

THE WEEKLY PORTAGE SENTINEL.

A HART, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR. THE UNION—IT MUST BE PRESERVED. OFFICE IN PHENIX BLOCK, THIRD STORY.

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Poetry.

"AIDS THIS AID?"

Written at the Grave of Washington.

BY OLIVER LAYTON.

The author, accompanied by a trip along the Potomac, a European gentleman of rank and education, who, with the magnificence of Westminster Abbey doubtless before his mind, on beholding the simple, unadorned aspect of Mount Vernon, remarked with surprise, and unfeignedly with admiration, "and in this spot, the great George Washington?"

And (1855) "What wouldst thou have done with this?"

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There was an aged oak standing out in the road—a grim old veteran of the forest that had stood the shocks of three hundred years. Right beyond was the blacksmith's home. With this thought warning his heart, he hurried on thinking of the calm young face and mid-blue eyes of that wife, who the night before had stood in the cottage door waving him out of sight, with a beckoning good-bye—thinking of the babe lying smiling, as it slept upon her bosom. He hurried on—he turned the bend of the road, he looked upon his home. Ah! what a sight was there! Where, the night before, he had left a peaceful cottage smiling under a green chestnut tree, in the light of the setting sun, now only was a heap of black smoking embers, and a burned and blasted tree. This was his home! And there stood the blacksmith, gazing upon the wreck of his hearth-stone, where he stood with folded arms and moody brow; but in a moment a smile broke over his face. He saw it all. In the night his home had taken fire, and been burned to cinders, but his wife and child had escaped—for that he thanked God. With the toil of his stout arm, plying there on the anvil, he would build a fairer home, for his wife and child, fresh flowers should bloom over the walls, and more lively vines trail along the basement. With this resolve trailing over his face, the blacksmith stood there with a cheerful light beaming upon his large gray eyes, when a hand was laid upon his shoulder.

He turned and beheld the face of a neighbor. It was a neighbor's face, but there was an awful agony flashing from those dilating eyes—there was a dark and terrible mystery speaking from those, thin lips that moved and moved, but made no sound. At last, forced the blacksmith along the brown gravelled walk, now strewn with cinders, he pointed to the smoking embers. There, there—amid that heap of black and smoking ruins the blacksmith beheld a dark mass of burned flesh and blackened bones.

"Your wife," shrieked the farmer, as his agony found words. "The British! they came in the night, they—and then she spoke that outrage which the lips refused to think on, which the heart grows pained to tell—that outrage too foul to name—Your wife!" he shrieked, pointing to that hideous mass amid the smoking ruins. "The British, they murdered your wife; they flung her dead body into the flames; they dashed your child against the hearth-stone." This was the farmer's story. And there as the light of the breaking day fell around the spot, there stood the husband, the father, gazing upon the mass of flesh and blackened bones, all that was once his wife! Do you ask me for the words that trembled from his lips! Do you ask me for the fire that blazed in his eye! I can't tell you; but I can tell you there is a vow going up to heaven from that blacksmith's heart! that there was a clenched hand sprang in the light of breaking day. Yes as the first gleam of the autumnal dawn broke around the spot, as the first long stream of sunlight streamed over the pealed skull of that fair young wife, she was that last night, there was a vow going up to heaven, the vow of a maddened heart and anguish brain.

How was that vow kept? Go to Brandywine, and where the carriage gathers thickest, where the fight is most bloody, there you may see a stout man striding on, lifting a huge hammer into light where that hammer falls it kills—where that hammer strikes it crushes. It is the blacksmith's form. And the war cry of vengeance—half howl, half hurrah! It is but a fierce yell breaking up from his heaving chest! Ah, no! Ah, no! It is the name of Mary! Oh Mary, sweetest name of woman—name of the mother of Jesus, made holy by poetry and religion. How strange did the syllables of music ring out from that blacksmith's lips as he went murdering on. "Mary," he shouts, as he drags that red-coated trooper from his steed. "Mary," he shrieks, as his hammer crushes down, laying that officer in the dust. Look! another officer, with a gallant face and form—another glittering in tinsel, claps the blacksmith by the knees and begs for mercy. "I have a wife—mercy, I have a wife in yonder England, spare me!" The blacksmith, crazed as he is, trembles, there is a tear in his eye. "I spare you, but there is a form before me—the form of my dead wife! That form has gone before me all day, she calls on me to strike," the hammer fell, and then rang out that war cry—"Mary!"

At last when the battle was over, he was found by a wagoner, who had at least shouldered a whip in his country's service. He was found sticking by the road-side, his head smitten, his leg broken, and his life's blood welling from his many wounds. The wagoner would have carried him from the field, but the stout blacksmith refused.

"You are a neighbor," he said, in that voice husky with death, "I never meddled with the British till they burned my home—kill them!—he could not speak my home—kill them!—his wife and child was before his eyes." And now I've but five minutes life in me. I'd like to have a shot at the British before I die; I've seen that cherry tree place me here, give me a powder horn, three rifle balls, and a good rifle, that's all I ask!" The wagoner granted his request, he fitted him to the foot of the cherry tree, he placed the rifle, balls and powder in his grasp, then whipping his horse through the narrow path, from the summit of a neighboring height, he looked down upon the last scene of the blacksmith's life. There lay the stout man at the foot of the cherry tree, his head smitten, his leg broken, his eye hanging over his forehead.

Carlyle on Labor.
There is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness in work. Were he ever so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works, in idleness alone there is perpetual despair. Work never so mammoth, mean, is in communication with nature; the real desire to get work does itself lead on more and more to Truth; to nature's appointments, and regulations; which are Truth.

The latest Gospel in this world is, 'Know thy work and do it.' Know thyself long enough has that poor soul of mine to know it, I believe! Think it not the business, that of knowing—thou art an unknown individual, know what thou canst work at like a Hercules that will be thy better plan.

It has been written, 'An endless significance lies in work.' A man perfects himself by working. Fool Juggles are cleared away far and near, and stately cities and withal, the man himself first ceases to be Juggler and fool unwholesome thereby. Consider how, in the meanest sort of labor, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work! Double, Desire, Sorrow, Indignation, Despair itself—all these, like hell-boundies, the beleaguering the soul of the poor day worker, as of every man; but he bends himself, with free will, against his task, and all these are still, all these shriek murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man. The blessed glow of labor is in him—is it not a purifying fire, wherein all poison is burnt up, and of our smoke itself there is made bright blessed flame.

Life in California.
The editor of the Golden Age, an excellent San Francisco paper, very nearly his of Eastern ideas of California civilization. The following, he says, is the daily routine of an editor's life in San Francisco:

"First, gets up in the morning at ten o'clock; dresses himself, puts on his hat in which are six or seven bullet-holes, and goes to a restaurant for breakfast. After breakfast, starts for the office to look over the papers, and discovers that he is called a scoundrel in one of them, a liar in another, and a puppy in another; he smiles at the prospect of having something to do; fills out and dispatches three blank challenges, a ream of which he always keeps on hand, ready printed, to save time; commences writing a leader, when as the clock strikes eleven, a large man with a cow-hide in one hand, and a pistol in the other, and a bowie-knife in his belt, walks in and asks him if his name is —; he answers by knocking the intruder down two pairs of stairs with a chair. At twelve o'clock he finds that his challenges have been accepted, and suddenly remembers that he has a little affair of that nature to settle at the house that day at three o'clock; goes on, kills his man, then comes in and dines on stewed grizzly. Starts for the office, and while going there gets mixed up in a street row, and has the heel of his boot shot off by accident; arrives at his sanctum, and finds an infernal machine upon the table; knows what it is, and merely pitches it out of the window; writes an article on 'moral reform,' then starts for the theatre; is attacked on the corner of a dark alley by three men, kills two of them, and takes the other to the station-house. Returning to the office at eleven o'clock at night, knocks a man down who attempts to rob him, kills a dog with a piece of paving-stone, gets run over by a cab, and has the tail of his coat slit with a thrust from a knife, and two bullet-holes put through his knee as he steps within his own door; smiles at his fortune; writes until two o'clock, and then 'turns in' with the happy consciousness of having two duels to fight the next day."

Historical Sketch.
The Mechanic Hero.
A TALE OF THE REVOLUTION.

NEAR Delworth corner, at the time of the Revolution, there stood a quiet cottage, somewhat retired from the road, under the shade of a stout chestnut tree. It was a quiet cottage, nestling away there in one corner of the forest road, a deer home, with a sloping roof, wall of dark gray stone, and a pavement hidden among vines and flowers. On one side, amid the interval of forest trees, was seen the rough ledge of a blacksmith shop. There was a small garden in front, with a brown gravelled walk and beautiful beds of flowers. Here, at the time of the revolution, there dwelt a stout blacksmith, his young wife and her babe. What cared that blacksmith, working away in that shadowy nook, for war? What feared he for the perils of the times, so long as his strong arm, ringing that hammer on the anvil, might gain bread for his wife and child! Ah, he cared little for the war—he took no note of the peal that shook the little valley, when a few mornings before the battle of Brandywine, while shoveling a horse of a tory rogue, he overheard a plot for the surprise and capture of Washington. The American leader was to be allured into the folds of the forest; his person once in the British camp, the English General might send the "Tyrant" Washington, to help to be tried at London. Now our blacksmith working away in that dim nook of the forest, without caring for battle or war, had still a sneaking kindness for this Miles Washington, whose name rang on the lips of all men. So one night, bidding his wife good bye, and kissing the babe that reposed on her bosom, smiling as he slept, he hurried away to the American camp, and told the news to Washington.

THE NEWS.
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A serious accident occurred on the New York Central Railroad on Wednesday night. The freight and passenger train came in collision, smashing the engine and instantly killing an engineer and fireman. William Giffing, of Buffalo, an express messenger, was fatally injured, and one or two others very severely.

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DESTRUCTION OF THE MERRICK HOUSE.
NEW BRIGHTON, Pa.—The large and magnificent Hotel, at New Brighton, known as the Merrick House, was totally destroyed by fire yesterday. The building was one of the largest in the State outside Pittsburgh or Philadelphia. It was erected a few years ago, by a joint stock company, at a cost of about \$40,000, but subsequently passed into the possession of Messrs. Merrick & Son, who were proprietors at the time of its destruction. The fire was discovered issuing from the roof at about 11 o'clock in the morning but on attempting to reach the place where it was burning, the communications were found to be entirely cut off, and the flames quickly spread over the whole upper portion of the house. A small engine, belonging to the town, was brought on the ground, but was of very little service, and in two hours from the discovery of the fire, the entire building was in ruins. Stern exertions were made to save the furniture, and a small portion, including the personal effects of nearly all the boarders was rescued from the flames. There were several Pittsburghers boarding at the house, but we are glad to say, no loss was sustained by any of them. The fire originated from a spark from the chimney.

The furniture of the establishment was valued at about \$10,000. On the building and furniture there was \$25,000 insurance, distributed amongst the following offices: State Mutual, of Harrisburg, \$5,000; Girard, of Philadelphia, \$5,000; Valley of Virginia, Winchester, Va., \$5,000; Pennsylvania, of Pittsburgh, \$5,000; and Delaware Mutual Safety, \$5,000.

The destruction of this fine Hotel will be severely felt, as it furnished accommodations to a large number of families from the city and elsewhere, who retired to New Brighton for recreation during the summer months. The building is such a total wreck, that it is more than improbable whether it will ever be rebuilt.

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