

# The Ebensburg Alleghanlian.

J. T. HUTCHINSON, EDITORS.  
ED. JAMES.

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

TERMS: \$2.50 PER ANNUM.  
(\$2.00 IN ADVANCE.)

VOLUME 9.

EBENSBURG, PA., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1868.

NUMBER 13.

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August 13, 1868.

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OF JOHNSTOWN, PENNA.  
Paid up Capital.....\$60,000 00  
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We buy and sell United and Foreign Drafts, Gold and Silver, and all classes of Government Securities; make collections at home and abroad; receive deposits; loan money; act as a general Banking business. All business entrusted to us will receive prompt attention and care, at moderate prices. Give us a trial.  
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## Legend of the Rhine.

The castle was grand, and the lady fair,  
And a knight of the good old time was there,  
Where the Rhine flowed on to the sea.  
The knight looked up, and the lady down;  
His brow wore a smile, and hers a frown,  
But the Rhine flowed on to the sea.  
Then a heart-quake shivered his coat of mail,  
While the lady's cheeks a lovely pale,  
And the Rhine flowed on to the sea.  
And a sigh from under his vizor gushed,  
And he looked up and down and blushed,  
While the Rhine flowed on to the sea.  
Then he fell on his knee; he must needs confess—  
Would she wed? She would; she whispered  
"Yes."  
And still flowed the Rhine to the sea.  
And the knight was brave, and the lady fair,  
And they lived in the grand old castle there,  
While the Rhine flowed on to the sea.  
And there, as I learn from some books of mine  
Still flows the flood of the rolling Rhine,  
As steadily on to the sea.  
And ladies may blush, and knights may swear,  
But there it will be in a hundred year,  
Still flowing on to the sea.

## Gift Enterprises.

A HISTORY OF THE GETTYSBURG AND OTHER LOTTERY SWINDLES.

I have an aunt in the country—one of the nicest women in the world—a widow, a little past the prime of life, prim, precise, and the mother of two pretty cousins of mine. She lives on the banks of the Genesee river, near the beautiful city of Rochester, and regularly every Sunday rides into town to listen to her favorite pastor. Her week-days are usually spent among her chickens, pigs, and cows, or in putting up pickles and preserves. Occasionally, however, she is obliged to go to the city to make purchases, and it was on one of these occasions that she was recently inveigled by designing men into a little speculation, and succeeded in bringing me in contact with a number of "Gift Enterprise" swindlers, whose tricks to entrap the unwary I propose to write about.

But first let my aunt tell her own story, which she does in the following letter, and then I'll tell what came of it:

"ROCHESTER, Nov. 22, 1867.  
"MY DEAR NEPHEW:—By reading this letter patiently through, you will discover that I have some queer business on my hands, and need your assistance to help me out. Some time since, I thought to make 'my everlasting fortune' by investing the sum of one dollar in a Gift Enterprise, the proprietors of which advertise that their headquarters are in that iniquitous city in which you reside, at No. — Broadway, New York. I was going to be very sly about it, so I assumed the name of Mrs. Sarah Dutton. When they sent me my ticket, they also sent sixteen others, with the assurance that if I would dispose of them they would guarantee to make me a present valued at \$150, in case my ticket did not draw a valuable prize. Being a credulous booby, I put faith in their promises, and induced some of my friends to buy the tickets. You will probably laugh at the idea of my aunt Sarah becoming the agent of a Gift Enterprise, but so it is. Well, I sent the money for the tickets, and have just been notified that one of them has drawn a prize valued at \$200, and that I can have the same on payment of five per cent. of the value. I understand that the prizes sent out by this concern are mostly petroleum stock, and as I am neither an oil dealer nor a Wall street speculator, I do not propose to send them \$10 until I know what sort of a prize I have drawn. Now, I want you to go and see these persons, and if I am really entitled to a valuable prize, pay the charges, and send the same, together with the bill, to your aunt, SARAH.  
"P. S.—Address me in my right name, as usual, and don't let the girls know I have an alias."

Enclosed with the above letter were the tickets which aunt Sarah had purchased, and the letter which had induced her to invest in the Gift speculation. I insert the letter, to show by what shallow devices unsophisticated persons are induced to part with their money. With the exception of the name of the enterprise, (for which the reader may insert that of any gift scheme known,) and the names of the persons signing it, (the real names are omitted to avoid legal annoyances—the truth being sometimes considered libelous,) the letter reads as follows:

"OFFICE OF GARROTTERS & ROBBERS'  
"GRAND PRESENTATION ENTERPRISE."  
"No. — Broadway, N. Y."  
"Mrs. Sarah Dutton:—Madam—You have received, containing one dollar. Your ticket is correctly registered. Enclosed we send you sixteen tickets and a proposition that we think will prove satisfactory to you, and a great benefit to us and our enterprise. It is this: If you will send us thirteen dollars for the enclosed sixteen tickets, we will register them to you with the understanding that, in case the tickets do not have a valuable prize awarded them, we will send you a present valued at \$165, if you will agree to exhibit it to

your friends, and state that you received it from the "G. and R. G. P. E. Co."  
"Yours, respectfully,  
"BARK, BITE & CO."

This absurd proposition is found by the gift enterprise people to work so well that it has been neatly printed, and scattered through the country broadcast. Their theory of human credulity appears to be, that when a person is foolish enough to put one dollar's worth of confidence in their advertisements, by purchasing a single ticket, he or she can be easily induced to swallow a few dollars' worth of extra promises, and pay for them accordingly. As their dealings are mostly with country people, this theory is found to work well practically, and to bring many dollars to their pockets.

On receiving the above letter, my aunt Sarah was overcome with visions of a speedily acquired fortune, and forthwith bestirred herself, as became a duly accredited agent of the "Garrotters and Robbers' Grand Presentation Enterprise," to dispose of the tickets which had been entrusted to her. In the course of a few days she discovered several female friends quite as credulous as herself, who hastily seized the opportunity to squander their husbands' money, and thirteen tickets were speedily disposed of, and the proceeds duly forwarded to "Bark, Bite & Co."—Scarcely a week elapsed before the good lady was thrown into a great flutter by the receipt of a letter, neatly printed, which read as follows:

"OFFICE OF THE GARROTTERS & ROBBERS'  
"GRAND PRESENTATION ENTERPRISE."  
"No. — Broadway, N. Y."  
"Mrs. Sarah Dutton:—Madam—You are hereby notified that one of your tickets has drawn a prize valued at \$200. Five per cent. of this amount will be \$10. This amount of assessed percentage must in all cases be sent on receipt of this notice, with directions by what express you wish the prize sent. Yours, respectfully,  
"BARK, BITE & CO."

This was the notification which my aunt forthwith sent to me with her letter, and now commences my connection with "Bark, Bite & Co." I had lived in New York long enough to know that the scheme was a swindle from first to last, but I determined to recover, if possible, from the swindlers, at least the value of the thirteen dollars which my country friends had invested. First calling upon a police magistrate with whom I am acquainted, and obtaining his signature across the back of one of my cards, I proceeded forthwith to the office of Bark, Bite & Co. I found it as designated in their advertisements and circulars, located in the lower part of Broadway, surrounded by the offices of bankers, brokers, insurance companies, &c. Their rooms were handsomely fitted up, in the manner usual to brokers and bankers. An iron railing, behind which were several desks, separated the manipulators of the "Garrotters and Robbers' Grand Presentation Enterprise" from the ordinary mortals having business with them. At each one of the six or seven desks sat a sickly-looking clerk, engaged in entering names in ledgers, addressing circulars to confiding victims, or preparing fresh announcements to catch new ones.

A brisk young Englishman, who spoke with a truly British disregard for his "h's," and who pronounced "g" like "k," bustled up to the counter and said:  
"Can he do anything for you, sir?"  
"Is Mr. Bark in?" I asked.  
"No sir," was the reply; "he's gone to Washington."  
"Is Mr. Bite in?"  
"No, sir," he's gone to Boston, and won't be back till Chewday week. Can't I attend to you, sir?" pressed the young gentleman.

"Is Mr. Co. in?" continued I.  
"Mr. oo, sir?"  
"Mr. Co., the other partner, or any other partner, or agent, or manager. I wish to see some responsible person."  
"Oh, no, sir," said the clerk, "there's none of the partners seldom 'ere, you know; the business 'ere is all done by a manager, but 'ces hout at present."  
I gave the young man my card, and said I should be happy to see the manager at my office at his early convenience. The clerk looked at my name and then at the signature of the Police Magistrate, with which he seemed to be particularly impressed. His manner changed instantly, and dropping his half-impudent, self-important, "chaffing" tone, he said respectfully that the manager would be sure to call on me at once.

I may here remark, that I have since called at the office several times, and I have never been able as yet to see any one of the gentlemen who are announced as the directors of the scheme. The business is always transacted through the medium of cheap and impudent clerks, who are employed principally on account of the readiness with which they can badger, blackmail and bully persons, who, like myself, call to "obtain satisfaction." In nine cases out of ten they will so abuse the seeker for information that he would rather abandon his claim than again run the gauntlet of profanity and obscenity.—Bark, Bite & Co. may possibly exist bodily in the flesh, but if so, they keep themselves so completely in the background, that one is led to believe "that there ain't no such person."

In accordance with the promise made to me, a person styling himself "the New York manager for the Garrotters & Robbers' Enterprise," called to see me. He was a sharp, shrewd, business-like, loquacious young man, and we soon got into a general conversation regarding the Gift Enterprise, during which he gave me some information regarding that particular branch of swindling which I deem it worth while to repeat.

The name of my friend, the magistrate, was undoubtedly the key which unlocked Mr. Manager's tongue.

Although the gift enterprise business has been in existence for many years, it has never more successful than at the present time. The many "gift concerts," "presentation festivals," etc., which were conducted during the war by patriotic ladies and gentlemen, for the benefit of sick and wounded soldiers, or for the widows and orphans of those who had nobly perished on the battle field, in defence of their country, served to popularize such schemes, and apparently to rob them of that gambling element which would otherwise have rendered them obnoxious to the public. The holy and patriotic purpose to be served caused people to overlook the means by which good was to be done.—And even those who did stop to consider, thought in such a cause it was well to "do a little evil that good might come."—While these truly honest, charitable schemes were really the means of gathering in many dollars that otherwise would never have reached the soldier, they created a sort of lottery mania throughout the country, and opened wide the door to swindlers and rascals. There was not a city, town or village in the land that did not present some scheme to raise money for the benefit of the soldier, and the principal attraction of all of them was a lottery whereby some fortunate ticket-holder was to be made wealthy for life by the simple turn of the wheel. Elegant and valuable prizes were often distributed fairly and to the satisfaction of the ticket-holders.—Those who won were of course rejoiced, while those who lost snapped their fingers and consoled themselves with the idea that their contributions had done some good to the soldiers.

But these honorable managers of charitable gambling schemes were speedily pushed from their stools by speculative swindlers, who hastened to enter in their own fashion to that depraved public appetite which had been unwittingly aroused by those patriotic pioneers. These swindlers imitated their predecessors in announcing their "gift concerts," "distribution enterprises," etc., for the benefit of soldiers, soldiers' widows, and orphans and the like, but followed no further in their footsteps. For valuable prizes they substituted in some instances galvanized jewelry, fictitious petroleum stock, or something equally as worthless, but far more frequently absconded entirely, after having sold as many tickets (and as many people) as possible. Notwithstanding all the exposures which have been made of these swindling concerns, and the large sums of which the public have been robbed by gift enterprise sharpers, they still flourish and thrive in our land, receiving thousands of dollars daily, for which they give no equivalent whatever. The gift enterprise business has come to be recognized as an ordinary calling, and the men who are principally engaged in it are recognized in Wall street as are other business men, and hold their heads aloft according as they have money in their pockets.—Their nefarious transactions have been exposed and denounced time and again by the press, they themselves have been frequently arrested and confined in jails, but still the business goes on, the number of dupes is the same, and the money still flows into their purses. The gambling spirit invoked by the war is still abroad in the land, and any scheme which promises to give a fortune to some one who has not earned it, or offers two dollars for one, "new lamps for old ones," is sure to find plenty of people credulous enough to invest their money in it—as did my exceedingly proper aunt.

The manner of conducting these swindling schemes is pretty well indicated by the letters received by my aunt. The concocters of the "Enterprise," by liberally advertising in the rural papers, and sending circulars to every person whose name can be found in the Directory of every city and town in the country, find purchasers for their tickets. An individual having bought one ticket, various means are sought to make him or her purchase still more. Promises of presents are unsparingly made, and not unfrequently the individual is quietly informed that the managers have so arranged matters that they can control the drawing of the prizes, and if the individual addressed will bestir himself and sell one, two, or three hundred tickets, he shall not only have a liberal commission on his receipts, but the managers will guarantee that his own ticket shall draw such a prize named in the schedule as he may most desire. This bait takes well—it is so natural for one person to wish to have an advantage over others—it is like betting on a certainty. Of course, such promises are no more kept to the agent than are those made to ordinary ticket holders. The agent is put off with promises, or with some almost worthless "prize," which is booked to him as "val-

ued" at \$200, \$300, or \$500, according to circumstances. There is no law prohibiting a person from putting such "values" on his goods as he pleases. I received from Bark, Bite & Co. for my aunt's ticket, a "fine gold watch, valued at \$200"—the same watches can be bought at wholesale for \$20 each, and if the purchaser grumbles at that price, the manufacturers will throw in a barrel or two of them.

These Gift Enterprise swindlers conduct their business so as to keep within the law, and although the attempt to punish them has frequently been made, it never succeeded. They have been arrested by the police authorities, their places of business entered, their mails, consisting of hundreds of money-orders, been seized, yet in every instance the rascals have escaped punishment, and in the end have succeeded in compelling the authorities to restore all the property seized. The reason is this—every ticket which they sell claims to be a ticket of admission to a "Grand Concert," and this is held to be a valuable consideration for the money paid, and hence a perfectly legitimate transaction—a simple case of buying and selling goods. The tickets which my aunt purchased read as follows:

Tickets, Garrotters & Robbers' Grand Presentation Enterprise.  
No. 129733.  
No. 129733.  
This ticket entitles the holder to one share in the GRAND DISTRIBUTION AT Irving Hall, BARK, BITE & CO., Bankers and Managers, No. — Broadway, New York city.

These are printed from a nicely engraved plate, in all the gorgeousness of blue ink, and a vignette representing the Goddess of Plenty scattering her favors broadcast over the land. "You pay your money for that," said the New York manager to me. "It promises you nothing, and you get what it promises. You may be notified that you have drawn a prize, valued at \$500, and you send us the five per cent. asked for. We send you a watch, valued at \$500, but worth \$20.—What are you going to do about it? What does your ticket call for? We admit the swindle, but what are you going to do about it? You've got no claim on us beyond an admission to Irving Hall, and we'll admit you—when we agree to. We haven't fixed the time yet." Nearly all the prizes given out by Bark, Bite & Co. consist of what purports to be shares in the "Thieves' and Burglars' Petroleum Stock Company." These are valued at \$100 each; but, it is scarcely necessary to say, they are utterly worthless. There is no such petroleum company, and if there is, it don't own any land, and if it does, it hasn't got any oil in it. The whole thing is simply and purely a fiction, having no better foundation than the printed scrip, which is a wicked waste of white paper. These bogus shares are sent out by the thousand, and not one in a hundred of the number who receive them ever takes the trouble to complain or denounce the swindlers. He has been victimized, first, to the amount of one dollar paid for his original ticket; second, to the extent of all other tickets he has been induced to purchase; and, third, to the amount of the five per cent. assessment of which he was notified. Recognizing the swindle, he is chary of prosecuting the matter further, for fear of being bitten again.

When the New York manager (whom I afterwards ascertained was but an ordinary clerk) had learned from me that I held a number of tickets which were said to have drawn prizes, he did not hesitate to inform me that they never intended giving prizes of any value, and justified such a course by saying that every person who bought a ticket did so in the hope of gaining an advantage over some one else—of getting a prize worth five, ten, or fifty times the amount he invested. To use the expressive language of the manager, "they hope to beat us, so we make sure of beating them. They want ten dollars for one, while we make ten for nothing.—Where's the difference between us? They try to overreach us, and we do overreach them. Morally considered, which is the worst?"

The answer to this is simply that the chances are not equal—or, rather, that there are no chances. The Gift Enterprise people so conduct their business that the person who invests money in their tickets does so with the certainty (unknown to him) of losing it, not with the chance of doubling it.

During one of my visits to Bark, Bite & Co., a farmer-looking man entered, and presenting a notification to the clerk, demanded the prize which he informed him he had drawn, valued at \$300. The obliging clerk offered him three shares in the "Thieves' and Burglars' Petroleum Stock Company." The man didn't want them, and after considerable talking, refused to take them, threatening to call in the police. He said that he lived in Connecticut, had bought a ticket, had been notified that he had drawn a prize, had sent the five per cent. demanded, amounting to \$15, and not hearing from it, had come down to see about the matter. The clerk denied having received the \$15, and refused to do anything for the poor man but give him his petroleum stock. A detective policeman was summoned, but he could do nothing—the farmer had no ground of action against the swindlers which would legally warrant their arrest. So the victimized farmer returned to his pigs and poultry in Connecticut, adding the expense of his trip and his lost time to the other sums to be charged to Bark, Bite & Co.

Perhaps the most notable instance of Gift Enterprise swindling was that recently perpetrated by the Gettysburg Asylum Company. This company proposed to purchase on the battle-field of Gettysburg a large tract of land and erect thereon a home for disabled soldiers. To secure the means to do this, a "gift" scheme was instituted. An individual in New York having been victimized by a diamond broker, found on his hands a lot of bogus diamonds, for which he had paid full price. These he proposed to put into the scheme for a much larger sum than he had paid, and consequently for an amount equal to five or six times their value. Another person put in a farm for \$60,000, the assessed value of which was \$5,000. A great variety of other prizes were put in the schedule, all bearing a greatly exaggerated value, (excepting the principal prize, which was \$100,000 in greenbacks,) and the company was ripe for action. A charter was, by some means, obtained from the Pennsylvania Legislature, and several prominent Generals in the army were induced to lend their names to the scheme. The total value of the prizes, according to the advertisements, was about \$700,000, and they were to be distributed among 1,200,000 persons, provided that number of persons could be found to buy tickets at one dollar each. Having acquired a quasi legal recognition from the State of Pennsylvania, the company commenced the sale of tickets. By a liberal course of advertising, a large number were disposed of, and finally the day of drawing was announced. This produced quite a furor, and the rush for tickets was immense.—About this time it was discovered that the managers of the scheme were well known lottery swindlers, and consequently the Pennsylvania Legislature withdrew the license previously given, the whole management was denounced in Congress and by the press, and the prominent men who had lent their names to aid it withdrew their support. All this denunciation only stirred the swindlers to renewed efforts, glowing in their descriptions and more brilliant in promises. At length, a concert was given in New York, and Irving Hall was unable to hold one-half the ticket-holders who sought admission.—Speeches were made, the golden promises renewed, and those who had been disposed to be suspicious went away satisfied. For a week longer the company flourished, their business office on Broadway being thronged at all hours with an eager crowd, who jostled and hustled each other in their efforts to obtain the coveted tickets. One bright morning, the greedy victims awoke to find the showy office closed, and the landlord's sign of "To let!" conspicuously posted on the windows. The managers, the diamonds, the desirable farm, the \$100,000 in greenbacks, had all disappeared—"all at one fell swoop"—with upwards of \$1,000,000 of the people's money. From that day to this, no trace of the Gettysburg Asylum scheme has been found, although many anxious ticket holders have made many anxious endeavors to obtain some information with regard to it.

It is somewhat remarkable that so barefaced and gigantic a swindle could be carried on so publicly, and successfully, too, in spite of the bitter opposition to it, and that a million of dollars could be thus easily taken from the pockets of confiding victims, most of whom were uneducated, ignorant men and women. But such are our laws; the fact that each ticket sold entitled the holder to an admission to a concert, enabled them to evade the laws against gambling, and was legally considered a valuable consideration for the money paid. The same Gettysburg managers are still in the Gift Enterprise business, and may be seen promenade Broadway almost any day, enjoying their ill-gotten gains. But as they conduct their business through the medium of impudent clerks, and are never visible to ticket buyers, they are known to but few, and consequently escape that well-merited personal chastisement which many of their victims would cheerfully administer, did the opportunity and the man present themselves.

I trust I have given sufficient illustration and explanation of the Gift Enterprise business to convince every one of my readers that each and every such scheme is nothing more nor less than a swindle—a deliberate trap set by unscrupulous, sharp, designing scoundrels to rob the ignorant and unsuspecting of their hard-earned money. Their villainy is the more atrocious in that in most cases they assume to be acting from patriotic or philanthropic motives, and by appeals to the popular love for our brave soldiers, or our soldiers' orphans and widows, extort money from those who can ill afford to lose it.

For all my aunt's tickets I received a "pinchbeck" watch and the foregoing information. The latter my readers have without buying a ticket, and the former they are better off without.