CREATIVE NONFICTION Pittsbu

James Parton
Pittsburg

At first glance it might look like a typo, but there's a reason for the missing "h" in the title of this piece, "Pittsburg," and Charles Henry White's essay, also entitled "Pittsburg." The modern-day spelling of the city's name is credited to General John Forbes, who, after securing Fort Duquesne from the French in 1758, referred to the area as "Pittsbourgh" in a letter to Prime Minister William Pitt. The modern "-burgh" spelling pays homage to Forbes' Scottish heritage by holding on to the "h."

Yet there was a period of time when Pittsburgh lost its "h." On March 18, 1816, when the city was chartered, a printer's careless error omitted the last letter from the spelling. It was not until the early 1900s that a young postmaster, William Hamilton Davis, campaigned for the restoration of the "h." On July 19, 1911, a resolution backed by a Pennsylvania senator and the Education Committee of the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce passed, restoring the original spelling. That October the canceling machines at the post office were changed to include the new-old spelling, making the "h" official once and for all.

On that low point of land, fringed now with steamboats and covered with grimy houses, scarcely visible in the November fog and smoke, modern history began. It began on an April day, one hundred and thirteen years ago, with the first hostile act of the long war which secured NorthThere are three cities readily accessible to the tourist, which are peculiar--Quebec, New Orleans, and Pittsburg--and of these Pittsburg is the most interesting by far. In other towns the traveller can make up his list of lions, do them in a few hours, and go away satisfied; but here all is curious or wonderful--site, environs, history, geology, business, aspect, atmosphere, customs, everything. Pittsburg is a place to read up for, to unpack your trunk and settle down at, to make excursions from, and to study as you would study a group of sciences. To know Pittsburg thoroughly is a liberal education in "the kind of culture demanded by modern times." America to our race, and gave final pre-eminence in Europe to the Protestant powers. Bismarck's recent exploits do but continue the work begun in 1754, when a French captain seized that point of land, and built Fort Duquesne upon it. From the windows of the Monongahela House, which stands near the site of the old fort, and within easy reach of the three rivers, the whole geography of the country can be spelled out on the sides of the steamboats. Here begins the Great West. We have reached the United States. Or, if it is political economy that you would know, behold it in operation! Here it is, complete, illustrated, with *errata* in the form of closed factories and workmen on the strike. Whatever protection can do to force the growth of premature enterprises has here been done, undone, and done again; and here, too, may be seen the legitimate triumphs of skill, fortitude, and patience, which the vagaries of legislation do not destroy, nor the alteration of a decimal fraction at a custom-house impair. Brave and steadfast men have battled nobly

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here with the substances that offer the greatest resistance to our control, and which serve us best when subjugated; and in the hills and valleys round about, nature has stored those substances away with unequalled profusion. Besides placing a thick layer of excellent bituminous coal halfway up those winding heights, besides accumulating within them exhaustless supplies of iron, besides sinking under them unfathomable wells of oil and salt water, nature has coiled

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sinking under them unfathomable wells of oil and salt water, nature has coiled about their bases a system of navigable streams, all of which form themselves into two rivers--the Alleghany and Monongahela--and at Pittsburg unite to form the Ohio, and give the city access to every port on earth. It is chiefly at Pittsburg that the products of the Pennsylvania hills and mountains are converted into wealth and distributed over the world. The wonder is, not that Pittsburg is an assemblage of flourishing towns of 230,000 inhabitants, but that, placed at such a commanding point, it is not the *most* flourishing and the *most* populous city in America.

This it might have been, perhaps, if the site had been ten level square miles, instead of two, and those two surrounded by steep hills four hundred feet high, and by rivers a third of a mile wide. It is curiously hemmed in--that small triangle of low land upon which the city was originally built. A stranger walking about the streets on a summer afternoon is haunted by the idea that a terrific thunder-storm is hanging over the place. Every street appears to end in a huge black cloud, and there is everywhere the ominous darkness that creeps over the scene when a storm is approaching. When the traveller has satisfied himself that the black clouds are only the smoke-covered hills that rise from each of the three rivers, still he catches himself occasionally quickening his steps, so as to get back to his umbrella before the storm bursts. During our first stroll about the town, some years ago, we remained under this delusion for half an hour; and only recovered from it after observing that the old ladies who sat knitting about the markets never stirred to get their small stock of small wares under cover.

Pittsburg announces its peculiar character from afar off. Those who approach it in the night see before them, first of all, a black hill, in the side of which are six round flaming fires, in a row, like six fiery eyes. Then other black hills loom dimly up, with other rows of fires half-way up their sides; and there are similar fiery dots in the gloom as far as the eye can reach. This is wonderfully picturesque, and excites the curiosity of the traveller to the highest point. He thinks that Pittsburg must be at work behind those fires, naked to the waist, with hairy chest and brawny arms, doing tremendous things with molten iron, or forging huge masses white-hot, amid showers of sparks. No such thing. These rows of fires, of which scofes can be counted from a favorable point, are merely the chimneys of coke-ovens, quietly doing their duty during the night, unattended. That duty is to convert the waste coal-dust at the mouths of the mines, where it has been accumulating for a century, into serviceable coke. These are almost the only fires about Pittsburg that are always burning, night and day, Sundays and holidays.

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The approach to the city by day is even more remarkable. The railroad from Cincinnati, after crossing the Ohio several miles below Pittsburg, has an arduous work to perform. Its general design is to follow the course of the river; but as the river is always bending into the form of the letter S, and carrying the hills with it, the railroad is continually diving under the hills to make short cuts. This is unfavorable to the improvement of the traveller's mind; for the alternations from daylight to darkness are so frequent and sudden, that he is apt, at length, to lay aside his book altogether, and give himself up to the contemplation of the November drizzle. This was our employment when the cars stopped opposite the point for which *nine* nations have contended--France, England, the United States, and the "Six Nations." Was there ever such a dismal lookout anywhere else in this world? Those hills, once so beautifully rounded and in such harmony with the scene, have been cut down, sliced off, pierced, slanted, zig-zagged, built upon, built under, until almost every trace of their former outline has been obliterated, without receiving from man's hand any atoning beauty. The town lies low, as at the bottom of an excavation, just visible through the mingled smoke and mist, and every object in it is black. Smoke, smoke, smoke--everywhere smoke! Smoke, with the noise of the steamhammer, and the spouting flame of tall chimneys--that is all we perceive of Pittsburg from the side of the hill opposite the site of Fort Duquesne. How different the scene which the youthful Washington saw here, a hundred and twenty years ago, when not a human dwelling was near, and scarcely a white man lived beyond the Alleghanies! With his soldier's eye he marked the rushing Alleghany, the tranquil Monongahela, the winding Ohio, and the hills through which they flowed, only to report that the point of land at the intersection was the very place, of all others, for a fort. We have found better uses for it since. But these better uses have played havoc with the striking beauties of the landscape.

The two tributary rivers are spanned by many bridges, light but strong, some of which are of great elegance. Over one of them the train crosses the Monongahela, alive with black barges and puffing tug-boats, and enters soon that famous depot, the common centre of all the great railroads meeting here.

The West is paying back, with large interest, the instruction and propulsion it once received from the East. New York has no such depot as this, though it has far more need of one than any Western city. We shall have to go to school to the West, erelong, and try to enlarge

our minds and methods--especially our methods of dealing with that long-suffering creature, the Public. Many thousand passengers are daily received, transferred, and distributed at this extensive depot, replete with every convenience, without loss of time, money, or temper.

There is no affectation here of stuffing change into the pocket without counting it. There is no one here who does not know there are such sums of money as seven, eight, and nine cents.

The traveller arriving from the West is immediately reminded that, at this point, the West terminates. Neither the Western nor the Southern mind fully recognizes the existence of any sum of money between five and ten cents, and the Southern man considers it a proud distinction that in his “section” there are no copper coins. In this depot, on the contrary, boys can be found who charge seven cents for a New York paper. In this depot there are hackmen who demand the exact fare as by law established, and who manifest some concern for the traveller’s convenience and comfort. Many other trifling circumstances denote that we have reached a State where exactness and economy are instinctive; a State that is neither Eastern nor Western, Northern nor Southern, but constitutes a class by itself--PENNSYLVANIA--square, solid, plodding, careful, saving Pennsylvania. There is no affectation *here* of stuffing change into the pocket without counting it. There is no one *here* who does not know there are such sums of money as seven, eight, and nine cents. Iron ore is not converted into steel bars so easily that the people who do it are disposed to throw away ever so small a fraction of the results of their labor. On the other hand, these men of iron know how to be liberal when there is occasion. During the war, no regiment, no soldier, passed through Pittsburg without being bountifully entertained; and the Sanitary Fair held here yielded a larger sum, for the size of the city, than any other. The sum was very nearly four hundred thousand dollars. It is people who feel the utility of copper coin that can do such things.

As to the men of Pittsburg, there is not an individual of them who appears to take the slightest interest in his clothes. If you wish to be in the height of the fashion there, you must be worth half a million, and wear a shabby suit of fustian.

From some of the expensive foibles of human nature the people of Pittsburg are necessarily exempt. There can never be any dandies here. He would be a very bold man indeed who should venture into the streets of Pittsburg with a pair of yellow kids upon his hands, nor would they be yellow more than ten minutes. All dainty and showy apparel is forbidden by the state of the atmosphere, and equally so is delicate upholstery within doors. Some very young girls, in flush times, when wages are high, venture forth with pink or blue ribbons in their bonnets, which may, in highly favorable circumstances, look clean and fresh for half a mile; but ladies of standing and experience never think of such extravagance, and wear only the colors that harmonize with the dingy livery of the place. These ladies pass their lives in an unending, ineffectual struggle with the omnipresent black. Everything is bought and arranged with reference to the ease with which its surface can be purified from the ever-falling soot. Lace curtains, carved furniture, light-colored carpets, white paint, marble, elaborate chandeliers, and every substance that either catches or shows this universal and all-penetrating product of the place, are avoided by sensible housekeepers. As to the men of Pittsburg, there is not an individual of them who appears to take the slightest interest in his clothes. If you wish to be in the height of the fashion there, you must be worth half a million, and wear a shabby suit of fustian. You must be proprietor in some extensive “works,” and go about not quite as well dressed as the workmen.

We will endeavor to describe without exaggeration the state of the atmosphere in Pittsburg, as we observed it on the 6th of December, 1866. We select that day because it was the first perfect specimen of a Pittsburg day at which we ever had the pleasure to assist, and it consequently made an impression on our mind. During the autumn, they have about thirty such days as the one we are about to describe. Pittsburg is proud of them. No other city can exhibit such a day. Pittsburg amuses itself (when it can find a moment to spare) with the wonder which its characteristic and unapproachable day excites in the mind of the stranger. No matter how dark it may be, the people still say that “this is nothing” to what they can do in the way of darkness. It was with irrepressible exultation, that one of the young gentlemen of the press assured us that he had been three weeks waiting to have his photograph taken. We know not why it is that no one has given an account of this curious production of nature and art--a Pittsburg day.

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On waking in the morning, while it was still as dark as midnight, we became gradually conscious that the town was all astir. The newsboys were piping their morning song at the door of the hotel; the street cars were jingling by; the steamboat whistles were shrieking; those huge Pennsylvania wagons, with their long lines of horses, were rumbling past; and in the passages of the hotel frequent steps were heard, of heavy-booted travellers and of light-footed chambermaids. “Ah,” we thought, “this is Pennsylvania indeed! What energy

chambermaids. "Ah," we thought, "this is Pennsylvania indeed! What energy, what a fury of industry! All Pittsburg at work before the dawn of day! This surpasses Chicago. What would luxurious St. Louis say of such reckless devotion to business as this?" Revolving such thoughts, it occurred to us, at length, that it would be only proper for an inquisitive traveller to follow this example, and do in Pittsburg as the Pittsburghers had already done. This bold conception was executed. A match was felt for and found, the gas was lighted, and the first duties of the day were performed with that feeling of moral superiority to mankind in general which is apt to steal over the soul of a person who dresses by gas-light for the first time in many years. “Would Brown do this? would Jones? would Robinson? What vigor there must be in that traveller who gets up to study his town before the first streak of dawn!”

hill to Cliff Street in Pittsburg, and looking over into—hell with the lid taken off.

Descending to the lower rooms of the hotel, elate with this new vanity, we were encouraged to find the gas all alight and turned full on, just as we had left it the evening before. The dining-room, too, was brilliantly lighted, and full of people taking sustenance. Hardly prepared to go so far as to take breakfast by gas-light--there is a medium in all things, even in the practice of heroic virtue--we nevertheless deemed it a wise precaution to buy a newspaper or two, thinking it probable that in such a place the newspapers would be all bought and done with by daylight. Then we strolled to the front door, and out into the street. It was still dark, though there were some very faint indications of daylight. Everything, however, was in full movement--stores open and lighted up, drivers alert, newsboys vociferous, vehicles and passers-by as numerous as if it were broad day. It is not pleasant to stumble about out of doors before daylight, on a damp and chilly December morning, especially in a strange place. The valuable idea now occurred to us, that it would be good economy to employ the time required by the day to overcome the gloom of the twilight in breakfasting. This fine idea was realized, and as it was never possible for us to read a newspaper with the light ten feet above it, we soon lost ourselves in wonder why people order for breakfast, at a hotel, five times as much as they can eat. We also pleased ourselves in anticipating the moderation which these wasters of food will exhibit when the civilized custom prevails of paying for what is ordered, and no more. These reflections were prolonged and varied as much as possible, and we endeavored to check the propensity to eat rapidly which besets him who eats alone in a crowd. Still the daylight made little progress; which we excused on the ground that it had much to contend with in Pittsburg, and could not be expected to do as well as in more favored climes. We left the dining-room, and looked about for a seat close to a window, where perhaps the large-type headings of the news might be made out by the aid of a glass. There was just light enough for that, and we sat awhile waiting for more. It came with such strange and tantalizing slowness, that it occurred to us, at last, to see what time it was. One glance at the watch dispelled our dream of moral superiority. It was a quarter to nine!

Toward two o’clock the heavy masses of smoke lifted a little; the sun appeared, in the semblance of a large, clean, yellow turnip; and, for the first time that day, it was possible to read without artificial light. This interval lasted half an hour. By three o' clock, it was darker than ever, and so remained till night came to make the darkness natural; when, the streets being lighted, Pittsburg was more cheerful than it had been

It was a still, foggy morning. There being no wind to drive away the smoke issuing from five hundred huge chimneys, the deep chasm in which Pittsburg lies was filled full of it, and this smoke was made heavy and thick by being mixed with vapor. At eleven o’clock that morning all the gas in the stores was lighted, and the light was as necessary as it ever can be at night. At ten minutes past noon, we chanced to be in a bookstore, where the bookkeeper’s desk was situated directly under a skylight, which in any other city would have flooded the desk with a dazzling excess of light. Even there, the gas was burning with all its force from two burners, and all its light was required. Toward two o’clock the heavy masses of smoke lifted a little; the sun appeared, in the semblance of a large, clean, yellow turnip; and, for the first time that day, it was possible to read without artificial light. This interval lasted half an hour. By three o' clock, it was darker than ever, and so remained till night came to make the darkness natural; when, the streets being lighted, Pittsburg was more cheerful than it had been all day.

There is one evening scene in Pittsburg which no visitor should miss. Owing to the abruptness of the hill behind the town, there is a street along the edge of a bluff, from which you can look directly down upon all that part of the city which lies low, near the level of the rivers. On the evening of this dark day, we were conducted to the edge of the abyss, and looked over the iron railing upon the most striking spectacle we ever beheld. The entire space lying between the hills was filled with blackest smoke, from out of which the hidden chimneys sent forth tongues of flame, while from the depths of the abyss came up the noise of hundreds of steam-hammers. There would be

all day.

of the abyss came up the holes of hundreds of steam-hammers. There would be moments when no flames were visible; but soon the wind would force the smoky curtains aside, and the whole black expanse would be dimly lighted with dull wreaths of fire. It is an unprofitable business, view-hunting; but if any one would enjoy a spectacle as striking as Niagara, he may do so by simply walking up a long hill to Cliff Street in Pittsburg, and looking over into--hell with the lid taken off.

Such is the kind of day of which Pittsburg boasts. The first feeling of the stranger is one of compassion for the people who are compelled to live in such an atmosphere. When hard pressed, a son of Pittsburg will not deny that the smoke *has* its inconveniences. He admits that it does prevent some inconsiderate people from living there, who, but for the prejudice against smoke in which they have been educated, would become residents of the place. He insists, however, that the smoke of bituminous coal kills malaria, and saves the eyesight. The smoke, he informs you, is a perpetual public sun-shade and color-subduer. There is no glare in Pittsburg, except from fire and red-hot iron; no object meets the eye that demands much of that organ, and consequently diseases of the eyes are remarkably rare. It is interesting to hear a Pittsburgher discourse on this subject; and it much relieves the mind of a visitor to be told, and to have the assertion proved, that the smoke, so far from being an evil, is a blessing. The really pernicious atmospheres, say the Pittsburg philosophers, convey to man no intimation of the poison with which they are laden, and we inhale death while enjoying every breath we draw; but this smoke is an evil only to the imagination, and it destroys every property of the atmosphere which is hostile to life. In proof of which the traveller is referred to the tables of mortality, which show that Pittsburg is the most favorable city in the world to longevity. All this is comforting to the benevolent mind. Still more so is the fact, that the fashion of living a few miles out of the smoke is beginning to prevail among the people of Pittsburg. Villages are springing up as far as twenty miles away, to which the business men repair, when, in consequence of having inhaled the smoke all day, they feel able to bear the common country atmosphere through the night. It is probable that, in coming years, the smoky abyss of Pittsburg will be occupied only by factories and “works,” and that nearly the whole population will deny themselves the privilege of living in the smoke. With three rivers and half a dozen railroads, the people have ready means of access to places of almost unequalled beauty and pleasantness.

The “great fact” of Pittsburg is coal. Iron and copper can better afford to come to coal to be melted, than send for coal to come and melt them. All those hills that frown down upon Pittsburg, and those that rise from the rivers back of Pittsburg, have a stratum of coal in them from four to twelve feet thick. This stratum is about three hundred feet above the water’s edge, and about one hundred feet from the average summit of the hills. It is simply a great cake of coal, lying flat in the hills, uniform, compact, as though this region had once been a lake of liquid coal, upon which mountains had been tossed, pressing it solid. The higher the hill rises above the coal cake, the better is the coal. It has had more pressure, is more compact and less impure. What this black stuff really is that we have named coal, how it got laid away so evenly in these hills, why the stratum of coal is always found just so high up the hill, why coal is found here and not everywhere, and why it is better here than elsewhere, are questions to which answers have often been attempted. We have read some of these answers, and remain up to the present moment perfectly ignorant of the whole matter. The mere quantity of coal in this region is sufficiently staggering. All the foundries and iron-works on earth could find ample room in this region, at the edge of a navigable stream, and have a coal mine at their back doors. The coal that is used in the foundries along the Monongahela is only shovelled twice. Deep in the heart of the hill that rises behind the foundry, the coal is mined, and thrown upon a car, by which it is conveyed to the mouth of the mine, and thence down an inclined plane to the foundry, where it is dumped at the door of the furnace which is to consume it. And, it seems, there are fifteen thousand square miles of “this sort of thing.” The “great Pittsburg coal seam,” as it is called, which consists of bituminous coal only, is put down in the books as covering eight and a half millions of acres. Mr. George H. Thurston of Pittsburg, who is learned in everything relating to his beloved city, computes that this area contains a trifle of about three trillions and a half of bushels of workable coal, or fifty-four billions of tons. Supposing this coal to be worth at the mine two dollars a ton, and supposing that we could sell out the whole seam for cash, Mr. Thurston assures us that we could immediately pay the national debt twenty-seven times over. He also remarks, that it would take the entire product of the California gold mines for a thousand years to buy the coal of this one seam.

We fervently hope these statements are correct. What we need is, a grand National, or, rather, a Continental Survey, on the scale of the Coast Survey, to take an inventory of our natural wealth, that could be implicitly relied on. It is but thirteen years ago, that a writer in the “Encyclopaedia Britannica,” who seemed deeply versed in his subject, assured his readers that there was in the coal mines of Great Britain workable coal enough to last nineteen hundred years; and now a great man rises in Parliament, and startles the world by the assertion that the supply will be practically exhausted in eighty years! If Mr. Thurston is right, and if Mr. Mill is right, the time is at hand when Sheffield, Birmingham, and the other iron cities of England will begin to cast inquiring eyes at these hills and streams about Pittsburg. If there is indeed a supply of bituminous coal in this region for many thousand years, we see no reason why Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, New York, and fifty smaller cities, may not make their gas in the coal region, and convey it across the country in pipes. The idea has been discussed, and there is talk of a company for carrying it into effect. This matter of the quantity and distribution of coal is of importance beyond calculation. There was one "tow" of coal sent down to New Orleans last year by a Pittsburg house, that contained all the coal of three and a quarter acres of seam. It were well to know with certainty and exactness how long the Pittsburg seam can keep it up at that rate.

To observe the whole process of getting coal out of the hills, it is only necessary to walk half a mile from the city. Cross one of the bridges over the Monongahela, walk up the hill that rises from the banks of that tranquil stream, and you behold, in the side of the hill, a round hole about large enough for a man to stand upright in. This cavity has smooth walls of coal, and there is a narrow railroad track in it. The air within is neither damp nor chilly, and often delicate flowers are blooming about the entrance. Strangers usually enter this convenient and inviting aperture, which may lead into the hill a mile, or even three miles. After walking a hundred yards or so, strangers usually think it best to go no farther. It is as dark in there as darkness itself, and as silent as a tomb. The entrance shows like a distant point of light. The visitor listens for the sound of the pickaxe, or the rumble of a coal-car; but nothing breaks the horrid silence of the place, and, retracing his steps, he sees with pleasure the point expanding into a round O. Reassured, he peers again into the mountain's heart, and discerns in the far distance a speck of light. This speck slowly, very slowly, approaches. A low and distant rumble is heard. The speck of light enlarges a little. A voice is heard--the voice of a boy addressing an observation to a mule. The light, that was but a speck, begins now to disperse the gloom; and at last we discover that it is a lamp fixed upon a mule's head, and that the mule is drawing two or three car-loads of coal, and is driven by a perfectly black white boy, who also has a lamp upon his head. The coal is immediately dumped, the mule is attached to the other end of the train, and re-enters the black hole. A stranger who has a proper respect for his garments will hesitate to climb over into that exceedingly black car; but curiosity is frequently stronger than principle, and there are travellers who will ride into the black bowels of the earth if they see an empty car going thither. What a strange sensation! How great the distance! The round O of the entrance, after dwindling to a white dot, disappears quite, and it is long before anything becomes visible in the depths of the mine. As we pass along this black and narrow street--just wide enough for a car, and not high enough for a man to stand upright in the car--we observe openings like doors into black, empty rooms. These *are* "rooms." When a mine is opened, the first thing, of course, is to make a straight passage into it; but on each side of the passage "rooms" are opened, one man being assigned to each, who excavates the apartment in solitude. The partitions left between the "rooms" keep the hill from settling down, and they remain intact until the seam is worked out. Then the partitions are knocked away and the coal removed. The hill is then only supported by upright logs, two or three feet thick, which, as the hill settles, are pressed slowly down and flattened out.

After a long ride in the car, signs of life appear; a speck of light is seen in the distance, and the click of a pickaxe is faintly heard. The train of empty coal-cars stops at the door of a "room," and one of them is cast off, and pushed into this apartment by a turnout. The visitors alight as best they can, and find themselves in the coaliest coal-hole ever known. Nothing is seen, felt, or smelt but coal; nothing is heard but the eager strokes of an invisible pickaxe, wielded by an unseen arm. The solitary occupant of this "room" is invisible at the moment, because he is employed in what the miners call "bearing in." When a miner finds himself before a wall of coal, from which he is to excavate convenient masses of that precious commodity, the first thing he does is to "bear in." To "bear in" is to get down upon your knees, and with a pickaxe cut deeply in at the bottom of the seam of coal--as far in as you can reach, even by lying down. When the miner has made his gash, three feet deep and six feet wide, it is very easy by wedges, or even by the pickaxe alone, to bring down all the upper part of the seam in pieces small enough to handle. Our miner was bearing in, at the moment of our entrance, with enthusiasm, owing to his being a little behind with his heap for the next load. Each miner expects to have a car-load ready when his car comes, and he lays out his work accordingly. His task is done when he has dug out the coal, and loaded it upon the car. And it is for doing these two things that he is paid a certain sum per bushel. Seven years ago, that sum was three quarters of a cent; it is now four cents; and the miners used to get out more coal per day when the price was low than they do now at the high price. Our eager miner, hearing voices in his room, rose at length, and dimly revealed himself by the light of a very small tin lamp that hung loosely on his forehead. What a picture he was, as he peered over the heap of coal, with his black cap fitting close to his head, his dangling tin lamp, his coaly visage, his red lips and white teeth, and his black eyes glistening in the midst of the dull black of the rest of his countenance! He looked the Spirit of the Coal-mine. He was, however, introduced to the intruders as "Mr. Gallagher"; and a very merry, social, pleasant fellow he was.

The people who live near the mines along the Monongahela speak well of the miners as a class. They are proud, honest, and orderly. A few of them, on festive days, indulge in their native pastime of whipping their wives; but even the few who do this are acquiring a taste for nobler pleasures.

People come into the mines prepared to regard with compassion these grimy workers in the eternal dark; but, on the contrary, they find them the gayest of men, very cheerful and companionable, with a keen sense of independence and personal dignity. We discovered at once that this man of the dangling lamp was indeed *Mr.* Gallagher. He begins work when he likes, works as fast as he likes, or as slow, and goes home when he likes. His "room" is his own against the world; and when he has dug out of it his regular hundred bushels, which he usually accomplishes about three o'clock in the afternoon, he takes up his oil-bottle and his dinner-kettle, gets upon a load of coal, rides to daylight, and saunters home. When he has had his thorough Saturday-afternoon wash, and has put on his fine Sunday broadcloth, he looks like a pale, muscular poet. The sun does not brown his skin, nor the wind roughen it. He works in the dark, in a still air, and at a uniform temperature of about sixty degrees, the year round. If he has a fancy to get rich, he can. Many of the proprietors about here once dug coal at three quarters of a cent per bushel. The people who live near the mines along the Monongahela speak well of the miners as a

class. They are proud, honest, and orderly. A few of them, on festive days, indulge in their native pastime of whipping their wives; but even the few who do this are acquiring a taste for nobler pleasures. The farmers say that their apples and watermelons are as safe here as anywhere. The miners are proud of their right to vote, are prompt to exercise that right, and generally send their children to school.

We asked “Mr. Gallagher” whether the practice of his vocation was attended by any danger. Like most other men in perilous employments, he protested that there was not the least danger, if a man was only careful. In proof of which he adduced the fact, that in this mine only one man had been killed in eleven months, and he was killed by a piece of “horseback” falling on him. Horseback is a thick scale of remarkably heavy stone that is always found at the top of the stratum of coal, and which *ought* to fall when the coal is cut away from under it. But masses of it often adhere to the roof of the mine, and cannot be dislodged without more labor than a miner is always willing to bestow. In almost every “room” of a mine, therefore, there will be heavy chunks of horseback clinging to the roof, which are sure to fall soon, and may fall at any instant. The solitary occupant of the room intends to avoid standing under these masses. He also intends to employ his first leisure in prying them off. But time passes; he forgets, in the heat of his work, the overhanging peril; and some day the solitary worker in the next room notices that his neighbor’s pickaxe has ceased to strike. Down there in the bowels of the earth, each man working by himself, separated from his fellow by a wall of coal several feet thick, men acquire a strange power of knowing how it fares with their friends in the rooms adjoining. They can tell what they are doing, whether they are forward with their load or behind with it, whether the coal is working easily or hard, whether they are working merrily or dully, whether they are good-tempered or cross. The sudden cessation of *all* noise in a room, at an hour when work is going on, soon attracts attention, and the poor miner is found with his lamp and his life crushed out, under half a ton of horseback. This is said to be the only danger to the miners of the Pittsburg Seam. If noxious gases are generated, it is easy to open a passage through to the other side of the hill for ventilation, or make a chimney through the roof. It is difficult to see how fifty or sixty billions of tons of coal could be put where man could get at them more conveniently. Sir Charles Lyell, who was in this region some years ago, was particularly struck with the accessibility of this coal, and observed that he never saw anywhere else coal so easily worked and loaded.

The population of the coal region near Pittsburg is about thirty-five thousand, and seven thousand of these are employed in and about the mines. The annual product of the mines is something near two millions and a half of tons, of which one third is consumed at Pittsburg, and the rest is sent away down the rivers to fill the valley of the Mississippi with smoke. In one week of 1866, seven steamboats arrived at New Orleans, having in tow fifty-eight coal-barges from Pittsburg, containing in all forty-five thousand tons of coal, worth at New Orleans three hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars.

As to that third part of the coal product of the great Pittsburg Seam which Pittsburg itself consumes, it performs a prodigious quantity of work, assisted by nine thousand mechanics and laborers. There are in the congregation of towns which the outside world knows only by the name of Pittsburg, five hundred manufactories and “works.” Fifty of these are glass-works, in which one half of all our glass-ware is made, and which employ three thousand persons. This important branch of business was planted here in 1787 by a person no less distinguished than Albert Gallatin, and it has grown to proportions of which no one seems to be aware out of Pittsburg. The fifteen bottle-works here produce the incredible number of seventy million bottles and vials per annum. But Pittsburg (so we were told in Nicholas Longworth’s wine-cellar at Cincinnati) has not yet learned to make a champagne-bottle that will stand the pressure of that wine. A serviceable champagne-bottle has never yet been made in the United States; and we have to send to France for all that we require in Ohio, Missouri, and California. We learned (in the same subterranean retreat) that the Pittsburg champagne-bottle comes nearest to being what a champagne-bottle should be, of any made in the United States. One in ten of the best French bottles bursts in the cellar of the bottler; one in six of the best Pittsburg bottles. But the truth is, we are such inveterate swillers of every kind of abominable mess that admits of being bottled, labelled, and advertised, that the Pittsburg bottle-makers have not had time yet to develop the higher branches of their vocation. Any sort of glass will do for quack medicine.

There are also fifteen window-glass-works at Pittsburg, which produce nearly half a million boxes of that commodity every year, worth about two millions and a half of dollars. It so happened that we had a burning curiosity to know how window-glass is made, and one of the first things we did at Pittsburg was to gratify this noble thirst for knowledge. Who would have thought that common window-glass is *blown*? It is actually blown like a bottle. The blower stands on a bench, and as he blows, he swings his tube to and fro, which causes the soft globule to lengthen out into a cylinder, five feet long and one foot in diameter. This cylinder is afterwards slit down all its length by a diamond, and placed in an oven, with the diamond-cut uppermost. As that oven grows hot, the cylinder divides where the diamond marked it, gently falls apart, and lies down flat on the bottom of the oven. There is your sheet of window-glass. As soon as it is cooled, it is cut into the required sizes by a diamond. There are also fifteen flint-glass-works at Pittsburg, the annual product of which is more than four thousand tons of the finest glass-ware, worth two millions of dollars. The total value of the glass made at Pittsburg every year is about seven millions of dollars, which is almost exactly one half of the value of our whole annual product of glass-ware. This is one item of the yearly work done by Pittsburg coal at Pittsburg. Other trifles are sixteen potteries, forty-six foundries, thirty-one rolling-mills, thirty-three manufactories of machinery, and fifty-three oil-refineries. Such a thing it is to have plenty of coal!

Oil Creek is a branch of the Alleghany River, and empties into it one hundred miles above Pittsburg. Pittsburg is, consequently, the great petroleum mart of the world. It is but five years ago that this material became important; and yet there were received at Pittsburg during the year 1866 more than sixteen hundred thousand barrels of it. The Alleghany River is one of the swiftest of navigable streams; but there is never a moment when its surface at Pittsburg is not streaked with petroleum. It would not require remarkable talent in an inhabitant of this place to “set the river on fire.” The crude oil is floated down this impetuous river in the slightest-built barges--mere oblong boxes made of common boards--into which the oil is poured as into an enormous trough. Petroleum is lighter than water, and would float very well without being boxed in; only it would be difficult to keep each proprietor’s lot separate. It needs but a slight accident to knock a hole in one of these thin barges. When such an accident has occurred, the fact is revealed by the rising of the petroleum in the barge; and the vessel gets fuller and fuller, until it overflows. In a few minutes, the petroleum lies all spread out upon the swift river, making its way toward Pittsburg, while the barge is filled with water and sunk.

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We were prepared to discourse wisely upon the subject of oil--its discovery, the fortunes made and squandered “in” it, and the healthy, proper way in which oil is now rising from the rank of a game to that of a business. We give place, however, to the editor of the “Crawford Journal” (published in the oil region), who related while we were at Pittsburg a story which is worth more than preaching. An item appeared in the papers, recording the sale of a certain farm on Oil Creek for taxes, which elicited from the editor of the “Crawford Journal” the following remarkable explanation:

“This farm was among the first of the oil-producing farms of the valley. Early in 1863, the Van Slyke well, on this farm, was struck, and flowed for some time at the rate of twenty-five hundred barrels per day, and several wells yielding from two hundred to eight hundred barrels were struck at subsequent periods. Beside these, there were many smaller wells; and the territory, though sadly mismanaged, is still regarded as among the best in the oil region. In 1864, Widow McClintock died from the effects of burns received while kindling a fire with crude oil. At this time, the average daily income from the landed interest of the farm was two thousand dollars; and by her will the property, with all her possessions in money, was left, without reservation, to her adopted son, John W. Steele, then about twenty years of age. In the iron safe where the old lady kept her money was found one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, two thirds of the amount in greenbacks, and the balance in gold. Mrs. McClintock was hardly cold in her coffin before young Steele, who appears to have had nothing naturally vicious in his composition, was surrounded by a set of vampires, who clung to him as long as he had a dollar remaining. The young millionaire’s head was evidently turned by his good fortune, as has been that of many an older man who made his 'pile in oil'; and he was of the opinion that his money would accumulate too rapidly unless it was actually thrown away, and throw it away he did. Many of the stories concerning his career in New York and Philadelphia savor strongly of fiction, and would not be credited were they not so well authenticated. Wine, women, horses, faro, and general debauchery, soon made a wreck of that princely fortune; and in twenty months Johnny Steele squandered two millions of dollars. Hon. John Morrissey, M. C., 'went through' him at faro to the amount of one hundred thousand dollars in two nights; he bought high-priced turnouts, and after driving them an hour or two gave them away; equipped a large minstrel troupe, and presented each member with a diamond pin and ring, and kept about him, besides, two or three men who were robbing him day after day. He is now filling the honorable position of doorkeeper for Skiff and Gaylord’s Minstrels, the company he organized, and is--to use a very expressive, but not strictly classical phrase--completely ‘played out.’

“The wealth obtained by those who worked so assiduously to effect Steele’s ruin gave little permanent benefit to its possessors. The person most brazen and chiefly instrumental in bringing about the present condition of affairs was the notorious Seth Slocum, who hung

around this city several weeks last summer. He was worth at one time over one hundred thousand dollars, which he had 'captured' from Steele, and laid aside for a rainy day; but when the latter's money vanished, this amount soon took unto itself wings, and he is at present known among his old associates as a 'dead beat.' At last accounts, Slocum was incarcerated in the jail of a neighboring county for various breaches of the peace, and was unable to obtain bail in the sum of five hundred dollars. Exemplifications these of the old adage, 'Easy come, easy go'; or the other, 'Fools and their money are soon parted.'"

This is merely the most striking and best known of many similar instances. It is doubtful if wealth suddenly acquired, without merit on the part of the recipient, has *ever* been of real service; and we presume Johnny Steele did the best thing possible for him in getting rid of his absurd millions in twenty months. He might have staggered under them twenty years, and even then had enough left to keep him from his proper place in the world. Happily, all this is over in the oil country, where the business languishes after the excitements of recent years, and is settling down to be a safe and legitimate pursuit, like coal, iron, and salt.

We all know the precise quantity of "dirt" which each of us has to eat in a lifetime. It is one peck. But is the gentle reader aware, that each inhabitant of the United States "consumes" about one hundred and twenty-five pounds of iron every year?

It is, however, the iron-works of Pittsburg that usually attract the stranger first, astonish him most, and detain him longest. We all know the precise quantity of "dirt" which each of us has to eat in a lifetime. It is one peck. But is the gentle reader aware, that each inhabitant of the United States "consumes" about one hundred and twenty-five pounds of iron every year? So we are assured; and we are also informed that the fact is highly honorable to us, since the quantity of iron consumed by a nation is one of the tests of its civilization. A Spaniard, for example, gets along with only five pounds of iron in a year, and a Russian finds ten pounds sufficient. An Austrian is satisfied with fifteen, a Swiss with twenty-two, a Norwegian with thirty; but a German must have fifty pounds, a Frenchman sixty, a Belgian seventy. Of the iron consumed in the United States, it appears that about two fifths are manufactured at Pittsburg, in those hundred and thirteen iron-works mentioned before. There is not one of those establishments in which an intelligent person may not find wonders enough to entertain him all day; but in the compass of one brief article we can do little more than allude to one or two of the more famous and established "lions." Pittsburg, as we have before remarked, is densely packed with marvels. Go where you will, you find something of the most particular interest, that demands to be examined, and most richly rewards examination. If ever we establish a college, we shall arrange it so, that the senior class shall spend six weeks at and near Pittsburg, in order to vivify their knowledge of geology, chemistry, and the other sciences.

Down by the swift and turbid Alleghany, close to the river, as all the great foundries are, we discovered with difficulty, on a very dark morning, the celebrated Fort Pitt Foundry, where twenty-five hundred of the great guns were cast that blew the late "So-Called" out of water. In this establishment may be seen the sublime of the mechanic arts. Only here, on the continent of America, have there ever been cast those monsters of artillery which are called by the ridiculous diminutive of "the twenty-inch gun." A twenty-inch gun is one of those corpulent pieces of ordnance that we see mounted on forts about our harbors, which weigh sixty tons, cost fifty thousand dollars each, and send a ball of a thousand pounds three miles. To be exact, the ball weighs one thousand and eighty pounds, and it costs one hundred and sixty-five dollars. To discharge a twenty-inch gun, loaded with one of these balls, requires one hundred and twenty-five pounds of powder, worth forty cents a pound; so that every time one of the guns is fired it costs a hundred and ninety-five dollars, without counting the wear and tear of the gun and its carriage, and the pay of the men.

The foundry where these huge guns are made is large, lofty, dark, and remarkably silent. Nearly every operation goes on in silence, and without the least fuss or hurry. We will endeavor to show, in a few words, how it is that a large lump of iron with a hole in it should cost so much.

To people outside of the iron world iron is iron; but to people inside of that world there are as many varieties of iron as there are sources of supply. We have often been amused at the positiveness with which the inhabitants of iron districts declare their iron to be the "best in the world." The people of Marquette, upon Lake Superior, the people interested in the Iron Mountain of Missouri, the iron-makers of Lake Champlain, and all who have anything to do with an iron mine, assert the superiority of their own iron. The best of it is, that all these people are right; for each of the great brands of iron actually *is* the best in the world--for some purposes. The iron for these large cannons comes from the Bloomfield Mine, in Blair County, Pennsylvania, and there is in the United States but one other iron as good for guns; and that is found in far-off Massachusetts. Everything depends upon the even and sufficient density of the iron; therefore, the pigs of iron from the Bloomfield Mine are again melted and purified here. They have an ingenious machine for testing the strength of iron. By a system of levers, a round piece of iron, one inch thick, is subjected to a steady pull until it breaks, and the operator is enabled to ascertain precisely how many pounds' weight it will bear. The same machine tests it by twisting and by crushing. It is this machine which determines the rank and value of all iron.

The mould in which the cannons are cast is an enormous structure of iron and sand, which weighs, when ready for the metal, more

than forty tons. The preparation of the mould is the most difficult and delicate of all the work done in the foundry; but it would be nearly impossible to convey an idea of it on paper. When it is ready, it is hoisted by steam-derricks, and let down into a pit, where it stands on end, with open mouth, ready for the fiery fluid. Those steam-derricks are wonderful. One man, by their assistance, lifts, carries, and deposits upon a car, in thirty minutes, a twenty-inch gun in its mould, weighing in all (including the waste metal) one hundred and thirty tons; and this he does with about as much physical exertion as is required to draw a glass of beer from a barrel. The whole force of the foundry--two hundred and fifty men--could not move such a mass one inch in twenty-four hours, unaided by machinery.

The thrilling event of the day is the casting, which occurs here at two o'clock in the afternoon, one great gun being cast every day. Three furnaces, early in the morning, are stacked full of pigs of iron, as high as a man's head, and about ten o'clock the fires are lighted under them. In some three hours the stacks of pigs are all melted down into a pool of liquid iron one foot deep. From each of the three furnaces an iron trough, lined with clay, extends across the wide and gloomy foundry, to the mould which is this day to be filled. The distance is a hundred feet, perhaps; and the iron troughs are laid in curves, to prevent a too rapid flow of metal. (The Ohio River is arranged on the same principle.) Men are stationed along each trough to comb off the dross, and there are men at the mould with levers and other implements; while Joseph Kaye, the foreman and genius of the place, who learned his trade here thirty years ago, and who is the inventor of important parts of the process we are beholding, stands apart, to give the word and overlook the whole. The word is given. A man at each furnace sets the stream running. At once, three FIERY SERPENTS of the fieriest fire come coiling down those troughs with a kind of slow rush, and make for the mould, into which they go headlong, and fall to the bottom with a sputtering thud. The resemblance to a serpent is perfect, until the stream has reached the gun. The stranger fancies that he can see the fiery devil's eyes, and that the sparks that fly from his head are the signs of a deadly anger. The streams run for about twenty minutes, and then, at a signal, a lump of clay is thrust into the aperture of each furnace; the streams dwindle to threads, and dry up.

Usually, all goes so smoothly that it seems as if it could go no other way. But there are frightful perils in the business. Sometimes an obstruction will occur in one of the troughs, and the liquid metal will overflow, and spread about the ground; or the supply of iron will be exhausted before the mould is quite full; or a break will occur in the mould, and the iron burst through, spoiling the mould, and wasting itself in the bottom of the pit. It is at such times that Joseph Kaye asserts his kingly power, and stands self-possessed in the midst of panic-stricken men. Many a great gun about to lapse into hopeless ruin he has saved by his courage and skill. There have been times when every man fled but him, and he sufficed. They point out one honest German, who was so thoroughly terrified by the breaking of a steam-derrick with a gun hanging to it, that he ran home at the top of his speed, and could not be coaxed back till six months had passed. Another German was once in a most painful dilemma. The furnaces having run dry before the gun-mould was quite full, the foreman, to save the gun, ordered metal to be brought from another furnace in iron pails. These pails of liquid iron are swung upon a lever, and carried by two men. Our German was so unfortunate as to stumble a little, which caused some of the melted metal to fall into his low shoe. But, exquisite as the agony was, he was obliged to endure it; since, in the hurry of the moment, there was no one who could stop to help him, while to have let go his load had been ruin and death. The man walked steadily to the mould, and assisted his comrade to empty the pail into it, before seeking relief.

After the gun has been cast, a variety of curious precautions are taken to cause the eighty tons of iron to cool in the manner most conducive to the strength of the gun. If nothing of this kind were done, the gun would be *thirty* days in getting cool enough to handle; but, by the constant flow of cold water in and out of the bore, the cooling is shortened to eighteen days. Then the huge thing is gently lifted out of its pit, gently swung across the dim foundry, and gently laid in the turning-shop; where the great rough end is cut off, where the outside is turned smooth, where the inside is bored to the proper size, where it loses twenty tons of metal. The mere boring of one of these monsters takes four weeks, night and day, Sundays and week-days. When once the boring has been begun, it can never stop until it is finished, without spoiling the gun; since, if the gun cools, the temperature that existed at the moment when the boring ceased can never be exactly reproduced, and consequently there will be a variation in the size of the bore. A variation in the bore of a hundredth part of an inch insures the rejection of the gun, and a hundredth part of an inch is less than the space between the teeth of a fine-tooth comb. Issuing from the lathe all shaven and shorn, the gun is laid upon two cars fastened together, taken seventeen miles out of town, fired ten times, and delivered to the government inspector. Formerly, they used to cram the great guns full of powder, and fire them off, thus overloaded, until they were on the point of bursting, and *would* burst with only an ordinary charge. This error has been avoided since the Princeton gun killed a Secretary of State, and came near destroying the whole government.

From seeing one of these enormous guns cast, the visitor at Pittsburg may go, if he chooses, to an establishment where they make tacks so minute that it takes a thousand of them to weigh an ounce. We went thither, having long had an imbecile curiosity to know how

nails and tacks are made. How startling the contrast between the slow movements, and tranquil, gloomy vastness of the cannon foundry, and the animation of the great rattling, roaring, crowded nail-works of Chess, Smyth, & Co., all glaring and flashing with light, with many tall chimneys pouring out black smoke and red blaze into the December evening! Noise? There is only one place in this world as noisy as a large nail-factory in full operation, and that is under the sheet at Niagara Falls. How should it be otherwise, when the factory is making many thousand nails a minute, and when every single nail, spike, brad, and tack is *cut* from a strip of cold iron, and headed by a blow upon cold iron? We saw one machine there pouring out shoemakers' brads at the rate of three thousand a

and headed by a blow upon cold iron? We saw one machine there pouring out shoemakers' brads at the rate of three thousand a minute, and it required the attendance of only one boy. They came rattling down a tin gutter as fast as meal comes from a mill. But to see this wonderful machine astonishes the stranger less than to see a girl in the packing-room who *weighs* and packs two thousand papers of tacks in nine hours.

Nails are made thus: 1. Pig-iron is rolled into long bars; 2. These long bars are cut into lengths of one foot; 3. These lengths are piled into heaps of nine; 4. These heaps of nine are rolled into sheets as thick as the nail is to be; 5. Those sheets are cut into strips a little wider than the nail is to be long; 6. These strips are cut into nails by the nailing-machine, which also heads the nails as they fall. A man holds the strip of iron in the machine's jaws, which instantly bite off a nail. But a nail tapers off from the head to the point, and consequently the strip has to be turned over before the machine can be allowed to bite again. But for this necessity of turning the strip, men could be dispensed with. Imagine a room four times as large as the interior of Trinity Church, with rows of nailing-machines as close together as sewing-machines in a clothing factory, and all on the full champ--some biting off spikes three to a pound, and others nipping tacks at the rate of thousands a minute.

This most interesting establishment employs two hundred and ten men, forty boys, and twenty-five girls; consumes one hundred and fifty tons of iron in a week; makes two hundred kinds of nails, tacks, and brads; makes in a week two thousand four hundred kegs of nails, one hundred and fifty boxes of tacks one hundred pounds to a box, and one hundred boxes of brads.

The crowning glory of Pittsburg is the "American Iron-Works" of Messrs. Jones and Laughlins. This establishment, which employs twenty-five hundred men, which has a coal mine at its back door and an iron mine on Lake Superior, which makes almost every large and difficult iron thing the country requires, which usually has "on hand" seven hundred thousand dollars' worth of finished work, is such a world of wonder that this whole magazine would not contain an adequate account of it. Here are machines ponderous and exact; here are a thousand ingenuities; here is the net result of all that man has done in iron masses during the whole period of his residence upon earth. What should there be here, too, but a specimen of what man can *undo* in iron, in the form of a great heap of rusty twisted rails from Georgia, so completely spoiled by General Sherman's troops that there was nothing to be done with them but sell them for old iron! It is at these works alone that iron is subjected to the new process called "cold-rolling." Every reader has stood by a steam-engine, and admired the perfect roundness, the silvery brightness, and the irresistible thrust of the piston-rod. A piston-rod is usually made thus. A huge, jagged mass of white-hot iron, just on the point of fusion, is fished out of the furnace, and is swung across the foundry to the rolling-machine, which rolls it into a long round roll, a little thicker than the piston-rod is to be. It is next put into a turning lathe, where it is turned and polished to the size required--a long and costly process. That is the usual way. The "cold-rolling" process is this: the long round roll, a little thicker than the piston-rod is to be, is passed *cold* through another rolling-mill of immense power, and simply *squeezed* to the size required. Advantages: 1. The process is quicker and cheaper; 2. The rod issues from the mill as brilliantly polished as the plate on a queen's table; 3. The pressure so increases the density of the iron, that the rod is about two and a half times stronger than those made in the old way. Iron plates and bars are made on the same principle.

We cannot linger among these wondrous "works" of the strong men of Pittsburg. The men themselves have claims upon our notice.

The masters of Pittsburg are mostly of the Scotch-Irish race, Presbyterians, keen and steady in the prosecution of their affairs, indifferent to pleasure, singularly devoid of the usual vanities and ostentations, proud to possess a solid and spacious factory, and to live in an insignificant house. There are no men of leisure in the town. Mr. George H. Thurston, President of the Pacific and Atlantic Telegraph Company--who, from having superintended the preparation of the Directory for many years, as well as from his very great interest in all that relates to the prosperity and glory of Pittsburg, knows the town better than any other person that ever lived in it--assured us positively that there were not, in all the region which we call Pittsburg, three persons out of business who were physically capable of conducting business. The old men never think of "retiring," nor is there anything for them to retire to. The family tie being powerful in this race, the great firms are usually composed of near relatives, and generally survive the generation that founded them. Thus, the Fort Pitt Foundry, founded in 1803, has cast cannon for every war in which the United States has been engaged, and is now conducted by the worthy and talented nephews of the Charles Knap who made the establishment what it is. In the American Iron-Works, we find six partners, namely, the two chiefs, Messrs. Jones and Laughlin, two sons of one of these chiefs, and two brothers of the other--a nice family party. Hence, there are few hired clerks in Pittsburg. These mighty "works" are managed with the minimum of expense. The visitor generally finds "the old man" bustling about the "works" in his cap and fustian jacket; while perhaps his eldest son is keeping the books, a son-in-law or nephew is making up the wages accounts, and a younger son is in the warehouse.

The conservative elements here are powerful, as they are in all communities in which families *endure*. Until very recently, in Pittsburg, it would have boded ill for a man to build a handsome house a few miles out of the smoke; and to this day it is said that a Pittsburg man of business who should publish a poem would find his "paper" doubted at the bank. "A good man, sir, but not practical." These excellent and strenuous men accuse themselves vehemently of a want of public spirit, and it is evident the charge is just. For the last few years, business has rushed in upon them like a torrent; and all their force having been expended in doing this business, they now awake to the fact, that a GREAT CITY is upon their hands, to be consolidated, organized, paved, policed, parked, purified, and adorned. They now

feel that some of those iron kings, those great men of glass, oil, coal, salt, and clay, must leave business to their sons and nephews, and take hold of Pittsburg.

The masters work too hard. We wish we had room to tell the story of one of the great brains of this place, just as we heard him tell it. We can but indicate the outline.

His own master at sixteen. At twenty-eight, one of a firm about to found new iron-works. Capital, one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Plunged into a business of a million per annum. Ticklish work this! A slight miscalculation in estimating for a contract, an unexpected rise in the price of something, and away goes the small capital, and honor with it. Hence he worked eighteen hours a day for fourteen years. Called at six every morning but Sunday. At warehouse in Pittsburg till nine. At the works until two. At the mine until dark. Home to tea, and to lovely family, well beloved; but too tired and dull to enjoy or be enjoyed. At seven, would “drag” round to the office, and there write or “estimate” till twelve. Then home to bed, and instantly to sleep. Felt always as if playing a great, splendid, complicated Game, upon which fortune and honor both were staked, but especially *honor*. Two kinds of honor--honor as a man of business, honor as a man of ability. The game was won! Capital increased from one hundred and fifty thousand to three million dollars. Finest, grandest iron-works in America. Glorious scene of triumphant ingenuity. Three hundred brick cottages owned by the firm, all tenanted by their own workmen. Paper, gilt-edged.

BUT One night, two years ago, instead of dropping asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow, this successful man could not go to sleep for hours, and then slept ill. Many such nights followed. One day, when he was abstrusely calculating, his mind suddenly lost its power; he could not keep his attention upon his figures, nor make any safe progress in his work. Alarmed, he went to the doctor, who told him, to his great *astonishment*, that he had been working too hard, and must rest. He took this advice and a short journey; but soon after, resuming his ordinary labors, his brain again suddenly lost its power. It was about eleven o’clock in the morning, and he tried to think of something to do that would amuse without fatiguing his mind. He could think of nothing but the *dentist’s*; so to the dentist’s he went, hoping to enjoy a little anguish till dinner-time. But this recreation was denied him, for, while waiting in the dentist’s parlor, he fainted dead away. He was now seriously alarmed, and for the first time began to consider his case with the intelligence he had been in the habit of bestowing upon iron alone. He lived thenceforth as became a man, a husband, and a father; worked ten hours a day, and spent every evening in playing with his children, and conversing with his wife and their friends. Thanks to a wonderful constitution, it was not too late. He recovered his health, and is now in the full enjoyment of life.

It is such as he who should leave iron to the youngsters, and amuse themselves for the rest of their lives in making Pittsburg metropolitan. Such a thought does not, it is said, ever cross their minds. When we suggested it to a son of Pittsburg, and mentioned an individual who could soon put the city in order, the reply was: “If Mr. ---- should sell out for three millions, he would never be easy till he had built a new factory for seven millions and then give himself no rest till he had paid off the four millions of debt.” This is *mania*. There will be, perhaps, asylums for this class of patients some day.

The workmen--what of them? As the stranger goes about among the “works,” and sees men performing labors so severe that they have to stop, now and then, in summer, take off their boots, and *pour the perspiration out of them*, he is apt to become a fanatical free-trader on the spot. He says to himself: “If there *is* any foreign country that is willing to do all this hideous work for us at a rate of compensation that we can afford to pay, why should not that foreign country be allowed to do it, so that these American citizens could turn their attention to something more agreeable?” But, then, if the work is terrific, the wages are extraordinary. Some of these “puddlers,” rollers, nailers, modellers, and others of the aristocracy of the mills, receive from ten to twenty-five dollars a day; and the average wages of skilled labor do not probably average below five dollars a day. The necessaries of life are cheaper here than in any other large city, East or West. For several years past, too, the men have generally been the masters, because there has been work offering beyond the capacity of the town to execute.

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But all who have power abuse it, more or less. Considering that during the greater part of man’s existence on earth workingmen have been oppressed, it is not

surprising that they should avail themselves of a passing opportunity to try a little oppression upon others. All the trades here have guilds, or societies, for protection against the capitalists, who also combine to resist the demands of the workmen. What both these combinations need, to keep their intercourse dignified and friendly--to prevent that fierce and vulgar hostility which rages in England between employers and men--is KNOWLEDGE, the great want of all men everywhere! But the workingmen especially need it. Every one of those workingmen's societies should have a little library of the best works upon political economy. If only one man in the whole guild had the spirit to study them, that one man might, at a critical time, prevent a whole trade from running full tilt, blindly, against a law of nature. But more than one man would study them, for there are evidently a great number of excellent heads among the men of the mills. One of the best little papers we ever read is one conducted by and for them at Pittsburg, called the "Workmen's and Soldiers' Advocate," and bearing the excellent motto, "Union is strength--KNOWLEDGE is power."

do all this hideous work for us at a rate of compensation that we can afford to pay, why should not that foreign country be allowed to do it, so that these American citizens could turn their attention to something more agreeable?"

We saw no indication at Pittsburg of the infernal feeling that appears to exist in Sheffield and Birmingham between employers and employed. The men laugh a good deal at the alleged narrowness of some of the capitalists of the town. A writer in the little paper just mentioned says: "Some one started the idea of making a public park on the northern face of Grant's Hill; but the public beneficence of the project was so un-Pittsburg-like, that the projector found he was either behind or in advance of the age so far. A soldiers' monument was next spoken of, but several of our wealthiest men (who had become so by the war) could only give two or three dollars apiece, and it has so far failed." Again: "It has become the prevailing opinion that landlords are not among our most benevolent citizens; and it is quite probable that public opinion does them injustice, since they are to be found among the most strict professors of religion, occupying front pews in church, carrying round the money-basket for collections, leading the way to the sacrament, inviting the minister to tea, and reproving the outbursts of hilarious youth on all occasions. None of the Pittsburg landlords owned the houses where Christ travelled, and 'had not where to lay his head.' But if he should ever happen to be in Pittsburg--which is doubtful--he would find that it would require an enormous amount of 'scrip in his purse.'"

The men are so numerous, that the whole width of some of the streets is filled with them; and there is not a woman to be seen! Not a single petticoat among thousands of other coats! Yet no crowd could be more orderly and quiet. These men—after a week of intense monotony,—gazing at dull objects and doing the same dull act ten hours a day,—how hungry they seem for some brightness to flash into their lives!

It is only such harmless fun as this that the grimy man of the furnace pokes at the slightly less grimy man of the counting-room. But if these passages show the good-humor of the men, how clearly they reveal their need of a course of political economy! All talk of that kind about the landlords is ignorance--pure ignorance. An American mechanic should be above it. Is not the law of nature which impels the workingman to get as much as he can for his labor a universal law?

Here, as everywhere, we see the process going on by which from the mass of men the few are selected whom nature has fitted to be masters. Many of the men who get from fifty to one hundred and fifty dollars a week waste their money and themselves. Some men drink twenty glasses of beer per day, the year round. About one third of the whole number of men save money, and live cleanly and sensibly; and it is from this third that the future foremen and proprietors will be gradually sifted out.

Nothing in the life of Pittsburg is more striking to a visitor than the completeness of the cessation from labor at the close of the week. The Scotch-Irish race are strict Sabbatarians, and nothing goes on in Pittsburg on Sundays which it is possible to stop. Of all those five hundred tall chimneys, there will not usually be more than two that smoke on Sundays. During the week the town gets under such a headway of industry, that it takes all Saturday afternoon for it to come to a stand. The regular work ceases at noon, but the afternoon is spent in paying wages, grinding tools, cleaning up, making repairs, and getting ready for a fair start on Monday morning. By

seven in the evening, the principal streets of Pittsburg are densely filled with washed men. They stroll about; they stand conversing in groups; they gather, in thick semicircles, about every shop-window that has a picture in it, or any bright or curious object; especially do they haunt the news-stands, which provide a free picture-gallery for them of Illustrated News, Comic Monthlies, and Funny Fellows. The men are so numerous, that the whole width of some of the streets is filled with them; and there is not a woman to be seen! Not a single petticoat among thousands of other coats! Yet no crowd could be more orderly and quiet. These men, after a week of intense monotony--gazing at dull objects and doing the same dull act ten hours a day--how hungry they seemed for some brightness to flash into their lives! How we longed to usher them all into some gorgeous scene, and give them a banquet of splendors! Mere brilliancy of color and light is transport, we should suppose, to a man who has been making nails or digging coal from Monday morning until Saturday noon.

We need not say that every theatre and show in Pittsburg is crammed on Saturday night. By putting forth the greatest efforts, we did manage to get into one of the theatres, into which dense masses of men were crowding. Not a woman was present. The place was packed with brawny men and noisy boys, all washed, all well-disposed, though half mad with joyous excitement. On the walls were posted such admonitions as these: “Hats off,” “No hallooing or whistling allowed,” “Applaud with your hands,” “Order must be observed,” “No walk around by performers in white faces allowed.” What the last of these announcements may mean we cannot tell; but, with regard to the rest, we can say that the audience paid no heed to them whatever. The performances consisted of farces raised to the fiftieth power, comic songs, and legs. Never have we seen an audience so amusable. It often happened, during the performance of a farce, that the people would keep up such a roar of laughter, that for many seconds at a time not a word could be heard from the stage. We discovered here what the play-bills mean when they speak of “roaring farces,” and of farces that are “screaming.”

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The reader will say, perhaps, that this is a poor ending to a week of hard labor.

Perhaps it is. But the natural kings of Pittsburg do not provide anything better, nor heartily encourage the production of anything better. These poor hungry fellows of the dark mine and the dim foundry want some change, some pleasure, some brilliancy. They can get this for twenty-five cents, and it is better than nothing. There are two other theatres in the town, where performances of a more “legitimate” character are given; and, considering the little aid they derive from those who could best afford to attend them, they are respectable.

Nine miles and three eighths from Pittsburg, on the shores of the Monongahela, is the pleasant and growing village called “Braddock’s Field.” Its principal streets are “Washington,” “Braddock,” “Halkett,” “Frazer,” “Beaujean,” “Aliquippa.” We need not say why this village is so called, nor why these names were given to its streets. The ford by which the fated army crossed the river was used as a ford until a few years ago, when the river was dammed to improve the navigation. The ancient Indian trail which led up from the ford is still a lane, fenced and used. The two ravines in which the Indians lay in ambush are visible. They are not more than three or four feet below the general level; the ambush having been afforded by a close growth of hazel-bushes that long ago disappeared. There are several trees standing on the field that must have been of good size when the defeat occurred; the largest is an ancient oak, that stands where the bullets must have flown thickest, and from which many have been picked by the prying knives of visitors. Near it is a rough enclosure of common rails, such as farmers make for a hay-stack, within which are buried a considerable number of human bones that were dug up when the track of the Pennsylvania Railroad was laid across the scene of the battle. Interesting relics of the encounter are still occasionally found. Colonel Edward J. Allen, whose agreeable and hospitable house stands upon the battle-field, close to the place of the greatest slaughter, informed us that his garden has never yet been dug up in the spring without the exposure of something of the kind, an arrow-head, a bullet, or even a bayonet. A sword with a name engraved upon it has been recently found in the neighborhood.

How changed this scene in a hundred and twelve years! The bluff beneath which those seven hundred men laid down their lives is pierced with holes, near the summit, out of which mules emerge, drawing car-loads of glistening coal. On the opposite bank, rows of the blazing chimneys of coke-ovens glare through the night. A beautiful village, noisy with the school-children at play, covers a great part of the field. Two railroads cross it, over which one hundred and twenty trains pass every twenty-four hours!

James Parton came to the United States from Britain at the age of five in 1827. He penned the lives of

Andrew Jackson, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson, and his social commentary appeared regularly in *Harper's* and *The Atlantic*.

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