The Ebensburg Alleghanian.

TODD HUTCHINSON, Editor.
M. E. HUTCHINSON, Publisher.

I WOULD RATHER BE RIGHT THAN PRESIDENT.—HENRY CLAY.

TERMS: { $3.00 PER ANNUM. $2.00 IN ADVANCE.

VOLUME 8. EBENSBURG, PA., THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 1867. NUMBER 2.

The Old Story.

I was a woman, and I'd a heart,
And I raved of love and constancy,
And he saw the tears in my eyelids start,
For he was the world to me!

He whispered low when the spring-time flew,
Of the tangled paths in which men stray,
And around me all his arms he threw,
His eyes were on fire that day.

We parted: yes! but I clung to him,
And I put up my lips to be kissed again;
But the laughing eyes of the heav'n grew dim,
And were swollen black with rain.

They came to me when my love was gone,
And said he was poor and toiled for bread;
They chill'd of rain and tears alone,
And my heart was dull as lead.

And then they laid their bribe at my feet—
'Twas the same old tale that is often told—
They play'd on the strings of my heart's conceit,
And dazzled my eyes with gold.

I sold myself to a loveless thing,
And I walk'd to the altar and there I lied;
For my heart was away with the primrose spring,
And I by my husband's side.

And now you ask me what of the lie?
I've paid full dear for my girlish greed;
'Twere better, I think, for a woman to die,
Than to live the life I lead.

I am alone, but still I can sing,
And pray for the ruin of winter's reign,
For the scent of the primrose-crown of spring
Will return to me again.

THE STORY OF A HERO.

And I don't think I ever shall get to take it as a matter of course, sir—taking it coolly out of the question. Here we are living about as an exciting a life as men can lead—always on duty, and ready at a moment to have a set-to with the worst fire that ever broke out. No, I shall never get to take it as a matter of course, for it's all dark, rush and excitement, and I love it, sir. Flash comes the news to us by telegraph, most likely; out come the horses; there's a light put to the ready trimmed fire, and then with a train of sparks flying out behind us, as the fire roars, and the steam's getting up, away gallop the horses. Ay, it's "Fire! hollo!" and they clear the road for us; and away we go on full gallop down the streets, with the horses' hoofs striking fire, the crowd shouting, and the running mob increasing at every step. There's something in it as warms one's blood; and as to the danger—well, of course, it's dangerous; but when we feel that we're doing our duty, and know what's before us, why somehow we don't remember the danger, but go at it in earnest.

Now, there was only last week, sitting as I was, waiting for a call—there it was at last, late on in the night, when the streets were clear; and away we tore at something like a pace. Oxford street, Holborn, down the Hill, up Skinner street, and Newgate street—whoop! and away full gallop, with the horses enjoying it, bless you, and lashing out till it's hard to say whether they didn't make more sparks than the fire under the boiler. We wanted no more instructions, for there was the red glow on ahead; and as we got nearer, we could almost see the sparks; and at last we did see them come pouring and rolling along with the smoke, and being a heavy, hot night, hanging like a thick star-spangled cloud just over our heads.

Two engines were there, and as it happened so late, there were not so many people as might have been expected; but as soon as I got there, I saw as something particular was the matter, and this is what it was:—The fire was in quite a narrow court, where they couldn't get the escapes, and there was people burning to death; while above the shouting of the mob and clanking of the engines hard at work, you could hear their awful cries for help.

Now, don't you suppose that I'm proud of all this I'm going to tell you, because I'm not. Now, if you were to dash in and save any one's life, why, no doubt, it would be brave and gallant, because you would have done it out of true compassion for a suffering fellow creature; but then with me it's quite different. I'm paid so much a week to save life and property from fire; consequently, I only do what's my duty to do.

I runs up the court axe in hand, and soon sees the state of affairs. One house was in a blaze from top to bottom, and the flames had worked through into the next, and were attacking the one opposite, while, with their escape regularly cut off, there were about a half a dozen people at the upper windows of the second house, and no way of getting to them. There was no back door to the place, being one of those crowded city places; while the door in front and staircase were now full of smoke, and no way of getting into a state of glow, off which the water sputtered and steamed without making any impression.

There was no time for ladders or anything else but the sheets, and them we got stretched out for the people to jump into, but poor things! they dared not, and what to do I could not tell. There was the fire blazing up higher and higher, and lightning up two of them old city churches that you see lost down those old courts, and looking as if they'd been put there out o' the way because people didn't have any use for them now. There they were lit up and glowing, and the pigeons that lived up there scared and flying round and round the fire; there was the rush and the roar of the wind along the court as it set towards the fire; and there were the flames leaping up, the clouds of smoke rolling away, and the crackling sputter of the slates as they flew with the heat, and then slid rattling off into the court beneath, smash upon the pavement. Every now and then came a loud roar and crash as a rafter or beam fell in, and sent the sparks up in the whirlwind. And there all that time were those poor creatures uttering the wildest piercing shrieks for help you ever heard. Now, I've heard so much of that sort of thing that you'd expect I shouldn't mind it; but I do though, and as I said about fires, I don't think I shall ever get to take it as a matter of course; for there is something very awful in seeing fellow-creatures, strong and hearty, and yet dying before your eyes, and you not able to save them.

But I wasn't idle all this time—not a bit of it—for every minute's worth something at a fire, and if you give it too much time it will beat you. Under the circumstances, the first thing was to save life, and whilst them that had the branches did the best to keep the fire back from them at the third floor window, I got hold of a rope, and in at the house opposite, and made my way up stairs to the third floor, which, like the rest of the place, was used as a warehouse, and crammed full of packages.

Being a strange house, it wasn't easy to find your way, but I got up at last, and opposite to the room where the poor things were all now huddled together at one window, for the fire was gaining on them, so that unless they were soon helped they wouldn't want it.

"Crash! crash!" didn't I let my little axe play round the sashes of that window, and soon have a clearance, for it was nailed up, and then when the poor things heard me, and saw the light shining on my helmet, how they did shriek for help.

Just then I looked down at the depth, and I caught sight of one fellow standing below with a short ladder in his hand, which might have been of use if the poor things had been on the first floor; and then I made ready to throw my rope across, when just as I was going to let go and then going to try and catch it, a thought struck me, and I let the coil of rope fall down into the court, and all but one end as I kept hold of, and then when the poor things saw it let down they shrieked again, and one of them fell back from the window.

"Tie on that ladder," I shouted "and some of you come up;" and one of my mates soon tied the ropes to one of the rounds, and then with two or three more ran into the house, while I hauled away till I got hold of the bottom of the ladder, for they sent the heaviest end up first, and then dragged it in at the window, and balancing the other end up, continued to push it across and into the window of the other house across the court, and so made a sort of bridge, only it was all askew, for the houses were not quite opposite to one another.

Just as I'd done this, in comes my mate with two more men, and I sets them to work to hold the ladder while I took hold of the rope, and then made ready to crawl across on the thin bridge I'd rigged up. It was for life and death, or I wouldn't have ventured on the slight, bending wood; for though a ladder set nearly upright may be strong enough, it makes it a deal weaker to lay it down level and then go and crawl along it. I knew how it would be though, so I tied the rope round my body, and made my mate hitch the other round a big hook in the wall used for a pulley, so that in event of a fall, if the rope held, I shouldn't have gone all the way. They tied one end of the ladder, too, for to keep it steady, and then there I was scrambling across, with the ladder bending and quivering, and the crowd underneath hurrahing and clapping their hands, just as if I was doing a bit of Blondin to please them.

Now the ladder did bend; so that I thought it must give way, and me go crash into the court; but it didn't, and the next moment I was in the window of the burning house, with the trembling women clinging to me.

"Now, then," I says, to one man, "you can creep across," and I pointed to the ladder.

"I can't leave my wife," he says, holding a half fainting woman against the window, where the smoke wasn't quite so dense.

"You're a trump, you are," I thinks, and then I hauls more of the rope over, and makes it fast round the poor woman's waist, and then we laid her on the ladder, and the three on the other side hauled, and we held on to the rope this end, and got her half across, when she slipped off the ladder, and hung right over the court, while there arose a regular shriek of horror. But there was no time to lose, so back end of the rope, and we hauled as the others hauled, and so they soon had her in at the other window, though the rope was so tight that it must have hurt the poor thing terribly.

Then they loosened the rope again, and we sent another woman over, and she was insensible with fear, and we got her over all right, though she, too, slipped off the ladder. Then there were too little girls, one after the other; and it was sad to see how they trembled and shook—too much frightened to cry, as well they might be, for the heat was awful; and I knew that another quarter of an hour would find the room we were in red hot.

We got another over—a young man—and he was dragged over, too, for he dare not try to crawl across, and I suppose to a man as ain't used to such things, to creep over a place like that, all those feet over the pavement, and when you've been frightened to death nearly by waking out of your sleep to find the next place on fire, is rather trying; and now there was only that chap whose wife was sent over first, and who had worked all he could to help me, and another cowardly chap, whom I'd had quite a set-to with to keep back, so as to save the women and children first.

And now this chap as I've just spoke about made a rush to get to the ladder, and he was in such a horrid fright that I don't believe he'd got over safe, and besides I knew there was time for us all to get away if things were done quietly; so, considering as it wasn't his turn, I held him back for the married man to go first to his wife, when the other one almost shrieked out with rage and fear.

"Let him go first," says the married man, "I'll wait."

"Pain't his turn," I says, rather obstinate like. "Over you go!" and at such a time one can't be interfered with, and having made my plans so far, didn't want them altered. So, "Over you go!" I says.

"I think I can crawl," he says, and he got out on the ladder; but instead of crawling, he sat astride of it and worked himself along, with the crowd hurrahing and cheering him tremendous.

And up came the flame and smoke, and the roar and crackle and falling in of timbers was getting terrible. Every place was light as day, while as to the heat, I declare it seemed to scorch you fearfully.

"The sooner you are across and me with you the better I shall like it," I say, and then I took a look round to see how matters were, when there came a crash and a puff, and in a moment the flames came wreathing and twirling up from underneath where I stood, and just as the last chap had his leg on the window sill, and I was going to tie the rope round him, he gave a yell and fell back, or rather I pulled him back into the smoky room, and he fainted dead away.

He must have gone down crash into the court if I hadn't dragged at him; but there was no time to lose. I made the rope fast and got him onto the ladder, with the flames darting up through the rounds and burning his hair; and then I shouted to them to haul, and haul they did, with me trying to steady him with my end of the rope, but before he was quite across, something went snap, and I staggered back into the room, holding on by the piece of burnt-through rope, and with my heart sinking, as I felt that my own means of salvation were partly gone.

Just then the flames were waited on one side, and I saw that they were dragging in the last of the seven, and I felt now as if I had done a good night's work, and it was time to save myself. I'm not ashamed to own it, I did feel frightened as I threw down that piece of rope, and it must have been something like a cry of horror I gave when I got hold of the ladder and felt it burn my hands, and then I tried to begin upon it and felt it crumble away, and I knew that I was without a way of escape.

Far above the noise of the fire and the water came the shriek of the crowd as the burnt ladder fell away and hung blazing by one end against the opposite house, while there came up such a rush of flame past the window that I could not look out, but directly after I heard the fierce rush of the water and could see that four branches were deluging the window and all beneath for my mates knew what a danger I was in.

I ran to the window, and was beaten back by the water, while the smoke that came up was quite blinding. Then I tried through the hot vapor in the room to see if I could get out of the door and reach the roof, but just at that moment there came a dull flash through the smoke, and I could see that the back of the house was all on fire, while from the way the flames rushed up again and filled the court, I knew there was no help to be had from the opposite, for they must be beaten from the window.

I had been in some dangers in my time, but till now there had always seemed a way out, and as I tore furiously around the place, with the sweat dripping off me, and the horrible fear of death so close at hand, I seemed to be regularly unnerved, and fell to shrieking and crying out that my mates had deserted me, when they were on the roof and had let down a rope to me, but I could not see it; and then at last one of them was let down as a trial to get to at the window, but the flames beat him back, and a groan came from the people as they saw all that had been done.

As I told you, I seemed quite to lose my nerve, and ran about shrieking for a few minutes, and then I fell down on my face upon the hot floor; but directly after my mind seemed to come again, and I felt that if I must die, I had done my duty and had saved seven poor creatures; and as I thought that, I took to my knees, and some words came to my lips—words that came from my heart as I thought of those who were once saved from the heat of the burning fiery furnace, and I prayed that I too might be saved.

And ah! it was hard to pray there—to keep your thoughts in the midst of that fierce, suffocating heat of smoke and steam from the water pouring into the room.—And how everything else but the words of prayer came into my mind; and it was as if devils—despairing, blasphemous devils—were hissing in my ears to curse and shriek oaths. Then, too, came the thought of those at home, and the little golden curls that I should play with no more; and how I could now understand the dread my wife always had of what she called my frightful business. Yes, I had saved seven that night; but it was hard to die—hard to give up life at eight-and-twenty, and suffer the death from which I had saved so many.

I couldn't help it just then, for a grim smile came over my face as I thought it was my old enemy, the fire, being revenged upon me; but directly after I tried to pray once more, and then in the midst of the smoke I gave a wild cry, dashed off my helmet, dragged my belt undone, and kicked off my heavy boots, half suffocated, and had off my thick coat, too; and then, with my heart beating with hope, I thanked God for the thought, and the next moment I was over the grate bars and in the big chimney of the old house.

It was full of smoke, and I could hardly breathe; but it was a sure way of escape to the roof; and though I could feel that I was tearing the skin from my elbows and knees, I managed to climb higher and higher, slowly and painfully, but soon I could feel a current of sweet, refreshing air setting down to me, and every breath gave me fresh strength till I reached the top, when my heart sank, as I found it would be impossible to get any further on account of the chimney pot.

To shout was useless, and for a while I was in despair; but at last I got my hands well above me, and tried to move the pot. I tried again and again, and then to force myself through, till I was so wedged in that I could not get back, but I found that I had loosened the pot, and at last completely forced it off, and raised myself in a sitting position on the chimney stack, but afraid to move, for my head was wedged in the pot, which was fixed down upon my shoulders.

I knew that I could not stay where I was for long, and tried once more to get rid of my awkward helmet; and now, having both hands at liberty, I loosened it, and it fell with a crash into the court beneath.

Just then there rose a cheer, for some one had made me out from below; and sick and faint as I was, I managed to wave my hand and try to cheer; but it stuck in my throat, and I could not get down without help. And I suppose English people must be fond of cheering, for how they did shout when I got down through another house and was there amongst them; and after all, it was only one's duty.

Abandoned Oil Wells.

The Oil City *Register* gives a history of the abandoned oil wells in the Venango region, and concludes as follows: "These are seemingly the failures. But they are no more numerous than the deserted claims of the gold diggings on the Pacific side of our continent were during the first few years of their development. In both cases, by the wise natural laws of compensation, stand out in bright relief the successes. A less number of failures to obtain good producing wells have occurred during the past mining season than during any previous one. With remunerative prices, many of these deserted oil wells will be thoroughly cleansed out, and by the application of greater skill and more fitting machinery, be made highly productive. In many localities, this experiment has been tried, and the result proves to be highly satisfactory. With the adoption of the petroleum product to other uses besides illuminating, and a demand created thereby, equal to the supply, these wells will be in demand. The land owners are now forfeiting all the losses they can get hold of already, and, in a short time, we predict that deserted oil wells will be few and far between—for we are well satisfied that with the proper application of improved mechanical forces, four-fifths of the deserted wells could be made to pay handsomely, thus proving that the vast expenditure of labor and money upon their creation was not wholly in vain, but will benefit somebody."

—Zero on Fahrenheit's thermometer is the point at which the mercury freezes when immersed in a mixture of snow and common salt.

—Ex-Gov. Letcher has been elected Mayor of Lexington, Va. Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen!

Philosophy of Shaking Hands.

There is a philosophy in hand shaking. It is an indication of character. It gives expression to the degree in which you are appreciated or esteemed by another. There is a variety of methods of shaking hands, according to the temperament, disposition, or occasion.

Some seize your hand with a fervent grasp—one foot extended—and holding your eye with their own. Such is the salutation of the jolly tar, ready to share the "last shot in the locker" with the stranger of the hour. Others, again, seize your hand with as much frenzy, and may mean as well toward you; but they do not look directly at you, but past your cheek, with eyes steadily set, as if looking for some undefined ghostliness beyond, and seeming to converse with the same.

Others give too great a show of fervency to the salutation, causing your fingers to tingle with pain; you involuntarily glance at the injured hand, expecting it to have been compressed into one horrid, bruised, extended, index finger. Others, again, add to this exhibition of muscular power by swinging your hand up and down—a sort of intimation that they are about to "pump" you!

A few come so close to you that you can feel their breath upon your face; others seem to be experimenting on the greatest distance at which the salutation can be exchanged. Some daintily offer you the tips of their fingers; it means either that they consider themselves your superior, or that they are not disposed to be especially gracious. Others, again, take your whole hand, even endangering the immaculate whiteness of your wristbands.

The most agreeable shake of the hand is that meaning, welcome grasp, warm but not painful in pressure, which stands guarantee to the sympathetic look and kindly spoken word. The most abominable handshaking is that lazy, listless offering, giving no pressure, and averse to receiving any. We have shaken hands with such persons, and the memory of it has annoyed us for an hour afterward. It was like touching a wet dish-cloth, or a cold, quivering frog. An embarrassing shake of the hand is, when the party greets you hesitatingly, yet slightly, as if he felt guilty of boldness, or was not quite sure that he had not been misled by a resemblance. It is as awkward as a pause in conversation.

Perhaps, to young lovers, the quiet, half-unintentional contact of hands is most pleasant—that soft, lingering restlessness—that delicious remaining at love's dictation—that faint attempt at withdrawal at propriety's suggestion; that electrical thrill of contact which fires the veins, modulates the voice, colors the cheeks, adds a brightness to the eye, and a tremulousness to the lips.

How many men, profound in philosophy, brilliant in scholarship, high in position, have sat for hours in the still moonlight, holding in their hand the soft white hand of a woman, their thoughts idly borne off by a fleeting leaf or the thrill of a bob-o-link? Who can say that they were not all the better for it? Cannot the lion be in love?

Prince of Wales.

The Prince of Wales is going in bad company, if the following story, told by a London letter writer, is true: A matter which greatly disturbs the good and loyal subjects of England is the intimacy between the Duke of St. Albans and the Prince of Wales. The Duke of St. Albans is a young man about the age of the Prince; and he has succeeded, in the course of his short but eventful life, in getting up one of the most notorious reputations in Europe. His character is so bad that, with very high rank and great wealth, he is not tolerated in the respectable aristocratic society of London. He began his career by getting into all sorts of scrapes at Oxford, in which city he used to appear with greater regularity in the police court than at the college chapel, and from which university he was finally expelled in disgrace. Since then he has been the hero of innumerable adventures on the Continent, scandalous and otherwise, is well known in every gambling house, and brothel, and police court in Paris, and is as accomplished a villain, for a young man, as you can find in many a day. At Oxford, one day, while yet he was in his teens, three different young women appeared in court against him, with charges of seduction. Since then he has matured in every species of dissipation, and is as well known to the London police as any longfingered "Jack" from Billingsgate. And this is the most intimate friend, companion and confidant of the heir of the British throne. They are constantly seen together—often go arm-in-arm together alone o' nights (and where they go to is hardly a mystery.) St. Albans stays by the week at Marlboro' House, and the Prince of Wales as regularly reciprocates by visiting the Duke at his house. They are, in every way, "thick as thieves." Not only this, the Duke of St. Albans is the intimate friend of the Princess, as well as the Prince of Wales, and is often seen riding with her alone in the parks.