

SETH BAKER.

Come, stow it, I say, for it's waste of breath:
I know as you mean it well;
But the eye sees clear when it's filmed with death,
And the thing as I sees is Hell!
I know of the Blood for sinners shed,
And the pardon full and free,
And the Grace that washes snow-white the red,
But there ain't no Grace for me!

Stop! let me speak, for the time is short:
You wasn't fetched here to spout:
I'm none of your Hallelujah sort:
White chokers and me falls out:
But you ain't, not you, of the smug-faced crew,
All Glory and white of eye:
I trust you, parson; by snakes, I do!
So listen before I die.

I'm bound, I am, for the brimstone lake,
With its horrible reek and stench:
For the worms as writhe and the flames as quake,
And the thirst you can noways squench.
I don't make out as I likes the trip,
But I tell you all the same,
I means to start with a good stiff lip,
And a step as shows I'm game.

I'm game to the bottom—curse the cough!
It saws me through and through—
And if ever my pals takes on to scold,
And say as I sent for you—
I fetched you away to jabber and pray,
And show me the road to die—
"Ho was game to the bottom," just you say,
And choke the fools with their lie.

I'm quiet—all right—I am, I swear:
No, I won't let out no more.
Just give me a pull of the brandy there—
Is there nobody nigh the door?
Are you sure as there's never a listening sneak?
Then give me your hand to ketch:
Bend down while I speak, for I'm horful weak,
And the words is hard to fetch.

Here's a newspaper under my head, you see,
What tells, with a heap of lies,
Seth Baker was tried in 'sixty-three
At the Worcester County 'Siz.
Don't spout it aloud, for it's waste of breath:
I can give you the pith, I can:
The sentence of death was passed on Seth
For knifing a poliss-man!

You remember it? No? Why, the world went mad!
'Twas a nine-days'-wonder case;
They talked of the bid, and the ways he had,
His pluck and his handsome face.
It wasn't right, proved how the blood was spilt,
And they'd easy have pulled him through;
But the stoopid young fool confessed his guilt—
So what could the lawyer do?

Petitions were signed—for the chap was young—
Imploping the Queen for grace;
But the end of it all was, Seth was hung,
In spite of his youth and face.
And I stood there, in the struggling square,
And stared in the prisoner's eye;
I saw them cover his face, so fair,
And fasten the hempen tie!

Yes, I stood there, in the death-still square,
And met Seth Baker's eye:
I heard him mutter a tag of pray'r;
I saw—I saw him die!
He took the drop with a rare good pluck,
With never a shake nor whine;
And the knife in the peeler's heart that stuck,
It wasn't not Seth's, but mine!

It happened along of a wench, you see—
Youth Seth was a-courtin' Kate;
But—so rum is she—she took to me,
And jilted my handsome mate.
So we got spliced,—but I used her bad:
It was nothin' but drink and row;
But she's getting paid back for the time she had,
A-singing in Glory now!

Well, Seth was a chap as was always soft—
He reggerler drove me wild:
For he'd foller and say to me, oft and oft,
"Be kind to your wife and child!"
But he gave it up, and he let me go—
No preachin' would keep me straight:
And he got to know as it meant a blow
And a worse time for Kate!

I was always in drink: I was deep in debt:
I was sacker from my job of work;
And then I got in with a pouchin' set,
As nothin' at all would shirk.
We'd many a spree, my pals and me,
And many a right good bag;
And we pecked the game to town, you see,
And fuddled away the swag.

We was out one night—I was settin' a snare:
Afore you could reckon thro',
A peeler was out of some cursed lair,
And grapplin' along of me.
He called for the rest—I was devilish pressed,
I didn't know what to do;
I draws my knife, and the peeler's breast
I drives it through and through.

He staggered and fell with a horful yell;
I hadn't no sense nor breath;
And the ruck tears on, like the fiends of hell
In a game of life and death.
I staggered and tript: I was well-nigh gript:
When, out of the fir-trees dim,
A bloke crep' soft, and behind me slippt,
And the peelers makes for him.

I couldn't tell how—and I can't tell now—
Seth came in the nick of time:
Unless he was there on the scent of a row,
To resker his pal from crime.
He touches my arm, and he says, says he,
As he points to the belt of fir,
"Crawl in on your knees—no matter for me:
It's all for the sake of Her!"

I've told it you, parson, straight and fair,
With devil a slur or lie:
And I stood there, in the death-still square,
And saw Seth Baker die!
I know of the Blood for sinners shed,
And the pardon full and free;
But the Grace that washes snow-white the red,
It isn't no go for me!

A lifer in Hell is the sentence spoke
On a soul so mean and grim.
Yet tell us the tale of that dying bloke,
And Christ as went bail for him.
Just mutter a prayer, I know it well,
This here is the grip of Hell.
It ain't as I want to beg of death,
I'm sorry I done it, Seth!

FREDERICK LANSBRIDGE.

PENNSYLVANIA TALK.

KITTANNING, PA.—"First time I took notice to you, I allowed I had saw you some place before; so I thought next time I seen you I'd ask you where?"

The speaker occupied a seat beside me at the table of a large hotel in Western Pennsylvania. He was a well-dressed man, apparently intelligent. His language enabled me at once to identify him, for there was no disguising the fact that he was a native. Then I informed him of the locality where he had "saw" me.

"Oh! yes, you are the very man I seen Tuesday moving your flitting to Millerstown with a team, and you called at my house to eat a piece. Have you got things red up at your house already?"

The reader is doubtless searching for his dictionary by this time. To spare him trouble I will explain that "flitting," in the language of this region, is a general term for household furniture; that "eating a piece," signifies partaking of a light meal; and that the "redding up" process is that about which housekeepers busy themselves from one year's end to another. The chambermaid "reds up" your room; the farmer reds up his field when he rids it of stumps; and the merchant reds up his accounts at intervals. Redding up is a great business, but it is confined to Pennsylvania.

The northwestern counties of this old Commonwealth were settled by immigrants from Westmoreland County in 1796. The first comers were mainly of Scottish and Irish origin. Later came the "Pennsylvania Dutch" from the eastern part of the State, and next a large number of Germans. A few people from New Jersey and other Eastern States were also among the first settlers. These various types are no longer distinct, but are so mixed and mingled that no man knows his pedigree. But whatever was colloquial and absurd in the vocabulary of their ancestors, these people have carefully preserved—not distinct and intact, but in a mongrel dialect that would set any philologist crazy.

I ask the waiter-girl for a piece of apple pie. She goes to bring it, but returns empty-handed, informing me that the apple pie is *done*. A person would naturally suppose it ought to be; but she means there is none. I observe a traveler enter the dining-room and seat himself at an empty table. In a few moments the waiter goes to him and the guest is informed, "We don't lift at this table, sir."

Next to "redding up," "lifting" occupies the largest portion of the Pennsylvanian's time. The waiter lifts the dishes; the housekeepers lift their carpets; and the business man lifts his mail from the Postoffice and his money from the bank. A horrible use of the same word obtains concerning funerals. "They lift at 11," was the answer I received on asking when certain obsequies would take place.

Some common phrases are very clumsy, for an example: "He said that you should say," for, he said that you said. "That was a fine day," refers not to yesterday, but to this present day. It can be heard on the streets a hundred times daily. A paper bag, or pouch is called a "poke." An old tobaccoist with whom I dealt was a man of few words. "That was a fine day—have it in a poke?" was his invariable salutation. He introduced no pause from the beginning to the end of his sentence. No other man have I ever met who was able to comment upon the weather and transact business in the same breath.

I spent several months in Butler County last summer, and while there was visited by my old friend, Sol Reed, from Massachusetts. About that time there was considerable excitement over the capture of a horse thief. Sol was trying to glean the particulars of the arrest from an old farmer, and the latter said:

"He came to my house in the evening and wanted in."

"And you don't keep one?" ventured my friend, timidly.

"Keep what?"

"Keep an inn."

"Oh, no! he just wanted to come in and rest?"

This was intelligible to the Yankee, but the next sentence nearly knocked him over:

"He didn't ask if he could get staying all night."

And just then the native fired off one of those double-barreled questions which are peculiar to Western Pennsylvania. They comprised two interrogation points at the beginning of the sentence, one at the end, an exclamation point in the middle, together with rising and falling inflexions, circumflex, dash, and an indescribable accent as though the tongue of the speaker were trying to slide down the hypothenuse of a right angled triangle and wallop itself around each of the shorter sides at the same time. Sol's face assumed an agonized expression and I hurried him away. He recovered, but his wonted cheerfulness was gone. He had spent years of his life and thousands of dollars learning modern languages, and could converse fluently in half the tongues of Europe; but to be unable to carry on a conversation with one of his own countrymen saddened and humiliated him.

To obtain a ride is to "get going," and to gain an interview with any one is to "get seeing" him. The Ohio man has improved upon these phrases; "gets to go" and "gets to see." These Scotch-Irish Pennsylvanians speak of a good-sized lad as a "chunk of a boy," women are called "weemen," a "good bit" is a considerable quantity—about as definite a term as

the "right smart" of the Southern people; a man that is busy tells you he is "thronged with work;" a stranger is a "strange man;" the "big end of a month" is three weeks. I heard a market man speak of the "big end of a dozen" chickens. "Been" is pronounced bean, and the auxiliary verb is usually omitted; as, "I bean there," instead of "I have been there." I recently saw some boys played in the street, some of them going on crutches and feigning lameness. "What is the matter?" I inquired. "Oh! nothing; we're just letting on"—i. e., pretending.

The word father is pronounced with a short, as in fat. "Pa" and "ma" are given similar sounds, only greatly prolonged; thus, a young lady calling to her mother emits from her ruby lips a sound that cannot fail to forcibly remind the hearer of the plaintive "ma-a-ah!" of a little lamb.

"We 'uns" and you 'uns," as pronounced; "this side" and "yon side," "some place" and "any place" used adverbially: the nouns, "pone" signifying corn cake and "slaw" meaning cabbage, though all in use here, are perhaps too generally current to entitle them to rank as Pennsylvania peculiarities. But the word "beal," signifying to fester or ulcerate, I have heard here for the first time in my life. A young lady informed me she was unable to attend a party on account of a "bealed jaw." Now beal is a good word, and is to be found in Webster. But where, except in this part of the country, did a young lady ever assign such a reason as a "bealed jaw" for remaining away from a party?

The production of petroleum is, of course, one of the leading industries in Western Pennsylvania. The oil men are generally very sensible fellows, and they invariably use the feminine gender in speaking of the product of the wells. Virgil's epithet, "varium et mutabile semper," applies as well to the freaks of petroleum as to those of Queen Dido. Yes, oil is properly called "she"—so much of this dialect is worthy of approbation.

The peculiarities of which I have spoken are not confined to the oral language. A certain railroad company prints a notice on passenger tickets to this effect: "Passengers desiring stop-over checks must obtain them from the conductor before this ticket is lifted." And thus the hard-working conductor is relieved from the necessity of wearing his young life away lifting and re-lifting bits of pasteboard. In Butler County there is a place called St. Joe. Whether it was nicknamed for the larger town thus designated, or called after some local saint whose name has never yet appeared in the calendar, I am not informed. Near the place a guide-board startles the public with the following announcement in bold stenciled letters:

"SENT JOE ONE MILE."

Some reckless traveler has attempted to introduce a between the first two letters, while another has penciled beneath the natural and human query: "Wonder if he ever returned?"

Near a large town and within easy range of a school house, I saw at the entrance of a grove a sign which contained this warning:

"NO HUNTING ALOUD."

I reflected on my youthful days and was sad. How much difficulty small boys and dogs must experience in trying to kill rabbits and squirrels silently!

The Pittsburgh papers seem determined that the rest of the world shall become acquainted with the peculiar language of the coal regions. A leading journal of that very enterprising city, states that "one of the firm seen a clerk deposit a large sum of money in a bank." "Seen" is perfectly good Pittsburgh English; in fact, it is in general use in the best society I have been able to find in this section. "What our reporter seen" is the ambitious headline of an article in a daily paper.

But I have yet to make the acquaintance of a journal whose editor has the boldness to introduce *have saw* into his columns. *Seen*, however, is firmly established, and doubtless it is only a question of time when *have saw* will become incorporated in the vocabulary of Pittsburgh journalists.—*Detroit Free Press*.

HEARTH AND HOME.

THERE is nothing makes a man suspect much more than to know a little; and, therefore, men should remedy suspicion by procuring to know more, and not to keep their suspicions in smother.

ALL the means of action, the shapeless masses, the materials, lie everywhere about us. What we need is the celestial fire to change the flint into transparent crystal, bright and clear.

A LITTLE neglect may breed great mischief. For want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by an enemy, all for want of care about a horseshoe nail.

WE often suffer ourselves to be put out of all our bearings by some misfortune, not of the most serious kind, which certainly looks very black at the time, but which, from its nature, cannot be lasting. We are thus like ignorant hens that insist upon going to roost in midday because there is a brief transitory eclipse of the sun.

THIS WORLD A HOSTELRY.—All that in this world enlarges the sphere of affection or imagination is to be revered, and all those circumstances enlarge it which strengthen our memory or quicken our conception of the dead; hence it is no light sin to destroy anything that is old, more especially because, even with the aid of obtainable records of the past, we, the living, occupy a space of too large importance and interest in our own eyes; we look upon the world too much as our own, too much as if we had possessed it and should possess it for ever, and forget that it is a mere hostelry, of which we occupy the apartments for a time, which others better than we have sojourned in before.

OVER particularity, or even reasonable particularity, in trifles causes a great deal of social discomfort and restraint. The man who, to use a common phrase, wishes a thing to be "just so," and not otherwise, is generally somewhat of a nuisance. People are, for the most part, very good-natured in these matters, and very anxious to please others; and they will make a great effort to satisfy the person who wishes to have things "just so." But they do not on that account love him, or her, the more. For any person to be thoroughly popular and liveable-with, there should be a little touch of untidiness and unpreciseness and indifference to small things.

MISCELLANY.

A BOHEMIAN COMPOSER OF OPERETTAS.—We shall soon have another sprightly composer to speak of. In the land, Bohemia, where music is taught in the village schools, where bands of music are formed in every hamlet, where music resounds at every corner, a real Slav composer, Bedrich Smetana, has appeared. He was a pianist in his former life, but, becoming deaf, devoted himself to composition, and is now coming forward among his countrymen. His youth will not recommend him, rather his ripe age. His best operas are: "The Brandenburghers in Bohemia," "The Sold Bride," "Dalibor," "A Kiss," and the "Secret." Smetana has taken Prague by storm with his last serio-comic opera, founded on a mythological theme of Slav origin, and it may be that we shall have it soon transplanted to American shores.

MR. JOHN PHILIPSON has written a work on harness, a subject which has not received much thoughtful elucidation from the pen, yet is decidedly worthy of consideration. He has gone into the matter from the very commencement. The methods of making and attaching harness to ancient Greek and Roman chariots is closely considered and comparisons made between them and modern methods, and the remainder of the work is devoted to a practical consideration of the planning and construction of modern harness. Commencing with a popular account of the various processes of tanning the skin, or pelt, and subsequent currying, the author describes the best leather to use, and the best method for using it, for the various parts of a good harness, whether single, pair, or four horse, and in the course of so doing gives some valuable information. A general description of "furniture," i. e., the metal mountings for harness, follows, showing the author to be well acquainted with this part of his subject, which would, indeed from its interesting nature, bear to be of greater length.

ART AND WEALTH.—Quite inconsistent with the notion that art is a child of opulence is the fact that poverty is so often its parent and nurse. It is related of Rivera, the Spanish artist, that, being in Rome, "steeped in poverty to the very lips," but happy in his industry, his talent at copying frescoes from the street walls attracted the regard of a cardinal, who took him home, provided him with comforts, and furnished him with models for his pencil. But the artist, loving his poverty better, made his escape into the streets, that he might pursue his art in his own way. The cardinal, meeting him again, persuaded him to return once more to the palace, upbraiding him for his vagabond disposition. Rivera soon relapsed a second time, saying that if he were to become an artist he must return to his rags and crusts. This pleased the cardinal and delighted the colony of artists, who nicknamed him Il Spagnolotto. Apart from the intervention of the cardinal, the story of Rivera is applicable to many of the fraternity. They grew in the shadow. Their days of high dreaming, purposing, aspiring, were the days of their penury, when frost and darkness thrust them back on themselves, made them blow with painful breath on the embers that smouldered in their bosoms, and fortified their talent with faith and courage, drawn from the depths of their souls. In the mountain tops, amid ice and cloud, their flashing waters had their source. The life of Claude Lorraine began in poverty. Mantegna was always in debt. Filippo Lippi was an orphan; Murillo was destitute; Masaccio was poor; so were Fra Bartolommeo, Perugino, Nicolas Poussin, Thorwaldson. Velasquez began in humblest condition. As far as we know, the greatest artists were not rich at first. Though their latest works may have been their best, the genius which made them possible arrived at consciousness before prosperity came. This was the case with Michael Angelo. So it was with Raphael, whom Julius II. employed, but did not inspire. In all the noblest instances, the years of toil were the great ones—not the years of fame; and the period of toil was that of want.