

The Altoona Tribune.

MCCORM & DERN,

[INDEPENDENT IN EVERYTHING.]

EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS.

ALTOONA, PA., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1864.

NO. 36.

THE ALTOONA TRIBUNE.

E. H. MCCORM,
D. C. DERN,
 EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS.
 For annum, (payable in advance) \$1.50
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Choice Poetry.

SHERIDAN'S RIDE.

Up from the South at break of day,
 Bringing to Winchester fresh dismay,
 The affrighted air with a shudder bore,
 Like a herald in haste to the chieftain's door,
 The terrible grumble and rattle and roar,
 Telling the battle was on once more,
 And Sheridan twenty miles away.

And wider still those billows of war
 Thundered along the horizon's bar.
 And louder yet in Winchester rolled,
 The roar of that red sea uncontrolled,
 Making the blood of the listener cold
 As he thought of the stake in that fiery fold,
 And Sheridan twenty miles away.

But there is a road from Winchester town,
 Through quiet villages where daffodils
 Sprinkle all the gardens with gold. Speed
 Over the sloping hills where springing
 grass sends up a faint, delicious smell,
 and brooks babble under swaying willows
 —past lonely church-yards, where the
 white heads of innumerable gravestones
 beckon through the twilight and are gone;
 for every throb of your pulse brings
 one true heart nearer home! Shot
 and shells had spared him for this hour;
 fever and pestilence and foul malaria
 have passed him by; and now—
 Suppose there should be an accident!
 He has heard of such things on these
 lightning-routes. Suppose he should be
 carried home a dead, mangled corpse,
 the words of greeting frozen into eternal
 silence on his lips, the glad sight sealed
 over under the heavy eyelids! Strange
 that such morbid fancies should never have
 assailed him in the fire and smoke of
 Gettysburg, yet come to him now, like
 gusts that would not be driven away, when
 he was within twenty miles of home!
 Would it break his mother's heart,
 or would she live on? And Kate Meriam—
 Kate Meriam, the blue-eyed, shy little
 fairy, who would never look at him save
 through her long, brown lashes, and whose
 coy mouth always made him think of
 scarlet cherries and roses dashed in dew.
 "To think!" ejaculated Carl Silver,
 bringing down his bronzed fist on the
 window ledge with a force that made the
 glass rattle ominously and struck a chill
 to the heart of the old lady in the bomb-
 azine bonnet: "to think that I, who would
 knock down the man who ventured to tell
 me I was a coward, should be afraid to
 say frankly to a little, slender girl that I
 love her! To think that the very touch
 of her glove, the sound of her footstep, the
 rustle of her ribbons, can frighten my
 self-possession away and make a staring,
 silent idiot of me! After all, what is a
 courage worth? There's no use in think-
 ing of it. I shall die an old bachelor, for
 I'll never marry any woman but Kate
 Meriam, and I shall never dare to plead
 my cause with Kate. I wish I had not
 such an absurd streak of cowardice
 through me."
 Yet Captain Silver's men had told a
 different tale when he led them over the
 bridge in that dreadful charge at Antietam
 Cowardice! there are several differ-
 ent interpretations to that word.
 "Carriage! carriage! No, I won't
 have a carriage. Get away from me you
 fellows! You are worse than the locusts
 of Egypt and ten times as noisy,"
 cried Captain Silver energetically elbowing
 his way through the swarms of eager hid-
 e-men, who were making night hide-
 out at the foot of Courtland street. "Do you
 suppose I am going to spoil my precious
 surprise by a carriage?"
 Broadway by gaslight! How strange,
 yet how familiar it seemed to the return-
 ing exile, with its stately faades of free-
 stone and marble, seeming literally to rest
 on foundations of quivering fire, and its
 throngs of people, coming and going in
 everlasting succession, like the tides of a
 never-resting sea. Carl Silver's heart
 leaped up in his breast with a quick, joy-
 ous throb at the old accustomed sights and
 sounds. It was good to hear his footsteps
 on Manhattan ground.
 "Ticket! I suppose I have such a thing
 about me," he muttered drowsily, search-
 ing first one pocket and then another.
 "Oh, here it is. I say conductor, are we
 near New York?"
 "Twenty minutes or so will bring us
 into Jersey City, sir—we are making
 pretty good time."
 And the sharp faced official passed on
 to harass the next unfortunate man who

had neglected to put his ticket in his hand;
 while Captain Silver dragged him-
 self into a sitting position, putting his two
 hands back of his head with a portentous
 yawn, and smiled to remember the fanta-
 stic dreams that had chased one another
 through his brain during that half hour of
 cramped, uneasy slumber, from which the
 conductor's challenge had roused him—
 dreams in which bloody battle-fields and
 lonely night-marches had blended oddly
 with sweet home voices, and the sulphur-
 ous breath of artillery had mingled with
 violet scents from the twilight woods
 around, and gusts of sweetness from the
 tossing clouds of peach blossoms, through
 which the Express train shot remorse-
 lessly.

And then Carl Silver began to think of
 other things.
 "Conductor!" whispered the fat old
 lady opposite, in the bombazine bonnet
 and stiff colored shawl.
 "Yes'm," said the man of tickets stop-
 ping abruptly in his transit through the
 cars, and inclining his ear.
 "That young man in military cap, con-
 ductor—I hope he ain't an escaped lunatic
 dressed up in soldier clothes, I've heard of
 such things. And I don't like a bit the
 way he keeps a grinnin' to himself and
 rubbin' his two hands together. He's
 acted queerly all day, and I'm travelin'
 alone!"
 The conductor laughed and passed on.
 The old lady bridled in offended dignity.
 Bless her anxious heart!—how was she
 to know that Captain Silver was only re-
 joicing in the thoughts of the glorious
 "surprise" he had in store for his mother
 and dimpled faced sister that night? Was
 it not a year—twelve long, long months—
 since he had looked upon their faces last?
 And now—
 On, speed on your way, Express train,
 through quiet villages where daffodils
 sprinkle all the gardens with gold. Speed
 Over the sloping hills where springing
 grass sends up a faint, delicious smell,
 and brooks babble under swaying willows
 —past lonely church-yards, where the
 white heads of innumerable gravestones
 beckon through the twilight and are gone;
 for every throb of your pulse brings
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 "Oh, here it is. I say conductor, are we
 near New York?"
 "Twenty minutes or so will bring us
 into Jersey City, sir—we are making
 pretty good time."
 And the sharp faced official passed on
 to harass the next unfortunate man who

was fond of sitting in the twilight,
 and dismissed the lingering doubt from his
 mind. How lucky, the door was on the
 latch, and swung noiselessly open.
 Hush! not a creaking stair or clanking
 spur must betray him, through the old fa-
 miliar hall he passed, and into his mother's
 room, lighted only by the ruddy glimmer
 of a bright coal fire.
 "Where the mischief are they all?"
 ejaculated Captain Silver under his breath.
 "No matter—they'll be along soon; mean-
 time I'll wheel this big chair up, and take
 a bask, for the air is chill, if it is the first
 of May. Won't they be astonished,
 though, when they come in? Upon my
 word, things couldn't have happened nicer!
 Fugh! what a smell of paint—white-
 wash, too, as I'm a living sinner. Con-
 found it, I've kicked over a pail of the
 stuff! If the women folks ain't house
 cleaning!"
 The Captain gave an indignant con-
 temptuous sniff as he surveyed the desolate
 scene.
 "What comfort a female can find in
 turning things upside down, and deluging
 the house with soap and water twice a
 year, I can't imagine. Carpets all up—
 floors damp—curtains torn down—not one
 familiar object to greet a fellow's eyes af-
 ter a twelve month's absence from home.
 Heigh ho! I think I'll light a cigar."
 Which he did, and began to smoke and
 meditate.
 There was a rustle and tripping foot-fall
 on the stairs. The Captain took out his
 cigar and listened.
 "That's Minny," he said to himself.
 "Ma'mma doesn't dance up stairs like
 that."
 He arose, and leaned against the door-
 casing as the dancing feet came nearer and
 nearer. How his heart beat as the fire-
 light shone upon a merino dress and a
 little white apron on the threshold. And
 the next moment he had caught the slight
 form in his arms and was showering kisses
 on cheek, and brow, and lips and hair.
 "Caught for once, Miss Minny?" he
 exclaimed. "That to pay you for presu-
 ming to clean house without my permis-
 sion! No, you're not going to escape."
 Such a piercing scream as she rewarded
 his fraternal demonstration with! Carl
 Silver let go her waist and retreated
 against the wall with a faint idea of
 breaking through the lath and plaster,
 and hiding himself in the general ruin.
 For, as truly as he stood there quaking in
 his regimentals, the voice was not that of
 his sister Minny, but Kate Meriam!
 "How dare you!" she ejaculated, with
 crimson cheeks and quivering lips. "I'll
 ring the bell and call the servants if you
 don't leave the house this instant!"
 "Upon my word, I'm not a burglar or
 assassin!" pleaded Carl, recovering his
 self-possession in a measure, as he saw
 Kate's breathless terror! "It was so
 dark I couldn't see your face, and I
 thought it was my sister Minny. Don't
 you know me, Miss Meriam—Captain
 Silver?"
 "You are an impostor," said Kate, with
 spirit, "Captain Silver is with the Army
 of the Potomac."
 "No, he is not, he's here," urged Carl.
 "How shall I prove that I am myself?"
 Kate? Miss Meriam?
 For she had sunk on the floor and be-
 gan to cry. He knelt beside her with a
 rough attempt at comfort.
 "No," she sobbed, "only—only I was
 so frightened!"
 The little trembling blue-eyed thing!
 Carl Silver had never seen her in tears
 before. No shy assumption of dignity
 now—no royal airs—only brown dis-
 heveled hair. He was the brave one
 now—how natural it seemed to clasp the
 tiny palms in his own strong hand!
 "Kate, dearest, I love you! With my
 whole heart, Kate. Nay, do not be so
 frightened—I would die to save you a
 moment's terror! Only tell me that your
 heart is mine!"
 And when the tears were dried, leaving
 the eyes like drenched violets, and the
 cheeks flushed brightly, Carl Silver had
 leave and license to keep one fluttering
 little hand in his and he knew he was an
 accepted lover.
 "But where are my mother and sister?"
 he asked at length. "And what is the
 solution of this strange riddle?"
 "Don't you know," laughed Kate,
 "they do not live here any more?"
 "Not live here?"
 "Have you forgotten that yesterday
 was the first of May? We occupy the
 house now, papa and aunt Millicent, and
 I."
 "Oh!" quoth Captain Silver, "so
 they have moved, and I never to hear of
 it. Upon my word they treat me pretty
 coolly."
 "Ah, but you would have heard of it,"
 said Kate, "if you had staid quietly in
 camp to get your letters, instead of roving
 over the country without a word of warn-
 ing to your friends."
 "Give me one more kiss, and I'm off
 to see them. One more, my betrothed
 wife. Does it not seem like a dream?"
 "And you are my soldier now," whis-
 pered Kate, playing with the gold buttons
 of his coat with tremulous fingers. "Mine
 to send out into the battle-field, to dream
 of and pray for Carl, I have always re-
 pined that I had no gift for my country,
 now I can give my best and dearest to aid
 her cause."
 "Spoken like a soldier's wife, Kate,"
 said Silver, with kindling eyes. "If you
 but knew how much better we rough men
 fight for knowing that woman's love and
 woman's prayers enshrine us with a golden,
 unseen army—nonsense! I'm getting sen-
 sational. Good night."
 So there was three surprises that May
 evening—one for Kate Meriam, (wouldn't
 you have been surprised, Mademoiselle,
 to be caught and kissed in the dark, and
 never know who the kisser was?), one for
 Captain Silver (a very agreeable one, if
 you may term it, for his mother and sister,
 and Carl has not left off congratulating
 himself that his "leave of absence" hap-
 pened to fall in the migratory month of
 May. For if he hadn't blundered into
 Miss Meriam's house and kissed her by
 mistake, thereby bringing matters pre-
 cipitately to a focus, probably to this day
 he never would have mustered courage to
 tell her of his love.
 And when the golden armadas of the
 autumn leaves float down the forest
 brooks, and the blue mist of Indian Sum-
 mer warps the hills in dreamy light, Carl
 Silver is coming back to seal Kate Meriam's
 destiny with a wedding ring.

SOCIETY.

Society is a horrible fellow. He is
 composed partly of pretty good fellows,
 but take him altogether he is bad. Modern
 social philosophers are of this opinion,
 and of course they know. The only way
 to mend the rascal, some of them tell us,
 is to pull him to pieces, and put him
 together again, on an entirely new plan.
 The scamp you see, is wrongly constituted,
 and always has been, although we have
 only recently found it out. If you look
 at him you will remark that he is made
 up of a lot of selfish sub-organizations
 called households, each of which loves
 itself better than all the world and his
 wife besides. This is a fearful evil—it
 prevents "fusion," "oneness of purpose,"
 and all that sort of thing. How can you
 expect a concert to work well that is
 made up of independent fragments? Segre-
 gation is ruin of us. Here are millions
 of separate domestic bundles knotted up
 with such ridiculous ligatures as matrimo-
 nial, filial and fraternal ties! Open them
 and mix the contents indiscriminately to-
 gether. That's the way to remodel So-
 ciety! At present he is a wretch that it
 would be gross flattery to call a criminal
 of any one particular class, inasmuch as
 he is a conglomerate of all criminals and
 responsible for all crimes. He ought to
 be hung—no not hung, reconstructed.
 To be sure the Bible recognizes the laws
 by which he is governed, and the patri-
 archs, prophets and evangelists, only
 wished to reform his faults, not to demol-
 ish him, and set up a Godless experiment
 in his stead—but then the Bible is a very
 old book and the personages referred to
 had old fashioned notions, and this you
 know, is the age of Progress.

BRIDESMAIDS.

Next to being a bride herself, every
 good-looking young woman likes to be a
 bride's maid. Wedlock is thought by a
 large proportion of the blooming sex to be
 contagious, and much to the credit of their
 courage, fair spinsters are not all afraid of
 catching it. Perhaps the theory that the
 affection is communicated by contact is
 correct. Certainly we have known one
 marriage to lead to another, and sometimes
 to such a series of "happy events" as to
 favor the belief that matrimony, as John
 Van Buren might say, "runs like the
 cholera."
 Is there any book entitled "Rules for
 Bridesmaids," in secret circulation among
 young ladies? It seems as if there must
 be, for all the pretty hench-women act pre-
 cisely alike. So far as official conduct is
 concerned, when you have seen one bridesmaid
 you have seen the whole fascinating tribe.
 Their leading duty seems to be to treat the
 bride as "a victim led with garlands to
 the sacrifice." They consider it necessary
 to exhort her to "cheer up and stand by."
 It is assumed by a poetic fiction, that she
 goes in a state of fearful trepidation to the
 altar, and upon the whole would rather
 not. Her fair *ads* provide themselves
 with pungent essences, lest she should faint
 at the "trying moment," which—between
 you and us, reader, she has no more idea
 of doing than she has of flying. It is true
 she sometimes tells them that she "feels
 if she should sink into the earth," and
 thus they respond "poor dear soul," and
 apply the smelling bottle; but she goes
 through her nuptial martyrdom with great
 fortitude, nevertheless. In nine cases out
 of ten the bridegroom is more "flustered"
 than the fragile and lovely creature at his
 side; but nobody thinks of pitying him,
 poor fellow! All sympathy, compassion,
 interest, is concentrated upon the bride,
 and if one of the groomsmen does recom-
 mend him to take a glass of wine before
 the ceremony, to steady his nerves, the
 advice is given superciliously—as who
 should say "what a spoony you are, old
 fellow!"
 Bridesmaids may be considered as brides
 in what the lawyers call the "inchoate"
 or incipient state. They are looking for-
 ward to that day of triumphant weakness
 when it shall be their turn to be "poor,
 dear, creatured," and Preston salted, and
 otherwise sustained and supported as the
 law of nuptial pretenses directs. Let us
 hope they may not be disappointed.

TRAVELLING IN THE DESERT.

The mode of travelling in the Desert has so
 often been described, that I need do no
 more than add my tribute to its charms.
 There is no life to be compared to it; the
 air you breathe is an elixir. In the Desert
 we learn for the first time what hunger
 really is, and what depths of repose its
 fatigues can open to us. The Arabian
 heaven is indeed "poured upon our nights,"
 and although the Arabian sun during the
 day may be a little too hot, yet the deli-
 cious coolness of the evening tones for the
 previous frizzle. Every incident, however
 trivial, is an excitement. A strange
 Arab, on his swift dromedary, is seen in
 the horizon, perhaps a spy from a hostile
 tribe—faint hopes of a skirmish, and a
 careful looking to pistols and fire-arms; a
 group of stunted shrubs indicating the
 presence of some "diamond of the Desert";
 the comfortable encampment in the eve-
 ning, so home-like that one leaves the very
 chicken bones the next morning with re-
 gret. All is delightful, strange, new, and
 exhilarating; and I sit down again by my
 sea-coal fire with a deep feeling of thank-
 fulness that I have experienced the delights
 of Eastern travel.

YANKEE SCIENTIFICS.

Mr. Eliphalet
 Stabbs, a real live Yankee from Connecti-
 cut in exhibiting his Patent Back action
 Spanker, thus scientifically describes it:
 "On being attached to a baby of any
 age, it (the spanker), watches over it like
 a mother, makes it to desist from swallow-
 ing thimbles, marbles and three cent pieces,
 pins, or any other food unsuited to its
 stomach; compels it to go to sleep when
 it doesn't want to; and if somewhat older,
 it sees that it keeps its hand off the sugar
 bowl and jam pots; besides making it
 keep its face clean—and all by the power
 of its back action."

DON'T KNOW MUCH.

A certain green
 customer, who was a stranger to mirrors,
 and who stepped into the cabin of one of
 our ocean steamers, stopping in front of a
 large pier glass which he took for a door,
 he said: "I say, mister, when does this
 boat start?" Incensed at the still, silent
 figure, he broke out: "Go to thunder!
 you darned sassafras-colored, shock-headed
 bull calf, you don't look as though you
 knowed very much, anyhow."

THE COAL FIELDS OF PENNSYLVANIA.

yielded on an average, two hundred and
 thirty thousand tons of coal per week for
 the last three months.

THE RENOWNED JOSH BILLINGS.

whose
 opinions on financial as well as moral and
 political matters are worthy of "awl con-
 sideration," has prepared the "Hollerin'
 explanashun from original respes" concern-
 ing the question of revenue:
 "Spirits of just men made perfect"
 don't cum within the whisky bill.
 "Spirits of the damned" are con-
 structed the same as damnable spirits, and
 must pay the highest whiskey rates.
 "Tax on 'undressed poultry" doubled
 —the morals of the country seem to re-
 quire it.
 "Bologna" sassage, in part dog and
 part red flannel, must pay the duty on
 fannels also.
 "Aw! tabakker (unless the manu-
 facturer discriminates what is new and what
 is old chaws), is elevated 50 per cent.
 "Ministers of the gospel, who don't
 dew over \$1,500 worth of business a year
 are exempt.

A GENTLEMAN LATELY OVERHEARD.

the following conversation between a man and
 a woman who appeared as though they
 had just returned from a pleasure trip to
 some of the out of town resorts:
 Woman—"Blow me, Bill, how tired I
 feel! I am as miserable, too, as a starved
 cat. What a miserable world this is! I
 wish I'd never been born, I wish myself
 dead again! Man—"Why, Bet, what's
 the matter with you now? What are you
 grumbling about?" Woman—"Why, don't
 I tell yer I'm as miserable as a rat!"
 Man—"Miserable, indeed! Why, what
 on earth would yer have? You was drunk
 on Monday, and you was drunk again on
 Wednesday, and I'm blest if that isn't
 pretty near enough pleasure for yer, I
 don't know what is. I s'pose you wants
 to be a downright hangel here upon the
 earth!"
 A numerous old gentleman once
 fell in with an ignorant and rather impertinent
 minister, who proceeded to inform
 the former, in very positive terms, that he
 never would reach Heaven unless he was
 born again, adding—"I have experienced
 that happy change, and now feel no an-
 xiety."
 "And have you really been born again?"
 said the old man, musingly.
 "Yes, I have" was the reply.
 "Well," said the old man, eyeing him
 attentively, "it may be all right, but—I
 don't think it would hurt you to be born
 once more!"

ANYTHING TO PRODUCE "CHANGE."

"This medicine," said Dr. Squills, "after
 having been taken a few days, will pro-
 duce the change desired."
 "What?" exclaimed the thunderstruck
 patient, "you don't say so, doctor?"
 "It's a fact sir," said the doctor, "The
 science of medicine has now reached—"
 "Well," said the patient, interrupting
 him, "it is wonderful! If you'd said
 'postage stamps, doctor, I wouldn't have
 said anything; but the 'desired change,'
 'doctor, it seems impossible!"
 The doctor had to take the patient in
 hand.
 Pat was employed at a furnace.
 He was ordered to take the two-wheeled
 cart with the oxen, and draw some iron to
 a particular spot and dump it. He brought
 the load to the place designed, and after
 gesticulating wildly to his meek oxen,
 exclaimed: "Rare up! rare up! ye bastards,
 and throw the load overboard."

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