

Terms, \$2.00 a Year, in Advance

Bellefonte, Pa., February 21, 1890.

P. GRAY MEEK.

THE LAST OF HOPKINS

HE EXPIATES HIS DOUBLE MURDER BY DEATH ON THE GALLOWS.

INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH HIS LAST DAYS ON EARTH.

Scenes on the Gallows-The Rope Breaks Rendering It Necessary to Carry Him Back to the Scaffold and Hang Him a Second Time.

FORMER EXECUTIONS IN CEN-



Thursday of this week, the 20th of February, 1890, will long be remembered as the day on which William Seely Hopkins, the murderer of his wife and mother-in-law, was hung in expiation of his atrocious and cowardly offense. As executions have been rare in this county, the hanging of this culprit excited a morbid interest that attracted a large number of visitors to Bellefonte, most of whom had no assurance of being able to witness more of the execution than could be afforded by looking at the outside of the walls of the jail yard.

Most of our readers have become familiar with the details of the foul offense for which Hopkins was justly made to answer with his life. It happened on a beautiful Sunday morning, September 20th, 1889, in the town of Philipsburg, this county, about the time the churchgoers of that place were repairing to their respective places of worship. Hopkins had been temporarily separated from his wife on account of constant family difficulties. She and her mother were living together. He, howover turned up in Philipsburg on the night preceding the murder, impelled to return to the place by the malicious intention of avenging what his jealous disposition had construed to be infidelity on the part of his wife. He concealed himself, in the cellar, and the next morning, when he heard the family moving above, he came up steal thily from his place of his wife and her mother.

The particulars of this family massacre, and has the subsequently tried to After recovering from his agitation he killed himself with the same pistol with which he had slain the two women, have already been fully published as have also the particulars of his arrest, incarceration, trial and conviction. The last undertaker Harris, of this place. It act in the bloody tragedy was the one performed on the scaffold on Thursday when the curtain was forever dropped graved the name! and age of the peron the drama of Seely Hopkins' misguided life.

He was so extraordinary a criminal. evincing such a reckless indifference to until December, when, after a brief vis- nal with his last taste of the good things it to his home, he started for Philips- of this world. some of her relatives, married her on would not be told anything about it, subsequently showed that this was not rescuers. William Irvin, one of the day express for burial.

in-law.

the prisoner stands to await his doom. on Tuesday by the sheriff with a 190 lady I would have stood a bet pound sand bag, and both stood the test, | in court." but the noose becoming disarranged, a new one had to be made in the rope. The gallows is a plain and unattractive the execution and gazed upon it as if it Houser, of Bellefonte; W. E. Landon, were the most interesting of objects. While it was being put together Hopkins was watching the operation from D. H. Rhule; of Spring Mills; I. N. a jocular view of the proceeding. He scaffold strong as he intended to come ipsburg, and Samuel Benison, of Marion. down to inspect the work. Instead of his being dismayed, as would naturally be the effect of such a sight, he seemed disposed to joke with those who were engaged in erecting the repulsive structure. He remarked that from that

scaffold "down would go McGinty." Notwithstanding the levity he inand expected the salvation that is vouchsafed to those who repent of their sins. Rev. Mr. Sarvis, of Pleasant Gap, attention of members of the Y. M. C. A. there was a "revival" scene in the cell where Hopkins and Andrews were confined. While Andrews was kneeling at his bed-side engaged in prayer, Hopkins went over to him and, kneeling by his side, they had a lively time together "wrestling with the Lord." After this "season of prayer" Andrews professed to have experienced a change of heart, and of course expected what facility criminals of the deepest dye, who have hurried their victims into the other world without a moment's time for preparation, can be fixed up for angelic existence in the next world. On Tuesday Hopkins' well-maintain-

ed bravado received a shock when he was taken down from his cell to see his coffin and examine the scaffold. When his eyes fell on the coffin his face grew white and his limbs trembled. The sight concealment and without warning set of the scaffold did not put him in quite about doing the bloody work of killing as jocose a mood as it did the day before, although he remarked that he thought it strong enough to hang a bull. examined the coffin with much interest. It was a handsome affair of the kind, made in Rochester, N. Y., and forwarded on by his relatives in care of was covered with black cloth, with a silver plate on top on which was enson who was to occupy it. Hopkins questioned Mr. Harris about the embalming process, and asked that his body should be embalmed. Mr. Harris could his impending fate, and deporting him- give him no assurance that this would self with such unvarying bravado, that | be done, but at Hopkins' request he exsomething concerning his early life and plained how embalming is done, which his doings antecedent to the crime that was listened to by the condemned man landed him on the gallows, may be in- with apparent interest. He was afterteresting to the reader. He was born at | wards weighed and tipped the beam at Spencerport, Monroe county, N. Y., on the 134 pounds, the heaviest weight he ever 3rd of July, 1860, and lived there until he had in his life, showing that prison life was twenty-one years of age. He claims promoted his physical condition. He he was thirteen years old, but from his facetious moods he remarked that thirteen to nineteen his conduct was when he was hung the sheriff would that of a bad and reckless boy. At have to attach a sand-bag to nineteen he "experienced religion," but him to break his neck. That his soon fell from grace and became worse impending doom did not diminish than he was before. On the 23d of Oc- his appetite was demonstrated by his tober, 1881, he still living at home, his request that his final meal previous to father wanted him to pay board, and his execution should be of the most getting into a quarrel with him about it, sumptuous character, including a turkey he struck him. He claims in his confes- and all the side dishes usual at such a sion that he was so ashamed of this con- feast, and in compliance with this reduct that he left home the same night quest Sheriff Cooke procured a 24 pound and went to Pittsford, N. Y., where he turkey from George Garman with the lived with a man named John Smith object of supplying this singular crimi-

burg, in this county, where he arrived On Wednesday morning J. Bert Hopon the 24th of December, 1881 and got kins, brother of the condemned man, and employment in making cars for J. & George Baker, his brother-in-law, arrived F. D. Gowland, in which business he in Bellefonte from their homein Rochescontinued until 1883. He afterwards ter, N. Y., to be with their unfortunate worked at Loch Lomond Mill, at Peal relative in his last hours. They immedi-City, and other places, making in the ately proceeded to the jail and an affectmean time a visit to his friends in New ing scene ensued between them. Seely York State. In 1886, having returned was particular in inquiring whether his to Philipsburg, he became acquainted old mother had been informed of his with Maggie Wighaman, his future conviction and sentence, and upon bewife, and after much opposition from ing informed that she had not been and cond operation, but an examination took a hand in restraining the would-be en to his home at Williamsport on the

the 23d of March, 1887. It was not be expressed much satisfaction. He the case, but that he finally died from troop, leveled McCamant with a blow of long before family jars arose attended then presented his brother with a \$2.50 strangalation. After hanging for by the marital infelicity which ended in gold piece on which was engraved "F.b- fifteen minutes he was pronounce dead the killing of his wife and mother- ruary 20, 1890," as a remembrancer by Dr. Dorworth, the prison physical which was certainly a ghastly one, as it cian, and the body was taken down and NCIDENTS PRELIMINARY TO THE EXE- bore the date of his execution. He re- placed in the coffin that was waiting quested his attendant, Clel Bamford, to for its reception. The breaking of the Mr. Gault and his partner, Mr. Stov- pass around the cigars, which being rope, which was caused by the parting er, employed most of their time on Mon- done, the party sat down to smoke and of one of the upper strands, was a horday in setting up the gallows which engaged in conversation on general sub-Centre county finds necessary to have on jects. He imparted to his brother the hand for the execution of her murderers. comfortable assurance that he had no It had been previously tramed and all dread of the future and that he should its parts adjusted at the workshop of its imform his friends that such was the constructors, and in that shape was haul- fact. He seemed very much gratified ed to the jail on Monday morning. It that a representative of the Elmira is of white oak, eighteen feet in height, | Telegram had been to see him, and was with the usual cross timber at the top evidently much pleased with the notorfrom which the rope is suspended, and a lity he had acquired. "I am ready to go," platform about 12 feet square and 10 he said, "and will die game. It is no feet from the ground, in the centre of more than right that I should hang. I which is a double trap-door on which tried to fight against it, (meaning the time intertained the crowd of visitors commission of the crime) but I was Its location is in the south east corner of weak and did it. Every one has be- the gallows, by showing them how the the jail yard. The solidity of the scaf- friended me, and I have nothing against fold and strength of the rope were tested any one. If I had not killed the old dummy culprit. There can be no

The following are the jurors officially selected by the Sheriff to witness the execution: Joseph Barton, of Unionville; of Philipsburg; D. B. Kunes, of Eagleville: Cephas Gramley, of Rebersburg; his cell window and was disposed to take Gordon, of Bellefonte; Samuel Aley, of Jacksonville; W. F. Reynolds, Jr., call down to the workmen to make the of Bellefonte; Dr. Dunwiddie, of Phil-

THE FINAL SCENES.

Hopkins spent a comfortable night immediately preceding his execution, his spiritual advisers being with him until 12 o'clock, when he retired and slept for four hours and woke up apparently refreshed and in good spirits. dulged in he claimed to be repentant He ate his breakfast, which consisted of a piece of toast and two eggs, at half after five, with a decided relish. The death warrant was read to him by Dewas one of his spiritual advisers, and puty Sheriff Wilson at 8.15, in presence Rev. Mr. Laurie frequently visited him of W. F. Reeder, Sheriff Cooke and Byers was found guilty of murdering a in a spiritual capacity. He also had the special officer Bamford. In reading the warrant Wilson faltered, at which and W. C. T. U. On Monday night Hopkins smiled and encouraged the the offense having occurred on the 15th Reeder, who had been one of his consel, and said: "You made a noble fight for my body and I have made a good fight for my salvation, which I have gained." J. C. Meyer, the prosesalvation. The incident showed with cuting attorney, was also present, and Hopkins shook hands with him, saying: "I have nothing against any one. am prepared to die and expect to be saved." At 9.30 he gave good-by to his counsel, Mr. Reeder. The turkey lunch was taken with a relish shortly before 10. o'clock.

The procession to the gallows started from the jail at 10.10, moving to the gallows through a crowd of some 200 spectators. He was attended by Sheriff Cooke, Captain Clark, Clel Bamford, utv Sheriff Wilson, Rev. J. P. Sarvis, of Howard. After the party had mounted the scaffold Rev. Mr. Long made an impressive prayer. While this was in progress Hopkins was supported on one side by Sheriff Cooke and on the other by Rev. Sarvis, while he held his right hand to his forehead, maintaining his composure with wonderful nerve. Sheriff Cooke then adjusted the noose about his neck and placed the black cap on his head preparatory to be drawn over his face after his farewell remarks had been made. Hopkins then stepped to the front and said: "Farewell friends, I leave this world without an enemy. I have no malice towards any one.' Then with a wave of the hand he said, "Farewell, friends, farewel." lHe then stepped back and the Sheriff said something to him, whereupon he stepped the reports in circulation about the two ladies in Bellefonte(naming them) being intimate with me while in jail is untrue." He then noticed Billy Charles in the audience, and calling him by name, exclaimed: "Billy, try to mend your evil ways and meet me in heaven." While the Sheriff was pinioning him he said he was sorry that he had committed the crime and believed that he was forgiven for it. He then gave a personal farewell to Sheriff Cooke and Deputy Wilson. At precisely 10.16 the drop fell, but to the horror of the spectators the rope broke and the body of the culprit fell the ground. His body was immediate-

rible episode in this revolting tragedy. This accident, which in a carefully ar ranged execution would not have hanened, was brought about by the strain to which the rope had been subjected previous to its being used for its legitimate purpose. From the time the scaffold was erected on Monday, up until Thursday, there was a sand.bag weighing 190 pounds suspended from that rope, and the Sheriff during that that thronged into the jail yard to see thing worked, using the sand-bag as a anc doubt that these repeated strains weakened the rope, and if it had not been for the circumstance that Hopkins was shocked into insensibility, there would in all probability have been structure, yet hundreds visited it before J. B. Sebring, of Loveville; William the frightful scene of a half hung man struggling in agony, as the result of the Sheriff entertaining his friends with the sand-bag performance.

Hopkins' body was taken in charge by his brother and brother-in-law, who left with it for Rochester on the 4.20 p. m. train.

CENTRE COUNTY'S OLD TIME EXE-CUTIONS .- The execution of Hopkins, which will be closely followed by that of Andrews, invests with interest on account of previous executions in this county, which were remarkably limited in number, there being but two, both occurring at an early period in the county's history.

The first was that of a negro named Daniel Byers, which took place on the 13th of December, 1802, very shortly after the formation of Centre county. mulatto named James Barrows, who was in the employ by John Dunlop, officers by telling them to keep up of October, 1802. The fact that scarcetheir courage and make a good job of ly two months elapsed between the ofit. After the warrant was read the fense and the punishment shows how condemned man shook hands with Mr. speedily justice was meted out to offenders in those early days.

This murder took place in the neigh-

borhood of Bellefonte, near Dunlop's, afterwards Valentine's, ironworks. James Barrows, the victim, was a free mulatto, a wagoner of John Dunlop proprietor of the iron works. It may be of interest to our readers to learn that at that time negro slavery existed to ome extent in Pennsylvania, and that the murderer Daniel Byers, or Black Dan, as he was called, was a slave owned by a Mr. Smith, of this neighborhood. A woman was at the bottom of this murder. Barrows was married to a white woman by whom he had five children. Between her and Byers an illicit attachment sprung up, and about six weeks before the murder occurred she Sheriff Leahev, of Clinton county, Dep- left her husband on account of a quarrel she had with him about Byers. The of Pleasant Gap, and Rev. T. A. Long, latter then determined to get Barrows out of the way on account of this woman, and did not hesitate to tell his associates that such was his intention. The night on which the murder took place Barrows was engaged in bringing a load of chargoal to the works. Byers, being acquainted with his' movements, waylaid him about half a mile from the furnace and shot him with a rifle while he was sitting on one of the horses, the ball penetrating his right breast and coming out near his right shoulder. When he fell the wagon wheels passed over the length of his body, which was supposed to have caused his death until the bullet hole in his breast was dis-

covered by the coroner's jury. Byers was tried before Judge James Riddle, in Bellefonte, at the November term of Court, 1802. At his execution on the 13th of the following month, which was a public one, as was the custo have attended Sunday school until was such a light weight that in one of front again said: "I want to say that tom at that time, a large concourse of people was present, including many of the rough characters employed at the iron works. In order to preserve order among this turbulent crowd a company of horse, under the command of Captain James Potter, was drawn up near the scaffold. When Byers was swung off the rope broke and he fell to the ground apparently unhurt. The crowd, laboring under the mistaken notion that in such a case the prisoner was exonerated from further punishment, set up the shout "Dan is free," and, headed by two men named McSwords and McCamant, made a move to rescue him from the officers. Sheriff Duncan, however, was prompt in conteractlimp and apparently unconscious to ing this movement and struck Mc-Swords a heavy blow over the head ly carried up again on the gallows with a loaded riding-whip. According by Capt. Clark, and Doctors Belsor, to an ancient chronicler of this occur-Harris and Hayes, and the fracture be- rence, "McSwords scratched his head ing repaired and the rope re-adjusted and said: "Mr. Duncan, as you are a around his neck, he was finally small man you may pass on," which swung off. His neck seemed to be was certainly a prudent conclusion for ward to open a switch when he tripped broken by the first fall as he gave no the boisterous and meddlesome Mc- and fell across the rail, the engine pass sign of consciousness during the seSwords. Captain Potter's company also
ing over him. The body was brought to

his sword, cutting his cap-rim through. The disturbance being quieted, William Petrikin stepped up to the half-hung culprit and said: "Dan, you have always been a good boy; go up now and be hung like a man." After this complimentary and encourging advice Dan's head was again put through the noose and he was hanged without any further

From our present point of view it is a curious circumstance connected with Black Dan's trial, that, in accordance with the law at that time, the jury in the verdict that consigned him to the gallows fixed his value as a slave at two hundred and four teen dollars. The second execution in this county,

and the last previous to that of Hopkins,

was that of James Monks, which took

place in Bellefonte on January 23rd,

1819, he having been convicted of the

murder of Reuben Guild, at the November term of court, Judge Huston presiding. The Monks case was a celebrated one and excited intense interest throughout central and western Pennsylvania. The offender was a native of Potter township, this county. In the confession which he made after his conviction he said that when he was returning to his home on March Creek, Howard township, on the evening of Sunday, November 16, 1817, he met Guild, who was on horseback, on a lonely part of the road, traveling from his home in New Jersey to the West. The two men bid the time of none of the leaders really favor, but day, but after they had passed each other, according to Monk's statement an uncontrolable impulse to kill the sidered as likely to pass would require stranger overtook him, whereupon he an increase of fully \$100,000,000 turned around, raised his gun and shot him through the body. With a shriek the assassinated man fell from his horse, and upon Monk's approaching him, said, "My friend, you have killed me." Seeing that he was still living, Monks, who had a hatchet with him, dispatched his victim by striking him in the head with that implement. He then concealed the body, after stripping it of its clothing, even to the shoes which he found too small to fit his feet. He then mounted the dead man's horse and with his plunder continued his journey home. As he was under the influence of liquor when he committed the bloody deed, he was not in a condition to thoroughly cover the evidence of his crime. He dropped a song-book belonging to Guild at the place where the murder was committed, and this circumstance eventually led to his arrest on suspicion. Upon his arriving home and examining the spoils of It calls for some \$70,000.000, and that his foul crime he found written in his True it does not take the whole sum at victim's pocket book: "Reuben Guild's once, but the faith of the government pocket-book. This pocket-book is my will be given for \$70,000,000, and it. it long." In addition to the horse and articles of clothing, the paltry proceeds buildings in every village of political of this bloody murder were a watch and

a few dollars in money. The execution of Monks, which was public and attracted a large crowd was conducted by Sheriff John Mitchell. | the navy, etc., and where is the tide of Probably with the object of imparting jobbing and waste to stop?" solemnity to the occasion, but which must have had rather a comical appearance, William Armor, a celebrated fifer of that period, played the Dead March under the gallows before the culprit was swung off. Some time after Press. It says: "I have received from the execution it was reported, and two independent sources in Siberia copmany people believed it, that Monks was seen alive, and for years he served as a spook with which to frighten child- been flogged to death at the mines of ren. His case furnished the subject of much doggerel verse.

interest, Etting, Bradford and Blanchard represented the Common wealth, and Norris, Burnside and Potter were Monks' counsel. Robert McGonegle, Anthony Klechner, Ephraim Lamborn, John Johnston, Frederick Shenck, Absolem Ligget, John Sherick, William White, George Gramley, Samuel Wil- rangements to confine these political son, Henry Barnhart and William Johnston, were the "twelve good and lawful men" who composed the jury, all of whom have long since been as dead as the prisoner whom their verdict consigned to the gallows, the last of them, Samuel Wilson, of Potter township, having died on the 18th of September, 1880, at the age of ninety

It May Be Too High.

years.

The cost of maintaining prisoners at the Huntindon reformatory is shown by the bills rendered to the various countie to be at the rate of fifty-five cents per This is about three times the cost of maintaining prisoners in the eastern penitentiary, and in many of the counties the officials say this rate is too high. The high rate is probably due to the fact that there are not many convicts in the institution as yet. The larger the number the less will be the average cost of keeping, and it is probable that next year will show a decided reduction in in the expenses of the different counties.

BRAKEMAN KILLED AT WAYNE .-W. Irvin, a freight brakeman, aged about 26 years and unmarried, instantly killed at Wayne about 8 o'clock Monday morning. He jumped from the pilot of the engine and was running for-

The Flood Tide of Profligacy

From a Washington Letter of Col. McClure to the Times.

"It is no longer a secret that we are on the eve of a floodtide of national profliga-Many Republicans deplore it, but cy. Many Republicans deplotes, all fear that it cannot be restrained. The new rules break down all the barriers which have held public thieves and jobbers of every hue at bay, and they are now beginning to crowd the lobbie of the hotels and to cast their nets to hold Congressmen in their meshes. Mr. Cramp, the big Republican ship builder of Philadelphia, said to me in this city several years ago that there had been a complete revolution wrought in naval contracts under President Cleveland. Said he: "I bid for vessels to-morrow, and will get the contracts if I am intitled to them, regardless of politics, and there is not one of the old naval jobbers who hindered honest contractors in the past to be seen now in Washington."
Mr. Cramp received several important contracts, although he voted against Cleveland, but when he now comes to obtain contracts he will see the jobbing vermin of the Robeson and Chandler rings thick around him and ready to ply their vocation as of old. They regard it as a restoration, and from Nat Mc-Kay up or down, they are here or coming and expect a return to the profligate days when an honest ship builder like Mr. Cramp could obtain no contracts. Secretary Tracy and the President doubtless do not mean to invite a restoration of thieves and profligates, but President Arthur did not mean it, and yet it

"It is now in no measure doubtful as to the late of the surplus. It will be appropriated, and more than the surplus, unless the few wiser leaders shall e much more successful than is now expected. The new pension bills, which which all must support, will alone more than destroy the surplus. Even the most conservative pension bill that is confirst year it gets into operation; and whether the service pension bill, or the dependent pension bill shall be adopted, fully \$1,000,000,000 will be required to fulfill the provisions of the new pension legislation. It is probable, also that the door will again be opened for new arrearages in pensions, and if so, that alone will add \$150,000,000 to the pension expenture in one year. Even Speaker Reed has taken the alarm at the pension tide, and clandestinely opposed the new rule giving the pen ommittee special right to the floor. Under the most economic pension legislation now possible, not only the entire surplus must go for new pensions, but it probable that pensions alone will produce a Treasury deficit in 1891 and that new taxes must be imposed to increase the revenues to the standard of

expenditures.' "The party in power is committed to the Southern educational scheme. The Senate has passed the Blair bill by a decided vote, only to be defeated in the House, but now the House dare not defeat it on a square vote, and under the new rules a vote cannot be prevented. property now, but I know I won't own must be paid. Then consider how jobbers and party leaders are to be pres Rivers and Harbors; for public importance: for State claims now amounting to hundreds of millions which have accumulated on the records of the House, and for many scores of millions wanted for coast fortifications,

The Horrors of Siberia.

CHICAGO, Feb, 17.—A communication has been received here from George Kennan, addressed to the Associated ies of the order of the Russian prison administration by virtue of which Madame Nadezhda Sigida seems to have Kara last November. It is as follows;

"On the steamer Nizhni Novgorod, of the volunteer fleet, which is to sail from In the trial, which excited intense | the port of Odessa on the 20th of March, 1888, there is a party of 528 convicts banished to the island of Saghalien. Among these criminals condemned to penal servitude are the political offenders Vassili Volnot, Sergo Kunzin, Ivan Meisner and Stanislaus Khrenofski. notifying you of this fact the chief prison administration has the honor to respectfully request that you make aroffenders not in a separate group by themselves, but in the cells of other (common criminal) convicts.

'In making such arrangements it is desirable not to put more than two politicals into any one cell containing common criminals. In making thearrangements for contining these politicals in prison and employing them in work no distinction whatever must be made between them and other criminals except in the matter of surveillance, which must be of the strictest possible character. Neither must any difference be made between them and other convicts in respect to punish ments inflicted for

violation of prison discipline. "You will not fail to inform the Chief Prison Administration of the manner in which the above named political offenders are distributed on the Island of Saghalien and to forward reports with regard to their behaviour.

M. GALKIN VRASSKOY. "Director of the Chief Prison Administration.

Up to the time when this order was ssued some difference had been made in Siberian prisons between the treatme tof politica offenders and the treatment of burglars, highway robbers and murderers. Both classes were confined in the same dress and leg fetters, but the politicals were isolated in cells specially set apart for them and were virtually exempt from corporal punishment. did not enjoy this exemption, however, by virtue of any law. Theoretically, and legally they were liable to the same punsshments that were inflicted upon common criminals, namely, 20 to 100 blows with the "rods" or the "plet" (a heavy whip of hardened rawhide with a number of lashes.)