

A FAMILY PAPER FOR TOWN AND COUNTRY,
IS PRINTED AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY
By WM. M. BRISLIN,
24 Story of Hancock's New Building, Cumberland St.
At One Dollar and Fifty Cents a Year.
Advertisements inserted at the usual rates.
HANDSOMELY PRINTED AT A HOME OFFICE.
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In Lebanon County, postage free
In Pennsylvania, out of Lebanon county 5 cents per
quarter, or 20 cents a year.
Out of this State, 5/8 cts. per quarter, or 20 cts. a year
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VOL. 16--NO. 52.

LEBANON, PA., WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 1865.

WHOLE NO. 834

PRINTING:

Business Cards, Handbills,
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Bill Headings, Blanks,
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Choice Poetry.

INSIDE THE ALEHOUSE.

O, don't go in to-night, John—
New, husband, don't go in!
To spend our only shilling, John,
Would be a feat at home,
There's not a loaf at home, John—
There's not a coal, you know,
Though with hunger I am faint, John,
And cold comes down the snow.
Then don't go in to-night!

Ah, John, you must remember—
And, John, I can't forget,
When never a foot of yours, John,
Was in the alehouse set.
Ah, those were happy times, John,
No quarrels then we knew,
And none were happier in our lane
Than I, dear John, and you.
Then don't go in to-night!

You will not go—John, John, I mind,
When we were drinking,
Had my arm as strong, or step as firm,
Or cheek as red as you;
But drink has stolen your strength John,
And paid your cheek to white,
Has tottered made your young, firm tread,
And bowed your manly height.
You'll not go in to-night?

You'll not go in? Think on the day
That made me, John, your wife,
Of all our future life,
Of how your steady earnings, John,
No wasting should consume,
But weekly some new comfort bring
To seek our happy home;
Then don't go in to-night?

To see us, John, as then we dressed,
In tidy, clean and neat,
Brings to my eyes to follow us
As we went down the street.
Ah, little thought our neighbors then,
And we as little thought,
That ever John, to rage like these,
By drink we should be brought;
You'll not go in to-night?

And will you go? If not for me,
Yet for your baby stay—
You know, John, not a taste of food
Has passed my lips to-day;
And tell your father, little one,
This mine your life hangs on;
You will not spend the shilling, John?
You'll give it him? Come John,
Come home with us to-night?

Miscellaneous.

A HAND AND A RING.

About six o'clock one autumn evening two men pushed their way through the furze bushes which bordered a road running from Quidhampton to Harnham. There was not much difference in their outward appearance, yet one was nothing but a woodman, and the other was Squire Winter, the owner of Stockton Park and most of the land near it. They had both been engaged all day in marking trees which were to be cut down to thin the young plantation; and Squire Winter still held in his hand the heavy kneed-edge knife, almost as heavy as a hatchet, which he had been using for this purpose. The air had been getting more and more damp for several hours, and just before the time I have mentioned a light rain began to fall. As he had been walking all day and was still nearly a mile and a half from his house the squire told the woodman to go across to the Pheasant, an inn which was about four or five hundred yards distant, and tell the landlord to saddle his horse for him, and he would send a groom back with it the following morning. The squire himself crossed over to another plantation, on the opposite side of the road, to see whether that too wanted trimming. In a few minutes he came out and walked down to the inn, where he found the landlord waiting for him with the horse ready saddled, and looking with its drooping head and lank ears as if it were keenly alive to the miserable state of the weather.

The squire looked at the animal, and said: "I think I might as well walk as ride; that seedy looking animal, Jackson. However, I suppose I can get something like a trot out of him for a short distance." Of course the landlord said he could, and Squire Winter mounted and rode off.

We are very apt to say that a second thought is the best, and certainly it would have been well for the squire if on this evening he had given up his idea of riding, as he was tempted to do when he saw the horse that was brought out for him, because in that case he would have been accompanied almost to his house by the woodman, who occupied a lodge at one of the gates opening into the park, and he would in all probability have escaped the catastrophe which befell him. The path he took was narrow, and for some distance ran through a hazel copse. The landlord of the Pheasant watched him till he was hidden by the trees and underwood, and then went indoors.

It was too early for him to have customers in his house; indeed, it was not very likely that he would have any at all on such a night; and he sat down by the tap-room fire and lighted a pipe. He had not been sitting there many minutes when he heard the sound of a horse galloping up to his door. He got up and went out, expecting to find somebody there who required refreshment, but to his astonishment, and somewhat to his alarm, he found his own horse standing there without a rider. He was disposed to believe, as he afterwards said, that the squire had got off on reaching his house, and left the animal standing at the door for the groom to come and take it away, and that, finding itself free to go which way it pleased, it had turned round and started off for its own stable. Still he thought it just possible that some accident had happened to the squire, especially when he had passed his hand down the horse's fore-legs,

and found that one of the shoulders was bleeding from a gash in it, which might have been caused by a stake in the hedge through which it had forced its way, though it seemed too clear for that. To make sure, he determined to go to the house and inquire; he was certain, if he could not befall the squire, that he would be invited to share a good supper with the servants, and would receive a more liberal remuneration for the hire of his horse. After washing the wound with cold water till the bleeding had ceased, he led the animal into the stable, and then put on his hat and walked down the same path which the squire had taken. The rain had left off, but the air was still so dark and heavy that, though the moon was up, the light was not sufficient to enable him to see far before him; and it was not until he was within about a dozen yards of it that he could see that a dark object which lay before him was the body of a man. It lay with its cheek resting on the wet ground; and on stooping over it, he saw, what the dress and appearance had already told him, that it was the body of Squire Winter.

The squire was dead for the heart had ceased to beat, though the body was still warm beneath the clothes. The laborer's cottages were not far off, and to those he ran for help to carry the body to the house. One of the laborers he sent for the doctor, and with some others he returned to the spot where the body was lying, and putting it on a hurdle, they carried it to the house, and laid it down in the hall, to wait the doctor's arrival, who came in a few minutes afterwards, and having unfastened the clothes discovered that death had been caused by a bullet which had entered the stomach, and taking an upward course, had lodged in some vital organ.

Fortunately, the Squire had no wife to regret his loss, but he had one son, who, the servants said had gone to Winchester to be present at a pigeon shooting match. A groom without waiting for directions from anybody, had ridden off before the doctor had time to ask any questions; and on inquiring at the barracks he was told that his master had left that place several hours since, and might have stopped at Stockton Park if he had not called anywhere on his road. It was then so late that the groom determined on remaining in Winchester that night, not doubting, that as he had not met his master on his way there, that gentleman had called at one of the many country houses which stand between the two places, and would long since have reached home. Starting early the next morning, he might have been back at Stockton Park while the day was still young; but he felt so sure that he would find his master at home, that he took advantage of the state of confusion caused by the old squire's murder to spend some hours with other grooms with whom he was acquainted, so that it was not until three or four o'clock in the afternoon that he made his appearance at Stockton Park. Up to this time, no uneasiness or surprise had been felt at the young squire's absence. His habits were well known to the servants, and they took it for granted that the groom had been unable to find him on the preceding night, and that they would return together in the course of the morning. But now that the groom had returned with the news that their master had left Winchester early the day before, the doctor, who still remained in the house, and exercised authority in directing what was to be done, sent servants and laborers to every place they could think of to search for him. The young squire, as he was called, to distinguish him from his father, and not because he was really a young man—for he had passed his fortieth year—was not liked by anybody. Neither he nor his father cared about the society of young men; the men of their own age who lived near them were generally married, and Stockton Park was one of those houses to which men do not like to take their wives. Occasionally, men came from the barracks at Winchester or from Portsmouth for two or three days' shooting; but they seldom came a second time. The game was plentiful, but the evenings are long in the autumn; and the bickerings between father and son, which not even strangers could check, made a visit to the Park so unpleasant, that visitors usually found a pretext for shortening their stay. The conduct of the younger Winter towards his father was so bad, that men who made no pretence of respecting anything because it was good, agreed that he was a snob and a brute, and showed no inclination to cultivate his acquaintance.

The whole of that day passed, and nothing was heard of him; but next morning the man whose business it was to fetch the letters from the post office at Salisbury brought a lot of addressed to the deceased squire, which was at once seen to be in the handwriting of his son. Under these circumstances the doctor considered himself justified in opening it to see if it contained an address. The post-mark showed it came from London, and the contents gave no further information of the place from whence it was written. To judge from the language, there must have been a more than usually serious quarrel between the late squire and his son, for the letter referred to a blow received on the night preceding his visit to Winchester, and went on to say that it was now impossible that they could

live in the same house; therefore his father was not to be surprised when he found that his account had been drawn upon to the amount of three thousand pounds, which he would soon recover by not having to pay his (the writer's) allowance, for he was on the point of starting for the Cape of Good Hope, where he intended to land, and make a journey into the interior of Africa. No address was given where a letter would reach him; and letters which were subsequently addressed to him at the Cape were returned with the endorsement that no person of the name of Winter had ever called at the post office for letters, but that it was believed that a Mr. Winter had gone nearer the village, and further from Squire Winter's estate. The deed was of old date, and was emblazoned with a singular looking device, which the clerk no sooner saw than he exclaimed:

"Why, this is the same crest that was on the ring Ellen Jackson showed me."

He stopped himself, and I said: "The same crest that was on the ring Ellen Jackson showed you, is it?"

After a little hesitation, he answered: "Yes. The crest was a very curious one, being four arms arranged in a semicircle, the hands grasping daggers, which were pointed upwards."

"Is the Ellen Jackson you referred to the daughter of the landlord of the Pheasant? I seem to remember a young woman of that name who gave evidence on Ward's trial."

"Yes," was his answer. "And did Miss Jackson tell you where she got such an uncommon ring?"

"Yes—no. Well, the fact is, the ring was on a hand. She showed it to me one morning when I called there in passing, when her father was out shooting. This Squire Winter is not such a man as his father was; he lets Jackson shoot over his estate as much as he pleases."

"The ring was on a hand; I suppose you mean on her hand?"

"No I don't. It was on a hand as dry and shrivelled as though it were a hundred years old."

"And where did she get this hand from? Is it left lying about where her father's customers can see it?"

He blushed for some reason, as he replied: "I don't think it is. She took it from a box in her father's bedroom, in which he keeps his papers and other things. I saw it when she was looking for a paper relating to some property left by her aunt, about which she wanted to ask me a question, and asked her to let me look at it."

At this moment I dropped upon another paper relative to the matter in hand, and all my attention was given to that, so that I asked no more questions at the time. But in the course of the evening, when my friend and I were smoking cigars, in the absence of any more interesting subject to talk about, I said:

"Your clerk tells me that Jackson, the landlord of the Pheasant, has got a ring with the peculiar crest of the Winters on it. Where do you suppose he got it from?"

"Heaven knows! or possibly, the present squire may have given it to him: I hear they are remarkable intimates."

"But neither of those hypotheses accounts for its being on a hand severed from the body."

"Severed from the body! That is singular, certainly. Why, Winter has lost one hand. Surely he would not have brought his hand all the way from Africa to make a publican a present of it."

"Not very likely, I should say."

After some further observations had been exchanged on the singularity of the circumstance, the conversation turned on matters in which we were more immediately interested.

I had a hard day's work in court on Saturday, and feeling a little fatigued, instead of going to church the next morning, I went round to the cathedral to Harnham, and from thence I wandered along a road which brought me to a public house. On looking up at the sign board, I saw that it was the Pheasant. The day was a hot one, and the sign reminded me that there was a bride-room which led through the wood in which poor old Winter had been murdered. I was warm and getting tired; and thinking that a rest among the hazel-wood would be pleasant, I turned into the path, and at the first opening I came to (which happened to be quite close to a stone cross, so covered with a species of moss, that I had some difficulty in making out that the inscription on it stated that this was the spot where the squire's body had been found.) I turned out of it again and found myself in a small open space. Here I lay down, with my face turned toward the bright blue sky, and watched the curious forms which the light clouds assumed as they followed each other across the confined space which comprised my field of view. Presently I fancied that my back was getting cold, and that this might be caused by the dampness of the ground on which I was lying. I got up and peered away with the heel of my boot to break through the grass to ascertain if the ground beneath was damp. I tried two or three places, and the last time it struck against the butt of a pistol causing the muzzle to turn upwards. I picked it up, and wiped the dirt off with some grass. The barrel was very rusty; but there was a small plate of silver behind the hammer, which I soon rubbed clean enough to see that it was engraved,

and a little additional friction enabled me to perceive that it was with the peculiar crest of the Winters.—To a man of my profession, the vicinity of the spot where Winter had been murdered naturally suggested that this pistol was the weapon by which the crime had been perpetrated. One idea followed another, until I was led to connect together the murder, the hand and ring possessed by Jackson, the hand lost by the present owner of Stockton Park, and the intimacy between the two men, so unusual between persons of such different grades. I walked to the stone cross while these things were passing through my mind, and leaning on it, I pondered over each idea as it occurred to me, linking one with the other, till I believed I had arrived at a clear comprehension of the whole affair.

At first I thought I would consult my friend the attorney before I did anything in the matter; but on second thoughts, I determined on striking a blow, while I was on the spot, and had some leisure. The door of the Pheasant was shut, as a sort of compliment to the day, I supposed, certainly not to keep out customers. I remembered the man directly I walked in and saw the landlord.—He was in the act of cleaning his gun, and without waiting to be questioned, I said: "Are you aware, Mr. Jackson, of the penalty to which an accessory to a murder, either before or after the fact, is liable?"

"He stared, and seemed quite stupefied by the question. I kept my eyes fixed steadfastly upon him, and at last he stammered out: "What do you ask me such a question for?"

"You don't remember me, perhaps. I depended poor Ward, who had such a narrow escape of being hanged, through your not telling the truth at the trial."

I could see that he was tempted to deny what I said, but the positive tone in which I spoke puzzled him so much, that after a brief attempt at consideration, he seemed to conclude that I had got my information from Winter, for he said: "I suppose Squire Winter is a friend of yours and he has got you to come and try to frighten me off."

I told him it was not so, and urged him to make such a statement as would enable me to get Ward released; in which case I promised he should be dealt with as leniently as possible, otherwise I would have him taken into custody at once as a party concerned. Intimidated by my threats, and not knowing how far I might be able to carry them into execution, but probably imagining the worst from what I said with respect to the hand and ring in his possession, he at last consented to tell me all about it.

"The evening the old squire was murdered, Stephen Quain, the woodman came across from the plantation yonder, and told me the squire wanted my horse to ride home. I got it ready as fast as I could, and brought him round. Two or three minutes afterwards, the squire came up. He didn't much like the look of the beast, and said so; but he was a very good horse for all that, only he didn't get as much rubbing as the squire's own horses did. However, he got on him, and rode off down the bride-road through the hazel-copse. I was sitting by the fire smoking my pipe; and I remember I was wondering whether he would catch sight of Ward who had been up here about an hour before, and went away soon after I told him that the squire was close by marking the trees.—Presently I heard a horse gallop up to the door, and went out to see if one of the grooms had brought mine back. I found it was my horse, but there was nobody on his back. I wondered what had happened, and guessed that the squire had got off and gone in-doors, thinking the horse would stand there till a groom came to ride him up here, and that the horse had trotted off, and found his legs to see if he had run against anything; and when I touched his off-shoulder, he started away; and at the same time, I felt that my hand was wet, I looked at it, and it was just light enough to see that my hand was bloody, and that the horse's shoulder had been out. I took hold of the bridle to lead him into the stable, and found there was something dangling from the ring of the bit and check-strap; and it gave me a turn when I saw it was a man's hand, cut off clean at the wrist. I unfastened the fingers, and carried it with me into the stable and put it in the corn-bin, while I went to get a lantern.—As soon as I took it out again, and held it to the light, I knew it was the young squire's by the ring that was on one of his fingers. I was a good bit frightened; but I thought it was best to say nothing about it then, so I hid the hand under the thatch, and went down to the house to see what had happened. As I was going through the hazel-copse, I saw something dark lying in the path. What we call the hunter's moon was pretty near the full; but it was such a bazy night that I could not just make out the face; and instead of being the young squire as I thought it must be, I found it was the squire himself."

[It is not necessary to repeat what I have already said of what he did on making the discovery.] "I didn't tell anybody what I knew; but if Ward had been sentenced to be hanged I should have done so. When his trial came on, and he was only to be transported for life, I thought to myself that I was a very poor man, and had got a large family to keep, and that

he would have been sure to be transported some time or other, for he wouldn't have minded shooting a keeper a bit; so I determined to keep the hand with the ring on the finger just as it was; and when the new squire came home, I would make him pay me to keep quiet.

"It was the right hand—for the squire is left-handed—and he always wore the ring on his fore-finger.—The next morning, as soon as it was light, I went down to the place where I found the body the night before, and among the roots of one of the hazels I found the pistol you have got there. I looked round to see if anybody was near, but there was nobody to see me, so I went behind the bushes, and dug out a turf, and buried the pistol underneath, and then put the turf down over it, so that nobody could see that it had been touched. Here, as if seized with a sudden impulse, he exclaimed:—"And by the Lord Harry I'll have it back again!" He had been holding the gun he was cleaning in his hand all the time he had been telling me what I have related; and as he uttered this exclamation he jumped up, and holding the gun by the barrel, made a blow at me with the stock. The attack was so sudden and unexpected that if my movement had not been as quick as my eye, I should probably have received the blow on my head as he undoubtedly intended I should. Luckily, I dodged it, and the gun came down on the back of the chair, smashing the back of the chair, and breaking the stock off from the barrel. Before he had time to recover himself to repeat the blow, I knocked him down, and beat him about the head with the metal butt of the pistol until he was incapable of doing more harm. When I had done this, I was puzzled what next to do, for I did not like to leave him there bleeding; and there was nobody in the house to attend to him if I went away, his daughter and other brothers having, as I was told afterwards, gone to the cathedral at Salisbury, in the hope of seeing the judge there. I went to the well, and drew up a pail of water; and soaking my handkerchief in it I went back and bound it round his head, and then started for the town as fast as I could go, calling as I went to my friend's house, at a surgeon's where I left word that his services were wanted at the Pheasant. My friend's residence was beyond the city; and when I got there, I found that he had gone to Laverstock, but was expected home to dinner, I had decided that I would tell him what had happened before I gave notice to the authorities. I knew that there was no chance of Jackson making his escape; and I did not imagine that he was in a condition to give any instructions to anybody to go to Squire Winter with an account of what had passed. Hour after hour went by and my friend did not come home. I dined alone; and about eleven o'clock, he returned, apologizing for his absence that he had found an old school fellow staying with his friend whom he had not seen for several years. Late as it was, I told him of the discovery I had made, but he thought as it was then so late, and we should be sure of finding Jackson the next day, that the matter might very well stand over until then. I did not quite approve of his advice, but I suffered myself to be persuaded.

The next morning we went to the court-house earlier than usual, and constables were despatched to apprehend Winter, and Jackson also, if he was in a condition to be moved. The latter was found in bed at his house, but the former was not discoverable anywhere. None of the servants knew where he had gone to; all they could say was that he had gone out on the Sunday afternoon as usual and had not returned. What had become of him was never ascertained. As for Jackson, he was recovering fast from his wounds; but erysipelas attacked him, and in a short time he had gone where the justice of man could not reach him.—Ward's release was obtained on a representation of the case in the proper quarter; but whether he availed himself of his right to a gratuitous passage to this country, or preferred remaining where he was I am unable to say.

The New York Evening Post, an intensely Republican sheet in a recent editorial said:

"It is our duty to insist that wherever our flag floats, there an American citizen may say what he thinks, to whoever chooses to hear him."

It is characteristic of the ground-hog never to come out of his hole in the spring, until he has unmistakable signs of fair weather. The Post in changing tactics, from the suppression of newspapers and the incarceration of American citizens, for attempting to enjoy the privilege it now claims, shows a fair change for the better, and we welcome it and several other Republican journals to the true doctrine of American freedom.

The quantity of digestion that a German can get over is really wonderful. We once boarded with one who disposed of six meals a day, and filled up the intervals with raw herrings and sardines. We never knew him to groan but once, and that was when he heard that the schooner "Houfer Kass," loaded with sour-kraut, had foundered at sea, and nothing had been saved but officers and crew.