

# THE COAL MINER.

## PLEASURES AND PLEASURES OF ANTHRACITE WORKERS.

The Horses They Live In—A Miner's Outfit—What they Earn—Preparing for a Blast—Miners' Amusements.

Dotted along the hillsides and the valleys of the anthracite area of Pennsylvania, says a Scranton letter to the Philadelphia Times, are thousands of modest little homes, around whose porches the roses are blooming and in whose adjacent gardens the traces of industry and good taste are visible in these golden days. Some of these dwellings are only a single story, but the majority of them are two stories high. They are cosy frame buildings, erected for accommodation rather than comfort, yet combining both, and around the doors of many of them and under the friendly shade of the fruit trees that throw their cool shadows across the walks are heard the voices of children, whose merry prattle is fatal to anarchism and all other isms that aim at the destruction of love and home and hope and religion. As a general thing, the miners have large families, and while their tables do not boast of many of life's luxuries, they manage to get a moderate share of such substantial fare as pork and cabbage, potatoes and beefsteak, with an occasional pie. The majority of them now find it a difficult matter to feed themselves and their families. It requires no small degree of tact, at the present rate of earning, to pay the monthly store bills, to say nothing of clothing and the other necessities of life. And yet the output of coal is large.

When business is brisk seven or eight hours constitute a miner's working day, while the laborers work ten hours or more per day. On full time a miner earns from \$2.50 to \$2.75 a day, and he is fortunate just now if his earnings average \$1.25 to \$1.50. Under favorable circumstances, and with plenty of work, a laborer earns \$1.75 a day generally, but he does not earn much more than 75 cents a day at present. The men employed on what is called "the day shift" generally go to work at 7 o'clock in the morning, and those employed in the mines at night, or on the "night shift," begin their tasks at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The food of the miner and his family generally consists of plain, substantial fare, meat of some kind being used invariably once a day. Much of this meat is bacon or "shoulder," which is bought because it is cheaper than "butchers' meat." This is the staple article of diet and it is supplemented by bread, potatoes, cabbage, when in season, and a good deal of salt fish and cheese. These constitute the main articles of food on a miner's table, but when work is steadier and pay better the love of luxury extends to an occasional cake or pie. Some of the miners, although they are the exceptions to the general rule, are so fortunately situated as to be able to raise their own pork, and at their tables meat is not as scarce as it is with those who depend for the necessities and comforts of life on their slender earnings.

The miner's outfit requires in the first place a coarse suit of clothing. If the working place is wet an oiled suit similar to that worn by sailors is essential, with a broad sou'wester hat and heavy hob-nailed boots. The hat is generally provided with a place for holding the lamp in front while the miner is at work. The miner also must have a drill—generally six or seven feet long and tipped with about six inches of steel. Recent inventions have improved on this primitive method of making room for the blast that brings down the anthracite, and a patent augur does duty in many places at present for the cumbersome drill and is much handier. The outfit of the miner includes an oil-can, a mining-lamp, wicks for the latter, a dinner pail and a pail for coffee or water. The blasting materials consist of powder served in twenty-five-pound kegs or in prepared cartridges. When the former is used the miner makes up his own charges and uses water-proof paper for the purpose. The ready-made cartridges are supplied in fire-proof cases.

In preparing for a blast a steel needle about five or six feet long is inserted in the charge, which is tamped close, after which the needle is withdrawn and a straw or squib inserted in the hole thus made for the purpose of igniting the explosive. In gaseous mines touch-squibs are employed to fire the blast, as a flame would be specially dangerous.

All these fine points must be understood by the miner to carry on his work successfully; but, careful as he is, great accidents that startle the country and fill whole communities with woe sometimes occur. To this class of mining horrors belong the disasters at Avondale, West Pittston and Nanticoke, all of comparatively recent occurrence, and the Carbon-dale mine "cave-in" of nearly thirty years ago, which is still remembered vividly by some of the older miners of the Lackawanna Valley. A disaster that takes twenty or forty precious lives at a single swoop is naturally remembered with terror, but the miscellaneous deaths that are caused by fall of roof and explosions of fire damp in a single year are not less appalling. The death list in the coal regions is terribly augmented every

year by the fatalities in the mines, and the long array of widows and orphans who are thus suddenly deprived of the means of support is something pitiful to contemplate.

The pleasures in the life of the miner are of a primitive sort. Occasionally during the dramatic season he may witness one of the many plays that travel or hear comic opera. He likes a good lecture or speech and has a good deal of respect for the man who can talk common sense backed by conviction. As a general thing the hard-working class of men like frankness. They don't appreciate duplicity or the political diplomacy that keeps the word of promise to the ear and breaks it to the hope. In the picnic season the miner, if he has the time, enjoys himself most. He believes in simple pleasures and will take a glass of beer occasionally unless he is a strict temperance man. There is not a great deal of drinking among the miners these times and a good many of them are members of various temperance organizations. They keep a close watch on the progress of public men and are careful readers of the newspapers. Many of the miners along the Lackawanna Valley own the little homes they live in and if work was more abundant they would be happy, as they are a thrifty, industrious class, and, while generous almost to a fault, are not by any means extravagant.

### Quicksilver.

Quicksilver forms a part of a soft, red rock called cinnabar, composed of mercury and sulphur. The cinnabar is crushed and exposed to the heat, when the metal, in form of vapor, passes into a vessel suitable for the purpose, where it is cooled. Then, being reduced to its liquid state, it is pure and fit for use.

When men working in the mines heat the rocks, the quicksilver will sometimes roll out in drops as large as a pigeon's egg, and fall on the ground in a million sparkling globules. It is said to be very beautiful against the dark, red rock, glittering everywhere with this "living silver," while every crack and crevice is also filled with it.

Just as wood floats on water because it is lighter, so large stones thrown into a kettle of mercury would float on top, it is so much more heavy a substance than the stone.

There are only four important localities where it is obtained—California, Peru, Austria, and Almaden, in Spain. The nearest mines to us are those in California. The mines in Peru were discovered in a curious manner. Cinnabar, when ground very fine, makes a beautiful red paint. The Indians used this to ornament their bodies on great occasions. This caused the country where they lived to be examined, and the cinnabar was found. The Romans used this paint hundreds of years ago in decorating their images. It is of great value now in our times, and we call it vermilion.

This wonderful quicksilver is very useful in separating metals from the rocks to which they cling. The rocks are crushed fine, sifted, and washed until as much of the gold and silver is removed as possible. Then it is placed in a bottle with the quicksilver, which seems to absorb it at once, separating it entirely from every particle of sand or rock. If the metal to be cleansed is gold, you will see a yellowish mass of a sort of paste or amalgam. This is heated, and the mercury or quicksilver flies away, leaving behind it pure gold.

Although mercury is so useful in many ways, it is also a deadly poison, and its vapor so dangerous that in the search for it many persons have lost their lives. Not many years ago the mines of Austria took fire, and 1,300 workmen were poisoned, many of them dying in consequence; and the water used to quench the flames, pumped into a river near by, caused all the fish in the river to die.

Have you ever seen mercury carried about? It is put in sheepskin bags and cast iron bottles. It is so heavy that instead of an ordinary cork, an iron stopper is used—screwed in!

Sometimes these bags do sad havoc, as in the case of a storage of several in the hold of a ship bringing it to this country. Some of the bags leaked. Everybody on board was poisoned. Every bit of metal was covered with a silver coating of quicksilver.

### Don't Blind the Babies.

Has it ever occurred to those who purchase coaches for their babies, and who make it a point to select the brightest colors they can find for the screen that is interposed between the eyes of the child and the sun, that they are liable to do irreparable injury to the vision of the little ones? An infant generally lies on its back, its eyes, of course, upturned toward the bright covering above it, its gaze being the more intense the brighter the covering and the more direct the rays of the sun upon it. Nothing but injury can result from such thoughtless exposure. An experienced nurse says there cannot be a doubt as to the injurious effects of those bright so-called shields upon the tender eyes of children. Parents who are wise will select the darker and denser shades, even though they may not be as handsome or showy in their eyes as some of those which are more fashionable.

What is the difference between a paper dollar and a dollar of silver? Never mined.

## 'ADIES' COLUMN.

### How a Girl Got Rid of Suitors.

A curious story comes from Moscow. A clever and beautiful girl had an immense fortune left her to be paid into her hands on the occasion of her marriage. Her friends tried to oblige her to marry a man whom she could not endure, and she had no money to take herself out of the reach of his attentions. So she sent for an old beggar man, to whom she had occasionally given a few cents, and offered him three hundred roubles if he would stand up for the marriage ceremony with her and straightway leave the town and never let her hear from him again till the news should be sent of his death. He consented very cheerfully and the marriage took place, all the beggars in Moscow coming to see the strange pair wedded. In a few years, the girl who is only twenty-two years old now, will doubtless be legally a widow, with the right to give her hand to the obscure lover for whose sake she went through the extraordinary ceremony. In the meantime she is rich and free from suitors.—Boston Record

### A Bride's Gift Table.

A Paris letter to London Truth says: I feel disposed to pat on the back an Argentine nabob of Irish origin—Mr. Thomas St. George Armstrong—for the openness of hand he showed on the occasion of his marriage last week with the daughter of Vicomte Faria. Consul General of Portugal here. The Armstrong fortune was made in and around Buenos Ayres—a classic land of extractum carnis.

No bride of high standing had ever, perhaps, a more sumptuous display of presents from the bridegroom on her gift-table than the lady who is now Mrs. Armstrong. What do you think of a string of pearls which cost 60,000 francs, and was just long enough to go once around a slender neck, of a diamond, rivière, to which could be attached a drapery of filigree work, studded and fringed with brilliants; of solitaire earrings large as hazel nuts, to which tassels in brilliants might be adapted, with, to match them, a brooch of one immense pearl, encircled with brilliants, a bouquet of roses in brilliants, a bunch of wheat-ears idem, and a diamond surmounted with a star? There were, besides, sets of turquoise and of pink coral ornaments, of sapphires and other rich rare gems. Although the bride is Portuguese, she has beauty enough of face and figure to be a blonde Cuban.

### The South American Queen.

I notice an interesting paragraph in an English journal which informs us that a Leitch firm has just completed a hand some screw steam launch which had been built to the order of Mrs. Couseno, a South American lady, who is reported to be the richest woman in the world. The launch, which is built of steel, is twenty-five feet in length, and is to be employed as a tender to her large yacht. (The large yacht is engaged at present in the unpretending but profitable trade of carrying coals from Lota to Valparaiso.) It is elaborately fitted up in polished mahogany, and is to be despatched forthwith by one of the mail steamers from Liverpool for conveyance to Chili.

Beside being the richest lady in the world, she also enjoys the singular privilege of being Empress over a tract of territory called Lota, which lies some two or three hundred miles to the south of the port. It may appear strange to speak of an Empress in the heart of a free republic, but nevertheless the fact exists, and so absolute are Her Majesty's powers that there are few of her subjects who would be resolute and courageous enough to claim the possession of their own immortal souls, or who would not be prepared to deny that on the making of the place a special arrangement was made with reference to coal deposits between the Divinity and the reigning monarch.—Valparaiso Letter.

### Fashion Notes.

Old mauve holds its own as a fashionable color.

Yellow suits are generally covered with black lace.

The stylish boot of the season has the toe and heel tip.

Watered silk and watered ribbon remain in favor.

Amber shot with deep blue or ruby is a favored combination.

Gauze fans have charming designs signed by artists of note.

The most fashionable hosiery has tiny embroidered designs or clocks in the same or contrasting colors.

Linen plush is a new material and used for dressing gowns and trimming. It resembles its woollen prototype.

Gloves of pean de Suede have the arm from the wrist upward of guipure lace corresponding in tint to the kid.

A pointed puff, extending from the top of the sleeve to the elbow, is made of the lace or embroidery with which the dress is trimmed. This style of trimming sleeves is only applicable to rich dresses.

Last year's leaf-shaped basques at the backs of bodices of woollen material are still in favor. When these are used the bodice is trimmed with velvet or moiré antique, and two points of this fall below the leaf points of the woollen material.

## A SOUTHERN EDEN.

### AN EXPLORER'S STORY OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

The Richest Country in the World—Falls that Equal Niagara—Beautiful Women and Progressive Men—Buenos Ayres.

Mr. W. P. Tisdal, the noted African explorer, has just returned from a trip to the Argentine Republic. A writer for the New York Mail and Express conversed with him about the magnificent El Dorado, as he termed the Argentine Republic.

"It is the Utopian country of the universe," he said. "In climate, resources, energy and future possibilities that country is the greatest on the face of the earth. It fulfills in every way the dream of the poet, the reality of the liberty-loving and the wealth that first led the adventurous Spaniards to seek out and conquer unknown worlds. The first impetus given to progress in the Republic was when President Sarmiento inaugurated the system of public schools fifteen years ago. Since then an Eden of prosperity has followed."

"How about the attempt to assassinate General Roca, the President, the other day?"

"That was the act of an insane man. Even model republics are not free from cranks. President Roca is popular, and the country has made great progress during his term, which expires on the 8th of October. He will then resume his position as General-in-Chief of the army. President Roca will be succeeded by Juarez Selman, who was elected by an overwhelming majority. A Presidential term is six years. There are two political parties—the Liberals and Conservatives. The former have won every election, and perhaps will continue to do so for many years. The constitution and laws are fashioned after those of the United States. The republic contains 4,000,000 people and an area of 1,900,000 square miles. The seasons there are reversed. I left the last of May; it was very cold. Now it is dead winter there. The climate surpasses that of any country. It is life-giving and invigorating. Beef hung up in the open air never decays, but dries to a state of preservation, and great quantities are shipped all over the world."

"What kind of a debt does the model republic groan under?"

"She smiles under a foreign and domestic debt of \$120,000,000. The revenues for 1886 were \$50,000,000 and the expenditures \$30,000,000. The foreign commerce of 1884 amounted to a grand total of \$150,000,000. Gold has recently been discovered in the Province of Patagonia, and an expedition has been fitted out under the direction of the wealthy capitalist, Senor Lezama, who has gone thither to explore and report. Such things constantly keep the country booming and give capital a chance to invest. The republic owns the great Province of the Missions, considered the richest in the world."

"The falls of Ygazu, a few miles above the intersection of the rivers Ygazu and the Parana, on the borders of the Missions, are considered superior in size, beauty and sublimity to the falls of Niagara. They are much wider and have a fall of twenty feet greater than Niagara. The volume of water is not as great as the latter, but for picturesqueness they go far ahead of the world-famous falls."

"How does Buenos Ayres compare with other cities?"

"It is the New York of that continent. There is no city in the world to equal it in enterprise and wealth according to its size. It has a population of 450,000, and supports twenty-eight daily newspapers. Everybody reads. The papers cost two and a half cents per copy. The majority are printed in Spanish, but nearly every language is represented. Buenos Ayres has more miles of street railroads than any other city in the world. The houses are generally one-story high. Of late, however, bank and public buildings have been erected three and four stories high. The only building material is brick. Telephones are everywhere, and the city is lit up with electricity. There are twelve theatres as finely appointed in every way as in Europe or the United States.

"But the city is shut off from the world?"

"No, only shut off from the United States. From thirty to sixty mail steamers arrive monthly and ride in one of the finest ports of entry in the world. One steamer departs monthly for the United States. There are several lines of steamers carrying frozen cattle to Europe. One beef extract company at Fray Bentos kill over 2,500 head of cattle per day. Emigration is pouring in from Italy, Spain, France, Greece and Ireland. The Americans do not come to any extent, although they would be gladly welcomed. The new city of La Plata, capital of the Province of Buenos Ayres, twelve miles from the city of Buenos Ayres, is considered the most wonderful place of its size that has ever been built. It contains 80,000 inhabitants. The city was constructed at a great expense by Governor Rocha, within a period of five years. The public buildings are comparable only to some of the finest in the United States. Electricity, telephones and all the modern improvements are in use. Millions upon

millions have been spent in beautifying the city and erecting handsome buildings."

"Well, have they many women in the model city?"

"Ah! yes, and the most beautiful that eyes ever gazed upon. Mr. Frank Vincent, author of the 'Land of the White Elephant,' came up with me. He declares that the Spanish women in the Argentine Republic are the most beautiful on the face of the globe."

### McClellan and Burnside.

Among the accounts from various points of view of the Battle of Fredericksburg, in the Century, is one by General D. N. Couch, from which we quote as follows: "Toward evening, on the 8th of November, 1862, at Warrenton, McClellan rode up to Burnside's headquarters to say that he had been relieved of the command of the army. Burnside replied:

"I am afraid it is bad policy; very, very."

"It was just at dark. I had dismounted, and, standing there in the snow, was superintending the camp arrangements of my troops, when McClellan came up with his staff, accompanied by General Burnside. McClellan drew in his horse, and the first thing he said was:

"Couch, I am relieved from the command of the army, and Burnside is my successor."

"I stepped up to him and took hold of his hand, and said: 'General McClellan, I am sorry for it.' Then, going around the head of the horse to Burnside, I said: 'General Burnside, I congratulate you.'"

"Burnside heard what I said to General McClellan; he turned away his head, and made a broad gesture as he exclaimed:

"Couch, don't say a word about it."

"His manner indicated that he did not wish to talk about the change; that he thought it wasn't good policy to do so, nor the place to do it. He told me afterward that he did not like to take the command, but that he did so to keep it from going to somebody manifestly unfit for it. I assumed that he meant Hooker. Those of us who were well acquainted with Burnside knew that he was a brave, loyal man, but we did not think he had the military ability to command the Army of the Potomac."

"McClellan took leave on the 10th. Fitz John Porter sent notes to the corps commanders, informing them that McClellan was going away, and suggesting that we ride around with him. Such a scene as that leave-taking had never been known in our army. Men shed tears and there was great excitement among the troops."

"I think the soldiers had an idea that McClellan would take care of them; wouldn't put them in places where they would be unnecessarily cut up; and if a general has the confidence of his men he is pretty strong. But officers and men were determined to serve Burnside loyally."

### Legitimate Newspapers.

James P. Guernsey, editor of the Republic, Rome, N. Y., truthfully says in the Journalist:

The country is flooded with a class of papers which reek with immorality—sewers for the offal of the universe. Still, we hear very few complaints against them, and the man who kicks at his home paper after perusing it for several hours, remarking that "there is nothing in it," will sneak off to some secluded spot and devour with avidity the contents of so-called police journals, which make a specialty of chronicling divorce cases, elopements, family quarrels, and other events still lower in the catalogue of shame. Do you ever hear them kicking against such sheets? Oh, no! They don't read them. But we started out to talk about legitimate newspapers. The fault-finding reader does not know—or at least he does not seem to know—that the editor is much the same as ordinary mortals. He has his share of trials and tribulations, and there are times when the pen forgets its cunning and facility. At such times his journal may seem a trifle dull. Weeks pass without giving him an opportunity of chronicling some startling event or inditing an editorial on some matter contiguous to his village or city. When opportunities are offered and he publishes his views on important matters, his readers will pick them to pieces and tell how he could have builded better, while the chances are ten to one that they would never have thought of giving their ideas in the matter had not the editor drawn them out. But, did you ever hear an excuse offered for an editor? We never did. Experience is a good teacher. Let the greenhorn who thinks he can pick up the editorial quill and wield it in such a manner that it will bear articles pleasing to everyone on the list, and win him a world-wide reputation, straddle the tripod, dip the quill in Arnold's best and spread the fluid.

James Hess, in the Herald of Health, makes a good point in regard to men's vests. The front of the vest is made of thick material of several thicknesses, sometimes even padded, while the back—where the lungs come nearest the surface—is made of some thin, flimsy material, like cambric. He thinks the thin-backed vest is responsible for many colds and much sickness.

## FACTS FOR THE CURIOUS.

One-half of the children born into the world die before they reach the age of five years.

Eighteen bumblebees, twenty-two wasps or thirty-eight ordinary honey bees contain enough poison to kill an adult.

To make nails was one of the sentences imposed in Massachusetts a hundred years ago as a punishment for crime, and twelve nails a day was accepted as a day's work.

The planet Mars has more land than the earth and the latest theory is that Mars is inhabited by a race of beings similar to our own, but longevity there is far less than here.

The greatest fortress in the world, from a strategical point of view, is the famous stronghold of Gibraltar. It occupies a rocky peninsula jutting out into the sea about three miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide.

It was not until 1850 that the word "donkey" found its way into the dictionaries. It is a nickname for the ass and nothing more. Probably in the course of time it will be superseded by the word "dude," which has about the same meaning.

Cesar is said to have had 320 pairs of gladiators at once in the arena, and to add to the scenic effect the bloody struggles were at night. Trajan surpassed all in forcing 10,000 unhappy prisoners and gladiators to contend for life in the Roman amphitheatre; the bloody and brutal sport lasted for 113 days.

In 1615 Governor Dale procured the important privilege for the people of Virginia of holding landed property by a stable tenure. The farmers then did not possess the land they cultivated by a tenure of common socage, but enjoyed it as tenants at will of the crown. Now to every adventurer into the colony, and to his heirs, were granted fifty acres of land, and the same quantity for every person imported by others.

A good many people will be surprised to learn that the biggest building in the United States will be the City Hall of Philadelphia, now in process of construction. Between \$11,000,000 and \$12,000,000 have been expended upon it since 1872. It is estimated to cover 2,800 more square feet than the Capitol at Washington. The tower on the north side will be surmounted by a statue of Penn., and its extreme height when completed will be 535 feet. It has now reached a height of 270 feet.

Slavery in the ancient Roman world was in part sustained by a practice so revolting and inhuman as hardly to be comprehensible to modern ideas—the systematic exposure and abandonment of the children of the poor and of feeble and defective children by the rich. There are innumerable allusions to this inhuman treatment throughout Latin literature. In two different comedies or dialogues the husband, on starting on a journey, is represented as ordering his wife, who is soon to give birth to a babe, to destroy it if it prove a girl; and the plot of one turns on the wife's foolish weakness in exposing rather than killing the female infant.

### The Manuscript Market.

Junius Henri Browne says in the Forum: Only those on the inside have any idea of the excessive supply of manuscripts wherever they are paid for, the price mattering little. Such is the general desire, indeed, to see one's self in print that periodicals which receive gratuitous contributions alone are always full to overflowing. There is not a magazine in the country but has enough accepted articles for the next two years, without any additions. Whenever a new monthly makes its appearance, it is deluged with papers on every topic conceivable, some of them almost inconceivable. Editors are in constant terror of manuscripts, which descend on them like avalanches. They are very wary and timid on the subject, and with reason. When anybody speaks of writing, they are visibly discomfited. It is like talking of halting in the house of the hanged. They do not like to say what they feel: "Heaven and earth! I am suffocating from a surplus of contributions; he who sends another is my bitter enemy!" lest they be thought rude. They shrink from being polite for fear of opening fresh sluices. They often hesitate to say: "We should like to see the article you mention, though we cannot promise to use it," which means nothing; is but a courteous phrase of emptiness. If they say so, they are afraid that the article will be offered and rejected, and that its writer will declare that he was urged to prepare it. Many editors put it bluntly: "We are overrun. We are taking nothing from outsiders. When we want anything special, we arrange for it with one of our regular contributors." This may not be exactly true, but it is substantially so. And it is better to be discouraging than to excite a hope which cannot be gratified. To be an editor is inconvenient; to be a writer of any kind, without other source of income, is positively tragic.

The oldest publishing house in the world is that of Orell, Fussli & Co., in Zurich, Switzerland. The firm still possesses initial letters that were used in 1519.