The Intelligencer.

A RED FLANNEL ROMANCE.

An Extraordinary Yarn of Vegetable Flannel, Mysterious Deaths, and a Pennsylvania Law Suit.

The New York *World* has the following strange story, told by a Harrisburg correspondent with great circumstantiality, but which reads more like a sensational romance than the narrative contained in a legal affidavit:

Those who read the papers must have noticed during 1869, 1870 and 1871, many paragraphs from different parts of the country obscurely chronicling cases of persons more or less severely poisoned (in more than one instance fatally) from wearing flannel, usually red flannel. Since intelligent inquiry has been directed to the subject, it is claimed to have been discovered that the diseases so produced were all of them essentially of one type, and never ensued except to persons who had been wearing flannel from the manufactory of Messrs. Rhees & Howell, on Howlet Creek, Pennsylvania. The suit in question is brought by some of the stockholders of the Rhees & Howel flannel works against the estate of young Mr. Rhees for damages done the value of their interests by new processes of manufacture introduced by him, which processes are said to have led to the disastrous effects stated, and in consequence of which their fabrics are rejected from the market and their dividends reduced to nothing.

The facts which the plaintifs in this suit will bring out are substantially as follows: The establishment of Rhees & Howel was one of the most respectable and wealthy manufactories in the country. Its products were always according to sample, and its dividends during at least a generation had been regular and handsome. Both Rhees & Howel were Welshmen by birth and excellent gentlemen, who had by their faithful industry accumulated large fortunes. Although of late years the factory had been a joint stock concern, it had always been managed in chief by the gentlemen of the firm, and when, in 1868, old Mr. Rhees died, Howel at once telegraphed for his son to come and fill his place. Young Mr. Rhees was at that time in Europe, and when he did come back—in 1869 early—Howel had also died, and the entire management of the concern devolved upon him and upon Mr. David Morgans, the intelligent foreman, who had been connected with the business for more than twenty-five years.

Mr. Griffith Rhees was about 30 years old when he returned, and it might have been thought that there could not be found a person better calculated to take charge of such a large establishment. He had been five years in Europe, most of the time at the University of Berlin, where he had been sedulously pursuing an extensive course of technical science and applied chemistry, under the most eminent instructors, with the express object of thoroughly fitting himself for his prospective duties of manufacturer. His chemical studies had ranged over well nigh the whole field of that fascinating science; he had not only sounded the depths of applied chemistry, but had ventured so boldly, and yet with such prescience and judgment into the more recondite and perilous ways of the theoretical branches, that Liebig, with whom he was a favorite, had told him that the career of Lavoisier himself was open to him, did he choose to embrace it. A paper of Mr. Rhees' contributed to a scientific journal published in Halle, shows that he had gone curiously back into the empirical but gorgeous dreams of the seventeenth century chemists, and hoped to wrest an intelligent tertium quid of authentic discovery even from the confused volumes of Helmont and Paracelsus, and the fantastical but exquisitely beautiful conceptions of Schott, Kircher, Borelli, Digby and Gaffarelli. He contended that chemistry was emphatically the Spagiric art, as these writers had named it, and the modern experimenters, while successfully pushing the analytical part of the science to its limits, had persistently neglected the complimentary branch of synthesis. He spoke admiringly of Stanl's "Zymotechnia Fundamentalis" as offering many hints that modern chemistry would have done well to follow, and expressed his confident belief that, by applying the severe and accurate methods of to-day to synthetical studies, a system of organic and inorganic zymotechnics might be orderly developed, from which would evidently rise, "like an exhalation," a "fabric hue," harmonious in its frame and fertile in its results, that would surpass in wonder even the most stupendous visions of chemical *palingenesis*. Mr. Rhees, however, was not a dreamer, but a man of extremely practical views. He never let conjecture override fact in his mind, and when he returned to the superintendency of the Howlet Creek factory, his first steps in the administration of affairs showed him to be a business man of no ordinary qualities. He called the stockholders together and showed them by irresistible figures that the Rhees & Howel mills were losing money. The stockholders proposed to suspend operations. This, however, Mr. Rhees opposed, convincing them that by this course they would lose their skilled labor and their old and well-established custom. "Besides, gentlemen," said he, "I mean to show you that American brains, American machinery, and American capital can do more than the same things in any other part of the world." It was finally agreed—Mr. Rhees owning two-thirds of the stock—that he should for the present run the factory in his own way, simply guaranteeing the stockholders seven per cent. on their shares. This meeting over, Mr. Rhees summoned the operatives together and arranged with them to continue the factory, working three-quarter time—an arrangement they were well satisfied with, knowing as they did that the running at all was more for their own benefit than the profit of the concern.

So much for the introductory history of this affair. The remainder of the narrative will be derived chiefly from the very circumstantial affidavit of Mr. David Morgans, the manager of the mills, which has been filed with the other papers accompanying the narrative in the suit above mentioned. Mr. Morgans says that Mr. Rhees took charge of the factory in person, remodeled the buildings, machinery, &c., and introduced so many modern appliances and so much strict system that the proportion of expenses was very materially reduced. Still the concern was not profitable, and Mr. Rhees was not satisfied.

One day, returning from a walk, Mr. Rhees called Morgans into his study and unrolled before him a strip of something that was like cloth, nigh the third of an inch thick, gray on one side, greenish on the other, with the texture and something of the touch of felt. "What's that?" said Mr. Rhees. Morgans shook his head. "It might be thick-milled flannel, but it isn't. I never handled any cloth like that." "It's a vegetable," said Mr. Rhees. "It's a confervoid plant, known as 'water-flannel,' and grows on our mill-dams." Morgans stared. "Cott!" said he; "if we could only get a good crop of that sort of thing on the ponds, we could let the tariff and taxes go to the devil!" Mr. Rhees did not reply, but placing a bit of the cloth under a microscope, showed Morgans that it was really a vegetable fungus, made up of myriads of jointed threads, woven together symmetrically and firmly, so as to have the texture and simulate the actual fabric of a cloth made by machinery.

This was still in the early part of 1869, Morgans' statement tells us; and it was only a few days later that Mr. Rhees summoned him again, and submitted to his inspection a piece of red flannel, which Morgan avers was in every respect not less than 25 per cent above the standard qualities produced at the mill. "That's English," said Morgans; "I know the feel of it!" "That's Howlet Creek and Rhees & Howel's mill-pond!" retorted Mr. Rhees. "That is made out of the piece of vegetable fibre I showed you the other day," added he. "Impossible!" said Morgans. "I knew that I could make cloth out of it," added Mr. Rhees, "and I have done it." Morgans' statement, which must needs be greatly compressed, goes to recount very circumstantially the processes resorted to by Mr. Rhees to convert the vegetable fabric into a durable cloth, to keep up the strength and continuity of its fibre, and prevent the fungus from undergoing decomposition. "Now, Morgans," added Mr. Rhees, "you must keep this matter a secret, for I am going to perform miracles, and we shall have the hands burning us up if it gets out. I mean to dispense with factory, machinery, and all; I mean to make our mill ponds manufacture this thing for us as fast as we want it, and so cheap that we can sell it, pound for pound, and drive even unwashed woolen out of the market!" Morgans looked at his employer as if he expected to find him turned lunatic. He saw instead a handsome, intelligent face, glowing with fine enthusiasm. "See here," said Mr. Rhees, using his microscope again; "do you see this? This cloth is simply vegetable fible and starch. Starch is the most readily organizable of all materials and if chemical synthesis cannot establish the conditions precedent to the unlimited production of these globules of fecule and their enwrapping fibre, it ought to surrender its claims to usefulness. I say this: I always know how to make cheap cloth, and good cloth, out of this fungus, and I will find means to induce mill-ponds of ours to produce the fungus, just when, how, and as much as we want." "What will become of the poor hands, then, Mr. Rhees?" Said Mr. Morgans. "Nonsense!" rejoined his employer, impatiently: "before you can say that any improved process deprives man of labor, you must show that something can come out of nothing. You cannot do that, and you cannot establish the other fallacy any better. This will still be a manufacture only by a simpler and cheaper process, and it will, when once established, give employment for three hands where we now have but one. The care of the ponds, the handling and marketing of the cloth, the intricate initial chemical process—all these will take more skilled labor than we can readily find, be sure of that.

Morgans' affidavit goes on to narrate that Mr. Rhees was now occupied for more than two years in perfecting and reducing to practice his various and complicated processes. After he found out how to consummate and regulate the production of the fungus, there was machinery to invent and to be made that would enable them to gather it cheaply, and there were besides a great number of subsidiary experiments to be conducted, so that the inventor's time was fully occupied. Meanwhile the mill had been steadily working on, during its three-quarter time with satisfaction to all concerned. Meanwhile, also, there had been put upon the market from the Rhees and Howel mill, slowly, in small lots, and with a certain avoidance of everything like asking attention to it, a new grade of flannel, mostly red in color, thick milled, rather harsh to the touch, and with very short nap, but otherwise not peculiar, except that it seemed a very fine goods. This flannel had a peculiar trade mark of its own, and was called "the Rhees fibre." It was sold only "for trial," and at prices averaging twenty-five per cent below the market standard for similar qualities, but always in small lots, and to different purchasers. This goods, thus distinctly separated from the common product of the mills, the parties who bring the suit claims will be specifically identified as the article whose introduction caused them the damages they allege, and indeed brought on the catastrophe of the Rhees and Howel mills.

We hasten, omitting numerous interesting details, to the account of that catastrophe as it is related by Mr. Morgans in his elaborate narrative. Morgans says that it was only in October, 1871, that Mr. Rhees had finally completed all his preparations. Even then he was only able to make the final experiment upon a small surface at the upper end of the mill dam, on account of the deficiency of help. It would not yet do to take the hands into the secret. Rhees, in fact, wanted to get possession of all the stock first, and then, turning his factory into a co-operative union, take all hands into business partnership with him at the same time that he shared with them the new secret. The operatives had already suspicious of something, and were only kept from murmurs and dissatisfaction by hints which Rhees threw out of his intention towards them. In one night, therefore, Rhees and Morgans, using a model of the landing machinery, brought to the shore enough of the fabric to make about 2,000 yards of flannel. This was loaded into country wagons hired for the purpose, delivered at the mill and stored in an unused room all under cover of the darkness. By the 20th of December Rhees and Morgans, working at odd times, had submitted this to the chemical and dressing processes necessary, had prepared it for market, and on that date, says Morgans, for the first time a large consignment of the "Rhees fabric" was made to their New York agents, along with other goods shipped them as usual.

Now for another phase of the matter, Rhees following up his plan, had been actively engaged in negotiating with the several holders for the purchase of their shares of stock in his mill. On the 17th day of January, 1872, (Moagans is particularly circumstantial as regards his dates) at 10 in the morning, Rhees came into the mill office, looking considerably disturbed. Morgans asked him what was the matter. He replied that his child, an infant less than a year old, was very much complaining. It had seemed to be threatened with croup; he had put a strip of flannel about its throat; but in the night it had had a sudden attack of fever, with a decided crimson eruption, and he had sent for the doctor, fearing it was scarletina. "But that is not the chief bother," said Rhees; "see this," and he opened a medical journal published in Louisville, and pointed Morgans to an article in it of a new disease just diagnosed there. It was styled in the article "Mycelloidal Dermesitis," was said to be a peculiar eruption attended with great irritation of the skin, running an uncertain course, complicated with cerebral symptoms more or less marked, and terminating variously. Cases were mentioned in which the eruption lasted for weeks, and then disappeared suddenly as it came. Others in which the attack was as violent and the result as immediately fatal as a malignant erysipelas. The disease was said to be caused by wearing red flannel.

"I don't believe it, Morgans," said Mr. Rhees, "but even if it is not so, and such a thing gits abroad, it will ruin our business. If people suspect there is such a thing as poisonous red flannel in the market they will decline to buy any flannel."

Morgans said not a word, but going to a drawer in his desk, produced a scrap book, opened it, and pointed his employer to a long column of newspaper clippings, enumerating cases of sickness and death from wearing red flannel.

"You see there's none of 'em older than '69," said Morgans.

"Good God, Morgans," said Rhees, "what do you mean?"

"Didn't we sell a piece of that flannel to Jones & Reinhardt of Louisville? I tell you that's our flannel—the Rhees fabric—that's poisoning all these folks."

"It's not—it cannot be," cried Mr. Rhees in great agitation. "Every part of the process, all the articles used in it are perfectly innocuous."

"Then its the fungus that does it," persisted Morgans. "I've watched these things some time and I know it's our flannel."

Morgans says Mr. Rhees stood like a man thunderstruck. He faltered, staggered, and could not speak. At this instant a servant came running to him from his house, and told him the doctor had come and wanted to see him at once—the baby was very ill. "Morgans," said Mr. Rhees, as he went out the door making a painful effort to control his agitation, "telegraph at once to our factors to stop selling these goods, peremptorily, and no matter at what cost." Morgans did as he was bidden, and in the course of half an hour Mr. Rhees returned to the office, looking, so the foreman said, like a man condemned to death. "Morgans," he asked, "where did that piece of flannel come from I sent for yesterday?" It was the Rhees fabric. "I thought you wanted it for some experiments. Good God! Mr. Rhees, you didn't put that around your child's neck, did you?" "What else?" said the unhappy man, forcing himself to be calm; "and the child is dying; and the doctor pronounces the disease to be—O God! I am punished! I am punished!" and to Morgans' great distress Mr. Rhees broke into a great weeping. At this moment a telegraph boy arrived with a dispatch, which Mr. Rhees read and then handed to Morgans, controlling himself and becoming suddenly calm once more by an effort, which the faithful foreman said was more frightful to witness than his sobs and tears. The message said that the orders arresting the sale of the consignment of the Rhees fabric had come too late. The goods had been sold on very satisfactory terms to another house, which had shipped them to South America, where, so it was reported, they were to be made into uniforms for General Harrera's army. "You see, Morgans," said Mr. Rhees, "the fire I kindled has gone beyond my own house." As he spoke, the doctor came to the door and laid his hand on Mr. Rhees' shoulder. "Your child is dead," said he; "go comfort your wife." "I am going—to make reparation to her, and to all," answered Mr. Rhees, walking out of the office.

After much search, his body was found, two days later, in the deepest part of the mill dam.

The stockholders suspended operations at the mill at once, attached the property of deceased, and brought suit as above mentioned.

The cause will come to trial as soon as the messengers who have been dispatched for witnesses from General Herrera's army shall have returned.

There will be no more of the Rhees fabric manufactured.

A LITTLE girl asked her sister what was chaos, that her papa read about? The other replied that it was a pile of nothing, and no place to put it in.

COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL.

MARKETS BY TELEGRAPH.

New York Bond Market.

NEW YORK, April 1.—STERLING EXCHANGE—109¼.

United States 6s of 1881, coupons	115¾
Five-twenties (1862)	112¾
Five-twenties (1864)	112¾
Five-twenties (1865)	112¾
Five-twenties (1865) new	111¾
Five-twenties (1867)	113
Five-twenties (1868)	113
Ten-forties	108¾
Currency Sixes	115¾

Chicago Market.

CHICAGO, April 1.—FLOUR—Extra superfine spring quiet at $6 50a7 00.

GRAIN—Wheat—No. 2 dull at $1 20⅝a 1 20¼. Corn—No. 2 mixed strong at 38a38¼c. Oats—No. 2 steady and firm at 30⅝a30¾c. Rye—No. 2 easier at 68a70c. Barley—No. 2 spring more active at 50c.

PROVISIONS—Quiet. Mess Pork $11 30. Lard $8 15a8 17½. Bulk Meats—shoulders 3⅝a3¾c; bulk sides clear rib 5⅝a5¾c.

HIGHWINES—Inactive and nearly nominal at 83a83½c.

Cincinnati Market.

CINCINNATI, April 1.—FLOUR—Quiet and unchanged.

GRAIN—Wheat—Red, $1 68a1 70. Corn—Demand fair and prices advanced; 47c. Rye—Market steady at 90c. Oats—Steady at 38a42c. Barley—Quiet and unchanged at 60a75c.

GROCERIES and OILS—Unchanged.

PROVISIONS—Pork—An advance is asked, but none established; asking, $12 00; offering, $11 75. Lard—Dull, and prices are nominal. Bulk Meats—Dull, and prices drooping; shoulders, 3¾c; sides, 5⅝a6¼c. Bacon—Dull; shoulders, 6¼a7c, with but little doing.

WHISKY—Dull and prices have declined to 83c.

Baltimore Market.

BALTIMORE, April 1.—FLOUR—Dull but unchanged.

GRAIN—Wheat—Firmer; Pennsylvania, $1 83a1 85. Corn—Steady. Oats—Western, 51a53c. Rye—Quiet at 90ca$1 05.

PROVISIONS—Mess Pork—$13 00a13 25. Bulk Meats—Shoulders, 4¼a5c; sides, clear rib, 6¼a6½c. Bacon—Shoulders, 5¾c. Lard—Dull; steam, 8¾c; kettle, 9a9¼c.

BUTTER—Western is active, but unchanged.

WHISKY—89c.

Milwaukee Market.

MILWUKEE, April 1.—FLOUR—Quiet and unchanged.

GRAIN—Wheat—Dull, and the market unsettled; No. 1, $1 30; No. 2, $1 20½; Oats—Market steady; No. 2, 32c. Corn—Demand fair; No. 2, mixed, 38½c. Rye—Dull and prices have declined; No. 1, 68½c. Barley—Dull, and prices drooping; No. 2, fall, 57c.

New Orleans Market.

NEW ORLEANS, April 1.—SUGAR—Dull; inferior, 5a6¼c; fair, 8¼c; fully fair to prime, 9¾c.

MOLASSES—Dull; plantation, reboiled, 40a48c.

COFFEE—Quiet and steady; fair to prime 19½a20¾c.

WHISKY—85a95c.

Louisville Market.

LOUISVILLE, April 1.—TOBACCO—Firm at unchanged prices.

SUGAR—WILL ARRIVE TO-DAY, per steamer Alaska, direct from Evergreen Plantation, La.,

130 *HHDS. CHOICE SUGAR,*

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100 Kits Mackerel.
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Steubenville	7:00 a. m.	3:15 p. m.
Wellsville	8:15 a. m.	4:40 p. m.
Alliance	11:35 a. m.	6:20 p. m.
ARRIVE.		
Cleveland	2:10 p. m.	8:45 p. m.
Crestline	5:00 p. m.	10:10 p. m.
Ft. Wayne	12:20 a. m.	3:50 a. m.
Chicago	6:50 a. m.	8:20 a. m.
Pittsburgh	10:40 a. m.	6:40 p. m.
Harrisburg	10:35 p. m.	3:55 a. m.
Baltimore	3:00 p. m.	7:20 a. m.
Washington	5:05 p. m.	10:00 a. m.
Philadelphia	3:40 p. m.	8:05 a. m.
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EAST—LEAVES	WEST—LEAVES
Wheeling daily at 6:50 a. m.	Wheeling daily at 11:20 a. m.
ARRIVES AT	ARRIVES AT
Cumberland 2:58 p. m.	Zanesville 3:20 p. m.
Baltimore 9:50 p. m.	Newark 4:30 p. m.
Washington, D. C. 11:10 p. m.	Sandusky 9:50 p. m.
Philadelphia 2:00 a. m.	Columbus 5:40 p. m.
New York 6:15 a. m.	Cincinnati 10:00 p. m.
	Chicago 7:20 a. m.

FAST LINE.

EAST—LEAVES	WEST—LEAVES
*Wheeling daily at 4:50 p. m.	*Wheeling daily at 7:00 a. m.
ARRIVES AT	ARRIVES AT
Parkersburg 4:25 a. m.	Zanesville 11:20 a. m.
Cumberland 8:00 a. m.	Newark 12:45 p. m.
Baltimore 8:20 a. m.	Columbus 2:30 p. m.
Wash'n City 10:00 a. m.	Sandusky 6:00 p. m.
Philadelphia 1:20 p. m.	Chicago 6:30 a. m.
New York 4:40 p. m.	*Sundays excepted.

*Sundays excepted.

MAIL TRAIN.

EAST—LEAVES	WEST—LEAVES
*Wheeling daily at 10:45 p. m.	*Wheeling daily at 1:20 a. m.
ARRIVES AT	ARRIVES AT
Cumberland 8:00 a. m.	Zanesville 6:15 a. m.
Parkersburg 2:25 a. m.	Newark 7:40 a. m.
Baltimore 5:05 p. m.	Columbus 9:10 a. m.
Philadelphia 11:30 p. m.	Cincinnati
*Saturdays excepted.	Chicago
	*Sundays excepted.

CUMBERLAND ACCOMMODATION.

EAST—LEAVES	WEST—LEAVES
*Wheeling daily at 10:30 a. m.	*Wheeling daily at 4:10 p. m.
ARRIVES AT	ARRIVES AT
Parkersburg 10:00 p. m.	Zanesville 9:10 p. m.
Cumberland 10:15 p. m.	Newark 10:30 p. m.
*Sundays excepted.	Columbus 12:00 p. m.
	Cincinnati
	*Sundays excepted.

WHEELING, PITTS'G & BALT. DIVISION. Leaves Wheeling at 7:10 a. m. and 3:25 p. m. East bound Trains make connections at Baltimore with trains for Philadelphia, New York and Boston. At Relay House, via Washington City, for all points South.

West bound trains make direct connection at Columbus for all points West and Northwest.

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WOODEN AND IRON HYDRANTS, STREET WASHERS AND RUBBER HOSE.

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100 " Colegate's Sterling do.
100 " Chemical Laundry do.
25 " Oriental Detersive do.
50 " German Olive do.
50 " Chemical Olive do.
In store and for sale by
mar2 LIST, DAVENPORT & PARKS.

MONITOR NAVY TOBACCO—5 cases, half-pounds, just received and for sale by
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Hardware, &c.

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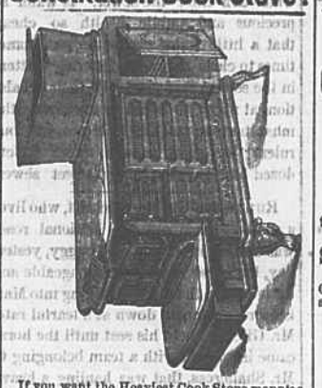

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NE PLUS ULTRA WHITE LIME,
COMMON LIME—in bbls.,
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