

Andrew Tracy

The Elk Advocate

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THE ELK ADVOCATE

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TIME OF HOLDING COURT. Second Monday in January. Last Monday in April. First Monday in August. First Monday in November.

[From the Clearfield Republican] Lena Miller.

Below will be found an account of the execution of this unfortunate woman, with whose arrest, trial and conviction our readers are all familiar. The advocates of capital punishment, for the first time in the history of our country, on Wednesday, the 28th, finished one of their jobs, upon one of the finest of their race—a woman—although the opportunity had presented itself four or five times before. According to our recollection, six murders have been committed in this county within the past twenty years. Brother shot brother; again, brother shot brother; husband shot wife; another destroyed child; neighbor shot neighbor; and wife poisoned husband. According to law, all should have suffered death; yet but one has paid that penalty. No other law on our statute book is so miserably executed, or falls so far short of its object. Were we an advocate of capital punishment—this relic of barbarism—we would be ashamed of the manner in which the law and the rights of community have been outraged in this county. But enough on this feature of the subject for the present. The facts to which we allude are known to all—a woman hung, one conviction and suicide, and four escapes, is the result. There is not much in this, we think, either to terrify or protest society—two vital points claimed by the advocates of capital punishment.

The gallows was erected within the walls of the jail yard, by Mr. George Thora, and in design and construction was a magnificent piece of workmanship. We in our time have seen at least four of these ornaments of barbarism or half-civilized beings, they might have escaped our notice; but when constructed in the midst of church steeples, they always attracted our attention very much; hence we can say that for workmanship and design this "relic of barbarism" far exceeds anything of the kind we have ever seen.

The prisoner was very much annoyed and agitated while the workmen were putting up the structure, and gave the Sheriff no peace until he informed her what the "hammering" and noise meant in the jail-yard. After some hesitation, he told her. She at once demanded privileges to see the "fixin'." He remarked that she would get to see it soon enough, and started to leave, whereupon she became excited and exclaimed, "for God's sake, let me see it." The Sheriff withdrew, but soon returned with a friend, and took her down into the yard to see the "fixin'." She stood in silence for some time gazing at the structure, and then said, "it looks nice," and commenced shaking it "to see whether it is stout enough." She then ascended the steps to the platform to "try it," and requested the Sheriff to show her "how it works." He ascended to the platform and explained its operations; after which she passed down the steps, remarking, "I guess it will do," and voluntarily started for her cell, as coolly as ever she passed to her kitchen, with the additional remark to the Sheriff, in a tone of pleasantry, that "I am ready whenever you are."

In passing along the hall she noticed the coffin in one of the cells, which she demanded to see. The Sheriff told her to go in and examine it. After giving it a minute inspection, she remarked that it was entirely too large, but otherwise "it is very nice," and passed to her cell. The Sheriff, Mr. Faust manfully discharged every duty devolving upon him during these trying circumstances. He had this woman under his care and keeping for over sixteen months, and as escapes from this institution of a jail had been frequent heretofore, it took no little time and attention to detain her. She made several attempts to escape latterly, but was always detected in time to frustrate her schemes. The labors of attending to this prisoner, it must be recollected, were twice that of a male, always being kept by herself and half the time waited upon by females.

But few persons, besides the twelve jurors and the physicians, were admitted into the jail yard. The execution passed off very quietly. But few citizens of the county came to town on that day, and those of the community attended to their business. The presence of a cavalry company, from Lumber City prevented the curious from scaling the surrounding buildings, besides a little snow made it uncomfortable and dangerous for such amusement.

Of the former life and habits of this woman, we know nothing; but as 'charity covereth a multitude of sins,' we dare not say to her children and the world, that "she was addicted to falsehood, vulgarity, profane swearing, and possessed a slavish appetite for strong drink." We are not in possession of the proof to establish such facts, nor do we deem it necessary to add additional reproach to this unfortunate woman and her friends, other than has been established in a legal way.

HER FORMER LIFE AND CONFESSION.

Mrs. Lena Miller was (as she told us) about 49 years old. She was born in Hanover, Germany. Her maiden name was Lena Padden. Her parents both died when she was very young—having no recollection of either of them. She was raised by her half-brother, who, when she was nine years old, put her out to the service of strangers, who treated her badly—compelling her to work hard, and giving her no education or religious instruction. When about fifteen years old, she sailed for America. Her reason for this, as she states, was on account of her desire to marry a man who came over with her, by the name of George Barrett, she being under the marriageable age, and not possessing the requisite amount of property which the law in that country requires. They landed in New York and went immediately to Williamsburg, in the vicinity of New York, where they lived together as man and wife, though without being really married, for about a year. When sober, Barrett was quiet, orderly and good-hearted, but he drank excessively, and as both worked out, he would draw both her wages and his own, and spend their money for intoxicating liquors; and when drunk, he was very noisy and abusive. She often threatened to leave him unless he behaved himself, and as he did not, she one evening in the house drunk, and has never heard of him since. She then went to Puttsville, Pa., and worked two months; thence to Selinsgrove, where she remained three months; and then to Schweinfordstown, where she lived one year. From the latter place she went to Lewistown, where she was taken sick with Typhoid fever, and stayed at the hotel of Mr. Moyer four months; thence to Potter's Bank, in Centre county, where she lived with Henry Fero, three years; and thence to Bellefonte, where she worked one year with Mr. Ben. Bennett. Here she met Xavier Miller, who was also working for Mr. Bennett. They were married in Bellefonte and went immediately to Snow Shoe, and after one year went to Frenchville, Clearfield county, in the neighborhood of which place they lived until the time of the murder—about fifteen years. The only incident worthy of note, during the time they lived there, until the murder was the burning of their "Shanty," with all its contents, which she herself set fire to.

HER CONFESSION.

I first thought of murdering my husband in the Summer of 1865. I tried first to poison him with Laurel leaves and the fillings of brass buckles. Then with the quicksilver off the back of a looking-glass. Then I gave him in two doses a bottle of laudanum, which I got

from Dr. Potter for the cramp. Then some indigo. Then, one day, going after the cows, I killed a small, green, grass snake, which I boiled and gave to him in coffee. All these things were given either in tea or coffee, according as one or the other was used at meals. None of them had the least effect upon him—did not even make him sick. The time occupied in giving them all, was about four weeks. I then gave it up, because I did not know of anything which would kill him. But I thought of it every day, and could not get it out of my mind, trying to think of something to poison him with. At last I remembered that some of the neighbors had got something at the store to poison rats with. The next time I went to Mr. Cranston's store, which was in the latter part of June, (1865,) I asked for "rat poison." The first he gave me, upon my asking him, he said it would not kill a man but make him very sick. I then asked him for something stronger, and he gave me the arsenic and told me how to use it. (Miller never told me to get any "rat poison," and my little girl swore to that because I told her to do so.) I took it home, but, in a day or two, Miller went to the Horse Shoe, and was gone until Saturday, and I had no opportunity to give it to him. He came home on Saturday, at noon, (June 30th,) and at supper I put a teaspoonful in some rice and set it at his plate. He took two or three knife-fuls, and then got up from the table and went out on the porch, where he commenced vomiting. The vomiting continued more or less frequently until bed time, when he told me he felt better. The next morning I gave him what you could hold on the point of a pen-knife, in his coffee. This made him sick again. Then I gave it to him again at night; and so on, in about the same quantity, two or three times a day—the number of times depending on whether there were strangers at the house or not—until the 10th of July, the day Dr. Litz came first, when the paper ran out; I had given him all. On the 11th of July, after dinner, I went to the Store to get some vinegar to mix a mustard plaster with, for his breast, as the doctor had told me. I could not get rid of the thought that I must not give it up, and so I bought another paper of the same kind of "rat poison" as I got before. I left the store about three o'clock and got home about four. Miller was much worse. I could hear the "death rattles," and knowing then that he was about to die, I did not give him any more. I went and told some of the neighbors that they must come over, that he was going to die that night. He did die the next day. I never opened the last paper of poison which I bought, but put it in the cupboard, where it remained for three days after the funeral, I then took it and put it in my pocket-book, and carried it two days, when, one morning, going over to Mrs. Pretotts, I found it in my pocket, out of the pocket-book, with my tobacco, and fearing that I might poison myself I threw it away, where I said I had done it; but as I was noticing especially those who were with me, and not where I was throwing it, I could not tell exactly the spot. Besides, the ground was covered with laurel, and it had rained in the meantime and as the run (small stream) is there close to the road, it may have fallen in that, so that it could not be found. The powder which was found on the clock, was the one left by Dr. Litz, on the 12th, to be given him that night, but as he died before that, he never got it. The powder they came out in the kitchen to get, and gave him the night before he died, was a powder left by Dr. Litz on his first visit. I gave him all the medicine the Doctor left, just as he told me.

My motive for killing him was, because he treated me badly and abused me so. He made me work hard outdoors on the farm. He would sometimes get mad and knock me down, and the marks of abuse could often be seen upon my body. I could not live with him any longer, and I could not leave him, because I could not bear to leave my children, whom I loved dearly. As soon, however, as I saw he was dead, I was alarmed and sorry that I had done it. I could not bear to look at him after he was dead, and, after the funeral, was restive—going all about and afraid to stay in the house on account of 'specks.'

I know and feel that I have committed a great sin, and acknowledge my punishment to be just; but I look to the mercy of God, and trust that he will forgive me.

A negro, a former slave of Jeff. Davis, has been, it is said, made a Mississippi Justice of the Peace. Since his blushing honors were thrust upon him he has had a quarrel with a white man, named Law, whom he knocked down. This is called the radical way in which a negro Justice "lays down the law" in Mississippi.

[From the Buffalo Express.] Important Project. The B. & W. Enterprise taking on a New Aspect—Organization of the Cattaraugus County Railway Company—A Chance for getting Cheap Coal into Buffalo Next year, &c. &c.

A very important meeting in connection with the Buffalo and Washington Railway enterprise was held on the 19th inst., at the office of that Company, at which results were reached which promised to give us cheapened coal considerably in advance of the completion of the B. & W. R. to its terminus at Emporium. The meeting was for the purpose of a conference of the Directors, of the B. & W. R. Company with a number of gentlemen from Pennsylvania, New York city and Cattaraugus county, who represent the project of a railroad from Great Valley, on the line of the Erie Railway, to Machias, to connect the Lafayette coal branch of the Erie with the Buffalo and Washington, substantially accomplishing the old project of the Buffalo, Bradford and Pittsburg Railroad.

It will be recollected that the Erie Railway Company some time ago took in a portion of the abandoned B. & P. Railroad, and completed it to Carrolton on the Erie Line, to Lafayette in McKean county, Pa., where it taps the coal mines. This branch of road it has had in operation for a year or more, bringing out coal which it has carried to Dunkirk, from whence a considerable supply has been shipped to this city during the past season. What is now sought is to accomplish a practical extension of that coal road to Buffalo, by filling the gap between the proposed line of the Buffalo & Washington and the nearest point on the Erie. This was the object of the meeting held yesterday, the gentlemen representing the Cattaraugus county enterprise coming here to confer with the B. & W. R. Company upon the subject. The following were present:

Gen. T. L. Kane and H. Yarnall, of Kane, Pa.; Dr. W. R. Irvine, of Irvine, Pa.; Frederick Collins, Esq., and H. Clay, Esq., of Philadelphia; D. B. Eaton, Esq., Attorney of the Erie Railway; York City, Pa. Dr. W. H. Drake, Esq., of Erie; D. Scott, Messrs. E. Harmon, E. S. Stewart, S. King Skinner, S. McCoy, John McMahon and E. D. Northrup, of Ellipticville; George Brewer, Esq., of Great Valley, and R. L. Whiteber, Esq., of Machias.

In the full and free discussion which took place it was shown that the project depended entirely upon the securing of a third rail on the Buffalo and Washington Railway from Machias, to give a six foot gauge into Buffalo, and that, furthermore, a contemplated extension by the Erie Railway Company of its Carrolton and Lafayette branch some distance further south into the heart of the coal region depended upon the same. Strong assurances were given that if the proposed connection with Buffalo can be formed, by the building of the Great Valley and Machias line, and by the laying of a third rail on the B. & W. thence to this city, the Erie Company will expend immediately not less than \$750,000 in extending and equipping the Lafayette road, to open one of the greatest sources of coal supply in Pennsylvania to this market.

When a full discussion of the matter had been had in open meeting, with the gentlemen from abroad present, the Directors of the B. & W. Railway retired and held a brief consultation, the result of which was stated on their return by Mr. Adams, the President of the Company, substantially as follows: That the B. & W. Railway Company desires to have the proposed connection made, and will do all in its power to facilitate it; that it will, if possible, lay the required third rail from Machias to Buffalo, and that if it is not able to do so it will permit any other Company to lay the rail, charging for the right of transit fair and equitable rates, to be determined in case of disagreement by the Companies concerned or by the Supreme Court.

The gentlemen representing the Great Valley and Machias project and the Erie Railway expressed themselves entirely satisfied with this assurance, as being all they require to give a substantial foundation to their enterprise, and the meeting broke up with a feeling on all sides that the marketing of Pennsylvania coal in Buffalo is a consummation which may be realized in another season, instead of waiting the completion of the Buffalo and Washington Railway to Emporium.

This arrangement gives an entirely new aspect to the B. & W. enterprise, and one the importance of which cannot be overestimated. The people of Cattaraugus county are evidently earnest in the matter, of building the connection from Machias to Great Valley, and are satisfied that they will meet the B. & W. at the former point as soon as its rails can be laid down that distance, which we

believe is something over forty miles. If they come up to what the projectors of the enterprise promise in their behalf, next Autumn may see the road built, and the B. & W., with the prospect of substantial earnings from the coal traffic as soon as it reaches Machias, ought to have no difficulty in gaining that point at the same time.

Another prospect opens in the same connection, Great Valley is only a few miles east of Salamanca, where the Atlantic & Great Western Railway unites with the Erie, and the proposed link will furnish an easy opportunity for the former company to carry out its old intention of establishing a connection with Buffalo.

The cost of laying the required third rail on the Buffalo and Washington Railway to Machias is estimated at about \$140,000. Apparently this extra expenditure might be deferred by laying the present track on the six foot gauge, as far as Machias, spreading the few miles of track already down. The road does not require its own proper gauge until it reaches Olean, and the third rail, it would seem, might be laid after the completion to Machias. We understand that an informal offer has been made by the representatives of the Erie road to loan rolling stock for temporary use if this course should be adopted and the six foot track constructed first.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CATTARAUGUS RAILWAY COMPANY.

Last evening the gentlemen engaged in the project of the road from Great Valley to Machias held a meeting at the Tift House and organized their enterprise under the name of "The Cattaraugus Railway Company." The following directors were elected: Alexander S. Diven, New York; John S. Elbridge, New York; D. B. Eaton, New York; Gen. Thos. L. Kane, McKean Co., Pa.; A. G. Rice, Ellipticville; Eleazer Harmon, Ellipticville; A. D. Scott, Ellipticville; John C. Davenport, Utica; George Brewer, Great Valley; Rufus L. Whiteber, Machias; Bronson C. Ramsey, Buffalo; Myron P. Bush, Buffalo; Harry A. Richmond, Buffalo. The office of the company is to be located for the present in this city. Its meeting for the election of officers will be held here, probably, next month, when the necessary terms of law have been complied with.

News Items.

- New Zealand is to have a University.
-A. T. Stewart employs two thousand.
-The silks for the costumes in a new play to be brought out in New York cost \$30,000.
-A wealthy pawnbroker in St. Louis has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for receiving stolen goods.
-A Dublin barber has invented a machine for cutting hair. It is a terrible affair, with revolving knives.
-The sorghum crop of 1867 is said to be a failure compared to that of previous years. Cause, too much rain.
-A steamer loaded with grain was burned at Jersey City, N. Y., some weeks ago. Loss \$30,000.
-A locomotive exploded at Binghamton on the 16th instant, killing the fireman and engineer.
-The oldest person in the United States is 117 years old, is a negro woman, and resides in Londonderry, N. H.
-In Madison, Florida, a boy of fourteen was joined in wedlock, recently, to a crafty old widow with five children.
-The New Orleans police have discovered that a large amount of bogus coin has been received in that city to be passed upon ignorant negroes.
-Sixty five years ago a lady planted her riding whip, a slip of grape-vine, at Montecito, California. Now it covers a space of 4659 feet.
-In the manufacture of steel pens at Birmingham 2,500 persons are employed. The yearly product is over 125,000,000 pens, consuming about 5,000 tons of steel.
-Howard Jenkins, the proprietor of the Planter's House at Platte City, Missouri, discharged a negro from his service. The next day the negro killed Mr. Jenkins.
-Mr. Wm. Dougherty died at Memphis on the 5th instant. He was the architect of the State House of South Carolina and of the Washington Monument, and planned the extension of the United States Treasury building.
-The famous American clown, Ag. greatt, called the "Mandy," committed suicide lately at Berlin, in presence of two thousand spectators, by firing a pistol in his mouth at the moment he was hanging by his feet to the ceiling of the theater.
-An exchange says: In the house owned by Mrs. Lincoln, at Springfield, Illinois, in a glass frame, is set a piece of Laura Keane's dress which she wore on the evening of the President's assassination. It bears a portion of the deep, dark, crimson stain which she received as she supported the martyr's head in her arms when she hastened from the box where he fell.
-Love thy neighbor as thyself.