,
I bid you each farewell;
And unto you I loudly call
A better tale to tell.

---

* Not contained in the original song.

[The verses following were published in the "Boston Museum," in 1851, and it is supposed were written by a native of Windham.]

THE BULL-FROG FIGHT;

A BALLAD OF THE OLDEN TIME.

A direful story must I tell,
  Should I at length relate
What once a luckless town befell
  In "wooden nutmeg" state.

'Twas in the days of old King George,
  The Dutchman, who did reign
O'er England, and her colonies,
  And islands in the main.

The Frenchmen, in those troublous times,
  With Indian tribes did strive
To shoot, and scalp, and tomahawk,
  And burn our sires alive.

And many a village was burned down,
  And many a shot and scar
To our forefathers oft was given
  In the French and Indian war.

But the direst fray in all that war
  To shake King George's crown,
Was when the BULL-FROGS marched by night
  Against old Windham town.

These bull-frogs lived a mile away,
  Beyond the eastern hill,
Within a rich and slimy pond
  That feeds an ancient mill.

And there, at night, their concerts loud
  Rolled up from stump and bog,
As bass and treble swelled the throat
  Of bull and heifer frog.

But "on a time" the greedy sun
  Had drunk their lakelet dry;
The reckless mill had drained it out,
  With grinding corn and rye.

And they but met an angry glare,
  When they reproached the sun;
Their bitter tears moved not a mill
  Nor broke its heart of stone.

The drinking sun and mill had drained
  A domain wide and rich,
And *dissipation*, not their own
  Brought the frogs to a narrow ditch.

Nature a living owed to them—
  'Twas very plain—and yet
They watched in vain for clouds to come,
  And *liquidate* the debt.

They often gasped and prayed for rain,
  And she did oft refuse,
And each dark eve conviction brought
  That she grudged them their *dews*.

At length, one night, when human kind
  In sleep had settled down,
They heard Shetucket rolling on,
  Beyond old Windham town.

The murmur of that rushing stream,
  Borne on the western wind,
Filled them with frenzy, and they left
  Their native pond behind.

They sallied forth, a mighty host,
  They swarmed upon the hill
Beneath whose front the village lay,
  In slumbers deep and still.

And now Shetucket's gurgling roar
  Came freshly from the wood,
And maddened them with strong desire
  To leap into the flood.

They piped, and screamed, and bellowed forth,
  In accents loud and deep,
Their frantic joy, and like the ghost
  Of Banquo, "murdered sleep."

The villagers whose rest was slain
  By this advancing crew,
Awaked from horrid dreams, in fear
  That they'd be murdered too.

For ne'er did angry foemen raise
  So loud and fierce a din—
Nor Scotch, nor Dutch, nor mad Malay,
  Nor ancient Philistine.

The frightful sounds were now like yells
  From painted savage grim,
And now—more terrible than that—
  Like Cromwell's battle hymn.

Then forth the people rushed, to hear
  Those noises rend the air;
And some resolved to meet the foe,
  Some, refuge sought in prayer.

Some thought the judgment day at hand;
  But their fears were banished quite,
By a funny black, who 'clared 'twas strange
  That that *day* should come in the night.

And soon were gathered on the green,
Old Windham's valiant sons,
Some armed with pitchforks, rakes, or scythes,
And some with rusty guns.

And there, in hurried council met,
They trembled and stood still,
To listen to the cruel foe
Who thundered from the hill.

The fiendish jargon that so loud
From throats discordant rung,
They doubted not conveyed fierce threats
In French or Indian tongue.

But how their warmest blood was chilled,
To hear the foe demand
The lives of their best citizens—
Much noted in the land.

How quaked their very souls with dread,
As, mid the grievous din,
The foe, remorseless, bellowed forth
The name of "Elderkin."

Their very hearts within them died,
When, as the host drew nigher,
They heard resound, in guttural notes,
The name of "Colonel Dyer!"

But fiery Mars inspired a few,
Who stalwart were in frame,
To meet the enemy in fight,
His insolence to tame.

They girded on their armor strong,
They charged their guns with lead;
Their friends gave them the parting word,
And mourned o'er them as dead.

And then this gallant company
  Marched boldly up the hill,
Resolved to quell the raging foe—
  His fevered blood to spill.

They reached the spot from whence was heard
  The fearful hue and cry,
And, though no murderous foe was seen,
  They let their powder fly.

Ensconced behind a granite wall,
  They poured a leaden rain
From blunderbuss and rusty gun,
  At random o'er the plain.

But strange to tell, the stupid foe,
  Returned no answering fire;
They only bellowed louder still
  The name of Colonel Dyer!

And when another volley spoke,
  And cut through thick and thin,
They bawled more loudly than before
  The name of Elderkin!

The courage of the Windham men
  Now rose exceeding high,
And so they blazed away till dawn
  Lit up the eastern sky.

The enemy dared not assail
  This valiant band at all,
But screamed and groaned and shouted still,
  Behind the granite wall.

"Pe-*ung*," "pe-*ung*," "go-*row*," "go-*row*,"
  "Chug," "chug," "peep," "peep" and "*tee-te*;"
"Cease firing, boys," the Captain said,
  "The dogs desire a treaty."

Our heroes rested on their arms,
Till morning's light revealed,
The bodies of the prostrate frogs
Stretched out upon the field.

But when they saw their waste of shot
And fright had been in vain,
Some made a solemn vow that they
Would ne'er bear arms again.

And they all returned with wiser heads
To the heart of Windham town;
While the remnant of the frogs went home,
And soon the rains came down.

And at this day when evening shades
Envelope brakes and bogs,
The tenants of that pond rehearse
The battle of the frogs.

And to this day, each Windhamite
Unto his little son
Relates how on a summer's night,
The BULL-FROG FIGHT was won.

This tale is true, and years far hence
It must be *current* still
For bull-frogs two are pictured on
Each current Windham bill.*

---

* See bills of all denominations on the Windham (Conn.) Bank.

WILLIMANTIC BOOKSTORE,

NEWS OFFICE,

AND

PAPER-HANGING DEPOT,

AT THE

NEW STORE,

(Three doors East of old stand in Franklin Building,)

WILLIMANTIC, CONN.

JAMES WALDEN, (successor to Wm. L. Weaver,) has removed to his new and commodious store, where he is prepared to do a much more extensive business than formerly.

SCHOOL-BOOKS,

School Stationery, and School Apparatus, including every article used in the school rooms of best quality.

STATIONERY

Of every variety, at wholesale and retail.

NEW BOOKS

Received as soon as published, with a good selection of Miscellaneous and Standard Works constantly on hand.

PAPER HANGINGS,

Borders, Shades, Window Curtains, &c., a large assortment at all seasons, both Foreign and American.

NEWSPAPERS,

Daily and Weekly, with the Magazines, furnished at subscription prices.

N. B. Dealers, Teachers, Committees, &c., furnished at a liberal discount.

☞ Orders promptly filled.

J. W. is Agent for the Adams' Express Company, and for Dodge's Dye House.

LE Je '10

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 006 719 302 7