

Miscellaneous.

Charity Among Miners.

BARBORDALE, PENN., March 20.—An item of considerable importance in the patronage enjoyed by local newspapers in the anthracite coal regions is the printing of traffic tickets. There is such a call for these tickets that they are kept standing in type, the only change that is necessary being in the name of the house where the raffle is to be held and the date of its occurrence, which is made as near the next pay day of the company by which the managers of the raffle are employed as is possible, for frequently 'the night after pay day.' These raffles are the miners' method of bestowing charity and providing relief in case of misfortune in the region. They are either got up for the benefit of some miner who has been injured or is ill, or for the benefit of some poor woman and her children who have been left without support by the killing of the husband and father in the mines. There are on the average 300 widows and five times as many orphans left by mine disasters in the anthracite regions every year. The miners have no organized system of charity, but widows and orphans are never permitted to suffer from hunger and cold so long as there is work for the miners to do, no matter how small the pittance may be that they have been able to earn. No dead-miner's family is ever turned out of the home for arrears of rent, for the old comrades of the one who has fallen victim to dangers which constantly surround and threaten them never forget when the day of rent comes round, and the landlord's money is always ready at the hour it is due. As they leave their work in the mines for the day each man takes a lump of coal with him and drops it at the widow's door or at the house of the fellow-miner too ill to work, as the position may be. Differences in religion, politics, or labor questions, which keep forever alive among mine laborers feelings of antipathy and bitterness, are all dropped when the necessities of a fellow-miner or his family appeal to them. The raffle is one of the channels through which charity is extended to suffering families. In nine-tenths of the raffles given in the coal regions the prizes are cooking stoves, although a spice of variety is given to the entertainment by making the prize a goose, a dozen heads of cabbage, or a goat-prize which may always be found at a miner's cabin. The air of substantial respectability and value attaching to a cooking stove makes it the favorite prize at a raffle. Not less than 100 tickets are ever ordered for a coal region raffle, whether it be for a goose or a stove, and the committee having in charge—their names being printed on the ticket—go to work with a will to sell them at half a dollar each. The cardboard tokens are readily and cheerfully purchased by the miners. The raffle is held at some convenient place in the mining village, and the purchasers of tickets assemble on the appointed night with wives and sweethearts, old, young and middle-aged. A keg of beer and perhaps stronger liquor are important adjuncts of the evening's sport, and a fiddler, piper, or accordion player is on hand to provide music for the occasion—for it is to be a festive one as soon as the serious business of the meeting is transacted. The chief committees have a list of the ticket holders, and a piece of paper for each one is placed in a hat. One of the slips has the name of the prize written on it. Then these slips, as the names are called, are drawn by one of the party—a blind person if there is one present. When the slip is drawn on which the name of the prize is written the raffle is won by the person whose name was called when it was drawn. During the drawing the party crowd around the hat and wait the result with suppressed excitement. When the prize is drawn a shout goes up like cheers at a political meeting, and the winner is warmly congratulated by his companions. This ceremony over, he presents the stove, or whatever the prize may be to the beneficiary of the evening, who is also handed the \$50 which has been paid for the chances. The article raffled for, by the way, is generally the original property of the beneficiary, with which the charitable fiction that it is to go to some one else if he wins it is maintained. After the raffle the party refreshes itself, the music strikes up, and merriment rules the hour. The festivities are kept up until shortly after midnight. Sometimes the dancing precedes the raffle, in which the drawing takes place at exactly midnight and the presentation ceremonies conclude the night's entertainment. Two or three raffles in the course of a year for a widow or helpless miner's family, with the other never-failing contributions of food and clothing go a long way toward making their lives comfortable and happy. To the public outside of the immediate mining towns one of the oddest among the people whose lives depend on the mines has always appeared strange, and has frequently resulted in the chilling of old sympathies for them in cases of great distress. This was first noticed and manifested after the terrible Avondale mine disaster near Pittston in 1869, when the hearts of the Nation almost went out for the hundred and more widows that were left destitute through that disaster. The intensity of their grief, the touching incidents of which were made household words by the newspapers at the time, aroused a feeling of sympathy for them that has never had its parallel in this country on any similar occasion. The grief of these widows seemed so hopeless that it did not seem that it could be assuaged by time and so when, a few weeks after the disaster, and while its horrors were still fresh in the public mind, the news began to be printed that the Avondale widows were, one by one, finding husbands for themselves again, and fathers for their children so recently bereaved, there came a vein of feeling throughout the country, and many schemes which were on foot having in view the relief of the widows and orphans were abruptly dropped. It was not known then, and probably is not now, that it is considered a sacred rule of duty among miners that of necessity, where it is agreeable to both parties, unassailably to take the place of a widowed companion as the marrying of his widow and children by marrying her, and as her necessities are pressing, a matter of delay is not taken into consideration as being important in influencing the final result. Thus, in the case of Avondale, this subject came up at once, and at a meeting of the miners it was resolved that as the necessities of the case were urgent, the unmarried men should offer to fill the places of the dead miners. The widows accepted the offers in the spirit in which they were made and most of them were soon married to industrious, sober men, who removed the fear of want and misery from their eyes. This is an old custom among the miners, and while it appears to be an affront to the sacredness of grief and a lack of respect for the memory of the dead it is prompted by a sentiment so honorable and unselfish that in the minds of those most interested its lack of the finer qualities of heart and delicacy of feeling is ample atoned for. All efforts to sustain an organized combination for purposes of charity among the miners have failed. Miners are a simple, and, as a class, superstitious and suspicious people. They are easily led and influenced by designing persons, and it was this that caused the disruption of the last and only effort to establish a charitable association among them. This was organized by Charles Parrish, of Wilkesbarre, who controlled some of the leading collieries of the middle field. His small monthly contributions from the miners, aided by liberal donations by the colliery operators, a fund of nearly \$100,000 was soon accumulated to be used in aiding cases of want and destitution. Then foolish persons began to whisper that it was wrong for the miners to let their employers handle so much of their money, as it could be used against them. These silly whippersnappers soon produced alarm among the Parrish employees, and they finally appointed a committee to wait on the custodians of the fund and demand that it be returned to those who had paid it in. This was done, and no mining community now has a general fund on which to depend in time of need.

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A FINE LOT OF
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DYE WORKS, GILBERT'S LANE, SAINT JOHN, N. B.

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Scientific American.
Established 1846.

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Windsor & Annapolis Railway
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Table with 2 columns: GOING EAST and GOING WEST. Lists stations and times.

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IRON & STEEL, assorted sizes.

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TWO Notes of Hand, via—One note for one hundred dollars and one note for one hundred and twenty-five dollars.

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MUTUAL RELIEF SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA.

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Spring Fashions from Godey's Lady's Book. Rows of fine gilt braid trim many of the new spring tailor made gowns.

China silks are offered to take the place of foulards and checked silks for summer dresses.

Handkerchiefs are no longer displaying peeping from the pocket, the belt, or the bosom.

The newest ball dresses the sleeves are either mere straps, with or without drooping lace, or three graduated strings of pearls falling on the arm.

Bangled bracelets are no longer fashionable. Narrow bracelets of gold, with the monogram of the owner in diamonds, rubies, or sapphires, are new.

The newest lace-pinares are in the shape of a moss rose, and are made of red gold set with a diamond surrounded with sapphires.

Spring mantles are made very simply; the trimmings are lace, velvet, braiding, embroidery, galloons of all widths and passementeries.

Collars and cuffs are made with square ends. Some of the newest are delicately embroidered in pale blue and pink.

Never be guilty of giving a child paregoric or soothing syrup for the purpose of putting it to sleep.

Before scouring silver it should be well washed in hot water, to which one teaspoonful of ammonia has been added to each quart of water.

To clean the iron glass used in stove doors, rub with a cloth wet with vinegar, clean, and then with a dry one, it will look as good as new and be as good.

Eggs to be poached should be put on in cold water and left in until the water comes almost but not quite to a boil, and then taken out and eaten.

A mistake which some, if not all, growers of house plants make at the outset, is that of trying to root cuttings in the shade, fearing that if they are put in the sunlight they will wilt.

Physician.—What shall I do for her? [The girl at the 'central' switches off to a machinist talking to a saw-mill man.]

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