

BRITISH WORKMAN



GLoucestershire Collier.

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CELEBRATED COLLIERIES AND MINERS.

[The Colliers and Miners we are so much indebted for our pit-side confidants at this season, that we give them the first place in our New Year's number.]

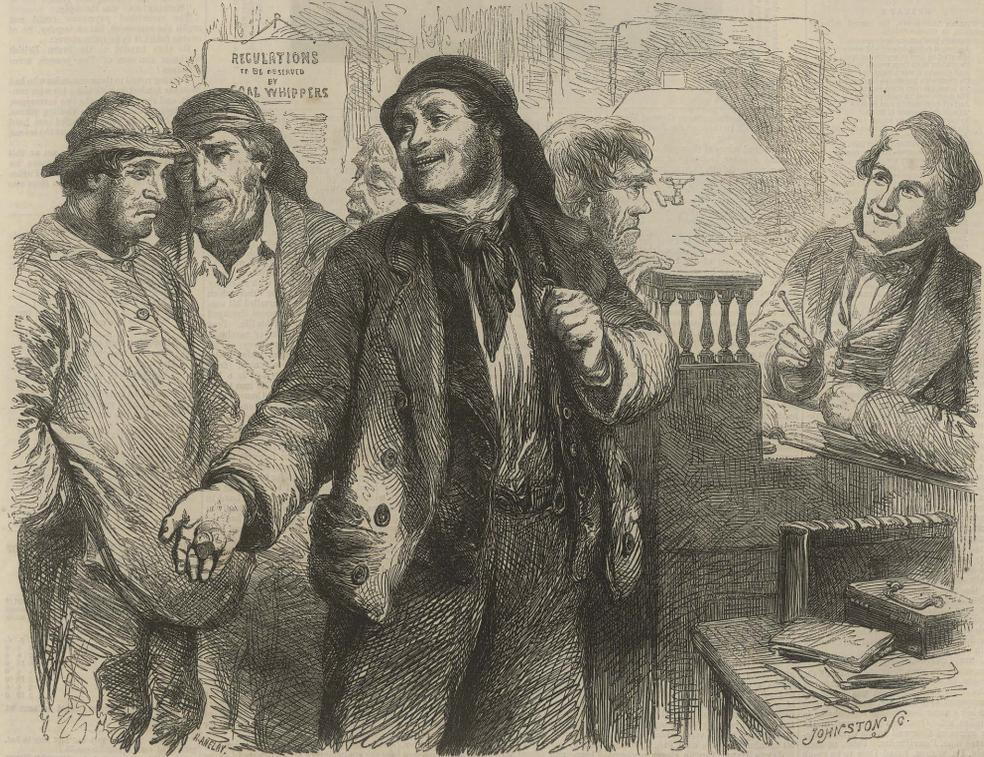
GEORGE STEPHENSON, the celebrated civil engineer and the father of the present Robert Stephenson, was, in the early part

of his life, a miner. He was born in a collier village near Newcastle, in 1761. His father was an engine tender at a pit, and George was taken when very young to earn twopence a day as an engine boy. In due time he became strong enough to work underground as a collier's assistant; and, after serving such an apprenticeship as is usual, became a pit labourer, afterwards

a breakman. In this humble capacity he worked steadily, soberly, and cheerfully, drawing the attention of his immediate superiors by his intelligence and readiness of resource when anything went wrong in the pit and required amendment. He was also remarked for a vigilant habit of observation, and a constant regard for the interests of his employers. The engine at

the pit mouth becoming unworkable, and the regular engineer having pronounced its condition hopeless, Stephenson came forward and offered to repair it. This he did completely, and he was forthwith installed by his employers in the place of engine man. From this he rose by various steps to the important position he ultimately occupied. He does not appear to have had

any school education, and it is said that he could not really read till he was twenty. He was a self-educated man, feeling his own deficiency he devoted himself to mental improvement by observation, experiment, reading, and study, at all times when he had the opportunity, and thus became useful, wealthy, and famous. About the same time that Sir Humphrey



"NOW LADS—I THINK I'VE GOT THE WHEAT, AND YOU'VE GOT THE CHAFF." (SEE NEXT PAGE.)

103rd Psalm, and knelt down, his family all kneeling round, and had prayer—the prayer of faith, and hope, and love. He rose, pressed the hand of the invalid, whose feeble lips moved with the words, "God be gracious to thee, my son." John dashed a tear from his eyes—his wife followed him to the door and kissed him—his little ones hung about him, and one boy prattler ran after him down the lane, and said, "Father, father, one more kiss for Nelly." Ah, clasp her close, poor child! for it is the last embrace her father will ever give her. He went with his heart overflowing with gratitude for all the sweet human ties that God had permitted to gather round him.

Hark! what is that? a shock! a crash! A sudden quiet, as if the hearts of the whole village had stood still—and then loud shouts and cries of men, and the wild scream of frantic women. Ah, it's too true! there's an explosion in the pit. Oh the agonies of wives, the terror of children, as they run in wild alarm to the place. Who can paint—may, who imagine the scene, but what an added pang there is for those who have parted in anger, and in sin. "Ah," said a widow in my hearing in South Wales, "if we had but parted in peace!" Oh, reader, try so to part with those you love, that the last words uttered on earth may be fit to echo in Heaven.

WELSH HOUSEWIFE.

Don't laugh dear reader! at the round high crowned black hat, worn by the tidy, hard-working Welsh woman. That hat often covers a good sensible head, full of wise true thoughts. I've



looked into the miners' homes in Wales, and when religion and sobriety were there, there are no working men's homes in any Britain more comfortable.

The good wife has a decent pride in having nice, and sometimes handsome furniture in her house. There's a row of houses all occupied by miners, that extends up hill out of the town of Merthyr Tydfil. There's good mahogany presses, and tables,



THE PIT EXPLOSION.

there, that reflect from their polished surface the glow of the bright large fires. Plenty of hard work there must be to keep the coals so neat and nice; and plenty of hard thrift to get such capital household gear; axes, and plenty of employment too, as at evening the wife spreads the plain plentiful meal, and waits her husband's return. He steps into his house like a king! How bright and warm and neat it is. And more than all it is his own! His kingdom! Who would crawl into a tap-room smelling of saw-dust, tobacco smoke, stale beer and dirty clothes, who could cheerfully go to a decent, quiet, snug little house, kept orderly by a good wife's hand, and lighted by her smile? But dear wife and mother, hear a word of advice from a friend. Have the fire, the meal, and the smile always ready; or the beer house keeper may cheat you of your husband. B.

PLEASANT TIDINGS.

THE REV. W. HAYWARD, M.A., late Chaplain at the Aldershot Camp, writes us from the Camp of the Curragh, thus:—"The BRITISH WORKMAN" so liberally sent to Aldershot, has been most highly valued by the gend. Some of the copies were placed in each ward of our hospital, and in every reading room. I have little hesitation in saying, that judging from their appearance (they were liberally distributed till they came to pieces) and from comments I heard made about them, they are the most popular of the many illustrated magazines with which our hospitals have been furnished."

TOUCHING ANECDOTE.

The following beautiful anecdote illustrative of the power of gospel promises amongst converted Indians, is given in a note attached to the first poem, by James Cochrane.

"It has been alleged by high authority that the Indians cannot be converted; the readiest answer to the impious and profane absurdity is, that they have been converted,

A large body of Indians have been converted by the Moravian missionaries, and settled in the West, where their simplicity, harmlessness, and happiness, secured a renewal of the better days of Christianity. During the revolutionary war, these settlements, named Liebenau and Gnadenthat, being located in the seat of the former Indian contests, were exposed to outrage from both parties. Being, however, under the tuition and influence of the whites, and having adopted their religion and the virtuous portion of their habits, they naturally apprehended that the hostile Indians, swearing down upon the American frontier, would take advantage of their helplessness, and destroy them as allies of the whites. Subsequent events enable us to compare the red and white man, and determine which is the savage. A party of two hundred hostile Hurons fiercely approached the Moravian Indian town. The Christian Indians conducted themselves in this trying extremity with meekness and firmness. They sent a deputation with refreshments to their approaching foes, and told them that by the word of God they were taught to be at peace with all men, and entreated for themselves and their white teachers peace and protection. And what replied the savage, fresh from the wilds and panting for blood? Did he mock to scorn the meek and christian appeal? Did he answer with his war-whoop, and lead on his men to the easy slaughter of his foes? What else could be expected from an Indian? Yet such was not the response of the red warrior. He said he was on a war party and his heart had been evil, and his aim had been blood, but the words of his brethren had opened his eyes. He would do them no harm. "Obey your teachers," said he "worship your God, and be not afraid. No creature shall hurt you."

BILSTON.

Bilston is a smoky episode between Birmingham and Wolverhampton, a town of miners and jaspers, and various workers in metals. Under many a coal-dusted face beats a thorough-going friendly heart, with as much of the milk of human kindness in it, as if it came naturally from a moral secretion. We who have lived long and moved among them, have often had to admire their patient practical attention to one another—the poor to the poor, in those seasons of accident, sickness, or any other calamity to which the nature of their work exposes them. We have seen great all muscular fellows carrying home a child from the house of a bruised fellow-workman, that "the woman (his wife) note take care on it till the foyther got round again." We have known a neighbouring housewife dress the burn wounds of some bachelor man who had no wife nor mother to tend upon him, through the trying and repulsive period of such an accident as a pit-burial, and continue to wait upon him hand and foot, without fee or favour, for nine or ten weeks together. All this is in their former greatly and nobly, but the drink ruins their other social virtues to a fearful extent, not to mention how awfully it tells upon their spiritual character and eternal destinies. Their wages are generally considerable, in some cases enough in a few years to retire upon their means, or else become a new race of master employers of labour. The



A BILSTON MINEER.

town possesses all the material for civil, moral, and intellectual improvement, and he who writes for it would be thankful to see all classes striving together to banish from among them vice, drunkenness, swearing, Sabbath breaking, and their intolerable love of "justising," and seeking to promote each other's social and religious welfare. Rev. J. B. Dwyer, M.A.



"They sent a deputation WITH REFRESHMENTS to their approaching foes."