

The Forest Republican.

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Sunny Days.

Oh, sing of sunny days, dear heart,
With hope and courage golden,
When all the treasures of our lives
Were in the future holden.
Sweet days long gone!
Life's shades draw on!
Hold fast my hand, we near the strand
Where our true hearts must sever,
But looking backward o'er the land,
That we have trod together,
We'll sing a song of the happy days
Whose sunshine streamed across our ways.
Yes, sing, old friend, of the sunny days;
Sing low, sweetheart, while cool the haze
Creeps upward from the misty river;
Sing softly of the glad days,
Sing softly, love, forever.

Oh, sing of sunny days, dear heart,
Bright in the land before us,
Where, without cloud of doubt between,
God's smile warms ever o'er us.
Sweet time to be,
We welcome thee
While hand in hand we near the strand
Where our true hearts must sever.
Our eyes are to the living land,
Our parting, not forever,
Our hearts sing glad of glorious days
Where love shall blend on all our ways;
Sing, friend, with me, of the sunny days;
Sing clear, sweetheart, while soft the haze
Watts o'er us from the narrow river,
Which parts us from the restful days
Of God's undimmed forever.
—Aurilla Furber, in Home Journal.

A SCRAP OF PAPER.

The following remarkable story has never before been published in its complete form. Years ago the main features of it were printed in the New York Courier, but, for the sake of certain parties involved, the full narrative was suppressed.

George Layman was a farmer, residing near Selby, in Yorkshire, England. Though not an educated man by any means, he was above the average farmer. He had a good home, well furnished and a fine farm excellently stocked. He was twenty-eight years old, and unmarried. With him resided an only sister of seventeen and a girl of remarkable beauty. In 1826, when this narrative opens, brother and sister were living in the greatest affection and harmony. In those days it was customary for farmers to employ young men, generally the sons of other farmers, and to board and lodge them in the house. George Layman had seven such. One of them was named Thomas Miller. He was about nineteen or twenty, well built, and exceptionally good looking and attractive. He was exceedingly well informed, and spoke without any of the peculiarities of dialect for which Yorkshire men are noted. His connections were unknown. He came to the farm house with a stick in his hand and a bundle on his shoulder, and obtained a night's lodging. He got into conversation with the farmer and the landlady, though he admitted that he knew nothing of farming, but had worked at the trade of a gunsmith, he expressed a desire to remain and make himself useful about the place. Layman assented. Miller joined the other young men, and was apparently soon deeply interested in his work.

An acquaintance soon sprang up between Miller and Fanny Layman, the farmer's sister. Unfortunately it took a clandestine form, and the lovers—for such they soon became—met in secret. The consequences which might be expected followed, and Miller soon afterward disappeared. When it was apparent to her brother and neighbors that she was to become a mother, she solemnly averred that she had been married to Miller, and produced a certificate showing such to be the fact. Miller disappeared March 20, 1828, when Fanny was within three months of her confinement.

On April 17 following a stranger arrived at the inn in the adjacent village, and sent for Farmer Layman. He represented that he was anxious to hire a run for cattle, and had heard that Layman's land was peculiarly adapted. A long conversation followed, and Layman did not return home until rather late. On the road thither, and not more than half a mile from his home, he came upon a carriage standing in the road.

Several men were around, and one held a lantern while the others were putting on the fere of wheel, which had come off in a rut. Layman paused a moment, and as he did so heard a stifled groan from the vehicle.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Any one hurt?"

"Oh, no," was the reply; "the lady is only alarmed—that's all."

"Help—help!" was heard in tones that seemed to indicate a struggle to free the speaker's mouth from a muffling hood.

"What means this?" Layman inquired, excitedly, springing from his horse and going toward the door of the carriage.

He was confronted by a stalwart, gray-haired man in a capacious cloak, who thrust him aside with his left hand, and said:

"Do not interfere, my friend; the lady is my daughter, and she is slightly alarmed—that is all."

At the same time another person stepped up to Layman and whispered:

"She has long been confined in a lunatic asylum, and we are just conveying her home. Make no alarm, or she may have to return."

Thus appealed to the farmer passed on, and before two minutes had elapsed the coach passed out of sight and hearing in an opposite direction.

When the farmer reached home he found that his sister was missing. Soon after he left for the inn a person brought a message for her, and she walked down the road with him. That was the last seen of her.

Search was made all over the neighborhood, but it was unavailing. The man at the hotel who had sent for Layman vanished the same night, and it was believed that he was in conspiracy with the abductors of the girl, and on him devolved the

part to get the farmer out of the way while his sister was removed.

What was the object of the abduction? That was the interesting question. Several days passed, and the neighborhood was still in excitement over the missing girl, when a servant, cleaning out the grate in the room occupied by the stranger at the inn, found a scrap of paper clinging to the chimney. It had been partly burned with others, but had been carried up the chimney by a draft and clung to a protruberance. This scrap of paper was thought nothing of by the servant, and would have been thrown away if the landlady had not seen it and observed on it the name "Layman." This attracted his attention, and he read all that was there. It was as follows:

—got the — Layman out,
—the way, you can easily entice Fanny—
Use what aids — find need.

—SELDON.

The paper had been folded along the fourth line and then torn off at the corner. It was conveyed to Layman and kept by him as likely to be of value. There was small doubt that Fanny was in the vehicle which Layman overtook on his way home, and that the screams which he heard were her cries for help. Could it be that Miller was at the bottom of the abduction? Layman remembered that Miller had frequently written in an album belonging to Fanny, and in comparing that writing with the writing on the scrap of paper they were found to be identical. Layman made his way to York to consult a lawyer as to the best means of discovering his sister. When he reached that city almost the first thing he saw in a newspaper was the discovery of the body of a murdered woman in the river Aire, just above Leeds, near a place known as The Forge. The woman's linen was marked "F. L." Feeling sure that this must be his sister—for the description answered to her in every particular—Layman started back home. On the outskirts of Selby he was waylaid by three footpads and robbed. Then he was left on the highway half dead. He was found by a laboring man, who recognized him and had him conveyed home. When Layman recovered consciousness he remembered distinctly that one of the footpads said, when expostulated with by the others:

"You know as well as I do that the understanding was that we were to kill him."

Layman was a vigorous man, and three days after his last mishap he was on his way to Leeds. Arrived at Kirkstall, he found that the body had been claimed by an old woman, as that of her daughter, and buried. Layman went before Mr. James Hargrave, then a magistrate, and applied so have the body disinterred. Leave was granted, and the next morning was appointed for the work. During the night, however, the grave was opened and the corpse removed. Who were the depredators was involved in mystery. Layman saw in it a conspiracy to defeat justice, and by a wonderful stroke of good fortune hit upon the very device which the depredators of the grave had adopted. While examining the churchyard and the neighboring fields, he observed deep footprints under a very high wall, the ascent of which was, however, easy to an unencumbered person. These footprints led both ways, and Layman concluded that the person rifling the grave had both approached it and quitted it by that way. But it was next to impossible that they could have done this with the coffin in their possession, and therefore he came to the conclusion that the corpse had been reburied somewhere within the precincts of the graveyard. A search was made, but no newly-turned soil was found. Mr. Hargrave suggested examining the old-fashioned square-raised tombs, of which there were many in the grounds, and sure enough, under one of the slabs was found the coffin and the remains. Layman identified the body as his sister's, and it bore marks to show that the girl had been strangled.

By this time the authorities of Leeds, York and Selby had become alike interested in the crime. That the man Miller was at the bottom of it they had every reason to believe. But who was he, that he could bring his instruments to bear so readily wherever he desired to use them? And what was his object in accomplishing the death of the girl? The word "Seldon" at the end of the writing on the scrap of paper found in the chimney was evidently the writer's name. Was Seldon the same person as Miller, and was that person interested in getting out of the way the girl whom he had lawfully married? Mr. Hargrave's shrewdness seemed to offer a rational solution of the mystery, namely: That Miller had married the girl unknown to wealthy parents or friends, and on their learning the fact they had taken measures to remove her, in order that the disgrace of marrying beneath his station might be removed, and that he might be at liberty to fulfill some other marriage engagement which they had arranged. One thing was resolved on—to look for Seldon. There was a family of that name in the North Riding, residing near Birmingham, and another branch of the same family at Stanhope, in Durham. All investigation, however, failed to connect any member of either family with Fanny Layman. There was only one young man of a suitable age in either, and he had been traveling abroad at the very time of Miller's stay with the Laymans. In the meantime it ought to be said, a coroner's jury had sat in the case of Fanny Layman or Miller, and returned a verdict of willful murder against some party or parties unknown.

Two years passed away. Layman went to London on pleasure or business, and as countrymen were wont, visited the House of Commons. He saw a gentleman coming out of St. Stephen's who attracted his attention. The young man Miller stood before him—there was no doubt of that. He inquired who he was and learned that he was James Aubrey Seldon, member of Parliament for the North Riding of Yorkshire, and that this was his first session in the House. Layman returned the next day and watched for the arrival of the members. In due time Seldon came, and Layman had a good view of him. No doubt remained in his mind as to his being Miller. Layman was in doubt what to do. He had £150 in his pocketbook, and he said to himself that ought to secure the services of a

lawyer. He asked for the courts, and meeting a host of lawyers coming out in wig and gown, he stopped one. This happened to be none other than the renowned Brougham, who listened to the man patiently. Calling a younger lawyer, he briefly informed him of the facts, and he asked Layman to wait where he was for a moment. The lawyer returned with a cab, and he and Layman drove to Bow street. A warrant was procured, and Seldon was arrested.

Now follows the most remarkable part of this strange narrative.

Seldon denied all knowledge of Layman or his family, or that he ever went by the name of Miller. His handwriting, however, was shown to correspond exactly with that of Miller, and that of the man who signed "Seldon" to the scrap of paper found in the chimney of the inn.

Seldon's father was also positively identified by Layman as the gray-haired man who thrust him away from the carriage on the night of Fanny's disappearance. A host of witnesses, however, swore that the elder Seldon was at home at that time and sick in bed. To crown all, while Seldon was still under examination, a young man, answering Miller's description somewhat, surrendered himself to the authorities and confessed that he was Miller, and had enticed Fanny away and murdered her. The admission of this cold-blooded crime aroused the indignation of all who heard it. He was tried, convicted and sentenced to be hanged within forty-eight hours.

At the last moment he was reprieved, and his sentence was subsequently commuted to banishment for life.

Layman persisted in his belief to the very last that Seldon was the real man, and his conviction was intensified by what occurred some years later. There was a hunt at Rock Hall, the seat of Sir Joseph Rockcliffe, Layman's landlord. Seldon was there, and following the hounds he took a path which no one knew but those acquainted with Layman's farm. This strengthened the farmer's belief that Seldon and Miller were identical.

But the most confirmatory proof is as yet to be given. Inquiry showed that the man presenting himself as Miller was pardoned the very day his sentence of death was commuted to transportation, and that he was actually keeping a hotel at Richmond, in Yorkshire, within a few miles of the county seat of the Seldons, and passing under his own name, Marfit. This fact was first ascertained in 1832. The very same year King was hanged at York for highway robbery. Before the execution he made a confession of his crimes, and, among other things, he admitted that he was one of the gang who assailed Layman, near Selby, soon after the murder of his sister. He was formerly a groom with the Seldon family, and confessed that he was hired to aid two gypsies in dispatching Layman and getting rid of his sister. He declined to say who hired him, but enough escaped from him to show that the employer was the elder Seldon.

Finally, in 1841, the wife of James Aubrey Seldon filed a bill of divorce against her husband, asking for a separate maintenance. One of the facts set up was that the respondent was at times subject to fits of great mental excitement, during which he committed crimes which he said he had committed, and among them the instigation of the murder of one Fanny Layman, to whom he was married clandestinely. An attempt was thereupon made to revive the inquiry into the murder, but Marfit disappeared from Richmond, and Seldon was placed in a lunatic asylum near Durham. Thence he escaped in 1847, and nothing was heard of him for several weeks, until his remains were found on a heap of straw in an old barn on Layman's farm.

Taking all the circumstances together, there is no doubt that James Aubrey Seldon and Miller were the same. Seldon had returned from the continent, and took a fancy to stroll through the country toward home. On his way he came to Layman's and there saw Fanny. That was the attraction which held him.

By some means his father, who was a desperate and unprincipled man, learned of his marriage, and a plan was devised to remove her. In the first instance, it is supposed that the gypsies were to abduct her and inveigle her into some situation which would warrant a divorce. Subsequently, however, her death was resolved on, whether with the sanction of the Seldons or not is uncertain. The old woman who claimed the girl's body was doubtless one of the gang of gypsies. The alleged sickness of the elder Seldon must have been a trumped-up story, to which it was not difficult to get retainers to swear, especially when all the authorities were anxious to cover up the guilt of the real culprits.

Encouraging Matrimony.

There is in Cincinnati a "National Association for the Promotion of Marriage." Its constitution says: "We have viewed with alarm and the deepest concern the rapidly-growing tendency of the people of the country, particularly those living in the larger cities, to remain unmarried—a condition unnatural and prejudicial to the welfare, success and happiness of the country; therefore, to correct this evil, we do establish and organize a society." The aim of the society is declared to be "in all honorable ways to promote the marriage of citizens; and to secure such an end this society will, so far as in its power, assist and give material aid to young couples in beginning married life, such as helping them to secure homes and the husbands in getting employment, or in any other manner within the province of the association." The society has not been long enough in existence to afford the means of judging of its practical value. It held a picnic recently, at which the attraction was the marriage of three couples; but it was not claimed that the mating had been brought about in any unusual way. Six thousand persons paid twenty-five cents each for admission, and there was a great deal of dancing and beer drinking. The marriage ceremony was performed on a high platform, so that all could see. The bridegrooms were an engraver, a painter and a peddler, and the newspaper reporters gallantly described all the brides as beautiful.

BURNING FOR FORTY-FIVE YEARS.

A Pennsylvania Coal Mine that Caught Fire in 1835 and is Still Burning—A 11 Attempts to Put Out the Fire Abandoned.

One of the most interesting and extensive fires ever known in this country has been raging in a colliery in Schuylkill county for nearly forty-five years. Thousands of dollars have been spent in vain endeavors to extinguish the fire, but at last the idea was abandoned, and since the beginning of the war nothing has been done to subdue the conflagration, which rages without interruption. The history of this mine is very interesting, and, strange to say, though hundreds of travelers visit the coal-fields of this and adjoining counties every year, hardly any of them hear of this great curiosity. The vein that is burning is called the "Jugular." As the surface crop was first worked in 1833 by Lewis E. Dougherty, at a place called Coal Castle, one and a half miles west of what is known as Mount Laffee. The coal taken out was of excellent quality and the mine very productive. When a drift is worked above water level it is the custom to keep a huge grate filled with burning coal just outside the mouth to prevent the water in the gutters from freezing. Such a grate was in operation in the upper drift of Mr. Dougherty's mine in the winter of 1835. One Saturday night the grate was filled with an unusually large quantity of coal, and the miners went to their homes. On the following Monday morning when the mine was visited it was found to be filled with flames. It is supposed that the fire in the grate became communicated to the timbers, and moving along the upper drift was, by means of an air-hole, carried into the lower drift. At any rate, the coal in both drifts was on fire when the men came to work on Monday morning, and two of the miners recklessly went in to save their tools and never returned.

Efforts were made to extinguish the fire, but, after working for several weeks, M. Dougherty gave up all hopes, and abandoning the place opened another colliery about half a mile west of it. During the winter of 1856-7, Mr. John McGinnis, of Pottsville, heard of the abandoned mine and concluded that some of it could be got out without reaching the fire. He put in a slope on the east side of the vein and below the water level. The work, however, progressed slowly, and owing to heavy masses of rock encountered was very expensive. He was finally rewarded by striking the "Jugular" vein at a point where there was a deposit of coal so thick that two or three miners could keep the breaker going, and although it was worked for months, they never succeeded in getting through it. The coal proved to be first-class, and four hundred yards of gangway had been driven when the miners began to complain of excessive heat, and then Mr. McGinnis knew that they were approaching the fire in the mine Dougherty had abandoned. This was about a year after the slope had been started, and Mr. McGinnis saw that it would be necessary to open an air-hole. This work began at once, but after driving twenty or thirty yards the heat became so intense that the workmen were almost suffocated, and many of them refused to continue. By paying double wages a number of men were found willing to work in the air-hole; some idea of the intense heat may be had when it is stated that the men worked perfectly naked, and were relieved every ten minutes. After the air-hole had been opened about fifty yards the heat became unbearable, and the men fainted when exposed to it a minute or two. Seeing that it was impossible to complete the air-hole, work in it was given up, and at a fortunate time for it was afterward discovered that if the hole had been carried up a few yards further it would have struck the water on the upper level and drowned every one in the mine. About this time the miners noticed that when a shot was fired, and the coal came rolling down in huge masses, it was so warm that it could not be comfortably handled. Every day the miners expected to see fire break out, and at last, when coming to work one morning, they found the gangway filled with smoke and flame. As this was expected to happen sooner, later, preparations had been made to extinguish the fire, and the mine was six feet deep with water. This treatment on the desired effect, and when the water was pumped out work was resumed. From this time forward it was almost a continual fight with fire, and no less than eight times was the colliery filled with water and pumped dry again. The ninth time the mine was filled with water the machinery got out of order and the pump refused to work. As Mr. McGinnis had sunk all his capital and could not raise enough money to purchase new machinery, the mine was abandoned in the winter of 1859. The fire continued to burn until the barriers between the mine were consumed, and the timbers in Mr. McGinnis' mine gradually rotted away, and finally the slope caved in. From that time until now the fire has continued without interruption, and the coal has been consumed for half a mile in every direction. The ground has caved in in many places, leaving great chasms that vary from fifty to one hundred feet in depth. Travel over the burned district is exceedingly dangerous to any one not familiar with the country, for in many places great holes are only covered by a shell of burned earth three or four feet thick. Mr. McGinnis states that even as familiar as he is with the locality, he came very near losing his life there a few years ago by falling through the crust. He was crossing a portion of the burnt field when he felt the earth giving way under his feet, and on starting to run for firmer ground he sank up to his armpits in dry ashes and burned earth. Fortunately he managed, with the assistance of a friend, to extricate himself and reach solid ground without injury. Inhabitants of the region never attempt to cross over the burning vein at night.

The only external evidence of the great conflagration that is going on un-

derneath the ground at that point is the total absence of vegetable life. Stones on the surface of the ground are so hot that they cannot be held, and snow is melted as fast as it falls. During rainy weather the surrounding country is enveloped in dense clouds of fog that rise from the overheated earth. The fire has now burned across the top rock and into a dirt vein, or vein of soft coal, where it may last for many years. During the early part of Mr. McGinnis' connection with the mine, it was noticed that the water oozing into it from the levels above had the effect of destroying the miners' shoes as soon as they came in contact with it. The water was not unpleasantly warm, and the men found that if a wound was washed with it a speedy cure followed. The curative qualities of this water soon became known, and hundreds of people flocked to Coal Castle during the summer of 1855 to test its merits. Remarkable cures of rheumatism, scrofula and other diseases are said to have been made, and consequently the water attracted a good deal of attention all over the country, and hundreds of barrels of it were sent to Philadelphia, New York, Boston and Baltimore. A regular physician established himself near the burning mine, bath-houses were erected, and for several months the place was filled with strangers. After the mine was abandoned, however, and left half full of water, it was difficult to obtain the mineral water that performed the cures, and the place began to lose its reputation. The doctor left for parts unknown, the shipments of water ceased and one by one the visitors departed. The water is still held in high regard by many people, and, being strongly impregnated with alkaline earths, its medicinal virtues are no doubt very great. The property is now owned by the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company, and is seldom visited by any one except luckleberry pickers and country people, who come to carry away jugs full of the wonderful water.—Pottsville (Pa.) Miners' Journal.

Petroleum.

When we are told that at the present time over 1,800,000 gallons of petroleum or earth oil are brought to the surface every day in the oil regions of Pennsylvania alone, the mind is staggered by the contemplation of the magnitude of this comparatively new industry. So lavish is mother earth of her hidden stores of oil that it is sent to the surface much faster than it can be taken care of or stored, and at the present time 300,000 gallons, at the lowest estimate, run to waste every day. The great United Pipe Line, and other methods of conveyance, utterly fail to convey the oil to markets, and the enormous tanks for storage are full to overflowing. There are tanks owned by companies which hold 5,000,000 barrels of oil, and all of them are full. The wooden tanks owned by individuals and private concerns amount in their aggregate capacity to as large a number of barrels, and these also are full.

Thus it will be understood that there are great lakes of oil above ground, as well as below; but there is good reason to believe that the subterranean deposits may with greater propriety be called oceans rather than lakes. The oil-wells are evidently pumping from inexhaustible supplies in the rock chambers below, and what are called the "spouting wells" deliver their vast currents with the same impetuosity as when the drills first tapped the pent-up stores. An interesting inquiry arises as regards what becomes of the oil that cannot be secured; into what does it flow and where is its final resting-place? Any one who has visited the oil regions will know of the nature of the country, and readily understand that much of the oil flows into brooks or small rivers, and in time finds its way into the large rivers, and is lost ultimately in the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean. Still larger quantities are absorbed by the earth in ravines and marshy places, and thus it is lost to view. In the famous district one is led to exclaim, "Oil, oil everywhere, and no untainted water to drink." There is oil in the soil; oil in the springs; oil in the bushes and trees; oil in the atmosphere, apparently, oil on the clothing, and in the mouth, eyes and hair of the workmen; the bread and coffee of the region have the odor of oil, and the beds are saturated with it.

How wonderful is all this! Well do we remember when the first vial of "rock oil" fell into our hands. It was called "Seneca oil," and it was claimed to be a most efficacious remedy for a variety of ills to which the human body was subject. The statement that it flowed spontaneously from a spring in Pennsylvania was received at first with much incredulity, as that was regarded as impossible, but in a short space of time the truth was known, and the oil was no longer regarded as a mixture devised by human hands.

American petroleum oil is now used as a source of artificial illumination in nearly all parts of the world. It goes along with rum, powder and muskets to the savage tribes of Africa, and the mud houses on the banks of the rivers of the interior are illuminated by its combustion; it is found in the interior of the Turkish Empire, in Persia, in Egypt, in Palestine, in China, and Japan and in the remote islands of the sea. For the paltry sum of fifteen cents we can purchase a gallon of the clear refined oil, and the cost of the light after that, in comparison with gas as furnished at the lowest cost in cities, is one to twenty in its favor. It is just now the most formidable antagonist of gas, and we can scarcely hope in the utilization of electrical force in the future, to secure light at a lower expense.—Boston Journal of Chemistry.

A curious case of death is that of Karl Goler, a butcher, who died in New York from malignant pustule. He had been handling some diseased meat, and his fingers must have become impregnated with the virus. He rubbed his mouth with his hand, and shortly after the malignant pustule appeared, and in a few days caused death.

Did you ever know a civil engineer to be guilty of rudeness?—Albany Journal.

The Glim Iron Spade.

Of all the devices which genius has made For science or art, or for commerce or trade, With pulley or shunt, wheel, saw, file or blade, Not many compare with the glim iron spade. Thon grand excavator and emblem of grade— Great lever of thrift—march on, promenade! The thousands who scorn thee in life, I'm afraid, Will meet thee too soon at the grave, iron spade.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

Firm friends—Partners.
A big revolver—The world.
Does a standing joke ever require a seat?
J. B. Gough has delivered 8,000 lectures.
Philadelphia's police force last year cost \$1,335,131.
How strange it is that hot words will produce coolness!
The dentist makes almost as much money per acher as the farmer.
Nobody should complain of sea-sickness when he considers that even the ocean is confined to its bed.
Norfolk ranks first in the peanut trade. Fully 600,000 bushels were handled there the present season.
Great Britain produces three times as much iron and nearly three times as much coal as the United States.
People who struggle to the tops of the Swiss mountains are those who may be said to most enjoy a foreign climb.
A recent authority on swimming says that a good swimmer can go two miles an hour without the aid of the current.
"A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind," but a fellow feeling for our pocket-book makes us wondrous mad.—Meriden Recorder.
The young man, says the Boston Transcript, who prides himself upon looking spruce, should bear in mind that spruce is ever green.
Advice to the young—Eat oysters only in the months that have an "r" in their names and drink whiskey only in the months that have a "k" in their names.—Albany Journal.
What a glorious country this is, when you come to think it all over! Seventy-five cents pays for a card in a newspaper nominating your brother-in-law for the Presidency! What nation can match us?—Detroit Free Press.
Ether was thrown into the cell of a refractory prisoner at Vervay, Switzerland, until he became harmless. He had defied the gendarmes to take him before the judges, and the court could not wait until he was starved into submission.
A Man's Fight with a Snake.
Mr. William Bowersmith, a farm hand, while working in a field near where Owl creek empties into the Mohican, met with an encounter a few days ago that seldom falls to the lot of man. Mr. Bowersmith had taken an ax in his hand to repair some fences bordering on the stream referred to. Passing over a little bayou formed by the back water in the recent freshet, and over which a large sycamore had fallen, he came to a little unweeded piece of ground, deeply shaded by buckeyes and the common larch, and grown over by tall grass and iron-weeds. Mr. B. repaired some breaks in the fence and was turning to go away, when his attention was attracted by most peculiar sounds, described as something like the hissing of geese, mingled with dull thuds, like striking on an old boot. Mr. Bowersmith turned his eyes in the direction of the sounds and saw the grass and weeds were in violent motion and leveled to the earth, as though smitten with a club. He approached the spot cautiously, and by climbing upon a stump close by his eyes met a sight never to be forgotten. Almost beneath his feet, locked in deadly conflict, lay two immense serpents, hissing, writhing and twisting, while their crimson mouths exuded blood and froth. Their eyes gleamed like rockets and protruded from their heads like beads. They would wrine around on another dash the ground with their tails, and, fastening their fangs into each other's neck, would shake with the ferocity of bulldogs. It soon became apparent that one of the serpents was about exhausted, and, while making a desperate charge upon its opponent, the other seized it near the under part of the throat and settled down upon the ground, where they lay writhing for several minutes. At last everything became quiet, and Mr. Bowersmith crept from his position, and raising his axe, advanced to dispatch the victor. It had scarcely reached the spot when, with the rapidity of lightning, the remaining serpent sprang upon him, and in an instant had so entwined itself about his person that resistance was impossible, and at each respiration the snake drew his deadly coil closer and closer. Mr. B. sank upon the ground, his face pierced in several places by the sharp fangs of the reptile. How long he remained in this position he knows not, and in all probability would not have been alive to-day had not a neighbor—who, with a common grain sickle in his hand, and who desired to see Mr. Bowersmith about some important matter—followed him to the spot and found him as above narrated. It was but the work of a moment for the neighbor to cut the body of the serpent in twain and release the unfortunate man, who was restored to consciousness by the abundant application of water and the imbibing of a little spirits which the neighbor had in his possession. The serpents proved to be two large reptiles of the species known as the black snake. After straightening them out the smaller one measured six feet four inches from tip to tip, and the other eight feet two inches, and was thought to be some three inches in diameter. Mr. Bowersmith has now nearly recovered, although his face is still swollen from the poisonous effects of the serpent's fangs, and the shock to his nervous system would have proved fatal to a less robust man.—Mt. Vernon (Ohio) Banner.