NEW PUBLICATIONS.

HARD TIMES. By CHARLES DICKENS. 8vo. pp. 136. T. L. McElrath & Co.

Neither the conception nor the execution of this work will give the reader any fresh illustration of the genius of Dickens, or add anything to his high reputation with the public. In its general outline, it presents the materials for a noble creation; but the frame-work is not worthily fitted up; the characters are not unfolded with the ever-growing accretion of interest that, at last, throws around them the spell of enchantment; they often have a worn and faded look; it would seem as if the author wearied of his task, or wrote under the pressure of circumstances unfavorable to inspiration; he does not follow up his own hints; a scene is presented in a light which provokes expectation, when it suddenly vanishes in a dissolving view; and the denouement is finally hurried up with railroad speed, as if we had been sent on a disagreeable journey, the end of which we could not reach too soon. Occasional touches, indeed, betray the hand of the favorite master. There are many passages in the story in which he shows his accustomed strength in the delineation of real life. Dickens can be no other than himself, even when jaded and languid. His very failures are not without point, and in many respects are superior to others' successes.

"Hard Times" is essentially a satire on the mechanical, prosaic, utilitarian spirit of the age. It takes up a new strain of the jeremiad which has been so bitterly chanted by Carlyle, Emerson, and other "prophets of the soul," to admiring audiences that were well-fed, well-clothed, and in every way well to do in the world, by the operation of the machinery of this age, which is set down as the invention of the devil to destroy poetry and religion. Dickens, however, makes many good hits at the extravagances of utilitarianism. He has caught a couple of the meanest specimens of the school, and set them in the pillory, much to the amusement of the spectators. True, they are decided caricatures—distorted abortions of humanity—with few features that can be recognized in their full blown ugliness; but they are the veritable incarnations of a prevailing spirit, whose visible grotesque forms may teach the deformity of selfishness as powerfully as the drunken Helots illustrated the virtue of temperance.

Mr. Thomas Gradgrind is the prominent apostle of the evangel of utilitarianism. His confession of faith is tersely expressed in his precepts to a model schoolmaster. "Now, what I want is, facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children. and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to facts, Sir."

A miniature sketch of the all-practical Gradgrind, which tells everything we want to know of such a two-legged insect, is given in the second chapter.

Thomas Gradgrind, Sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, Sir—peremptorily Thomas—Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, Sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic. You might hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the head of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind, or John Gradgrind, or Joseph Gradgrind (all suppositious, non existent persons,) but into the head of Thomas Gradgrind—no, Sir!

But a still more delectable product of the matter-of-fact philosophy, is the exemplary Mr. Bounderby, a self-made man, with that circumstance always uppermost in his thoughts, cherishing a profound contempt for everything usually valued by decent people, except hard cash, and for ever bragging that he had crept up from the foulest slime of his original condition, to wealth and influence in society, by sheer dint of paucity of principle and plenty of brass. "Mr. Bounderby was as near being Mr. Gradgrind's bosom friend, as a man perfectly devoid of sentiment can approach that spiritual relationship toward another man perfectly devoid of sentiment. He was a rich man: banker, merchant, manufacturer, and what not. A big, loud man, with a stare and a metallic laugh. A man made out of a coarse material, which seemed to have been stretched to make so much of him. A man with a great puffed head and forehead, swelled veins in his temples, and such a strained skin to his face that it seemed to hold his eyes open and lift his eyebrows up. A man with a pervading appearance on him of being inflated like a balloon, and ready to start. A man who could never sufficiently vaunt himself a self-made man. A man who was always proclaiming, through that brassy speaking-trumpet of a voice of his, his old ignorance and his old poverty. A man who was the totally of humility."

Bounderby holds the front rank on the scene. He is mixed up with the whole movement of the story. Not a complication occurs in which his flabby fingers have not moved the springs. His presence, which at first is simply disgusting, at length becomes intolerable, and we sicken of recitals in which he plays the chief part. No skill of the artist can reconcile us to his hideous portraiture. He has not the ability which lends a charm to positive wickedness. His brutal selfishness is not redeemed by the shrewdness which usually accompanies that quality; but a big, coarse, stupid braggart with neither cunning nor contrivance, he forces his loathsome image on the spectator until he becomes as revolting as a bloated, shapeless, venomous reptile. To cap the climax of his burly enormities, he pretends to fall in love with Gradgrind's daughter, who, by a strange caprice of nature, is a beautiful model of gentle womanhood, whose heart could not be crushed out of her by the pressure of her absurd education—whose affections blossom luxuriantly in the arid desert of her father's house—whose life is an unconscious protest against the miserable system of which she is the victim—and without a worthy object to love, who clings with a sister's devotion to a young scamp of a brother, that shows in every trait and action the inevitable fruits of the hard, soulless, matter-of fact routine in which he had been trained from infancy. Louisa—which was the daughter's name—finally consents to marry Bounderby, without attempting to dupe him by professions of love. The sacrifice is completed—she becomes the companion of a fool and a bully—her position almost solicits the addresses of unlawful admirers; but though her nature is soft and womanly, she saves herself from sin by retreating to her father's house, who by this time has begun to get his eyes a little opened to something besides tangible facts. Bounderby swallows his grief at her loss with consummate ease, and continues to find a glorious solace in narrating his progress from the ditch to the money-bags. Even this wretched romance is at last detected, and after repeated coarse melodramatic sketches of the barbarity of his parents, who left him an outcast to struggle with the world, his mother finally turns up in the person of a mysterious woman, who several times suspiciously flits across the scene, but proves to have no greater fault than an overweening love for the heartless Caliban she had inflicted on humanity.

The locality, in which the incidents of the story occur, is an English manufacturing city called Coketown, and many interesting situations are founded on the lives and struggles of the operatives, earning a scanty supply of bread by never-ending toil. Two factory laborers, Stephen Blackpool and his friend Rachael, are introduced as specimens of virtue in humble condition, and present a delightful contrast to the plethoric selfishness of the "first families" represented by Gradgrind and Bounderby. We who them so well ourselves, that we must take leave to present them to our readers:

TWO FACTORY OPERATIVES.

In the hardest working part of Coketown; in the innermost fortifications of that ugly citadel, where Nature was as strongly bricked out as killing airs and gases were bricked in; at the heart of the labyrinth of narrow courts upon courts, and close streets upon streets, which had come into existence piecemeal, every piece in a violent hurry for some one man's purpose, and the whole an unnatural family, shouldering, and trampling, and pressing one another to death; in the last close nook of this great exhausted receiver, where the chimneys, for want of air to make a draft, were built in an immense variety of stunted and crooked shapes, as though every house put out a sign of the kind of people who might be expected to be born in it; among the multitude of Coketown, generically called "the Hands"—a race who would have found more favor with some people, if Providence had seen fit to make them only hands, or, like the lower creatures of the sea-shore, only hands and stomachs—lived a certain Stephen Blackpool, forty years of age.

Stephen looked older, but he had had a hard life. It is said that every life has its roses and thorns; there seemed, however, to have been a misadventure or mistake in Stephen's case, whereby somebody else had become possessed of his roses, and he had become possessed of the same somebody else's thorns in addition to his own. He had known, to use his words, a peck of trouble. He was usually called Old Stephen, in a kind of rough homage to the fact.

A rather stooping man, with a knitted brow, a pondering expression of face, and a hard looking head sufficiently capacious, on which his iron-gray hair lay long and thin, Old Stephen might have passed for a particularly intelligent man in his condition. Yet he was not. He took no place among those remarkable "Hands" who, piecing together their broken intervals of leisure through many years, had mastered difficult sciences, and acquired a knowledge of most unlikely things. He held no station among the Hands who could make speeches and carry on debates. Thousands of his compeers could talk much better than he at any time. He was a good power-loom weaver, and a man of perfect integrity. What more he was, or what else he had in him, if anything, let him show for himself.

The lights in the great factories, which looked, when they were illuminated, like fairy palaces—or the travelers by express-train said so—were all extinguished; and the bells had rung for knocking off for the night, and had ceased again; and the Hands, men and women, boy and girl, were clattering home. Old Stephen was standing in the street, with the odd sensation upon him which the stoppage of the machinery always produced—the sensation of its having worked and stopped in his own head.

"Yet I don't see Rachel, still!" said he.

It was a wet night, and many groups of young women passed him, with their shawls drawn over their bare heads and held close under their chins, to keep the rain out. He knew Rachel well, for a glance at any one of these groups was sufficient to show him that she was not there. At last, there were no more to come; and then he turned away, saying in a tone of disappointment, "Why, then, I ha' missed her!"

But he had not gone the length of three streets, when he saw another of the shawled figures in advance of him, at which he looked so keenly that perhaps its mere shadow indistinctly reflected on the wet pavement—if he could have seen it without the figure itself moving from lamp to lamp, brightening and fading as it went—would have been enough to tell him who was there. Making his pace at once much quicker and much softer, he darted on until he was very near this figure, then fell into his former walk, and called "Rachael!"

She turned, being then in the brightness of a lamp; and raising her hood a little, showed a quiet oval face, dark and rather delicate, irradiated by a pair of very gentle eyes, and further set off by the perfect order of her shining black hair. It was not a face in its first bloom; she was a woman five-and-thirty years of age.

"Ah lad! 'Tis thou!" When she had said this, with a smile which would have been quite expressed, though nothing of her had been seen but her pleasant eyes, she replaced her hood again, and they went on together.

"I thought thou wast ahind me, Rachael!"

"No."

"Early t'night, lass?"

"Times I'm a little early, Stephen; 'times a little late. I'm never to be counted on, going home."

"Nor going t'other way, neither, 'tseems to me, Rachael!"

"No, Stephen."

He looked at her with some disappointment in his face, but with a respectful and patient conviction that she must be right in whatever she did. The expression was not lost upon her; she laid her hand lightly on his arm a moment, as if to thank him for it.

"We are such true friends, lad, and such old friends, and getting to be such old folks, now."

"No, Rachael, thou'rt as young as ever thou wast."

"One of us would be puzzled how to get old, Stephen, without t'other getting so too, both being alive," she answered, laughing; "but, any ways, we're such old friends that t'hide a word of honest truth fra' one another would be a sin and a pity. 'Tis better not to walk too much together. 'Times, yes! 'Twould be hard, indeed, if 'twas not to be at all, she said, with a cheerfulness she sought to communicate to him."

"'Tis hard, anyways, Rachel."

"Try to think not, lad; and 'twill seem better."

"I've tried a long time, and 't a'nt got better. But thou'rt right; 'tmight make folk talk, even of thee. Thou hast been that to me, Rachael, through so many year: thou hast done me so much good, and heartened of me in that cheering way, that thy word is a law to me. Ah, lass, and a bright good law! Better than some real ones."

"Never fret about them, Stephen," she answered quickly, and not without an anxious glance at his face. "Let the laws be."

"Yes," he said, with a slow nod or two. "Let 'em be. Let everything be. Let all sorts alone. 'Tis a muddle, and that's all."

"Always a muddle, lad!" said Rachael, with another gentle touch upon his arm, as if to recall him out of the thoughtfulness in which he was biting the long ends of his loose neckerchief as he walked along. The touch had its instantaneous effect. He let them fall, turned a smiling face upon her, and said, as he broke into a good-humored laugh, "Ay, Rachael, lass, always a muddle. That's where I stick. I come to the muddle many times and again, and I never get beyond it."

They had walked some distance, and were near their own homes. The woman's was the first reached. It was in one of the many small streets for which the favorite undertaker (who turned a handsome sum out of the one poor ghastly pomp of the neighborhood) kept a black ladder, in order that those who had done their daily groping up and down the narrow stairs might slide out of this working world by the windows. She stopped at the corner, and putting her hand in his, wished him good night.

"Good night, dear lass; good night!"

She went, with her neat figure and her sober, womanly step, down the dark street, and he stood looking after her until she turned into one of the small houses. There was not a flutter of her coarse shawl, perhaps, but had its interest in this man's eyes; not a tone of her voice but had its echo in his innermost heart.

When she was lost to his eyes, he pursued his homeward way, glancing up sometimes at the sky, where the clouds were sailing fast and wildly. But they were broken now, and the rain had ceased, and the moon shone—looking down the high chimneys of Coketown on the deep furnaces below, and casting titanic shadows of the steam engines at rest, upon the walls where they were lodged. The man seemed to have brightened with the night, as he went on.

His home, in such another street as the first, saving that it was narrower, was over a little shop. How it came to pass that any people found it worth while to sell or buy the wretched little toys mixed up in its window with cheap newspapers and pork, (there was a leg to be raffled for tomorrow night,) matters not here. He took his end of candle from a shelf, lighted it at another end of candle on the counter, without disturbing the mistress of the shop, who was asleep in her little room, and went up stairs into his lodging.

It was a room, not unacquainted with the black ladder under various tenants; but as neat, at present, as such a room could be. A few books and writings were on an old bureau in a corner, the furniture was decent and sufficient, and, though the atmosphere was tainted, the room was clean.

Going to the hearth to set the candle down upon a round three-legged table standing there, he stumbled upon something. As he recoiled, looking down at it, it raised itself up into the form of a woman in a sitting attitude.

"Heaven's mercy, woman!" he cried, falling farther off from the figure. "Hast thou come back again!"

Such a woman! A disabled, drunken creature, barely able to preserve the sitting posture by steadying herself with one begrimed hand on the floor, while the other was so purposeless in trying to push away her tangled hair from her face, that it only blinded her the more with the dirt upon it. A creature so foul to look at, in her tatters, stains, and splashes, but so much fouler than that in her moral infamy, that it was a shameful thing even to see her.

After an impatient oath or two, and some stupid clawing of herself with the hand not necessary to her support, she got her hair away from her eyes sufficiently to obtain a sight of him. Then she sat swaying her body to and fro, and making gestures with her unnerved arm, which seemed intended as the accompaniment to a fit of laughter, though her face was stolid and drowsy.

"Eigh lad! What, yo're there!" Some hoarse sounds meant for this came mockingly out of her at last; and then her head dropped forward on her breast.

"Back again!" she screeched, after some minutes, as if he had that moment said it. "Yes! And back again. Back again, ever and ever so often. Back! Yes, back. Why not!"

Roused by the unmeaning violence with which she cried it out, she scrambled up, and stood supporting herself with her shoulders against the wall: dangling in one hand by the string, a dunghill fragment of a bonnet, and trying to look scornfully at him.

"I'll sell thee off again, and I'll sell thee off again, and I'll sell thee off a score of times!" she cried, with something between a furious menace and an effort at a defiant dance. "Come away from th' bed!" He was sitting on the side of it, with his face hidden in his hands. "Come away from't. 'Tis mine, and I've a right to't!"

As she staggered to it, he avoided her with a shudder, and passed—his face still hidden—to the opposite end of the room. She threw herself upon the bed heavily, and soon was snoring hard. He sunk in a chair, and moved but once all that night. It was to throw a covering over her, as if his hands were not enough to hide her, even in the darkness.

This woman turns out to be Stephen's wife, whose love of the bottle had made an utter wreck of her. She had deserted her husband, led a vagabond life, had lost all sense of decency, wandering from one rum-shop to another, and once in a while returning, in the state we have seen, to worry out the remains of existence in the long suffering Stephen.

In process of time he incurs the ill-will of his fellow-laborers, for declining to engage in a strike, at the instance of an itinerant rhetorician, who made the workingmen his tools, and soon after falls into disfavor with his employer, is discharged from the factory, and is obliged to seek employment in another district of the country. Here he is suspected of having been the perpetrator of a robbery on Mr. Bounderby's bank, a reward is offered for his arrest, and though circumstances have been turned against him by the young "whelp" Tom Gradgrind, the actual robber, nothing can shake the confidence of Rachael in his integrity. But the search for him was in vain. He was nowhere to be found. His pursuers were baffled, and the mystery grew thicker, when the following scene occurs. We quote the description as not surpassed in vigor and pathos by any passage in the story.

The Sunday was a bright Sunday in autumn, clear and cool, when early in the morning Sissy and Rachael met, to walk in the country.

As Coketown cast ashes not only on its own head but on the neighborhood's too—after the manner of those pious persons who do penance for their own sins by putting other people into sackcloth—it was customary for those who now and then thirsted for a draught of pure air, which is not absolutely the most wicked among the vanities of life, to get a few miles away by the railroad, and then begin their walk, or their lounge in the fields. Sissy and Rachael helped themselves out of the smoke by the usual means, and were put down at a station about midway between the town and Mr. Bounderby's retreat.

Though the green landscape was blotted here and there with heaps of coal, it was green, and there were trees to see, and there were larks singing, (though it was Sunday,) and there were pleasant scents in the air, and all was overarched by a bright blue sky. In the distance one way, Coketown showed as a black mist; in another distance, hills began to rise; in a third, there was a faint change in the light of the horizon, where it shone upon the far-off sea. Under their feet, the grass was fresh; beautiful shadows of branches flickered upon it and speckled it; hedgerows were luxuriant; everything was at peace. Engines at pits' mouths, and lean old horses that had worn the circle of their daily labor into the ground, were alike quiet; wheels had ceased for a short space to turn; and the great wheel of earth seemed to revolve without the shocks and noises of another time.

They walked on across the fields and down the shady lanes, sometimes getting over a fragment of a fence so rotten that it dropped at a touch of the foot, sometimes passing near a wreck of bricks and beams overgrown with grass, marking the site of some deserted works. They followed paths and tracks, however slight. Mounds where the grass was rank and high, and where brambles, dock-weeds, and such-like vegetation were confusedly heaped together, they always avoided; for dismal stories were told in that country of the old pits hidden beneath such indications.

The sun was high when they sat down to rest. They had seen no one, near or distant, for a long time, and the solitude remained unbroken. "It is so still here, Rachael, and the way is so untrodden that I think we must be the first who have been here all the summer."

As Sissy said it, her eyes were attracted by another of those rotten fragments of fence upon the ground. She got up to look at it. "And yet I don't know. This has not been broken very long. The wood is quite fresh where it gave way. Here are footsteps too. O Rachael!"

She ran back and caught her round the neck. Rachael had already started up.

"What is the matter?"

"I don't know. There is a hat lying in the grass."

They went forward together. Rachael took it up, shaking from head to foot. She broke into a passion of tears and lamentations; Stephen Blackpool was written in his own hand on the inside.

"O the poor lad, the poor lad! He has been made away with. He is lying murdered here!"

"Is there—has the hat any blood upon it?" Sissy faltered.

They were afraid to look, but they did examine it, and found no mark of violence inside or out. It had been lying there some days, for rain and dew had stained it, and it left the mark of its shape on the grass where it had fallen. They looked fearfully about them, without moving, but could see nothing more. "Rachael," Sissy whispered, "I will go on a little by myself."

She had unclasped her hand, and was in the act of stepping forward, when Rachael caught her in both arms with a scream that resounded over the wide landscape. Before them, at their very feet, was the brink of a black, ragged chasm, hidden by the thick grass. They sprang back and fell upon their knees, each hiding her face upon the other's neck.

"Oh my good God! He's down there! Down there!" At first this and her terrific screams were all that could be got from Rachael by any tears, by any prayers, by any representations, by any means. It was impossible to hush her, and it was deadly necessary to hold her, or she would have distractedly flung herself down the shaft.

"Rachel, dear Rachel, good Rachel, for the love of Heaven, not these dreadful cries! Think of Stephen, think of Stephen, think of Stephen!"

By an earnest repetition of this entreaty, poured out in all the agony of such a time, Sissy at last brought her to be silent, and to look at her with a fearless face of stone.

"Rachel, Stephen may be living. You wouldn't leave him lying maimed at the bottom of this dreadful place a moment if you could bring help to him!"

"No, no, no!"

"Don't stir from here for his sake! Let me go and listen."

She shuddered to approach the pit, but she crept toward it on her hands and knees, and called to him as loud as she could call. She listened, but no sound replied. She called again and listened; still no answering sound. She did this twenty, thirty times. She took a clod of earth from the broken ground where he had stumbled, and threw it in. She could not hear it fall.

The wide prospect, so beautiful in its stillness but a few minutes ago, almost carried despair to her brave heart as she rose and looked all round her seeing no help. "Rachael, we must not lose a moment. We must go in different directions seeking aid. You shall go by the way we have come, and I will go forward by the path. Tell any one you see, and every one, what has happened. Think of Stephen, think of Stephen!"

She knew by Rachael's face that she might trust her now. After standing for a moment to see her running wringing her hands as she went, she turned and went upon her own search; she stopped at the hedge to tie her shawl there as a guide to the place, then threw her bonnet aside, and ran as she had never run before.

Run, Sissy, run, in Heaven's name! Don't stop for breath. Run, run! Quickening herself by carrying such entreaties in her thoughts, she ran from field to field, and lane to lane, and place to place, as she had never run before, until she came to a shed by an engine-house, where two men lay in the shade asleep on straw.

First to wake them, and next to tell them, all so wild and breathless as she was, what had brought her there, were difficulties; but they no sooner understood her than their spirits were on fire like hers. One of the men was in a drunken slumber, but on his comrade's shouting to him that a man had fallen down the Old Hell Shaft, he started out to a pool of dirty water, put his head in it and came back sober.

With these two men she ran to another half a mile further, and with that one to another, while they ran elsewhere. Then a horse was found, and she got another man to ride for life or death to the railroad, and send a message to Louisa, which she wrote and gave him. By this time a whole village was up: and windlasses, ropes, poles, buckets, candles, lanterns, all things necessary, were fast collecting and being brought into one place to be carried to the Old Hell Shaft.

It seemed now hours and hours since she had left the lost man lying in the grave where he had been buried alive. She could not bear to remain away from it any longer—it was like deserting him—and she hurried swiftly back, accompanied by half-a-dozen laborers, including the drunken man whom the news had sobered, and who was the best man of all. When they came to the Old Hell Shaft they found it as lonely as she had left it. The men called and listened as she had done, and examined the edge of the chasm, and settled how it had happened, and then sat down to wait until the implements they wanted should come up.

Every sound of insects in the air, every stirring of the leaves, every whisper among these men, made Sissy tremble, for she thought it was a cry at the bottom of the pit. But the wind blew idly over it, and no sound arose to the surface, and they sat upon the grass, waiting and waiting. After they had waited some time, straggling people who had heard of the accident began to come up; then the real help of implements began to arrive. In the midst of this Rachael returned; and with her party there was a surgeon, who brought some wine and medicines. But the expectation among the working pitmen that the man would be found alive, was very slight indeed.

There being now people enough present to impede the work; the sobered man put himself at the head of the rest, or was put there by the general consent, and made a large ring round the Old Hell Shaft, and appointed men to keep it. Besides such volunteers as were accepted to work, only Sissy and Rachael were at first permitted within this ring; but later in the day, when the message brought an express from Coketown, Mr. Gradgrind and Louisa, and Mr. Bounderby, and the whelp, were also there.

The sun was four hours lower than when Sissy and Rachael had first sat down upon the grass, before a means of enabling two men to descend securely was rigged with poles and ropes. Difficulties had arisen in the construction of this machine, simple as it was: requisites had been found wanting, and messages had had to go and return. It was 5 o'clock in the afternoon of a bright autumnal Sunday, before a candle was sent down to try the air, while three or four rough faces stood crowded close together, all actively watching it: the men at the windlass lowering as they were told. The candle was brought up again, feebly burning, and then some water was cast in. Then the bucket was hooked on, and the shored man and another got in with lights giving the word "Lower away!"

So the rope went out, slight and strained, and the windlass creaked. There was not a breath among the crowd. Hundred men and women looking on that same as it was went to come. The signal was given and the windlass stopped, with abundant rope to spare. Apparently so long an interval ensued, with the men at the windlass standing idle, that some women shrieked another accident had happened. But the surgeon who held the watch, declared five minutes not to have elapsed yet, and sternly admonished them to keep silence. He had not well done speaking when the windlass was reversed and worked again. Practiced eyes knew that it did not go as heavily as it would if workmen had been coming up, and that only one was returning.

The rope came in tight and strained, and ring after ring was coiled upon the barrel of the windlass, and all eyes were fastened on the pit.

The sobered man was brought up, and leaped out briskly on the grass. There was a universal cry of "Alive or dead?" and then a deep profound hush.

When he said "Alive," a great shout arose, and many eyes had tears in them.

"But he's hurt very bad," he added, as soon as he could make himself heard again. "Where's doctor? He's hurt so very bad, sir, that we donno how to get him up."

They all consulted together, and looked anxiously at the surgeon, as he asked some questions, and shook his head on receiving the replies. The sun was setting now, and the red light in the evening sky touched every face there, and caused it to be distinctly seen in all its rapt suspense.

The consultation ended in the men returning to the windlass, and the pitman going down again, carrying the wine and some other small matters with him. Then the other man came up. In the meantime, under the surgeon's directions, some men brought a bundle, on which others made a thick bed of spare clothes covered with straw, while he himself contrived some bandages and slings from shawls and handkerchiefs. As these were made, they were hung upon the arm of the pitman who had last come up, with instructions how to use them; and as he stood, shown in the light he carried, leaning his powerful loose hand upon one of the poles, and sometimes glancing round upon the people, he was not the least conspicuous figure in the scene. It was dark now, and torches were kindled.

It appears from the little this man said to those about him, which was quickly repeated all over the circle, that the lost man had fallen upon a mass of crumbled rubbish with which the pit was half choked up, and that his fall had further been broken by some jagged earth at the side. He lay upon his back with one arm doubled under him, and according to his belief had hardly stirred since he fell, except that he had moved his free hand to a side pocket, in which he remembered to have some bread and meat (of which he had swallowed crumbs,) and had likewise scooped up a little water in it now and then. He had come straight away from his work on being written to, and had walked the whole journey; and was on his way to Mr. Bounderby's country-house after dark, when he fell. He was crossing that dangerous country at such a dangerous time because he was wholly innocent of what was laid to his charge, and couldn't rest from coming the nearest way to deliver himself up. The Old Hell Shaft, the pitman said, with a curse upon it, was worthy of its evil name to the last, for though Stephen could speak now, he believed it would soon be found to have mangled the life out of him.

When all was ready, this man still taking his last hurried charges from his comrades and the surgeon, after the windlass had begun to lower him, disappeared into the pit. The rope went out as before, the signal was made as before, and the windlass stopped. No man removed his hand from it now. Every one waited with his grasp set, and his body bent down to the work, ready to reverse and wind in. At length the signal was given, and all the ring leaned forward.

For now the rope came in tightened and strained to its utmost as it appeared, and the men turned heavily, and the windlass complained. It was scarcely endurable to look at the rope, and think of its given way. But ring after ring was coiled upon the barrel of the windlass safely, and the connecting chains appeared, and finally the bucket with the two men holding on at the sides—a sight to make the head swim and oppress the heart—and tenderly supporting between them, slung and tied within, the figure of a poor crushed human creature.

A low murmur of pity went round the throng, and the women wept aloud, as this form, almost without form, was moved very slowly from its iron deliverance, and laid upon the bed of straw. At first none but the surgeon went close to it. He did what he could in its adjustment on the couch, but the best that he could do was to cover it. That gently done, he called to him Rachael and Sissy, and at that time the pale, worn, patient face was seen looking up at the sky, with the broken right hand lying bare on the outside of the covering garments, as if waiting to be taken by another hand.

They gave him drink, moistened his face with water, and administered some drops of cordial and wine. Though he lay quite motionless looking up at the sky, he smiled and said "Rachael."

She stooped down on the grass at his side, and bent over him until her eyes were between his and the sky, for he could not so much as turn them to look at her.

"Rachael my dear."

She took his hand. He smiled again and said, "Don't let it go."

"Thou'rt in great pain, my own dear Stephen?"

"I ha' been, but not now. I ha' been—dreadful, and dree, and long, my dear—but 'tis ower now. Ah Rachael, aw a muddle! Fro' first to last, a muddle!"

The specter of his old look seemed to pass as he said the word.

"I ha' fell into th' pit, my dear, as have cost wi'n the knowledge o' old fok now livin' hundreds and hundred o' men's lives—fathers, sons, brothers, dear to thousands an' thousands, and keepin' 'em fro' want and hunger. I ha' fell into a pit that ha' been wi' th' fire-damp crueller than battle. I ha' read on't in the public petition, as onny one may read, fro' the men that works in pits, in which they ha' pra'yn an' pray'n the law-makers for Christ's sake not to let their work be murder to 'em, but to spare 'em for th' wives and children that they loves as well as gentlefolk loves theirs. When it were in work it killed wi'out need; when 'tis let alone, it kills wi'out need. See how we die an' no need, one way an' another—in a muddle every day!"

He faintly said it, without any anger against any one. Merely as the truth.

"Thy little sister, Rachael, thou hast not forgot her. Thou'rt not like to forget her now, and me so nigh her. Then know'st, poor, patient, suff'rin' dear, how she died, young and misshapen; awlung o' sickly air as had'n no need to be, an' awlung o' working people's miserable homes. A muddle! Aw a muddle!"

Louisa approached him, but he could not see her, lying with his face turned up to the night sky.

"If aw th' things that touches us, my dear, was not so muddled, I should'n ha' had'n need to coom heer. If we was not in a muddle among ourseln, I should'n ha' been by my own fellow-weavers and workin' brothers so mistook. If Mr. Bounderby had ever knowd me right—rather if he'd ever know'd me at aw—he would'n ha' took'n offense wi' me. He would'n' ha' suspect'n me. But look up yonder, Rachael! Look aboove."

Following his eyes, she saw that he was gazing at a star.

"It ha' shined upon me," he said reverently, "in pain and trouble down below. It ha' shined into my mind. I ha' lookn and thout o' thee, Rachael, till the muddle in my mind have cleared a-a above a bit, I hope. If soom ha' been wantin in unnerstannin' me better, I, too, ha' been wantin in unnerstannin' them better. When I got thy letter, I easily believed that what the young lady seen an' done to me, an' what her brother seen an' done to me were one, an' that there were a wicked plot betwixt us. When I fell, I were in anger wi' her, an' hurryin' on t' be as onjust t' her as others was t' me. But in our judgment like as in our coins, we mun bear and forbear. You in my pain an' trouble lookin' up yonder.—wi' it shinin' on me—I ha' seen more clear, and ha' made it my dying prayer that aw' th' world may on'y come together more, an' get a better unnerstannin' o' one another than when I were in't my own weak seln."

Louisa hearing what he said, bent over him on the opposite side to Rachael, so that he could see her.

"You ha' heard?" he said after a few moment's silence, "I ha' not forgot yo', lady."

"Yes, Stephen, I have heard you. And your prayer is mine."

"You ha' a father. Will yo' tak a message to him?"

"He is here," said Louisa, with dread. "Shall I bring him to you?"

"If yo' please."

Louisa returned with her father. Standing hand-in-hand, they both looked down upon his solemn countenance.

"Sir, yo' will clear me an' mak' my name good wi' aw men. This I leave to yo."

Mr. Gradgrind was troubled and asked how?

"Sir," was the reply, "yor son will tell yo how. Ask him. I mak' no charges. I leave none aliint me, not a single word. I ha' seen an' spok'n wi' yor son, one night. I ask no more o' yo than that, to clear me—an' I trust to yo to do't."

The bearers being now ready to carry him away, and the surgeon being anxious for his removal, those who had torches or lanterns, prepared to go in front of the litter. Before it was raised, and while they were arranging how to go, he said to Rachael, looking upward at the star—

"Often as I coom to myseln, and found it shinin' on me down there in my trouble I thought were the star as guided to our Savior's home. I awmust think it to be the very star!"

They lifted him up, and he was overjoyed to find that they were about to take him in the direction whither the star seemed to him to lead.

"Rachael, beloved lass! Don't let go my hand. We may walk together t'night, dear!"

"I will hold thy hand, and keep beside thee, Stephen, all the way."

"Bless thee! Will somebody be pleased to coover my face?"

They carried him very gently along the fields and down the lanes, and over the wide landscape; Rachael always holding the hand in hers. Very few whispers broke the mournful silence. It was soon a funeral procession. The star had shown him where to find the God of the poor; and through humility, and sorrow, and forgiveness, he had gone to his Redeemer's rest.

After this, the plot rushes to a conclusion, and very wisely, as we think, for there were no materials for a more striking episode, than that just narrated. A dim vail is drawn over Bounderby's future career, the curtain falls with sad music in the distance, and a common-place moral closes the tale.

IMPROVEMENT IN MACHINERY.—We learn that Mr. George W. Pryor, coach-maker of Baltimore, has patented an improved cut in the method of oiling the axles of railroad cars, which will be of great advantage.

REV. JAMES PRITCHARD died at Belleville, Ill., on the 11th, aged 93.

THE WHITE MOUNTAINS.

Correspondence of The N. Y. Tribune.

SUMMIT HOUSE, MOUNT WASHINGTON, Saturday, Aug. 12, 1854.

Perhaps a line from this elevated and cool locality might not be uninteresting to your host of readers. I find the temperature here about the same as last year, very even, more so I think than any other inhabited region in this country, if not in the whole world.

The temperature for June, from the 10th to 30th inclusive, was as follows, viz:

Mean temperature at sunrise	43.5°
Mean temperature at noon	50.8°
Mean temperature at sunset	46.0°
Mean temperature by self register during night	40.8°
Coldest day 17th, mean	38.0°
Warmest day 28th, mean	56.0°
Range of Thermometer	29.0°
Thermometer, highest 28th	58.0°
Thermometer, lowest 16th	29.0°

Last year the mean temperature of June was as follows, viz:

Mean temperature at sunrise	43.3°
Mean temperature at noon	53.5°
Mean temperature at sunset	45.7°

It varies but little from this year.

The temperature of July this year was as follows, viz:

Mean temperature at sunrise	46.9°
Mean temperature at noon	53.9°
Mean temperature at sunset	51.5°
Mean temperature by self-register during night	46.2°
Coldest day 27th, mean	40.5°
Warmest day 20th, mean	61.5°
Range of thermometer	30.0°
Thermometer highest 20th	70.0°
Thermometer lowest 13th	31.0°

There has been ice once or more during each month, but the changes are not great or sudden generally. The air is very pure, and that, together with the pure spring water, to be found gushing out from among the rocks almost at the tip-top of the mountain, and the evenness of temperature, makes it a healthy place of resort during the summer months, when it is so hot and sickly in the cities and other places nearer the sea level.

The attention of those who invariably travel during the warm season is turning toward those places where there is purer air, and more to be seen in the shape of scenery. What can be more delightful than to spend a few days or weeks among mountains, where the nights are cool and comfortable, giving one a quiet, refreshing sleep, and where the days are not over hot? And the beautiful and varied scenery to be found among the White Mountains well repays the expense attending a visit to them. A gentleman from Switzerland remarked to me, while conversing upon the subject, that for boldness of scenery these mountains excelled those of his country. Let a person ascend the mountain (Mount Washington) from the eastern side, and if he does not meet with the boldest scenery to be met with in this part of the world, then I am mistaken. Those who walk up, taking plenty of time to do it in, will be paid far better than those who ride up in a hurry. And a night spent upon the summit, at the hospitable mansion kept by Hall, Spaulding & Co., well repays for doing so, as the sunset and sunrise view from this *exalted habitation* is beyond description. Occasionally the surrounding country, as far as the eye can reach, is enveloped in fog, appearing like a vast sea, sometimes changing color and counterfeiting huge snow-banks, and as the fog gradually settles into the valleys below, the tops of the neighboring mountains loom up through the fog, looking like islands in a surging, tempest-tossed ocean.

A deep gulf called *Tuckerman's Ravine*, one mile from the summit, is well worth a visit from those who can spare the time. A snow-arch is formed during the winter that lasts until nearly the first of August each year. It is directly over a brook, which runs through it, gullying out a channel of sufficient size to walk in, while the snow is from *ten to fifteen feet* in depth over head. This arch was measured July 17, by L. O. Macomber, Esq., President of the Mount Washington Carriage Road Company, and J. H. Spaulding, one of the proprietors of the *Summit House*, and found to be of the following size, viz: Length, 266 feet; width, 180 feet; depth of snow estimated to be 10 feet. They sat down while under it and ate a lunch, catching the water as it dripped down from the snow, and drinking it. A nice place to cool off, when over-heated with the exertion required to visit the place. Near this place is a fall of water called the thousand streams, which fall nearly seven hundred feet, almost perpendicularly on to a large flat rock called Table Rock. It is a grand place to take a shower bath, one that would doubtless give the nervous system a double-distilled galvanic shock, and make the blood gallop through the veins at a 2:40 pace.

I have not told the half that is to be seen while visiting this celebrated summer resort. To all who are sighing for a breath of pure cool air, I would say leave for the mountains by the next train. N. N.

FROM NORTH-EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA.

Correspondence of The N. Y. Tribune.

HAWLEY, Wayne Co., Pa., Aug. 11, 1854.

This being a prominent point in North-Eastern Pennsylvania in coal operations, politics, &c., I thought a letter might not be unacceptable to you at this time. This village which has sprung up from the next thing to nothing within five years, into a population of about 2,500, owes its rise and progress almost wholly to the coal business of the Pennsylvania Coal Company, this being the eastern terminus of their road from Pittston, and where the coal is transhipped from the cars to the boats on the Delaware and Hudson Canal; also, the location of their foundery, machine shops, &c., the works here giving employment to some 200 men.

The Company have thus far fallen short some 20,000 tuns this season in their shipments of coal to market, as compared with the same period last year, owing to the scarcity of boatmen, caused partly by the strike last spring, and partly by the high prices of provisions, horse feed, &c. But the recent liberal advance made by the Company on the freight of coal has brought all their boats into use, and the prospect now is that the amount of their shipments of coal will yet equal, if they do not exceed, those of last year. They are now loading 35 or 40 boats a day—between 4,000 and 5,000 tuns.

As the canal below this point is now greatly cr