

LEWISBURG CHRONICLE.

BY O. N. WORDEN & J. R. CORNELIUS.

Fridays---at Lewisburg, Union County, Pennsylvania.

ELEVENTH YEAR....WHOLE NUMBER, 569.

\$1.50 PER YEAR, ALWAYS IN ADVANCE.

The Lewisburg Chronicle.

FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 1855.

From Arthur's Home Magazine for March, 1855.
JOHNNY COLE.

BY JES. B. HEWSON, NARR.

"I guess we will have to put out our Johnny," said Mrs. Cole, with a sigh, as she drew closer to the fire, one cold day in Autumn. This remark was addressed to her husband, a sleepy, lazy looking man, who was stretched on a bench, with his eyes half closed. The wife, with two little girls of eight and ten, were knitting as fast as their fingers could fly; the baby was sound asleep in the cradle; while Johnny, a boy of thirteen, and a brother of four, were seated on the wide hearth making a snare for rabbits. The room they occupied was cold and cheerless; the warmth of the stony fire being scarcely felt; yet the floor, and every article of furniture, men as they were, were scrupulously neat and clean.

The appearance of this family indicated that they were very poor. They were all thin and pale, ready for want of proper food, and their clothes had been patched until it was difficult to decide what the original fabric had been; yet this very circumstance spoke volumes in favor of the mother. She was a woman of great energy of character, unfortunately united to a man whose habits were such, that for the greater part of the time, he was a dead weight upon her hands; although not habitually intemperate, he was indolent and good-for-nothing to a degree, lying in the sun half his time, when the weather was warm, and never doing a stroke of work until driven to it by the pangs of hunger.

As for the wife, by taking in sewing, knitting and spinning for the farmers' families in the neighborhood, she managed to pay a rent of twenty dollars for the cabin in which they lived; while she and Johnny, with what assistance they could occasionally get from Jerry, her husband, tiled the half acre of ground attached; and the vegetables thus obtained, were their main dependence during the long winter just at hand. Having thus introduced the Cole's to our readers, we will continue the conversation.

"I guess we will have to put out Johnny, and you will try and help us a little more, Jerry, dear?"

"Why, what's got into this woman now?" muttered Jerry, stretching his arms, and yawning to the utmost capacity of his mouth. The children laughed at their father's uncouth gestures, and even Mrs. Cole's serious face relaxed into a smile as she answered—

"Don't swallow us all, and I will tell you. The winter is beginning early, and promises to be cold. Our potatoes didn't turn out as well as I expected, and the truth is, we can't get along so. We won't have victuals to last us half the time; and, manage as I will, I can't make more than pay the rent, I get so little for the kind of work I do. Now, if Johnny gets a place, it will make one less to provide for; and he will be learning to do something for himself."

"Yes, but mother," said the boy, moving close to her side and laying his head on her knee. "Yes, but what'll help you when I am gone? Who'll dig the lot, and hoe, and cut the wood, and carry the water? You can't go away down to the spring in the dog-days, and who'll make the fire in the cold mornings?"

The mother looked sorry enough, as her darling boy, for he was the object around which the fondest affections of her heart had entwined themselves—she looked sorry enough, as he enumerated the turns he was in the habit of doing for her; but, woman-like, she could suffer and be still; so she answered cheerfully—

"May be father will, dear; and when you grow bigger, and learn how to do everything, you'll be such a help to us all."

"Don't depend on me," said Jerry, now arising himself and sauntering to the fire; "I hardly feel well,"—complaining was Jerry's special forte, an excuse for all his laziness; yet his appetite never failed; and what, as was sometimes the case, one of the neighbors sent a small piece of meat, or any little article of food to his wife, under the plea of ill health, he managed to appropriate nearly the whole of it. He was selfishness embodied, and a serious injury to his family, as few cared to keep him up in his laziness.

One evening a few days later, Mrs. Cole, who had been absent several hours, came in looking very tired, and after laying aside her old bonnet and shawl, informed them that she had obtained a place for Johnny. It was five miles distant, and the farmer's man would stop for him on his way from town, the next afternoon. What a beautiful object was farmer Watkins' homestead, lying as it did on the sunny slope of a hill! Its grey stone walls, peeping out from between the giant trees that overshadowed it, while everything around and about gave evidence of abundance and comfort. The thrifty orchard; the huge barn with its overflowing granaries; the sleek, well-fed cattle; even the low-roofed spring house, with its superabundance of spring pails and pans, formed an item which could hardly be dispensed with, in the best ensemble of this pleasant home.

Father Watkins was an honest hard-working man, somewhat past middle age, with a heart not naturally devoid of kindness, but where his hirelings were concerned, so strongly entrenched with a layer of *habits*, that they acted as an effectual check upon his better feelings. His family

consisted of his wife (said to be a notable manager) and five or six children, the eldest, a son, at college. In this household, work, was the order of the day; the farmer himself, with his great brown fists, set the example, and the others, willing or unwilling, were obliged to follow his lead. He had agreed to take John Cole, as he said, money to get rid of his mother's importunities, than for any benefit he expected to derive from him; and when remunerated with his wife for his folly in giving her the trouble of another brat, he answered shortly, "Never fear, I'll get the worth of his vicinals and clothes out of him." Johnny was to have his boarding, clothes, and a dollar a month, for two years. This dollar a month was the great item in Mrs. Cole's calculations; to wit: in a year, she argued, would amount pay her rent, and when the tears stood in Johnny's great brown eyes, (for he was a pretty, gentle-hearted boy,) as he was bidding them all goodbye, and kissing the baby over and over again, she told him about the money he would earn, and nerved his little heart with her glowing representations, until he was able to choke back the tears, and leave home almost cheerfully.

Home, yes, it was home; for they had much to redeem the miseries of want within those rare cabin walls, for gentle hearts and kindly smiles were there;

there his brother and sisters played; there his associations, his hopes, his wishes, were all centered. When he arrived at farmer Watkins', and was sent into the large carpeted kitchen, everything was so unlike this home, that his fortitude almost gave way, and it was as much as he could do, as he told his mother afterwards, "to keep from bursting right out." Mrs. Watkins looked very cross, nor did she notice him except to order him to stand out of the way of the red-haired girl who was preparing supper and placing it on a table in the ample apartment. Johnny looked with amazement at the great dishes of meat, and plates of hot biscuit, but the odor of the steaming coffee, and the heat were almost too much for him, as he had eaten nothing since morning, for he was too sorry to leave home to care about dinner. The girl, noticing that his pale face grew paler, laughingly drew her mistress' attention to "master's new boy."

"Go out and bring in some wood for the stove," said Mrs. Watkins, sharply; "the air will do you good."

John went out, and in a few minutes felt revived. Looking about, he soon found the wood-shed; there was plenty of wood, but none out of a suitable length; it was all in cord sticks. Taking an axe, he chopped an arsaful, and on taking it into the house found the family had finished their supper; the biscuits and meat were all eaten.

"Come on here to your supper!" said the maid servant, angrily, "what have you been doing?" and without waiting for an answer, she filled a tin basin with mush and skimmed milk and set it before him. The little boy did not attempt to speak, but sat down and ate what was given him; immediately after, he was sent into a lot to bed, where he cried himself to sleep. All when we count the thousand pangs that yield pain or pleasure to the human mind, what a power to do good or evil, is possessed by every one! and how often would a kind word, or one sympathizing glance, gladden the hearts of those thus prematurely forested upon the anxieties of the world—but how few there are who care to bestow them!

The next morning, long before dawn the farmer's family, with the exception of the younger children, were astir. The cattle were to be fed and attended to, the horses harnessed, the oxen yoked, and great was the bustle until all hands were fairly at work. As for Johnny, he was taken into the field to assist in husking corn. The wind was keen, and the stalks, from recent rain, were wet, and filled with ice. His scanty clothing severely afforded any protection from the cold, and his hands soon became so numb that he could scarcely use them; but, if he stopped one moment to rap them, or breathe upon them, in the hope of imparting some warmth, the farmer, who was close at hand, in warm woolen clothes, and thick busking gloves, would call out—"Hurry up, hurry up, my boy; no idle broad must be eaten here."

And bravely did Johnny struggle not to mind the cold and pain, but it would not do; he began to cry, when the master, who never thought of exercising anything but severity towards those who labored for him, told him sternly that if he did not stop his howling in a moment, he would send him home. This was enough for John; anything was better than to go back and be a burden on his mother; he worked to the best of his ability until noon. At noon, he managed to get thoroughly warm, behind the stone when eating his dinner. Still, the sufferings of the child, with his insufficient clothing, were very great; but nobody seemed to think of the *little boy* being an object of sympathy, and thus he continued. The rule seemed to be to get all that was possible out of him, and his little frame was so weary at night, that he had hardly time to rest, until called with the dawn to rouse his labor. A monthly Sunday, however, was the golden period looked forward to in his day-dreams; for it had been stipulated by his parent, that on Saturday evening every four weeks, he was to come, and stay all the next day. And when the time arrived, how nimblely did he get over the ground that stretched between him and the goal of his wishes. How much he had to tell. But as soon as he began to complain, his mother would say cheerfully, although her heart bled for the hardships of her child,

"Never mind, you will get used to work; and after awhile, when you grow up, you can rent a farm, and take me to keep house for you."

This was the impulse that prompted to action. No one can be utterly miserable who has a hope, even a remote one, of bettering his condition; and with a motive

such as this to cheer him, Johnny persevered; young as he was, he understood the necessity. But how often during the four weary weeks that succeeded, did the memory of the Saturday night he had spent at home come up before his mental vision. The fresh loaf of yeast bread, baked in honor of his arrival, and eaten for supper, with maple molasses—the very molasses he had helped to boil on shares with farmer Thrifty's boys in the Spring. What a feast they had! Then the long evening afterwards, when the blaze of the hickory fire lighted up the timbers of the old cabin, with a mellow glow, and mother looked cheerful and smiled so kindly, as she sat spinning in its warmth and light. And how even father had helped to pop corn in the iron pot.

All that was a time long to be remembered; and he had ample opportunity to draw comparisons, for he often thought his master cared more for his cattle than he for him, and it is quite probable he did; for while they were warmly housed, he was needlessly exposed, and his comfort utterly disregarded. If there was brush to cut, or fence to make, or any out-door labor to perform, a wet, cold or windy day, was sure to be selected, while *fine weather*, the wood was required to be chopped, and generally speaking, all the work that could be done under shelter. Yet, we dare say, Farmer Watkins never thought of the indelicacy of this, or the advantage he would himself derive by arranging it otherwise.

John Cole had been living out, perhaps a year. He had not grown much in this period; his frame had always been slight, and his spoken checks, and wasted limbs, spoke of the hard usage and suffering of his present situation. The family had many delicacies for themselves, but the *work boy* they knew never was used to such things, and they were indifferent as to what his fare chanced to be. He generally managed to satisfy the cravings of hunger on the coarse food given him, but that was all. About this time it happened that the farmer was digging a ditch, and as he was afraid winter would set in before it was completed, Johnny and himself were at work upon it early and late, notwithstanding the wind whistled, and it was so cold they could hardly handle the tools. While thus employed, it chanced that they got wet to the skin with a drizzling rain, and on returning to the house, the farmer changed his clothes, drank some hot mulled cider, and spent the remainder of the evening in his high backed chair before a comfortable fire; while the boy was sent to grease a wagon in an open shed, and at night crept to his straw pallet, shaking as though in an ague fever. The next morning he was in a high fever, and with many a wonder of what got into him, but without one word of sympathy, or any other manifestation of good will, he was sent home to his mother. Late in the evening of the same day, a compassionate physician was surprised to see a woman enter his office; her garments wet and travel-stained, and with streaming eyes, she besought him to come and see her son.

"My Johnny, my Johnny, sir," she cried, "he has been raving wild all day, and we are afraid he will die."

Mistaking the cause of the good man's hesitation, she nibbled with a fresh burst of grief, "Oh! I will work my fingers to the bone to pay you, sir, if you will only come. We live in the Gap."

A few inquiries were all that was necessary to learn the state of the case. The benevolent doctor took the woman in his vehicle, and proceeded, over a mountainous road of six miles to see his patient. But vain was the help of man; Johnny continued delirious; it was work, work, always at work; and pitiful was it to hear his complaints of being cold and tired, while his heart-beating parent hung over him, and denied herself necessities of life to minister to his wants. After being ill about a fortnight, he awoke one evening apparently free from fever. His expression was natural, but he seemed so weak he could not speak. His mother, with a heart overflowing with joy at the change she imagined favorable, bent over him. With a great effort he placed his arms about her neck; she kissed his pale lips; a smile of strange meaning passed over his face, and ere she could unwind that living clasp, little Johnny was no more. He had gone where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest; but her lips were blasted; her house was left unto her desolate; and as she watched, through the long hours of night, beside the dead body, it was to *Our Father* who art in Heaven her anguish heart poured itself out in prayer. Think of this, ye rich! who morning and evening breathe the same petition by your own hearthstones. Think of it, ye who have authority to oppress! Do not deprive the poor man or woman of the "eve lamb"; that is their sole possession; and remember that His whose ear is ever open to the cry of the distressed, has power to avenge their cause.

THE FARM: The Garden—The Orchard.

It is a very happy thing to be able to present in this week's Chronicle, the following article on FRUITRY, by Wm. G. Watkins, Esq., near Lewisburg, Centre Co., Pa. A number of our readers are so much interested in agriculture, that we have the pleasure of offering articles from his pen, to appear occasionally, on subjects related to Horticulture and the raising of Fruit. He is the author of a little work, "The Fruit Grower's Manual," which is for sale at this office. He is interested in the announcement, that we have the pleasure of offering articles from his pen, to appear occasionally, on subjects related to Horticulture and the raising of Fruit. He is the author of a little work, "The Fruit Grower's Manual," which is for sale at this office. He is interested in the announcement, that we have the pleasure of offering articles from his pen, to appear occasionally, on subjects related to Horticulture and the raising of Fruit. 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