THE

PASSING

CLOUDS

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N.C.

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THE

PASSING CLOUDS

by

Dr. David Morrill

Farmville

N.C.

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INTRODUCTORY.

FOR the appearance of this little volume I feel that only a general apology need be made. Its faults, I know, are many, and its merits, if it has any, will speak for themselves. But for expression of reason and good sense you will agree with me that it contains some. Its literary style and finish will not especially appeal to you, but without regard to this you can well afford to read its pages through for the actual facts they contain.

I have for several years been amusing the children who would occasionally come in my office by telling them all kinds of stories. Some of the more practical ones I have sought to preserve for their future reference by having them printed and bound in book form.

You can well imagine how hard it is to tell a good story when interruptions are frequent; thus it has been with me. But time is passing on, and I still find myself following the same old route.

However, the children continue to come in, and occasionally I relate to them a new story.

THE PASSING CLOUDS.

LUCINDA AND THE PREACHER.

MANY years ago there lived a young preacher who was both handsome and fascinating to a remarkable degree. He was married, and lived very happily with his young and beautiful wife Lucinda. Lucinda was of a very sympathetic though imperious nature. She loved her home life, and spent most of her time in amiably discharging the many duties that fell to her share.

She dressed with the daintiest care, and with a wealth of soft brown hair playing about her temples, it seemed as if she would for many years to come retain in its original freshness and exuberance the beauty of early youth.

The preacher showed her every possible courtesy and was considerate of her to a remarkable degree. He never tired or hesitated to make any sacrifices that he might the better grant her every wish. Finally one day he said to her in a gentle and very affectionate manner, "My dearest Lucinda, Lucinda," he repeated, for he loved to call her name, "I am obliged to leave you for a short while; it almost kills me to think that I must leave you for even a short while; but while I am absent, try in every possible way to pass the time pleasantly. I know you will never forget me for one moment; and

rest assured, dearest Lucinda, that my thoughts will ever be of you."

As the preacher drove away, Lucinda stood in the doorway looking after him; and with his parting words she waived a melancholy farewell, though she well knew he would be gone only a short while. "How fortunate I am," she said to herself on going back to her room, "that I, with no more charms than I possess, should have won the heart of such a noble man. There is no woman in this wide world with whom I would exchange places. We are so happy, there is nothing to trouble us. The sky is always clear with me."

Lucinda remembered her good resolution some little time, two or three hours or more perhaps, during which she wandered about the house, walked through the gardens and played on the musical instruments.

At last growing weary of this monotonous solitude, and finding the afternoon well on, she resolved to go to the seminary to return with the preacher, for she well knew he had gone there.

On entering the hallway she was informed that the preacher had some time before walked out in the garden and was by now probably among the evergreens.

After securing the key to the iron gate on the side, noiselessly she walked along the side way to the gate, and quietly turning the bolt the door flew open, and to her bewildered amazement, there was the preacher sitting on a rustic seat, and at either side of him there sat a pretty girl, each one resting a dainty arm on his shoulder. They seemed to be extremely happy and contented, he reading to them from a book.

No sooner had the gates opened than they closed again. The woman returned the way she had come. But she did not go to her home.

To a vacant brick mansion left her by her father she retired. Here she lived ever after, absolutely secluded from the rest of the world.

Two faithful servants lived with her, and when anything was needed one of them went for it. The other kept guard at the door. Never a word came or went except through these loyal servants. Old friends and relatives, calling, would be received and dismissed at the door.

The sheriff, calling to collect taxes, was received at the stair-steps; and the servants who paid the charges took care of the receipts.

As the years passed on outside interest in the strange mistress of the lonely home increased; but no word came from within, nor ever a glimpse of the features once so much admired.

Finally as the town grew, and new and strange people came in to replace others having died or moved away, and the old interest was dying out or being forgotten by the rising generation, some thought the strange woman would emerge from her hiding and again share with the world the charms of her lovely personality. But, as events proved, she had already grown old though still young in years.

The brown hair was now snowy white, her back inclined forward, a profound melancholy had possession of her soul.

Finally the undertaker received through the mail a

note directing him to call at the mansion and arrange for the burial. He did so, and found no living person about the house. The servants were gone.

The woman was neatly clad, and lying in an iron casket with the glass cover sealed down. On this lay a note in her original handwriting, stating that she had been prepared for burial by her faithful servants, who now, by her request, had left the place to return no more.

The note also requested that she be given a quiet burial in the old cemetery by the side of the friends of her childhood. Also her property she wished to be distributed among the poor of her native town. But there was no explanation of the strange transformation that had come over her, by which she chose to retire from the world and pass her best days alone in absolute seclusion.

The story of Lucinda and the preacher shows only too vividly how human nature in its depravity, and woman in her rivalry, can wreck the very foundations of the home.

PLUCKY BILL'S STRANGE ADVENTURES.

THE STORY TOLD BY PLUCKY BILL.

WHEN I was a small boy, my parents used to say that I was the most curious, headstrong, and impatient little rascal they had ever seen. I was always prying into something and asking questions about things which should neither concern nor interest me.

But with all of this I was easily satisfied, and always good-natured, never complaining, or even calling for things I could not have. With these good qualities, they also gave me credit for an industrious disposition, and a rather remarkable ingenuity for constructing out of the roughest pieces of timber and the very crudest elements small buildings and other things that resembled quite distinctly the original pattern. They would not, therefore, have despaired of my ever being able to look out for myself had it not been for a kind of mad aversion which I every day exhibited for books or any kind of printed matter. I would not study or even try to spell the simplest words, and a disposition to rove about caused them much annoyance. Thus engaged I was in my happiest mood. The woods were never too thick and briery for me, nor a bird's nest too high for my reach, for in one way or another it was surely mine. You can well imagine the many unhappy hours I caused my good parents by my complete disre-

gard for their efforts to have me attend school and learn something. But I usually had my way, and in the end could generally win them over on my side.

My disposition for roving was steadily fastening its grasp on me, when one night by the moonlight I left home for an indefinite jaunt.

I gained my exit from a second story window by a rope fastened to the bedpost. Down this I noiselessly escaped in the dead of night.

I had not gone a mile from home when I came to a country store where, in a shed at one side, I found some old balloons which apparently some workmen had just set aside while they took a nap, for here were their glue pots and their tools.

One of these strange things I noticed to be in good order, all but the parachute, which I tinkered on for a few minutes, hoping to repair its disabilities. Now I had heard people talk about going up in balloons so high that all the world could be seen at a single glance, and it occurred to me if this was so, which I had no reason to doubt, here was my opportunity. The moon was shining bright as I dragged this old time-worn thing out in an open space and securing myself to it by a rope, touched off the fuse.

Steadily the thing puffed out and finally arose, tilting me to one side, from which I dangled in a sad and hopeless repentance; for it seemed to me that every moment would be my last.

If I didn't straugle to death, I was liable at any moment to be dropped from an enormous height.

The wind had risen to a gale, and higher and higher we went, the balloon and I.

It swayed and rocked and I followed it, the stars seemed nearer and larger than before, and the air was filled with dampness.

I will soon be up to the heavens, I thought, and naturally enough, in that hour of peril, in my vain conceit, I hoped for the long-cherished ease and rest, that they used to tell me in the Sunday-school was in store for all good children.

All of a sudden I felt something give way, and in the short space of time that followed I faintly felt myself falling from an unknown height.

How or when I reached the earth again I can give no definite account, but when I came to my senses I was alone on the shore of a tremenduous body of water.

I raised up on my elbows, which, to be sure, were sore and almost disjointed. My head felt heavy, and I thought my brains, if I had any, were all run together. There was a great bruise on my shoulder, and the side of my neck was lame. There was a hole in the coarse white sand beside me, and on rubbing my eyes a little and looking about, it occurred to me all in a flash that I had fallen there, and in an instant the experience of the night before came back to me.

It's the Atlantic coast, sure enough, I thought. How lucky that I was not dumped down in mid ocean to be devoured by the merciless sharks, or swallowed alive by a water snake. There were the dead bodies of a countless number of porpoises in all stages of disintegration, and the sea-birds dove about here and there.

I shook the sand from my clothes and wandered about the beach sad and alone.

Several hours must have passed when presently I came upon some young people in bathing, but their costumes frightened me and I took to my heels in the greatest haste.

I felt encouraged, however, to think that the place was inhabited in other ways than by the slowly disintegrating bodies of the inhabitants of the sea.

I had not gone very far before I came upon a small black horse, with a white star in her forehead. She was hitched to a light-running buggy and tied to a tree, for I had now wandered off to the edge of a wooded space, through which there was a good solid road. Here I stopped to collect my thoughts. I could just barely perceive the sound of bells ringing and a faint humming and puffing of steam.

High, Joe! I thought, I am near to some town from which somebody has driven this horse, and tied her here while they are walking across the sand.

Without a moment's reflection, I untied the animal and took my seat with as much composure as if the whole world was mine. The animal swayed around to one side and moved off at a rapid gait, which pleased me very much, for I was from childhood fond of horses, and from the earliest age could tell a peart one. I was enjoying my ride more than anybody could tell, when in a flash, the animal dashed off on a side-track in the direction from which I had just come.

Down the road she flew, every minute getting faster,

until everything seemed to be on the go; trees, stumps, and everything dashed by me.

My strength was about exhausted, but I held to my grip. From one side of the road to the other, then up and then down, the animal charged, and switched her tail and snorted with terrific fury. I now began to wish I had been killed the night before when the balloon struck the sand, for any kind of death would be better than to be dashed to pieces against a tree.

I had lost my reins and hat and was thinking of trying to jump to the ground when suddenly we came to a steep hill which, in descending, the buggy turned over and dropped me in a gully, with no serious injury except a broken nose, which pained me terribly.

I had now about recovered my usual senses and was rubbing my sores, and congratulating myself over my good fortune in escaping such a horrible death, when presently I saw two men approaching, carrying sticks, and shouting to me "You miserable tramp! You outlawed horse-thief! You old son of a gun! I will kill you in one more minute."

They snapped their teeth together and frightened me so outrageously that I rushed off as fast as I could go in the direction of the ocean, hoping that since they were already exhausted and out of breath, I could gain the shore and dive inward, for it seemed to me that I would rather be devoured by the sharks than to fall into their hands. I reached the shore and pushed off in a small tug which, fortunately for me, lay there a tanchor, just in time to escape a terrible blow from the sticks they hurled at me, finding they could not get hold of me. But

I kept at a good distance and nibbled away at a luncheon which a boating party had left there, for I had been some thirty-six hours without food.

I now set sail and drifted smoothly in a new field of adventure, and congratulated myself on my good fortune in escaping from so many perils. The afternoon was quiet, and being completely fagged out, I stretched out for a short repose. When I awoke night had come on, a tremendous gale had arisen; and before I had time to collect my remaining senses my boat was hurled against something which to me seemed to be a tremenduous log in mid ocean, which seemed only to tremble a little from the blow. The boat was dashed to pieces but I had gained a seat on the log and clung to it with what little strength remained.

I now began to experience more horrors than I had ever before dreamed. All the perils of the night and day previous were as pleasant reverie compared to my present situation.

Here I was in darkness on a log in mid ocean! I could see in the starlight the faint outline of sharks diving about me; every moment I expected to be squirming in their jaws. My clothes were wringing wet, and I had about resigned myself to die at sea and fall a victim to the merciless sharks and sea-serpents, when suddenly I heard the rustle of wings, and in an instant a tremendous body swooped down on me which almost caused me to lose my hold. It proved to be an immense sea-bird of some kind, drifted here by the gale.

I had presence of mind enough to immediately throw my arms about his neck and fasten my legs around his

body. The bird soon recovered himself, and being frightened by my movements and audacity now took to his wings. However, he was seriously burdened by my weight, the force of my grip interfering with his muscular movements.

But he flopped away at a greater speed than I had ever traveled before, even excelling the balloon in force of velocity.

I have no idea how far he carried me for I soon lost consciousness, but held to my grip with a turtle-like tenacity.

How or when I lost my companion I cannot begin to tell, nor is there any record of such a bird having been seen on land.

Some pile-drivers working on a bridge found me lying in a ravine, and by a badge I wore on my vest they learned where I lived, which, to tell the truth, was no great distance away.

After recovering my senses again, the only regret I felt grew out of my inability to make a proper apology to the men whose horse I stole, and my failure to thank the generous sea-bird for coming to my rescue in such a dreadful place.

A UNIQUE AMERICAN.

WHEN I was a medical student I had for my roommate during the third and fourth year, and during the hospital régime, a young Westerner, who in many ways was the strangest and most peculiar character with whom I have ever come in contact. Except that he was about my age we were different in every way.

He was neither tall nor short, but about medium. Nor was he large or small, but was a little above medium in this respect. His countenance, though not beautiful, was exceedingly interesting, and waving brown hair played about his forehead. His bearing was easy, firm and graceful. He did not study very much, but when he did study he learned something he did not know before, and, having once learned it, it was not forgotten. He kept well up with me in his studies, but did it with half the labor, and got more fun out of a blunder made by an associate than I could get out of an afternoon at a popular matinée.

He had plenty of leisure time, much of which he spent in reading and whist-playing until the habit began to fasten on him; then suddenly he would give up the cards saying: "They are doing too much for me."

On religious subjects his ideas were original, and he never hesitated to differ with other people. He did not believe in the immortality of the soul, or that a person even had a soul; but with these ideas strongly

stamped on his mind, strange as it may seem, he was a devoted friend and a most companionable person. We used frequently to have our discussions over the matter, and once, in reply, he said to me: "As much as I think of you, if I were to die to-day and be buried to-morrow, I would never expect to see you again. With me, when I leave here, it is all over with; the grave ends it all. There is no such thing as a soul; it is unreasonable, impossible, illogical and absolutely impracticable. The human body is simply a complex and intricate combination of machinery, which, during life, works along with harmonious accuracy; the breathing, the circulation, the digestion, the muscular movements, the slow oxidation by which waste and repair go on hand in hand, and the peaceful state of sleep, all go to prove that for our life we are dependent, not on divine dispensation, but on the accuracy of nature in constructing the machinery and on our care of an inheritance for which we are in no way responsible. The breath of a person is not his life, any more than the circulation of the blood or the secretion of the salivary glands; but the combined functions of the body, working in harmonious order, are life; and when that life ends, and the body is buried, all is buried; there is nothing left to take wings and soar upward; there is nothing to burn in after years; there is nothing to haunt our paths at night; it is impossible, impracticable—all that ever was of him is buried in an iron casing from which there is no escaping. The grave ends all. How can you ever expect to meet your friends and relatives in Paradise, you say?

"In what form do you expect to find them? Surely they have not two bodies—one for the grave and one for Paradise? Could you recognize one spirit from another? The soul, you say, is invisible; then how could you caress or salute an invisible being? Surely you are not a pagan. You must be to believe in such imaginary objects.

"How could you be happy and feel united with a spirit, when you know the body of your friend is lying over there in the cemetery—there the slab that tells when he was born and when he died? Of course you may have for your authority the scriptural teaching, for whose authorship there is no authority, nor is there a definite record to tell how we came by it; so it remains with us as a unique relic of the olden time.

"But if there is an after-life, and it is any better than this one here, which, to tell the truth, is good enough for me, I would gladly follow you there. And if you believe there are two, a good one and a bad one, then surely I can only praise you for choosing to lead a life here in this world which ought to insure you more comfort hereafter. Not only do I believe in living a quiet, orderly life for my own sake, but for the example it sets.

"And how can you wash away a baby's sins by sprinkling water over him? sins which it has not. A baby is not responsible for its origin, or its birth, or anything it inherits, whether disease, or sins, or what-not, and the simple form of sprinkling water on his head cannot keep him from colliding with the many snares that beset the walks of life. This semi-barbaric form must

necessarily have only an effect to induce cold, and probably endanger life."

Who would think that a man with such erratic ideas could be a favorite among men, and even idolized by his friends? Strange though it may seem, he had the strongest influence over his personal friends and a bewildering fascination for all womankind. They would all stop to look at him. Many of them admired him, and not a few even loved him. But his fondness for them was equally strange. When he cared for a woman at all, which, to tell the truth, was not often, his affection seemed genuine; he would throw himself at her feet. He could not do too much for her, and any one not familiar with his disposition, would believe it to be an enduring affection. But presently, after a few months of intense devotion, the blaze on the altar would smoulder away, and then the coals would blacken.

He would suddenly become indifferent, and then no force could be brought to bear on him sufficient to induce a continuation of his friendly relations. Very often nothing would occur to cause any disturbance or turn him against his friend; but when once turned, whether for just cause or no cause, there was no reconciliation.

When he did show a woman any preference, it was with a free and lavish hand; with all the ease and grace with which his passionate heart was capable. He would show her every courtesy. Nor did he confine his admiration to the young girls of his acquaintance, for the married ladies were just as often his victims,

and over their hearts he seemed to exert a withering power; but no one expected anything better from him, so with tantalizing audacity he would fan the flame of love to fervent glow, and then, without any warning, leave them in bewildered uncertainty.

He always argued against the popular state of matrimony, declaring this to be nothing but fool's play. In fact, he seemed to imagine the average married life to be nothing more than a kindergarten of troubles, a cyclopedia of disappointment, and a cemetery of hopes.

But whether he still adheres to these ideas, or whether time in its slow working has wrought other changes in his magnetic yet serene nature, I cannot say; for years have passed since we were young together, and with the passing clouds the imprint of many storms are marked upon our hearts; and maybe he now looks to a higher and more worthy source for the consolation he then found in the gratification of his ruling passion.

THE ODIAN THEATRE.

WELL, gentlemen, I think we had all better go down to the Odian to-night. We have now been here long enough to see all sides of life but this place, which we have been slighting all the time."

It was on a Thanksgiving evening; and here I must stop to make apology for the manner in which the time was being occupied. We had been several months without any real amusement, and we had taken advantage of the first respite in our daily curriculum for a little genuine fun.

Four of us were sitting around a table in my room playing whist, when my roommate interrupted us with this exclamation.

"What is the Odian?" I inquired.

"Why, boy! you damn little fool! it is an up-to-date theatre, down on Light street. Where have you been all this time, that you have not heard of the Odian?"

He laughingly took a cigarette from his pocket, and rolling it several times between his hands, touched it to the gas jet and commenced to puff away with great composure. "They say it is easy to get in," he continued, "but risky getting out, if you are alone; but three or four always get along well, and they tell me that a person who goes there once never cares to return."

So he talked away, telling of strange occurrences connected with the place until we all had our curiosity strongly aroused, and at last we all decided to go. And

we left in such a hurry that no one stopped to arrange matters, as we would wish our administrators to find them in case we did not return. I did, however, take what money I had in my vest pocket to a more secure hiding-place, and substituted a soft hat for a stiff one.

We started off with merry hearts and the happiest anticipations for Light street, which, at the very outset, is a grave misnomer, for it is a dark street in every sense of the word, situated right down on the docks at Curtis Bay, where all the dampness from the distant ocean and neighboring bodies of water seems to settle for the night, and the nauseating emanations from the old warerooms and musty storage apartments seem to mingle with the escaping gases of the neighborhood with stifling intensity. Here also the sticky mud and slippery cobblestones keep the pedestrian in constant apprehension for his life. Every corner and every alley-way was beset by wharf tramps, ready to emerge and scatter through the neighborhood as night came on.

The far-off electric lights shone faintly through the alley-ways until the damp vapor arising subdued every ray. Complete darkness now spread over the narrow path to the Odian.

Every now and then the musty, fishy body of a tramp would brush against us. They were the wharf "burrowers," a name given to a low gang of tramps who, when tired of plundering about, seek rest in burrows under the rubbish and old platforms about the wharves of south Baltimore.

These fellows keep pretty close in daylight, but as

night comes on they emerge like vermin, from their hiding-place, and then plunder about in the slums.

At last we came to a place that gave out strongly the smell of liquor. Some racket was going on inside, and on striking a match against my trousers, we read over a dilapidated door, in large letters, "The Odian Theatre. Come in."

Here I hesitated and drew backward. The impulse was revolting. I was afraid to go forward, and afraid to return to my room. But I had not long to hesitate, for suddenly a rough looking "cop" carrying a smoking lantern appeared, and bawled out, "Go up if you are going; there are the stairs!"

The boys led the way, I followed. Presently we came to a winding stair, which was wet from top to bottom, and apparently saturated in something smelling like beer.

As we passed upward, the top step, it seemed to me, we would never reach.

Strange looking people beset the stairs at places, at the end of narrow halls, into which a person could barely squeeze, leading off into some unknown region.

These creatures would beg for money and ask us to treat them.

At last we reached a box, and we four took possession, as we thought. The box cost us $1.50 and was almost in reach of the stage. Cheap enough for a whole box at a theatre, wasn't it?

It was almost impossible to tell when the play began, for it seemed that one-half the audience was drunk, and

the frequent brawls were constantly interfering with the fake performance.

Presently a bar waiter came in, bringing six glasses of beer on a tray, some fellow near the aisle jarred his arm, the beer turned over on the heads of those nearest by, and a free fight ensued.

Three shabby looking policemen stalked in, and grabbing three of the boisterous ones hustled them down in a cellar.

Such disturbances as this were frequent.

The drinking continued, while the room was becoming saturated with smoke and all kinds of nauseating odors; so unbearable was this combination that it soon became intolerable, even to a person accustomed to the dissecting-room.

Presently a little girl about twelve years old came out on the stage and sang the "Bowery."

This was a pathetic scene; here was a harmless little child, good looking, and neatly clad, connected with this outrageous gang. She sang very sweetly, and with perfect ease, apparently absolutely indifferent to her vile surroundings.

Her sweet voice and gentle appearance was all there was of the play to remember.

All the rest was simply a conglomeration of the lowest form of villainy.

Before we had been in the box many minutes two wild-looking fellows scrambled into our compartment, which we considered a gross imposition and promptly shoved them out.

Later on another fellow appeared with a ticket, and

he, being less repulsive than the others, was allowed to remain. He soon began to give us his impressions of the Odian, saying among other things that he had been coming there occasionally for about two years, and it was called the worst place in Baltimore.

There was a bar on the first floor, and a cellar below, where the victims of the rows were immediately thrown to await the mercy of the officer on duty. The seats were scarred and splintered by flying missiles, and blood-stains marked the floor here and there. At last a big carousal closed the entertainment for the night; and then began our homeward journey—a distance of two miles, dark, damp and dismal. I had already some time before made up my mind that if I ever got out of there alive I would never be found in the vicinity again; and finally, after descending the dreadful stairs, around which there was the same vague outline of moving characters begging to be given a little assistance, and retracing our steps up Light street, we reached decent territory again, and I, for one, was not sorry for my experience at the Odian Theatre.

I have never cared to go there again.

THE STORY TOLD BY BIDLACK.

MY father, who was an honest farmer, never tired in exerting every possible effort to have me attend school, and improve my time; but for all that might seem to be of any real benefit to me I had an intense aversion. Headstrong and unreliable at all times, I passed the best part of each day in lounging about and running after the sheep and cows, hunting after hen-nests and raising disturbance among the chickens. I rigged up all kinds of wagons and carts, and had all the dogs broken to pull them. The teams moved off in a hurry at the snap of my whip, or even the tone of my voice.

No wonder I grew up a worthless, unreasonable youngster, little to be depended on and still less to be trusted, for I would not do any one kind of work long enough to make a beginning of success with it; but with wanton indecision I would go from one thing to another, expecting in each to find a hidden fortune. Nor would one failure have any force to make me the more careful in my projects, for it seemed that there was no teaching for me. Nor did I ever have sense enough to distinguish failure from success, or at least if I did, I surely had no conscience; if I was just living that seemed to be enough for me. The how and wherefore did not trouble me.

At last, having failed at everything, I entered a country store to work for my board, lodging and clothes,

though I was now nineteen years old and fairly well grown.

The store was a miserable one-story, smoky-looking affair, which carried a very common stock of goods, many of which were second-hand.

I now felt that I had an easy place and expected to enjoy life.

As night came on the owner set out for his home a short distance away, and left me there to keep open until nine o'clock; it was then a little past seven o'clock. But no sooner had he gotten out of my sight than I locked up the store and retired for the night, in the garret. Soon after putting out the light a tremendous quantity of rats and mice began to skip about the room, and some of them were so bold as to hop right over me. This state of affairs frightened me outrageously. Such dangerous quarters were unendurable, so I went down and got in a box under the counter and left the lamp burning low. Here I rested quietly until morning, when I was aroused by the proprietor banging on the door and scolding me for not having the store open and everything in order.

Each day I seemed more of a burden than a boon to my new employer, until finally, at the end of five days, he told me if I would leave the place and keep out of his sight and never come about the store again, that he would not charge me anything for the amount I had damaged him.

I promptly accepted his proposition.

I now tramped about for several days, but finally, realizing that I would soon become exhausted from lack

of food, I hired out to work on a farm. I secured a square meal to begin with, the first I had had since leaving home, and commenced work in my new field much encouraged; for it seemed to me at last as if I had struck my calling.

Here I worked away with a merry heart until my employer, coming in the part of the field where I was, observed that by my clumsy movements I was either trampling with my feet or cutting up the very plants he wanted to save. So without a moment's delay or a word of explanation, except a savage look, he ordered me from the field in the greatest haste, which he facilitated by several vigorous kicks and a number of frightful oaths.

Though somewhat disheartened by these repeated failures, I was not discouraged, for I still had in my pocket an old mouth-harp on which I could blow no semblance of a tune. However, I sat down on a log by a woods-path and commenced blowing away on the harp in a furious manner. Soon a flock of crows began to gather, and collecting on the limbs of a dead tree standing near me, they returned my salute with their monotonous cawing, until the air was rent with horror, and I, being frightened out of my wits, soon took to my heels.

For several days I plundered about, living on green corn, berries or anything I could get, until at last, being tired out with this, I decided to try hunting.

I borrowed an old musket from a boy who did not know me, and set out with the expectation of many possibilities lying before me.

But after tramping several hours, and no game coming in my reach, and being tired out, I sat down beside a stump, and leaning backward soon fell asleep. When I awoke night was coming on. I raised up, looked about, and felt for the gun, but it was gone. "Hello," I exclaimed, "some scamp has come along and stolen my gun, and here I am in the woods alone."

The deep hideous notes of the owl were sounding through the forest, and mingled with the shrill cry of the night-hawk and the shivering species of mouse-catcher, sent cold chills running over me from head to foot. There was no moon, and the darkness, I noticed from the dense foliage, would soon be complete.

I got up and walked along through the underbrush hoping to find a hollow log into which I could crawl to pass the night in safety. But soon the distant barking of dogs startled me. At first this inspired me with hope, for I thought I was near some farmhouse. But presently, on realizing it was a pack of wild dogs, you can well imagine the horror of my position and the melody of my outcry.

Noticing that they were drawing nearer I took to a tree, and had just gotten fixed astride a high fork when they rushed up to the trunk and began sniffing and howling in the most violent and savage manner. With no further explanation, you can see at a glance how desperate my situation was.

At last, finding they could not reach me, they quieted off and seemed to lie down about the tree, for I could see in the darkness their shining eyes and a faint glimpse of their long teeth.

Being completely exhausted and frightened to death,

and realizing that I might suddenly fall asleep or faint and fall from the fork, to be torn to pieces in a moment, I took from my pocket a rope, which I usually carried, and bound myself securely to the limb.

I must have soon lost consciousness, for I knew nothing more till about day, when I heard a buzzing and felt something like fine red-hot needles sticking in me all over. I cried out for mercy and rubbed my eyes, only to realize that the tree in which I had taken refuge was a bee-tree; and as day came on the bees were coming out, and finding me intruding my presence on them, they had thus proceeded to greet me in this enthusiastic but most frightful manner.

You can never, good friend, begin to imagine the extent of my suffering; for my face and limbs soon puffed up to an enormous size. The rope broke and the fork split out, but the dogs had left me, going deeper into the forest I presume.

In the utmost despair, I cried out for help.

Presently two men appeared, carrying guns on their shoulders. My first impression was that they intended helping me; but in a moment they began to shout, "Ah! you miserable rascal, come down from there! You thought you would steal our honey, did you? Come down from there!"

They proceeded to build up a dense smoke, which soon scattered the bees. They now came up to the trunk and again ordered me down.

But my limbs were swollen so I could not move, nor could I use my tongue.

Thinking that I wished to treat them with contempt

by not coming down, or answering, or paying them any attention, they laid hands on their axes and proceeded to bring the tree to the ground.

The jar in falling was terrific, but not so horrible as the pain caused by my leg striking a stump which shattered a bone.

The men were unmerciful, and as I was not able to walk to them to explain matters, they simply ordered me to get out of their sight if I valued my life. This I did, dragging the broken limb as best I could, with all the pain and suffering a human being could endure. I dared not look back to see when out of their sight; in fact, the smoke they made filled the air completely.

Finally, when quite sure I was out of their reach I sat down on a log, desperate from pain and exhaustion.

Here I must have fallen asleep, for on realizing my situation again the sun was shining high; the birds were hopping about me and some were crying out as if some strange creature was about to attack them.

Feeling somewhat strengthened by this lapse into unconsciousness, I proceeded to examine my wounds and began to form the brightest kind of plans for suing my enemies for damages. By this device, it seemed to me that I could easily collect several thousand dollars, which would enable me to live as becomes a gentleman of leisure the rest of my life.

While thus feasting on such wild fancies, a filthy looking tramp came along; and after relating to him, as well as I could, my strange experience and my present plans, he said I was nothing but a fool. "For you have," he said, "in the first place, no money to carry on a law-

suit. In the second place, you had no business being on posted land. If you had any money, they could get it away from you for that alone. In the third place you have no sense anyhow. You are nothing but a fool, and deserve the treatment you have just received. It will be of more service to you than money. The best thing for you to do," he continued, "is to tie up that broken leg."

This we proceeded to do by taking two flat sticks and wrapping them with soft moss, held in place by strong spider web, and then binding these on securely with long thin strips of columbine.

The tramp then told me since I had nowhere to go and no friend to whom I could appeal for help, I might go along with him and share the misery of his burrow in an old unused shed.

This proposition I gratefully accepted.

Here we lived, or I had better say, stayed in peace, at least, except for the multitude of vermin that infested the miserable hovel.

Finally my injuries healed fairly well, and being tired of this style of living I set out one morning and joined with a gang of cattle-drivers bound for the west. They offered me twenty-five cents a day and board to go along with them and help keep the cattle together; for there were about two hundred of them, many of which were rebellious and sullen.

The constant activity made my broken limb pain me any amount.

After several weeks of steady travel, during which I experienced all kinds of hardships and suffered privations of every description and lived on half ration, for the manager said I was of no account and did not deserve anything at all, we reached our journey's end.

The manager paid me seventy-five cents for my services to him, which, though small as it may seem, was the largest sum of money I had ever earned, though going in my twentieth year.

Thoroughly disgusted with cattle-driving, I next called at a hotel, hoping to get a place as clerk, but the proprietor told me that he did not need such a slovenly looking fellow as I about the house, for I would soon ruin his patronage.

Not knowing what else to do, I next applied to a dairy-man, whom I told of my experience in handling cattle. He told me he would board, lodge and clothe me, and furnish soap and water, if I would attend to his cows, and would reward me according to the extent and value of my services.

His proposition I promptly accepted. The work soon became interesting to me, and my employer said one day that he expected soon to advance my wages. He treated me better than any of the others. In fact, I began to feel at home again and my employer was so agreeable to me, that one evening I related to him the story of my singular experiences since leaving my father's home to carve out my own fortune.

* * *

The story told by Bidlack is an object-lesson to that type of the young American who imagines he knows more than his parents; yet few they are who would ex-

hibit Bidlack's fortitude in keeping from his parents the knowledge of his miserable condition, after he had so grossly disregarded their wishes. How readily they would have come to his assistance.

ESTHER LEE.

THE poet Shelley never felt a more divine inspiration than while walking in a field a skylark arose from the grass, and drifting away in the clear open sky, the poet sang these lines :

"Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven or near it
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse streams of unpremeditated art."

"I never will forget one Sunday morning in May, some twenty or more years ago," said a companion to me one day ; "for on that day Esther Lee went out driving with me, and as we drove along that familiar old road, and over the bridge and rough cobbled places, it seemed to me that nature had never been so generous or endowed our path with a more liberal hand. For the trees and grass were fresh in their luxuriant greenness, and the early spring flowers sprinkling the roadside yielded up their fragrance in one continuous exhalation. Here and there a turtle-dove or some other kind of bird was seen picking up straw or little sticks, and flying away to its nest ; in fact, the birds seemed to be out in full force.

"I noticed in the distance a tulip poplar bough that waved to and fro in the gentle breeze, and from its summit a mocking-bird poured forth his song in the most exquisite and superb manner.

"Bush wrens dove about the underbrush, and around the fence corners, jabbering away in their monotonous fashion. Occasionally in the distance the deep melodious notes of the brown-thrush were heard, and this voice, mingled with the sad, crushed tones of the poor little phebe, presented an amusing contrast.

"As the sun rose higher, and its penetrating rays came glimmering over the slumbering hills and through the loftiest tree-tops, the dewdrops, before silent and inactive, now commenced moving about with genuine activity—first sparkling, then dripping, and now falling, they would spatter about and lose themselves in the leaves below.

"I had thus finished my journey to Esther Lee's home without realizing that I was there, and when she came forth to greet me in her usual angelic loveliness, attired in purest white with flowing ribbons, with glossy black curls waving about her neck and a sweet sympathetic smile on her face, she seemed to me the very incarnation of all that is gentle, modest and lovable. Always companionable and possessed of beauty of a rare and artistic type, she moved about and entertained her callers with the tenderest grace, and captivated all comers by her many good qualities. For nature had been more than generous to Esther Lee, endowing her with so many of those better qualities in which most of us are deficient. I pinned a bunch of white and red rosebuds on her dress, fresh from the heavy, dew-laden bushes, and their silvery, sparkling drops mingled with the light from her soft brown eyes. We drove along through the country a distance of eight or ten

miles or more, and passed by some very interesting places and through some very artistic scenery. I remember a rivulet, or creek, whose banks were a solid mass of roots growing out over the water and covered by a thick carpet of green grass. Some rabbits were frisking about the place, and the constant, monotonous song of the locust gave out a humdrum impression. The tall trees on the banks leaned together and almost excluded the sunlight from above. A soft, cool breeze played about the bridge, and once or twice a red fin came to the surface of the water.

"A log extending over the water supported seven happy terrapins, seemingly oblivious to all about. Still we traveled on without regard to time or tide, and presently came to a great outstretching farm with meadow banks on one side.

"Here there was a herd of short-horned, spotted cows; some were drinking from a brook that flowed by, while others were lying under the trees.

"Away out to the right, as far as the eye could reach, a smoky haze appeared, and in this the sky and earth commingled, for the afternoon was well on; and so we hurried home."

RICHARD HOWARD'S WIFE HELENA.

A GOOD many years ago there lived in the mountainous portion of Virginia a young and very wealthy farmer, who had married in his early twenties a handsome little woman of his neighborhood. Soon after his marriage he bought an old colonial mansion, with fine and extensive farming lands extending out in all directions.

Now they had, in the course of a few months, spent large sums of money in an effort to preserve, in this ancient structure, its original outlines, with modern improvements to add to their comfort.

So they had built at one end an artistic pavilion, connected with fine side porches and dormer-windows to the sides. So grand was the appearance of the structure that it was commonly called "the castle."

Now the "castle," you may well imagine, was finished up in the finest kind of style, and furnished throughout in the daintiest taste, with rare costly drapery and tapestry in profusion, and furniture and carpets in keeping with the rest. Nor was this all, for the attendance was equally good.

Here it was that Richard Howard took his young wife to live. What more could the human mind desire? It would seem that here was centered all that could prosper mankind or enliven the soul.

To either side of the castle thick evergreens were growing, and to the west a mighty row of Lombardy poplars

waved to and fro. Like pyramids, they seemed to extend upward to the sky. Through this wealth of foliage the sun, in setting, cast its last melancholy rays, like departing friends.

Often had Helena sat and watched the last emblems of day sink over those distant hilltops into the valleys below, and wondered if the people beyond were waiting and watching for its coming.

Who would think that Helena, thus enthroned in her happy home, with so much to please and still more to amuse, would ever grow weary or chafe over the free indulgence her good fortune allowed?

But when we stop to consider the slow workings of nature and the strange partiality of fate, we are brought face to face with that which seems inevitable. And so it was with Helena.

One fine bright day Richard Howard went out with a boating party, to return late in the afternoon. He took with him dinner and refreshments for the entire party, and left his good wife with the housekeeper and her favorite pet, a St. Bernard named Roland. Little did Richard think that in this brief absence so great a calamity could befall him, for he had oftentimes left her for a few hours and always returned to find her happy, with her pet Roland by her side.

Far along in the day the boating party came home, and Richard Howard, instead of meeting Helena at the gate, as it had always been before, saw only the shadow of the leaves waving over the arched parapet.

Roland whined piteously around the yard and ran to and fro about the house, looking in first one room

and then in another, and occasionally he would look up and bay as if at the moon.

The cats were all out on the front steps asleep, and the housekeeper, too, was gone. The crickets kept up a monotonous grating as the shadows of the afternoon were descending over the deserted castle.

The horns were blown, and the hands rushed in from the fields. Each one in turn declared he had seen no strange happening about the place; no carriage had been seen to drive that way, and no one had gone out so far as they had seen. The workmen were immediately given orders to search the place high and low, far and wide, and to leave no stone unturned that would give any clue as to what had become of the lady of the mansion; for it was thought she might be in a trance, away in some secluded corner or in the garret. But news had already come that the gypsies had been seen to pass that way, and knowing where the rich people lived, it was imagined she might have been spirited away by them and held for ransom.

So the roads leading from the castle were filled with searching parties, and the neighboring woods and mountains thoroughly scoured; but no such woman was found; not even a fragment of wearing apparel or a handkerchief, which so often follows in the tracks of a woman.

In the meantime poor old Roland whined about the castle sad and alone, occasionally breaking out with an unearthly howl and looking upward as if some strange objects were abiding there.

The housekeeper had now come in from a neighbor's

house, and said she had been out in the garden feeding the goldfish, and on returning she had found the house vacant. Helena had been reading one of Scott's novels when she left her to feed the goldfish, and there was the book open just as she had placed it, with her ring for a book-mark—that wedding ring that buries many a human heart. But where had she gone? Helena! Helena! she cried out in despair; but only the echoes came back to her. Roland was lying asleep on the rug just as she had left him a few minutes before.

Now the housekeeper had made a brief search, and not finding her mistress, and being of a superstitious nature and a profound believer in ghosts and spiritualism, she had suddenly taken fright, womanlike, and rushed from the premises, but did not take the pains to tell her neighbor with whom she found lodgment of her strange experience; probably because she thought later on that all would come out well, and she would be victimized for her excess of timidity. All night long and the following day the search was continued. The rivers and lakes for miles around were dragged, and canteens of powder exploded from their depths, but all in vain.

Bloodhounds were brought in and placed in her chair, where she was last to be seen happily reading; but they only sniffed about the room and yard, but failed to strike a trail. The stations were watched and detectives on the alert.

The searching parties continued their work, but no word came from the missing woman.

Meanwhile the days came and went, but Richard

Howard could never resign himself to his fate. His voice was growing weak; his eyes were sinking backward, and their merry light was gone; his pale thin face wore a melancholy expression, and the thin black hair tousled about his ears. His clothes, too, were overlarge and hung about the joints in wrinkles; in fact he was not the same man—it was somebody else. He wandered about the premises, still hoping for a brighter day, thinking that yet some word would come from sweet Helena. Through all this trying period he would every day go into Helena's room and kneel by her chair. Here he would spend hours in sad, embittered musing, where before they had read together and looked through old albums and laughed over old love-letters.

Poor old Roland had grown old and died, a neglected and sad spectacle. He had always stayed near Helena and ran along by her side; he seemed to always mourn her loss.

As the years passed by Richard Howard grieved more and more over his strange misfortune, and a profound gloom and stifling depression seemed to pervade his whole soul. He would sit for hours in a stupor, apparently oblivious to all about him. He had long ago lost all interest in life, probably from the moment of Helena's disappearance; but the thought that he would yet find her had kept body and soul together, and stimulated him to carry on the most energetic search ever instituted to find a missing person.

The farm equipment was running to decay; the fertile lands were barren; the meadows had grown up in

wire-grass and ground briers; the pastures were worthless; the cows, once the pride of the farm, had dwindled away to nothing; the fine horses had all died or been carried off by the mountaineers, and only a few old sheep roved about the place where years before there were hundreds. The fences had all fallen down, and, in fact, all the old symbols that told of a rich and happy home were gone—lost forever.

Richard Howard now began to rove about and often spent the night in the fields. He was adjudged insane, though harmless; and to avoid the publicity of a legal committal he was taken away to be cared for by a relative.

Many years have passed since then, and travelers to the springs of Virginia and the historic old city of Richmond still find a kind of awe-inspiring interest in visiting the scene of a mystery which time seems only to deepen.

But what had become of Helena? There were those who believed that the gypsies had taken her away; but while they were known to have been in the community, that of itself conveyed no evidence of harm against them.

There were those who believed she had never existed as a substantial woman, made of real flesh and blood, in which the breath of human life had murmured. They believed she had existed only as a spirit, and when the time came she had vanished.

LA ROY AND THE FISHERMAN.

THERE were only two of us, myself and a friend whose name was La Roy.

We had been from childhood kept pretty close at home, and finally, having tired of its restraining influence, we decided to leave and try traveling.

After a very trying experience lasting several days, during which we suffered greatly and went hungry most of the time, we reached the seashore and, being completely exhausted, sat down for a short repose.

Neither of us had ever seen so grand a body of water, for the blue waves dashing by us was all there was to break the stillness of the day.

The descending rays of the afternoon sun lit up the horizon for miles around, and sent, now and then, an electric-like flash deep into the body of the sea. As far out as we could perceive the waves gradually diminished in size, and finally faded away, to be enveloped in a hazy mist beyond an area of boundless extent.

Presently a ship approached us, and I beckoned to the captain to come toward me, which signal he promptly obeyed. It proved to be the boat of a fisherman, who plied the sea in search of large fish. Being anxious to explore the sea, or even the mysteries of eternity, we immediately made a contract with him to take us on board, which he willingly did, for we paid him five dollars at the start—a good fee for so small a service. After resting a while the captain set sail, and

the wind rising, we soon found ourselves beyond the sight of land.

I could see in the blue water dashing about us the outline of many sharks and frightful sea monsters lashing in the deep current as if driven by some mighty force. They reminded me of the tremendous sea-lions I had observed in the lakes of our city parks at home.

The dashing of the waves caused a constant rocking of our ship, so much so, in fact, that I expected every moment to be capsized, but you may well imagine I did not let the rest of our crew know of my fear.

Presently I began to get dizzy, and in a moment more was deathly sick and blind. I wished for the sight of land once more, and envied my neighbors at home. I soon became unconscious. Several weeks must have passed before I fully regained my equilibrium.

For on realizing my situation again La Roy was sitting on the side of the bunk on which I was lying. He was telling me of the frightful experiences they had had since we embarked.

"We would all have been drowned," he continued, "had it not been for the sagacity of our captain. He alone has stood up through it all. We have been lost for a number of days, and there is no telling where we are. Soon after you were taken ill there arose a tremendous gale, which tore the sails and dashed the ship about at a terrible rate. The waves splashed clear over us, and sharks and sea-serpents of a tremendous size were washed on deck.

"Their weight at times seemed enough to overturn our boat. On one occasion, a sea-bird of enormous size,

driven by the storms, swooped in among us. His legs were as large as a fence-rail, and he must have weighed several hundred pounds.

"No words can describe the horror of our situation. And I doubt if any brush could draw the outline of a picture more distressing. Here we are—lost at sea, to die alone and feed the sharks. We had given you up for dead, and now you are coming to."

I will not stop to describe my feelings at this information. You can imagine that for yourself. The rest is a blank space in the history of time, from which my memory shrinks. Nor do I care to recall my impressions of the next few days, which, however, were suddenly changed by our ship coming in sight of land. We had struck a small island to the east of Borneo, and as the captain cast anchor the natives rushed forward to greet us.

You can never imagine my delight on seeing land again, and though it was a foreign country and inhabited by frightful looking little brown savages, those who came on board were disposed to treat us kindly and made arrangements for us to land in safety.

We spent some time in this country and were well treated by the natives, who seemed to regard us as great giants capable of doing wonders.

The fine fruits in which the island abounded, the green meadow lands and the immense number of singing birds, richly plumaged, pleased me any amount. It reminded me of my early years at home.

Strangest of all were their customs, some of which were foolish, while the good of others was far-reaching

and widely felt. They baptized their babies, for example, by taking them by the heels and dipping them in the stream nearest to where they were born. The water must be deep enough to come entirely over the innocent little victim; no portion of the heels could go unbathed.

Another peculiar custom related to their preparation and forethought previous to marriage. On the island we found that a couple were never married according to the statute law until a pre-speculative period took place. This was simply an original custom of theirs. If a couple thought they loved each other well enough to spend their best days together they proceeded to make the necessary investigation by securing a separate home or apartments of their own in the parental mansion, and there living as if their contract had been practically sealed.

This preparatory measure lasted for one year only, at the end of which, if the contracting parties were satisfied with each other and felt that they could with mutual harmony share the burden of responsibility and willingly divide what measure of happiness came to them, they were publicly married, received the blessing of their family and assumed the obligations according to the customs of the island.

But if, on the other hand, they find themselves not suited, with no spirit of congeniality to bind their union, they separate, and in a year's time may select another mate for trial. During this waiting period they are obliged to wear mourning to punish them for having made a bad selection, and to steer others safely

by. And, if a third failure is made to find a suitable companion, the parties become offenders. They are brought before a court of justice, declared criminals and cast into prison for life. Naturally enough every couple tries to be sure they are well matched before entering into the contract. Divorce is unknown on the island. If either husband or wife leaves the other, the offending party is brought before the court of justice, which reigns supreme. The offender is thrown into prison for life. This hardly ever happens on the island.

The native's sense of obligation to his fellow-man is very strict and far-reaching; he will not, for any inducement, betray the confidence of his neighbor. My friend La Roy was much impressed by this custom. He seemed to imply that if this was the custom in our country, where civilization runs so high, great reform measures could be instituted.

In fact, we became so much attached to the island, and our ship having to undergo some repairs, we decided to hold over on the spot until the stormy season had passed, after which we again reached home safely.

THE STORY OF THE JEWELER HUNSACK.

THERE was once a jeweler whose name was Hunsack; and in the same town there lived a prosperous merchant who lived very happily with his charming wife and two sprightly children, a little girl of about seven years and a boy some older who was away at school.

Hunsack was a very peculiar man, strange in his habits, erratic in his ideas and dramatic in his ways.

He lived alone in his own apartments, cared very little for society, nothing for religion, and usually seemed good-natured and cheerful. He evinced a great fondness for music, and when an entertainment of any kind was going on near him he would go out and walk up and down the street to feast his hungering soul on the enchanting musical strains, but never daring to go in.

The visitors participating in the festivities, finding Hunsack in the vicinity, would go out and entreat him to come in and share with them the company of his strange personality. But "No! I guess not," he would say, "I have only a few minutes to stop, and just came by to hear the violin, or possibly a few notes from the piano. I am in a hurry and must get along back."

Now, Hunsack could not strike a tune himself, and he had a decided aversion to vocal music, but over the notes of almost any good instrument he was easily carried away.

He would always avoid a crowd, in which he was ex-

tremely cold and reserved, but in the company of one or two friends he would brighten up to an amazing degree, and would often prove a most charming companion.

Now the merchant's wife was a gifted musician, and possessed also many other charming qualities, among which was a very tender and winning disposition.

She enjoyed the society of her special friends, whom she entertained in the gentlest manner. Hunsack was a close observer. He soon took note of these good qualities, and having been with other guests frequently received and entertained by her hearthstone, he decided to call more frequently.

Being a bachelor, there was nothing in his way to interfere. This good woman could, without changing her entire disposition, nature and habits, receive him only most graciously, which she did, and which pleased and flattered the jeweler exceedingly.

He exercised his wits to appear to the best advantage, and conversed with as much energy and ease as he could bring to bear.

One visit only provoked another; one unconscious smile would melt his sympathetic heart. She played so sweetly, was so cheerful and was always so glad to see him!

The jeweler's sensitive nature could not resist the winning charms of that woman.

"Oh! that woman! that woman!" he would say, over and over again to himself.

He would stand all day in his apartments at the window, hoping to see her come down the street; and then his hopes disappointing him, he would retire, sad, melancholy and alone. The good woman thought the jeweler to be a simple, easy-going, good-natured fellow, who loved quietude better than the street rabble, but who had had such good advantages as to make him appear like a gentleman of the old school. She did not discourage him from his frequent visits until finally presents of every description began to pour in on her, and she could trace their origin to the jeweler's tender sympathies. Hunsack came and played with the little girl, told her long fairy stories and gave little descriptions of his experience in different places, which amused her greatly; so much so that she became much attached to him and looked forward to his visits with delight.

He watched the gold fish, fed the canary and seemed to be as much at home as if on his own threshold.

In the meantime this good woman was running over in her mind and figuring on a plan to rid herself of the attention of the adoring jeweler. Knowing that she could in the end courteously dismiss him without injuring his pride, she finally arrived at a conclusion which swiftly proved entirely satisfactory and afforded the home circle considerable amusement.

Hunsack's presents continued to pour in, fine fruits and confectioneries, hot-house flowers and rare oil-paintings.

At last, being determined to bring the jeweler's affection to grief, the good woman, on receiving a painting representing an actor on the stage about to embrace his love, wrote to him in accepting it the following lines:

"My Good Friend: — Our little girl seems delighted with the present you sent her to-day. She claims it

all for her own, saying that you knew she loved dramatic scenery, and that you remembered her fancy in securing this beautiful painting. In fact, I believe she considers you now one of her best friends, and never tires of talking about you. But remember, good friend, that you must not let her approval of your disposition and habits cause you to lay out too lavishly for her.

She is only a child but appears advanced for her years. Again thanking you for your kindness to the little girl and consideration of us all, I am as ever, your friend, MARGUERITTA."

In the same envelope with the note was a fifty-dollar bill, with a note pinned on it containing these impressive words:

"The little girl's papa thinks that you are spending too lavishly for her amusement, and desires to reimburse you to some extent without letting our little treasure know it. Hoping you are still well and happy, I am your friend, M."

Hunsack read the note over very carefully. He then sat down and thought deliberately; he took up the note on the bill and read it over again and again, his temperature lowered, his pulse weakened.

Presently he rolled the bill up and placed it in his vest pocket. The two notes he carefully destroyed, and his strange affection was cured forever.

JOHN HUSKY'S EPITAPH.

SEVERAL years ago, while spending some time in a neighboring State, I stopped over in a flourishing little town, and the following day being anxious to see the country walked about in the suburbs and finally visited the cemetery.

I was immediately impressed with the good condition of the walks and the care manifestly used in keeping the place in order. No vegetation or foreign matter of an unsuitable character was seen encroaching on the graves or the vacant plots. The tombs had all been recently polished, and fresh cut flowers placed over many of the graves showed that loved ones at home still held in tender remembrance their departed relatives.

I lingered about the place for several hours, for the day was unusually pleasant, and I enjoyed the quiet seclusion and solemn impressions about me. Presently I came to a small stream whose banks were dotted here and there by clumps of wild flowers, or a vine twining about a slender stem till burdened to the bending point they would lose themselves in the verdant carpet of the bank. I had a strong desire to follow up this stream, but as I proceeded the sight of many newly closed graves made cold chills run over me.

I first thought that bodies from other burying-grounds were being brought there for permanent rest, but on further reflection the idea came to me that surely the physicians of the community were on a strike, and that

some serious malady, unmolested by medical interference, had thus mercilessly proceeded to slay its victims without cause or contract.

I had therefore seated myself on a rock, and was pleasantly musing on this original idea and running over in my mind a possible plan to mellow the views of the medical fraternity should I find on investigation this condition to be the cause of such a terrible mortality, when suddenly my eyes fell on a newly erected slab at the head of a grave a short distance away.

The inscription impressed me forcibly, for there were five lines that told the whole story. The slab was a smooth piece of plank about two feet high and one foot wide. It was painted white, and on it painted in black was this impressive epitaph:

"John Husky.
He was born,
He lived,
He died; and
He was buried."

The impression conveyed to my mind by this simple yet strange inscription was so strong that I could not rid myself of its burden, but walked about repeating over and over again those striking words.

I was determined to investigate further, for it seemed to me possible that some enemy had placed this slab at the grave of an envied rival.

The following morning while passing up the street I came upon an old gentleman with long white hair and gold spectacles mounted over a Roman nose.

I stopped by him a moment, for he was sitting on the shady side of the street and held a newspaper in his hand, over which at short intervals he sent tremendous clouds of white smoke from a long-stemmed pipe. I soon scraped an acquaintance with him, and promptly asked for an explanation of the strange inscription on a certain slab in the cemetery, and also the cause of so many recently closed graves.

He said: "So far as the graves are concerned," looking over his glasses a few moments and emitting another volley of smoke, "there has been in the community recently an epidemic of Asiatic itch, which in the course of time has destroyed many lives. But the victims," he added, "do not die from the primary disease; death results from blood-poisoning induced from the terrible rubbing and scratching of the body. The raw surfaces become infected from the finger-nails, and there being no specific death is almost invariably the result.

"As for the peculiar epitaph," he proceeded deliberately, after putting aside his paper and inviting me to share with him the narrow bench in the shade, where undoubtedly he had spent many happy hours.

He still clung to his pipe, and occasionally held his glasses in one hand, as he sent forth furious clouds of white smoke.

"John Husky came here about the same time I did. We were regarded as old settlers. Nobody knew where he came from, and he never told. He did not seem to to have any relatives. He struck town without any money and immediately commenced to beg.

"His forsaken, pitiable looking appearance at once

excited sympathy, and for some months he was enabled to maintain himself in this way. Finally we all began to realize how we were being victimized; we saw what a disreputable scamp the fellow was. We saw that the more you gave him the greater was his demand, and we grew tired of his conduct. One night he was taken from the cabin where he stayed when run away from everywhere else, a blindfold was carefully adjusted, his clothes removed, and with a rag-mop soft, warm tar was applied in generous quantity. He was then rolled in chicken feathers and left alone on the edge of town to find his way back in darkness.

"He was not seen again for several days, but when he did at last appear he looked better than he had ever looked before. He was never known to beg any more, nor was he ever known to volunteer his services for any kind of work; but if a person came by him and told him to come on and do a certain piece of work he would move on, and when the service was completed he would quietly sit and wait for the next call—he would never exert himself.

"He lived in this way for a good many years, and finally died a few months since. In his pocket was found a note and a silver dollar. The note requested that his body be given decent burial in the cemetery near the river, where he could, though dead, still imagine he heard the murmur of the waves breaking on the rocks about which he had spent his happier days.

"He also requested that with the dollar a plain slab with an appropriate epitaph be placed at his grave. Of course he made no allowance for his funeral expenses. The town had this to bear.

"So at last, after he was buried, the town commissioners decided the epitaph which interested you so much to be the most appropriate for him."

THE SONG OF LIFE.

THE birds that sing their songs so sweet
In spite of summer's withering heat
Are like the thoughts of youthful lore,
Which, being once, are then no more.

A bud when nipped in early morn
Retains no more its blooming dawn,
But withers and goes to rest
And leaves the world as it sees best.

The day that dawns in summer clouds
May sink to rest in dusky shrouds,
And all that's pleasant in the land
Soon may vanish from our hand.

THE MERCHANT AND THE SPIRIT.

THERE was once a merchant who lived very happily with his devoted wife, for she was handsome, good-natured, generous and affectionate; possessing you see the very qualities a chivalrous man most admires in a woman. No wonder the merchant, who was neither handsome nor genteel looking, though he was kindly disposed and indulgent, idolized his lovely companion.

For several years the merchant prospered even beyond his most sanguine expectations; each year his income doubled. It gave him much pleasure to be able to supply his wife with her every want.

Their home was furnished in the most sumptuous style, ornamented with the most artistic hangings and rich drapery, servants ready at a moment's call, and a carriage and horses of the finest style. Now these good people were very charitable, contributing liberally to all in need, and lending assistance to many struggling for a footing. But with these good and reasonable qualities, strange as such a mixture may seem, they were superstitious and wildly erratic in their ideas. They were often melancholy, religiously inclined, and were strong believers in the doctrine of spiritualism.

They spent some time each day in forlorn meditation, and in communicating with the spirits of departed friends and relatives. They believed that by a certain number of calls made by a divinely inspired leader, a

certain spirit, though invisible, could be brought into communication with their living presence and the usual greetings exchanged. But a friend or relative could not speak directly with the spirit of one departed, but the interchange of greeting must be conveyed through the presence of a third person who must be a medium. A medium, in the minds of spiritualists, is a divinely endowed prophet incapable of anything but the truth. Each year these people became the more enthused in their religious belief, and each year beheld them the more victims to their religious folly.

They grieved over their many shortcomings, and sighed in contemplating the world's strange misgoing.

Finally the good wife was taken seriously ill, she suffered several days, and then died; and the merchant, sad and alone, spent most of his time by her grave. Here he would frequently lapse into a state of unconsciousness and be carried away by the neighbors.

However, as the days and weeks and months passed, and the chasm between the living and the dead lengthened, time in its slow working, and nature in its mighty healing power, had wrought other changes in the merchant's crushed spirit and partly healed the lacerated and bleeding heart. He no longer frequented the cemetery, there to linger, like a lost sheep, nor was he often seen weeping over the grave of his lost wife; he only went and came, carried flowers, and with his own hand plucked away what little vegetation dared to encroach on her resting-place.

* * *

The merchant had begun to appear young and happy

again, a pleasant surprise to many of his friends, for they were sorry for him at so early an age thus buried alive; many thought he would soon be himself again.

He was finally married, and as often happens in such cases, sorrow and disaster came thick and fast; for instead of finding in his second wife the good-natured helpful companion he expected, he found her an ill-tempered shrew, who possessed no good qualities, nor any characteristic he really admired. She was incapable of a tender sentiment, and had neither heart nor soul. She took no interest in her household affairs, which went to ruin through neglect and bad management. She frequented the stores, spent much time on the street, and was all the time on the go.

Now the spirit of the departed wife, still vigilant and envious, though for several years the woman was sleeping under the sod, observed all these changes, and the unhappy state of the merchant in his helpless misfortune. The spirit sought therefore through the medium to communicate with him, and if possible to soothe and console his broken heart; though a cold indifference had for some time existed between them on account of the merchants ruthless disregard for her wishes in bringing to his heart another companion. For they had often promised each other, in the event of either's death, the other should ever remain true to the departed one, and that no human force, divine dispensation or unearthly upheaval could ever change this sacred pledge or cause either to break it.

But the merchant, in his loneliness, had forgotten this promise, and the spirit after seeing him for so long ill-

treated and his life made miserable in the hands of his second companion, thinking that misery enough had been already endured to punish him for his disregard for his promise, softened her views toward him.

The medium being ready, held the merchant by the hand; in a moment they both began to quiver as though an electric shock was passing over them.

Then the spirit spoke as follows: "I have for several years been a witness of his wanton infidelity to me; his disregard for our promises and my wishes has caused me much suffering. There is no injury so painful as that of the wounded heart; and while I have sworn eternal vengeance against him, I have also pitied him, and the ill treatment he has endured since forgetting me must be sufficient to compensate for any crime; and though I am grieved, I am not unmerciful; and through your mighty power I want him to know that I now forgive him everything." Here the power of the spirit, in its desperate emotion, shook the medium and the merchant terribly, and frightened them almost out of their wits. "Just tell him," the spirit continued, "that Madeline, the wife of his youth, who stood by him in every storm and shared with him his every sorrow and misfortune, who for never a moment has forgotten him, still hopes he may soon share with her the lonely solitude of the cold damp clay, and abide together, though only as spirits."

The merchant received this information in abject silence, but soon manifested signs of intense suffering.

He was apparently glad to communicate with his wife's spirit, but it seemed that all in an instant the circumstances connected with his disregard of her wishes had so overpowered him, and reflection on the matter had so distressed him, that for a long time he remained practically insensible to his surroundings.

He passed most of the time in melancholy apprehension for his future welfare.

In the meantime the second wife lost no time in giving him frequent beatings about his growing neglect of his affairs and general indifference, and increasing fondness for lounging around in idleness.

The truth was he did not feel like going about as he had before and mingling with his former associates, for he was now completely crushed, a mere wreck of his former self. He never appeared like himself again, and finally after a few weeks of lingering illness, during which he gradually wasted away and received no consolation or comforting words at home, death relieved him of all further responsibility here below.

And his spirit, it is hoped, went to abide with that of Madeline, the companion of his earlier years.

THE DEAD-BEAT.

OF all classes of people I believe the dead-beat, more than any other, deserves less sympathy. He is simply a monster at large, and whether of the type that stays in our locality or goes from place to place to bleed the innocent and sympathetic public, the effect is the same. In either case he deserves only the severest condemnation, and in reality he should be dealt with as we would with an outlaw. One of these miserable creatures will go to a town, put up at the hotel, profess to be engaged in some kind of business, about which he does not fail to discourse until all about him are tired out of their wits.

He soon explains that he is for a few hours out of money, but expects a check with the next mail, on the arrival of which he will promptly settle. Of course his bill is never paid, nor does he receive the expected check.

Before being turned off, he attempts to borrow small sums from all the guests about the place.

He finds another stopping place, and sets up the same plea. He is often sober and fairly good looking, but frequently he is the reverse of this.

Thus he goes from one town to another, staying in each as long as he is tolerated—they keep this up year in and year out. He gets all his smoking materials and most of his liquor out of the people about the place where he is loafing. With them he is ever ready to make friends on the shortest notice. While down town

he plies his tongue as usual, begging from everybody he can. The strange thing to me is, what they do with the money they get; they never have anything—and still they never pay for anything. It seems as if money would accumulate in their pockets.

But there is a reason, and here it is: There is a power irresistible, at the head of all things, which prevents, in a large measure, money unworthily received, from benefiting the holder.

These contemptible thieves are a disgrace to our civilization, they would even contaminate the Devil's region.

The practice of so-called professional dead-beating for a living is increasing at an alarming rate. Every city and town has its burden of them, and the rural districts too are being infested at a terrible rate.

Here, from inexperience, they find a ready victim, who frequently treats the intruder as he would a favored guest; for he is usually well-dressed and often of pleasing appearance. All this readily appeals to the uninitiated farmer. A fellow of this type will go to a country home, put up for the night, and exhibit a sample of some kind of drug or other stuff, with which he can interest the innocent family, saying that as soon as he returns to his supply department the goods purchased will be immediately forwarded.

In this way he secures a dollar or two from the family, with a night's lodging, and goes on to the next home.

Of course the family receive nothing for their money, and in many cases several experiences along this line are necessary to put them on their guard. In the meantime the dead-beat plies his trade.

OBSERVATIONS OF A TRAINED NURSE.

NEXT to the refined courtesies that go with good breeding and careful observation, there is hardly an accomplishment that goes further towards making a person's presence in a home desirable than the simple qualities usually found associated with a good nurse, many of which can be readily acquired by careful observation.

You cannot go very far, or live very long, without coming in contact with people at home who are at a complete loss from the lack of that sensible, firm advice that any well-informed, intelligent person ought to be able to give.

The baby will be sick, or a little out of temper, or Aunt Sal will have a pain in her side, or she will imagine she has; here the advice of some strong friend, with possibly the application of some harmless household remedy, with absolutely no medicinal virtue, will relieve her. The influence of the friend's presence, with the consoling confidence it carries, relieves the patient's mind of its burden, and the pain vanishes simply through the visitor's tact. Who has not been in a room where there was a sick person, with some one coming in and making various foolish, nauseating remarks about so-called "sun-cures," which no intelligent person would hear but to forget. On the other hand, who has ever been long around sick people without observing the conduct and movements of a sensible person.

Such, for instance, would know that if a baby is apparently choking or suffocating with croup that the proper thing to do in the absence of a physician would be to produce emesis, which empties the bronchial tubes of the abundant secretion causing the trouble and allows a peaceful sleep to follow. Any intelligent observing person, whether a nurse or not, sitting by the cradle of a baby suffering with intestinal indigestion, with a tense, feverish abdomen and distorted anxious expression, with frequent outcries, would naturally suggest that a pint of warm water, judiciously used by means of a fountain syringe, would quickly give relief.

Suppose Johnnie has been out playing hard all the afternoon, right after a big dinner, and comes in at night and lies down on the couch with cold feet and hands and a hot aching head, what would you suggest? You might say a red-oak poultice to the left foot, a collard leaf to the stomach, or a blister over the right ear. Another might give absolute assurance that relief would follow the application of three drops of spirits of turpentine to the back of the neck. But if there was a nurse present, or any person who had cultivated the natural power of judgment, the suggestion would be, in the physician's absence, that the stomach be emptied by warm salt water, and that the feet be given a hot steam bath to equalize the circulation, hitherto directed to the scene of activity, the overloaded and tortured stomach and the sympathetic and excited brain.

These more reasonable suggestions are not the result of long training or hard study, or a more fortunate inheritance, but are simply the result of careful observation, intelligent reflection, and enough presence of mind to prevent one from being frightened at his own shadow. Thoughtfulness of this character and many desirable qualities associated therewith, can be easily acquired by any person of ordinary intelligence, though he may not give sufficient attention to small matters to prevent his being lost in his own empty thoughts.

Who would not agree that as the rain falls the earth moistens, and as the torrent rages the streams overflow?

PERSEVERANCE AND SUCCESS.

"I BEGAN life," continued Leona, "endowed with an abiding intention to cultivate a fondness for industry, economy and patience, for when we were married, ten years ago, our prospects were gloomy and our possibilities exceedingly few. I was only seventeen years of age, just a mere child; and Adelbert, my husband, was twenty-two.

Our parents objected somewhat to the marriage on account of our youth and lack of means to earn a living. But I told Adelbert we were well and able to work, and he was strong and willing to make an effort. So we settled down near where we were raised and commenced farming in the suburbs of a small town. We rented a little farm of about thirty acres that had a shabby looking three-roomed house on it. This was about one quarter of a mile from the post-office, so it was but little trouble for me to go to town when I had anything to sell.

We bought a horse and farming implements on credit by paying twenty-five dollars in advance, which sum Adelbert had saved up. And a kind neighbor, who owned several cows, allowed me to take one to milk. When spring opened up and the fresh grass came along, the cow's milk-giving capacity increased greatly, and by milking twice a day and feeding her in addition, from the garden, I soon found myself selling two pounds

of butter a week, at thirty-five cents a pound. This made $2.80 a month. I kept this up all summer, and also sold quite a little bit of milk at ten cents a quart. This after saving what was necessary for our own use.

I had brought with me from home ten Plymouth Rock hens and a rooster, and Adelbert had about a dozen white Brahmas. We divided our yard by a slat board fence and kept them separate. We fed them well and they paid us in return. We sold from twelve to sixteen eggs a day the summer through, at an average of fifteen cents a dozen.

Later in the year we allowed some of the hens to set, and we sold quite a number of chickens at fifteen cents apiece. But I think egg-selling paid better, for it was more certain and required less expense and trouble.

I raised cabbages, cucumbers and other vegetables, and supplied them to the hotel regularly, and they brought me in a good profit.

But right here I had so much getting about to do that we hired a little colored boy to carry the things to market. His people were poor too, and I paid him largely in vegetables and milk.

I used to take in sewing occasionally, but this I had to do at night; and I always made it a rule to never sew later than ten o'clock, for I valued my eyesight.

By the middle of October of the first year I had saved up and had in small change eighty-seven dollars. I had twenty-three turkeys ready for market, worth about one dollar apiece.

I now bought the cow for twenty dollars, my good neighbor refusing pay for my keeping her during the

summer; and as they would not take the calf either, I sold it for seven dollars and a half.

I was well pleased with my first year's work so far, and Adelbert had been equally successful with his farming. He paid for the horse and farming implements, settled the little store account, and had corn and hay enough to last the next year, and potatoes, rice, peanuts, and hogs still to sell.

About Christmas we counted out our money on hand after the debts were all paid, and we had $283.75. We were happy, felt very much encouraged, and I was eager to begin the next year's work.

We now subscribed for several newspapers, and I took a magazine. I spent all my leisure time reading, and when Adelbert came in at night too tired for anything, I would read aloud for his benefit. Reading was a great comfort to me when Adelbert was out at work, and I often wished that we had a house up in town where I would not be so lonely, and could see people getting about.

I was afraid to put the money in bank or lend it out; so Adelbert told me to put it in an iron safe we had and put it in a box of clothes under the bed; adding that no one would ever think we had any money. I did this and it proved to be all right.

The next year we worked along as we did before, but I read a good deal more, and Adelbert did not want me to work so hard. We hired a white woman to work with me and live in the house; she was a good companion and a great help to me. I rejoiced that we were

able to hire this woman, she was so nice about the house and so much help to us.

Each year now found us working along in about the same old way, but I could not save as much from my work because our expenses almost doubled, and we had to hire more work done as our family increased. But Adelbert was successful with his farming, and all went well. We lived happily and time passed away rapidly.

About the close of the sixth year Adelbert said one day he believed we were about strong enough to build a cottage up in town, where I could have more neighbors and less work; he said he could carry on the farm just the same. But I told him not yet, for I was getting along well enough. But I did long to get up in town where I could have some social advantages; for I had gotten to be a great reader, and took several magazines and read all the books I could get.

Early in our eighth year on the farm my husband told me one night that he was going to build a house in town, and I, to tell the truth, did not oppose it; but rather encouraged him by saying that I would do all in my power to make it a happy home. We soon bought a lot and commenced to build a four-room cottage. We had it all completed and were living in it at Christmas.

We could have built a more expensive house that would have shown to better advantage, but we simply wanted something new, complete and comfortable, and well finished on the exterior. Adelbert had decided to buy the farm, and I told him this would be house a plenty for us, certainly better than either of us had been used to, and we were happy before. I think we have a very

nice little cottage; you would say so yourself, I am sure. The plan is convenient and simple. We have a wide hall, eleven feet, with two rooms on the right, each sixteen feet square. The front room with a bay window, we use for the parlor, in the rear of this is a bedroom, on the left is my bedroom, in the rear of this the dining-room, each sixteen feet square, and the dining-room is connected with the kitchen by a porch, closed on the west side, and built with reference to converting this space into a dining-room should we ever need more room. The kitchen is sixteen feet square, with a pantry at the farther end. From the kitchen around to and including the hall the back piazza extends, and the parlor and the room in the rear of it are connected by a piazza on the east side. The front porch extends along my room and the hall. Outside the house is painted salmon and trimmed with white and red, with green blinds. On the inside it is painted throughout in imitation antique oak. The parlor paper has a green background figured with growing wheat and daisies, the room on the right has its walls covered with blue paper figured with wild geese, and hunters with dogs. The paper in my room is gray with red roses scattered at intervals, and the carpets and furnishings in the same coloring. The dining-room is in pale green with a design of fruit and flowers.

THE STORY OF THE MAGIC BRICK-THROWING.

SOME years ago there lived on a farm near me a superstitious family of negroes who, having had some trouble with a neighbor of their own nationality, had become strongly convinced, in their own imagination, that the house in which they lived had been tricked by their enemies.

Now, if you understand the negro race, you will know what they mean by being tricked, for this is a common expression with them.

They believe that people, especially their enemies, have the strange power to send evil spirits in various forms, and appearing in various disguises, to beset their pathway and dog their very existence. So at night, if these ignorant creatures heard a rat scratching about in the ceiling, or any snapping of the timbers, or an unusual rustle in the wind, they believed an evil spirit was awaiting them to commit some serious depredation should they venture to close their eyes in sleep.

Those people sometimes have their superstitious craze developed to such an extent as to become demented, and sometimes raving, from the continued excitation of their wild fancies. So it was with this family. To avoid such a catastrophe they left home, moved away, in search of that blessed state of mental quietude of which the hideous spirits had robbed their home. No sooner had they moved than the report went about that strange upheavals of nature were going on about the place.

One honest and reliable old negro related that in passing the premises he saw a tremendous quantity of brick arising, apparently from three or four feet above ground, and steadily ascending until well above the roof, then suddenly they would fall and shower down through the roof, and then become invisible. Nor would the continuity of the roof be disturbed. The brick seemed to arise from simply nowhere, and having reached their destination, their mission being fulfilled, they disappeared just as they had come. The excitement among the common people and negroes, created by the brick-throwing, was of a wild order, and the interest they had taken in it, naturally enough, amused the intelligent people, who, of course, knew that the negroes were simply victimized by their ignorant and superstitious imagination. So the negroes, to make themselves secure against any hostile demonstration from the brick-throwing element, collected themselves together and formed companies. Then they organized brigades, armed with all kinds of weapons of defense, and marched against their peculiar foe.

But on these occasions they always met with disappointment. They would march up to the suspected place, throw their men in position for a central and decisive attack; then, on finding everything quiet, the air serene, they would gradually begin to investigate, to find all at ease and nothing out of the ordinary going on.

Some peanut vines left on the floor were undisturbed, save for a few mice that played among them and nibbled away at the scattering fruit.

These organized invasions they would make over and over again, at a few days, or at most, a few weeks interval, during which an occasional negro, visiting the place alone, would observe all the horror and the strange demonstrations already described.

These single visits, repeated by a number of influential negroes, would simply renew the excitement; which provoked another armed invasion, which, of course, discovered nothing but possibly a stray rat fishing about the dark corners; or perhaps a pair of house-wrens who had taken possession of a gable cornice and disputed the invader's right to molest them in their retired home.

Frequently the army of invasion would attempt to seclude itself in the immediate vicinity, hoping that by its apparent withdrawal the attack upon the unfortunate house would be renewed, and they would then in a mass attack the offending element. But on these occasions their hopes would all go astray. No demonstration of any kind would take place, and the army, after withdrawing from the expected field of combat, and being advised and charged by the leader, would temporarily stack arms, subject to immediate or future orders.

Prayer-meetings were frequently held, and all kinds of supplications made and sacrifices offered, if only the Lord would descend in his glory and destroy the offending element.

I remember on one occasion, while passing a colored church, I was so impressed by the intensity of the speaker's exhortation that I went up to the door for a

few minutes' edification. The speaker had just concluded a portion of his sermon, of which the whole congregation seemed to heartily approve. The excitement subsiding, he then continued: "My good brudders and sisters, an' friends in general, we learn from de Scriptural teachin' dat blessed is he what specteth little, for he shall not be 'ceived. Again we larn, an' is frequently reminded, that it is better fer ter give than ter receive. Furthermore, dear friends, in general, we are 'vised ter entertain strangers with no circumspection, for thereby you may be wid angels unbeknown. These, my good friends, are plain fac's laid down in de Scripters, an' finally handed down ter us by de Almighty, through his followers, de prophets. Now if we is ter foller de teachin' er de Lord, an' am to live up to der divine standard as set forth by de prophets, we must each an' every one of us bind ourselves tergedder in a mighty effort to upset de devilish workin' er de gang, who, to spite an' torment our 'zistence, have run our neighbor and brudder frum his home, an' set up on his premises a kind er strange upheaval in de form of a mighty infernal brick-throwing. I, fer one, don know what de brick-throwing is, but I has seed the brick rise an' fall, an' I don't blame my brudder fur leavin' a place so infected, an' holdin' out for him nothing but de prospect of a certain and horrible death.

"I, fer one, inspired wid de hope an' 'zire to find an' pertect my neighbor, and to pint out to him and dem de way dey should go, do b'l'eve dat de only hope fur our safety lays in er mighty organized 'tack on de place, wid well 'quipped guards held in 'zerve. I b'l'eve, dere-

fore, we mus' arm ourselves, march ter de scene of terror, erect a camp dere, an' wait fer de nex' 'tack."

Right here I was so overcome with laughter that I had to rush away from the sanctuary; for the congregation, by their enlivened expressions, seemed to acquiesce in his desperate plan. From the front doorstep I called to the preacher and told him to bring out his deacons and members, for I wanted to explain the folly of his discourse and the absolute fallacy of the brick-throwing idea. They soon gathered about me, expecting to hear a new revelation, or of some depredation more atrocious than any already committed, perhaps. But by quiet reasoning, I soon pacified them, and, after explaining the utter folly of their superstition and absolute fallacy of their assertions, and the utter impossibility of such occurrences, they took a more reasonable view of the situation and agreed to await patiently further developments.

Soon after this the farmers in the vicinity, having been disturbed a great deal by their hands stopping work and being so demoralized by the colored agitators, caught several of the leaders and with whatever instruments of flagellation were most convenient administered sound thrashings, which were speedily efficient in settling the brick-throwing business.

THE MERCHANT'S BLACK HORSE.

I KNEW a merchant who owned a black horse that seemed in many ways to be a very remarkable beast. The merchant valued the animal more than anything else in his possession, and always took great pleasure in taking his friends out driving behind her; who in turn were equally carried away with the rapid and delightful manner in which she whirled them over the road. Now, to tell the truth, this black horse was very intelligent. She carried a high head, and stepped up and moved off in the grandest kind of style. Most any person would envy the one who held the ribbons over her back.

One day some important business took the merchant away for a few hours, and as he set off to return the horse suddenly became unmanageable. She dashed away down the road at an unearthly speed, snorting and puffing like a steam engine, and foaming like waves on the sea. Away the animal flew, every minute getting faster, until at last the merchant's strength became exhausted. "No words can describe the horror of my situation," said he, a few days later. "There I was sitting helpless in the buggy, with the reins lying at my feet. On each side of me there was a deep ditch, around which huge trees were growing. The animal did not take a straight course, but waived from one side to the other, then up and then down. She switched her tail

furiously, and made me think that each minute she would kick me into eternity.

I tried to crawl out the back of the buggy, but the curtain was down, which prevented me from even leaning backward.

For three miles I was carried under these horrible circumstances; it seemed like a long time, but really it could not have been more than a few minutes.

But six minutes, short as it may seem when one is pleasantly entertained, is a different matter when every minute you think the next will be your last; or that the tree next in sight will be the one with which your head will collide.

There is no telling how far I would have traveled, or where we would have stopped, had it not been that the road forked some ways ahead of me, and from the side road, a horse, buggy and driver suddenly appeared in front of me. I was on them in a moment, and shouted with what little strength I had remaining, 'Turn out! Turn out!' But either I was too slow or the black horse too fast, I know not which, nor did I then have time and composure enough to stop to consider the matter; for in a moment my team was all over his. Both horses, buggies, drivers and all rolled over in a ditch. The buggy of the other man had a closed top too. This was broken off and turned bottom upward, with its occupant quietly lodged inside.

As for myself the black horse did not stop a moment, and in dragging my buggy over sideways, it passed over a ditch, into which I rolled like a watermelon. The horse kept on, but soon collided with a stump, which

strange to say, though neverthless the truth, set the buggy straight on its wheels again, which in a moment was out of sight. All this required but a few seconds. I had gotten up from the ditch and assisted my good friend in turning his buggy around on its all fours again, and gracefully exchanged congratulations that neither of us received even the slightest injury.

My friend's horse had stood still, and seemed only to look on and smile, as all the commotion was going on. Fortunate it was for me, for there is no knowing what we owe him for his dignified conduct during these exciting moments. The black horse after running about a mile further, turned into a large farm, where in jumping a large canal, the buggy fell in it. This stopped the horse, and she was soon found uninjured, by a party of workmen who had collected and followed on after her.

The strangest feature of this peculiar episode is, that there was absolutely no injury received, and no repairs to be made except my friend had to have his buggy top put back on the vehicle.

VISITING THE SICK.

THE practice of visiting the sick is one which is most unmercifully abused; and the weight of abuse falls on the unfortunate victim—the sick person visited. Take, for example, a person in the second week of typhoid fever. By this time all the neighbors, and, in fact, all the people about town, have heard of the unfortunate one; so each one resolves in a self-sacrificing, religious kind of way to pay his respects to the sick one.

On entering the sick-room the visitor sees the attentive mother sitting by the bedside, who motions to her guest to take a seat but says not a word.

In a few moments another good woman enters the room in the same manner. Of course they make some noise. The patient has now roused up a little, turns over restlessly, and sees some strange objects in the room, but knows them not, neither does he care; he wants absolute rest. His temperature is 104 degrees. The mother gets a bowl of water and begins to bathe the sick one.

The first woman who came in gets up from her chair, and in doing so snags one foot against the rug, but, still undismayed, makes her way to the bedside and, with increased exuberance, asks the patient if he does not feel a little bit better.

The patient, not knowing night from day, but, however, conscious of being annoyed, turns restlessly on

the other side, throws his arms about in wild delusion, picks at some imaginary object about him, and gives expression to bodily suffering.

His temperature now begins to rise. The second woman had gone out for a drink of water, but has returned and, making her way to the bedside, assures the patient that he will be well in a few days and extends an invitation to spend a day with her as soon as he has gained strength enough to eat.

The good mother, afraid that she might offend her neighbor, but all the time realizing the harm being done, has worked steadily at her bathing. But the condition of things causing the rise of temperature was more powerful than her means to reduce it, so her efforts are in vain. But, with renewed energy, she continues her work, while the visitors take part in a spirited conversation, each side being reinforced from time to time by the arrival of another visitor coming in to help the tired mother. And so the afternoon wanes and the conversation waxes warm. The good mother realizes that against this deplorable condition her efforts are futile, breaks down and begins to cry. What wonder, when "man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn."

The afternoon is now well-nigh spent; the attending physician calls around as usual. He enters the room, says not a word, but goes on to the patient and, at a glance, takes in the situation. He finds the pulse 130, temperature $104\frac{2}{5}$ degrees. He had left him at 2 o'clock with a pulse at 98 and temperature of 101

degrees, and the patient resting quietly, manifesting no sign of suffering.

The patient turns over and seems to recognize a friend —a friend who has seen him two or three times a day for ten days, but has not asked him how he felt but once in all that time. A person who knows anything of human nature and human expression can tell how a person feels without asking. The countenance speaks for itself, not only in the human family but down among the lower animals. The courteous inquiry for a person's health is simply a matter of form, and a miserable form too, when applied to the sick.

But the physician, recognizing the situation, interferes with the conversation, and invites the callers into another room (a distant room most desirable), and closes the door. He now begins with a quiet tongue, and the free use of cold water to repair to some extent the damage done, which after a time is fairly successful, and after taking his nourishment and a little cracked ice, his patient peacefully turns again and now is asleep.

The room is quiet and there is no one present save patient, mother and doctor. The clock is out in the hall, and in its place there hangs a watch. The room is quiet—the patient apparently comfortable.

Put yourself in the patient's position. People in general make a great mistake in their method of expressing their solicitude for their fellow-beings, and most frequently great harm is done unintentionally. What person is so base that he would, from mere wantonness, add to his neighbor's distress? Yet, through ignorance or misguided judgment, we often do it. Ig-

norance for which we alone are responsible, for we cultivate it.

Have you lived twenty years and not been sick with a fever or had a raging headache? Well, then, did you want the whole town to come in and inquire for your health? No; most certainly, no! You wanted to be let peacefully alone, after the proper remedies were administered, with the soothing influence of some soft, gentle hand. Why make undue disturbance? When you come in the sick-room make your advent as soft and gentle as possible; simply bow to those present; take a seat, if there is a vacant one, whether invited to or not, if you are in the habit of calling or are a friend to the family. And when you leave it is not necessary to even say farewell. You went simply as a matter of form, to show the family that you remember them, and not to make an afternoon call, or to work as a servant.

Be quiet in the sick-room. For humanity's sake, don't talk in the sick-room! I mean, of course, when the patient is very sick, or is nervous.

When the patient is getting better, and is clear of fever, then he can appreciate a pleasant caller, and frequently asks that they come in to see him.

One of the hardest things in all this world for two women to do, whether sitting or standing, riding or swimming, is to remain many minutes together without talking. They are generally absolutely invulnerable to any situation, and as a rule, when two or more are together their tongues, though apparently riveted in the center, but with free margin, yield an incessant

melody from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof, nor do they stop then.

Be quiet in the sick-room, or don't enter at all; never there attempt to lead in conversation; leave this for the mother or nurse to do. And if there seems to be a superabundance of company in the room, get up quietly and leave. Don't wait for somebody else to start.

And don't select a public gathering—the hotel table or a crowded store—to inquire the nature of the sickness of those latest stricken down, and oftentimes it is better not to inquire at all.

A STORM AT SEA.

I LAY on my pillow at night
And heard the ocean roar;
When presently the tempest
Rose higher than before.

I thought of my dear old mother
And my sister jolly and gay.
And wished for just one moment
I could see the light of day.

The horror of those moments
No words can ever tell;
I raised up from my pillow
And felt the ocean swell.

"Just a few more seconds,
Let's be resigned to die,"
The captain raised his voice,
Then lowered with a sigh.

The words he said were true—
We felt the lathered foam,
And a boy's wandering spirit
Sends this message home.

THE SOUTHERN NEGRO.

SEVERAL months ago a physician living in Virginia became involved in a discussion about the American Negro with a Massachusetts lawyer, and in reply to the lawyer the physician spoke, according to reports, with decided firmness and in a very convincing manner. He thus proceeded in his characteristic style, after relating an amusing anecdote: And while I am aware of the fact that in many places there exists such a conglomeration of ideas and such a neglected ignorance of the actual existing conditions that a true and unbiased consideration of this matter is quite improbable; and, furthermore, knowing well enough how the idea exists in some parts of the country that the Southern people are prone to abuse, discredit, deceive and defraud the Negro of his common rights and privileges, and of a true, just and rightful recognition of him away from home. But, granting if you please, that in this special case these accusations are not applicable, and that no such evil motives actuate the speaker of the few facts here set forth, and, furthermore, if the dispassionate, unprejudiced hearer could imagine himself once for all giving to the Southern people a proper recognition of their superior wisdom in dealing with a mighty yet trying problem, they would be willing to admit that the Southern people are seeking with tireless energy and a never waning courage to elevate the Negro, and by improving him mentally and morally,

develop in him a degree of reliability and stableness of character as to make him a helpful neighbor. As a friend of the Negro, as one who will not discredit him or turn from him in need, I want to say that before you can discuss the Negro intelligently, you must first know him. You must live among them; you must work them and work for them. You must know the Negro as he really is. You must know him in the daylight and at night. You must know him on the street and on the farm; on the country highways and lounging about the street corners laughing and bawling out at everything that appeals to his humorous nature. You must see him in his sorrow and know his sympathy for his sick ones. You must see him rally from his grief for a deceased wife only to take another in a few months' time—often before her tracks have been erased from the sand about his door. You must know that his weak and vacillating will-power are in perfect submission to a stronger mind, and it is the Negro characteristic to crave a vicious leader. You must know something of his anatomy and his histological make-up; of the effect of heat and exercise on the minute glandular structure of his skin. You must have been for at least one hour in a tight room, on a hot summer day, where at least one hundred Negroes were confined. Then you would get the sweet aroma that exhales from his skin, and the gentle winds blowing through the South would waft it along to the sea,

"As a feather is wafted downward from an eagle in its flight."

The Negro of forty years ago was a striking contrast to the Negro of to-day. For in those days he was raised

up to work; he was taught to work, and he knew his work. He went about it with a merry heart and sang, as he worked up and down the rows, his native lullabies. The Negro was happy then; he had no care, no thought. He worked during the day and at night had his food already prepared for him, so there was nothing to do after supper but lie down and sleep, and this is the most glorious state for the Negro; let him lie down for a nap and he is happy; but attempt to arouse him for any cause and you will have to raise your voice. The Negro sleeps heavily. In those days there was nothing to disturb him; he was used to it and trained that way. It suited him and he flourished under it. After waking in the morning they had their breakfast and went their usual paths to work. The old Negroes in those days were generally reliable and had a higher appreciation of character than they ever exhibit in the present day. This was because they were kept more constantly in contact with the white people and their absorption therefrom was in excess of the injury wrought by evil association. While now all the good you could infuse into a Negro in a week's time would be completely displaced and eradicated by the evil influence of one rowdy party, or a drunken carousal, or the explosion of one plot to execute some thievish exploit.

In the old days the Negro had his parties and other social festivities just as they do to-day, only now the natural humor of their nature is subdued by the boisterous revelry of liquor-drinking.

The young Negro of to-day does not consider himself fixed at all for a social gathering unless he has a bottle

of whisky in his pocket and five cents' worth of candy. A mouth harp is an additional treasure with which many provide themselves, and thus rend the air with their musical strains. But the Negro of to-day is of a different breed altogether. Collectively, I mean most certainly, for surely there are some exceptions to most any general type of a thing, and I would not do a single one the slightest injustice. But I mean, you understand, the great and surging bulk of the Negro element. They are raised up on the streets, or country roads, just as it may happen. They begin to walk about, many of them, by the time they are seven or eight months old, and as the result of this many of them are rachitic. I have seen a few Negroes down in Georgia who could not walk down the middle of a three-foot cotton row without jabbing into the stalks with their knees, so great was the deformity. But they care nothing for this; they want their meat and bread and liquor.

As the little Negroes grow up nowadays, they are sent to school, many of them, and the white people pay all the expenses—schoolhouse building, paying the teacher and everything.

The Negro tax amounts to nothing, for he who has managed to depart from the ways and methods of his fellow-beings enough to accumulate a little property manages to deceive the tax-lister. And here in the South it is so hard to make a Negro pay a debt that it is a well-known fact that it costs almost as much to collect the tax as it is worth. So in view of this undisputed fact, it must be plain to all that the white people pay all the costs.

After a time the little Negroes learn to read, write and spell a little, have become very proficient in swearing and general vulgarity, and begin to smoke cigarettes, dip snuff and wear their hats on one side, or rather, hung on one ear—a great fashion with the African race.

They now begin to pin large, showy flowers on their clothes, tie white handkerchiefs around their necks and walk about in a sporty fashion, spending their time drumming away on old musical instruments but making very little progress in their books.

The average Negro has not sense enough to acquire an education; he is not intended for that. His head is too flat and thick, his lips too clumsy; he is too indolent and unworthy; he is too ungrateful.

The little Negroes grow up rapidly. They are grown at fifteen or sixteen years in most cases, and they now have all the knowledge a human being can possess. They call themselves educated. They are Negro gentlemen and ladies, you understand, and they despise work, they lounge about, drink whisky, smoke cigarettes and try by every possible means to avoid work. They are expert in this capacity. They apply for schools, start little stores, skip their rent, eat up the profits, and finally wind up and skip at night. They organize serenading clubs, try to be various kinds of agents, peddlers, and in fact do anything to avoid manual labor, for which they were intended and so peculiarly fitted by their natural power of endurance and indifference to their surroundings.

The educated Negro enjoys walking about town with the handle of a walking-cane stuck in his mouth, and

a red silk handkerchief around his neck. If you meet one of these he is indifferent about yielding any of the sidewalk to you, and it is not uncommon for three or four walking together to attempt to force children off into the street. They feel that they are of some importance, and through natural, inherent, vulgar ignorance, this is the way they show it.

The negro of this type presents a glittering exterior, with his showy cuff buttons and dangling brass chain, but his underclothing is apt to be ragged and filthy and saturated with the wearer's characteristic odor.

In direct contrast to this type of negro is his less fortunate neighbor whose parents did not believe in any education. He was kept at home at work, he knows the cornfields and the tread of the old mule, he enjoys his three meals a day, but looks enviously on his enlightened neighbor who has gone to town and with whom he comes in contact Saturday and Sunday. For all negroes have to go to town on Saturday to drink whisky and lounge around. They all like liquor. Ninety-five per cent. of them will drink all they can get, and they are inveterate gamblers. They will throw away a week's earnings in one Saturday night's game, and then go home towards morning, without a penny and with nothing in the house to eat.

Just a few weeks ago I was called on Saturday night to the house of a Negro woman in distress.

She had been seized suddenly with a violent attack of cramp colic, and on entering the house in complete darkness, I told the Negro man to light the lamp. He responded "The oil is all out." I then told him to build

up a fire, and to this suggestion he replied that he had gotten in so late that he could not see to get any wood.

But I was fortunate enough to have some matches in my vest pocket and by striking one after another I secured the advantage of sufficient light to prepare the woman some medicine which in a few minutes gave her ease.

But this man had found time and money a few hours before this experience to get a bottle of whisky to last him through Sunday which stood on a table near the bed. But the oil and the wood he lost sight of.

Oh! that liquor, that liquor, that is the one thing nearest the Negro's heart. We meet with such cases as this almost every day, and I only mention this one because it is so fresh in my mind and illustrates so clearly the low and common ideals of the Negro race. The Negro as an independent workman, or farmer, is a hopeless failure.

He cannot lead, he must follow, he must work as a hand or under an overseer; You cannot trust him. Nor can he trust himself—he is even treacherous to himself from mere wantonness.

He is sullen, shirking and absolutely unreliable. There is no reason about him and he is devoid of judgment. Give him a horse and buggy and he will drive it to ruin; he will not distinguish between animal endurance and the power of steam or water.

But give him an old mule or an ox and put him on the farm and he is at home; this is the best place for him; he gets in less trouble at this, and then again, this

is as high a calling as the genuine full-blooded Negro need aspire to, for he cannot maintain his equilibrium on a higher plane.

THE ANGLO-SAXON ELEMENT.

Whenever and wherever you find a Negro successfully engaged in advanced educational work, or a thriving mercantile business, or a flourishing business of any kind, or one who has a good understanding of the ordinary comforts of civilization and the obligations and responsibilities of life, you find the Anglo-Saxon element asserting itself, and its superior instincts overpowering and suspending the groveling Negro proclivities.

This is why so many negroes have succeeded over their fellows. They are half breeds.

It is the white element that tells. Take this from them and they would all be common vulgar Negroes with the rest—with no regard for right or wrong, truth or not, except in those cases where the Negro in working with his white neighbors, absorbs from them refining elements, which in time often work a complete change in the Negro conduct and manner.

Keep the Negro at home on the farm at work, and there it is that the best that he is capable of will be realized. Any attempt on the part of public officers, through policy or otherwise, to show favoritism to the Negro race by honoring half breeds at social or political festivities has a blighting influence on the whole Negro persuasion. It makes them impudent, arrogant and sometimes discontented. It makes them all think they should

share the same honor, and as the final result of these, many Negroes receive chastisement which always does good.

It matters not that the Negro leaders thus honored are worthy citizens. The common Negro does not distinguish one from the other, nor does he care, it is simply a morbid instinct with him. He wants to be doing as others are.

The Negro at home does fairly good work if you watch him, but you must not leave him alone or your work will go to ruin, for he will shirk all he can. But we expect that of most any common laborer, and so we forgive him each month enough to hang him in a year's time.

The Negro as a criminal is widely known. This is his most famous characteristic—a lover of crimes. But his crimes are generally on the petty order, with the exception of his love for murder.

He does not plan and execute a daring train robbery; he is not bold enough for that. He has not mechanical instinct enough to formulate and execute the necessary plans. He rarely enters a bank or post-office with plans laid to engineer a robbing exploit. But for the theft of small sums about his employer's house, barn or farm, he is an expert. He can carry a grown chicken or a ham where the average person could hardly carry a purse.

I would not be surprised if there are not Negroes drawing pensions from the government to-day for alleged disabilities received in the civil war, which, if the facts were known, were caused by a steel trap in his neighbor's barn or smokehouse.

A few years ago there was a negro preacher living

near me who was drawing a pension and was making application for an increase, though he had been a marl-digger and ditcher all his life and still followed this work. Of course he never heard a gun fire during the war, and I doubt if he ever assisted in throwing up the breastworks.

The penitentiary seems to have a great attraction for the negro, and the State prisons throughout the South are full of them, and probably these do not make up more than fifty per cent. of those that should be there. The rest are going at large, so far having escaped the arm of law, or have been pardoned or allowed to escape prison or guards.

Recently, while the East Carolina Railroad was being constructed, ninety-five convicts were engaged in doing the rough work, and of this number three were white. The rest were the genuine negro. This shows fairly well the proportion of white and black criminals, though the white population in the South exceeds the black.

The negro is worked to better advantage this way than any other. They hardly ever attempt to escape the guards, and the strict discipline seems to be a good thing for them. In fact there have a few miserable wretches served out their sentence and later on turned out to be of some service to the community. So it may be safely said that this kind of training school is a good thing for at least twenty per cent. of the negro population.

IN POLITICS.

As a political factor, the negro is simply a tool in the hands of his intellectual superiors. The astute politician

holds the negro in the hollow of his hand. He controls his vote absolutely. He does only as his political idol instructs him. The politicians of this type are the most depraved and vicious characters imaginable. They have only to tighten their grasp and the negro squeals. They use the negro simply as a means to gain an object —the object is a political appointment, or patronage of some kind. These crafty fellows who manipulate the negro vote do more to debauch politics and prejudice the negro against his white friends than all the other kinds of evil combined.

As the result of the negro in politics he is given quite a liberal allowance of Federal patronage. The Treasury department alone employs about 210 negroes, and the Interior department about 200, paying them $271,000 annually. The Government printing department employs about 168. The State department gives employment to quite a number, and the Consular service and post-office department employ quite a few, and in addition to this they are given places in the Army and Navy. The post-offices throughout the South smell with the negroes' characteristic odor.

But here, as in other places, he is a menace to civilization, owing to his thievish practices and natural imprudence.

It might seem at a glance, without deliberating, that the negro, holding so many important positions of trust, must be of some merit and importance, but this is simply the easiest, and possibly the most legitimate, way, to reward him for his services. And except from the standpoint of commercialism, the negro would be unknown

in politics and office, as well as in many other vocations into which he has gained extrance.

But whether you seek to praise the negro or malign him, or take a fair unbiased view of him as he exists in the multitude, several things must be acknowledged by all, and due credit given him for all that is deserving.

We all know the negro is happy and contented in the South. He loves the warm sunshine and has a catlike domesticity about him. He becomes attached to the surroundings connected with his early associations, and often becomes strongly attached to his old plantation home.

The negroes of the South give less trouble to their employers than any other class of laborers. Think of the immense army at work in the fields, and yet a strike among them is unknown. They never offer any armed resistance as the rebellious laborers of the North and West do. All the trouble that has ever come from the negro in the South was due to malicious publications by political office-seekers, and speeches made by them in the back-woods. This has been a great menace to the South.

I refer to that type of politician whose business it is to collect the negroes at woods churches and other isolated places and stuff them with corn whisky while they pour forth in deceitful words the fruit of enduring evil.

Durham Sun - 8-9-63

Dr. and Mrs. John L. Frizzelle attended the funeral today of their uncle, Dr. David S. Morrill of Farmville. A well-known physician in Eastern Carolina, Dr. Morrill died in the Pitt Memorial Hospital in Greenville on Wednesday night from a stroke.