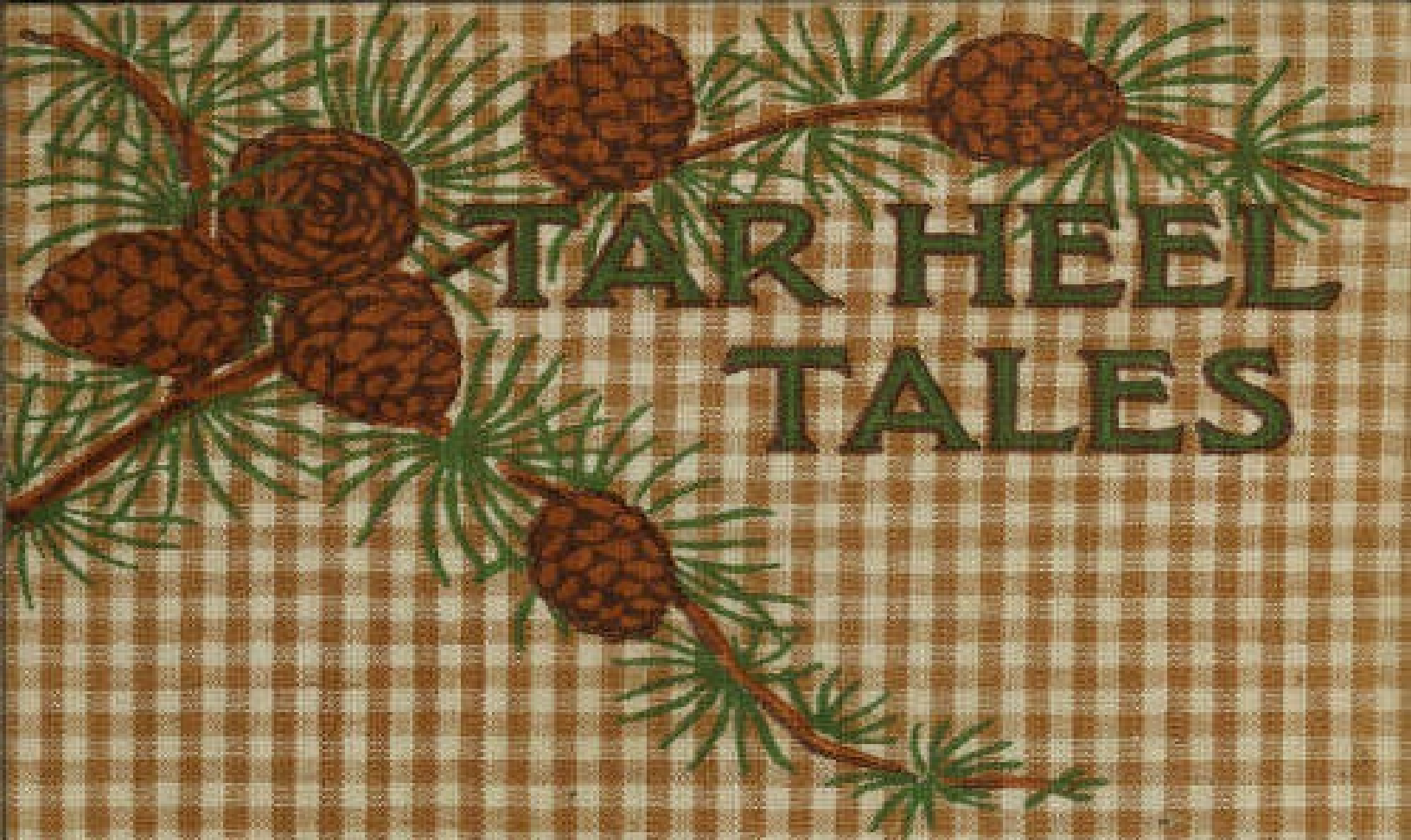
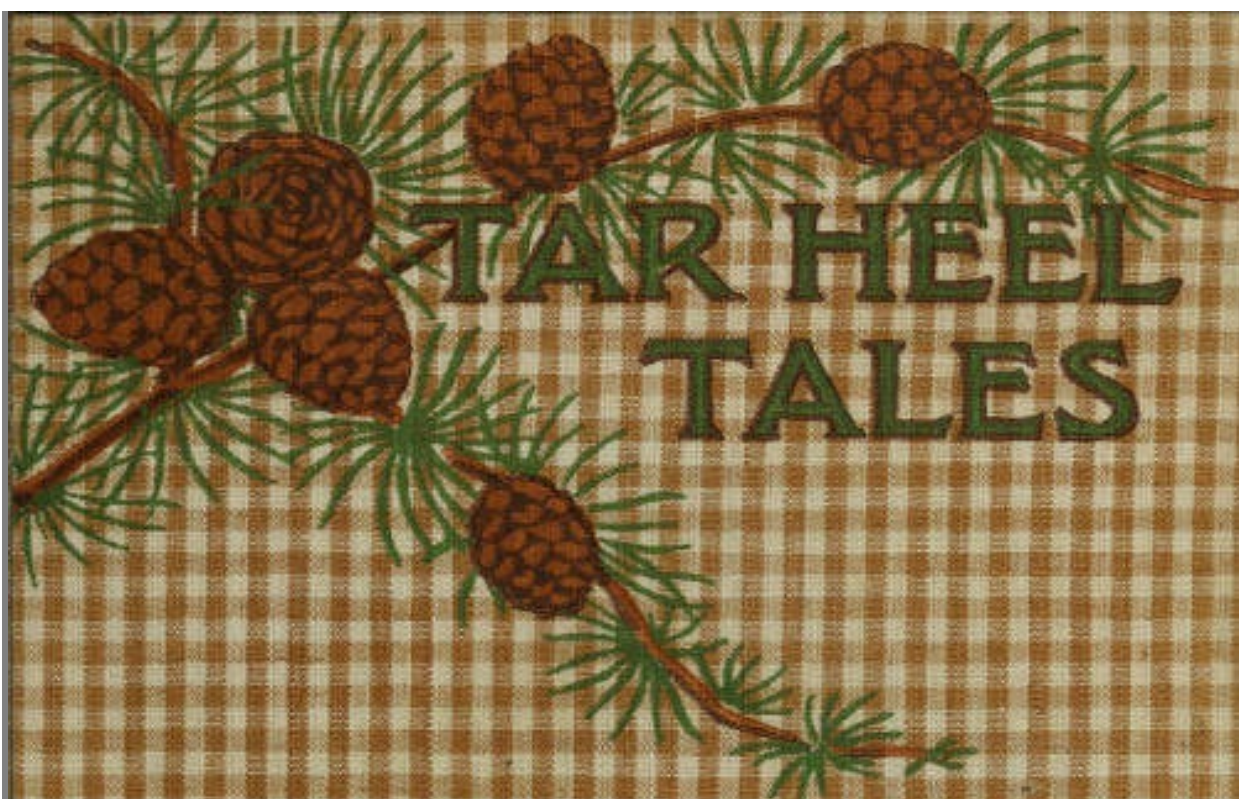




TAR HEEL TALES

H. E. C. BRYANT
"RED BUCK"



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H.E.C. BRYANT
"RED BUCK"



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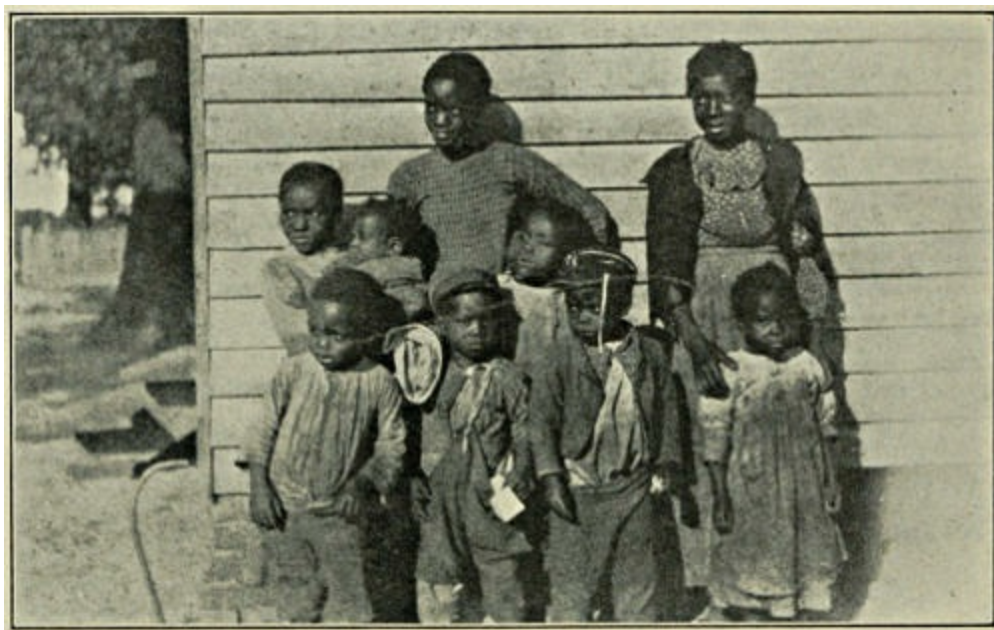
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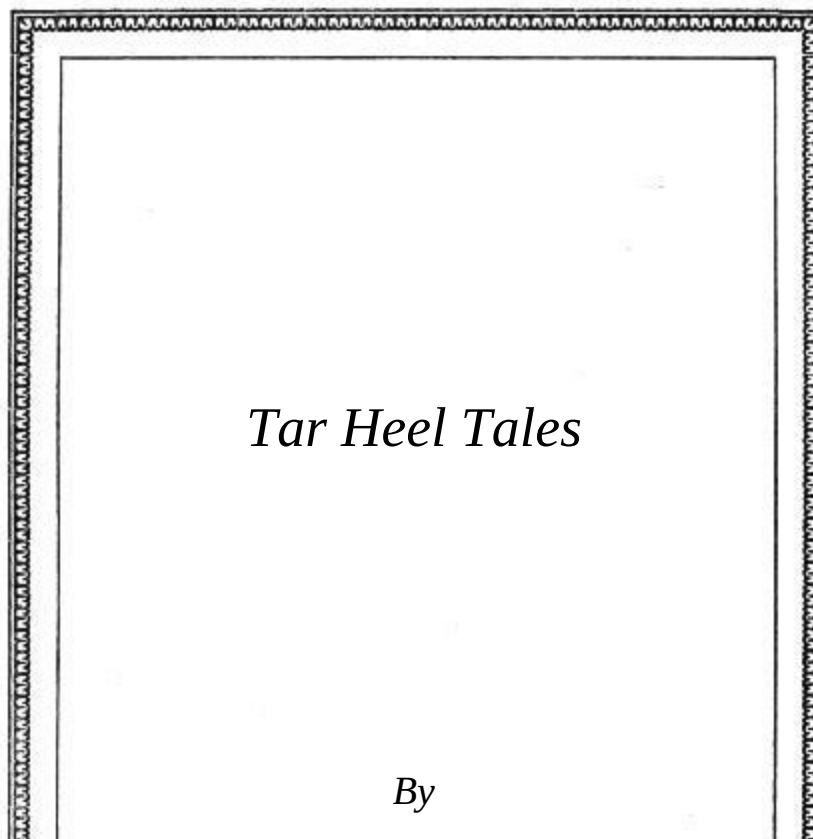
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TALES ***



Nine Little Tar Heels.



H. E. C. Bryant
"Red Buck"

Stone & Barringer Co.
Charlotte, N. C.
1910

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TO
JOSEPH PEARSON CALDWELL

MOST OF THESE STORIES YOU HAVE SEEN, SOME YOU HAVE PRAISED, WHILE OTHERS,
NEWLY WRIT, YOU HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO SEE ON ACCOUNT OF YOUR UNFORTUNATE
ILLNESS, BUT, TO YOU, THE PRINCE OF TAR HEELS, I DEDICATE ALL, IN LOVING
REMEMBRANCE OF FIFTEEN YEARS OF INTIMATE ACQUAINTANCE, FAITHFUL FRIENDSHIP,
AND MOST DELIGHTFUL COMPANIONSHIP.

PREFACE

These tales, concerning all sorts and conditions of people, were written by H. E. C. Bryant, better known as Red Buck. As staff correspondent of The Charlotte Observer, Mr. Bryant visited every corner of North Carolina, and in his travels over the state wrote many stories of human interest, depicting life and character as he found it. His first impulse to publish his stories in book form resulted from an appreciation of his work by the lamented Harry Myrover, a very scholarly writer of Fayetteville, who said:

“I have been struck frequently at how the predominant mental characteristic sticks out in Mr. Bryant. His sense of humor is as keen as a razor. He sees a farce while other men are looking at a funeral, and this exquisite sense of humor is liable to break out at any time—even in church. One may read after him seriously, as he reports the proceedings of a big event but toward the last the whole thing is likely to burst out in an irrepressible guffaw, at some very quaint, funny reflection or criticism, or an inadversion. All this shows out, too, from the personal side of the man, making him delightful in talk, and altogether one of the most entertaining fellows one will meet in many a day’s journey.

“I really think there is more individuality about his writings, than about those of any other writer of the state. Every page sparkles and bubbles with the humor of the man, and it is a clean, wholesome humor, there being nothing in it to wound, but everything to cheer and please.”

These words honestly spoken by Mr. Myrover encouraged Mr. Bryant. Red Buck’s dialect stories soon obtained a state wide reputation, and as Mr. J. P. Caldwell, the gifted editor of The Charlotte Observer, truly said: “His negro dialect stories are equal to those of Joel Chandler Harris—Uncle Remus.”

His friends will be delighted to know that he has collected some of the best of his stories, and that they are presented here.

In North Carolina there is no better known man than Red Buck. A letter addressed to “Red Buck, North Carolina,” would be delivered to H. E. C. Bryant, at Charlotte. Everybody in the state knows the big hearted, auburn

haired Scotch-Irishman of the Mecklenburg colony, who, on leaving college went to work on The Charlotte Observer and, on account of his cardinal locks, rosy complexion and gay and game way, was dubbed “Red Buck” by the editor, Mr. Caldwell. It was an office name for a time. Then it became state property, and the name “Bryant” perished.

Red Buck has traveled all over the state of North Carolina and written human interest stories from every sand-hill and mountain cove. Many Tar Heels know him by no other name than Red Buck. In fact there is a Red Buck fad in the state, which has resulted in a Red Buck brand of whiskey, a Red Buck cigar, a Red Buck mule, a Red Buck pig, and a Red Buck rooster, although the man for whom they are named drinks not, neither does he smoke.

This book of Tar Heel tales is from Mr. Bryant’s cleverest work.

THOMAS J. PENCE.

Washington Press Gallery.

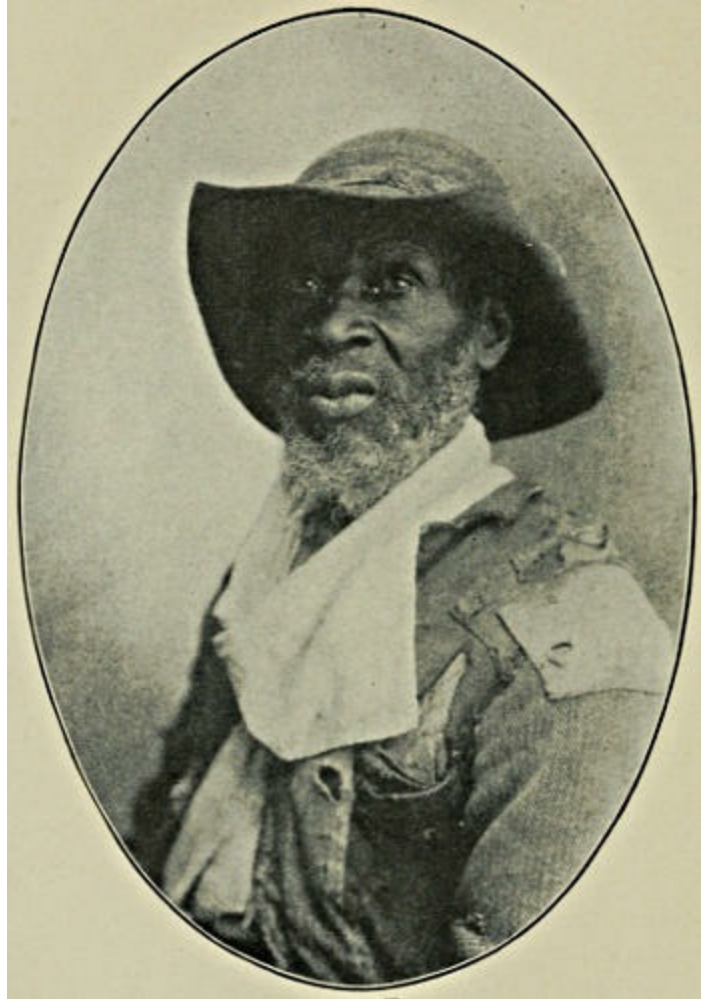
December, 1909.

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Uncle Ben.

TAR HEEL TALES

UNCLE BEN'S LAST FOX RACE

“Me an’ Marse Jeems is all uv de ole stock dat’s lef’,” said Uncle Ben, an ex-slave of the Morrow family, of Providence township.

“Yes, Miss Lizzie, she’s daid, an’ ole Marster, he’s gone to jine her. It’s des me an’ Marse Jeems, an’ he’s in furrin parts. He sole de ole farm, all cep’n’ dis here little spot dat he lef’ fur me an’ Ellen. An’ Ellen, she’s daid an’ de ole nigger’s by hissef.

“Dey ain’t no foks lak dem here now. De times is done changed. Me an’ Marse Wash wuz de big uns here when he wuz livin’. All dis lan’ an’ dese farms belonged to him. But Marse Jeems he’s done come to be er fine doctor, an’ stays in New York.

“Evybudy’s gone an’ lef’ me.

“De horses an’ de houns, too, dey’re all gone.

“I guess I ain’t here fur long, but I sho’ woul’ lak to see ole Marster, an’ Miss Lizzie, an’ Sam, an’ Cindy, an’ Mollie, de hosses, an’ Joe, Jerry, Loud, Dinah, Sing, an’ Hannah, de dogs.”

The old darkey was on his death bed. He spoke in a weak but charming voice. His mind was wandering, returning to the past. He had been his old master’s hunting companion, his whipper-in, and their black and tan hounds were famous for speed, casting ahead at a loss and hard driving. They could catch a red fox or make him take to the earth.

Old Ben was a hunter from his heart. He loved the running dog, the fast horse and the chase. The pleasant days of years long since passed were coming back to him. He longed for one more run with the old Morrow hounds. Those who watched by the death bed in the little cabin, waiting for the final summons, listened to Ben’s stories of the past. Dr. Smith had telegraphed for Dr. James Morrow, the last of his family, and told him that the old man wanted to see him and say good-bye. Loyal to the last the young master was hurrying from the North to the old home place to be present when the faithful servant departed this life. He had asked Dr. Smith to make the last

hours as comfortable as possible and to gratify Uncle Ben's every wish.

It was almost midnight that October day; the moon was shining gloriously, the ground damp from recent rain and the weather fine for a fox hunt. The scenting conditions were well-nigh perfect. Dr. Morrow had just arrived, but old Ben did not know him.

"Yes, sir, Marse Wash, all's ready fur de hunt," said the negro in his delirium.

"Ever thing's right an' ole Hannah's been clawin' at my do' fur de las' hour. She's mighty anxious to try dat ole Stinson fiel' fox dis evnin'. De horses is done saddled an' nothin' to do but start.

"Des listen at Sing an' Jerry, dey's powful anxious to go!"

It was pathetic to hear the old fellow talking to his master who had been dead many years, but he seemed happy. There was no way to stop him if those there should have desired to do so.

"Blow yo' horn, boss, an' let Marse Sam Stitt jine us ef he will. Dat'll do, I hear 'im. He's comin'."

For a time Uncle Ben was quiet. His lips worked and he seemed to be talking to himself. But, after a long silence, he lifted his head from the pillow and exclaimed: "Listen! Listen, Marse Wash! Hear dat bark? Dat's ole Sly, Marse Sam's Georgy dog. She's done slip in dere an' strike er head uv ole Hannah!

"Listen! Hear her callin'? Marse Wash, dat Sly looks lak er steppin' dog an' she sho' is gwine to give Joe some hard runnin' dis mornin' ef we jump dat Stinson fox.

"Listen, listen, listen, Marse Wash, I hear our dogs puttin' in! Dere's ole Sing, ole Loud and Joe. It's time fur dat fox to walk erway now, ole Joe ain't in no foolin' way to-night. He sho' is ready to run. Listen, Marse Wash, you hear him callin'."

Uncle Ben dropped back on the pillow, and rested a few minutes. Everybody in the room was silent. It seemed only an hour or so. The old man had run his race and his time had come.

"Hear dat, Marse Wash? Listen how dat Georgy lady's singin' in dere. She

an' ole Joe's neck to neck. Deyer comin' down thu de Hartis woods now an' 'tain't gwine to be long till dey make dat fox run. Ef it's de ole Stinson fox dey'll 'roust him in de Rea pastur'. Dat's whay he's feedin' dis time er night.

"Dat's it! Listen, you hear ole Loud crossin' dat hill? He's scoutin' now. De fus' thing you know he'll be right behind dat rascal. He ain't sayin' much, but he's movin' on.

"Dat's Joe fallin' in, an' Jerry, an' Dinah!

"Deyer all crossin' to de pastur. Dat's whay ole Stinson Fiel' do his eatin' 'bout dis time. Well, ef he's in dere to-night you'll hear dem dogs cry out lak dey wuz mad derectly."

At irregular intervals the old darkey would stop and catch his breath. There was a smile upon his face and spirit in his voice. Death came on and he was having his last fox chase. The old Morrow hounds trailed the famous Stinson Field fox and were about to make a jump. Capt. Sam Stitt's dogs were putting in and the quality of a new hound would be tested. The contest promised to be exciting.

"Hear dat Sly, wid dat chop, chop bark, an' er sort uv er squeal! She's right wid ole Joe.

"Listen, Marse Wash, ole Loud's done driv him out!

"Des listen how he's shoutin'!

"Dey's gone toads de Big Rock an' dey sho' is flyin'. Ef it's de ole fiel' feller he'll drap erroun' by de Cunnigin place des to let 'em know dat he's up an' doin' an den he'll come back dis way.

"Whoopee, but ain't dey movin'! Listen at ole Joe wid his 'yowl' holler. He's des kickin' dust in de faces uv de res' uv dem dogs.

"Yes, sir, he's gone right square to dat Cunnigin place. It's ole Stinson an' he's walkin' erbout.

"I des kin hear 'em. Dey's sucklin' 'roun de ole house now."

There was a break in the story. Uncle Ben stopped to rest. The dogs had gone out of his hearing.

"Listen, Marse Wash, dey're comin' back! Ole Joe's runnin' lak he's

skeered. Some dog mus' be crowdin' him? Yes, sir, it's de Stinson fox, an' he's comin' dis way. See, comin' over de hill? Dat's him! Look how he's lopin'! He knows dat ole Joe ain't arter no foolin' dis night.

"See, yonder's de dogs! Dey're travlin' arter him. Look at dat pale red houn'! Dat's Sly, an' she's steppin' lak de groun' wuz hot! She ain't givin' ole Joe time to open his mouf wide. I knowed some dog wuz pushin' him.

"Here dey come down to de branch! Ain't dey movin'? Dey're goin' to de Hartis woods, an' on toads Providence church. But ain't dey flyin'? I dis kin hear dem!"

As the dogs went out of hearing toward the east the old hunter lay back and hushed his tongue. He was running the race that he had run many times before.

"Listen, Marse Wash, I hear 'em crossin' de Providence road, comin' back. Dey're drivin' to kill ole Stinson now. I 'clar' fo' de Lawd I never heered dat Joe run lak he's runnin' dis night. He's almos' flyin'.

"But hush, listen, don't you hear dat 'Whoo-ark, whoo-ark, whoo-ark' in dere? Dat's Sly, an' she sho' is shovin' dat fox an' crowdin' Joe.

"Hear dat? She's crossin' de big hill fust.

"Dey're turnin'! He's makin' fur de Big Rock, but he ain't gut time to make it.

"Listen, Marse Wash, dat Georgy dog's 'bout to outdo ole Joe! She's comin' lak de wind. I don't hear ole Joe. He won't bark ef he gits behind. He mus' be tryin' to head off dat Sly bitch.

"Look! Yon dey go 'cross de cotton fiel' an' Joe an' Sly is side to side.

"Whoopee, ain't dey goin'? Ole Joe sho' is doin' about, but Sly's on his heels.

"Dey's goin' to ketch dat fox. Git up Sam an' less see 'em kill him! Go on! Come on, Marse Wash!"

For the first time during the night the old darkey became very much excited and jumped and surged in the bed. Those near tried to calm him. But the race was almost over. Uncle Ben's summons had come. The angel of death was at the door.

“Look, Marse Wash, ole Joe’s in de lead. He sees dat fox an’ he’s done lef’ Sly. He’s runnin’ fur blood.

“See him! Look! Look! Ole Stinson Fiel’s ’bout to git to de thicket! See, he can’t make it! Joe’s grabbin’ at him! Look! Look!”

That was all. Uncle Ben was giving up the ghost. Death came on him. The final summons had arrived. As old Joe bore down the fox the faithful servant of the Morrow family passed away. As the end drew nigh Dr. Morrow and Dr. Smith and other friends who had assembled around the bed stood near and watched the light go out. Everything around was still. Death was easy.

The remains were buried in the Morrow family’s private burial grounds. Ben was the last of the old slave stock. In his delirium he had called back his old master, the old horses and the old hounds, and died happy in the delusion.





Aunt Matt.

FORTY ACRES AND A MULE

“What about your husband and the ‘forty acres and the mule,’ Aunt Matt?” asked the ruddy-faced young man who had just arrived from the city to visit his father and mother at the old home place on the farm.

“It’s fine weather, Mister Eddie, an’ de cotton an’ de corn is des growin’ a inch or two ever’ night,” said Matt Tite, a tall, thin-faced negress of the antebellum type, smiling.

“Don’t evade the question, Matt; tell these boys about Tite and the carpet-baggers,” insisted the visitor. “Out with it, I want to hear the story again.”

“Chile, ain’t you never gwine to fergit dat? I walked eight miles to git here to see you, but ef I’d er knowed dat you wuz gwine to pester me ’bout Tite an’ de Ku Kluxes I sho’ wouldn’t a come.

“I’s done fergit de perticlers uv dat story.”

“You know enough to make it interesting; tell it.”

“Tite’s done fergit de forty acres an’ de mule, an’ ef I des wanten have er fight, let me mention it in his presence.

“You know Tite wuz one uv Marse John Robinson’s niggers ’fo’ s’render. Marse John wuz a powerful big man in dem times ef he is po’ now. He had lots uv lan’ an’ niggers, an’ wuz mighty good to his slaves. Tite wuz a good nigger, an’ Marse John làked him, an’ arter de war he stay on at de ole place an’ seem satisfied till dem cearpet-baggers (dat’s what de white folks called dem) fust come sneakin’ around, puttin’ de devil in de niggers’ haid, promisin’ all kinds uv things, an’ given dem nuthin’ but trouble.

“’Twuz soon arter s’render when me an’ Tite married. I had b’longed to Marse Jeems Walkup, an’ a mighty good man, too, he wuz. When I marry Tite I move to de Robinson place to live wid him, an’ we all git ’long fine fur a while. Tite he wucked ’bout de farm an’ I hep ’roun’ de Big House. Ole Miss Jane done say dat she been wantin’ me fur de longes’ sort uv time.

“One night, when me an’ Tite start ’way fum de kitchen, I seed a rabbit

cross de road in front uv us, an' I 'low right den dere wuz bad luck ahead fur him an' me. Ole Missus uster say ef a rabbit cross yo' path somefin' bad woul' sho' happen to you.

“Sho' nuff, chile, hit done come. Bad times 'gin on dat plantation an' 'roun' dat neighborhood dat very night. When me an' Tite git home dar come 'long a strange white man, lookin' lak er peddler, totin' a police on his arm. Comin' nigh he say to me an' Tite, 'Howdy-do, Miss Robinson an' Mr. Robinson?’

“I look 'roun' to see ef Ole Marses an' Missus wuz dere, fur I knowed we wuz no 'Miss Robinson' an' 'Mr. Robinson.' But, bless yo' sole, honey, he wuz talkin' to nobody but me an' Tite. I look at de man spicious lak right den, an' kinder git skeered. He 'gin to talk 'bout sellin' us some specs an' julery, an' sich lak, but soon he tell Tite dat he's sont dere fum de Norf to talk 'bout de comin' 'lection. He 'low dat he's been heerin' 'bout Tite, an' tell him dat he's one of de big niggers uv de country ef he des only knowed it. Tite he say nuthin' but de white man des keep on an' on.

“‘Yes,’ 'low de man, ‘dey tells me dat you's one uv de mos' prominent cul'ud gentlemens in dis section uv de country. I knows dat's so fur you looks smarter dan de res' I's seed down here!’

“I seed Tite swell up a little when de man tell him dat. Niggers' haid des lak white folks', dey gits mighty big sometime.

“‘Well, Mr. Robinson, dere's a better day comin' fur you an' Miss Robinson,’ 'clared de white man.

“‘I's des fum de Norf, an' come to fetch you good tidens. By dis time of coase you knows who yo' frien's is. You had slav'ry; you's gut freedom. Dat's not all, ef de 'Publikins gits in dis time you's gwine to have some uv dis lan'. Yes, you's gwine to have forty acres uv lan' an' a mule to wuck it wid. You, Tite Robinson, is to have de pic' uv de lot fur you's gut so much sense.’

“Dat man sho' did have a sharp tongue, an' knowed how to please a nigger. Tite's eyes git mighty big while he talk 'bout de lan' an' de mule. But all de time I wuz lookin' at dat man an' de way he dress. He look lak a bad man. Me an' Tite wuz not use to calls fum white men. No spectacle white person prowled 'bout 'mong de niggers lookin' dat way. But 't'wuz none uv

my bizness to meddle wid him an' Tite. So I says nuthin' an' he goes on wid his putty talk.

"After while he say to Tite: 'Come inside an' make a light; I's gut some pitchers to show you an' Miss Robinson.'

"Dat wuz mos' too much fur me, but I darsen' cheep. Tite he goes in an' lights de torch an' de man he opens up his police an' takes out some pitchers. De fust ones had niggers wid chains on, an' de overseer wid his whup. Indeed, sir, dem pitchers had de po' darkey in a bad place. De man say dat's de way it wuz in slav'ry time. Den he fotch out some wid Mr. Nigger dressed up in fine clothes, wid yaller buttons, dis what de nigger laks. Bless me, ef he didn't have one wid Tite on a big chestnut hoss, ridin' 'roun' de farm. It look so much lak de nigger dat I des laugh out loud. An' Tite he grin all over de face.

"'Dat's de way Tite's gwine to look after de 'lection,' said de man. 'Dat's ef de 'Publikins git in.'

"Chile, dat wuz a powful talkin' man. His tongue go dis lak it wuz loose at both een's. When he shet up his police, after givin' Tite some pitchers to put on de mantel boa'd, he take de breff fum me by axin' ef he kin stay all night. Tite wuz so stuck on him dat he say 'all right.' So he stay, but slip out 'fo' day nex' mornin'.

"Dat talk an' dem pitchers stir Tite all up. He's not de same nigger no mo'. De nex' day he wuz mean to me, 'cause he seed fum de color in my eye dat I lak no sich doin's, an' he had some words wid Marse John. 'Deed, sir, he wuz des lak er stubborn mule. Nobudy coul' do nuthin' wid him. I tole him dat he'd better quit foolin' wid po' white trash, fur you git nuthin' in dis worl' 'cepin' whut you wuck fur. But Tite he wuz done gone 'stracted on de forty acres an' de mule. He des look at hissef on dat big hoss an' smile."

"Matt, do you really think Tite believed he would get the land and mule?"

"Coase he did!" declared the old woman with considerable spirit.

"De same white man meet Tite an' talk agin, but dat time I wuz away an' hear nuthin' uv it. Tite soon 'gin to talk 'bout callin' a meetin' uv de niggers. Mo' strange niggers dan I ever seed befo' come dere to talk wid him, an' dey all act mighty bigity lak.

“Yes, sir, Tite wuz de big nigger in dem parts. Whatever he said de ’tuther niggers done. De ’lection come nigher an’ Tite gits mo’ triflin’ ’bout wuckin’ fur de white folks. Him an’ Marse John had a dispute an’ Marse John knock him down wid a stick. Talkin’ woul’ do no good. De crowds uv niggers kep’ gittin’ bigger an’ bigger an’ mo’ strange white mens come to see Tite, an’ dey all’ers sneak in at night.

“De white folks lak Marse John and Marse Jeems Walkup ’gin to git tired uv all dis foolishness. Dey hold a meetin’ demselves, at Marse John’s, an’ ’scuss how to keep de cearpet-baggers off uv deyer farms an’ git de niggers back to wuck.

“But, Lawd bless yo’ soul, honey, ’bout dis time Tite cut de highes’ buck uv all an’ have Marse John ’rested an’ carried to town fur hittin’ him. Yes, sir, a man wid blue suit an’ brass buttons come an’ git Marse John an’ take him to Charlotte ’fo’ dat Freedman’s Bureau. You orter heerd de niggers an’ white foks cryin’, an’ seen ’em takin’ on when de officer driv’ off wid Marse John. Ole Missus took it mighty hard, so she did, an’ I wuz des as mad es I coul’ be. I knowed dat de devil wuz to pay den, fur de white foks wuzn’t gwine to put up wid no sich es dat. Deyer day wuz comin’ agin.”

“Did they put Grandpa in jail?” asked one of the excited children.

“No, honey, but dey mos’ done it. Marse John come back de very nex’ day, but he wuzn’t de same man. He done gut mad an’ all de res’ uv de white foks wid him. ’Deed, sir, dey wuz tired foolin’ wid dem cearpet-baggers, an’ Marse John make Tite git out uv his house de fust thing when he come back, an’ to tell de truf I didn’t blame him one bit, fur dat nigger wuz des so mean dat nobody coul’ git on wid him. Ole Miss Jane wuz pow’ful sorry fur me but I had to go wid Tite. We rented a house fum a town man, an’ move in. We wuz back fum de road an’ ’way fum de white foks. I never seed sich a nigger es Tite; every day he wuz wusser dan de day befo’. Fum ’sociatin’ wid dem cearpet-baggers he gut high up. Dey done fill his ole kinky haid wid highferlutin’ talk an’ idees. Every udder night he wuz at some nigger meetin’, stayin’ till ’fo’ day in de mornin’. You woul’ never know when an’ where dey wuz gwine to meet but dere wuz all’ers lots uv ’em dere. Sometimes dey’d meet at my house an’ it woul’n’t hold ’em all. De way dem niggers talk when dey meet I des knowed somefin’ bad wuz boun’ to happen.

“Now an’ den, when Tite wuz off politicin’, I woul’ slip off an’ go see

Miss Jane, an' hear whut de white peoples wuz doin'. Den I beg Tite to let politicin' 'lone an' stay at home, but, no, sir, he knowed his bizness. His haid wuz sot on dat forty acres an' de mule, an' I coul'n't do nuthin' wid him.

"One day Miss Jane read fum de paper whut de Ku Kluxes wuz doin' to niggers down in Souf Careliny. You know where 'tis: des over de line down here 'bout three mile? De piece say dat dey wuz comin' dis way. She 'low dat de doin's uv mean niggers wuz gwine to fetch 'em here.

"An' let me tell you, chilluns, it wuzn't long 'fo' dey come an' putty nigh skeered de niggers to deaf.

"But, 'fo' dey come Tite done run plum mad on de subjec' uv de 'lection. I beg him to stop dat foolin' an' go back to wuck, but he des go on lak he never heerd me. Why, honey, de fool nigger done 'gin to think he's gwine to be Gov'ner. De wust ain't come yit, fur one day a white man come 'long an' giv' Tite what he say wuz a deed fur Marse John's mill place. Es he giv' de paper to Tite he say: 'Mr. Robinson (talkin' to nobody but Tite), here's de deed to de mill place an' you kin have it surveyed as soon as you laks, fur de 'lection is mos' here an' 'twon't be long 'fo' you kin git dem forty acres an' de mule.'

"Tite, he take it an' hide it under a rock. I seed him lookin' at it, des lak he coul' read, when he know he don't know B fum bull-foot. One day, while Tite wuz in Charlotte, I slip de deed out fum under de log where he hid it, an' took it over to Miss Jane an' she say it read lak dis: 'Es Samson lifted de serpent out uv de wilderness so I lifted dis po' nigger out uv \$5.'

"Tite done giv' de man \$5 fur drawin' de deed, an' he sho' did think it wuz er deed fur de mill place, an', 'cordin'ly, he an' another nigger sneak down one day, while Ole Marster wuz in Souf Careliny, an' lay off whut he want an' put up rocks to mark de corners. Soon after de 'lection Tite an' de yudder niggers uv de Robinson settlement wuz to go to town an' git de mules an', bein' as Tite wuz a leader, he wuz gwine to have a fine hoss to boot. De cearpet-baggers done tell dem dat dey woul' have several thousan' mules fur de niggers in de county. 'Fo' dat, one night, Tite done come in wid a long coat wid shiny buttons, an' a stovepipe hat. You orter seed dat nigger how he swell 'roun' 'fo' me, but de mo' he git fur nuthing de mo' trouble I seed fur him. I 'spect'd trouble every day. It des look to me lak de worl' wuz comin' to de een. All de time Miss Jane kep' tellin' me 'bout de Kluxes comin'

nigher. An', bless yo' soul, honey, one mornin' all de niggers 'long de big road wuz stirred up 'bout er percession dey had seed de night befo'. Dey say dat de bigges' men dey ever see come 'long ridin' camels lak dey have in de show. Whutever it wuz didn't make no fuss but move easy des lak a cat after er rat. De mens coul' stretch deyer necks way up in de trees, an' drink a whole bucket uv water at a time.

"'Fo' de day passed we heerd 'bout de same crowd goin' to ole Joe Grier's home an' takin' him out an' beatin' his back wid a buggy trace. Yes, sir, dey say it wuz a shame de way dey do dat nigger, but he'd been medlin' des lak Tite. Dey kotch him makin' a speech at one uv dem nigger meetin's an' dey bus' his high hat (one lak Tite's) all to flinders. An' dey say when dey lef' dere dat ole Tite Robinson wuz de nex' nigger dey woul' git. When Tite hear' dat he git sorter shaky, but 'low, big lak, dat dey wuz foolin' wid de wrong nigger. He make out lak he's gwine to fite.

"Dat very night Tite wuz gwine to have a big meetin', de las' 'fo' de 'lection, at Pineville chuch. It wuz to be de bigges' uv all but when de niggers hear 'bout de Ku Kluxes dey gut skittish 'bout gittin' out after dark. Tite an' de rest uv de ringleaders went but dey didn't have much uv a crowd. De pews uv de chuch wuzn't full lak dey had been. Yes, sir, de audience wuz rather slim fur de 'casion. But Tite wuz dere in all his glory, an' de boss dog uv de yard. Howsomever, when he lef' home dat night he wuz sorter quiet lak. He 'peered to be a little oneasy. I wuz monstrous anxious 'bout him fur I knowed de Kluxes wuz in de lan'. I didn't want Tite to git hurt but I didn't care much ef de Kluxes skeered dem fool idees out uv his haid, so he coul' have some sense once mo'."

"Did they get him, Aunt Matt?" asked a small boy who had become thoroughly interested.

"Honey, dat's de night de devil broke loose," said Matt. "I des felt lak somefin' wuz gwine to drap, an' sho' nuff it did.

"Soon after Tite lef de house de elements gut wrong. De clouds gather'd thick an' hang mighty low in de Wes'. I coul' hear de thunderin' an' see de lightnin'. I never seed sich a dark night. But, after de bigges' rain dat I ever seed fell, de clouds 'clare 'way an' de moon come out.

"When Tite wuz gone an' de rain wuz over I went to sleep an' knowed no

mo' till I heerd peoples talkin' an' cussin', an' it soun' des lak dey wuz outside my do'. It wuz den after midnight, I spec'. I coul' hear de low whisperin' voices on fust one side uv de house, den de tuther. I heerd horses movin' 'bout, an' den I knowed dat it wuz de Ku Kluxes. I heerd one man say: 'Well, we'll go in here an' see ef de black rascal's come yit. But I don't see how he coul' uv haided us off.'

"'Bout dat time dere wuz a tap on de do', an' a call, 'Matt, open de do'. We want to see if Tite's in dere. We won't hurt you ef you let us in, an' ef you don't we are comin' in anyhow. We'll break de do'.'

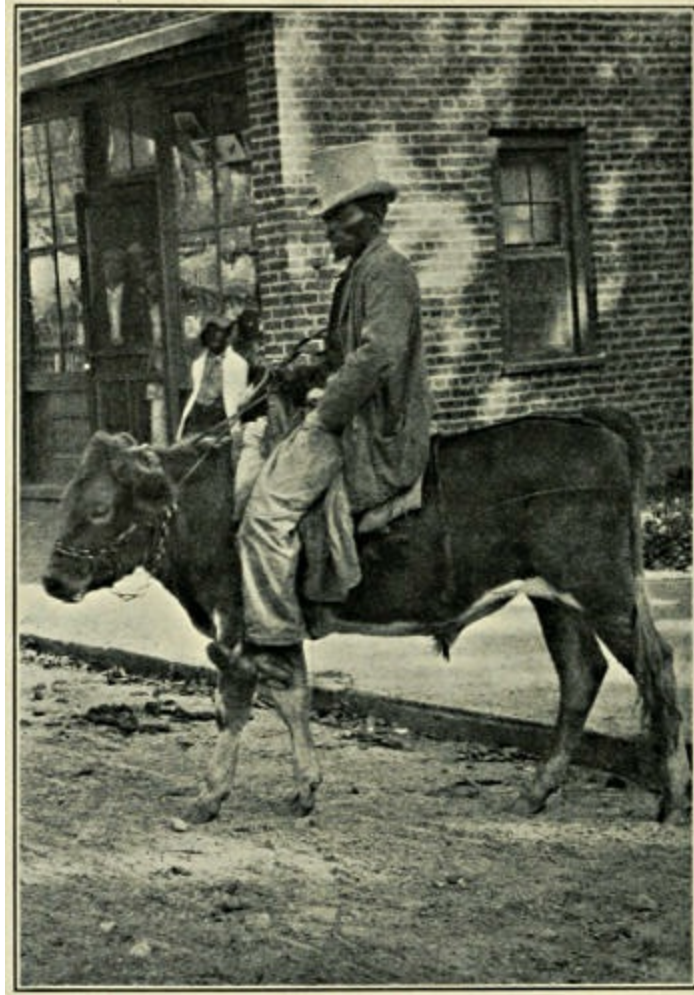
"I wuz wide awake but say nuthin'.

"'Matt! Matt! Don't you hear?' I coul'n't tell de voice but I knowed ef I didn't open de do' dey woul' break it down; so I open it an' git back in bed. When de do' come open it peered to me lak I seed a whole lot uv hosses in de road an' lots uv men in de yard, dressed in red shirts an' had on dese here false faces. I wuz skeered an' den I wuzn't, fur de man whut do de talkin' had a mighty fermilyer lak voice to me, but I des coul'n't say who's it wuz. Dey peered to b'lieve me when I told 'em dat Tite wuzn't dere, but dey searched anyhow to make sartin'.

"After dey can't find him an' dey start out de man what spoke befo' say: 'Well, Matt, we give de ole devil a good run, an' would've swung him up ef we'd ketched him, but it's late now an' we'd better go.'

"Den I say: 'Please, marster, don't kill him fur he's des gone crazy 'bout dis here 'lection bizness what dem strange white foks put in his haid. Don't, boss man, fur my sake, kill de ole nigger. He'll come right. I's tried to git him to stay at home. Now des let me try him one mo' time. Ax Marse John Robinson an' Marse Jeems Walkup 'bout Matt. Dey knows me. I's been good since s'render, an' I's tried to make Tite behave hissef. So, Mister, won't you let him off dis time?'

"De same man what spoke befo' 'low: 'Well, boys, I b'lieve dis is a good nigger, an' on her 'count we'll let de Parson 'lone fur a few days an' see. Ef we hear uv any mo' uv his doin's, 'citin' de niggers an' makin' speeches, we'll do him des lak we did Ole Joe Grier, or wuss. Ef he hadn't run lak er deer t'night, we'd broke his neck. Let's go back to Souf Careliny, an' res'.'



Tite; riding a Democratic Ox.

“Dis said, dey rode off. I wuz skeered dat Tite wuz daid, an’ coul’n’t sleep no mo’ dat night, but wuz too bad ’frighten’ to git up.

“Way in de mornin’, toge day, when all gits quiet, I heered a soft knock at de do’. I knowed it mus’ be Tite, so I gits up an’ opens it, an’ sho’ nuff it wuz him.

“Honey, you woul’n’t knowed dat nigger. He wuz wet an’ muddy fum de bottom uv his feets up. He wuz bare haided an’ his clothes all tore. But, bless yo’ soul, chile, he wuz glad to git home. When I open de do’ he say, ‘Let me in, ole ’oman, fur I’s mos’ daid. De Ku Kluxes is been runnin’ me all night. Don’t make no fuss, but lem’me in.’

“Skeered as I wuz when I seed him I had to laugh. He look’ des lak a frizzly chicken wid de feathers turned de wrong way, an’ wuz des tremblin’

lak a leaf. Ever time I move my foot he jump lak he wuz hit, but when I tell him what de Kluxes say to me he 'clare, 'Thank Gawd, Matt, ef dat be so I's yo' nigger so long as I live. You ain't gwine to ketch me foolin' wid po' white foks an' politics no mo'. Dis is my las' time. I's never been so skeered since de Lawd made me.'

"Yes, sir, an' dat wuz his las' meetin', an' when dem cearpet-baggers come sneakin' 'roun' at night he made me drive dem way des es same as ef dey had pizen. He went straight to wuck an' fum dat day to dis he's been quiet on politics.

"But it wuz a long time 'fo' I knowed what happened at de chuch dat night. Tite woul'n't never talk 'bout it. Miss Jane heered all de fac's an' tell me.

"It wuz lak dis. You's been to Pineville chuch—I mean de col'ud chuch—de one dat sets on de big hill. At de time when Tite wuz flyin' so high no white pusson lived close to de chuch. All de lan' 'bout dere wuz in woods. De chuch is gut two do's, one in de side an' one at de een where de pulpit is. It wuz a good thing fur Tite dat de een do' wuz dere. Dat's all dat saved his life.

"Tite an' his niggers wuz at de chuch dat night an' had de meetin' gwine at nine. De onlies' lamp in de house wuz on de pulpit. Tite wuz de fust speaker fur de 'cassion. He wuz to stir up de niggers fur de 'lection day. Dem cearpet-baggers done told him what to say.

"De niggers all holler fur Parson Robinson an' Tite step up in de pulpit an' take off his stovepipe hat, set it on de table, button up his long coat, an' start off lak dis: 'Gents an' Feller Citizens: I's come here to-night to tell you dat de nigger's 'bout to git what b'longs to 'em. De white foks is been on top long 'nuff. Ef de 'Publikins wins dis time ever nigger in dis house is gwine to git forty acres uv de bes' lan' in dis kermunity an' a mule to wuck it wid.'

"'Fur nuthin', Mr. Robinson?' 'low' Ole Tom Moore.

"'Yes, Mr. Moore, fur nuthin', fur it b'longs to 'em. Dat's de truf. I's done gut de deed fur mine, an' all I's gut to do is to move on after de 'lection, an' go to town an' git my mule.'

"'Dat's de truf,' shouted Ole Bill Davis, a deekin in de chuch.

“‘Tell it to ’em, brother! Come on wid some mo’ lak dat!’

“‘Dat’s whut we wants to heer,’ said de crowd.

“Tite went on: ‘But on de yudder han’, ef de Demmycrats gits back in power, de las’ one uv you will go bac’ in slav’ry. De overseer wid his whup will be back. Mark whut I say fur it’s de truf!’

“‘We know it, Parson, tell it des lak it is!’

“But, bless yo’ soul, honey, dis is where de speakin’ wuz out. While Tite wuz soarin’ high ’mong de clouds, ’bout a dozen great big mens, wid masses on deyer faces, an’ red shirts on deyer bodies, sprung up des lak fum de yearth an’ march down de middle aisle uv de chuch an’ take seats on de long bench in front uv de pulpit. Nobudy but Tite say nuthin’, an’ he chatter des lak he’s crazy. His voice trem’le so it almos’ shake de house. At fust his tongue mos’ stop, but when he seed de strange men cross deyer legs an’ look up at him, he say dat he’s gut nuthin’ ’ginst de white foks, an’ he seed no use in freedom nohow.

“Dere wuz a little shufflin’ in de back uv de buildin’. It wuz Tom Moore, Bill Davis an’ other niggers pilin’ out.

“‘Bout dis time come de straw dat broke de camel’s bac’. De big mens uncross deyer legs, all at one time, an’ each one pull out a long knife an’ a whit rock an commence to sharpen de blades, des lak dey wuz fixin’ to kill hogs. De shinin’ steel dumbfounded Tite. Big draps uv sweat come out on his haid. When de red shirt mens see how skeered de po’ nigger is dey soun’ deyer blades on de rocks an’ Tite mos’ jump out uv his skin. He fust look at de mens an’ den at de bac’ do’. His tongue done stick to de roof uv his mouf, but he muster up courage to say: ‘I see dat you darkies didn’t fetch no water fur me to drink. I can’t speak widout water, so I’ll des git a little at de well.’

“Dis said, Tite dash out de back do’ widout his hat an’ de Ku Kluxes give a wild Injin yell an’ charge out de side do’.

“But, chile, you can’t ketch a skeered nigger, an’ it’s no use to try. ’Fo’ de Kluxes git started Tite wuz gone.

“Tite never did git de forty acres an’ de mule. Ef he did I never seed it, an’ I’s been livin’ wid him ever since.”

Later, when Grover Cleveland ran for President, Tite rode in a Democratic

procession, mounted on an ox, and wearing a Cleveland hat.



THE SPANIEL AND THE COPS

“Come here, Judge,” said Col. Tom Black, the big, blonde policeman, of the Charlotte force, as a black, sleek, shaggy water spaniel started across Independence Square. “You’ve got no business over there; come here.”

Officer Will Pitts, who was by Col. Black’s side at the time, volunteered: “That is an affectionate pair—Col. Black and Judge—they like each other; they tramp the same beat together every night the colonel is on duty.”

“That’s no lie,” put in Col. Black, “that dog is as regular as a clock. He comes to headquarters just before twelve and patrols with the boys till they go off in the morning. He has sense like a man; I never saw such an intelligent animal.

“Look at that large head, those big, bright eyes and that splendid nose! Judge’s no fool!

“He’s got sense enough to vote for mayor. That’s the gospel truth.”

Pitts acquiesced in everything the colonel said, and moved around like a caged animal while Judge was being discussed. He is very fond of the dog.

Judge is a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde dog. During the day, when all honest beings go about and care not who observes them and their manners, Judge plays the part of Dr. Jekyll, serving as a watchdog for his rightful master, Dr. George W. Graham, and enlivening the premises by a cheerful bark or warning growl. All friends of the family are as welcome to the place as the gentle south winds of summer, but an enemy is driven out.

Who, that strolls about the town, viewing the pretty homes, has not seen Judge, trotting about the Graham yard, at the corner of Seventh and Church streets, switching his bushy tail and smiling out of his great brownish mellow eyes at all attractive persons as they pass?

That is his best side.

But, at that very moment, Judge is playing the hypocrite, just as well as a deceitful man would do. All is fair and bright, and Judge greets you with a

heartly shake of the tail, beaming face and dancing eyes, delighted to please one and all, knowing that his proud master is watching him through the window. If his behavior is excellent, his dinner will be something out of the ordinary; a rare slice of beef, or a bit of cake, and Pussy will not get all the cream.

Judge comes to just conclusions. He fools the folks at home seven days in the week, being a past master at wool-pulling. When Dr. Graham goes home at night, tired and depressed from a hard day's work, Judge, tactful dog that he is, rushes out to meet him.

Such capers he does cut, barking, cutting somersaults, and jumping around like wild; his joy unconfined. Dr. Graham tarries for a few minutes to play with him, and if you chance to hear the racket, you think that two gay school children have taken possession of the lawn. If Judge has an axe to grind—an extra large cavity in his bread-basket, or desires to slip away unnoticed earlier than usual—he romps all the harder, and barks more boisterously. He is a shrewd politician. His love for Dr. Graham is sincere, but not as intense as he would make him believe. He is not unlike the girl who marries one fellow for his money while she loves another; Judge prefers Col. Black, Pitts, Sergeant Jetton and other members of the police force to his home people.

For five years he has spent his nights with the night officers of the city. He knows the ins and outs of the police department better than one or two of the billy-toters that pass for policemen. For patrol duty he is first-class. He can run with the flying thief, or jump fences with the light-footed crap-shooter, and is always handy and willing. If a call comes for Black Maria, Judge is the first to mount the front seat. He likes an exciting race—the faster the better. On raids, he is the first to enter the house and the last to quit it. While the search or investigation is being made, he sits quietly by, a visiting onlooker, interested but not active. If the officers are compelled to run a foot-race, Judge takes the lead, and it is a wiry culprit that can out-distance him. The prisoner securely fixed in the wagon, Judge takes his seat in front, turns his back to the horse, and faces the unfortunate one. He seems to delight in bringing offenders to justice, not cruel, but in full sympathy with the blue-stocking laws of the city.

Once outside of his own yard, Judge assumes a dignified, stiff air, except when playing with his favorite officers. Some people would say that he is

haughty, and at times he is, but if he turns up his nose at a fellow, that means that he considers himself superior to that particular wart on society, and there is generally a good reason for his contempt.

Dogs do not concern Judge. He pays but little attention to their friendly advances or threatening growls. If some vicious cur snarls and snaps at his heels, he curls his fuzzy tail over his back and ignores the common whelp; while, on the other hand, if some soft-coated, gentle-mannered, pedigreed dog tries to make up to him, he goes to Col. Black, rubs against his legs, looks up into his face, and declares: "What fools these canines be! I don't care one whit for any of them."

From what has already been said, one might conclude that Judge is a coward. Well, dear reader, you may disabuse your mind of that conclusion, for it is wrong. Judge is a true North Carolinian—slow to anger, but fearfully courageous when in trouble. He fears no dog in town. The common herd like to snap at him from inside a secure fence, as he trots by in the wake of Col. Black, but none would dare go near the open gate. Judge just ignores everything that keeps its distance. He has frequently said to the patrolmen something like this: "Did you see that contemptuous scamp charging at me? I would not lower myself to fight him if he were out. I should like to sick old Puss on him if he'd call at my home."

In order to get Judge to do battle, a dog must assault him. Being an officer of the law, he lives up to the letter. If attacked, he fights in self-defense. It will be recalled that he put the little speckled bull-terrier, that loafed around the Gem Restaurant a few years ago, clear out of business for good. Old Speck lingered between life and death for two days after the affray, and then died from his wounds. Other dogs have fared as badly. Judge is slow to take hold, but when he does, Pitts says it's good night, Isum, for death will creep over the prostrate form of the other dog before he can stop the fight. That is the kind of scrapper Judge is. Like the man who says little, but hangs on like grim death.

I have always heard it said in Providence that it was well to stay out of a row with the laughing fighter. Such a one is Judge. He winks his eyes and grins in the midst of the fight.

Col. Black has one thing against Judge. As Mr. Hyde he is all right, but as Dr. Jekyll he is high-headed and arrogant. If Judge goes up street with any of

Dr. Graham's family, he refuses to recognize any police officer. He carries himself far above common people and soars in an aristocratic atmosphere. If Col. Black or Mr. Pitts calls to him on the sly, he lifts his saucy tail a bit higher and gets closer to his young mistress or master, as the case may be, as if he feared contamination of some sort. In other words, Col. Black and his associates on the police force are proper company after dark, but not in daylight.

Judge does not recognize them in a social way. As conclusive evidence on this point, I relate the following incident:

The joke is on Col. Black or Pitts. Col. Black claims that it is on Pitts, and Pitts that it is on the colonel.

One day, several years ago, one of these worthy officers was sent to notify Dr. Graham that a certain committee, of which he was a member, would meet that night. The officer went to Dr. Graham's gate, opened it, and started to the porch. Judge, the faithful friend of the early morning, rushed around the house, with bristles raised and teeth shining, growling viciously. The officer, seeing the threatening attitude of the dog, stopped, and said: "Why, Judge, don't you know me?" Instead of making up, after this, Judge became more determined to stop the officer. He hurried to the walkway, fixed himself, and made ready for a stubborn resistance.

"Judge! Judge!" said Col. Black or Pitts, which ever it was. But Judge heard him not.

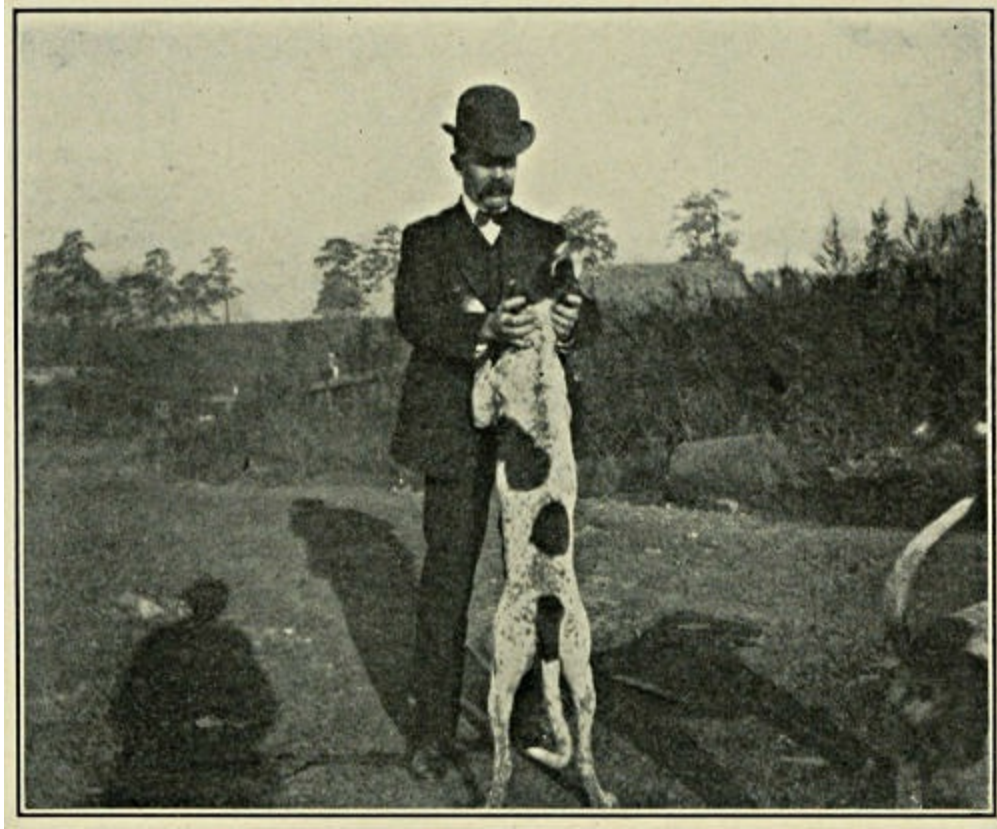
Dr. Graham, seeing the predicament of the officer from within the house, came out and assured Judge that all was well, and he dropped his tail, and went toward the kitchen, carrying an ugly case of the sulks, seeming badly put out because he did not get to bite the caller.

At midnight of the same day, Judge joined Col. Black and Pitts on their rounds, as bright and cheerful as ever.

The two men reasoned it out after this fashion: "Well, I guess he is right. We are the stuff when it comes to beating around the city, keeping out burglars and thieves, but must stay in our places. Judge thought we were going to make a social call."

Judge grew greater in their estimation. They cursed him at first, but finally came to the conclusion that as Mr. Hyde he is on an equality with policemen,

but as Dr. Jekyll out of their class.



Marse Lawrence and Trouble.

A HOUND OF THE OLD STOCK

“Is dem putty fas’ houn’s, Marse Lawrence?” asked Uncle Simon Bolick, as Mr. L. A. Williamson, of Graham, Alamance county, came up with his pack of noted fox dogs.

“Yes, Uncle Simon, they are the best in the country,” was the answer.

“Yes, sir; I spec’ dey is now, since ole marster’s stock ’s all died out. But when Marse Billy wuz livin’ he had de steppin’ dogs. Dey wuz de swiftest in de lan’. Yo’ daddy’ll tell you dat. Dey don’t have houn’s lak his’n now. Ef I coul’ git some uv de ole Bolick breed I sho’ would git on ole Beck an’ go wid you arter Big Sandy, dat sly ole red dat uses in de Big Crick woods. But de las’ uv de stock’s gone. When Marse Tim lef’ here he sont Buck an’ Bell, de onlies’ ones livin’, to ole man Bob Bolick, his no ’count uncle, up in de Souf Mountins. Ole Bob he never know’d how to care for nothin’, much less er fine houn’. All my fo’ks is lef’ dis section. De war broke dem up an’ mos’ uv dem’s in de fur Wes’, unless dey’s all daid. But ef I had one uv dem old Bolick houn’s I woul’ show you how to ketch ole Sandy. Dat’s de gospel truf!”

The old darkey was in earnest. His memory carried him back and he lived in days gone by, and scoffed at the things of the present. Life was not as sweet to him as it had been when he served his owner, Colonel William Bolick, the famous old farmer-sport of Piedmont, North Carolina, for then every day was a holiday. He hunted and traveled with his master, who kept fine wines, blooded horses and fast dogs. Truly, those were glorious days for Simon, and he has never become reconciled to the prosaic life of freedom. The Bolicks were prominent in North Carolina, and came from a good old English family. Robert, however, never did well and, to get rid of him, his father purchased a fertile mountain valley farm and sent him there to live. That suited him, for he had no pride and but little ambition.

Colonel William Bolick did well until the civil war. Like many men of his class and day, however, he could not change with the times. The freeing of the negroes destroyed him financially, and he was never able to rally his fortunes. He died soon, leaving an encumbered estate and a family of boys;

the former was sold and the boys went West.

Old Simon, the aristocratic ex-slave, took up the burden of life, and went from place to place doing odd jobs here and there until two years ago, when he moved to Graham to live with a daughter who had saved money and bought a home. There he made the acquaintance of Mr. Williamson, and never tired of telling him about the Bolick hounds.

A fortunate thing happened for Simon last fall. He was wrong in his conjecture about the passing of the Bolick stock. It had not all perished. The breed had been kept pure and improved by the sons of Bob Bolick. Some profitable crosses had been made, and the Bolick hounds of South Mountain were even better than the ones formerly owned by Colonel William Bolick. They had not been hunted after foxes, but had run deer, bear, coons and wild cats.

Zeb Bolick, the most promising son of Bob, heard of the old family negro at Graham. He found out that the Bolick hound was the hobby of Uncle Simon, and determined to box up one of the best young ones in his pack and send her to the old darkey. Therefore, on a fine day in October, he shipped Dinah, a well-built bitch, to Graham, at the same time sending the following letter to Simon:

“Simon, I have just sent you a hound of the old Bolick stock. I heard that you wanted one. She is untrained for foxes, but will run anything that leaves a scent. Accept her as a gift for the sake of by-gone days. I never saw you, but if you were raised by Uncle William, you are all right. I have named the black and tan lady Dinah. She looks just like old Bell, her great-great-grandmother, except that she is larger. She has raced all the flesh off of her bones, but that is a small matter.”

Simon Bolick was the happiest negro in the county. He rejoiced for two reasons; the promise of the dog made him happy, and the receipt of the letter, the first one of his life, pleased him. He told the town of his good fortune, going from store to store showing his letter. It was like a dream to him, and he could not realize that the dog was actually on the way. He ran around until he was almost prostrate.

For some cause Dinah was two days late in showing up, and it began to look as if somebody had been joking the old man.

Simon had described her as a beautiful, gentle animal, full of life and well-bred looking, but his imagination had been too active. Hence, when Dinah arrived, the old darkey was sorely disappointed, for she was skinny, raw-boned and dirty, her ribs prominent and her back too sharp. The boys laughed and jeered as Simon led her along the street. She seemed half-starved and tried to put her nose into everything. If she found a morsel to eat she gulped it down so greedily that the spectators roared with delight. But when safely within his own yard, the old negro made a thorough examination of his dog, and, after looking her over from nose-tip to tail, he spoke to himself as follows: "Dat ain't no bad dog ef I'm a jedge. She's got de same marks dat de ol' houn's had. I laks dem thin years, dat hump-back an' dat long, keen tail. All she needs is somefin' to eat an' er little res'. Me an' ole Suckie 'll fetch her out. By de time de race arter Big Sandy comes off I'll have her des right, an' ef I ain't mightily mistaken she's gwine to sho' dem yudder dogs de bottom uv her feets es she flies. Des es soon es she gits rested, I's gwine to slip her off down to de crick an' hear dat mouf. Ef it soun's lak ole Bell, den I'll bet on her sho' nuff."

The tongue proved right. It was loud, clear and horn-like and could be distinguished in any pack. Simon was happy. His cup of joy was brimful when Mr. Williamson sent him word that he could join him for a chase the first good opportunity for a night hunt. The old darkey could hardly wait—he was so anxious for the hunt.

When the eventful hour came, Simon, mounted on his trusty mule, Beck, with his master's old horn on his back, and Dinah trotting behind, with head and tail down, overtook the other hunters just out of Graham, on the Haw River road. The night was fine, and the ground in first-class condition. The atmosphere was fresh and sweet, after a light shower, and the weeds and grass sufficiently damp to hold a scent. As Simon rode up, Mr. Williamson remarked: "Well, old fellow, if Dinah has the proper stuff in her, and we hit old Sandy, she will have an opportunity to do her best to-night, for the weather is ideal."

"Yes, sir; dat's so; Mr. Fox'll smell mighty good arter de little sprinkle. I ain't sayin' much erbout my dog yit, 'cause she ain't never run but one or two foxes in her life, but I feels lak she wuz des gwine to fall in wid de res' an' do her part."

Some of the mischievous chaps in the party twitted the old negro about his hound, calling her “skinflint,” “meat-catcher,” “rabbit-chaser,” and the like, but he laughed and advised them to wait and see.

The hunters had not gone far when Trump, a young dog, routed a rabbit, and drove him flying across the road. Five or six puppies joined in and hurried old mollie-cotton-tail to the thicket of a near-by stream. Soon a turn was made and all came back. The dogs were close behind Brer Rabbit, and a new mouth carried the lead. Uncle Simon, with much joy in his heart, cried out: “Listen at dat horn-mouf! Dat’s Dinah, an’ she’s in front!”

Mr. Williamson was charmed with the deep bark of Skinny Dinah. It was wrong to encourage the rabbit hunters, but the boys could not refrain from galloping ahead to see the race. Dinah was literally splitting the wind. She did not tarry or linger, but picked up the scent here and there and hastened on. Simon blew his horn and all of the culprits, except Dinah, came in; and her tongue ceased. It was surmised that she had caught the rabbit and was eating a second supper. Soon she overtook her proud owner, her mouth blood-stained and her sides sticking out. The laugh was on the darkey.

Far to the right came the melodious note of Trouble, the faithful old strike dog. He had ranged toward Bull Nose Creek and struck a hot scent. Mark, Mr. Williamson’s colored valet, declared, “Dat’s where dey strikes ole Sandy, an’ Trouble knowed where to hit him!”

The hunters struck a gallop and the dogs were “harkened” in—Jerry, Jude, Kate, Sing, Music, Flora, Black Bill, Red Ball, Trumpet and Flirt. Strive, a big, deep-mouthed, bob-tailed hound, opened some distance in front of the rest. He was a fast trailer, making time and ground by sighting logs and wet places ahead and hitting here and there. He had good dog sense and knew the ways of Reynard, and, under his leadership, the pack soon had a running trail.

Mark dismounted and examined the track. “It sho’ is ole Sandy, Mr. Lawrence,” said he. “If you don’t believe it, come here an’ look.” And so it turned out.

The dogs moved across Cedar Hill toward Holt’s Bay and Drowning Creek. The young hounds, all but Dinah, were chiming in at the rear. Dinah seemed interested, but lazy. However, she kept nibbling at the track. As the hounds went in on the north side of Holt’s Bay, old Sandy slipped out on the

other side. Red Ball, the famous leader of the pack, got a live scent of the cunning fox as he set out, and rushed through the thicket, bawling as he went, and picked up the hot track. There was consternation among the dogs for a moment, but in a jiffy every last mouth, even that of Dinah, was giving tongue behind Red Ball.

As was the custom of Sandy, he took a short round to try the quality of the pack. He raced three miles and back over level country, entered the bay where he went out, dodged through and started for the swamps of Big Creek, five miles away, to the north. The hounds were in hot pursuit, Red Ball in the lead, closely followed by Trumpet, Sing and Flirt.

About every fourth leap Ball would cry, "Yock! Yocky-yocky yock!" It was sweet music to the ear. He did not bark often, but his voice was strong and piercing. Dinah brought up the rear, but was now thoroughly aroused, though the rabbit had made her heavy and slow. Simon was delighted to see her sticking to it so well and showing such interest.

The hunters rode to the top of the hill, dismounted and waited patiently for the fox and the dogs to return. It might be an hour, or it might be four, but Sandy always came back to Drowning Creek, and the faster the race the quicker the return.

Mr. Williamson and his companions did not have to loiter long that night, for within three-quarters of an hour after the hounds went out of hearing, Mark, with his keen ear, heard the tongue of Red Ball. It was coming back, "Yock! Yocky-yocky yock!"

The men hurried to a road crossing to see the pack as it passed. Dogs had changed places. Some of the short-winded runners had dropped out and others fallen back. But Simon's Dinah had performed the most wonderful feat; instead of bringing up the tail-end, she was pushing Ball. Her tongue was mingling with his, and the old negro could not constrain himself. He just had to yell, and yell he did, at the top of his voice. "As sho' es de Lawd," he shouted, "she's one uv de ole stock!"

But it was no time to shout. The dogs were flying on, and any inopportune whoop might bother them, so Simon was rebuked by the captain of the party.

Sandy covered his three-mile circuit again, and returned to Holt's Bay. By that time he saw that his life was in danger, for the hounds were racing him

faster than he ever had to go before. If the gait continued death would be staring him in the face, so he determined to put forth his best efforts in a run to Buck Hill and back, a total of sixteen miles, but by foiling several miles he would have ample time to dodge in Holt's Bay. The dogs were close after him when he left for Buck Hill, with Red Ball and Dinah cheek by jowl. Ball was running wild, while Dinah seemed to be getting better. To the west the flying pack went, the tongues of Ball and Dinah blended in one sound. Simon was so elated that he could not be still, moving about like a crazy man.

When the music ceased, Mr. Williamson turned to Uncle Simon and said, "Old man, I'll give you fifty dollars for her."

"Marse Lawrence, I needs de money, but I wouldn't swap dat dog fer yo' cotton mill; no sar, dat I wouldn't."

After that there was no sound for more than two hours, though the hunters listened with strained ears. Mark was the first to hear the returning music. He cried: "Hush! There they come! Dinah's in the lead!"

"Yoo-it yoo-it yoo-it! yoo-it!" came the sound rending the air. Ball had fallen back ten feet or more. Again the hunters hastened to a place where they could view the dogs. That time they saw the fox, Big Sandy. He was but thirty yards ahead, with tail dragging the ground and tongue hanging out.

His last race was run. The fatal day had come. But he had pluck to struggle on. Dinah and her mates came on, tired but strong. Sandy was pulling for Holt's Bay, where he could turn and double about, and worry the dogs. But the sight of the men and the horses seemed to urge Dinah on. They gave her courage and she gained on the fox. As she crossed a hillock in the edge of the woods and turned down the opposite side, she caught a glimpse of Big Sandy. Her heart beat with joy and she went forward with renewed vigor. The other dogs and the hunters were close in her wake. They had noted the change in her tongue and knew full well what it meant. It was a sight race from there to the thicket, and Dinah had the advantage. Big Sandy dodged and twisted, but his last moment had arrived. Dinah pounced on his back just as he entered the edge of the bay, and it was all over.

Dinah had proved her mettle, and Big Sandy was dead. Uncle Simon was so happy that he could not speak. He fell upon his dog and embraced her, while the boys patted him on the back and rejoiced with him. Dinah rolled

and groaned in the broom sage, the idol of the hour.



MINERVA—THE OWL

When in Charlotte, I make my home at 411 North Tryon street, in a private family. My hostess, Mrs. Barringer, widow of General Rufus Barringer, owns an owl of the Asia Accipitrimus or short-eared species; her name is Minerva and she is a very common bird. Hundreds like her dwell along the wooded streams of Mecklenburg and adjoining counties. None of them are beautiful. The one of which I write has but one redeeming feature. She is grateful to her mistress who, alone, has fondled and petted her. In this she acts well and shows a trait that but few men have.

Where did this strange, quaint and curious creature come from? Why did she become a thing to be domesticated and cared for like the beautiful little canary or the sweet-tongued mocking bird? Is she the apple of any person's eye, or the pride of any home? To the last question I should say: "No; she is nobody's darling."

The owner of Minerva was not looking for her when she came nor did she especially desire to become the possessor of such a charge. A friend sent her as a present from a neighboring town. She had been lifted from her nest, a tiny, awkward, helpless birdie, and dropped into our home suddenly.

What was to be done?

Had she been given her liberty in Charlotte, either by night or by day, a violent death would have been her fate. Hungry cats were ready to crack her delicate bones, and the street urchin, with his never-failing sling shot, or air-rifle, was eager to try his skill on just such a mark.

Truly, the ugly, dirty, drab-colored little bird was far from enthusiastic friend or kindred. None of her kind are within several miles of the town. But if she could have been taken to the woods and set free she would have died from starvation and loneliness, for she was young, innocent and inexperienced.

Indeed, she must be fed, housed and cared for as an object of charity, for, truly, she lacked lovable characteristics. At first she had but one friend and that, her owner, and to her she owes life and what happiness she has had.

For twelve months of her existence, after she arrived, Minerva lived in a large wire-screen chicken pen, situated beneath my room window. It was there that she grew into the dignified old lady that she is. The pen was built and is used for cooping chickens for the table. At times it was well filled with a fine lot of hens and then, again, empty. Minerva watched the daily slaughter of her strange companions with apparent concern from the highest perch she could find. She would not associate with them. However, she soon discovered that they were afraid of her. Those direct from the country, sought the farthest corner from her. All this she did not understand, for having seen none of her peculiar family, she must have felt that she was of the same blood as her fellow creatures. She tried diligently to unravel the mystery. Her thoughts were along the line of these questions, I imagine, from the serious look she always wore upon her face: "Why do they avoid me? Will that dreadful tall creature from the kitchen come and wring my head off like he has done others? What does it all mean? Have I but one friend, the sweet old lady who raises the window every morning and greets me?"

The only trouble Minerva had in her early captivity was given by Osmond, the son of her mistress, who set Jack, his fierce bull terrier, after her. The dog could not get inside the enclosure, but would frighten her into hysterics by charging against the wire and barking viciously. Under this excitement she took the only exercise she got, flying from pole to pole and snapping her bill. What the bull dog and his master did for her Minerva did for the timid chickens. She amused herself daily by chasing them around. By instinct an owl captures a fowl by pushing it off of a perch and catching it on the wing. Minerva would drop on the pole by the side of a frightened hen and shove her off, just to see her squirm and hear her squall. She kept this sport up for months. Every time a new chicken was turned in she would haze her, much to the delight of those who could watch the game.

But, now, Minerva is too much of a lady to engage in such youthful pranks. She sits on her perch and keeps tab on the sons and daughters of our neighbors. She announces the time of night that Colonel Willie Harty comes in and sings a funeral dirge out of respect for Fritz, the deceased dog of Mr. John Oates. In her more cheerful moods, she warbles after this manner: "Toot, oot, hoot, toot!" "Toot, oot, hoot, toot!'" That is very owlish and I have found no one who could translate it into English.

Mrs. Barringer, being a woman of noble heart, decided, not long ago, to

give the bird her freedom. William, the man servant, was instructed to turn her out and see that no enemy harmed her. We all believed that she would be glad to leave the place for good at the first opportunity, for she did not seem to care for or even trust any one but her mistress, to whom she would go when called or notice when spoken to. But we had reckoned wrong. She did not desire to depart from us. Her hours are whiled away in such cozy nooks and corners as she elects to occupy in the back yard. She is growing fat and familiar with mankind and beast.

But, with liberty, protection and free-lunch, Minerva is not permitted to be contented and happy. She has a swarm of unrelenting feathered enemies that make her life a burden. The blue jay, the red-headed peckerwood, the harsh catbird, and the cruel English sparrow are her fiercest foes. They annoyed her no little while confined in the chicken pen, by railing at her through the wire, but now they dare to pluck feathers from her back and puncture her body with sharp bills. The mischievous old jay lands in the morning before the servants come or the occupants of the house begin to stir, delivers an inflammatory speech and urges his hearers to fight for their rights, their homes, their wives and their little ones.

It was my fortune, good or bad, to see one of these crowds assembled, to hear one of the addresses and witness an onslaught, one fine Sunday morning, several weeks ago. I had retired early the night before and slept well. The first call of Mr. Blue Jay waked me. I sat up in bed and looked on through the window blinds. The jay, feigning great indignation, sat in the top of an elm tree, not ten feet from the window. His voice rang out loud and shrill through the light morning air. It was harkened to by all the winged kind for several blocks. The red-headed woodpecker quit his hammering on the steeple of the Lutheran church across the street, and flew in all haste to join in the outcry with his rasping voice. The catbird sailed out from a neighboring fig bush and came tumbling and screaming across the garden. English sparrows poured in by the score from all directions until the tree was alive with their nervous little bodies.

All was consternation and fuss at first, but soon the jay got the floor and made this very bitter and impressive speech: "Fellow creatures: Here we are defied by the vilest bird that left the ark. She lurks about and seeks to do murder to you and to me, to yours and to mine. Our homes, our wives and our children are in danger! What shall we do? Must we stand quietly by and see

our loved ones killed and their flesh defiled by this designing old night-assassin? I answer: 'No!' Why, she was despised and hated by the people of old. Hear what the Great Book says about her! When Job's honor was turned into extreme contempt and his prosperity into calamity, he cried: 'I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.'

"Babylon was threatened: 'It shall never be inhabited, etc.

"'But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.'

"Yes, we must slay the detested creature. She is an imposition. I command you to rise in your might and drive her out of our paradise!

"The English sparrow will lead the charge.

"All together!

"Charge! Bite! Scratch! Squall! Poise the head!"

Off they went in a body to wage war on old Minerva, who had seen the antics and heard the words of the indignant meddlers from her comfortable seat on a wheelbarrow-handle, just under a thick circle of a grape vine. It is useless to say that she was badly frightened, for she dreaded the sharp beak and the fury of the courageous little sparrow; he was so swift and determined in action that his onslaughts were to be feared. The bombastic jay, the timid catbird and the blatant woodpecker gave her no concern.

The fight was in earnest when William, the servant, hove in sight. Minerva had lost several batches of feathers and her back was sore where the sparrows had billed her. At the flight of her assailants and the appearance of William, she chirped: "Toot, toot, toot!"

This is a brief sketch of Minerva's life. She is shunned, despised and distrusted by all the Charlotte feathered tribe. She is alone in the world. Her appearance is against her and she has no accomplishments. She can neither sing nor dance. Truly she is "the bird with the hoe."

UNCLE DERRICK IN WASHINGTON

It was the week after Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, had Booker Washington, a famous negro educator, at the White House for dinner with him, and the press of the land had sent the news broadcast.

“Good morning, Uncle Derrick, where are you off for to-day?” asked Dr. F. L. Smith of Concord, of his fellow-townsmen, Derrick Alexander, the old colored wood-chopper, as he trudged along the street.

“I’s gwine to de Big House at Washington, where de President lives,” said the old darkey.

“Yes, sir, I’s on my way to see President Roseanfelt.”

“What are you going to see him for?” inquired Dr. Smith.



Uncle Derrick at Home.

“Why, ain’t you been readin’ in de papers ’bout dem big festerbul’s dat Mr. Roseanfelt an’ his fine lady’s been havin’ spechully fer de niggers? Dat’s it, sir! Dere’s where Uncle Derrick’s goin’.”

The old fellow was in earnest. He wore his best shoes—a new pair of number fourteen brogans—a weather-beaten stovepipe hat and an antiquated suit of livery. In a bandanna handkerchief, swung over the end of a stout cane across his shoulder, he carried a few odds and ends of dress.

“Well, Uncle Derrick, how much money are you taking with you? Can you go in good style?”

“Boss, dat’s de weak p’int ’bout my trip. De ole nigger’s des got ernuff to git to Salisbury, but ef he can’t fine er frien’ dere to hep him on he’ll walk. I’s gwine to go ef de Lawd lets me live. De time dat I’s been waitin’ fer is

done come. It sho' is. All de niggers in my part uv de town is talkin' 'bout goin'. President Roseanfelt (dat's what de Dutch folks uv Keebarrus county calls him) sho' is de frien' uv de nigger. Think uv it! Niggers wid deyer shinin' clothes on eatin' wid de rich white folks uv de lan'! I ain't got no fine clothes, but ef de ole nigger kin des git dere he'll be all right; some good white gem'man frum de Souf will hand me out er thanky-suit. No, sir, I ain't 'spectin' no trouble arter I git dere fer de ole nigger's mighty handy 'bout de house. Ef I can't git in at de fust table I kin at de secon'."

"But, Uncle Derrick, they won't let a cornfield negro go in the White House; it's high-toned negroes, like Booker Washington and John Dancy, that attend the receptions of the President."

"What? Dem yaller niggers! Dey ain't fitten to go wid de quality. It's de right black nigger dat's got de 'ristocrat blood in him. My ole marster uster say dat a light-skin nigger an' er roan mule wuz de wust things in de worl'."

"No, sir, I ain't skeered uv no nigger wid er yaller skin. Ef I des kin git to de Big House dat's all I ax; I'll do de rest."

Dr. Smith, seeing that Derrick was serious, furnished him with money to buy a ticket to Washington and urged him to go forth and be merry.

But, a week later, Derrick returned to Concord, ragged and bruised. His clothes had been rent in many places and his head badly wounded. He hobbled up town and called on Dr. Smith, to whom he told the story of his visit to Washington, and recited the fearful tale of woe that follows:

"Marster, I 'clare 'fo' Gawd dat I'll never leave home ergin while I live. Dere's mo' good foks in Concord dan anywhere else. I'll die right here. Dem Washington foks is de meanes' people dat I ever seed. De niggers is bigity an' de white men don't pay no 'tention to you, an' dat's one place de poleesmens don't take no draggin' fer dey'll knock you down fer lookin' mad. I sho' did think that judgment day had come when I got dere."

"De trip up dere on de train wuz fust-class. I seed lots uv fine people on de way. But no sooner dan I lit on de groun' at Washington my trouble started."

"I followed de yudder travelers f'um de train out to de street, where I met a big buck nigger, wearin' uv a beaver. I know'd dat he was fixin' to go to de festerbul. He had on er Jim-swingers coat an' high-top boots. I step up to him an' say: 'Is dis de day fer de President's big blow-out to de niggers an' de big

white foks?’ De rascal look me up an’ down an’ all over an’ ax: ‘What is you talkin’ ’bout, ole Rube? What do you know ’bout de President’s functions?’ I stop right dere fer I seed de kinder nigger I wuz talkin’ to. He was too highferlutin’ fer me, talkin’ ’bout functions; when er nigger quits sayin’ festerbul it’s time to let him erlone. I axed him de way to de Big House an’ he sed, ‘Go to de yavenue an’ up.’ I say, ‘What’s dat?’ He answer, ‘It’s de bigges’ street in de town.’

“I move on till I meet er pleasant lookin’ white gem’man who say dat he’s frum Alabam. I knowed dat he wuz uv de bes’ stock in de country, fer he had on good clothes an’ er big wide brim hat, one la’k ole master useter wear. I pull off my hat an’ say, ‘Boss, does you live here?’ ‘No,’ he say, ‘why?’

“I seed dat he wuz all right, so I pop er few questions to him. ‘Boss, is dis de day uv de festerbul at de Big House fer de culled peoples an’ yudders?’ Well, sir, he smile way down to his Adam’s apple, des la’k de question do him good, and say, ‘Is you thinkin’ ’bout ’tendin’ one uv de White House to-do’s?’

“‘Yes, sir, dat’s what I come up here fer; I lives in Concord, North Carolina, wid Marse Jim Cannon, Marse John Wadsworth an’ de rest. I sho’ do wish dat you’d hep me git in. I’s des as good as dem yaller niggers dat’s been ’vited.’

“He des chuckle when I tol’ him ’bout my bizness up dere. He reach in his pocket an’ fetch out a ticket wid his name on it an’ when he write, ‘Let dis nigger in de White House to de festerbul,’ he handed it to me an’ say, ‘Dat’ll git you in.’

“‘But, uncle,’ he say, ‘dey don’t call de to-do’s festerbuls, la’k dey do down Souf, but dey is functions an’ ceptions.’

“‘Well,’ I say, ‘des so dey have good things to eat, dat’s all dat I care ’bout. We calls ’em festerbuls.’

“‘Why,’ he ’clare, ‘dey don’t have nothin’ to eat. You des go up dere an’ shake hands wid de big fo’ks. Dat’s all you do. Dere ain’t no eatin’ ’bout it.’

“Dat didn’t suit dis nigger an’ I wuz hot under de collar, fer Marse John Wadsworth tolt me, ‘fo’ I lef’ dat dey woul’ have er ’possum as big as er sheep an’ sweet-taters an’ gravy by de gallun. Dat wuz what I went fer. I kin shake han’s wid folks at home. I thought de gem’man wuz tryin’ to fool me,

but I didn't tell him so. He look at me an' laugh, an' den go on 'bout his bizness.

"I go on up de yavenue an' meet all de fo'ks. I didn't know dat dere wuz so many people in de worl'. I step in front uv a nice lookin' man an' ax, 'Boss, is chuch out?' I seed de crowd an' thought dat wuz de trouble. But de man hain't answer my question yit. He look me in de eye, stick out his han' to shake wid me, an' say, 'Jones is my name. What did you say yourn wuz?' Dat wuz somefin' else. I wuzn't uster shakin' wid white fo'ks, but I thought he might be kin to de President, so I ketched his han' an' 'clare, 'My name is Derrick Alexander, frum Concord, North Caroliny.' Well, de bref lef' me when he say, 'What kin I do fer you, Mr. Alexander?' I'se ninety years ole, but dat's de fust time dat er white man ever calt me 'Mister.' I slip erway fum de man quick fer I knowed dat he wuz one uv dem Yankees dat ole marster uster cuss so hard. I went on up de yavenue, but kep' lookin' back to see ef he wuz arter me. Frum dat time on it seem to me dat all de fo'ks dat I see wuz Yankees. Dey la'k ter driv' me crazy. Dat's de truf.

"Dat wuz de longes' street dat I ever seed, for it took me er half er day to git to de Big House yard. I wuz des wile fer all de niggers dat I seed wuz bigity an' de white fo'ks wuz mean. De little niggers look at me an' laugh. Ef I had been back in Concord I'd busted some uv deyer noggin's, but I wuz skeered to do it up dere. By de time I got to de Big House gate I wuz mad an' 'stracted. It 'peers dat everybudy wuz ergin me. As I started to step up in de gate er man wearin' er uneeform an' brass buttons come out frum behint er bush an' say, sassy la'k, 'Don't come in here, ole man! Dis's no place fer niggers!'

"Well, sir, dat raised my dander. I des made up my mine to go in dere anyhow. So I say, 'I'm goin' to see de President ef I have ter lick you.' He grin back at me an' 'clare, 'Dere's de President now. He an' his boy, goin' fer er ride.'

"I turnt my head an' looked roun' an' sho' 'nuff, dere wuz er man an' er boy ridin' bob-tail horses. I yell out, 'Hello, Mr. President! Dis ole Derrick, frum Concord. He's come to yo' festerbul.' I don't know why, but dat peered to make him mad an' his upper lip histed up lack er winder shade an' his lower lip fall down. I 'clare fo' de Lawd dat I never seed sich a mouf full uv teef in my life. Dey shine so dat dey look la'k dem new tombstones in Red

Hill graveyard. An' he ain't stop at grinnin', fer he say to de plesman close to me, "Rest dat crank uv er nigger an' lock him up!" Dat wuz de las' straw. I des square myself fer to fight. But dat's all dat I know den, fer de man wid de uneeform whack me over de head wid his billy-stick an' put me ter sleep. Dat's what made de hole in my foid. As I wuz on de way to de gard house wid de officer, I hearn somebody say, "Why, dat's ole Derrick Alexander. What's he bin doin', Mr. Officer?" "Tryin' to git to de White House." "Well, des as soon as he gits able to travel I'll send him home."

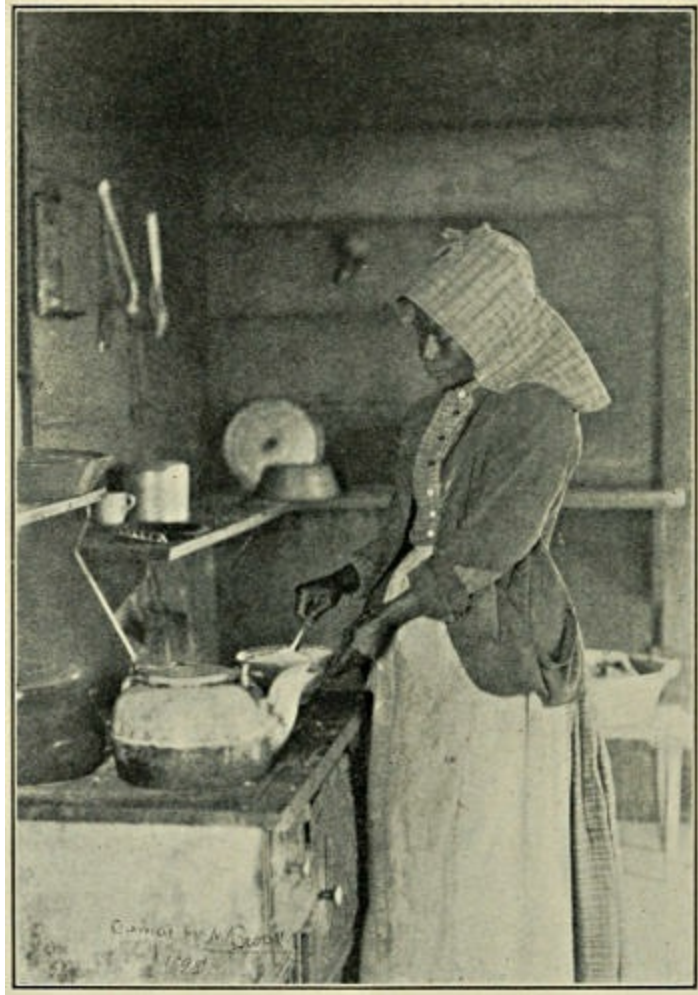
"I didn't know who it wuz den, but I hearn later dat it wuz Congressman Theo. Kluttz, from Salisbury. I had fetched water fer him ter drink at er speakin' at Concord one day.

"Dey took me ter de lock-up an' put me in er iron cell an' it wuz late in de day 'fo' I knowed er thing. Den I waked up an' looked 'round me. I seed niggers in all de cells, an' mos' uv dem had sore heads. Dey had been tryin' to git in de White House. I cried des la'k er chile an' wish dat I wuz back at Concord wid de people dat I know. I imagined dat I seed all de good fo'ks here.

"Early de nex' mornin' de bossman uv de place come to me an' say, 'Ef you'll git outen dis town des as fas' as you kin hustle, we'll let you go. A gem'man lef' er ticket home fer you. Take it an' git!'

"Dat sho' was sweet music to my ears. I wuz ready to go right den. I went out de do' an' almos' skip to de depot.

"Thank Gawd dat de ole nigger's back home ergin. Dat's where he's goin' ter stay. Dem niggers what want to go to de White House 'ceptions kin go, but give me my ole fryin' pan, er big fat 'possum, a peck uv taters an' er pint uv gravy. Dat's what suits dis nigger. I ain't hankerin' arter shakin' nobody's han'."



Preparing for the Guest.

AND THE SIGNS FAILED NOT

“Shhoo, shhoo, shhoo, you good-for-nothing thing, we don’t want any company to-day,” shouted the large, ruddy-faced lady of the Parks Big House, to a handsome, red and black game cock that jumped upon the walk in front of the porch, flapped his glossy wings and started to crow.

“Who you reckon’s comin’ here dis time uv de week, an’ we so busy, Miss Jule?” asked old Matt Miller, the family servant, as she came around the corner of the house, from the kitchen, on her way to the well, carrying two water buckets, with her sleeves rolled to her elbows, showing a pair of lithe, black arms, well muscled and hard.

“I don’t know, Matt, but that rooster persists in crowing in front of the door, and that is a mighty good sign that some stranger’s coming for a meal,” declared Miss Jule.

“Yes’m, an’ I’s done drap de dish rag twice dis mornin’ an’ dat’s er sign dat don’t fail, an’ de pusson whut comes is mos’ lakly to be hongry, too.

“Maybe hits de new preacher?”

“No, Matt, I don’t think so, he’s never said anything about coming, and he will go and see all of the elders and deacons before he starts around among the common folks. He hasn’t been to see the Graves yet, and they are pillars in Sharon.”

“Humph, Miss Jule, you don’t know dese young preachers lak I doos. Hit ain’t de elders an’ de deekins deyer arter so much as hit’s de mens wid de money.

“Leastwise, dat de way hit is wid our people, an’ human natur’ is ’bout de same whether de skin’s white or black. I knows dis, ef you hain’t gut de spondulicks you don’t git de preacher.

“Ef hit ain’t de rocks hit’s de weemens dat de young preachers is gut on deyer minds dese days. Dat sho’ is de truf.

“Dat young feller, he’s done heered dat Marse George’s gut las’ year’s

cotton in de shed, dat ain't never been sold, an' he's des 'bout comin' to spend de day."

"What about our new preacher, Matt, do you like his looks?" asked the lady of the house, as she knitted.

"I ain't seed 'im right good, but I don't lak de lef' eye."

"What's the matter with it?"

"Yo' maw, Miss Nancy, an' she wuz er pow'ful smart 'oman too, used to say: 'Matt, don't you marry no cock-eye man, ef you do you'll git cheated.'"

"And you believe it?"

"'Cose I do. Look at Marse George, one uv de bestes' horse traders in dese parts! Whut do he say? 'Don't buy no white foot horse or trade wid er cock-eye man.'

"But, Miss Jule, I ain't sayin' nothin' ergin yo' preacher. I don't lak to think bad 'bout de men uv de pulpit, but I ain't gut de faith dat I used to have. No, chile, de older I gits de wuss I is."

Matt moved on, leaving her mistress to think over what she had said.

Mrs. George Parks, although corpulent, and misshapen, had pretty white hands, neat and dainty feet and small, aristocratic ankles, pretty soft, iron-gray hair, and bright, keen gray eyes. Her every feature bespoke a warm heart, a gentle and refined nature. As she sat there that morning, in her own low rocking chair, knitting away at a cotton sock, she was a perfect picture of health and happiness. She had put her house in shape for the day, fed the early biddies just from the eggshells, looked over her garden and was resting on the long, cool front porch, overspread by the limbs of two magnificent white oaks.

After Matt had drawn the water and returned to the kitchen, Charlie, the baby boy of the Parks home, came running in from the shop with a hoe in his hand, and dashed up the steps, intending to go through the house to the field in the rear, but was halted by his mother, who said sharply: "Child, don't bring that hoe in here, it is bad luck to carry a hoe in a house where one lives."

The boy hurried back down the steps and around the house.

The reader may imagine that he is at this prosperous country home, in the Piedmont region of the South, where cotton is king, and hog and hominy the staff of life, and view the scene.

It is springtime, a beautiful fair morning in early June, and the grandfather clock, one that had been in the family for several generations, had just struck nine. Mrs. Parks was at peace with the world. She had helped to red up the house, to feed the poultry, strain the fresh milk, churn and put away the butter and written a letter to her oldest son, who was off at college.

Old Matt, who served as cook, chambermaid, milkmaid, dairymaid, and errand runner, was preparing dinner.

“Have you put on your greens, Matt?” asked Mrs. Parks, throwing back her head, and calling over her shoulder.

“Yes’m, long ’go,” responded the faithful Matt.

“What do you think about killing a chicken? Do you reckon we’ll have company?”

“Des as shore, Miss Jule, as I’s livin’; I’s done drap de dish rag ergin. Ef I wuz you, I’d be skeered to risk it.”

“Well, I think so myself, for George took butter this morning when he had butter on his plate, and that is a pretty sure sign. When the rooster crows in front of the house, and the cook drops the dish rag three times, and the head of the family takes butter when he’s got butter, all of the signs point one way.

“I expect you had better call Charlie and catch that little red rooster that stays in the Irish potato patch, back of the garden.”

Mrs. Parks continued to knit, and ponder. Her mind went from one thing to another. One moment she was thinking of her dear Tom, who would soon be home from the University, and the next of Ned, who had gone to Charlotte to get a new mowing machine. Most of her thoughts were of her children.

Matt and Charlie chased the little red rooster through Marse George’s prize cotton patch, under the barn and out again, over the fence, around the carriage house, finally hemming him in a corner and catching him. Matt put him in a pie and Charlie went to carry water to the field hands, in response to Big John Ardrey’s call: “Sonny, sonny, sonny, ain’t you gwine to fetch de ole nigger no water to-day? He’s so thirsty!”

The cotton and corn were beginning to show well in the more fertile fields. Every available man and woman on the place was at work, either plowing or hoeing, thinning the young truck to a stand, and making war on General Green, the farmer's faithful enemy. Many fields were green with waving grain. Here and there wheat was turning yellow and would soon be ready for the reaper.

To the right of the Big House, far out in the twenty-four acre field, eight plows, drawn by as many sturdy mules, still thin from hard spring plowing, breaking lands, and brown from the first scorching rays of the sun, manned by lusty negroes, black and glossy from eating rich Western-grown meat, were going, running around the cotton, thinned to a stand.

“Lawdy, lawdy, lawdy, lawdy,
It's almos' pay day, pay day,
An' I'se gwine to git my honey er hat,”

sang Jerry, a loud-mouthed, animated young negro, who plowed Kit, a four-year-old mule, fifteen hands high, and valued by Squire Parks at one-seventy-five. There was no meter to his song, but it sounded well to him, and the neighbors for two miles around could hear it.

“Listen, Miss Jule,” said Matt, to Mrs. Parks, who had gone to the kitchen to see about dinner. “Dat big mouf Jerry can't keep quiet.

“Hear 'im singin' 'bout his honey?

“He rakes 'roun' all night, an' hollers all day 'bout his honey? He better be givin' dat Runt somefin', dat chile uv Mary's.”

“Is that his child, Matt?”

“'Cose hit's his'n.

“An' he ain't never as much as give it a moufful uv nothin'—no, not nary moufful!

“De po' little chile des runs 'roun' while Mary wuks, des lak it wuz er dog or hog. I ain't never seed sich neglect. But Mary can't hep it now; she's gut to wuck fur er livin'.”

“Well, I didn't know that Runt was Jerry's child before.”

“Yon he is now!” exclaimed Matt, as she turned and looked out of the window, toward the hands, who were hoeing cotton in the Clay Field, back of the orchard.

“Yes’m, Mary’s des hoein’ an’ wuckin’ lak er dog, an’ keepin’ dat chile, while Jerry’s spendin’ money on dat yaller Rose whut come here wid dat nigger Rufus, who de pleemens tuck back to town an’ put on de chain-gang fur stealin’ er cow.

“Po’ Runt, he don’t git much ’tenshun! Dey never thought enough uv ’im to name ’im, an’ de foks, seein’ how little he wuz, called ’im ‘Runt’ an’ ‘Runt’ he is. Ef anybudy wanted him dey coul’ steal ’im an’ nobody woul’ make much fuss ’bout it. Ef it wuz slavry time ergin, an’ Ole Brickhouse Jim wuz livin’, he’d git ’im ’fo’ Sadday night. Mary tote’s ’im to de fiel’ in de mornin’ an’ puts ’im down in de shade uv er tree an’ lets ’im stay dere.”

This same little negro, four years old, bow-legged, flat-nosed, onery-looking and dirty, clad in a single garment, which was torn, and without buttons to hold it in place, was at that very moment rambling about in the weeds in the orchard, far from his mother, who, with a dozen other hands, were chopping cotton. If a dog or a calf or anything else came along and toppled him over he cried until he was exhausted, fell asleep and waked up refreshed. No one seemed to love or care for him; he weeded his own row.

Taking pity on him, on various and sundry occasions, Miss Jule had sent Charlie with buttered biscuits or pieces of pie to the four-year-old. Although Runt was afraid of Charlie, who often slipped up behind him, turned his little shirt over his head and ran, he was thankful for the hand-outs, without knowing just where they came from. If he saw the white boy coming he wanted to hide, but was afraid to lest he miss a sweet morsel for his tongue.

“Look, Miss Jule, don’t it beat all how boys do? See Charlie teasing dat po’ little nigger,” old Matt would say.

“Charlie! Charlie! You little scamp, you! Quit worrying that child!” would follow, and the youngster would laugh and run, leaving Runt to think it over.

“Shhoo, shhoo, shhoo!

“There’s that old rooster again,” said Mrs. Parks, as she turned and started for the front porch again.

“We don’t want any company to-day.”

“Miss Jule, don’t you speck you’d better spruce up er little, so ef de preacher do come you’ll be ready fur ’im?”

“I will put on my new dress, I want George to see it anyhow, and I can take it off after dinner if nobody comes.”

“I speck you better.”

After the mistress of the house had resumed her seat on the porch, having arrayed herself in her pretty calico frock, Matt called out: “Miss Jule, who is dat comin’ ’roun’ de fiel’ on dat big white hoss?”

“It looks like Capt. Brown, on old Roy,” said Mrs. Parks.

“Yes’m, hit do, but he woul’n’t be comin’ here fur dinner, ’ceptin’ Miss Jane’s erway,” declared Matt.

Sure enough, it was Capt. Brown, and he rode up to the front gate.

“The tip of the day to you, Mrs. Parks!” said the gallant fellow, lifting his hat.

“Good morning, Capt. Brown; won’t you light?”

“No, thank you; I haven’t time.”

“You all well?”

“We’re up an’ about, but I’m not feeling well. I have had a pain in my head for several days.”

“Listen at Miss Jule,” said old Matt to herself, as she peeped around the honeysuckle vine, at the end of the porch to catch what was said. “I ain’t never seed her look better nor puttier.”

“How are you all, Capt. Brown?”

“Just tollerably well, only; the old woman is grunting a little this morning.”

“Which way is the ’Squire?”

“He’s in the Clay Field, back of the house, where the hoe hands are at work.”

“Have you heard from Mrs. Marler to-day?”

“No, but Sam came by there last night, late, on his way from the post office, and Reuben told him that she was no better. I guess she’s in a right bad way.”

“Yes, poor woman, she’s been a great sufferer for a long time. I have been wanting to go to see her, but the stock is busy now, and then, too, I have not felt like riding. I get dizzy every time I get in a buggy.”

“You heard about Mrs. Bill McGregor, Mrs. Parks?”

“No; is it a boy or girl?”

“A ten-pound boy.”

“That’s fine! Five girls and three boys.

“Tell Mollie to come over. She needn’t wait on me. I’m getting too old to travel about much.”

“Thank you. You and George come.

“Well, I want to see the old man on a little business; I will just ride around there.”

Capt. Brown and Squire Parks were the best of neighbors and friends. Both were influential in political affairs and substantial business men. That morning they talked over a private matter and Capt. Brown turned and went back.

Dinner time came and no company arrived. The greens, the chicken and strawberry pies were all ready, but there was no one outside of the family circle to eat them.

“I don’t believe in your signs, anyhow,” declared Mr. Parks, “for, this morning, as I went to the field, a red bird, a pretty one, flew across the road in front of me, and I have heard it said that that is the sign that you are going to see your sweetheart, dressed in her best clothes, and I know I haven’t seen any sweetheart to-day.”

“O, yes, you is, Marse George,” said Matt, as she handed him the greens for a second help.

“Who? Where?”

“Here she is, Miss Jule, de onlies’ sweetheart dat you ever had.”

“Don’t you believe that, Matt,” said Mrs. Parks, fishing for a compliment.

“I guess you are right, Matt, and she’s got on a new dress,” conceded the lord and master of the Parks Big House.

Dinner and the hour of rest over, the hands started for the field. Everybody, save Mary, the mother of Runt, had gone, and she hunted everywhere for the fatherless waif, but could not find him. Squire Parks, Miss Jule, and Matt organized themselves into a searching party, but hunt where they would they could not find the little negro. The big bell that hung on the red oak in front of the lot gate was sounded, and all the workmen came in, knowing that the ringing of it meant a general alarm, and were formed into groups and sent to the fields to look for the missing child. Aunt Matt took a mirror and reflected the sun in the well, thinking that he might have tumbled in there. Every nook and corner about the barn and every wash, or gulley, or weed patch about the place was examined, but no trace of Runt was found.

“Somebudy done tuck an’ stole dat chile,” said Matt. “Told you so. I knowed dat de Lawd wuz gwine to let somebudy have ’im dat woul’ care fur ’im.

“Po’ little chile, I hope dat nothin’ ain’t happen to ’im.”

For two hours the hunt continued. Mary was wailing and shouting like one possessed. Jerry, the wayward negro of the plantation, was racing everywhere, looking. When all had about concluded that the boy had been kidnaped, Miss Jule, who had become hot and tired, moving about in the broiling sun, and returned to the house, discovered a pair of little black, dirty feet sticking out from under a large hall table and, on making a closer examination, found that Runt had stolen in, crawled under the table and gone to sleep on the floor. Having put a pillow under the knappy head she notified the hunters and told Mary to go to her work and leave the child to her.

Matt was very much disappointed, for she had looked into the well until she believed that she could see the body of a child on the bottom, and when Miss Jule called she was preparing to announce that she had found the little fellow; but, after seeing the feet and bowlegs, as they protruded from the table, was convinced that she was wrong.

“Yes, Miss Jule, an’ de signs done come true,” declared the old darkey. “Dat’s de hongry pusson dat wuz comin’; dat chile des gut so hongry dat he

couldn't stand hit no longer an' come in. Po' little thing."

"I am glad he made himself at home, Matt, I will adopt him."

"One thing, Miss Jule, I wuz glad to see dat Jerry lookin' sad-lak 'bout his boy. He may not be so bad arter all. De Lawd put good in everybudy."

"Yes, and Jerry and Mary may marry some day, and make Runt a home; you can't tell," added Mrs. Parks.

Runt was treated as a guest of the house. He slept unmolested for an hour, and when he waked he was taken to the kitchen and given the best the larder afforded. For a month he remained there, waxing fat and black and strong. Mary was delighted to be rid of him under the circumstances.

The rooster had not given the clarion call in vain.

One day two weeks later, Miss Jule sent for Jerry, and they talked on the front steps. The next day the young negro said to Squire Parks: "Say, Marse George, I want's you to marry me an' Mary. I'se done gut de licenses."

"Where did you get money to get license, this time of year?" asked the justice of the peace.

"Miss Jule give it to me."

That was the day the signs failed not.

THE IRISHMAN'S GAME COCK

“That was a great day in Providence—when Paddy Roark’s bird outwitted Black John Smith’s fine cock, the mighty Jay Bird,” said the old gambler. “That was the end of the world for me. We’ve had no real sport since that time; the boys are all good nowadays.”

Briefly put, that is the story of the last gambling bout of a public nature in Providence township, Mecklenburg county. The day of the great battle between the fowls of Roark and Smith marks the beginning of a new era.

Black John Smith, as he was known far and near, on account of his swarthy complexion, was among the last of his kind in the Southern states that embrace the Piedmont region. He and his sort had their day just after the civil war, when every community in Dixie was in a state of confusion, and horse racing, cock fighting, wrestling and fighting matches were common. Smith was one of the boys—a jolly, good fellow, who liked a good time, and if he could not have it one way he would another. He did not belong to the Southern aristocracy of the age; his blood was tainted, but he was a man of fine sense, never-failing courage, and handsome appearance. His family record being a little off color made him a social outcast and his associates were inferiors. Life to him was just what he made it, and he lived like a lord. His home, The Elms, the former residence of Capt. Jim Davis, the largest slave owner in the southern section of the county, was the rendezvous of second-class sportsmen, who assembled there to drink, revel and try their brawn.

Being industrious and a first-rate farmer, Black John, who never owned land, but rented the best to be had, always had plenty to eat and drink around him. His corn bread and butter milk, pig jowl and kraut, hog and hominy, wine and brandy, all home-made, were of the best in the land, and, liberal to a fault, he was never without friends.

If any man were out hunting for trouble for himself, his dog, his rooster, or anything else, he could find it at The Elms when Black John Smith flourished there. Rural athletes, bullies, owners of game cocks, and racing horses met with him on off days for a big time.

Among those who foregathered at his home were dissipated landlords of the community, but, being of a higher social strata, the better citizens rarely ever tarried at the Smith hearth unless they were there on business.

In the early eighties there drifted into Providence one Paddy Roark, an Irish artisan, from where no one ever knew. Paddy was a unique character and the people of the good old Presbyterian neighborhood gave him a cordial welcome. Just such a man was needed. At all times he was affable and jolly and made friends everywhere. He was a handy man—could do any sort of turn. It was “Paddy do this” and “Paddy do that.” If a farmer needed a painter, a carpenter, a brick mason, or what not, Paddy was the man. Truly, Paddy was “Dick and the wheel in any tight place.” If the boys and girls of Providence had a frolic or a dance he played the fiddle, or picked the banjo, or sang Irish songs. The good housewives of the community liked him, for he could make the kraut, salt the meat, cook fruit for preserves, make persimmon and locust beer, or take the honey from the bee hive. In fact, Paddy was an all-round citizen, and so long as he behaved himself the good people of the community did not worry about his mysterious past or the suddenness of his advent into that bailiwick. Little did they care, the descendants of the signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, if he had killed an Englishman or two in the old country.

Paddy Roark belonged to the social circle of The Elms. He and Black John Smith were friends, but the Irishman, being a man of keen wit and cleverness, did not like the way the lord of the old Davis place towered above his fellows. There sprung up a rivalry between these popular idols. In a clash of intellects the man from the Emerald Isle outshone the native Tar Heel. In a test of physical strength they were pretty evenly matched. Paddy was the best boxer, but Black John could throw him down in a wrestle. Paddy was the only man in the Smith set that would challenge the “Chief of The Elms.”

It was on a cold, drizzly day in September and the boys for several miles around had assembled under the Smith roof to discuss plans for the fall and winter. Black John sat in one corner and Paddy in the other, in front of a big log fire. There was a lull in the conversation.

“A rooster is the gamest thing on earth,” said Smith.

“I do not admit that without proof,” said Paddy.

“The proof is at hand,” declared Smith. “Jay Bird, my dominecker game, is in the yard. He is the champion of the county and I will back him against the feathered kingdom. He carries a chip on his shoulder and challenges the world every time he crows. He can crow louder, shriller, oftener and longer than any chicken in seven states. I can make him come in here and fight you.”

About that time the clarion call of a rooster was heard.

“Listen!” shouted Black John. “He says ‘I can lick anything that wears feathers!’

“I will back him in that declaration.”

Smith got up, opened the door and yelled: “Jay Bird, come here and defend yourself.”

Before one could say Jack Robinson twice, a beautiful game rooster—and there is nothing prettier—came flying to the house from the barn. His magnificent head, as keen as an arrow point, was red with life, and his alert brown eye sparkled with fire. His spurs were long and sharp and well set in a pair of splendid legs. His cold, steady eye gave him a fierce appearance; the calm, determined stare of never-failing courage, was what made adversaries quail before him.

“Come in, Jay Bird, and get on your master’s shoulder,” was the invitation extended. Black John was proud of his cock. He petted and groomed him daily.

“Jay Bird, they say you can be whipped,” said Smith, when the rooster lit upon his shoulder. “What about it?”

Flapping his wings, lifting his eagle-head, and crowing, Jay Bird seemed to say: “I can whip any rooster in the land.”

“A game rooster is proud, daring and fearless if he comes of the right stock,” asserted Black John. “Courageous men or dogs do not fight without an excuse, but the cock goes forth to hunt a foe. Two games will meet far from their own barnyards and fight to the death, when there is no provocation for a meeting, much less a fight. The bold, defiant spirit of their blood urges them on. The one hears the challenge of the other and accepts by going, running, flying and crowing, to meet him.

“Jay Bird is a bundle of superb courage, and I will pit him against any two-

legged fowl.”

“I accept the challenge,” said Paddy. “Name the time and the place and I will be on hand with my bird. We shall put up \$25 a side if you say so.”

This announcement took the breath from the crowd. The money was put up and the day fixed.

The acceptance of Black John’s challenge by Paddy Roark was the sensation of the month. The countryside was surprised and delighted. Everybody was asking, “And where did Paddy get a chicken that can stand up against Jay Bird, the wonder?”

All the answer that Paddy gave was, “Never you moind, I’ll be there at the roight toime, and I will have a foighting cock that will swape the daeck.”

The word was “put out” and traveled with the wind, crossing out of Providence into Pineville, Morning Star, Sharon and Steele Creek townships, and into Union county and South Carolina. The coming contest was all the talk, and Paddy Roark the hero of the hour. If he brought a fowl that could whip Jay Bird the people of the community stood ready to give him a vote of thanks. The older persons of the neighborhood believed that if Smith could be outdone he might turn from his evil ways and discontinue the parties at his place. All minds were on Paddy, who was admired, for his consummate nerve, by men, women and children. The small boy longed to be a man so that he could model after Paddy Roark, the Irishman. When Paddy attended church on Sunday, which he usually did, the pious communicants turned to look at him. He who dared accept Black John Smith’s challenge was a mighty man.

The last Saturday in October was the day, and Bald Knob, near McAlpine’s creek, the place for the meet.

Long before the appointed hour a crowd began to gather from three counties. Men came twenty miles to witness the fight.

The woods that surrounded the open field in which the main was to take place were alive with horses and mules, and while the beasts of burden whinnied and brayed their owners discussed the approaching event. The mystery that surrounded Paddy Roark and his fowl had excited the quiet citizens of Providence as they had not been excited since the days of the Ku Klux Klan. John Smith, himself, looked pale and confused. Could he have

done so gracefully, he would have crawfished, but it was too late to think of such a thing. He had to stand to the rack. Bright and early he was at the right place. Jay Bird had crowed until he was hoarse. He knew that something was in the wind and, from the attention he received, that he was to play a part. Hundreds of people called at his cage to see him. He was in fine form and looked every inch a fighter.

Paddy Roark, who had not been in his usual haunts for several days, had not shown up. The friends of Smith were saying that the Irishman had fluked, but Paddy had backers aplenty, who assured one and all that he would be on time. Fifteen minutes before the hour arrived Paddy was not in sight. At ten of ten a shout broke on the eastern outskirts of the mob. Paddy, riding a gray mule, came galloping over the hill, from towards Matthews, carrying a sack over his shoulder. As he dismounted from his nag an outburst of applause greeted him.

It was, "Hurrah, for Paddy Roark, and his bird!"

"Come on with your critter, whatever it be," responded the Smithites, "and Jay Bird will knock the filling out of him!"

At this time the entire hillside was covered with a surging, wild-eyed human mass, each person seeking to get where he or she could see. Above the tumult and the shouting, the shrill cry of Jay Bird could be heard, asserting, "I can whip any cock in the land."

Roark was literally mobbed by his friends, who asked: "Paddy, have you brought your rooster?"

"What kind of a beast is he?"

"Can he do Jay Bird?"

"We're betting on him."

"Fetch him out, the time is most up."

In the midst of this turmoil and chaos Paddy Roark was cool, calm and deliberate. He smoked his pipe, smiled and told the boys that they might stake all they had on "Jerry."

His mule tied, Paddy started for the battle-ground with his tow sack on his back; he would not show his bird to any one, but the bulk in one corner of the

bag was encouraging. His supporters were cheering and singing, “We’ll hang Jay Bird on a sour apple tree.”

As the hour hand moved toward ten the lord of The Elms and the Irish carpenter faced each other, the one holding a rooster and the other, the mouth of a bag.

“Clear out! Stand back! Give the gentlemen room!” shouted the officer of the day.

Paddy did not seem to be in any hurry. No one knew what his bag contained for all was quiet inside.

“That’s the deadest rooster ever,” yelled someone in derision. “He’s asleep. Wake up, birdie, day’s breaking!”

Paddy made no reply. He seemed satisfied with himself and his “boird.”

“All’s ready!” shouted the umpire.

“When I say ‘three’ let them go!”

Paddy took hold of the bottom of the sack and made ready to empty the contents.

The spectators at this juncture pressed against the ropes and stood on tiptoe to see Paddy’s bird. When the word was given, Jerry, a large, Muscovy drake, web-footed and clumsy, dropped into the arena. The friends of Paddy were struck speechless, and the supporters of Jay Bird laughed boisterously, treating the affair as a joke, but Jay Bird, and Jerry were serious, and went to sparring at each other.

Paddy, too, was in earnest; knowing his champion he said: “He’s all roight, boys. All hell can’t thrip him.”

For a moment Jay Bird was disconcerted; although he had never seen a drake before, he did his best. He had fought turkeys, pea fowls and guineas, but not ducks. It was evident from the outset that Jerry knew what he was doing. He dodged beautifully and let the rooster pass over his head. Jay Bird’s spurs would come together above his back every time. The fighting was not dull. Those who watched it felt that there were surprises ahead for the cock. Jerry was biding his time, and it came by and by. Having knocked off the wire edge, without as much as touching the drake, Jay Bird settled

down to a steady lick. That was just what Jerry had hoped for; then he became more aggressive. Sallying forth, ducking and dodging a little, he caught his adversary by the back of the neck. Jay Bird pulled back, but Jerry did not turn loose until he had kicked him in the breast and beaten him over the head with his heavy wings.

The pounding made the rooster furious, and he flew at his antagonist with more vim than ever, and that time the aim was accurate, the blow falling on the drake's head.

It was Jerry's turn to be angry. He stepped back a step or two and prepared to meet Jay Bird. The chicken went with a rush, half running and half flying, and as he rose to strike, the duck fastened him in the throat, brought him down and thumped him severely.

The crowd was wild, but the battle had been so fast and furious and full of surprises that all looked on in silence, waiting to see the next move.

At this stage of the game the drake did a wonderful feat. He ran into Jay Bird, took a firm hold upon his neck, rose and flew, like a hawk. The trick was done so quickly that the engrossed onlookers did not realize for a second what had happened. The big duck, with Jay Bird in his mouth, was going toward the creek. The crowd whirled about and hurried after him.

"It's all over now," Paddy cried; "Jerry will drown Jay Bird in Black John's swimming hole."

When the boys arrived at the edge of the water, Jerry was catching tadpoles, having sunk the body of his foe.

Black John Smith never recovered from the humiliating defeat and death of his rooster. The beginning of the end had come.



STRANGE VISION OF ARABELLA

The colored people within a radius of twenty-five miles of Reding Springs camp ground, Union county, congregate there once a year, generally in August, after the crops are laid by, for a big religious revival. At Reding Springs they are far removed from white people, and surrounded by forests. They can camp out, eat, drink, preach and sing to their hearts' content without molesting anyone. Sometimes the meetings are brought to sudden conclusions by free-for-all fights, started by bullies, with rocks, pistols and razors, but this is an unusual thing for the good darkies of that section strive to keep down any unlawful disturbances. Old Satan, shrewd and alert always, enters the home of God's people occasionally and makes mischief. So it is at Reding Springs now and then.



Arabella the Day After.

For almost a half century Reding Springs has been a popular camping place for the negroes of the Sandy Ridge region. They gather there and remain for weeks, worshiping according to their lights. Thousands of persons camp there during the meeting. They make the neighborhood dark with their presence and resound with their music.

The Reding Springs meetings are not for the city-bred negro, with his lofty airs and college training, but for the country negro. There he feels at home, where he goes once every twelve months to repent of his sins, give in his experience and shout until weary. The religious enthusiast can sing, preach, pray or participate in any other seemly way in the services without restrictions. The parson reads his text, closes the Bible, and preaches from memory. He gives out the hymns line at a time, and leads in the singing, young and old, saint and sinner joining to make the welkin ring, no one

feeling constrained to curb his voice, the more force applied the better, volume, not quality, being demanded.

Dear reader, if you have followed me so far, don't turn back now, for it is my purpose to tell you about Arabella Simpkins, the prophetess of the Reding Springs section. She was the sage of the community. The negroes feared her, and their fear was of the sort that made them want to get closer to her.

Reding Springs negroes had cause to fear Arabella. The troubles that she predicted came true. She had foretold the storm that swept the harbor away in 1882; the earthquake that shook the tents in 1886, and the bolt of lightning that set fire to the church in 1898. She had seen these in visions and told of them as she shouted up and down the aisles of the camp grounds. The people had learned from experience that the predictions of Arabella came to pass; she had won the respect of the leaders, who looked upon her arrival as an omen for good or bad. She had never attended a meeting except to deliver herself of an abiding prophecy. Therefore, if Arabella appeared on the scene everybody gave way to her and listened with abated breath for her prediction, which she gave when the meeting was at its best, when excitement ran highest. Before the big negress could perform effectively, the preaching and singing had to be of such a character that the hearers cried and wrung their hands. Then, with the aisles and halls filled with shouting men and women and crying children, Arabella sallied forth from her seat, humming softly, walling her eyes and warming up as she went.

It was a hot day in 19— that I went with a party of young people to the Reding Springs camp meeting. We were invited by some of the older darkies of Providence. It was said that Arabella was about due, as she had not been out in several years, and, hence, a good time to go.

We arrived early Sunday morning, looked over the grounds and watched the crowds gather from the surrounding country. I enjoyed the preliminaries. I had never seen so many and such a variety of vehicles. The majority of the darkies came in wagons, sitting flat on the bottom, using wheat or oat straw as a cushion, while others rode in antiquated carriages, buggies and two-wheeled carts, some of which were drawn by oxen. The outskirts of the grounds were covered with canvas tents, where those from a distance lived.

Nothing out of the ordinary happened until ten o'clock, when I saw several old men and women, those high in the councils of the church, looking and

pointing down the road toward Twelve-Mile creek. Going near, so that I could hear, I learned that an old sister had spied a covered wagon, and, as I approached, she was saying: "Dat sho' is Arabella Simpkins, and her top wagin, fur I knows dat ole yaller mule."

"Sister Blue," said Parson Honeycutt, "I'm 'clined to b'lieve dat you is kerrect in yo' diagnosis uv de case, fur dat looks mighty lak Miss Simpkins on de front seat."

"I's sho' uv it now," added Sister Blue, "fur dat's Cæsar, her ole man, drivin'; I knows his derby hat. Yes, sir, an' dere somefin' on Arry's mind. We sho' is gwine to hear somefin' drap to-day."

And so it proved.

Arabella was on the way. She and Cæsar came driving a sorrel mule, whose mane and tail needed trimming.

A chill passed over the crowd when it became generally known that the notorious Arabella was arriving. There was not a negro present who would not have given all he possessed to have been at home. But every one was too superstitious to run away; that would have brought bad luck. Therefore, with a kind of fear that produces confidence and brings hope the unhappy negroes collected about Arabella and offered their services, but with the air of a judge, who had the power to sentence to prison or death the entire crowd, she refused all proffers of help. The mule unhitched and tied to a dogwood sprout she went to the harbor and took a seat half way down the middle pew. Every person craned slyly his neck to see her. The prophetess sat, with her arms folded across her lap, silent and dignified. Cæsar, who had escorted her in, seemed to be absorbed in some profound thought. No one went near the pair.

The older men of the congregation retired to the amen corner and sat like dummies waiting for the hour for the sermon to begin.

Everybody was wild with pent-up excitement. There was anxiety in every eye. Feeling, though suppressed, ran high.

Brother Honeycutt, trembling with emotion, announced that the ten-thirty service would begin with prayer and asked one and all to join him in a petition to the Lord for a successful meeting. He fell upon his knees and prayed long and earnestly, beseeching the Maker to stay the hand of the evil one and save the Reding Springs people from any great pending calamity.

The fervent ones punctuated and punctured the prayer with hearty amens. Hymns were sung and the sermon commenced. At first there was nothing unusual about the services. They were like those of all negro meetings held in rural districts, except that the congregation seemed unusually quiet. The falling of a pin upon the floor could have been heard across the room.

The arrival of Arabella had brought order. The bravest of the rowdies would not have dared disturb the tranquillity of that meeting. A most pious and respectful body of worshippers it was!

Along toward the latter part of the sermon Parson Honeycutt warmed up to his subject and spoke with force and feeling, picturing the scenes of judgment day, when all would be begging Peter for admittance to the Holy Land. His story and enthusiasm were calculated to touch the hardest-hearted sinner. As he moved on, swinging, half speaking and half singing, the audience became more and more interested. As he swayed to and fro behind the pulpit his hearers swung in sympathy. In conclusion he sung:

“De ole time religion is good enough for me,
It wuz good enough for Paul and Silas,
An’ it’s good enough for me.”

The entire congregation chimed in and sang with spirit if not understanding.

It was at this juncture that an over-wrought sister, singing and crying at the top of her voice, “an’ it’s good enough fer me,” rushed into the aisle, clapping her hands, and shouting.

The meeting was getting right then for Elder Brown, a man of piety and reverence, cried out: “Dat’s it, sister, tell it to ’em!”

A half-dozen women and two men joined the first shouter.

“An’ it’s good enough fer me,” yelled the preacher, slapping his big hands together; “come on, brethren an’ sistern, an’ jine de moaners!”

Four-fifths of the congregation kept an eye on Arabella, knowing that it was only a question of time until she would come forward with a swing and a whoop, and tell what she had seen.

The eager throng did not have to wait long, for Arabella was eager to get

out, and deliver her message. Laying aside her hat and veil she waltzed out, humming softly, and sweetly, in a melodious voice, “An’ I seed er vision, er vision, er vision!”

“I tole you so, honey, an’ she’s gwine to tell it,” shouted Uncle Jerry Howard, one of the class leaders.

As she rose I got a good look at Arabella, and I was very much impressed with her masculine features. She weighed about 225 pounds, was large of bone, muscular and black. She entered the aisle reeling and rocking.

“Clar de way dere,” said Parson Honeycutt, “an’ let Miss Simpkins pass!”

“It sho’ is de same ole Arabella,” declared Class Leader Jones, “an’ she’s gut trouble on her mind des as sho’ as you’s born’d.

“Come on, Sister Simpkins, an’ don’t keep us in dis agony! Tell de truf as you see it! Tell it an’ let us prepare fer de wust!”

“Dis mornin’,” sang Arabella, “as I wuz er comin’ er long-er de road, I seed er vision, er vision, er vision.”

“Tell it, sister; don’t keep back nothin’. What wuz it you seed?” came from the amen corner.

“Yes, Brer Honeycutt, des as I started, an’ as I wuz comin’ down de road-er, I seed er vision, er vision, er vision!”

“Yes, Lawd! Tell it all, sister! What did you see?”

“An’ I looked back-er, an’ seed it ergin-er.”

“Come on wid it, sister! Tell it all!”

“An’ it had-er long tail-er. Yes, Lawd, an’ dat I did-er!”

“Come on, honey, what wuz it you seed?”

By this time everybody else had quit shouting; Arabella had the floor to herself. Every neck was craned and every ear open to get what she said.

“An’ I look back-er, an’ I seed dat it had er head-er, er head-er, er head-er!”

“What den, chile?”

“An’ er long body-er, body-er, body-er! An’ legs-er, fo’ long legs-er. Yes,

yes, chillun, an' fo' legs-er!"

While this was going on I could not keep my eyes off of Parson Honeycutt, the large, striking-looking preacher, who was very superstitious. I was afraid he would go into convulsions. His eyes were stretched, his nostrils distended and his mouth in a quiver. He leaned over the pulpit and listened intently at Arabella. He was anxious to hear her prediction. The suspense was telling on his nerves, and his heart.

"What wuz it, sister?" he cried in his agony.

"An' I look back-er, an' seed dat it had a long pair years-er," continued Arabella.

The excitement had reached its zenith. The tension was greatest, and the crowd could constrain itself no longer. The spell was broken when Elder Brown shouted: "An' thank Gawd it were a mule-er!"

"Amen!" added the parson.

"Hold me, hold me, hold me, ef you don't I'll fly away to glory an' leave you all," bellowed Arabella.

"Brother Simpkins, hold yo' wife," cried a voice.

Cæsar Simpkins rose from his seat and started toward Arabella, who was prancing up and down the center aisle, but when she saw him coming she waved her hand at him and sung:

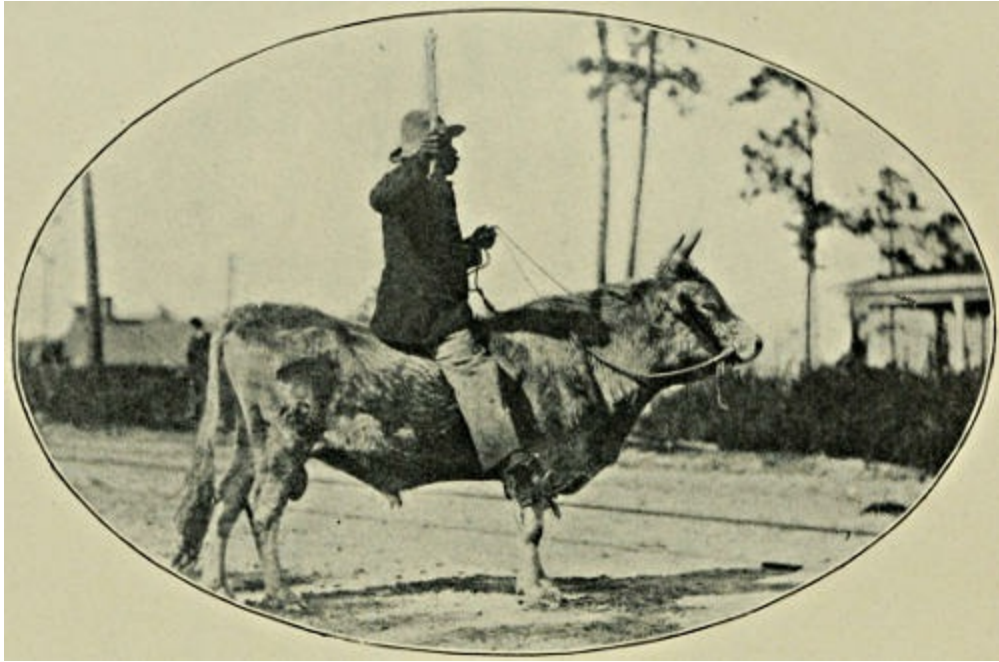
"G'way, Cæsar, g'way, I don't want you to hold me,
I's gut sugar an' molasses in my soul,
An' I want's Brer Honeycutt to hold me."

Parson Honeycutt hurried down from the rostrum, caught Arabella by the right arm, and they went up the aisle singing "Glory hallelujah!"

Arabella went into a trance, fell in Brother Honeycutt's arms, and was carried out and laid upon the grass beneath a large oak tree, where she was permitted to cool off and "come around."

The sequel: That afternoon, while on his way home, Brother Honeycutt was thrown from his roan mule, Napoleon Bonaparte, who became frightened at a toad hopping across the road, and had his left forefinger broken.

“I told you so!” said one and all. “Dat nigger’s vision allers comes true.”



Jim in a Peaceful Mood.

A NEGRO AND HIS FRIEND

On a sultry morning in August, nineteen hundred and two, an ex-Confederate soldier, who had fought under Lee and Jackson, hobbled across Independence Square, bearing heavily upon his cane, on his way to the Mecklenburg county courthouse. From the opposite direction came a young fellow, with ruddy complexion, beaming face and springy step, en route to the railway station to take an early train for a neighboring town. The two, unexpectedly, came together in front of the Central Hotel and extended their right hands to each other.

“Why, father,” exclaimed the younger man, “what are you doing here this time of day?”

“Have you driven all the way from home this morning?”

“Yes, son, I left the farm about daylight, and just this moment arrived.

“Jim is in trouble again.”

“Another church row?”

“Yes; a camp meeting this time.”

“Well, father, I think if I were in your place I would let that negro go to the roads. The ball and chain might improve him. He has given you no end of trouble and cost you some money; let him take his medicine.”

“I don’t know about that, Harry; your mother and I have decided to stand by him once more. He is a mighty good boy about the place and we have implicit confidence in him.”

“Yes, but he is forever fighting and getting in court. Let him go!”

“Well, son, his daddy, Old John, was a good darkey, and your grandfather would not like it if we were to let one of his old carriage driver’s boys go to prison if we could help it.

“I know Jim is pretty bad about fighting negroes, but he is a good hand, and we get on well with him.”

“How many negro meetings has he broken up since you hired him?”

“I don’t know exactly, but would say four or five. He has a sort of mania for that. He is always polite to us and never complains when asked to do extra work. We call on him to go errands at all hours of the day or night, and he goes cheerfully. I do not see how we could get on without him; he milks the cows if the cook is sick, cuts the stove-wood and carries it in, churns if there is nobody else to do it, feeds and curries the horses, helps your mother to make preserves, or pickles, or put up the fruit, and drives the carriage to church on Sunday.

“Yet, Harry, if I had not known John and Mary, his parents, I might let him go without putting up a fight for him, but his daddy or mammy would have done anything for your mother, and your grandfather would turn over in his grave if he could know that I had not done my duty toward Jim.

“I don’t know how serious this last affair is, but I will employ a lawyer and fight it out.”

Harry Brown did not leave the city that day but remained at home to see if he could be of service to his aged and decrepit father. He went to the jail and had a talk with Jim, who had been his childhood playmate, and learned his side of the case.

“Mr. Harry, you think de jedge will make it putty hard on me?” asked Jim, as the young white man turned to leave.

“I can’t say, Jim, but he is a strict church man—a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian—and it would be difficult to predict the result. If it is possible to keep your fighting record out of court I think we can get him to be merciful, but if some one lugs your past in, then, with this Puritanical judge, you may take a tumble toward the chain-gang.”

“Orh, Mr. Harry, you don’t think no white jedge wud send a good nigger lak me to de roads des fur breakin’ up a nigger camp meetin’, do you?”

“Things have changed, Jim. You can’t tell nowadays, since the people have become so particular about drinking, gambling, and the like, what a judge will do. I’m a little uneasy about you.”

“Well, Mr. Harry, tell Marse Henry to stan’ by me des one mo’ time, an’ den I’ll do better. Ef I gits out dis time I sho’ will ’have mysef.”

Jim Parks was the kind of negro that one finds about oldtime Southern country homes: as black as the ace of spades, with a mouth full of pretty white teeth, every one as sound as a silver dollar, and muscular and active. There were but few things about the farm that he could not do when he tried. Everybody, even the other negroes, liked him. With white people he was mannerly, pleasant and obliging, always, and those who knew him at the Brown home, as he went about his work, could not believe the stories they heard of his midnight brawls and dark-house fights at negro gatherings. Usually he was such a happy-go-lucky chap that his white friends could not imagine him in the role of a bully.

But Jim Parks at home, among his white folks, and Jim Parks abroad, with the people of his own race, were different persons—a Dr. Jekel and a Mr. Hyde.

At noon, Saturday, the last day of the Mecklenburg court, Judge Shaler presiding, Solicitor Bluelaw called the Zion Camp Meeting case, and put Rev. Archie Degraffenreid LaFayette Small, colored, on the stand.

“Parson,” said the prosecuting attorney, “tell the court what took place at the camp ground that Sunday.”

“Yes, sir; it wuz lak dis: I’d been in de pulpit about two minutes, gettin’ ready to preach de eight o’clock sermon, when I seed a commotion in de grounds, about two-hund’d yards away, an’ twuzn’t long ’fo’ I heard a pistol crack, an’ dere wuz a scattation of people.”

“Who used the weapon?”

“I heard ’em say it wuz dis here Jim Parks—dat boy over dere.”

“Don’t tell what you heard,” said Col. Calvin Tedder, attorney for the defense, “but what you actually saw.”

“Yes, sir; well de moist dat I seed wuz folks runnin’—gittin’ away frum dere.”

“Did you hear more than one pistol shot?” asked the solicitor.

“Yes, sir; some several shots. In fact, sir, dey come so fas’ dat I couldn’t give out de hymn fur hearin’ ’em.”

“You were pretty badly frightened, were you not?”

“‘Cose I wuz, sir, an’ I ain’t shame to say it. I felt my legs trimblin’, an’ I couldn’t keep my eye on de book.

“Yes, sir, de public worship wuz already disturbed. Ef de shootin’ had stopped dere de law wuz done broke.

“Yes, sir.”

“Is this defendant the man who created the disturbance in the yard?”

“Yes, sir; he’s de one, fur I knows him well. He’s de one dat tuck Brother Jones’ watermillons.”

“How is that?” asked the court, interested.

“Yes, sir, please yo’ honor, it wuz lak dis: Brother Jones, uv de Sandy Creek kermunity, focht a load uv watermillons an’ wuz sellin’ ’em, when dis man Parks come out uv one uv de tents an’ pick out a big millon an’ ’low: ‘I’ll des take dis one wid me.’

“‘Not till you give me thirty-five cents,’ says Brother Jones, dis lak dat.

“‘Take dat,’ said dis boy, pitchin’ Brother Jones a nickel.

“Dat wuz de start uv it, an’ one word brought on another ’till Parks jerked out his gun an’ fell to shootin’.”

“Who did he shoot at?”

“Brother Jones.”

“What did Jones do?”

“Run, sir. De last time I seed ’im wuz when he struck de woods ’bout half mile away.”

“It’s generally time to run when this negro gets after you with a revolver, ain’t it?” asked the solicitor.

“Yes, sir. He’s gut de reputation uv bein’ mighty handy wid his gun.”

“What followed? Tell the whole story.”

“Well, sir, befo’ Brother Jones wuz out uv sight good, dis Jim Parks come to de arbor an’ saunter down de aisle.”

“Did you see him?”

“‘Cose I did; I wuz makin’ out lak I wuz readin’ de hymn, but de truf wuz I had my eye on dat nigger, ’cause I knowed ’im uv old.”

“Go ahead; tell what you saw.”

“Yes, sir. I know’d dat I couldn’t hold de ’tension uv de crowd arter he ’peared on de scene, but I wuz gwine to try to tame ’im. Brother Smith, one uv my right-hand men, had done had some ’sperience wid de boy, an’ he fainted over in de amen corner, fell off de bench an’ rolled under it. When I seed dat, I wuz sorter confused, fur I wuz lookin’ fur Brother Smith to he’p me out.

“Dis Jim, he come on down de aisle, grinnin’, until he gut ’bout half way to de pulpit, an’ den he stop an’ take out his ’volver, a black lookin’ one, as fur as I kin reckerlec’, an’ look at me an’ say: ‘Big Nigger, we ain’t gwine to have no eight o’clock service dis mornin’. Church is out.’”

“What did you say to that, Parson?”

“Not wantin’ to cross ’im, I ’low: ‘‘Cose it is, ’cose it is—we ain’t gwine to argify ’bout dat, Brother Parks.’”

“You called him Brother Parks?”

“Yes, sir, I wuz tryin’ to make up to ’im.”

“What did he do then?”

“He take aim at me an’ say: ‘Come on down, Big Nigger! Come on down! An’ don’t be so long ’bout it!’

“Seein’ dat he wuz meanin’ bizness I ’low: ‘Yes, Brother Parks, I’s comin’,’ but ’fo’ I coul’ git it out he wuz pintin’ his gun at me.”

“Go on!” demanded the solicitor, in an excited tone of voice.

“I heard de pistol say ‘click, click.’ I don’t know what happened arter dat fur I lef’ dere right den, goin’ th’ough de hole at de back uv de pulpit. As I lef’ he wuz cockin’ de ’volver but when I heard de ’port I wuz crossin’ Mr. Bob Bell’s paster fence several hund’d yards away.”

“Did he shoot directly at you?”

“I can’t say as to dat, but as I went over de fence I heard de ball ajunin’ putty close to my year.”

“What became of the congregation?”

“Moist uv it went th’ough de woods des a little ahead uv me. Yes, sir. I think some uv de younger ones staid an’ fout.”

“That will do, don’t tell what you think,” shouted Col. Tedder.

“Well, dat’s all I seed fur I never went back no mo’ ’till nex’ day, an’ de fightin’ crowd wuz gone.”

The essential features of Parson Small’s testimony were corroborated. Several of the officers of the church gave their versions of the affair. Everybody seemed to be against Jim.

Col. Tedder was afraid to put his client on the stand lest his court record be produced. He rested his case after making a short rambling speech. After remaining out three minutes the jury came in and rendered a verdict of guilty.

Col. Tedder spoke eloquently for mercy for his negro, saying that he was a good darkey, except now and then when he drank a little too much.

“Stand up here, Jim Parks,” said the judge, when Col. Tedder sat down.

“What do you mean by disturbing public worship?”

“Why do you persist in breaking up camp meetings?”

“Don’t you know that it is wrong?”

“Yes, sir, Jedge, an’ I ain’t gwine to do it no mo’. Ef you’ll des let me off dis time, so dat I kin go home wid Marse Henry, I’ll be a good nigger de res’ uv my life.

“No, sir, Marse Jedge, you needn’t worry ’bout dis nigger no mo’, ’cause he ain’t gwine to come back here ef he live a hund’d years.”

“That is very fine talk but you don’t mean it,” declared the court. “Nothing short of the chain-gang will cure you. I will sentence you—”

“Hold on, boss, ain’t you gwine to let Marse Henry say a word fur de ole nigger?”

“He’s already said that you were all right except about fighting negroes. The court must protect all classes of citizens. I will give you nine months.”

“Amen!” whispered Parson Small.

'Squire Brown dropped his head to keep from meeting Jim's tearful eyes, as the boy marched out to the jail, handcuffed to two other culprits.

"That was about as I anticipated," said Harry to his father, as they left the courthouse. "Jim's reputation hurt him with the judge. If you had been in Judge Shaler's place you would have done the same thing."

"Yes, I think you are right, but I don't like to see the boy go that way. It would cost close to seventy dollars to get him out; he owes me something now; I have not the money to spare, and cannot afford to pay him more than ten dollars a month if I have him.

"He will have to go this time."

This was the sorrowful admission of 'Squire Brown.

"I think you are right; let him try the road awhile," added the less sentimental son.

"Now, good-bye; if I run upon a respectable-looking negro that I think would suit you and mother, I will send him to you."

'Squire Brown collected his packages and set out for home, a long, lonesome ride through the country, over seventeen miles of macadam road, that hot, dusty night. He needed Jim, and did not like to see him go to prison, but could not prevent it. The old place would not seem the same without the little black negro, with his merry laugh and shining face.

"I don't understand why the little rascal cannot behave," said the 'Squire to himself, as his horse jogged along.

That evening, when he drove up to the lot gate, Mrs. Brown, who had been looking for him for hours, called out in a strident voice: "Well, did you bring Jim?"

"No, I am sorry to say, he went to jail in spite of all I could do; the judge was prejudiced against him. He will have to serve nine months on the chain-gang."

"That is too bad," said Mrs. Brown. "Jim is a good darkey."

"Yes," put in the 'Squire, "but he will break up camp meetings.

"I did all I could, employed a lawyer, spoke to the solicitor, and swore a

half-lie about Jim's character."

Bright and early Monday, 'Squire Brown and his son, Harry, met on the Square in Charlotte, just as they had met two mornings before.

"I am surprised, Dad, to see you here again?" said the boy, frowning.

"Why, your mother and I, after thinking the matter over yesterday, decided to take Jim out; it will cost \$65, but I am going to do it. I have borrowed the money, and will take the negro home with me."

"You are a good one, father—you and mother—taking Jim out of jail, but there is something about that sort of thing that I like," said the son, smiling. "Race problem? Negro haters? Why ask who is the negro's friends when incidents like this occur every day?"

Harry, who had been traveling in the East and West for four or five years, did not feel about the negro as he once did. Being in constant touch with the old cornfield darkey 'Squire Brown had a different viewpoint. The kindly feeling that the younger man once had was passing away.

Late that afternoon, in a cloud of summer dust, 'Squire Brown and Jim Parks, his negro, drove out South Tryon street toward Pineville, and in passing in front of *The Observer* building Jim caught sight of Harry, turned in the buggy and shouted back: "Good-bye, Mr. Harry, me an' Marse Henry's gwine home to see your Maw. Be a good boy, an' don't let de jedge git you. 'Have yo'se'f, an' stay out uv cote, but ef you do git in, by accident, des lak I done, don't have Col. Tedder to 'fend you, onless you spect to go right on to jail."

"No wonder the old folks like the black scamp," said Harry, laughing to himself. "He's an interesting negro."

There was great rejoicing on the Brown place that night when the 'Squire and Jim arrived. Ella, Jim's wife, was beside herself, and 'Squire and Mrs. Brown were almost as happy. Everybody, white and black, was delighted.

The following December, after the cotton, the corn, the potatoes, and the fruit had been gathered, Harry visited his parents at the old place. In driving down the lane he observed that the little log cabin, formerly occupied by Jim and Ella, was empty, and when the black worthy failed to show up to take the horse, as he had done many times before, he asked of his father what had

become of the negro.

“He’s gone to South Carolina,” said the ’Squire.

“Left?”

“Yes.”

“What did he leave for?”

“Why, he got in a little trouble out at Jones’ Chapel, where the colored people were having some kind of a church festival, and the officers were after him.”

“He jumped the game, and left you in the lurch?”

“No; I told him to run so that they could not serve a warrant on him.”

“And you a justice of the peace, too?”

“Yes; I wasn’t elected to try my own negroes.”

“How much does Jim owe you?”

“I don’t know, exactly.”

“A pretty good sum, I guess?”

“That sixty-five and a little more for rations.”

“Will you ever get it?”

“Oh, yes, if Jim is ever able he will pay it.”



FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

The burial of Uncle Billy Malone, of Jackson county, by his intimate friends and boon companions, was one of the strangest funerals ever held in North Carolina, or anywhere else; it was a clear case of birds of a feather flocking together even unto the grave.

Everybody in Jackson knew or knew of Uncle Billy Malone, the blacksmith-horse-trader; he was one of the few very interesting characters of the county. His chief end in life seemed to be a burning desire to satisfy an unquenchable thirst for strong drink. He was a confirmed toper, and all of his personal friends were of the same persuasion.

Uncle Billy and his associates made it a rule for years to assemble at Washington, the county seat of Jackson, every off day—every Saturday, every wet day, every holiday, in fact, every day they could, and drink the health of each other, the state and the nation. It was a jolly lot and Uncle Billy, the dean, was the oldest of them all; his son Sid, the youngest, and Col. William LaFayette, the wisest. The little circle numbered eight, and it was a close corporation while the cup passed around. Whiskey was the besetting sin of each and every one of them, who drank whenever he could, and wherever he could.

Col. LaFayette was a tenant farmer—a typical tenant farmer of a class that lived in the cotton-producing section of the South after the civil war. During the days of slavery he served as overseer for small slave-owning landlords. Most of his kind moved to the towns of the Piedmont counties of the Southern States when cotton mills began to flourish and put their children at work at the spindle and the loom. The sorrier ones became vampires.

In appearance Col. LaFayette was a freak, but in manner, a sort of shabby-genteel Chesterfield. He was a cadaverous-looking fellow, with long body, long legs, and long arms, and thin, sharp, pointed face. The oldest citizen of his county did not remember to have seen him in well-fitting clothes. His shirt sleeves were too short, and his trousers never reached the top of his shoes. He habitually wore a slouch hat, with one side up and the other down, and went with his shirt front open and his shoes loosely laced.

Picture him in your mind, trudging his way to town to join his chums at The Merry Bowl, Jim Roediger's saloon! Any excuse took him in, for he was always certain that his friends, all of whom, save Uncle Billy, were fellow tillers of the soil, would meet him there. No particular day was set but the little band of drinking cronies came together like iron filings to a magnet. If any one failed to appear something serious had happened to prevent his coming. Jim Boggs, Pete Blue, Sam Helms, Mike Broom and Bob Sink belonged to the coterie.

Such were the running mates of Uncle Bill Malone; all good fellows, and harmless, except to their own constitutions. They stood in their own light but no one could say aught against any of them, barring the fact that he drank to excess, and that was a common complaint at that time. They had lived together so long, and enjoyed one another's society to such an extent that, up to the time of Uncle Billy's death, with the exception of a few business associations, they shunned the rest of mankind, not that they were ashamed but that ordinary men bored them. Their circle was complete.

On a cold—bitter cold—night in December, 18—, the angel of death knocked at the cabin door of Uncle Billy Malone. Without warning, and suddenly, the call came. The old man had not been feeling well for several days, but he had not complained to his companions. The facts concerning his last moments are not known to the outside world. The curtain is down and no one can say how Uncle Billy passed from life to eternity. But the charitable must believe that he was sober and clothed in his right mind.

The day before the summons came De Ate, as the party was known, foregathered at The Merry Bowl and drank until late. Sid and his father got home just before dark. The next morning, when the son went to arouse his father, he found his body cold in death.

But, let us turn to the funeral!

Sid Malone behaved like a child in the presence of death. The very thought of being alone and face to face with a dead kinsman seemed to unnerve him. There was but one definite idea in his head and that was that his father had to be buried.

"Who is to do it?" he asked himself.

"Why, his friends!" was the natural answer.

“Who, Col. LaFayette, and the others of De Ate?”

Those were the only friends he knew. He had not been to church in forty years, and no preacher had ever put foot in his home.

“Is there no woman or minister of the gospel?” asked Sid.

“Not one,” echo answered.

With these thoughts running through his mind Sid mounted his mule and started to the several homes of his friends to announce the sad news. He had not gone far when he met Col. LaFayette and others, riding through eight inches of snow, on their way to Washington for a drinking frolic. Thinking of nothing but the exhilarating glass that awaited them at The Merry Bowl, they did not recognize Sid Malone as he came riding down the road.

The death of his father had softened Sid, and his heart was sore. When his companions came in sight he was thinking of the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death, a subject he had never considered before. The turning place for him, he argued, had come. But alas! he met his old cronies, and the flow of serious thought was diverted.

“Turn back, boys, don’t go to town to-day,” said Sid, as he recognized his pals. “Turn back, my daddy’s daid!”

“Oh, Sid, don’t tell me that your daddy air daid,” cried Col. LaFayette, throwing up his hands at the unexpected and shocking announcement. “How kin it be?”

“It shore is the truth, and I want you fellers to help me give him a decent burial.”

“Well, Sid, there ain’t nothin’ that I wouldn’t do for Uncle Billy Malone, daid or alive, and as quick as I go up town and tend to a little bizness I’ll be wid you.”

Col. LaFayette had his mind fatally fixed on The Merry Bowl, and he felt compelled to have a drink before he could do anything else, but, be it said to his credit, that although his tongue was dry and his head set on the saloon, his heart—a large, warm one—was with his dead comrade. He was loyal and true to his friends, and Uncle Billy stood at the head of the list.

He went to The Merry Bowl—he and all of his associates except Sid, who

went to the church to have a grave prepared—took a round or two of drinks and bought several bottles to carry away with them. Having thus fortified against the cold and the dreary hours ahead the six companions of the Malones repaired to the little home on the outskirts of the town, and began the watch over Uncle Billy's remains.

Sid Malone and his father lived in a two-roomed log house, which had been built two generations before. They had been the sole occupants since the death of Mrs. Malone, mother and wife, twenty years prior to that time. It was a wretched, poverty-stricken place, unkept and dilapidated.

Here, on the day of the funeral, the friends of the late lord and master of the hut sat in silence, doing what they deemed to be the right thing toward their departed comrade. The six, with solemn faces, sat looking in the fire that crackled away on the hearth. Deep down they were sorrow-stricken but, withal, the thirst that never dies tugged at them. At first, when one felt that it was impossible to do without a drink any longer, he would rise and steal quietly out, step aside, and touch his flask. This was out of respect to the memory of Uncle Billy. However, this formality did not continue long for, inside of two hours, the boys were drinking in the good old way, and in the presence of the corpse.

Sid returned about noon, broken and dejected, and was prevailed upon to take a cup or two for his nerves.

"It's mighty hard, fellers," said Col. LaFayette, "but we can not undo what has been done. The Father of All intended that we should go just like Uncle Billy went. I hope that my takin' off will be as sudden and as unlooked-for as his. I have my thoughts about the hereafter, but I hope to be with my friends. Let us drink one glass in honor of our old friend who has gone on before!"

The frequent drinks of whiskey had lifted the sorrow from the hearts of the little band of associates.

After dinner, while a heavy snow fell, the friends of Uncle Billy Malone put the body in a pine coffin, one made for the purpose by the dead man, and bore it to its last resting place. A hand-car, which was operated on a spur of a trunk-line road, was used in place of a hearse. The mourners staggered by the car and shoved it along the rails. On the way the casket fell off but was soon replaced. The drinking begun early in the morning, had been kept up all day,

and Col. LaFayette and his friends were pretty rocky.

When the funeral party reached the church, Bellevue Chapel, there was no one to greet it. Simp Syder, the colored grave digger, was the only living creature in sight. The trees, the church top, and the tombstones were covered with snow, and everything seemed dead and cold.

The corpse was carried to the open grave and let down. After the ropes were pulled out the associates of the late Uncle Billy Malone stood and looked at each other, inquiring in a mute way: "Is it possible that no one can say a word—a last word—for the old man?"

Col. William LaFayette, big-hearted fellow that he was, arose to the emergency. Looking in the grave, at the coffin, and then passing his eyes from man to man, he knew that the task had fallen on him. He read in the faces of the others that he was expected to perform the last rites and ceremonies over the body of their departed friend. On realizing this, he said: "Stand 'round the grave, boys, and pull off your hats. Git as close as you can.

"There air nobody here—no preacher, nor weemens, or the like of that—to say nuthing, and it just won't do to bury a man like Uncle Billy Malone without something being said; if nobody else will say it, I will.

"Here air the body of Uncle Billy Malone, and he air daid. He was as good-er man as ever lived, and you all know it. And we air every one drunk, and I would go further to remark, and to say, that if Uncle Billy were here, he'd be drunk, too.

"Let's all hope that he's gone to the Good Place, for he was a mighty good man. That's all.

"If any of the rest of you have got anything to say, say it now, for it will be too late to-morrow."

That closed the ceremonies. The grave was filled in, and the more tender-hearted ones of the party dropped tears on the red clay that covered the old fellow's body. It was a solemn scene, there in the snow-covered grove, near the church. Uncle Billy's friends had remained faithful to the last. They had done the best they knew how.

“RED BUCK”: WHERE I CAME BY IT

This is a story of North Carolina Fusion days, two years before the Constitutional amendment, disfranchising the negro, was adopted. In 1896 the Populists, managed by Senator Marion Butler, of Sampson, and the Republicans by Senator Jeter C. Pritchard, of Buncombe, were standing together in the State for mutual benefit—for pelf and pie—what most all active politicians stand together for. The Democrats were down and out. Ex-Judge Daniel L. Russell, of Wilmington, and Hon. Oliver H. Dockery, of Mangum, both of the sixth congressional district, were the candidates for the Republican nomination for Governor, which, at that time, meant an election. Charlotte, Union, Anson, Richmond, Robeson, New Hanover and other counties were in the Shoestring district.

The Republicans were very busy.

That being before the negro was disfranchised, the Republican party in this immediate section of the State was largely composed of Afro-Americans. A county convention was held in Charlotte, and it was as black as Africa. Of course there was a sprinkling of white men in it, but nine out of ten of the delegates were colored. The Dockeryites and the Russellites came close to blows. There were rumors of wars, but no blood was shed.

Every county in the district had had a similar convention and named delegates to the Maxton meeting.

The all-absorbing question was: “Are you for Dockery or Russell?”

Mr. Dockery was known as the “Great Warhorse of the Pee Dee,” and Mr. Russell as “The Mighty Dan of New Hanover.”

The Maxton convention promised a live newspaper story. Unless the hand writing on the wall had been misread there was blood on the moon. Some sort of a fight seemed certain if the delegates of the Shoestring district ever got together.

It was at Maxton, as a common reporter, that I got my nickname, Red Buck, now a nom de plume. When the fight became warm I bolted without

waiting ceremonies.

We, the Mecklenburg delegates to the district convention, and I, my paper's reliance for the story of the day, left Charlotte on the early train, a bright spring morning, and journeyed eastward.

At Monroe the Union delegation got aboard, and at Wadesboro the Anson, and at Rockingham and Laurinburg, the Richmond.

The train was literally filled with negroes. I had a dull time with that crowd until we got to Rockingham, where Claude Dockery, whom I had met at the State University at Chapel Hill several years prior to that, joined the party and introduced me to the most interesting character in the Dockery contingent, Rich Lilly, a tall, wiry, limber negro, with juicy mouth and knappy, dusty head. Rich was going to do what he could toward the nomination of his old friend, Col. Oliver Dockery. Somewhere between Rockingham and Maxton Rich and I were thrown together, when no one else was near. Rich beckoned to me and dodged behind a freight car and, in order to see what he wanted, I followed.

"Boss, is you gwine to Maxton?" asked Rich, holding his right hand under his coat tail as if to draw his gun.

"Yes, sir. That is where I am bound for."

"Well, say, boss, here's des' a little uv Duckery's best, won't you have er drink?"

"No, thank you, I don't drink," said I.

"Looker here, boss, you mus' not be no delegate?"

"No, I am not."

"Well, is yer gwine to de convention?"

"Yes."

The train started and we got aboard. Rich could not understand; my attitude toward his elixir of life astonished him.

About 12 o'clock the convention met in a large hall, provided with a rostrum, over a store on Main street. The hall, having been used for a buggy warehouse, had a tramway that led from the sidewalk to the floor. Up this

broad and slanting way the delegates and spectators traveled. I was one among the first to arrive, with a chair that I borrowed, a small lapboard and a tablet, and took my seat on the rostrum, in the north corner, against the rear wall, near a window that looked out on a back lot, believing that I had selected the best place in the house for my purpose.

At the appointed hour the hall was well filled with people, principally negroes. Seeing Mr. Claude Dockery talking and laughing with me, Rich Lilly became curious again, and, when no one was about, he came up, looked me in the eye and asked: "Boss, for Gawd's sake, whut is you gwine ter do ef you ain't no deligate."

"I am going to sit here and watch you Republicans, take notes and write you up in the paper if you don't behave yourselves," was my reply.

"O, you's er writer fur de paper?"

"Yes."

"I sees."

I do not recall any but the more violent incidents of the convention. As I sat there and watched the various delegations take their seats, a looker-on in Vienna pointed out some of the celebrities.

"That man with the long beard and long fig-stemmed pipe, is Dr. R. M. Norment, of Lumberton," said my coach. "The man with the cripple hand is Col. B. Bill Terry. The long-armed man with abbreviated trousers and coat sleeves, is Speaking Henry Covington."

Many others were named, but I have forgotten most of them. Later Big Bill Sutton, of Bladen, came in. He did not belong to the convention, but it was understood that he was there to lead the Russell forces in a rough-house affair if his services were needed.

No one would have imagined that the quiet, lifeless body of men of the first half hour of the convention would become the mob that it did before the day was over.

The trouble began when the convention voted on a permanent chairman, each side claiming the majority when the balloting was over. The god of peace had quit the meeting and the devil taken possession. Mr. A. M. Long, of Rockingham, a handsome man, with good face, was put up by the

Dockeryites, and a Wilmington negro by the Russellites. Both Mr. Long and the darkey tried to take the seat, each mounting the rostrum and seizing a chair.

This was the signal for a general fight, which began on the stage.

Knowing the power of Speaking Henry's lungs the Dockery delegates began to yell "Covington," "Covington," "speech," but in the meantime the Wilmington negro, the Russell chairman, had been deprived of his seat by force. Mr. Long held his with a brace of Colts.

I want the reader to understand that the fight then in progress was none of my affair. To tell the whole truth I did look on with considerable satisfaction until I saw two or three men produce pistols; from that time I had one eye on the convention and the other looking for a way to escape.

Every fighting man was coming to the rostrum, throwing nervous delegates out of the way as he advanced.

Rich Lilly brought first blood. The calls for Henry Covington, the supple man with the oily tongue, were heeded by that gentleman, who was just as fearless as wordy, and while others glared and swore at each other he was making the welkin ring with Dockery thunder. No man ever made more gestures and took longer strides than did Speaking Henry that afternoon.

With a quart of mean liquor in his stomach and a cigarette in his mouth, Rich Lilly, the warmest Dockeryite of them all, pranced behind Mr. Covington, following him with his hands and feet as far as he could without injuring himself.

Seeing this double-barreled performance I lost sight of the free-for-all fight on the opposite side of the stage. It wasn't what Mr. Covington said but the way he said it that attracted. Except for the difference in color one would have taken Speaking Henry and Rich Lilly for the Gold Dust twins.

"Tell it to 'em!" shouted Rich, every time he hit the floor.

"Yes, Lawd, let 'em have it. Dere ain't no candi-date but Col. Duckery!"

Tiring of this, a Russell man in the back section of the hall roared out: "Five dollars for the man who will pull that long-legged devil down from there."

No sooner had the offer been made than did a short, stocky, big-headed negro, with a Van Dyke beard, start from the fifth row of seats toward the stand to catch Covington by the leg.

I mounted my chair to see. Having the advantage of the pedestal I could take in everything.

Speaking Henry had charged and jumped and squatted and bounced until his trousers, all too short, had climbed nearly to his knees and his heavy home-knit socks had fallen over his shoe tops. He was about ready to fly when the designing negro reached out for his thin, bare shank.

But there came a turn; Rich Lilly, who had heard the offer and seen the negro start and wend his way to the stage, was guarding the speaker. Just as the Wilmington delegate made a pass at the Dockery speaker, Rich bowed his back, like a Thomas cat, ducked, shot forward and gave him a blow between the eyes and floored him. Speaking Henry never let up. In fact, he never knew what had happened until the convention was over. Rich resumed his antics until he recalled the fact that I was taking notes and then rushed back to where I had dropped into my seat, put his hands on my knees, looked me in the face and asked, seriously: "Say, boss, did I act lak er delegate?"

"Yes, indeed, do it again."

To my certain knowledge Rich hammered five other delegates after that and came to see if I approved of the manner in which he did it.

But I was forced to forget Speaking Henry and Rich Lilly. Other incidents, more exciting and more strenuous, were in progress. Big Bill Sutton had come upon the rostrum and was throwing delegates east and west. Having the advantage of a tremendous frame and a notorious reputation as a scrapper he walked roughshod over less fortunate ones. But there was one man, with a keen eye, an iron face and frosted hair, that was not afraid to face him, and that was Mr. Dan Morrison, of Rockingham, a Republican leader at that time.

As old man Bill surged on the rostrum his son, Dave, screamed back at Henry Covington from the hall. I saw Mr. Morrison climb on the rostrum, and knew that he was mad. He and Big Bill glowered at each other for an instant at twenty paces. Two seconds later they were rushing at each other, like vicious dogs. They did not have a head-on collision, but side-swiped. The Rockingham man got the best of the first round; he tore Sutton's collar

and tie from his neck and held it between the thumb and forefinger, so that all might see. Friends interfered and prevented an ugly affair.

“Clear the rostrum!” shouted some one from the hall.

That is what the chairmen and their friends had been trying to do for some minutes. But the delegates crowded around the edge until they were fifteen or twenty deep and the rostrum was alive with opposing factions.

After the Morrison-Sutton mix-up the fighting became general. Some fellow in the house knocked Dr. Norment over a seat, jamming his pipe stem halfway down his throat.

Times were beginning to look squally for me, and I had no way out. To my left was a window, but if I went out that it meant a fall of 20 feet to the ground; to my right, an anteroom, with a small, thin wall; going out, down the steps from the rostrum, the way I came in, seemed at that time an impossibility. While considering the advisability of going into the anteroom and closing the door I saw an upheaval across from me and before I could catch my breath an old darkey sailed into the room and slammed the door and I was cut off there.

All the while the mob on the rostrum became blacker and more like a negro festival. The old cornfield negroes were just beginning to catch the spirit of the meeting. As the colored delegates increased the white ones stole away, imagining that something would be doing soon.

Seeing the change in color and temperament of the stage crowd I began to have serious concern about my own welfare. Had the fight been among my own people I might have taken a hand, but to sit idly by and be punctured with a pistol or a knife was not to my liking. I was slow in making up my mind. But there came a time when I had to act before thinking it over. As I sat there and wondered what injuries I would receive if I jumped out the window, a big negro, perhaps a ditcher, clad in overalls and wearing a cap and high-top boots, broke through the mob in the hall, jumped up on the stand immediately in front of me, and began to finger in his boot and swear. I heard him mumble to himself: “I’ll be d—d ef I don’t clar dis hall when I get ole Sallie.”

I had an idea that “Ole Sallie” was a weapon of some sort, and I was right, for a half a second later the big nigger rose to his full height, threw open a

razor, turned around three times (coming close to me as he wheeled) and yelled, “Git off uv dis stage, don’t I’ll cut yo’ throats—every one uv you.”

I was the first to leave, going over the heads of the mob that had collected about the edge of the stage. My notebook flew to the right and my lapboard to the left, while I continued my flight straight ahead down the tramway. As I struck the street, old man B. B. Terry, whom I knew very well, stood behind the wall of the brick building, and peeping up the exit, said: “I gad, that’s no place for a well man, much less a cripple.” I did not argue the point.

I was followed by many hundreds. In fact, the entire Russell delegation bolted, some going through the windows and others down the tramway.

The Dockery men remained and passed a few resolutions, but there was no more fighting.

Late that afternoon, when the westbound delegates were waiting at the station to take the train, some one discovered that Uncle Hampton, a very ancient colored delegate from Monroe, was missing. I heard the talking and inquired as to his appearance.

“Why,” said I, “that is the old fellow that went in the anteroom when the fight began.”

A party of us visited the hall and knocked on the locked door, but did not get a response. Finally we broke in and there sat old man Hampton, jouked down in the corner, afraid to move.

Claude Dockery, who sat on the roof and saw me make the famous leap, went to Raleigh and told Tom Pence, the city editor of *The Times-Visitor*, that “Red Buck had bolted the convention.” I was the butt of papers and politicians for weeks. The Old Man said, in an editorial, that “Red Buck” would have to explain why he bolted and he did as best he could. Mr. Caldwell had dubbed me “Brick Top,” “Strawberry Blond,” and “Red Buck,” and the last name stuck because of the Maxton convention and Claude Dockery’s interview.

UNTIL DEATH DO US PART

The man who earns by the sweat of his brow or the cunning of his mind a comfortable living for those dependent upon him should not complain but consider the mean lot of others, less fortunate, and rejoice at his good fate. There is not a day of my life that I do not see some wretch faring worse than I; some poor person struggling desperately to keep body and soul together.

Let us thank God for a sound mind and a sound body: that we do not think side-whiskers are pretty and that we have not hair-lips.

One day not long ago, while hurrying from my work, I passed a Greek peanut roaster, and wondered about his lot. Day after day I had seen him with his little push-cart, but rarely had I observed any customers.

“How fares it to-day?” said I, as I hurried by.

“Fine, thank you: little mon, good book, good health, and heap of joy!”

“There is a philosopher,” thought I to myself. “He is a happy man. His life seems to be sweet, although he has but little of the goods of this world.”

That very day John, that son of Athens, had sold less than fifty cents worth of truck, yet he was rejoicing as he sat on the curbing, reading the life of Thomas Jefferson in Greek.

On a fine afternoon, in the spring of 1898, I walked from the Hotel LaFayette, at Fayetteville, to the Cape Fear river. I had a purpose in making the trip; I had been threatened with a fit of melancholia and was trying to stave it off. I strolled down to the water’s edge, where fishermen were wont to tie their boats at night, and stood there looking, looking, studying the topography of the country and the people in their labor for bread and meat.

I tarried on a pretty little hill, just above the river, where I had a good view of the water and surrounding fields. The territory for a hundred yards square in my immediate vicinity was bald and smooth from the constant tread of fishermen’s feet. Back of that, early vegetables and succulent grasses were springing up. Along the shore a dozen or more batteaus, or small fishing boats, were chained to stakes, or anchored to each other.

Far up and down the river I could see men in boats, gliding noiselessly along the banks, setting hooks for the evening bite. It was past the middle of the afternoon and the big fish, cats, carp and red horse, were beginning to run. This the fishermen knew and were hurrying to place their hooks, baited with mussels. At nine o'clock at night and early the next morning the hooks were looked.

While standing there, gazing here and there, I saw a party of small negro boys, wading to their waists in the water, graveling in the sand, for mussels to sell to the fishermen. Silently and doggedly, the little fellows hunted the slimy, shell-covered creatures, gathering them by the hundred.

The longer I remained there on that knoll, in the midst of that peculiarly fascinating life, the more interested I became. Every man, every woman and every boy or girl appealed to me. Between five-thirty and six o'clock the men who baited and placed the hooks came ashore, fastened their boats, and went to their respective homes for supper and a moment with their wives and children before starting out for the night fish. I saw them go and come with their nets. From dark until about ten o'clock they fished for shad, the most valuable fish in the Cape Fear at that season of the year.

It is intensely fascinating to watch the movements and study the habits and manners of the people who get their living from the water. They belong to a certain class and are of a certain type, differing from their brothers and sisters who till the soil. Loving the water and having become so used to it, they would not quit it for the land.

As a rule, river people are strong and ruddy. Their faces are hard and sunburned and their muscles well-knit and tough.

It is a wholesome life.

These be the sort of men I saw that afternoon. On the ground they were awkward, ill at ease, and grouchy, but in their boats graceful, sturdy and merry.

Soon after I went down to the river and settled myself, to look on and learn what I could of the ways of the living things about me, I heard a shuffling noise behind me, and when I turned to ascertain the cause, my eyes fell upon the most pitiful creature it had ever been my fortune to see. A woman, yes, a woman, one of God's noblest creatures, stood and gazed in wonderment at

me. She had approached within a few feet of me before she realized that I was a living being; I was hid from the view of the path that leads from the town to the river by a thicket of weeds and grass.

Once I began to look at the woman I could not keep from staring at her. She was ragged, wrinkled and unwashed. The clothes that covered her back, all bent and misshapen, were tattered and torn. Her leathery face was deeply seamed and drawn. The queer sound that attracted my attention as she came up, was made by her shoes, which were large, not mates, and without strings. They slipped up and down upon her naked heels and made the “slick-slack,” “slick-slack” noise, so familiar to the country boy who has plowed in his father’s cast-off brogans, several numbers too large for his feet.

The woman was pathetic-looking, her crestfallen face was partially hid from me by an antiquated, dilapidated, weather-beaten split bonnet. Every garment she wore was a misfit and threadbare.

I felt myself drawn to this poverty-stricken creature. In order that I might find out something about her, I engaged her in conversation before she could wheel and escape.

“Are you going fishing?” I asked.

“No,” she answered pleasantly; “I came down to see if I could see my old man. He is fishing.”

“Do you live here?”

“Yes. We have lived in this town thirty-odd years; me and my old man.”

“What does he do for a living?”

“Well, he fishes now. He is getting so old and feeble that he cannot do anything else. When young and strong, he worked on a freight boat on the river, but his health failed about ten years ago, and we have had a mighty hard time since. I have actually seed the time that we did not have enough to eat. He is proud, and would not beg. He fishes, while I tries to make a little money washing and sewing, but he will not let me work much.”

“Have you any children?”

“No, sir, Mister; God never gave us any, and I expect it is best. We are so poor they might have a hard time. Me and him are all of the two families left.

He is the only person that I have to look to and he is good to me. He does his best, and God will not forget him for it.”

“Do you own a home?”

“No, sir. We have nothing but a little bit of furniture. We live in a rented house and the man who owns it could put us out to-night, but he is a Christian and would not do it. We have paid no rent in six years. We just can’t; that’s the reason. But it won’t be long now, for my old man is getting weak— weaker day by day. He can’t live much longer, and when he goes I hope that I may go too. We have been together forty-odd years, and in death I pray that God will not part us.

“The Lord has been good to us. We get comfort from the Bible.

“We don’t see anybody nowadays; we go nowhere, and nobody comes to see us. The friends we had in more prosperous days have deserted us; there is nothing about us to attract people. Some seem to shun us through fear that we may beg, but never, never; we would starve first. My old man is too proud to beg. I live in fear that he may get so feeble that he cannot go and that we will have nothing. He often says that he hopes he will die some night after fishing all day. If he does, I want to go too.”

“Do you ever go to church?”

“No, Mister; we haven’t been in goin’ on ten years. We have no fit clothes. The churches look too fine inside for our old rags, but we read our old Bible every Sunday. We can’t read much now; our eyes are bad; but we get much comfort out of the Good Book.

“The Church folks don’t ever come to see us. They don’t need us, as we ain’t got no money to give. I guess when we die some good preacher will say a word over our graves; I don’t know.”

This said, the old woman moved on toward the river, craning her neck as she went, so that she could see to the right of a clump of trees that stood near the water, looking for her husband, but she must not have seen him, for she soon passed back on her way home.

Becoming interested in what she said, I made up my mind to remain there till the old gentleman arrived and look him over. I had a long wait, for it was almost dark when his little boat hove in sight. His wife had been back and

looked up the river several times. She seemed lonely, restless and uneasy.

I felt sorry for the old woman, but was afraid to say so. It was, as she said, a bitter fight for existence. The aged pair had no associates, and actually suffered from poverty.

The last time she came to the landing she carried in her arms a tiny, toothless, starved dog.

“Is that your pet?” said I, anxious to reopen the conversation.

“Yes, he’s nearly twenty-two years old, and has been ours since a pup.”

“He is very old,” I declared, for the want of something better.

“Yes; and blind, and toothless.”

“Why do you keep him?”

“For what he has been. It would be cruel to kill him or desert him now, when he cannot take care of himself. I shall keep him until he dies, unless I go first. When he was younger he kept me company, and guarded our little home, when my old man was down the river for days and nights at a time, and now, if God spares me, I will see him through. I have to make a sort of soup for him to eat, and guide his footsteps. I do not think he is here for much longer; he is getting very thin and frail.”

She let him down on the ground by her side, and said: “Fido, do you love your mistress?” and the grateful little brute shook his tail.

The wife was not there when the husband came; though I had never seen him before I knew him when he landed. His face was haggard and worn, and his body emaciated. Some disease preyed at his vitals. His constitution was gone, but the blazing fire of pride still burned in his gray eyes. The will and the spirit were there. He had a fair string of fish, and after eating the smaller ones would have enough left to bring twenty-five cents.

Having tied his boat, he shouldered his tackle, took up his fish, and climbed the hill past me. I did not see his eyes searching for the faithful wife who had four times come to greet him; this lack of care I did not like. He seemed too indifferent. Possibly he was disappointed when his old companion was not there to meet him, not knowing that she had come and gone time after time. He dragged his weary limbs over the brow of the hill,

and toward the city. As he went by, I had a good opportunity to observe his clothes. He was not the one-gallus fellow that the politicians so often refer to, but the no-gallus one. His trousers were held up by sharp hip-bones and his shirt was decorated with vari-colored patches.

I followed the old man, until he met his wife, who was coming in a half-trot from their little cabin. The meeting was full of meaning. No word was uttered; no time lost. He looked solemn, the least bit angry, and she smiled, a bitter sad smile, and turned and followed him. Her eyes were on the fish, giving them a cash valuation.

All of this passed without a sound from either.

That night, after I had enjoyed a good meal, to gratify my curiosity I walked by the home of the lonely couple, and found them enjoying a pipe of tobacco each. The little dog was there, on the top step between them, and they were apparently happy.

As I moved on, I said to myself: "I wonder how it would feel to be penniless, friendless, decrepit and old, but too proud to beg?"

May fortune smile on the old fisherman, his loyal helpmeet and their little dog!



UNCLE GEORGE AND THE ENGLISHMAN

The summer season was in full blast at Lake Toxaway. Hundreds of Southerners and scores of others were there, enjoying the invigorating climate, the cooling breezes, and the open-air pastimes—golf, tennis, fishing, horseback riding, and rowing. For weeks the weather had been fair and fine, and the beautiful and popular resort, in the Blue Ridge, teemed with vivacious visitors, who romped on the lake, in the woods, and along the roads by day and danced, played cards and other indoor games, and chatted in the evenings, making merry fifteen hours a day.

Among the guests at Toxaway Inn was an Englishman, a Mr. Ferrier, who had come to North Carolina in search of rare beetles. To the other guests of the fashionable hostelry Ferrier was a freak—a bug hunter—who, although he mixed but rarely with the crowd, was well known to all by his tall, lanky form, his long stride, and energetic and positive air, on account of which he had incurred, without his knowledge, the dislike of many who came in touch with him. Wherever he went he left the impression that he believed England was the only place fit for a decent person to live.

Captain James Brusard, proprietor of the inn, would not have tolerated Ferrier, with his whims and kicks, had he not been one of his most profitable guests, occupying an expensive room, for which he paid an exorbitant price. The Englishman was liberal with his money, but his manner, which to the average Southerner seemed surly and uncivil, made him disagreeable to those with whom he came in contact, especially the easy-going, indolent servants, most of whom were oldtime negroes, such as had been with the Brusards for more than half a century. The excellent fare, carefully selected and well cooked, the exhilarating atmosphere, the refreshing water and the wealth of insects and flowers pleased him very much, but hilarious pleasure-seekers, and the indifferent negroes riled him. The pretty, elegantly-dressed women, with their merry chatter, did not appeal to him.

“Bugs! Bugs!! Nothing but bugs!” was his cry.

“I never seed sich a man since I been born,” said Uncle George, the head porter. “We ain’t got nuthin’ dat suits him. Whenever I see him comin’, wid

dat baskit on his arm, an' dat single-bar'l glass on his eye, den I knows some trouble's on de way."

Ferrier, much to the joy of his fellow lodgers, spent most of his time in the woods, hunting insects. Every sunny day he would leave bright and early and stay away until late in the afternoon, sometimes tramping ten or twelve miles and back between suns. Natives, as well as visitors, soon became interested in him and his work, but no one ever sought him out to interrogate him, or to converse with him. His demeanor was forbidding, yet he never intentionally affronted any one. To the few he made up to he was very affable and likable. He meant well, but his neighbors could not become accustomed to his brusqueness.

The Toxaway country abounds in deer, grouse and trout. During the busy season, sportsmen bring in many trophies of the hunt. Ferrier, if one were to judge from his conversation, was an authority on game. In talking of the catch or kill of the North Carolina fishermen or hunters, he would speak slightly, and this, more than any other thing, made him unpopular.

"I 'clar' 'fo' Gawd," said Uncle George, one day, "ain't we got nuthin' as good as whut dey's got in Englan'?"

Robert Brusard, son of the Captain, caught a very large trout, brought it home and exhibited it in front of the hotel, and one after another declared that it was the finest fish of the kind he had ever seen, but when Ferrier saw it he shook his head, and said: "Yes, yes, that is a big trout, but we have larger ones than that in England." When a grouse was shown he made about the same comparison, and a deer, always giving his country the best of it. This kept up until every American in the community was *mad* at Ferrier.

"Ef I live, so hep me Gawd, I'll git somefin' bigger dan whut dey's gut in Englan'," declared Uncle George, the boss of all the darkies. "I sho' is gwine to git even wid dat man.

"When Marse Robert go out here an' ketch de bigges' trout dat de oles' men in dese parts ever seed, den come 'long dat man, wid his single-bar'l eyeglass, slap it up to his face, an' 'low: 'Yes, dat's er putty big fish, but dey's gut bigger ones dan dat in Englan'.' I don't say much, fur I ain't never been dare. But dat ain't all. No, sir, he don't stop den, but des keep on an' on.

"De yudder day, when Marse Jim killed dat grouse—I believe dat's whut

dey call it, but it look des lak a sho' nuff ole speckle hen to me—an' fetch it here, all whut see it, 'cepin' dat Englishman, say dat it's de bigges' bird uv de kind in all de lan', I wondered whut he gwine to say. Yes, sir, I des wonder whut he gwine to say. But I ain't hafter wonder long, fur he come 'long, steppin' two yards at a time, an' stop, an' put on dat single-bar'l eyeglass, an' look down at de grouse. I helt my breaf until he say: 'Yes, yes, dat's er putty big bird, but dey's gut bigger grouse dan dat in Englan'.'

"Dat wuz too much. I des gut right sick when he say it. An' no longer dan de day befo', right dare in de back yard, he say dat de deer whut de gemmun frum Atlanty kilt wuz er big one, but not as big as de ones dey have in Englan'."

One afternoon, not long after the deer incident, the old negro was fishing in Horseshoe River, at the foot of the mountain, when he saw another fisherman catch a mud turtle, or cooter, as the natives called it. At the sight of the wriggling thing, a happy thought came to Uncle George.

"I sho' will trade fur dat cooter an' git even wid de Englishman," said he. "Yes, sir; dat's des whut I'll do."

Going up to the man who had landed the turtle, George asked: "Say, boss, how'll you swap dat tuckle fur some fish?"

"I'll trade fair," said the mountaineer.

"Well, I'm yo' man, ef you will, fur I wants dat cooter," declared the darkey.

"I'll give you two trouts fur him?"

The exchange was made and George set out for home. No one knew what the negro was up to until he let a few of his friends, white and black, onto his game.

"Marse Jim, I wants you an' Marse Robert to come roun' to de back yard des arter dinner," said George to Mr. Brusard.

"What are you up to, George?" asked the white man.

"Des a little fun, sir. Be sho' an' be dere!"

George went through the house, telling those whom he liked that he would expect them at the rear of the building that evening at half-past nine.

At the appointed hour the little yard was full of curious persons, anxious to know what sort of trick the ex-slave had on hand.

“George, what is this you are giving us?” asked young Brusard.

“Ax me no questions, an’ I’ll tell you no lies,” answered the negro.

“Marse Jim, ef you all des wait here till de Englishman go to his room den you’ll see some fun.”

“What have you done to Mr. Ferrier’s room?”

“Des evenin’, while I wuz down on Horseshoe, fishin’, I seed a mountain man ketch er tuckle, one of dese here cooters whut bites an’ holds on till it thunders, an’ I swappd fur it, brought it home an’ tuck it up dere an’ put it in dat man’s bed. Yes, sir; I slip up dere right easy lak, pull de kiver down an’ slip him in between de sheets, so dat when Mr. Ferrier hop in he’ll hop out ergin. All you gut to do is to wait.”

A little snicker passed over the crowd.

Soon after nine the bug-hunter climbed the stairs from the office to his room, unlocked the door, struck a match and lit the candle on the table by the bed.

“Now listen,” whispered Uncle George; “he’s up dere. Did you hear him scratch de match. He won’t be dere long ’fo’ he jumps in de bed, an’ den trouble’ll begin.

“Look, look; see de light go out!

“Now listen, an’ you’ll hear him bounce in!

“Listen; hear de bed a screachin’!

“He’s in.”

“Help! Ho!” came from the window above.

“Listen!” cried the darkey.

The crowd below could hear everything. Ferrier sprung out of the bed, fell over a chair, rose to his feet, scrambled out the door, and came flying down the back way, yelling every jump.

“Help! A dog! A mad cat!”

The onlookers stood perfectly still, while Ferrier rushed into the yard, with the turtle hanging on to his night shirt.

“Take it off! Kill it!” shouted the Englishman.

“Des let him run,” whispered Uncle George.

Round and round the frightened fellow went, with the turtle swinging against his legs, now and then scratching them.

“Knock this thing off, George,” he cried to the old negro.

“Ef you’ll stop so I kin hit it widout hittin’ you,” was the reply.

Picking up a broom handle, George cracked the creature on the head and broke it loose.

“What in the name of the Lord is that, George?” asked the Briton, as he turned and gazed upon the dying turtle.

“Dat, sir, is a ’Merikin bed bug. Is you gut any in Englan’ dat kin beat it?”



SHE DIDN'T LIKE MY YELLOW SHOES

Human nature is the same the world over, and the train is the best place to get the cream of it.

The other day, while on my way from Kansas City to St. Louis, in a day coach, I lost my seat to two ladies, who, disregarding my suit case and coat, had taken possession while I was in the rear getting a drink of water. This I did not mind, as there were plenty of seats vacant. Soon after the newcomers had arrived they began to buy and eat fruit, using a time-table which I had secured and marked for my convenience, as a receptacle for the peelings and seed. This annoyed me just a little, for I could not get a fresh one until I reached the end of my journey, but I said nothing.

An hour later, after I had taken a short nap and lost the run of the stations, I desired to consult my schedule. Looking over the way, I found that the younger woman had disappeared, leaving her companion, an old lady dressed in heavy black, wearing on her head an antiquated split bonnet. Thinking of nothing but my time-table, I got up and went to where the aged traveler sat and, without much ado, reached down and picked it up. My intention was to steal away unobserved, so that the woman would not feel called upon to offer an apology for taking my seat, but I was foiled. As I lifted the book a cold, bony, clammy hand shot from beneath a black sleeve and fastened my wrist with a vice-like grip. The turn was so sudden and so unexpected that I lost my equilibrium.

"My time-table, good lady, is all that I want," said I, as meekly as possible.

"It's mine," was the sharp reply, the hand closing on my wrist.

"I beg your pardon, madam, but I have carried that folder for two days."

"You hain't no sich thing, fur I got it this mornin'."

"I do not like to dispute your word, madam, but I left this book on this seat and it was here when you came this morning."

"You're just a tellin' what ain't so, an' I don't lak to be meddled wid by no man wid yaller shoes."

“O, I see it is my shoes you do not like!”

“No, I don’t lak you ner none lak you. What you got on that long thing fur?”

I wore a long automobile coat, or duster, to protect my clothes, and the old lady did not like that. Seeing what a tempest I had stirred, I decided to fight it out just for fun.

“Madam, you wouldn’t mind my taking my suit case out of here so that you could have more room for your feet?”

“No. It hain’t got no bizness in here nohow.”

“Why, my dear, I know it hasn’t,” said I.

“I ain’t none of your dear, an’ don’t you call me that nuther.”

“Pardon me, sister, but I meant to be pleasant to you.”

“I wouldn’t choose any of your pleasantness. It’s just lak you drummer chaps. I’ve heard of your doin’s before.”

She thought I was a knight of the grip, and feared that I would flirt with her. That was interesting.

“My coat—that’s it hanging there above your head, where I put it before you took my seat.”

“’Tain’t your seat! How come it your seat?”

“I am not claiming it, mother, but just explaining how my coat got there—that’s all. No, it is your seat by the right of possession, and I should not ask you to move if I had to hang on the bell cord.”

“You make out lak you’re powerful perlite, but the way you drummers do nobudy—not even an ole woman lak me—kin tell what you’re up to.”

“I beg your pardon, madam, but I am not a drummer. I live one thousand miles from here, and am on my way home from the Democratic convention, at Denver, to see my wife and little girl. I have tried to behave myself and it grieves me to think that I offended you, but I am sure you will not say that I did it intentionally. I entered this train early this morning, at Kansas City, and picked this seat, where the sun would not shine on me, and occupied it. Later, you and your friend came in and captured it while I drank at the water cooler,

and I had originally selected one that your good taste made you prefer to the many empty ones that were here when you came. That is the whole story. I wanted to see my time-table, and came for it. You took hold of my arm—something I never permit any woman but my wife to do—”

“You know that ain’t so,” declared the disputant hotly. “I never held your arm.”

“Look now, my dear, and see if you have not my wrist.”

That was the blow that killed mother, for she still held my wrist, although I had dropped the folder. Here a bit of color mounted the pale, wrinkled cheeks.

“I love to see a pretty woman blush,” said I, smiling from ear to ear.

“You shet your mouth. I ain’t blushin’! I wish my brother was here. I’d make him crack your head.”

“Your brother—where is your husband or your son?”

“I ain’t got none, as I have never been married.”

“O, I see; you are still enjoying single bliss—a charming old maid?”

“It’s none of your bizness what I am. You’ve got nuthin’ to do with me.”

Passengers several seats back and front were listening to the controversy, which had been fast and sharp, and enjoying it.

“Well, good soul, I will leave you if you will give me my time-table.”

“It’s none of yourn, but take it an’ go.”

“Not until you are convinced that it is mine.”

“It’s mine, but you kin have it.”

“Just one word? Did you write your name on your book?”

“No, I didn’t.”

“Well, if you will look inside there you will find my name. If you do not I shall apologize and give you a basket of candy.”

“I don’t want your candy.”

“I know you don’t, but you will look for my name?”

As she opened the book and revealed the name, I said: “That’s my handwriting, as you will see by comparing it with this on my ticket.”

“Now look on page forty and see if the table from Kansas City to St. Louis is not marked.”

She was convinced that I owned the book.

“Now, madam, if you will look over there on top of your telescope you will find your table, right where you put it when you came in. I am sorry to have troubled you, and as we journey through this vale of tears if I can ever do you a turn you may call on me. I like your spunk.”

“You go on about your bizness an’ let me erlone an’ I’ll ’tend to mine. If you’ll throw them yaller shoes in the river an’ give that jimswinger to some nigger you’ll look putty decent.”

When the old damsel got up to leave the train, I hurried up, like a young gallant, grabbed up her luggage and carried it to the door before she had time to protest.

“Good-bye, sweetheart,” I shouted, as the train pulled out, and in reply she yelled: “Shet your mouth, smarty!”



AFRAID OF THE FROWZY BLONDE

“Why don’t you slide in by the frowzy blonde?” asked Sanford of Roark, who backed himself up against a seat in the first-class car, as the train came down the mountain.

“She’s like a snow peak,” said Roark. “I passed and looked longingly, but you should have seen the icy stare she handed me.”

“Yes, but when the train is crowded, as it is, she is not entitled to a whole seat,” responded Sanford. “You would be justified in scrouging in.”

“It is no question of my right,” said Roark, “but those frigid eyes took the nerve out of me. I think she’s been in cold storage.

“In beating about the country, old fellow, I have become somewhat of a physiognomist. The woman or man who holds an entire seat, in a crowded car, does so by force. Take the blonde there, why, you could not any more approach her than you could a bull dog nibbling on a bone.

“If I am one of many who occupy seats in a car and a stranger asks me if I will share with him I feel complimented. The person asked to share a seat with me, by me, should feel honored, for I do not sit down by any old scrub if I can avoid it, and I usually can. One day, not long ago, I saw a little girl on a car, unattended, go to a gentleman whom she had never seen before and take a seat by him. I did not know the man, but had admired his kind, gentle face, and the child had picked him as a safe companion.

“What a handsome compliment! I would give my fortune for that man’s countenance. Mark Twain is credited with saying that, in passing, a dog will lick the hand of an honest man, but will growl at a scoundrel.

“Instinct tells us.

“Of course, I should like to have that seat—any seat—but the young woman does not want to share it. I shall stand.”

The Shoofly was full to overflowing that day, but the blonde, with the wealth of hair, such as it was, and the drowsy look, traveled unmolested.

Somewhere, while crossing the foothills, she lifted her feet to the seat, let her head down upon the aisle-arm, and slept. The engine blew, the wheels squeaked, and babies cried, but she knew it not; she was making up for lost time.

“She’s dead to the world now,” said Sanford joyfully.

“Yes,” declared Roark, “and if she doesn’t mind some of that hair will drop to the floor. I have been watching it shake as the car rocks on.”

“I should laugh if it would,” declared Sanford.

At that juncture the upper end of a long, yellow curl broke from its mooring, fell back and began to fly with the winds.

“Look at that,” said Roark.

The curl whirled around a time or two and fell to the floor.

The train moved on, crossing rough places in the road, and the sleeping head went up and down. A second curl—what is known as a Minerva knot—began to loosen in the east and the west.

“It’s a landslide this time,” said Sanford.

“It looks that way,” Roark acquiesced.

“But I shall not complain, no matter what comes.”

“I wish that lady would wake up,” said a female voice across the aisle. “I fear her hair will lose its Grecian effect. But I will not arouse her; it might make her mad.”

“I believe, without being able to say positively, Charlie, that she has on fluffy ruffers,” said Roark, laughing.

“I have studied the combination and I can’t quite unlock it,” said Sanford, “but I think she has what they call a transformation pompadour, with coronet braid, zephyr curls, all of which is covered with a bunch of real Grecian curls, but I must admit that I am not much on diagnosing a case like this.”

“Make way, for the earth is giving,” said a citizen who had just arrived.

A section of hair, shaped like a shovel, such as the farmers use for bursting out middles, or to go with a sweep, gave way and fell, inside up.

“That’s a loller-perlooler,” said Roark. “I wonder if we could get a basket to put it in?”

The rain of ornaments had started. Everybody was expectant. Rats, rolls, puffs, curls and knots were loosening. A bundle of wire, something akin to a small mouse trap, came with the hair.

“Nope, it’s the Wire Trust in disguise,” declared Roark.

“Hold your tongue! It’s a summer hotel,” said the newcomer, who had become thoroughly interested, as a bit of hair, done up in fine silk, fell out. “Rats, rat traps and mosquito nets.”

The lady began to wiggle.

“Carry me away,” said Roark.

“It’s to the Land of Nod for me,” exclaimed Sanford.

“The baggage room for me,” said the third observer.

Ten more rats, six rolls, two curls and a small knot were the last to go down. Piled on the floor, in the shape of a cone, was a peck measure full of all sorts of hair dressing. Yellow prevailed, but there was anything from a drab to a chemical blonde.

The owner, one time possessor, waked in the course of time, and, on feeling curious about the head, ran her hand back to see if she had lost anything.

“What about that?” said she to herself, realizing the extent of her loss.

“Ghnarr!” snorted Sanford, snoring.

“Whee-oo!” retorted Roark, who had fallen suddenly asleep in a seat, just captured.

“I am so thankful that everybody is asleep,” said the blonde, aside. “What a disgrace?”

“Spoo-it!” snored Sanford.

Bit by bit, piece by piece, the dislocated charms were picked up and shoved into a traveling bag, and the young woman retired to the toilet room, from which she emerged an hour later, looking as pert and as grand as ever, just as if nothing unusual had happened, every rat, or curl, in its place.

Sanford, Roark and their new friend, the man who arrived late, disputed over recent baseball scores.

JAN PIER—THE SHOESHINE

Jan Pier, the little Frenchman, who came here several months ago from Norfolk, is going back to the Atlantic coast, where he can hear the roar of the mighty waters as they break upon the American shores, and see the ships as they come and go.

One morning, about ninety days ago, as I approached the square, on East Trade, I beheld a shock-headed boy, bowing low shining a shoe. Beneath the auburn locks shone the skin of an Anglo-Saxon.

“A white shoe-shine?” said I to Chris Karnazes, the fruit dealer, at the Central Hotel corner.

“Yes,” answered Chris, joyfully and proudly.

“Me brought him to work here.”

“What is his name?”

“Jan.”

It was a beautiful Sunday—fair, cool and bracing, and everybody save Jan Pier and two colored associates had on their holiday clothes. Chris wore a clean shirt, white collar and red tie. It was his day off, but Jan, the newcomer, the boy of seventeen, with thick brown hair, and big brownish eyes, bent to his labors, side by side with negro lads, in tattered togs. Not a word did the Frenchman utter, nor a time lift his face, but slaved on and on, hour after hour, polishing shoes, and taking in nickels.

“Have a shine,” said Chris to me.

I mounted the stand. Jan Pier, without looking up, ran his rag across my shoe.

“Where are you from, young fellow?” I asked.

No answer; not even a grunt.

“Where, boy, is your home?”

Chris spoke to him in Greek.

“France,” said Jan, looking up into my eyes.

“Where did he come from, Chris?”

“Norfolk.”

That was the first time I saw Jan Pier.

A Frenchman—an auburn-haired Frenchman—with bright eyes, working for a Greek and with an Afro-American shoeblack!

How could it be?

A week later, Jan Pier, with downcast look, soiled clothes, and tear-stained cheeks, came to me, silently begging.

“What is the matter?” I asked.

“Me no work; no mon; no friends.”

I pitied Jan, but what could I do. The next day the Greek at the corner gave him work. I asked a negro boy why Jan left Chris, and he answered: “Jan knock down, Chris say.”

I had Jan shine my shoes every time they needed it. I wrote a story about him, and advertised his business, hoping that it might prosper. But Jan flourished not. Once more he loafed the streets penniless, hungry, friendless, and far, far from home and loved ones.

“Jan, where did you come from?”

“Norfolk.”

“Before that?”

“Greece.”

“Before that, even?”

“France.”

“When did you leave France?”

“I was twelve years old.”

“Did you run away?”

“Yes.”

“Where did you go?”

“To Turkey.”

“How did you get to this country?”

“On a big ship.”

“Were you a stowaway?”

“I helped the seamen.”

That is the story of Jan Pier. He ran away from home, when a small boy, went to Turkey, learned Greek, and four years later shipped for America, and landed at Norfolk. In the course of a short time he drifted to Charlotte, where he has been very unhappy, nobody to talk with, no kind friend to help him, and no wise hand to guide him. His energy, courage, and stout heart and body have kept him going. But, now, alas, he is tired of the struggle among strangers, who do not understand his language, and will go back to Norfolk, and, perhaps, home. A generous-hearted Greek, of one of the Greek restaurants, is getting up a purse to defray his railroad fare to the Virginia city.

Soon the little outcast will say “adieu.”

When Jan came to me the second time, with the woe-begone look, I took him to Buster Brown, the mailing clerk, and recommended him for a newsboy. Buster ran his cruel eye over him and asked, in Pilot Mountain vernacular: “Have you ever harpooned the public in any way?”

“A coup sur,” said Jan.

“What’s that you’ve handed me?” asked Buster.

“‘Surely,’ he means,” said I.

“What is he?”

“French.”

“Will you accept me as a friend?” asked Buster, proud to have a real Frenchman for an employé.

“A bras ouverts,” was the reply.

“Come again,” said the Pilot Mountain man.

“He says ‘with open arms’ he will be your friend.”

“Good, I gad.”

“Coute qu’il coute,” declared Jan, smiling.

“The devil abit,” said Dick Allen, who had just come up, “and what is it he says?”

“He has sworn to be Buster’s friend ‘Let it cost what it may.’”

“A beau jeu, beau retour (one good turn deserves another).”

Buster and Jan, the one six-feet-five, erect, weighing 260, and the other, four-feet-one, stocky, and stooped, ambled off toward the press room.

“That pile of old papers, under the table, will be your bed, Monsieur Jan Pier,” said Buster. “Your drawing room and all. The spigot will be your wash basin, and any old issue of *The Observer* or *Chronicle*, your towel. May you prosper.”

Jan Pier stirred the enmity of the native newsboys, some of whom hammered him the next morning when out of sight of the shop force. Although dejected and sad, the Frenchman sold every paper he took out. Offering one to a traveling man, who was climbing in a hack at the Selwyn, he imagined that his offer had been accepted, and ran to the station, four blocks away, keeping close in the wake of the hustling horse. Seeing what the boy had done the salesman said: “I will take two.” Jan was delighted.

Unable to talk and tell his troubles, surrounded by hostile youngsters, and contending with prospective customers made life one long, desperate fight for the Frenchman. The climax came one night, when he slumbered in his corner beneath the table in the press room, and a loafer, a town lad, slept above him. Somebody, on mischief bent, turned the hose on the shaver on the top berth, and the water poured down on Jan.

That was the straw that broke the camel’s back—the fighting word had passed, and the pent-up dander of the bushy red head was at last aroused. As the intruding chap fell off of his perch Jan nailed him, believing that he had wet him, and such a fight as was never witnessed in *The Observer* building before followed.

Round and round the diminutive pugilists went until Jan showed signs of

the savage, and onlookers interfered to prevent murder. The devil in Jan was in tumult and he fought like a Spartan.

After that the boys—the paper sellers—left Jan alone.

Now, Jan is going to leave us. His friends will chip in and help him on the way.

He will be missed in circles where his auburn hair has become familiar. Jan, industrious, capable, and good-natured, but unfamiliar with the ways of this country, deserves credit for being as good as he is.

Some day Jan Pier may wander back again.



WILLIAM AND APPENDICITIS

“Dere’s one thing dat I can’t understan’,” said William Gorrell, the doorkeeper at the Southern Manufacturers’ Club. “Yes, sir, an’ it’s puzzled me er whole heap.”

“What is that, William?” I inquired.

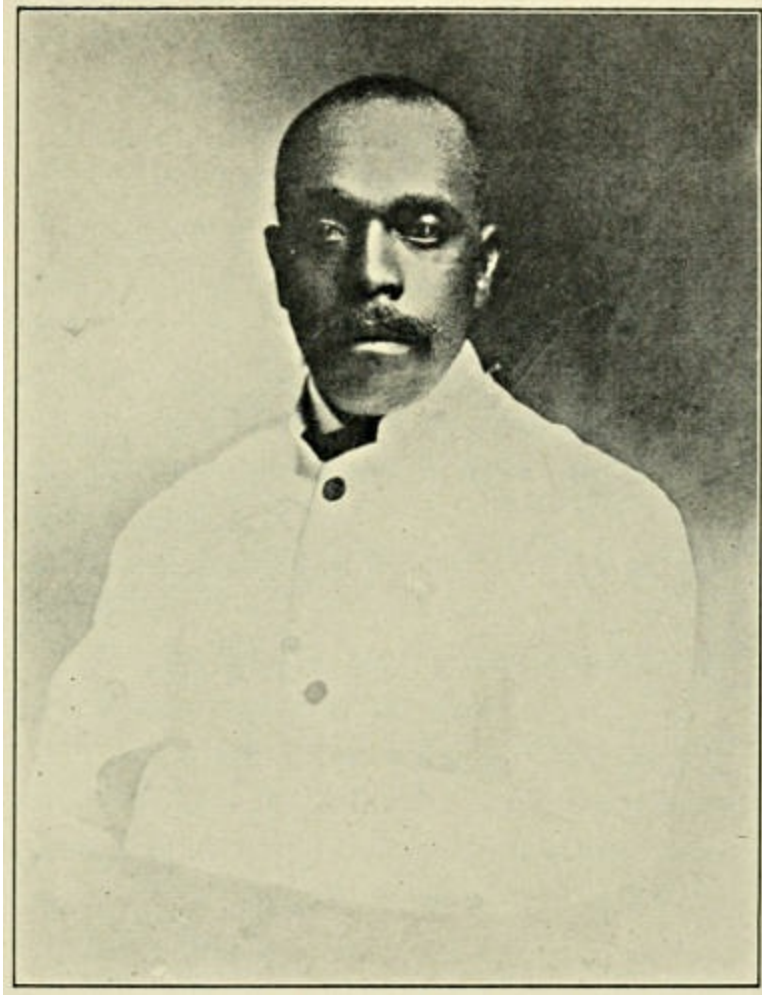
“How come you don’t hear ’bout no nigger havin’ dese new fangle diseases—dis here bell-aker an’ ’penderseetis.”

“Bell-aker?” I asked.

“Yes, sir, dis misery dat comes fum eatin’ corn. How come no nigger don’t have it? Dere ain’t nobody whut eats more corn bread an’ mush dan er sho’ ’nuff nigger. Up home—dat’s in Greensboro—de niggers say:

“‘Down de country de nigger say he loves mush,

“‘Up de country de nigger say for God’s sake hush!’



William.

“Haf’ de niggers in dis country’s been raised on mush, an’ corn dodger, an’ I ain’t never seed one die wid bell-aker.”

“You mean pellagra?”

“I don’t know whut you call it.”

“I dismiss the pellagra, for I don’t know anything about it, but there’s nothing strange about the negro not having appendicitis, William,” said I. “You know what the vermiform appendix is, don’t you?”

“No, sir, ’ceptin’ dat it’s somefin’ dat you gut an’ don’t need, an’ it can’t stay in yer when it gets hot.”

“You know about Darwin’s theory of evolution?”

“No, sir, to tell you de truf, I ain’t seed Mr. Dargin in almos’ er year.”

“I don’t mean Jim Dargin, the traveling man, but Dr. Darwin, the great scientist, a learned man of the last century who contended that we all came from monkeys. You have heard of that theory?”

“Yes, sir, I’ve heard it said dat we come fum monkeys, but I ain’t believin’ everything dat I hears.”

William cocked one eye up a little and prepared to listen. He did not catch on to the word “evolution,” but when I said that Mr. Darwin was the man that believed that a man came from a monkey he understood. He had heard of that claim.

“You have heard that, then, William?” I continued.

“Whut, boss, dat er man come fum er monkey?”

“Yes.”

“Yes, sir, but I ain’t put no faith in it.”

“Well, I do, William; I believe that Darwin was right, and I have come to this belief since I parted with my appendix.”

“Don’t tell me, boss!”

“It is this way about your appendix,” I declared, “the man who is farthest removed from the monkey has the smallest appendix and is most liable to have the appendicitis, and the closest, has the largest. As one becomes more civilized his appendix decreases. The doctors, on making the incision in my abdomen, found that I had a very small appendix, so small, in fact, that it became stopped and inflamed.

“I should say that if your friend, Rastus Johnsing, over there, were opened it would be discovered that his vermiform appendix is as large as my arm and as long as a rolling pin. Your appendix, or that of any ordinary, dark-hued negro, is about the size of a common guano horn.”

“Humph! My Gawd! How come?”

“How come? Because your race is not more than 200 years from the monkey. I would not be surprised if your great-great grandfather did not run wild in the forests of Africa, living off of bugs and other insects. You know, as I sit back there at my desk every day and watch you climb over this grill and brush off the dust, I feel sorry for you. You like to climb—so does

anyone not far from the monkey. In the course of 2,000 years the negro will begin to have appendicitis, long after the white people lose theirs.”

“Hold on, boss! How long did you say it would be?”

“About 2,000 years, I should say.”

“Humph! I’ll be gone den. What you say makes me feel good. I ain’t haf’ as much interested in de race as I is in William Gorrell, an’ his pickininnies. Ef mer ’pendix is as big as er guano sack it ain’t nobody’s bizness but mine.”

END

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TAR HEEL TALES

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