

The Altoona Tribune

McCRUM & DEERN,

[INDEPENDENT IN EVERYTHING.]

EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS

VOL. 7.

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NO. 2.

THE ALTOONA TRIBUNE.

H. B. McCRUM, PUBLISHER AND PROPRIETOR.

For annum, (payable in advance), \$10.00.

All papers discontinued at the expiration of the time paid for.

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Advertisements by the year, twenty-six squares, 67.50 " " " "

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Advertisements by the year, thirty squares, 77.50 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, thirty-one squares, 80.00 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, thirty-two squares, 82.50 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, thirty-three squares, 85.00 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, thirty-four squares, 87.50 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, thirty-five squares, 90.00 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, thirty-six squares, 92.50 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, thirty-seven squares, 95.00 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, thirty-eight squares, 97.50 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, thirty-nine squares, 100.00 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, forty squares, 102.50 " " " "

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Advertisements by the year, forty-two squares, 107.50 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, forty-three squares, 110.00 " " " "

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Advertisements by the year, fifty-six squares, 142.50 " " " "

Advertisements by the year, fifty-seven squares, 145.00 " " " "

Choice Poetry.

NO SECT IN HEAVEN.

Talking of sects till late one eve,
Of the various doctrines the saints believe,
That night I stood, in a troubled dream,
By the side of a dark, flowing stream.

And a "Churchman" down to the river came,
When I heard a strange voice call his name—
"Good father, stop: when you cross this tide,
You must leave your robes on the other side."

But the aged father did not mind,
And his long gown floated out behind,
As down the stream his way he took,
His pale hands clasping a gilt-edged book.

"I'm bound for Heaven, and when I'm there,
I shall want my book of Common Prayer;
I should feel quite lost without my gown."

Then he fixed his eye on the shining track,
But his gown was heavy, and held him back,
And the poor old father tried in vain,
A single step in the flood to gain.

I saw him again on the other side,
But his silk gown floated on the tide;
And no one asked in that blessed spot,
Whether he belonged to "the Church" or not.

Then down to the river a Quaker strayed,
His dress of a sober hue was made;
"My coat and pants must all be of gray,
I cannot go any other way."

Then he buttoned his coat straight up to his chin,
And staidly, solemnly, waded in,
And his broad-brimmed hat he pulled down tight
Over his forehead so cold and white.

But a strong wind carried away his hat;
A moment he silently sighed over that,
And then, as he gazed to the farther shore,
His coat slipped off, and was seen no more.

And none of the angels questioned him
About the width of his beaver's brim.
Next came Dr. Watts, with a bundle of Psalms
Tied up nicely in his aged arms,
And hymns as many—a very wise thing—
That the people in Heaven "all round" might sing.

But I thought that he heaved an anxious sigh,
As he saw that the river ran broad and high,
And looked rather surprised, as one by one,
The Psalms and Hymns in the waves were down.

And after him, with his MSS.,
Came Wesley, the pattern of godliness,
But he cried, "Dear me, what shall I do?
The water has soaked them through and through."

And there on the rocks, far and wide,
Away they went, down the swollen tide,
And the saint astonished passed through alone,
Without his manuscripts, up to the throne.

Then gravely walking, two saints by name,
Down to the stream together came,
But as they stepped at the river's brink,
I saw one saint from the other shrink.

"Sprinkled or plunged, may I ask you, friend,
How you attained to life's great end?"
"Plunged, with few drops on my brow";
"But I have been dipped, as you'll see me now."

"And I really think it will hardly do,
As I'm close companion to you with you;
You're bound, I know, to the realm of bliss,
But you must get that way and I'll go this."

Then straightaway plunging with all his might,
Away to the left—his friend at the right;
Apart they went from this world of sin,
But at last together they entered in.

And now, when the river was rolling on,
A Presbyterian church came down,
Of women there seemed an innumerable throng,
But the men I could count as they passed along.

And concerning the road they could never agree,
As I've close companion to you with you;
You're bound, I know, to the realm of bliss,
But you must get that way and I'll go this."

And a sound of murmuring long and loud
Came ever up from the moving crowd—
"You're in the old way, and I'm in the new."
"That is the false, and this is the true."
"Or, 'I'm in the old way, and you're in the new."
"That is the false, and this is the true."

But the brethren only seemed to speak,
Modest the sisters walked and meek,
And if ever one of them chanced to say
What troubles she met with on the way,
How she longed to pass to the other side,
Not feared to cross over the swelling tide,
A voice arose from the brethren then:
"Let no one speak but the holy men;
For have you not heard the words of Paul,
'Oh, let the women keep silence all?'"

I watched them long in my curious dream,
Till they stood by the borders of the stream,
Then, just as I thought, the two ways met,
But all the brethren were talking yet,
And would talk on, till the heaving tide
Carried them over, side by side;
Side by side, for the way was one,
The solemn journey of life was done,
And all who in Christ the Saviour died,
Came out alike on the other side.
No forms, or crosses, or books, had they,
No gowns of silk, or suits of gray,
No creeds to guide them, or MSS.,
For all had put on Christ's righteousness."

since I left there; and the very bluffs themselves have been quarried away for their excellent limestone, till the "oldest inhabitant" would scarcely know them.

But when I was a half-fledged backwoodsman, given to shooting, riding, nutting and bushwhacking generally, the bluffs were quite a splendid affair. They extended some miles along the northern bank of the river, a solid, perpendicular wall of white limestone below, some hundred or two hundred feet in height, crowned above by lofty mounds of grass-grown soil, terraced by rains and storms, thinly dotted with oak and cedar, and surrounded by a narrow tortuous foot-path, or "trail," that ran along the very brink of the sheer precipice. Far below, a rocky shore divided the waters of the Mississippi from this natural river wall, and the toothed boulders and jagged masses of limestone that strewn the margin, made a glance from the top still more dizzy and terrible.

I remember that one lofty point, just beyond the old steam mill, bore the name of "Seaman's Leap." An unhappy man, who had long been embittered by matrimonial difficulties, found existence too heavy to bear, and one day, threw himself from this elevation upon the numerous stones beneath. His name—Seaman—attached itself, ever after, to the scene of the tragedy.

But this was not the most interesting portion of the bluffs, to me, though I never passed it without a quick glance from pinnacle to base, and a cold shudder. The cave of the "Piassa Bird," and the Indian painting of that strange myth on the smooth face of the cliff, midway between top and bottom, were the objects that most deeply fascinated my youthful fancy.

My earliest remembrances of the bluffs are, that there were a great many works of aboriginal art upon them. There were huge targets, rings and bulls' eyes, at which the Piassa Indians used to shoot from their canoes. There were hand paintings, by dipping one's hand in a pot of vermilion and pressing the palm against the rock. Some of these were thirty or forty feet from the bottom, and the adventurous artist who executed them must have been the apex of a human pyramid, whose parts stood with their feet upon each other's shoulders.

Lastly, there was a picture of the bird itself; a sprawling monster, with dragon's wings, deer's horns, and a serpent's tail. It was much dimmed and defaced by the weather, but could be tolerably well made out, within my recollection. The labors of the quarrymen, however, have obliterated all these mementoes of barbarism, years ago, and the traveler on the Mississippi may look in vain for any of the vermilion stains that I recall so vividly.

Of the Piassa tribe of Indians, not one is left. They were exterminated by the small pox and wars with other tribes, at about the time, I think, of the admission of Illinois as a State. There is a stream emptying into the river at Altoona, called Piassa Creek, and there was once a hotel there called Piassa House, but no further souvenirs of these "First Families" remained, save the bluff paintings, and countless arrow heads, some of them beautifully symmetrical, that were turned up by the plow on the farms thereabout. One field of my father's estate was sprinkled very plentifully with the heads of the barbed war-arrows, at a few inches below the surface. It had, undoubtedly been the scene of some aboriginal Waterloo.

But the tradition of the Piassa Bird remained, and was known to all the early settlers in Altoona. I imagine that it has been nearly forgotten, by this time, for Altoona is a flourishing *entrepot* and the spirit of railroading is inimical to the spirit of legendary lore. Still, there are, undoubtedly, some who will recollect the old story, and reading it here, will be glad to see it rescued from oblivion.

Bald Eagle, the grim and grizzled old chief of the Piassa tribe, walked up and down before the lodge, hiding his face in his blanket, and silently communing with himself.

Within, twelve of the women, disheveled and in mourning-paint, sat rocking to and fro, shrilly chanting the death-song.

The braves lay asleep in their lodges, or squatting about in groups, sullenly muttered monosyllabic remarks to each other.

Thin columns of smoke ascended from a few tents here and there, where the old women cooked the venison slain the day before, but the signs of sorrow were more numerous than the signs of life in the Piassa village.

As Bald Eagle strode gloomily up and down, there came to him Black Feather, the strongest and most courageous warrior of the tribe; a young man, but already high in honor and respect, loved by his friends and dreaded by his enemies.

"A brave man died last night," said Black Feather, abruptly.

"And one the night before," replied the chief, without pausing in his walk or uncovering his face.

"Our women must kill the Piassa, next season," said the young warrior; "our lodges will be empty of braves, and the

bears and the deers may come and laugh at us."

"The Great Spirit wishes us evil," said Bald Eagle, stopping, and raising his arm toward heaven. "Who will go next? A brave every night! Our lodges will be empty, indeed!"

"Black Feather's heart never beats faster or slower," replied the young man; he does not know what fear is. If the Great Spirit wants him, he can smile as he goes."

"And Red Sunrise—"

The warriors countenance expressed pain.

"She is only a woman," he said, at length, resuming his usual solidity.

Red Sunrise was the handsomest of all the Piassa women, and the most sought in marriage. She was the only daughter of Bald Eagle, and had been betrothed to Black Feather only after he had presented her father with a hundred scalps, including those of three of her other suitors.

This delicate proof of sincerity and courage had overcome all the chief's objections, and he had gladly consented to the ceremony of betrothal.

Bald Eagle mused awhile upon Black Feather's words. Then he turned suddenly and said:

"What shall we do?"

"The young man was silent

"For ten nights," continued the chief, "has the Bird devoured one of our number every night. Ten good and brave warriors. The women cry and moan all the day long. The men lose their spirit, and care no longer to follow the war-path or the trail of the deer. I am old and used to storms, but I feel bowed down. The Great Spirit is offended."

"I know all this," said Black Feather, moodily; "but what can we do? What do the medicine-men say?"

"They say that the Bird is a bad manitou, that dwells in a cave on the bluffs. It devours our braves, nightly, till the Great Spirit's anger is appeased. When will that be? How many lodges will be left?"

"The two men parted as they had met, gloomy, wondering and fearing for the future. All day the women cried and chanted the song of mourning. All day the warriors lay listlessly about the tents, and when night closed in, each went to sleep marvelling if he should be the next victim to the cruel rapacity of the manitou.

The brother of Red Sunrise, youngest son of Bald Eagle, was the victim. His canoe was seen at nightfall, wending its way up the river from one of the islands below, where he had been to hunt wild turkeys. The morning showed the frail shell, crushed and blood-stained, lying upon the rocks at the foot of the bluff. Red Sunrise wept with the bitterness of despair, and her old father bowed his head in deeper gloom than ever.

Then he summoned all the braves of the tribe about him.

"Brothers," said he, "I am old, and my bones are tired. I can follow the trail no longer as I used to, and my arm is weak to strike our foes. But the Great Spirit has given me power of sight in dreams—Last night He came to me and talked our tongue as I talk to you. He told me how to appease the Bird that is destroying our tribe, and despoiling our lodges."

A series of deeply-guttural ejaculations expressed the gratification which this announcement caused.

"There must be one more victim. The bravest warrior of our race must voluntarily offer himself to the manitou this night, and end the devastation. Who will go alone to the bluffs at sunset and never return?"

Black Feather sprang forward.

"I will go," he said, "my heart never beats quicker or slower. I know not what fear is. Let me be the last victim, and save my tribe!"

Nine others claimed the honor of offering themselves, and disputes arose.

"Peace!" said old Bald Eagle, "Black Feather spoke first. If ye wanted to be the victims, why did ye not come forward at once? No, he is the bravest among ye all. Let him be the most honored."

Red Sunrise mourned with double desperation when she learned her lover's determination, and implored him to allow another to take his place; but he listened unmoved.

At sunset he went forth from the village, where every heart lamented while blessing him. In war-paint and full costume, he looked more the brave and warrior than ever, and the nine who had offered to sacrifice themselves were permitted to escort him with triumphant songs to the loneliest point of the bluffs, near the manitou's cave.

There they left him, standing dark and alone, against the sullen red sky of the sunset.

The light faded. The gray dusk settled upon the hills, the wide, smooth river, and the long, low stretch of woods upon the Missouri shore. The great white stars came out one by one, and gleamed in troublous reflection from the dark water. The owl cried from the cedars near, and the caty-paw sadly replied, but no other sound greeted the ear of Black Feather.

When all was dark, a low, rustling flap

among the rocks about the mouth of the cave attested the movement of the Piassa Bird, and immediately after a spectral shape, indefinite but horrible, beat the air with gigantic wings, and rushed forth into the night.

Black Feather knew that his hour had come. He commended himself to the care of the Great Spirit, and prayed Him to watch over his poor betrothed, widowed even before she was a wife.

Then, folding his arms, he stood upright and calm. A rushing sound met his ears—a shrill scream—and the bird descended like a torrent.

At the instant the rocky bluffs resounded to the echo of the Piassa war-whoop, a flight of sharp arrows cleft the air, and down rolled the hideous monster, pierced through and through by ten unerring shafts!

The nine friends of Black Feather, who had escorted him, led by their old chief, had concealed themselves in a thicket near by instead of returning to the village, and had awaited the swoop of the bird, with bow-strings drawn. Their aim had been sure, and the evil manitou now groveled and shrieked its hateful life out upon the jagged rocks far beneath.

"You are saved, O my son," said Bald Eagle, calmly.

"And I thank the Great Spirit, and you, my father!" said Black Feather.

So the warrior was spared, and the tribe rescued from its certain doom. The tradition goes no further; but I am surely warranted in believing that Red Sunrise became the happy partner of Black Feather, and that he was chief of the tribe after Bald Eagle's death, when he painted a crude image of the Piassa Bird upon the face of the cliff, and had every warrior who passed up or down the river, discharge an arrow at it, to commemorate the strange episode.

A FRENCH STORY.

In 1769 as a gentleman was passing late one night over Pont Neuf, Paris, with a lantern, a man came up to him and said: "Read this paper." He held up his lantern and read as follows:—

"Speak not a word when this you've read, Or in an instant you'll be dead! Give us your money, watch and rings, With other valuable things. Then quick, in silence, you depart, Or I, with knife, will leave your heart!"

Not being a man of much pluck the affrighted gentleman gave up his watch and money, and ran off. He soon gave the alarm and the highwayman was arrested.

"What have you to say for yourself?" inquired the magistrate before whom the robber was arraigned.

"That I am not guilty of robbery, though I took the watch and money."

"Why not guilty?" asked the magistrate.

"Because I can neither read nor write. I picked that up just at the moment I met this gentleman with a lantern. Thinking it might be something valuable, I politely asked him to read it for me. He complied with my request, and presently handed me his watch and purse and ran off. I supposed the paper to be of great value to him, and that he thus liberally rewarded me for finding it. He gave me no time to return thanks, which act of politeness I am ready to perform."

The gentleman accepted the plea of the robber and withdrew his complaint.

A GOOD JOKE ALL AROUND.—There is a quaint humor attached to somebody connected with *The Rochester Express*, that breaks out in spots occasionally in that sheet, as witness the following:

"A gentleman (whose name we suppress for 'obvious reasons') while returning home with his family purchases on Saturday evening, stepped into an oyster saloon on Main Street, to refresh himself with a stew. While thus engaged, a friend who had followed him in, abstracted from his groceries a package containing a pound of ground coffee, and having emptied it, refilled the paper with saw-dust, and restored it to its original place. The mistake was not discovered until the following morning, when the wife of the injured man prepared his breakfast. Laboring under the misapprehension that the grocer had swindled him, the husband returned the saw-dust in the morning, and indignantly demanded, and finally received, its equivalent in Old Java. The unhappy grocer, who is notoriously subject to fits of 'absent mindedness,' declared most solemnly that it was unintentional, and that really, it was a little the worst mistake he ever committed! What renders this transaction still more perplexing is, that for the life of him he can't remember where he got the saw-dust."

"Husband, do you believe in special judgments of Providence upon individuals in this life?"

"Yes, my dear."

"Do you, indeed? Did one of the judgments ever happen to you?"

"Yes, love."

"When was it, my husband?"

"When I married you, my dear."

HOW TO WRITE TO SOLDIERS.

1. Write often. They are lonely and homesick many times, and a letter from a friend will "do them good like a medicine." If fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, could see them gathering, with anxious and expectant faces, around the Postman, they would not let a week pass without writing.

2. Write cheerfully. The soldier has his cares and trials. He needs encouragement and sympathy. It will do no good to fill your letters with that is sad in the facts around you, or in your feelings. Fling every streak of sunshine that you can upon your letters, and the soldier's heart will bless you.

3. Direct your letter plainly—putting on it the name of the soldier and his Captain, and the name and number of the regiment, as well as where you suppose the regiment to be. In an army a man is known literally "by his company," and thousands of letters are lost because the writer supposed that in a great camp of 20,000 men his friend John Smith, or whatever the name may be, is as well known and as easily found as he was in the little village at home.

4. Write about particulars. We have enough of *Generals* here. Tell us how many kittens tumble over the floor; how many calves bawl at the barn; whether Towser's sore foot is well yet or not; what kind of a dress little Mary has got; who took sister Ann sleigh riding last snow; and above all, who goes home from singing school with—

—of course we won't mention her name, but you ought to do so, just as if you didn't know anything about it. And don't forget to speak of church and Sabbath schools, prayer meetings, and what you talk about Sabbath evenings, and what new hymns you sing.

A whirlpool, some three hundred and sixty feet in diameter, has been formed in the sea near Torre del Greco, by the late eruption of Vesuvius. The sounding gave twenty-three fathoms of water, and the plummet brought up sulphur. From a part of the circumference, a tail, so to call it, about sixty feet in width, runs away in the direction of Sorrento, and is of a beautiful light green color. All the water here was tepid, had a strong sulphureous smell, and many fish have been destroyed. The eruption of Vesuvius appears to be increasing at latest dates in severity to a degree. There are eleven craters above Torre del Greco, all emitting sulphureous vapors, and the largest is from seventy to eighty feet deep and one hundred feet wide. From this point, after heavy rumblings and heaving of the surface, the ground was split open and a fiery fissure was made almost to the outskirts of the city, through which the dread unseen power passed, opening the streets and laying bare some parts of the former buried town, and then running into the sea. Strangers are coming from all parts of Europe to Naples, to behold Vesuvius in its glorious burning and devastating anger.

My friend lives three miles from the Post Office; and one stormy night last Winter he told the help to harness the horse, go down to the office and see what was there in his box, giving him the number. In due time Jerry returned, and putting up his horse, made his appearance at the library door of Mr. C—, who, sitting in gown and slippers, was patiently waiting the arrival of the mail.

"Well, Jerry, what was there for me?"

"Two letters, and a paper, sir."

"Well, hand them to me. What are you standing there for?"

"Indeed, Sir, you didn't tell me to bring them, at all at all."

Mr. C—, finding that Jerry had the best of it, asked him what he went to the office for.

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