PENNSYLVANIA'S DISGRACE.

Shameful Treatment of Soldiers' Orphans at the State Asylum.

A Philadelphia correspondent of the New York *World* writes: Considerable indignation has been excited in this Commonwealth by the recent publications in the newspapers touching the shameful management of the Mount Joy Asylum for Soldiers' Orphans. Investigation shows wretched treatment of the children committed to the care of the State, and there is a strong suspicion of corruption on the part of the officials in charge. The story of Squeers's Yorkshire school, Dotheboy's Hall, is painfully revived by the revelations already made, and the indignant ex-soldiers are disposed to change the name of the institution from Mount Joy to Mount Sorrow.

On the 14th of December last I was in Williamsport, Pa., and was lamenting the dearth of news to an acquaintance. He answered: "My dear fellow, you don't look in the right place. Now, I will give you a pointer. Are you aware that soldiers' orphans are bought and sold in this community? No! Well, I will explain. I know that there are several men at this present time engaged in furnishing our soldiers' orphans' schools with children, and they are paid so much a head, and, furthermore, the condition of said schools is most disgraceful and will amply repay a news reporter to investigate. You can get some idea of the matter by stopping off at Mount Joy and can see for yourself. So, good luck and goodby."

Dec. 17 found me at Mount Joy, a neat, thrifty town situated in the heart of the richest farming district in the State. The cultivation of tobacco has brought wealth into the community and there are farmers here whose income from this source alone is over $5,000 a year.

The orphan school buildings are within sight of the railroad and a short distance out of town. The air was raw and nippy and I walked smartly to keep warm. A hundred yards from the school I met a man, evidently a farm laborer, who was trying to arrange a load of heavy chestnut rails that had shifted, and I held his restive horses for a moment. When he was through I said: "That is a fine institution and a credit to the State." He looked at me a moment and answered: "Well, sir, I can't agree with you, and what is more I know pretty well what I am talking about. It's a disgrace to decent people to bring children up as they are. I haul feed to the place, and of course I see the boys and know their condition. Why, sir, I've seen the children alive with vermin, and had occasion to handle a blanket such as they have on their beds, and I found it full of the pests. How can there be anything like moral training in a place where the children are huddled together like pigs? Some of the boys come from the coal breakers and are old in wickedness, and although I am no chicken their bad language fairly makes me sick. When you think that there are 350 children, boys and girls, packed into that building, and only four people to look after them, and some of them drink, and of course don't do their duty any better for that, you can judge for yourself. A man named Sherbin is head keeper and is called Instructor in Mechanics. Before he came here he was clerk in a store, so that it's not likely that his instruction amounts to much. But the fact is that the people in the neighborhood are to blame. They have known all about this for the last five years, but they sell things to the school and turn a dollar by it and so don't dare. Their victuals would not be so bad if they were only cooked right, but no attention is paid to the kitchen, which is as dirty as a cattle car, and the children must just eat what they get or go hungry.

Thanking the man for his information, I went through the gate and up the long gravel walk to the building. It was evident that the outside was duly cared for, and that neither labor nor pains were spared to make things look seemly. Four boys were lounging around, and three girls, shock-headed and forlorn looking, were evidently quarrelling with them. In two minutes I heard enough to satisfy me that my instructive wagoner had not exaggerated when he spoke of their lack of moral training, for one of the girls yelled at the boys and addressed them in language that no Cherry street rough could surpass in vileness, and a boy calling her a head-headed——, adding: "Here come a cully."

Apart from the others was a girl and boy, evidently brother and sister, and of these I made a sketch. One tough, hard-headed looking boy, the only one that seemed to have any life in him, asked me to "take his fortygraff."

The girl's hands were scared with tetter-marks, and every now and then she snatched at her clothes in a way that showed she was afflicted with that horrid complaint that invariably follows poor diet and personal uncleanliness. Her clothing was of the poorest material, and was faded and worn, and in fact she was dressed precisely as the field hands were in the South in ante-war times; but the condition of the boys was much worse, for they were veritably in rags, and the little fellow's pants were torn and frayed from the knee down, and his thin blue legs were exposed to the harsh air. The other boy, in answer to my query, "Why do you wear your worst clothes in cold weather?" answered, "Why, we ain't got any others, and some of the fellows is worse off nor us."

Here a boy about fourteen and far more intelligent in appearance than the others, came around the house with a baseball bat in his hand. I at once conjectured that he was a new-comer and spoke to him. His eyes filled, and he said "yes, and I'm not going to stay. I have to sleep with two other boys, and one has sores all over him and smells so bad he makes me sick. I've only been here three weeks, and I'm getting sore eyes, and Dr. Zeigler leaves salve and the Greaser puts it on us with his fingers and we are getting worse all the time. When I came here they gave me this old jacket (evidently an old infantry shell jacket, ragged and greasy), to wear and it made me ——, and I can't get 'em off." And I was horrified when he turned up his cuff and I plainly saw the loathsome vermin nestled there.

All the smaller boys had skin irritation, and no care was taken to prevent the new arrivals from getting it, as they were assigned to beds by the older boys, who had charge of the dormitories, and no means were taken to isolate the infected children. All washed together and used the same towels, and in bad weather they were packed into the cellar like so many sheep.

"My father," said the poor boy, "was a Captain in the army, and was wounded in front of Petersburg, and there's plenty here that are not soldiers' orphans at all, sir. I'm going to cut it as soon as spring comes."

Mindful of the maxim of the reverence due to children, I did not speak of the relations of the boys and girls in the school, but I utterly failed to get any of the girls to talk; they seemed utterly cowed and depressed, and slunk away when addressed. The Captain's son said that "Old Sherbin" had forbid them speaking of the place and its methods to strangers. I now determined to get inside, and had my foot on the steps leading to the front door when some one called out: "What do ye want?" I turned and found that the children had vanished and that my querist was a man; this was Sherbin, Acting Superintendent and "Master of Mechanics." He settled my expectations of getting further information in very few words. "If I had an order from Mr. Higbie or Mr. Paul I could go through the building. If I had no pass I was a trespasser and had no right to go around jawing to the children." He was evidently determined to be uncivil, and replied to several of my questions by saying shortly "that it was none of my business," and that I must "git out" at once. It is not easy to upset the professional equanimity of a reporter, and I quietly walked past him and around the east side of the house to get a look at the kitchen. The door was open and everything was black with dirt. The floor seemed to answer for a table, as it was covered with cooking utensils, and there was a sour, sickly steam arising from the food that was cooking on the ranges. My investigation was cut short by some one slamming the door to violently, nearly banging my nose. Again the man spoke: "Now, sir, I don't want to be uncivil, but this is agin' the rules, and you must go. If you bring a proper order, I'll do all I can to oblige you." I found that I could do no more, and as my time was limited I could not well stay longer, but in truth I had seen enough for conviction. The institution was an offence to all decency and humahity, and those connected with it were well aware of all this—but there was money in it, and justice must sleep for a time. I learned from a Harrisburg reporter that there was something on foot and that the managers were excited and vigilant, and that I would most likely get a very frosty reception from the Harrisburg officials if I went for an order to visit the schools. He told me the schools were run by a syndicate for the State appropriation. and that he could get $5 for taking a "kid" there, and it was not an indispensable condition that the "kid" should be an orphan and the child of a soldier, as he knew of children there whose parents had not been in the country ten years. They were worth $35 a year to the syndicate, and not less than $30,000 per annum was divided among the men that run the business. Now all this was two months before the formal and searching investigation that is now going on was commenced, and I can well believe that the worst has not been told. Hearsay evidence alone is scarcely admissable to impeach men of fraud and inhumanity, but the testimony of my own ears and eyes corroborates much that I learned from others.

I Guess So.

A New York paper says the phrase "I guess" is a colloquialism which had its origin in New England. It is undoubtedly a colloquialism common in New England, but it is a natural expression, and its origin probably contemporaneous with the words of which it is composed. Chaucer wrote:

"With him there was his son, a young squire,
A lover and a lusty bachelor,
With lockes crull, as they were laid in press,
Of twenty years of age he was, I guess."

—*Boston Courier.*

FACT AND FANCY.

A bank cashier never goes off until he is loaded, and then he makes no report.

Never borrow trouble. The interest you have to pay for the accommodation is excessive.

Scientific people say London fogs are turning pink; but possibly pink is the favorite color of young bucks when they go out painting the town.

"I've run a piece of wood under my finger nail," said an old married man to his wife. "Ah," she sneered, "you must have been scratching your head."

"Are you a marrying man?" was asked of a somber-looking man at a recent up-town reception. "Yes, sir," was the prompt reply; "I am a clergyman."

Yes, Sam Jones is undoubtedly correct. The devil is a gentleman, but he differs from some other gentlemen we wot of. He has a cloven foot instead of a cloven breath.

Rev. Henry Ward Beecher has been preaching a sermon to "Men who Can Not Smile." We have not explicit information, but suppose it must refer to prohibitionists; but even in that case we think H. W. B. is mistaken.

The following letter was received by an undertaker from an afflicted widower: "My wief is ded and wants to be beried to marrow at Wonner klock. U nose wair to dig the Hole—by the side of my other two wiefs—let it be deep."

"Mother, what is an angel?" "My dear it is a little girl with wings who flies." "But I heard papa telling the governess yesterday that she was an angel; will she fly?" "Yes, my dear, she will fly away the first thing tomorrow."

There is said to be a movement on foot to organize a servant girls' mutual protective association. One of the first rules, it is understood, will be that no mistress is to be permitted to fuss around in the kitchen while a servant girl is present.

A nurseryman in Pennsylvania claims to be able to grow apples without cores. This is certainly an improvement upon that variety of fruit which comes with the flowers that bloom in the spring, and is principally remarkable for being a core without any apple outside of it.

"We go to press at 2 instead of 4 today," said a Tennessee paper, "in order to attend to some business of importance in the country." At precisely five minutes of 4 two high-toned-looking men with shot-guns called, and wanted to know where the editor was.

Artillery is monarchic, cavalry aristocratic, and infantry democratic. Armor and horse brought the rule of the few over the many; cannon helped make one man ruler over all, while the musket is the agent of the popular will and the pioneer of universal suffrage.

A 68-pounder twenty-five years ago was the most powerful piece of artillery known, and it threw a projectile 1,570 feet per second. Now the weight of guns has increased from 5 to 100 tons, the velocities from 1,600 to 2,000 feet, and the energies from 1,100 foot-tons to 52,000 foot-tons.

The *Gaulois*, of Paris, informs its readers that "Gen. Crook, at the head of 6,000 men, one-fifth of the entire army of the United States, has been pursuing for the past two weeks ten Apaches, who have been giving him a breakneck run through the immense territory of Arizona."

Six-year-old Mary M. informed the family a few days ago that she wished to go to church Sunday, as she was interested in what would be said. After much persuasion she was induced to say that she "spected after the men and women had sung the minister would get up and say: 'The Progressive Whist club will meet with Mrs. M. next Wednesday night."

"We have called Rev. Dr. Blank to our church next year." "You don't mean it! I never heard of him. What church has he ever had? Is he a famous preacher?" "Famous preacher? Should say he was. He has been indicted by a grand jury twice, and was three times suspended from the ministry in four years. I expect we shall have to build an addition to our church in six months."

She was young, she was green, she was very new in Washington. At a recent swell affair she had gone with the crowd into the refreshment room. Presently an elegant-looking waiter for all the world like a foreign ambassador, bowed politely before her and murmured: "Is there anybody waiting on you miss?" "Sir? Sir?" she stammered, in startled embarrassment. "Pardonnez moi. Is there anyone waiting on you?" "Oh!" she said, blushing brightly. "No, sir; not in Washington. But when I'm home I've got more beaux than any other girl in town."

Few of the people who see Lotta kicking her heels and playing all the tricks of a little girl on the stage would place her age at the correct figure. The little mite of a body doesn't look it, but she was born on Nassau street, New York, Nov. 27, 1847. Her father, John Ashworth Crabtree, was an Englishman, and kept a bookstore, which he abandoned to go to California during the gold craze of '49. Lotta has been on the stage since 1858, and she is credited with the largest pile of dollars of any woman in the profession, the greater part of which she owes to her mother's business shrewdness.

An Astonished Engineer.

Over in Jersey City one day last week two or three locomotive engineers sat talking over strange experiences, and this was the story that one told: "I was a young man working on a southern railroad as a fireman when the war broke out. Before the war was over I got an engine of my own; but before I was regularly promoted the engineer of my train fell sick of a sudden and I was ordered to take the engine out myself. I shipped a brakesman to do my firing, and atarted away at six o'clock in the morning, pulling one passenger and half a dozen freight cars. There wasn't any fighting along my line, but there was a deal of bad feeling everywhere, and lots of lawless deeds were being committed. The track on this road had been torn up in two places only a week before and there was a good bit of talk about train-wreckers and the like. At about eight o'clock at a way station I got a telegram from headquarters to drop all my cars and hurry right on to the end of the line with only my locomotive and tender. It was a queer order, but I knew that it was official and I made ready to obey orders, when a little man with a slouched hat, who did not look as if he weighed over a hundred pounds, climbed up into the cab, and said to me that he wished I would let him ride in there with me, he was so anxious to go forward as far as he could. I told him that my orders were to let nobody ride, and explained that I didn't think I could let him go. 'Didn't you expect me?' he asked. I told him I didn't. 'It will be all right,' he insisted, but when I asked him what was his name and what was his business he couldn't be induced to tell me. 'Then it's all up,' said I, 'I'll go right along without you.' Then he suggested that he was willing to pay me well for letting him remain aboard, but I wasn't taking any chances, and I told him so. I was only waiting while my fireman attended to some business that he had gone down the track about, and then I was going to shoot ahead and leave everybody behind. You ought to have seen the sparks in that little man's eye. 'You needn't wait for your helper,' he said, in that kind of quiet tone that had a whole battlefield in its very quietness. 'You needn't wait for your fireman. I'll do his work. Go ahead!' I looked at him, wondering whether or not he was crazy, when he calmly took out a shiny pistol and tapped gently on one of the brass rods of the cab seat, and he repeated once more, 'Go ahead!' I was knocked clean out. What could the stranger mean? That sparkle in his eye grew brighter and brighter, and seemed fairly to dance like a diamond in the sun. 'Do you understand?' he inquired, in the quiet tone that pierced me like a bullet. 'Go ahead, I say.' I went ahead. On, on, and on we dashed, through the fields and forests and by the villages, stopping nowhere, my passenger—I felt that he was a madman—keeping a close watch on me all the while. I was scared. That pistol was still in his hand, and like the little hand of a watch its rat-a-tat-tat on the brass rod kept counting off the seconds and the minutes till I grew almost crazy myself. I was rattled. A sort of film kept coming up before my eyes. He said not one word, but I felt that his searching gaze was on me all the while. And finally I could stand it no more. There was a rush of blood to my head, I staggered and fell—with the town I was bound for just in sight. What I remember next was a buzz of voices over me as I lay in a doctor's office. Aside from a nervous shock I had suffered nothing. My engine had brought me into town all right, and had come to a halt at the station as gently and amiably as any old family horse. The man who had rode down with me had known enough to govern her, but he had waited at the depot after arriving only long enough to tell a bystander that I was in need of help in on the engine's floor. A week after I learned the reason for the strange order that had been given me to hurry on with my locomotive and no cars, and I learned too the name and the mission of my passenger. A telegraph operator had blundered. My dispatch should have read: 'Take on little man with brown slouch hat; drop all cars and rush forward with no stops.' The operator had carelessly left off the first phrase about 'the little man with brown slouch hat,' and given me only the last part of the order. The man? He was Alexander H. Stephens, and he had important war information that he had been willing to trust nobody else. He apologized to me afterward for his strange actions, but he said he felt that only in such a way could he ever manage to make me go on, for he didn't know what the text of my orders was, and he was afraid to ask for fear that he might find me either unfriendly or untrustworthy. Those were days when everybody was suspected, you know."
—*New York Times.*

Racing at a Ball.

"I say, Jim, were you over to the Charity Ball, the other night."

"Yes, and I predominated there to a great extent."

"Did you notice anything there that would remind you of a horse race?"

"Well, I noticed considerable jockeying among the fair sex to see who would win the race for beauty."

"And what was the result of your observation?"

"They nearly all came in winners by a bare neck."—*National Weekly.*