THE BEECHERS,
or
Rural Kentucky Before the War.

By

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HAMERMILL BOND

Affectionately Dedicated
to
Neel Glenn,
By
His Father--The Author.

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C H A P T E R 1.

WHEN THE STARS FELL.

"John Henry Boblin,for goodness' sake wake up,get up,get out and see what on earth is the matter!"

Such was the excited language used by Mrs.Malinda Boblin on the early morning of November the 13th,1833 as she punched her husband in the short ribs which half way aroused the man from his peaceful slumbers. The punch caused a sudden cessation in the loud and stertorous snoring which was always a sure indication that the head of the household was a way off in dreamland.

"What in the devil and Tom Walker do you mean Malinda ? How do you expect me to sleep when you punch me that way?" Then Mr.Boblin turned over in the bed and was soon again snoring as loudly as before.

"Hush up! Wake up!" excalimed Mrs.Boblin as she gave the man another punch-this time in the stomach. "There's something wrong somewhere. Listen to the noise and confusion that is going on outside."

By this time Mr.Boblin was fully aroused. The horses were neighing,the cows were lowing,the dogs were barking and the man well knew that there was something out of the ordinary taking place. Fear seized the man,who half clad rushed to the door. He cast a glance up into the heavens when he saw such a sight as had never before,nor has ever since been witnessed by the inhabitants of this world. The whole heavens above were in commotion. One look satisfied Mr.Boblin that the end of time was not only approacing,but that it had already approached. He rushed back into the house and shouted at the top of his voice:

"Good God,Malinda;wake up the children and get them dressed as

soon as possible. Get into your best dress for the day of Judgment has come and if we are not already prepared,it may not be too late to do some praying."

"What is the matter John Henry and what's wrong anyway? Are you crazy?" demanded the good wife.

"Everythig's the matter,everyhting's wrong. I'm not crazy.Every star in the heavens has lost its hold and the whole business is coming down like hail towards the earth and it wont be ten minutes before the stars will be falling right on top of the house."

Then Mr.Boblin seized the dinner horn,placed it to his lips and began to send out blasts therefrom that were as long,loud and strident as the ones we may expect to hear when Gabriel at the last day calls to wake the sleeping dead. While these blasts from Mr.Boblin's horn did not have any perceptible effect on those who were silently sleeping in the nearby cemetery,they did have the effect to arouse every living sleeper in the Beech Creek Settlement.

At this juncture-old Mose,who was the property of Mr.Boblin and the most ungodly liar in the settlement-was heard making his way across the wood's pasture toward the home,yelling and screaming as if pursued by all the demons of the infernal regions. The negro had been 'possum hunting,had captured a fine specimen of the marsupial tribe and was on his way home with his prize. He stopped under a beech tree to rest and in a short time fell asleep.

While dreaming of the "possum and sweet 'taters" that he would have for his dinner the next day he heard the sound of the Boblin horn, awoke with a start,looked into the heavens and when he saw what was taking place in the above,he forgot all about his catch and started in a run to his home,yelling at every jump:

"Oh,mar's John Henry. Oh,good Lawd have mercy on dis pore niger. Oh mar's John;Oh,good Lawd."

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When he saw Mr.Boblin standing on the porch he raised another yell that was even louder than the ones he had emitted while on his race to get back to his home. "De end of time is here an' we aint' prepared for de comin' of de Lawd. What's we gwine to do mar's John?"

"What do you suppose it is Mose,do you think it is the day of judgment?" inquired Mr.Boblin but little less excited than was the old negro.

"Yes mar's John Henry. It is de las' of dis ole worl'." whined the negro.

The call from Mr.Boblin's horn had aroused every one in the whole community. Twenty different horns were sending out blasts of warnings. Every horn was screeching and screaming to every other horn.

"Oh Lawd", screamed Mose as this mighty sound was going up from every corner of the settlement,"-"-jes' listen to de blowing of Gabriel's trumpet. Dar's at least a thousand of dese trumpets an' all a blowin' at once.I's a pore lost sinner, but Lawd forgive me an' I promise on my word of honor dat if I get outen dis dat so long as I live I'll never tell another lie.."

Mose fell at the feet of Mrs.Boblin and piteously wailed: "Oh Miss M'linda jes' take me with you to heaven an' I'll serve you better dar dan I ever did here on dis earth."

At this period in rural Kentucky,the sound of a dinner horn at night,and especially if blown in short sharp blasts that were prolonged,was always regarded as a signal of distress to which a ready and willing response was ~~always~~ quickly given.

The blasts from Mr.Boblin's horn awoke the neighbors and when these went to their doors to investigate the cause of the "distress call," they too became alarmed,seized their horns and blew answering calls.

In less than ten minutes the blowing of horns, the screams of women and children, the moans and groans of the negroes and the howling of the dogs made it seem as if pandemonium had broken loose and that the end of all things earthly was nigh at hand.

Prof. Green, who was teacher of the Beech Creek school and who boarded week about "with the scholars," was this week the guest of the Boblins. When he heard the tumult—more asleep than awake-and without stopping to don his clothes to make himself presentable-appeared on the scene

"Professor," said Mr. Boblin as he pointed upward,"-will you please explain the cause of the stars falling from their places."

"No, Mr. Boblin, I can't explain this wonderful phenomenon. While I have seen a few stars fall yet I must say that this beats all that I ever saw or heard of before." answered the man of letters.

"There! Look! Yonder comes a great big star and it is coming right in this direction. Run, Malinda, run and take the children with you", exclaimed Mr. Boblin as both he and the professor dodged behind a large beech tree that stood in the yard. Each was surprised to find that neither had been struck by the flying meteor.

A frightened cat that was being chased by the dog, mistaking Prof. Green's bare legs for a post, shinnied up the legs of the man, thus reminding him of the fact that he lacked a great deal of being dressed as one becoming his profession. It was with fear and trembling that he retired to his room as he expected every moment should be the last one while here in the flesh.

It was not the Boblins only who were alarmed as never before, but so it was with every family in the whole country. Nor was it the whites alone who were frightened ~~and~~ at this, the most wonderful ~~dispuly~~ meteoric display ever before witnessed by the inhabitants of this old world-the negroes were thrown into paroxysms of fear that almost bordered on insanity. It was a most ~~wonderful~~ fearful and awesome sight to behold.

As each of these meteors flitted across the mighty above and left its fast fading impress behind, it was succeeded by one of its kind that was just as erraftic as its predecessor. The whole heavens above were in commotion. To the spectator it was a marching and a counter marching and yet a most disorderly one. It seemed as if every star in the firmament had been loosed from its place and was tumbling and descending upon the earth below and yet from some unknown ~~and to them inexplainable~~ cause failed to reach its destination.

The people crowded together-parents and children, the servants and their masters and even the dogs crouched at the feet of the frightened throng. They looked into the blanched faces of eachother, but could glean not one ray of hope, because there appeared to be no way of escape. It was indeed a solemn occasion.

"They spoke not a word:
But like dumb statues or breathing stone,
Gazed on eachother, and looked deadly pale."

At length light began to dawn in the east. There was a rosy streak of day. One by one the meteors began to fade away and by the time the sun had shown his face above the eastern horizon, the last one of the dread omens of impending danger had ceased to be visible to the awe-struck inhabitants of old mother earth. Never before had the luminary of day been more welcome to any people as his effulgence soon eclipsed the brightness of these wanderers of the mighty ~~above~~ upper deep and caused them to hide their faces in abysmal space.

"Bless de Lawd," exclaimed Luke the colored preacher as the sun rose above the tree tops and not another meteor was in sight,"-I jest naturally thought dat de end of de worl' had come and dat in a short time we good people would all be in glory and de bad ones in de fire dat is never squenched but burns forever and forever more."

"Luke,if you are so certain of heaven why was it that you were so frightened when the stars fell?" asked Deacon Johnson,the owner of the colored preacher.

"Oh,mar's Billy,I's afeard dat may be you wasn't quite ready for de trip an' I didn't want to go by myself." was the reply.

The day that followed the night of the "Falling Stars,"as that occasion is known until the present day,was one of seriousness to all the people who had witnessed that wonderful meteoric display. It was late the ~~next~~ morning following the incident before breakfast was prepared and then it was eaten with little relish.

The people of different neighborhoods collected together and discussed the wonders of the night before and all offered up a prayer of thankfulness that they had been spared and were still in the land of the living. It was not a day for work. There were many who dreaded the coming night as it was feared that perhaps the sun and the moon should slip from their places before another day and thus destroy the world and all the people thereon.

It was agreed that there should be a "prayer meeting and watch service" that night at the Methodist church. By "early candle-lighting" all the people of the neighborhood were present,both to thank God that they had been preserved through the frightful scenes of the night before and to implore His protection during the future. Bro.Riley,the local preacher was chosen to conduct the services.

While the prayer and song service was being conducted inside the church it was thought advisable to have some of the brethren stay on the outside to watch for any signs that might appear in the heavens and thus warn the worshippers of any impending danger.

Prof.Green, Deacon Johnson and Mr.Boblin were appointed as "watchers for signs." The three men took their places on the "style-block" which was about fifty yards from the church. Just beyond and back

of this was a swamp that was dark and dismal. The watchers took their seats in silence,but kept both eyes and ears open for the least sign that might attract their attention.

About the time the congregation began to sing that once familiar and popular hymn, "Hark from the tombs," Prof.Green cast his eyes heavenward and saw a meteor flit across the sky. He called the attention of the other men to the sight. Very soon another star made its appearance. This caused the men to tremble. They well believed that there was to be a repetition of the night before.

While the men were watching for more signs,two large black dogs that had followed their masters to the service began a fierce fight in their rear toward the swamp. The watchers turned their heads to invetigate the noise made by the dogs and as they looked they beheld an "ignis fatuus," or "Jack-O'lantern," moving up and down and across the ~~the~~ swamp. The growling,snapping,snarling and fighting of the dogs,together with the strange light was too much for the men, especially at this particular time.

Just as Bro.Riley was in the midst of one of his most earnest and most vociferous prayers and was pleading in a voice that could be heard all over the settlement,the three watchers rushed into the house of worship each one yelling as if he had been seized by fits of insanity.

Mr.Boblin mounted a bench and cried out at the top of his voice; "The end of time has come. The stars have commenced falling again and the whole business is coming down on us. The devil is in the swamp and is coming this way howling for souls."

The two dogs which had been fighting on the outside carried the war into the church and among the congregation. This added to the confusion.

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In the midst of the confusion that followed the announcement by Mr.Boblin,Sister Simpson raised a shout that could be heard for more than a mile. That good woman closed her eyes,raised her head toward the roof of the church and screamed: "Thank God we shall all be in glory in a few minutes."

While most of the people there assembled were professed christians,yet there were very few of them who could agree with sister Simpson in thanking the Lord that they were to be in glory in so short a time.

At last the shouting ceased and some of the more brave ventured out to investigate the condition of things material. The two dogs had ceased their fighting and had made friends. The Jack-O'lantern had escaped to some other section of the swamp,there was an occasional meteor that showed for a few seconds and disappeared-everything was as quiet as a November night should be and in a short time the people felt a kind of security and all believed that the prayers of the good people had prevalied and that there was no further danger.

After a few prayers of thanksgiving for their preservation and when the people began to get tired and sleepy,the congregation slowly and silently left the church,went to their homes and before midnight most of these were in their beds sleeping the sleep of the just.

For a short time the bad boys and the mischievous girls were quiet and sedate,but the scare soon wore off and by Christmas the "Falling Stars," were only a memory. Then as now,Christmas was a time for fun and frolic rather than for serious thought. The people felt that,

"Religion does not censure or exclude
Unnumbered pleasures,harmlessly pursued."

CHAPTER II

BEECH CREEK SETTLEMENT.

Not the oldest nor yet the youngest,
Not the richest,nor yet the poorest,
Not the largest,nor yet the least,
But take it all in all,for men and women,
For boys and girls,for feilds and skies,
For happy homes and loving hearts,
The best place outside of heaven the Lord ever made.

The Beech Creek Settlement from some cause unknown and unexplained to the writer,or any one else on top side of the earth,has never been either mapped or ~~chartered.~~ charted. The geographies and the school histories are as silent as the grave in reference to this particular section of the state of Kentucky. It has been suggested that the reason for this omission was prompted by jealousy on the part of those who were never admitted into the inner shrine of this goodly heritage.

To assist the anxious inquirer in his efforts to locate this "garden-spot" of the world-as the Beech Creekers were wont to speak of that community-it were well enough to say that it was and is still situated about the center of what is known as the "Penny-royal,"-sometimes called the "Penny-rile" section of the state of Kentucky.

Before describing the manners,customs and other characteristics of the Beech Creekers,it would perhaps be advisable to enter into a more minute description of the territory these people occupied nearly a century ago and which has come down as a rich heritage from a noble ancestry to an honorable and God-fearing posterity.

Beech Creek was so named from the great number of Beech trees that grew,not only on the banks of the creek but were scattered over a large adjoining territory. The Beech Creek Settlement extended about

five miles up and down the stream and was about the same in width. While the Beech trees were more plentiful than any other kind of timber,yet there were hickory,walnut,oak and several other kinds. The country before invaded by the woodman's axe presented a sight that was the delight of the hunter's eye.

The water of this limpid stream was as pure and sparkling as though distilled in the laboratory of nature itself. The creek had its deep holes,its fishing holes and its swimming holes,all of which were the delight of the boys of that time.

From the creation of the world,the power of steam had lain dormant in every drop of water of Beech Creek,while electricity was quietly sleeping in the clouds that overhung the surrounding territory. During all these ages that unseen force in nature had only been waiting for a Newton or an Edison to make it the servant of man.

Game was plentiful. Deer and turkeys-both now almost extinct-furnished a plentiful supply of of meat to the hunters and the early settlers. Squirrels and other small game could be found almost anywhere outside the farmer's yard. This game was so plentiful that it was often a menace to the planter. Turkeys,deer, squirrels,raccons and other birds and animals frequently invaded the corn fields and did great damage to the growing crops.

It was but very little more trouble to go to the woods and bring home a fat turkey or a mess of squirrels for dinner when the "company" came than it was to step into the back yard and kill a yellow legged pullet for the occasion.

On account of the plentiful supply of acorns and beech mast that ripened about the time the first frosts fell,not only the wild game,but hogs and cattle that belonged to the people became exceedingly fat-thus making the expense of raising this stock a matter of small import. The cost all told of growing a hog or a steer until the animal

was two years old did not avverage to as much as three dollars per head.

A now entirely extinct bird-the wild,or "passenger pigeon" - found this place to be an ideal feeding ground. In the fall of the year these birds visited this section-not by the thousands only,but by the millions. This is no fiction,nor is the following statement overdrawn or misrepresented in any particular. The author writes whereof he knows and knows whereof he writes.

While these birds were known in most parts of the United States in the fall of the year,yet it was a popular belief that they were more plentiful in Kentucky than in any other portion of the Union. They came in flocks or droves that were innumerable. So numberless were they in their passage over the country that the eye could look in no direction that there were no pigeons in sight. There were times that it required more than a half an hour for them to get beyond the vision of the onlooker. Above and around in every direction were these birds. They were never seen during the late winter,the spring or the summer. It was only when there was mast in the forest that they made their appearance.

When they arrived at their feeding grounds they would alight on the trees in such numbers that that it was frequently the case that the limbs of the trees were unable to bear their weight. When they were alarmed or took to flight,the noise made by their wings was very much like distant thunder or the roar of a waterfall.

These birds had their roosting places which were many miles distant from where they fed. At night they would pile up on eachother until the weight would cause the trees to break and the falling timber killed thousands of the flock. Hogs learned the places where they roosted and fed on the dead birds that had been killed during the night and these porkers becam fat on pigeon meat.

These birds were not however fit for human food. They were poor and tough. There was a peculiar flavor about the meat that was not at all inviting. Yet there were those who each fall felt called upon to try a "pigeon pie," with a hope that it might be better or more palatable ~~paliative~~ than the one of a year before. A trial once a year of this diet was as much as any one ever felt disposed to tackle. Men and boys sometimes shot these birds for sport-but not for their flesh.

About the time the war between the North and the South broke out it was noticed that year by year the pigeons became scarcer and scarcer until in a few years they had become almost extinct. No one has ever yet been able to give any good reason or explanation of the disappearance of these birds. They were not killed for their flesh, nor were they destroyed by any human agency. That they have disappeared is a certainty. There is not today a single specimen of that innumerable throng that lives to mourn over the deaprture of its kind.

The last pigeon ever seen in a wild state of which there is any account was about eight years ago when one of these brids was seen sitting-lonely-on a tree on Waldon Mountain in Tennessee. It was alone-with all its companions dead and gone.

In the year 1878 several of these birds were captured and placed in the Zoological Garden at Cincinnati. A few eggs were laid, a fewer number were hatched and still a fewer number of those hatched ever lived to maturity. These died one by one-the last of the many millions. On the ~~las~~ first day of September 1914, the last survivor of that mighty host, having been born in captivity and having lived to be twenty eight years of age, closed its eyes in death and from now henceforth and forever, the world will be "pigeonless," that is so far as the wild pigeon is concerned.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD LOG SCHOOL HOUSE.

There was not a family in the whole Beech Creek Settlement from the arrival of the first man and woman in that community--seeking a home in that favored spot of earth--until long after the time of which we shall write that did not believe in both religion and education. Hence the school and the church. These persons understood the the R's and determined that no child should arrive at the age of fifteen and be unable to spell every word in the Blue-back Speller, read intelligently from the McGuffey, or Saunder's reader and cipher half way through Pike's or Smiley's arithmetic.

The school house was erected in the center of the district and was a primitive affair. It was built of logs, the cracks between chinked and daubed, the roof of clap boards that were held in place by poles laid thereon, as nails were to scarce and expensive to be used on buildings of this kind. At the rear a large opening reaching half way across the room was cut out and in this was a huge fireplace with a "stick and clay chimney." A log was cut from each side of the building ~~and~~ and in this opening either panes of glass or greased paper served as windows to let in the light.

The seats were made of split logs, split side hewed and turned up, holes bored in the bark side and into these holes long pegs, used for legs were driven. These benches were about ten feet long, stood about two feet from the floor and were "backless." The splinters were frequently a great annoyance as they persisted in entering through the seat of the pantaloons into the flesh of the boys and others who occupied these benches.

It was from these seats or benches that the word "scrouge" had its origin. Eight or ten boys would sometimes be seated thereon, or

rather "roost" on one of these uncushioned and uncomfortable instruments of torture. It took a long-legged boy to be able to sit on this ancient piece of furniture and be able to let his feet reach to the floor.

Every boy wanted the end seat,but when he got that coveted position he did not know how long he would be able to retain possession of the place. While the teacher would have his back turned attending to some of the other duties of his profession,some one on the bench would pass the word "scrouge" up the line. Then by a concert of action and a sudden moving of the boys,the fellow on the end would find himself landed in the middle of the floor.

When the teacher would discover the commotion and turned to make investigation he would find Sam scrambling to his feet,while the remaining boys on the bench would apparently be studying as if their lives depended on their application to business.

"What's the matter San," demanded the teacher.

"The boys scrouged me and I lost my holt," replies Sam,while pretending to be very much worried over the matter,but really enjoying the fun as much as any of the other boys.

"No more scrouging," replies the teacher with a scowl and a frown,yet smiling to himself and thinking of the time when he was a boy in the long ago when he too engaged in "scrouging."

There is no other word in the English language that more completely expresses this pushing process than the word "scrouge." It is a word that needs no definition--it defines itself.

In the old fashioned school house there was never any complaint of a lack of "ventilation." It was ventilated from the bottom by the cracks in the floor,from the outside where the chinking and daubing had fallen from between the cracks of the logs of the walls and from the top as there was nothing between the floor and high heaven except the

clap-boards that were fequently blown off by the winds or had rotted from exposure to the weather. The trouble was that it was frequently the case that there was little else to the building except ventilation.

As the school building was invariably erected on pillars ~~to as to~~ keep the sills off the ground so as the prevent decay, and as it was too much trouble to underpin the house, the space between the floor and the earth beneath made an ideal place for the hogs of the neighborhood to collect on rainy or cold weather. If these animals made too much noise while the school was in session, it became the duty of some boy to go out and drive the animals from their beds. Whether or not the hogs were fine porkers, one thing is certain they knew how raise a large and vigorous crop of fleas.

These fleas were no respector of persons on account of age, sex or previous condition of servitude. When they invaded the building, they went carrying their appetites with them. They came like a thief in the night. When they began operations there was sracthing, and twisting among both scholars and teachers. The boy who could produce the most flea-skins when the day closed was regarded as the champion "flea-killer" of the day.

With the fleas, the seed-ticks, the big ticks and not infrequently the lice--which were introduced into the school by some freckled-faced, tow-headed boy-- which ~~in XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ insects later persisted in finding their way to the heads of the others--with about one third of the boys and an equal number of the girls having a chill every other day--all sitting on high backless benches, writing with goose-quill pens dipped in poke-berry juice which was used for ink; doing the chores at home before going to school in the morining and after the school closed in the afternoon; getting a threshing every few days by the teacher for some disobedience of the rules of the

institution of learning and then another "whaling" at home for fear the ~~the~~ teacher had not done his full duty; the school lasting only three months in the year and the boy having to miss part of this time from the school on account of duties at home--the wonder is how an education could be obtained under such adverse circumstances.

Children then as now, were afflicted with many and various diseases such as mumps, measles, whooping cough, chicken-pox and last, but not least that troublesome affliction the "seven year itch," or as it was denominated by the more ignorant "the eatch." The disease was not then regarded as particularly disgraceful, but that did not prevent it being very annoying.

As a preventive, or rather a charm against these infectious diseases, the boys and girls frequently wore what was known as "stink-bags." This was a small bag made of flannel and held about a tablespoonful of a mixture that was composed of equal parts of sulphur and assafeotida. This bag was hanged around the neck with a string, permitting the bag to come down to the breast bone of the wearer.

When the wearer of this charm got too near the fire, or when he exercised himself until he got in "a sweat," there was therefore an odor that would place that from a "pole-cat," clear outside the pale of recognition as a disinfectant. But both teacher and pupil soon got used to the thing and paid no more attention to the pungent odor of the "stink-bag" than they would if the room had been banked by roses and violets.

The boy of that time knew nothing more of athletics as now taught than a Hottentot knows of the christain religion. His gymnasium was the woods and the fields--in fact it was any spot of the earth that was not used for any other purpose. And yet he was an athlete. He could "skin the cat," turn a "summersault," jump a ten rail fence, out climb a squirrel, out run a horse, kick higher than a mule, swim like a duck, was as strong as a young bull, was not afarid to tackle

his Satanic majesty in a square fight. He ~~He~~ could hunt coons and possums all night, do a good days work the next day and be ready that evening as soom as supper was over to go hunting again.

On the school ground when play time came, he engaged in "town-ball," "bull-pen," "cat," "antny over," "marbles," "mumble-the peg, "prisoner's base," and other games of amusement. The girls "skipped the rope," "chased the fox," and occasionally took part in the games played by the boys.

And yet these boys and girls did get an education that fitted and qualified them for the duties and responsibilities of life. Henry Clay, the "mill-boy of the slashes," Abraham Lincoln the "rail-splitter," and in fact three fourths of the great men that Kentucky has produced attended school and received most of their traing in school houses and under just such conditions as here described.

These were the "hard schools of experience" that taight the boy to fight his own battles and to win his way to victory. The old log school house with its old time teacher and the ~~old~~ now out of date "blue-back speller," were the Alma Mater of more great men and women than all the high schools, ~~and~~ colleges and universities of the United States combined. ~~The old fashioned school~~

The old fashioned school in the old log school house had no commencement or graduating exercises. There were no diplomas issued stating to the world that John Smith Or Sallie Brown had completed the course of study as laid down by that institution; no giving of presents to the boy or girl who stood at the head of his or her class; no annual sermon by some noted divine, or an address by the congressman or a college president--nothing but a school exhibition where every one from ~~the~~ the youngest to the oldest was expected to recite anything from "Mary's lamb," to "Washington's Farewell Address."

And these school exhibitions of the long ago were great events. They were long remembered. It was a proud day for the teacher and a

prouder one for the scholar, who--though he may have attended but a few weeks of that time--yet felt that he was a part and parcel of the school. Every father and mother believed that their child or chidren had done just a little better than any other boy or girl of ~~of~~ any of the various classes. There were no heart-aches on account of "not passing." They all ~~#~~ "passed." All were pleased.

The principal and most important school book of that time was that book of "blessed memory," the old time "BLUE-BACK speller", from whose pages, letters were learned and lessons conned by men, who in after life made this the greatest nation on earth--made that nation what it now is and what it is to be in the future.

Outside the Bible, we make bold to say that there has never yet been any other book printed in the English language--perhaps no hundred other books--that have had a wider circulation, been more read and studied and that have been worth more to the people of this nation than that simple little volume that for nearly half a century has been relegated to the "scrap pile of literature," where let us hope that the time may come when it shall be brought forth, the dust wiped from its golden pages and it shall come again into its own.

There are two books and perhaps only two, "Mother's old Family Bible" and "Grand-father's old Blue back Speller," that have never yet been improved by either revision or substitution. It was the sacred pages of the one that were the solace and comfort of that mother in her declining years; it was from the pages of the other that the millions of boys and girls learned to read the ~~pages~~ promises contained in Holy Writ.

Three fourths of the presidents of the United States, an equal number of United States senators, more than one half our congressmen, two thirds of the rail-road magnates, a large majority of the men who have made their names as financiers, three fifths of the men of letters

who are known to the arts and sciences, and millions upon millions of the bone and sinew of this country, learned their a,b,c's from the old blue back spelling book.

Of the multiplied millions of people who have been born and bred in the United States--most of whom have passed away-- and who obtained an education of any kind, the great majority learned their first lesson in the log school houses of the country from the blue back spelling book while sitting on the rude benches that had been hewed out by willing hands.

If all the blue back spelling books that have been printed and used by the boys and girls of this nation could be brouht together and piled in one great heap they would make a pyramid that would reach far up into the heavens and if set on fire the blaze therefrom would light up the whole civilized world.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RURAL SCHOOL.

"Come in to books," yelled Silas Green the teacher of the Beech Creek School--now more than three quarters of a century ago--when the twenty five or thirty boys and girls of the dozen different families of that community collected at the school house for the opening exercises of the first day's session. These youngsters,--the lusty offspring of a vigorous ancestry--had come together from the different sections of the settlement--some of whom had walked three miles to reach their destination.

At play time and recess the young Beech Creekers--like so many uncaged animals--sometimes in their games wandered so far away from the building that they could not hear the "call to books." Therefore it was necessary to resort to some other method of making a noise that should be louder or further reaching than the voice of Mr.Green.

For this purpose a smooth hickory sapling about a quarter of an inch in diameter and three feet long was vigorously applied to the boards of the door by the teacher. This beating of the door made a noise that could be heard a great distance. The boy who failed to hear--or to heed this call--unless he could offer a good excuse was certain to have a good sized hickory laid on his back by the teacher as a gentle reminder that he "must come when called."

Mr.Green was of Scotch-Irish descent and believed in the biblical injunction that "sparing the rod spoiled the child." Therefore he spoiled none of the boys or the girls who attended his school.

The teacher was the first one at the school in the morning--school "took up" just as soon as the first boy or girl arrived at the building and the first one to enter the door was allowed to be the first one to recite during the day.

There were few classes except in spelling and one or two in other studies. The quick to learn was not kept back with the laggard, nor was the idle and indifferent pushed forward and kept in a class with which he could not or would not "keep up." In a way it was every fellow for himself and the teacher "get the hindmost."

The blue back speller was the foundation of all education--it was to the school what the Bible was to the family. Spelling,reading, writing and arithmetic,with occasionally geography and history completed the course of study. At that time there was no public school system for the state of Kentucky. The teacher was hired by the patrons who paid him so much per month for each child that attended the school.

It was not until 1838 that an act of the legislature of Kentucky was approved establishing for the state a system of public schools. It was a system without funds--or at least the amount set apart for educational purposes was so insignificant that it was worth but little to the cause of education. It was not until after the war between the North and the South that the public school system of the state was more than a name.

"Mother," excitedly exclaimed Dan Boblin as he rushed into the room when he had returned from school, "--Mr.Green will board with us next week. It's our time to have the teacher."

"That's all right," observed Mrs.Boblin, "I shall expect you to behave yourself properly while he is here."

"Of course I shall," replied the boy. "I am glad he is coming, because we shall have good eating all the week. I'll be good while Mr.Green is here and I want you to be good to me."

"I don't want to have to whip nor scold you during the whole time. See how well you can behave," siad Mrs.Boblin.

"You bet I'll do my best. He'll be at Deacon Johnson's next week after he is here. I'll be good one week and Sam will have to be good the week after," said Dan as he went off whistling.

"The boarding around among the scholars," --as was the custom at that time--was always enjoyed by the boys and girls--if not by the parents. To have the teacher at the home was an event of much importance. It meant something better to eat than usual,and it also meant the help of the teacher in preparing the lessons for the next day. There was no family so poor but what the teacher--like the preacher--could find a welcome and no family so improvident that the teacher did not feel it his duty to spend a week at that home.

"School-butter!" "School ---butter!" "School -----butter!" The two hated words! And the repetitions! The big spelling class was on the floor and as soon as the lesson should be recited-then would come dinner time. When the boys heard the first words of the stranger as he rode by and uttered the insulting challenge,the looked out through the door,then when it was repeated the boys broke ranks and as the third challenge was uttered there wasn't a boy over ten years of age who was not on the run to capture and punsih the fellow who had insulted the whole school-the teacher as well by yelling "school butter."

"Did you hear that?" demanded Sam Johnson as he moved from the head of the class and started for the door.

"Go back and take your places in the class," demanded Mr.Green.

"School butter," in louder tone and more raucus and tantalizing voice came the words from a man on the outside who was on horseback.

"Whoope-e-e. Let's catch him and give him a good ducking," yelled Dan Boblin as he joined Sam Johnson and was followed by the other boys.

"Come back! Come back, I say," yelled Mr.Green with all the authority he could command.

"We will,when we catch him and souse him in the creek," replied Sam Johnson as they rushed pell-mell after the man who had so grossly insulted the whole school by yelling "school butter.

"Go it boys! Catch him boys! Give the rascal a ducking when you get him," shouted the girls in unison as the boys started down the road after the fleeing man.

Mr.Green had as well tried to stop the thunder storm from rolling, or the rain from falling from the clouds as to stop that gang of young Kentuckians.While no one has ever yet been able to define the exact meaning of the word "school-butter,"yet there was no phrase or expression in the English language that was regarded as more insulting,or more desreving of punishment than these two little words.

As the man was riding he had but little trouble in keeping out of reach of the boys. They pursued him to the outside limits of the Beech Creek Settlement. Had they caught him,the insult would only have been avenged by ducking the man in the creek, and an apology for the almost unpardonable offense offered the dignity of the school.

It was one o'clock in the afternoon, —"time to take up books,"— before the boys returned from the chase. Mr.Green very kindly allowed the boys fifteen minutes extra for the youngsters to eat their dinners and to "cool off" from the long and fruitless pursuit.

"Ding him,but didn't he run when he saw us coming?" exclaimed Sam Johnson between bites as he ate his dinner.

"I would have given a thouasnd dollars if we could have caught him," chimed in Dan Boblin.

"Three cheers for Dan and Sam and the other boys," shouted Susie Brown as she swung her bonnet in the air.

"Now to your books," said Mr.Green. "Let's see if you can study your books as hard as you ran after the "school butter man."

"Boys," said Dan Boblin seconded by Sam Johnson,"the school closes next Friday and we have got to have a treat from Mr.Green and a half holiday,or we shall know the reason why."

"Yes! Hurrah! Yes," assented the full chorus of boys and girls who were ever ready to follow where Sam and Dan might lead.

"Then be on hand early Thursday morning prepared for the fun," said Sam.

For the next two or three days the boys could be seen in bunches of from two or three, to a half dozen, eagerly discussing what they called the "turn-out." They imagined that the teacher was ignorant of the meaning of all this--but they were mistaken. He knew intuitively what was coming.

On Wednesday night before retiring, the mothers were asked to have an extra early breakfast--each boy in the district giving as a reason that he was wnated at the school room on "important business." The fathers and mothers well understood the "important business," but pretended ignorance of what that business might be.

Thursday morning ~~arrived~~ came and Sam Johnson and Dan Boblin were the first to arrive on the school grounds. They reconnoitered in order to ascertain whether or not the teacher might be hidden anywhere in the building. He was not there. The seats were immediately piled up against the windows, a fire was built to prevent the teacher coming down the chimney and as soon as the others entered and were safely inside, the door was barricaded and they were ready for the siege.

"Look yonder," shouted Susie Brown,--"the teacher is coming over the hill whistling as merrily as if the door of the school house stood wide open to receive him."

Through a crack between the logs of the building the children could see the master approaching--all in apparent ignorance of the fortification which he was nearing.

When Mr. Green came to the door and attempted to open the same, he was met with cheers and jeers from the boys and girls on the inside.

"Open the door," demanded the teacher.

The only reply was a yell of defiance from Sam and Dan who were seconded by the others.

"Open the door this minute! If you do not obey me instantly,I shall break down the shutter and thresh the last one of you," sternly demanded Mr.Green.

"Promise to treat us to candy and apples and give us a half holiday and we will let you in," replied Dan.

"I make no such promise. You are a set of outlaws. You defy the authority of your teacher. The last one of you shall be punished and that severely for this outrage," replied Mr.Green in seemingly a rage.

This threat had the effect to frighten the more timid of the children.

"Let's open the door," sobbed Mary Jones one of the smaller girls. "If we don't I know Mr.Green will whip us almost to death."

" Boo-o-o,boo-hooh," broke out Tim Smith who was about the same age of Sam. "He'll kill us sure. I'm going to open the door."

"No you don't," said Sam Johnson as he shoved Tim into a corner.

"Stand your grounds," shouted Susie Brown as she mounted the teacher's desk and waved her bonnet over her head.

"We'll do it or bust," replid Dan and Sam as they smiled their approval. With pretty Susie Brown to encourage the leaders Sam and Dan would have suffered martyrdom rather than "have shown the white feather," on this occasion.

Mr.Green saw that it were futile to attempt to gain an entrance by parleying. He retired a short distance and the belief of ~~the~~ some of the besieged was that the teacher had concluded to retire without even an attempt to take the fort by assault. The timid took heart at this,but the leaders were prepared for a further conflict.

In a short time Mr.Green was observed returning with a large pole on his shoulder. He approached the door and again demanded a surrender, accompanied with dire and fearful threats against the insurgents.

"Oh,lordy," howled Tim Smith and a few of the smaller children. "Mr.Green is going to smash us with that big pole and we are all going to be killed. Oh,mama,come and help us."

"Oh,shut up you cowardly cur," growled Sam. "If I hear another word from you I'll pitch you out of the window and let the hogs eat you up."

"Open the door and be quick about it," demanded Mr.Green in stentorian tones.

"Never,never in this world until you accede to our demands," was the reply that was shouted back by Sam and Dan.

"Stand your grounds and don't give up the fight," shouted Susie from her perch on the desk.

"Bang--bang--bang. Crack--crack--crack," went the pole which the teacher used as a battering-ram against the door.

With every thwack of the pole there went up an echo of sobs and screams from the timid boys and girls and yells of defiance from Sam and Dan and their adherents.

It was not long before the door gave way--the benches flew in every direction, while the faint hearted ones huddled together near the fire place.

Mr.Green soon affected an opening, crawled through the door and began to make his way over the scattered furniture. Before the man could get clear of the benches and other impediments that were in his way, Dan and Sam grabbed the invader, called for help and in less than a minute the teacher found himslef under a pile of a half dozen boys who were being encouraged by Susie Brown and several other girls.

"Now ding you," said Sam Johnson, "agree to the treat and the half holiday."

"I agree to nothing," was the reply.

"Take him to the swimming hole," exclaimed Dan Boblin.

"Souse him in when you get him there if he does not agree to our terms," demaned Susie Brown.

The boys picked up the man who was kicking and squirming for all he was worth. After a time they arrived at the bank of the creek.

"Treat,or in you go," said Dan and Sam as they prepared to drop the teacher into the stream.

"I surrender," exclaimed the man.

"Bully for you," shouted the whole school.

Did that act on the part of the boys and the girls cause any unpleasant feelings between the teacher and those who took part in the "turn-out?" some one may inquire. None whatever.

The boys helped brush the dirt from the teacher's clothes,while Susie loaned him her apron to wipe the perspiration from his face.

Yes,there were some hurts,scratches and bruises.Sam Johnson got a cracked shin in the scuffle,Dan Boblin lost a good sized strip of skin from his left arm,whileSusie Brown in her excitement fell from the teacher's desk and bruised her forehead. There was not a single one of these young heroes who was not as proud of his wounds as if he had received them while engaged in battle in defense of his country.

The children the next day got their treat which consisted of several pounds of red striped stick candy and all the apples they could eat. They also got their half holiday--at the close of which victorious and the defeated separated--the one form the other--each pleased with the result of the morning before.

CHAPTER V.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN.

It was one pleasant afternoon about the first of June that Mr.Boblin,his wife and their son Dan,a youth of about ten years of age were sitting on the front porch of the Boblin residence discussing the weather,the crops and other little matters that pertain to family affairs. It was but a short time until the subject of the "Falling Stars" which had occurred some eleven or twelve years before,was brought forward by the boy.

To Dan there was no other subject that he liked better to hear about than the time the stars fell and came so near scaring the people to death. Although the lad was less than two years of age at the time the incident occurred,yet he claimed that he remembered the occasion as well as if it had only happened last week. He had heard the story repeated so often that his mind became obsessed with the idea that he really remembered the whole affair.

"Dad," asked the boy with great interest, "how many stars did fall that morning-was there as many as a dozen?"

"Yes,a great deal more than that," was the reply.

"Do you reckon there was as many as a hundred?" was the further inquiry.

"Yes,Dan. Prof.Green claims that there were millions of them." responded Mr.Boblin.

"Did he count them?" demanded Dan.

"Oh,no.Of course not."

"Well,if he didn't count them,how in the world did he know how many there were?" was the startling inquiry of the boy.

"Oh,I suppose he guessed at it." was the answer.

"Guess work will do as well as any other I suppose,that is if it hits right." soliloquied the boy.

After a few minutes silence and deep thought Dan exclaimed, "I wish me and Sam Johnson had been there and as old as we are now. You bet we would know a sight more about what happened that morning than Prof.Green or any of the otherss."

"You and Sam Johnson would have been just as badly frightened as any of those who were there. You would have wished yourselves in kingdom come,or somewhere else," frowned Mr.Boblin.

"Say dad,didn't them two dogs that had the fight the night the stars fell while you were all at the watch meeting,belong to you and Deacon Johnson?"

"Yes. But waht of that?" Deamnded Mr Boblin.

"Which dog whipped?"

"Oh,I don't know," Snapped Mr.Boblin.

"Well,Sam said their dog got the best of it."

"Sam don't know any more about it than you do." Replied the man.

"Sam says his daddy said that their dog Bulger bit our dog Tige on the leg and made him yell like blazes," exclaimed the boy.

"Oh,well,Tige bit Bulger and made him howl like all tarnation." smiled Mr.Boblin.

"I wish Sam and me had seen the dog fight,the jack o'lantern and had heard Sister Simpson shout. What a lot of fun we missed by not having been born sooner." Soliloquized Dan.

Just at this time they observed a lone horseman coming down the road in the direction of the house. When the stranger arrived at the end of the lane,he stopped for a few seconds,saw the people sitting on the porch and turned into the path that led to the Boblin home.

"Get down,hitch your horse and come in," was the greeting

of Mr.Boblin as he left his seat and walked down to the gate where the man was busily engaged in making preparations to accept the hospitality that had been so generously extended to him.

"My name," siad the stranger,—"is Henry Foster. I am from the city of Louisville. I have been directed to call on you on a matter of importance and have been advised that you are not only informed in regard to the people of this community,but that you ~~well~~ understand the people with their manners and customs as well,or better than any other man in the settlement. I have been further informed that your home is always open to the stranger and that your wife is one of the best house-keepers in the state of Kentucky."

"You do me honor Mr.Foster," exclaimed Mr.Boblin. "I suppose you are at least correct in some of your premises. If I do say it myself,I think I am safe in saying that I am about as well acquainted with every man,woman and child in this section of the country as I am with my own wife and children. You are correct furthermore as far as my wife is concerned,for I do really believe that she stands at the head of the class when it comes to knowing how to keep house and prepare a good meal. Come,walk right in sir and more than a welcome is yours."

The two men walked to the porch when Mr.Foster was introduced to Mrs.Boblin. Dan also received an introduction,which he acknowledged with a grin and the boy at once became interested in the conversation that ensued. When he learned that Mr.Foster was from Louisville-a city that Dan had determined in his mind that he would visit sometime in the future- his interest in the stanger was greater than ever.

Mr.Boblin could not help but wonder what could be the "matter of importance" referred to when the men met at the gate a few minutes before. He cudgeled his brain in the hope that he might be able to get an idea of the import of the visit of the man from the city.

While Mr.Boblin had lived here for many years, he could not call to mind the fact that any man farther removed than the County seat-unless some relative or some one wanting to loacte in the community-had ever before made a visit of "importance" to the settlement. And more than that, the man was a city chap. Mr.Boblin determined not to appear over-anxious to learn the business of the man, but it was a difficult matter for him to conceal his thoughts.

"Mr.Foster," said Mr.Boblin after the man had arrived, "-the afternoon is more than half spent and as you have more or less business with me, I suppose you will remain over for the night, will you not?"

"Yes," was the reply." I shall be glad to accept your hospitality and be your guest until morning. I am fully able to compensate you for all your trouble and expense that may occur while under your roof. I shall pay my bill in the morning."

"Look here Mr.Foster. You may stay all night, all the next day, two nights, a week, or just as long as you have any business; you can have the best we can procure for the table, you may sleep in the cleanest bed and in the company room-but I want you to understand that as long as my name is John Henry Boblin and my wife is named Malinda that if you want to retain our friendship and our good opinion of you, that I do not want to hear you say anything about paying for any accommodation you may receive at our hands. I do not propose to be the first Beech Creeker to take money from a stranger who seeks food and shelter at and in my home.No Sir!" said Mr.Boblin rising and bowing to his guest.

"Mr.Boblin. You must pardon my ignorance in regard to the custom of the people of the rural communities of the great state of Kentucky," explained Mr.Foster. "It is the custom in the larger towns and and the cities to call for what you want and pay for what you get."

"Oh, darn the cities anyhow," exclaimed Mr.Boblin. "Here in the

Beech Creek Settlement,you call for what you want-if you don't see it then ask for it-and if possible it is always ~~fothe~~ forth coming-and all we ask is a simple thank you.'"

"Here Dan," turning to the boy,Mr.Boblin said:"Take Mr.Foster's horse to the pond,let him drink all he will,then put him in the stable-in the right hand stall-and give him plenty of corn and oats."

This just suited Dan as he had had a burning desire from the moment he had seen the city horse,to mount the animal and give it a "try out." Although the horse was a blooded ~~and~~ one and showed considerable spirit,that made no difference to the boy. He was not afraid to mount anything that had "hair on its back!

Dan gave a chuckle of delight,jumped down from the porch,made a running leap and in one effort was on top of the fence. He preferred climbing the fence to walking through the gate. Of course the seat of the trousers caught on a splinter and made a good sized rent in the rear part of the garment. A scolding from the mother with a threat-which he knew would never be put into execution-was the end of the matter,so far as the boy was concerned.

Dan unhitched the animal,vaulted onto its back,grabbed the bridle reins,struck the horse a sharp blow with a switch and in a short time was at the edge of the pond where the beast quenched its thirst. The horse was satisfied and was ready to leave the water,but not so with the boy. He rode the horse further in-the water came up to the saddle skirts. He urged the animal farther in and soon there was a "swimming contest" on hand.

Dan stood up on the back of the animal,sometimes on one foot and then on the other. He was having fun and even the horse seemed to enjoy the sport. Mr.Foster,Mr. and Mrs.Boblin were watching from the porch. Mr.Foster became excited and begged that they should go to the boy and "rescue him from drowning."

"Never mind that boy," exclaimed Mr.Boblin,meanwhile a broad and pleased smile was on the face of the mother. "Neither Dan, nor the horse are in any danger whatever-not a bit more than if they were in the back yard among the roses. If the boy falls off he will swim out and he will see that the horse makes a safe landing on the other side.

"That's a bright boy of yours," suggested Mr.Foster as he glanced at the parents of the lad.

"Yes,we think so." was the pleased reply of the pair.

"What's that horse worth?" asked Dan of the man when he had returned from watering and feeding the animal.

"About five hundred dollars," was the reply.

"Oh,shucks," replied Dan."Whoever heard of a horse that was worth that much?"

"That's a Blue Grass horse and of fine blooded stock." Replied Mr.Foster.

"Blue-blooded grass stock! Our horses are red-blooded pennyrile stock and I wouldn't be afraid to bet you my best set of marbles against your pocket-knife that our four year old "Thumper" could beat your horse on a ~~race~~ race from here to Turpin-the County seat-and back again and not half try. Thumper,he's a runner. I would bet you a dollar-that is if I had one-but dad wont allow me to bet money on anything."

"Your dad is right in discouraging betting,especially on a horse race." said Mr.Foster.

"Say Mr.Foster, I wish you could meet Sam Johnson."

"Who is Sam Johnson?" queried the man.

"Sam Johnson! Why he's my best friend. I am ten days older than he is and he is ten days younger than I am," was the reply.

"Perhaps I shall see him before I go back to the city."

"Next to my dog Sneezer,Sam's dog Ripper is the fightingest dog in the whole settlement," said Dan proudly.

Mr.Boblin who was of a very inquiring mind was becoming somewhat impatient to learn why it was that the man from the city had come all the way from Louisville to see him on "important business." The man seemed to really more interested in Dan than he was in Mr. Boblin. After a few more tilts between the boy and the visitor,Mr.Boblin turned to Dan and said:

"Son,if you wish to do so,you may run over to Deacon Johnson's and spend an hour or two with Sam."

Dan bounced up,gave a shrill whistle,called his dog Sneezer, who came forth wagging his tail,and in less than a minute both boy and dog were racing down the lane in the direction of the Johnson home which was about a quarter of a mile distant.

"That's a bright and intelligent boy of yours," said Mr.Foster as he addressed the parents of the boy as they were all enaged in watching the lad and the dog as they crossed the creek that divided the two farms.

A smile of approval from the doting parents was the reply to the compliment. Then the woman rose from where she had been sitting, ~~and~~ went into the house to look after the various duties that needed her attention and left the two men on the porch.

"Mr.Boblin," said the man from the city, "as I have already informed you,I am from Louisville,the metropolis of the state of Kentucky. I am connected in a reportorial capacity ~~for~~ with one of the newspaers of that city. The managemen of the paper which I represent has sent me to the Beech Creek Settlement in order to learn something of the country and of the people in this section of the state. We have heard much of this particular portion of the Commonwealth and as a special correspondent I have n been delegated to get up a short history of the community,its location,its people and their characteristics. The article will appear in a short time in my paper.

"Just so," exclaimed Mr.Boblin "I am at your service."

"I want to thank you in advance. I had been assured before my coming to this community that you-as a leading citizen-would be able to render me valuable assistance in the work in which I am engaged."

"Yes," replied Mr.Boblin who of course felt flattered by the compliment, "I suppose I may be able to assist you and I assure you that I shall regard it as a favor to give you any information you may desire."

"From what I had been able to learn,even before I left the city," said Mr.Foster "-I have been led to believe that this is an ideal community-that the land is rich and fertile and that it has a citizenship that is the equal of any in the state."

"You're mighty right sir,more than right," enthusiastically exclaimed Mr.Boblin."When the good Lord was creating and peopling this earth,it seems as though He was exceedingly partial and prodigal toward the Beech Creek Settlement and the people who dwell therein."

"I infer from what you say Mr.Boblin," interrupted the man "-that you are anyhting but a kicker or a knocker,especially so far as your country and its people are concerned."

"A kicker! A knocker! Good Lord,no! I have almost as much respect for a horse thief or a nigger stealer as I have for the man who is not loyal to his country,true to his neighbors and faithful to his religion." replied Mr.Boblin.

"I am led to believe from what you say," interrupted the man, "that I am on a visit to a community that has but few equals and perhaps no superiors."

"You are right again!" replied Mr.Boblin."In all the created universe,I believe that the United States is the greatest,the grandest and the most glorious country upon which the sun ever shone. Of all the states of the Union there is no other that so appeals to me and to

my pride as does does that of my native state-Kentucky. Of the many Counties of which the state is composed-not even the Blue Grass section-can compare favorably with our own beloved County, and when it comes right down home to the particular spot known as the Beech Creek Settlement, I believe it to be the best spot on the top side of earth.

"And let me add just a little further-the section lying ~~South~~ North of the creek, which you see just over there less than a quarter of a mile distant-while mighty fine, lacks somewhat being quite the equal of that on the South side, on which we are now talking and viewing. And dear sir-as my wife is not present-let me add that she is the best woman the Lord ever made, though Deacon Johnson, who lives opposite on the other side of the creek, contends equally as vigourously for his section and his people."

"I infer from what you say that you and the Deacon are on good terms although you may not agree on certain propositions in reference to location and the people thereof," ~~thereof~~ suggested Mr. Foster.

"Yes. The Deacon is a Baptist-as hide bound as the Lord ever made. That is about the only objections any one could have to him. He can't see any way of getting to heaven except through the mill-pond and close communion. He's a fool when it comes to religious matters. He says I am an idiot when it comes to religious affars. I am a Methodist of the shouting and sprinkling kind.

"We have been discussing our religious differences for the last twenty years and we are no nearer together than when we first commenced the argument. Just as apt as not he will be over here tonight and will want to sit up until ten or eleven o'clock trying to convince me that he is right and that I am wrong."

"Do you and the Deacon agree on other matters and does he make a good neighbor?" inquired the man.

"We agree in everything except religious affairs. There is no

difference in our political views,or as to how things in general shall be managed. As to his being a good neighbor,there is not a better in the County. I don't know that I can blame him much for being a Baptist-it was the way he brought up,and more than that all the people on the North side of ~~the creek~~who Beech Creek-who make any pretentions to religion-are Baptists and are members of the Bethel church,of which he is a Deacon.No Methodists live on that side of the branch."

"Are there many Methodists on your side-the south side-of the creek?" asked Mr.Foster.

"We are all Methodists amd not a single Baptist in our section. I am the Class-leader at the Zion church and let me tell you Mr.Foster, we Methodists do sometimes have about the biggest revival meetings you ever read of heard of."

"I suppose both the Methodists and Baptists have their own pastors and regular services?" inquired the man.

"Yes. If you will stay over until Sunday we can all go to Zion church and hear Bro. Riely who is the local Methodist preacher. He is a powerful man mentally,physically and in voice is a wonder. Next Sunday-being the fourth Sunday in the month and regular preaching day-Bro Riley is going to preach one of his big doctrinal sermons. And by the way,it is his intention to take the hide off the Baptists on that occasion. The last second Sunday-which was the regular preaching day-at Bethel- Parson Turner,the Baptist preacher went after us Methodists as though we were a pack of heathens. The preachers take it time about in shooting it into eachother."

"Don't these religious controversies engender strife among the people of the two sections of the Settlement?" inquired Mr.Foster.

"Perhaps in a way," onserved Mr.Boblin."But that does not prevent the people from being good friends and good neighbors. When a good Baptist gets sick,we sit up with him and if he dies,we attend

his funeral and feel that the Lord will take care of him, even if he was not one of us in mind and spirit. The Baptists are as liberal and tolerant as we are when it comes to sickness and death. We may differ while in health but when sickness, sorrow and death come to our community, we forget all else and become brothers and sister in the Lord."

"I have no doubt," said Mr. Foster, "-that in time-perhaps long before the close of the present century-when we shall have railroads-as they have them in the eastern states-when education becomes more generally diffused, when city, town and country are brought into closer contact-we shall see a breaking down of many of the barriers that now so widely separate the various religious denominations of the world. The time will come Mr. Boblin, though you and I may never live to see it, that the Baptists, the Methodists, the Presbyterians and all other protestant denominations shall get together-not as members of the same church, not all being of the same name, not all using the same catechism, the same Confession of Faith, or the same rules of Discipline, not all agreeing as to the same mode of baptism or the best methods of church government-but when all shall meet on one common level ~~ground~~ for the common good and for the purpose of discovering and discussing the best means of converting the whole world to the religion of Jesus Christ."

"God speed that good time coming," reverently exclaimed Mr. Boblin.

Those of us living at the present time have seen the prophecy of Mr. Foster most fully fulfilled-as is evidenced by the many National and Inter-national gatherings of the christian people of the world. The time has come in the history of the world where the true follower of the savior of the people of this earth believes more in christianity than he does in churchanity.

Before the sun had set Mr. Foster had acquired a very familiar ~~acquaintance~~ knowledge of the Beech Creek Settlement and the inhabitants

thereof. He had learned that Deacon Billy Johnson was a Baptist and that John Henry Boblin was a Methodist, that Bro. Riley was the local Methodist preacher and Rev. Turner preached for the Baptists. In connection with the Johnson family he very soon ascertained that the Deacon's son Sam and Mr. Boblin's son Dan were pals who did not worry themselves about the religious differences that existed between their fathers, but that these boys were strenuos young American citizens who believed in taking things as they come.

Prof. Green had for a number of years been the teacher of the Beech Creek school and though a Baptist he was enough diplomat so as to steer claer of church disputations. His wife, who had died ~~a few years previous~~ recently had been a Methodist and this had had its good effect on the people of the South side of the creek.

Sister Simpson was a widow of long standing, a devout Methodist who could not resist the temptation to raise a shout-especially when Bro. Riley preached one of his very red-hot sermons. She was the mother of a daughter who from some cause had escaped matrimonial alliance until she had arrived at an age that she was denominated by the then hated appellation of an "old maid." Yet she bore all this with christian resignation-being well grounded in the faith that she would in time become the wife of some good man and perhaps in the end be the mother of sons and daughters.

Thomas Miller had the largest and best farm in the whole settlement. He had married a city woman about twenty yaers ago, brought her to his home in the country but she found it a difficult matter to adjust herself to the simple life as practiced by her rural neighbors. She was neither popular nor unpopular. The daughter Flora was very much like her mother, while Jack, the son was a cripple, about ten years of age was as democratic as his father and was consequently popular with all with whom he came in contact.

About this time Deacon Johnson rode up to the gate and was invited to get down and come in-which invitation he accepted and in a short time was sitting on the porch after having been introduced to Mr.Foster. The Deacon had been to Turpin-and as was the custom at that time-he had brought what mail there might be in the post office for his neighbors. He had a letter for Mr.Boblin which was from his brother who lived in North Carolina from whom he had not heard an almost a year.

Letter writing at that time was by no means as common as at the present. The mail was carried by stage coach,horse-back ~~an~~ or by boat and was frequenly delayed while in transit. This letter had been ten days on the road. This was before stamps were used and the postage was paid either by the sender of the letter or the one receiving the missive. As this letter had traveled more than four hundred miles the postage amounted to twenty five cents,which had been paid by the sender and was so noted on the folded and sealed sheet-as at that time there were no evelopes.

The rate on letters was six cents for thirty miles or less. If one hundred and fifty miles it was twelve and one half cents and if four hundred miles or more it amounted to twenty five cents.

Said Mr.Foster after Mr.Boblin had read the letter, "I have no doubt that the time will soon come when our mail facilities shall be greatly improved. A few years ago-it was in 1840-Rowland Hill, though his influence induced England to adopt "stamped labels," as they were called and they are meeting with great favor all over that kingdom. I doubt not that in a few years that the idea originated by Mr.Hill will be adopted by all the civilized countries of the world. The prophecy was correct,for in 1847,seven years after Great Britan had adopted it,the postage stamp came into use in the United States.

Deacon Johnson after having remained a few minutes talking over the news of the day, proceeded on his way home, but not until he had exacted a promise from the city man that he should visit the Johnson home before he left the settlement.

"Deacon Johnson impresses me quite favorably" . said Mr. Foster as the man rode down the lane.

"Yes," was the reply. "If he were only a Methodist instaed of a Baptist he would really be one of the best men in the whole country. But Baptist or no Baptist we are friends and we are like brothers."

Just as supper was announced, Dan Boblin returned from his visit to Deacon Johnson's and of course Sam was with him. Dan had told such wonderful tales about the man from the city that Sam could not resist the temptation to come over to the Boblin home to see and hear for himself.

The supper-like all suppers of the Beech Creek community at that time-especially if company was present, was one to be enjoyed by even a city epicurean. After the meal was over, the porch again became a resort for the evening talk.

"Mr. Foster," said Dan addressing the man from the city, "-did you ~~say~~ ride that horse all the way from the city, or did you come a part of the way by steam boat and stage coach?"

"I rode Charley the whole distance which is about seventy five miles," was the reply.

"How long did it take you to make the trip?"

"Naerly three days. I took my time and rode slowly as I wanted to see the country as I came down here."

"We need a river right through ~~here~~ the Beech Creek Settlement so that boats could run and the people travel on them," suggested Sam.

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"Wouldn't you rather have a railrod?"inqured Mr.Foster.

"Not unless they are better than the dirt roads we have," answered Dan. "What kind of a thing is a railroad anyho? Do you put fence rails across the road so that the wagons won't mire down in the mud?"

Mr.Foster explained to the boys how a railroad was built,how cars ran on the tracks and carried people from place. When he explained how fast these trains traveled,the boys held their breath and by their looks showed that they had some doubts in regard to the statement made by the man.

"Did you ever ride on one of the cars on a railroad?" asked Dan excitedly.

"Yes,often," was the reply.

"And didn't you get killed?" demanded Sam.

"No," smiled Mr.Foster.

"Well,I'll be dinged," sighed Sam. "Well,I'll be darned," added Dan.

"Boys," said Mr.Foster, "I want you both to come to Louisville sometine and while in the city I want you to be my guests. Stop at my home and I will do all I can to make you have a pleasant time while you are there."

"Gosh," siad Dan. "Jimminy," exclaimed Sam. "You bet we'll go."

It was now time to go to bed,but it was almost midnight before Dan and Sam could compose themselves enough to go to sleep. The boys had heard so much of the city,of the railroad,the steam boats and other wonderful things as related by Mr.Foster that ~~wne~~ when they closed their eyes they could not keep them shut long enough to drift into slumberland.

The boys had been to Turpin, the County seat a number of times and had supposed that village to be about the size of the average city. In their dreams they made a trip to the city, they saw the tall buildings as described by the man, the boats on the river, the railroad and the street cars drawn by the mules. They rode on the train and had a smash up in the way of a head-on collision; the coach rolled into a ditch, when the boys awoke with a scream which brought Mrs. Boblin to the room to ascertain the cause of the commotion. When the boys found it was only a dream, they soon fell into a gentle slumber and did not wake until called to breakfast next morning.

The next day in compliance with a promise made the afternoon before, Mr. Foster made a call on Deacon Johnson, where he found a welcome awaiting his arrival. In making inquriry further in regard to the Beech Creek Settlement, Deacon Johnson corroborated nearly everything that had been said by Mr. Boblin-making-as the Deacon said-"a few minor corrections."

The Deacon siad in explanation," Mr. Boblin was mistaken when he claimed that the south side of the settlement was just a little better than the north side and also as to the name of the best woman the Lord ever made. Mr Boblin knows, or at least ought to know that the north side-the side on which you now have the honor to be-is just a little superior to the other, and that Betsy, the wife of your humble servant-as a woman-has no superior on the earth."

"Mr. Boblin is a very honorable citizen and a good christain gentleman, is he not?" inquired Mr. Foster.

"First class sir; first class. If he would only quit bragging about his side of the settlement and his wife, I should like him much better. But he is a Methodist and I am sometimes worried for fear he may drop dead on some occasion when he has "fallen from grace" and shall thereby be lost forever and eternally. But with all his faults

we are friends; the very best of friends."

"I am very much of the opinion," said Mr. Foster, That the Beech Creek Settlement, with its people is the one spot on earth where the inhabitants thereof are a God-fearing, a law-abiding and a home-loving people. A place where the ten commandments are the creed and the whole Bible the accepted word of God."

To this eulogy Deacon Johnson gave a hearty assent.

After spending a few days in the community where he met and talked with the Beech Creekers, Mr. Foster set out on his return to the city, having prepared for his paper a glowing account of what he had seen and heard and of his ~~hosti~~ hospitable reception by these good people. In summing up the impression made on the city man, Mr. Foster concluded his article with the following tribute to his new acquaintances:

"They are neither rich nor poor so far as this world's goods are concerned-just enough for comfort and not enough for worry-yet rich in all the virtues that are necessary for the comfort and happiness of a christain people. They fear God and love their fellow man."

CHAPTER VI.

BRO. RILEY--THE LOCAL PREACHER.

"But in his duty prompt in every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all."

Bro. Riley was an old fashioned local Methodist preacher and lived a few miles from Zion church. He was by trade a balcksmith with powerful arms and even a more powerful voice--especially when he got his religious enthusiamm worked up to a certain point. He was six feet tall, weighed one hundred and eighty pounds, was broa d of shoulders and as strong as an ox. When he became deeply interested in his sermon on "fleeing the wrath to come," his voice could be heard half way across the Beech Creek settlement.

In the absence of the "circuit rider," Bro. Riley was expected to fill the pulpit which he did to the entire satisfaction of all. He was equally as good at a log-rolling, a corn-shucking, a house-raising or a picnic as he was in dispensing the gospel. He was as full of fun as a boy, could lift as much with a "hand-spike" as any other man on the ground and when he got to the table he could eat with the hungriest of the crowd.

Bro. Riley could officiate with grace at a wedding, or with solemnity at a funeral, sit up with and minister to the sick and dying, pray with the disconsolate or the heart-broken and would go as far to relieve suffering as any other man in the community. He was optimistic and always saw the bright side of every proposition. He loved and enjoyed a joke even if at his own expense or that of his best friend.

One Saturday there was a log-rolling and quilting-bee at the home of Cal Benton's. The men of the neighborhood were there with their "hand-spikes" with which to carry and pile the logs that lay on the newly cleard land that had been felled by Mr. Benton and his

and his boys.

And the women were there with their thimbles and needles to quilt on the "patch-work" quilt that had been made by Mrs. Benton and her daughters. No woman ever failed to attend one of the "quilting bees" if it were possible for her to be there.

It was after the men had eaten their dinners and while taking a rest preparatory to finishing the un-rolled logs in the afternoon that Mr.Boblin and Bro.Riley happened to be sitting by themselves on a wooden bench in the front yard of the Benton home.

"Bro.Boblin," said Bro.Riley, "I have just received a letter from sister Jones--wife of our former pastor and have read it with much interest.

"Where is Bro.Jones located now?" asked Mr.Boblin.

"He is in the state of Georgia. You know he was transferred a few years ago from our conference soon after he left this circuit. Here is the letter. I will read it to you if you wish."

"I shall be glad to have you do so Bro.Riley."

"It is as follows:"

"Macon,Georgia, April 9,1845.

"Dear Bro.Riley:-

I have been thinking for sometime that I would write to you and let you know how we are situated at the present time. I am quite busy this afternoon--as I have been by myself for the last few days. You may not have heard the latest news,which may be of some interest to you.

"More than a week ago,Mr.Scott,the sheriff--seemingly a good friend of ours--came to our home and took Mr.Jones to the state prison where he will remain for the next two years.

"I think I shall make my arrangements--in fact have them about made--to move there so that I may be near my dear husband so as to com-

for him as much as possible. We have never been separated from eachother more than ten days at a time since we were married. Since he has been absent, the members of the church have been exceedingly kind to me while he is in the prison.

"Perhaps it would be well enough for me to explain to you why Mr.Jones is in the penitentiary and why he will have to serve two years. He has been elected as Chaplain of that institution and has gone to enter in upon his duties. Please remember me to all my Beech Creek friends.

Your sister in the faith,

Mrs.Tom Jones."

Bill Smith who was of an inquistive turn of mind could not resist the temptation when he saw two men talking to intrude himself and if possible learn something of the conversation. When he saw Mr.Boblin and Bro.Riley reading and discussing the letter, Smith was seized with an irresistable desire to know its contents. He went to where the men were sitting and took a place between Mr.Boblin and Bro.Riley.

"What's the latest news?" inquired Smith.

"Nothing in particular," answered Mr.Boblin.

"Who's your letter from?" asked Smith as he noticed the missive in Bro.Riley's hand.

"It's from sister Jones, the wife of Bro.Jones, who as you know was our pastor a few years ago."

"Are they well and doing well?" inquired Smith.

"I will read the letter to you," replied Bro.Riley.

"I shall be glad to hear it read," answered Smith. "As you know I always had a very high regard for Bro.Jones. I thought him to be the best and most ~~consecrated~~ christian and the most worthy preacher we ever had in this country."

Bro.Riley began to read while Bill Smith was all attention.

When the first section was completed with the paragraph,"you may not have heard the latest news which may be of some interest to you," Smith looked up and said, "Oh,what is the news?"

Bro.Riley continued to read on and when he came to the clause, "perhaps it would be well enough for me to explain to you why he is in the penitentiary and why he will have to serve two years," Smith jumped to his feet and anxiously inquired: "Is he in the penitentiary?"

Bro.Riley in order to carry out the joke said: "Well,that's what the letter says and no doubt sister Jones is telling the truth."

"Oh,well. Dog-gone his skin. Do you know that just between us three and the gate post--never to be repeated what I said--I've always had my doubts about the Rev.Tom Jones." Then after a minute's pause Smith continued; "I'm not at all surprised. Really ever since he left Kentucky I have been expecting to hear that the man had turned out bad and am not at all suprised that he has landed in the penitentiary where perhaps he ought to have been long ago."

Then lowering his voice to almost a whisper Bill Smith anxiously said:

"I wonder what he stole."

Bro.Riley to further humor the joke siad: "Bro.Smith,I think it would be well enough to keep this a secret from the public,at least for the time being."

"You're right,Bro.Riley. I would not repeat it for the world. But I do wish I knew what Tom Jones stole."

Before Bro.Riley had time to continue the reading of the letter,Smith had walked off and was mumbling to himself: "I wish I knew what Tom Jones stole."

It was soon noticed that Bill Smith was quite busy taking men to one side and engaging them in earnest conversation. To all these he would whisper: "Bro.Jones--Tom Jones--who was once our preacher,is in the Georgia penitentiary for two years."

When asked for his authority for the statement he had made he told of the letter that he had just heard Bro.Riley read from. "But don't say anything about it or that I told you so. It is a profound secret and should never be breathed," was his parting injunction as he plucked another one aside to impart the information to some new victim to whom he gave out this morsel of news.

It was but a short time until it was noised among the crowd that Bro.Jones was in the penitentiary and that Bro.Riley had a letter telling all about the disgrace that had befallen the Methodist church.

A delegation of both men and women waited on Bro.Riley for confirmation or denial of the report that had gained such wide circulation in so short a time.

"Bro.Riley," said the spokesman of the committee, "--have you a letter from the Joneses?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Is it true that Bro.Jones is in the penitentiary for two years?"

"There seems to be no doubt about it in the world. I have sister Jones' word for it that he is there."

"Oh,--ah," and other groans were heard,while some of the sisters began to shed tears of sorrow. Sister Simpson was wild with grief and refused to be comforted.

"Hold on,brothers and sisters," exclaimed Bro.Riley,—"this thing has gone far enough. Let me read the closing paragraph in reference to the matter." He then read: "He has been elected chaplain of that institution and has gone to enter on his new duties."

"Well,I'll be durned," was the only reply made by Bill Smith as he walked away crestfallen. For the remainder of the day Mr.Smith was not quite so talkative as usual.

What Bro.Riley lacked in education he made up in zeal and earnestness in the cause of the Lord. He was a plain man and did not approve of some of the styles and fashions, especially of the bonnets and dresses as worn by the women of that day. While this head-gear was not quite so broad as that of later years, yet what it lacked in width was more than made up in tallness. The dresses were as much too full, as they are now too scant. Hoop skirts that were at least three feet in diameter were worn ~~over~~ under dresses to make the skirts stand out like inflated balloons.

Bro.Riley announced one Sunday as he closed the services, that ~~at~~ at his next appointment he would take two texts from which he would deliver his sermon. The texts he said were: "Top not, go down," and "Straight and narrow is the way." He asked that the people should seek out these two passages of scripture and study them carefully befor the next meeting day.

There was a whole lot of Bible reading in that community during the next few weeks. The searchers for the two texts had but little difficulty in finding the last named one but could not locate the "Top not, go down."

When the time came for the delivery of the anxiously awaited sermon, what was the surprise of the congregation when Bro.Riley read: "Let him that is on the house--top not go down." The people saw the joke and smiled.

Said the preacher: "If your high hats with their tall feathers and big tucking combs do not make a 'Top not,' then it would be a hard matter for me to understand what a top knot is. Therefore I say, let your top nots go down."

He then discussed the straight and narrow way as being a path that was wide enough only for travel without any extra frils, flounces or furbelows.

"How do you sisters expect to get into heaven through that straight and narrow way with your hoop-skirts that are so wide that you can scarcely enter the church door and walk up the aisles of the building and your hats so tall that the men in the rear cannot see over the tops thereof?" demanded the preacher in dramatic tones.

"Amen," ejaculated Sister Simpson as she wore sun-bonnets and had refused to adopt the hoop-skirt fashion.

The men grinned, smiled and noddingly approved the w ords of the speaker. Mr Boblin, Deacon Johnson and others who sat on the front seat and the amen corner, while so highly approving what was being said to the discomfort of the sisters, were engaged in their usual practice of chewing tobacco and squirting the juice thereof all over the floor.

Bro. Riley noticed the condition brought about by the tobacco chewing brothers, stopped short in his discourse, cast his eyes on the puddles of amber and exclaimed:

"I am also reminded that the Bible says that nothing unclean shall enter the kingdom of heaven." Then pointing to the floor, he continued: "Behold that disgusting sight. There is filth through which these women have to wade to get in or out of church. Suppose these sisters ~~have to wade~~ happen to squeeze through the gates of the New Jerusalem and St. Peter should ~~fail~~ forbid their entrance, then you men would be responsible for their lost condition."

"Amen," shouted Sister Simpson.

The last sally of the preacher put the women in good humor. Bro. Riley continued; "Of course you are not going to take your wide skirts nor your tall hats into the next world, but instead you shall be clothed in robes of righteousness." To the men he said, "neither are you going to take your tobacco with you--there shall be neither chewing nor spitting on the streets of the Holy City. Therefore let us live clean, pure and upright lives while we abide here on earth."

Bro.Riley could find some good quality in every one—no matter how unworthy that one might be. He contended that no man lived who was totally bad,but that each one had some redeeming quaility,—yet occasionally there were cases that it was a difficult matter to determine the redeeming trait.

One time he was called upon to go to an adjoining community to officiate at the funeral of Tom Wiggins--one of the most worthless men in the neighborhood. Tom was a drunken vagabond who neglected his family and made his living by ways that were not regarded as strictly honest or credible by his neighbors—not one of whom could think of a single good quality that the dead man ever possessed,unless it was the fact of his death.

Before the arrival of the preacher—two men who knew Bro.Riley's habit of always saying something good of the departed—got up a bet that he would say something complimentary of the dead Wiggins.

"Bill," said Henry Brown addressing his neighbor Jones, "I'll bet you ten dollars that Bro.Riley will have something good to say about the corpse before it is laid away in the ground."

"Good," replied Bill, "I'll take the bet."

Wiggins was laid out in a rough wooden coffin,a song had been sung,the ~~last~~ prayer had been said and the crowd was taking a last look at the dead man. Not a tear had been shed—there was a pause. Bill Jones began to believe he would lose his bet. Henry Brown felt that his ten dollars was safe.

All eyes were turned on Bro.Riley,who was intently gazing at the placid features of the corpse. Now it happened that the lips of the encoffined man separated,showing his teeth.

Bro.Riley heaved a sigh and said: "Brethren,one thing is certain and that may be said to the credit of Tom Wiggins—I believe he had about as fine set of teeth as ever I saw in any man's head."

Bill Jones lost his bet,but whether or not it was ever paid, no one outside the two betters ever knew.

Bro.Riley ovasionally preached what he called his "WOOD" sermon. He siad there were four different kinds of hearers who might be compared to as many different kinds of wood with which they were all acquainted as follows:

"Sassafras,
Dog-wood,
Hickory,
Sog-wood."

The first three kinds of wood mentioned represented three different kinds of christains,while the last named was nothing but a common,every day sinner."

Said he:-"The sassafras christian reminds me of a fire that is made of dry sassafras wood. When this wood is piled together and set on fire,the blaze runs from stick to stick and from bark to bark,the fire begins to burn and sparkle,it pops and from the noise it makes one would suppose that the whole pile would soon be one mass of heat. And in fact it does show up quite well. But let the chunks fall apart so that they don't touch eachother,then it makes a few spirts,does a little popping and soon there is nothing left but a few blackened sticks.

"There are some professed christians who when they get together, blaze,pop,sparkle and make such a noise that one who does not know them would think that these fellows were going to whip the devil in a short time and take the world for the Lord. But just as soon as the meeting is over and they are separated one from the other,they make a few sputters and in less than a month they are nothing but a lot of dead christian chunks that cannot be lighted again until the next protracted meeting comes around."

"And again," said he, "There is the dog-wood christian. You know that the hunter who stalks the deer at night gets a lot of dry dog-wood which is split into kindling and placed in the pan which the hunter carries on his shoulder. When this wood is set on fire, it makes a steady blaze, throws its light in front, attracts the attention of the animal to be shot and shows the man where to take his aim so as to get his meat.

"So it is with those people whose religion is that quiet kind that makes but little noise, but sheds its light in both front and rear and shows where to to shoot and what to shoot at. The dog-wood christian may not make much fuss about his religion, but he lets his light so shine that others may see his good works."

"Then there is the hickory religion that is about the best kind in the world. You all know brethren that when you build a fire of good hickory wood that it burns and blazes, that it may sparkle sometimes, that it gives out a great heat and that when the wood has become ingited, these chunks may be carried for miles, they may be separated and each one left to itself, but that chunk continues to burn until there is nothing left but the ashes.

"So it is with the man who has a genuine case of religion. He catches on fire, he burns and blazes, he gives off light and heat, he may be separated from his fellowman, he may go to the uttermost parts of earth, but his religion sticks to him until he is no longer of this world."

"But now," said the preacher: "We come to the worst kind of all the sog-wood fellow. He is no christian. He makes no pretentions to religion, though he may attend all the meetings and may perhaps contribute his part toward the support of the gospel.

"He is the old wet sog-wood of the swamp. While others are on fire with zeal, while they are enjoying the blessings of the gospel, the sog-wood fellow may feel a little of the warmth, he may even get warm

enough to smoke a little from the heat, but he is so steeped in sin and crime that there is not enough heat in th e gospel to cause him to even get warm enough to kindle one spark of saving grace in his unregenerate soul."

CHAPTER VII.

MRS. SIMPSON AND DAUGHTER MANDY.

"Yes, child of suffering, thou may'st well be sure,
He who ordains the Sabbath loves the poor."

"Mandy," said Mrs. Simpson as she came into the kitchen where the daughter was busily engaged in preparing the mid-day meal "-while I am not inclined to complain of the hard lot that has fallen to us almost from the day of your birth until the present, yet I cannot help but wish-for your sake if for no other reason-that things were different from what they now are."

"Don't worry mother dear," replied the daughter. "Remember there are thousands of others who have not as much for which to be thankful as we have. We have our little home, and it is our own and while it may not be so large and comfortable as that of some others in the neighborhood, yet to me it is "sweet home." And just think of our good cow, the best cow in the whole country, our five fat pigs and the hens and chickens. Why mother, we are almost rich if we but knew it!"

"I know Mandy that you always look on the bright side of life and that you seem to be able to extract comfort from that which to me and to others appears comfortless," replied the mother.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," smiled Mandy. "If I believe trouble is coming I do not run to meet it, but when it does come I make the best of it possible-I try to smile and get rid of it the best I can."

"This life is a warfare. It appears to me that I have enlisted in that life-war and that I shall have to serve until the end." Sighed Mrs. Simpson, who turning to her daughter siad: "Mandy, wont you be glad that the time shall come when we shall be done with the things of this world and shall be called home to a better one beyond the skies?"

"I can't say that I am in any hurry about leaving this mundane sphere and going to glory for some time yet to come," replied the girl

"Just think of it," exclaimed Mrs.Simpson. "When we get to heaven we shall walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem and shall have nothing to do but spend a blessed eternity in an everlasting Sunday."

Miss Mandy had heard sermon after sermon preached on the glorise of the world to come and of the long and eternal rest that was for the saints. While this sounded very well in theory,but the practical part did not particularly appeal to her. She was an industrious and frugal womam who abhorred the very idea of a "do-nothing heaven." While she sometimes enjoyed a ~~eav~~ vacation by making a visit to friends in an adjoining County,yet by the end of the week she became impatient to return to their humble home where she could look after the domestic duties that appeal so largely to women who are good house-keepers.

Replying to the question of her mother she said: "No,mother. I do not want to go to heaven-that is not just now. The truth of the matter is that while things are not always what I should like-that is for the time being-the Beech Creek Settlement and the Beech Creek people are good enough for me. Here,I know the country with its fields, its orchards,its hills and its valleys. They present a landscape that to me are more beautiful than paved streets and towering buildings. What music can be sweeter than the lowing herds,the warbling of the winged songsters,the waters of the babbling brooks as they tumble over the waterfalls? These are things that can be seen by the natural eye and heard with the natural ear. They satisfy my soul for the time being-hence I am in no hurry to exchange a world where I know and am known for the one of which I know nothing-except by faith."

"Mandy,you almost shock me by your talk," exclaimed Mrs.Simpson. "Do you not believe in a future state of existence,of a heaven as the future abode of the finally faithful?"

"Yes,mother. I believe in all this. I believe in the religion of Jesus Christ and in the heaven to come,but I believe none the less that it is our duty while here on earth to enjoy the life that God has given us. I have learned to have but little patience with the idea that we need dying grace while in health and the right exercise of our faculties. We perhaps need grace-living grace-not dying grace. We can very well afford to wait it until the summons comes to go hence for dying grace."

"I know daughter that from some cause you are getting more out life than I ever did,and yet I hardly know how to account for all this. As you well know your father died about thirty years ago when you were but a few months old. The little farm on which we live,with a horse,cow and a few other things were all that was left to you and me. It has been a hard struggle and I regret that I have not been able to give you the advantages that have come to other girls of the community who have had better opportunities than you have had. I am growing a little old and feel that most of my life is already spent. But I have done the best for you that I could." Then Mrs.Simpson dropped a tear.

"Mother," said Mandy,placing her arms about the woman, "-you have been the very best mother in the world. You have done the very best by me that it was possible for you to do,and I would be an ingrate if I should regard you otherwise than with that true love and devotion that is due from the daughter to the mother."

"Mandy," smiled the mother, "-if I could only see you married to some good man before I am called away by death,I feel that I could die happy."

"Mother," responded the girl, "-if you will defer your going to heaven only a few years longer,I assure you that your wish in the matter shall be most fully gratified."

"Why Mandy,are you engaged to be married?"excitedly demanded Mrs.Simpson.

"No,not yet," was the reply.

"Is any one courting you?" excitedly demanded the mother.

"No." was the reply.

"Then how do you know you are going to marry,though no one has ever courted you? You are the only woman who has ever lived in the settlement and has arrived at your age who has not been courted and married," sighed Mrs.Simpson.

"That may be true but it signifies nothing. There is a man somewhere for me-this I know and furthermore I know that that man will come in proper time and that Miss Mandy Simpson Simpson will change her name and she will then be called Mrs.Mandy---"

"----Mrs.Mandy-who?" interrupted the mother.

"I do not know-who," replied Mandy, "-but the man will come in due time and when he comes he will find me waiting-just as you are waiting to be called on high."

"The Lord grant it," smiled the mother.

"Mother,do you know that ~~I pray~~ every night before I go to sleep I pray for my husband?"

"Do you mean that you are praying for the Lord to send you a husband?" inquired the mother.

"No. I do not ask the Lord to send me a husband. The man will come of himself of his own volition whether sent of the Lord or not. I only ask in my prayers that the Lord shall bless,protect,guide,guard and direct the one who in time is to become my husband-the husband of your daughter."

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The frugal,but well cooked meal was by this time prepared and set on the table. Mrs.Simpson-as was her custom-asked a blessing upon the food and soon the mother and daughter were engaged in other conver-

sation than that of heavenly affairs and earthly courtships. Each one felt benefited by the heart to heart talk that had just taken place between the two while the meal was being prepared by the woman who knew intuitively that it was only a question of time until she should be wooed and won by one of the sterner sex.

After the meal had been concluded and the table cleared away, each one went at once to her own particular duties. While Mrs.Simpson and her daughter had never suffered for any of the necessities of life yet they had been unable to obtain more than a sufficiency of this world's goods. The mother at times became despondent,while the daughter on the other hand always looked on the bright side of life and believed there was a better day coming.

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About the midle of the afternoon while the two women were engaged in their varied duties,a census enumerator rode up to the gate, alighted and came up to the door. He was politley invited to come in and take a seat. Then he announced his business. As was his duty,the man asked many questions,the answers of which were noted in in a book for that purpose.

"How many in family?" queried the man.

"Only two of us,"responded Mrs.Simpson.

"Are you a widow?" was the next question.

"Yes," was the reply.

Turning to Mandy he aksed, "Are you married or unmarried?"

"Neither," was the reply.

"How can that be?" inquired the man.

"Very easily," replied Mandy."I have never been married,and as I have never been married I could of course never get unmarried."

"Oh,I see," smiled the man. "Whose fault is it that you have never been married?"

"The fault is with both of us," replid the woman.

"With both of whom?" queried the man.

"The man who hasn't courted and the woman who has not been wooed and won," was the reply.

"I infer from what you say that you are a spinster," said the man.

"Yes,both mother and I spin sometimes," replied Mandy.

"The word spinster,in law,means a woman over twenty one who has never been married," was the explanation.

"In other words," said Mandy,"it means an old maid. Well,I guess I am one."

The talk then drifted to other subjects-not matrimonial,when the man bade the mother and daughter good by and rode off down the lane.

"Wasn't that an inquisitive chap," smiled Mandy,looking in the direction of the departing guest.

"Some what," was the reply of the mother.

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Mrs.Simpson was intensely religious and was a devote member of the Methodist church,who believed the Discipline,as read and expounded by the presiding Elder was as much given by inspiration as was the Bible itself. By the people generally she was known as "Sister Simpson."

Among Sister Simpson's accomplishements was that she was known as the greatest "shouter" in the Beech Creek Settlemet. She never failed on the fourth Sunday of each month to be present and in her place at Zion church and furthermore it was well understood by both preacher and congregation that she would get shouting happy before the services were ended. She wore a cap-such as was common at that time among the women. She always carried with her a "reticule" in which she carefully placed her handkerchief,her spectacle case and a few other things of more or less value.

About the time the preacher would get half way through his sermon and begin to pound the pulpit with more or less vigor, sister Simpson would arrange the ribbons of her cap, adjust her spectacles on her nose, smooth down her hair, place her reticule in a safe place, then begin to sway her body back and forth and when she got into a good weaving way would emit a yell of "glories" and "hallelujahs" that could be heard all over the surrounding country.

Sometimes her shouting became infectious, whereupon other sisters, joined by the preacher and perhaps one or two of the stewards added to the chorus and thus the old church would resound with the praises of the happy people. As her every day life comported with her Sunday experience there were none who doubted the genuineness of her religion.

"Sister Simpson," inquired Deacon Johnson one day while in the presence of a number of people, "why is it that you never shout when you attend preaching at Bethel church where Bro. Turner, the Baptsit minister does the preaching?"

"Because I never have anything to shout about when I am there," was the reply of the woman.

"Brother Turner is a splendid talker, a good man and an excellent preacher and frequently gives us some very fine sermons," replied the Deacon.

"May be you think so," replied Sister Simpson, "-but he ain't got enough fire in his discourses to heat up a sick kitten,"

Notwithstanding this badinage between the two, sister Simpson and Deacon Johnson were the very best of friends. She was a shouting Methodist and didn't care who knew it, while he was a Baptist dyed in the wool.

Simpson

Sister had her loom and her spinning wheel and with these she managed to make a respectable living. She was never too tired to sit

up with a sick neighbor-even though she knew that by so doing she should have to neglect her own affairs.

Miss Mandy Simpson,while regarded by all the people of the Beech Creek Settlement as one of the very best of women,yet from some cause she had few if any suitors. She was far from being handsome and yet she was by no means homely. She was slightly freckled and her hair was almost red in color. She was of very good bodily form. But up to the present time she had failed to attract the attention of the matrimonially inclined of the opposite sex.

But if these lacking qualities in her make-up-that young women so much desire-or the neglect of suitors to press their claim gave her a moment of unrest,she kept the matter to herself. While she longed to love and be loved in return,she bided her time. What she lacked in form and feature she made up in goodness of heart and gentleness of disposition.

She reasoned within herself that it were better to be an "old maid," than to be the wife of a worthless husband whose only claim to manhood might be that he was "the father of a large family of children." And she was right in this. Marriage may be as St. Paul said,"honorable among all men." The apostle might have added:"All men are not honorable,nor are they all marriageable."

Miss Mandy was thoroughly unselfish. She congratulated every woman of her acquaintance on a happy marriage and sympathized with those who found matrimony a burden. She was ready to sit up all night with a sick child while its mother could get a needed rest-although she herself might be tired and worn from the labors of the previous day.

Whether in the home of sickness and distress and when death came unbidden and unwelcome,or at the function where fun and frolic ran riot,this good woman was the same kind being who thought more of making others happy than she did of her own pleasure.

It was at her own home that Miss Mandy was at her best. As she had neither husband nor children, she naturally had other pets that were may be as harmless and perhaps more appreciative of her kind ministrations than are many of the husbands and children of the present time. Her special pets were a dog and a cat.

The dog was an every day, ordinary mongrel cur that showed his teeth whenever a stranger came unbidden into the yard. She named this animal, "Nebuchadnezzar" and called him "Nebbie" for short. The cat was a good mouser, had a bobbed tail, one eye had been put out in a fight one dark night with a feline enemy that lived on the next farm. His name was "~~Alenaber~~ Alexander," which was abbreviated to "Alex." Miss Mandy was frequently called upon to settle little difference that would naturally arise between the two animals.

The crimpled horn cow was named "Mary Lou," for short "May-Lou," and was a fine milker who was never known to kick over the pail and scatter the milk all over the place." The cow furnished milk for the family while there was some to spare for the pigs that were later to go to the "smoke-house" and finally become good home made bacon.

Miss. Mandy prided herself on her chickens. She had a name for each of them. There were two roosters-one named General Jackson-because as she said, "he was such a fighter that he could whip any dog or cat that ever tried to catch one of her chickens." The name of the other rooster was "Peter, who was always crowing and ready to run when he saw a Methodist preacher ride up to the gate."

She had a name for each one of her twenty or more hens. Her best and finest one was "Liza Jane who was always sure to get there with the goods." If she cackled "there was certain to be a new laid egg in the nest." "old Speck was a motherly hen who took pride in her offspring and the larger the gang that followed her the prouder was the bearing of the head of the procession."

"Mandy," said Mrs.Simpson one morning when the two were in the yard viewing the chickens and making calculations as to the profit to be derived from the coming increase of the flock, "-Bro.Riley is coming tomorrow to take dinner with us and spend the day in prayer and praise--"

"--and in eating chicken also," replied Mandy.

"Daughter," said Mrs. Simpson with some show of disapproval, "--you should not speak so irreverently of Bro.Riley. He is a good man who seeks to comfort and console the widow and the orphan--"

"--and to spend his time and to take up our time in chicken eating and talking about the glories and the beauties of the world to come instead of some of the good things of this earth," interrupted Mandy. After a discussion between the two women as to the preparation of the dinner for the next day it was decided that Peter,-the rooster- could better be spared for the sacrifice than any other member of the barn-yard family. Miss Mandy consoled herself for the loss of Peter by saying:

"Mother,you are so old and I am too timid so that neither of us can ~~well enter~~ ever be preachers or missionaries. I have no brother to fill the pulpit,it is therefore mete that we let Peter enter the ministry tomorrow through Bro.Riley-while you and I and the hens can be lay members."

"Amen," responded Sister Simpson. Very soon Peter was captured, his neck was stretched across a convinient stump,the axe was wielded by the mother and almost in the twinkling of an eye, the head of Peter was thrown to the left,while the decapitated body of the bird fell with a dull thud,made a few convulsive flutters and soon settled into that silence and stillness that sooner or later must come to everything that breathes the breath of life.

According to agreement and appointment,Bro.Riley was on hand the next day and in due time. "Glad to meet you Bro.Riley," exclaimed

Mrs.Simpson as she met the parson at the door and invited him into the home.

The old fashioned turkey-wing fan was handed to the man who made good use of the same as he mopped his face with his red bandana handkerchief and talked of the weather and on other subjects that were of more or less interest to him and Sister Simpson.

When the table was set and everything was ready for the feast, Miss Mandy bore the body of Peter from the kitchen to his last resting place among the other things that had been prepared for the occasion. He was done to a beautiful brown and as the woman gazed at the form of the noble bird she said:

"Peter,you are more beautiful in death than you were in life. You are a martyr to the cause of religion and Methodism. Good by Peter—the Lord be with you."

Parson Riley,like most Methodist preachers of that time, "took his appetite with him"-on this occasion. He was filled to satiety with chicken-if not with the spirit of Jehovah. "Sister Mandy," said the parson, "-you are certainly a fine cook. This"-pointing to the remnant of Peter, "-is the best cooked fowl I ever ate."

"Thank you for the compliment," said Miss Mandy with a smile.

"By the way,why is it that you have never married?" inquired Bro.Riley.

"I've been on the market so many years that I suppose I am perhaps shop-worn-perhaps marked down to about half price with no takers," siad Miss Mandy.

"I intend to sound your praises from the hillsides and the mountain tops as being the best cook and the best woman of the whole community so that some good man can rest neither day or night until he shall come this way a courting."

Mandy smiled an acknowledgment of t he compliment and said "Thank you."

"And furthermore," added the preacher, "if I am permitted to be the officiating clergyman at the wedding I shall donate the fee, let it be what it may, to the bride, to be used by her just as she may see proper."

"Thank, I shall be at home when the right man comes," answered the girl.

In the afternoon when the shadows were beginning to lengthen, Bro.Riley mounted his horse and rode of down the lane, after having expressed his thanks to the women for their hospitality. "A fine woman that," mused the parson. "waht a splendid wife she would make for some good man. I have in mind a man who would just fill the bill, but for the time being his name shall not be mentioned, even in a whisper."

"Mother," said Miss Mandy in the kitchen while the two women were engaged in washing the dishes and putting things to right, while the parson was in the sitting room, "--let me tell you truly, that the next time I kill one of my chickens it shall be--not to feed a hungry preacher-but for the man who comes a courting and not then until after I have promised to be his wife."

After Bro.Riley had started home Mrs.Simpson looked at her daughter and asked, "you do not regret the coming of the parson, do you?"

"No, mother. But I did so hate to see Peter have to go the way he did. No more in this world, nor in the world to come shall I ever again hear his clarion voice as it used to ring out on the fresh morning air," replied Mandy in a melo-dramaitic tone of voice.

"I hope you do not regret the visit that the parson made us today. Bro.Riley is one of the best men living," said Mrs.Simpson.

"Oh, no, I do not regret it in the least. I am glad he came and also that he has gone." Then the woman softly hummed:

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Miss Mandy sat on the back porch of the Simpson home. The sun was rapidly sinking in the west. She placed her elbows on her knees, her head rested on her hands and she began to meditate. She was wondering why it was that no man had ever made love to her. She had built her air castles as have other girls from the creation of the world until the present and will continue to do so as long as time shall last. Like others of her sex she had longed to love and to be loved in return-to have a home of her own,to be the mother of children who should play around the hearth-stone.

This poor unlettered girl-though unknown and unprepossessing-was worth more to the world-worth more to humanity,worth more to the God who created her than any one hundred of the society young ladies who do nothing to make the world better by their existence-yes worth more than a thousand of the Beatrices and Geraldines "who spin not neither do they weave nor toil," but spend their time in merely existing.

Though she saw not the rainbow of promise that spanned the horizon of her being-or if she saw it recognized not its meaning-yet the coming years-and they were not far in the distant-had for her happiness that she little dreamed of.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COUNTRY BOY.

"You hear that laughing?—You think he's all fun;
But the angels, laugh too, at the good he has done;
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all."

A boy is a boy—a male biped, who if he were born in any rural community in Kentucky between the time Daniel Boone came to the state and the war between the North and the South--was a bundle of nerve, force and energy.

His feet were used for running on errands of mercy—or mischief; his hands for performing tasks of deeds of valor--or playing tricks on his compan ions; his head for planning and plotting either pleasure or discomfort for his elders—his mind to discover the undiscovered, to solve the unsolvable and to undertake the impossible. He was a little savage, yet he had a heart in him that made him the defender of the right against the wrong--ready and willing at all times and under all conditions to respond to the call of distress.

While the boy of that time was just the same kind of a boy as the one of today, yet he was differently circumstanced from the one of the present. The world was his to do with as he pleased--there was none to dispute his rights—save and except his parents or his teacher. His play ground was bounded only by the impassable rivers or the impenetrable forests. If in his enthusiasm he wished to raise his voice to such a pitch that it would out-thunder the thunders of heaven, there was no rude hand laid on his shoulder to warn him that he was "disturbing the neighbors on the adjoining farm or the next County."

While he might be wild and unrestrained, yet he was subject to the will of his parents who looked with pride upon the boy who day by day was growing and developing into mature manhood. The very atmosphere

he breathed made him a being who was so full of life and animal spirits that it was necessary that there should be some outlet for his enthusiasm.

The summer apparel of the country boy--during the week-days while at work in the fields--was very simple and far from being expensive. It consisted a of a long tow-linen shirt that came down to his heels. This garment was home-made, the handi-work of his mother who spun, wove and made the garment from the flax that the boy had helped grow and hackle for the loom--which was found in nearly every well regulated home. The shirt as a covering for the body, with a ten cent straw hat to protect the head from the sun, equipped the boy for the labors of the day.

"Sam," said Deacon Johnson just as the breakfast was completed one hot July day, "I want you to hitch old Blaze to the plow and break up that patch of ground back of the garden this morning."

"All right, dad," was the reply. "May I go fishing after I get through the job?"

"Yes. Do your work well and take the balance of the day," was the reply.

Sam, dressed in his long shirt, donned his straw hat, left the room whistling and in due time had old Blaze hitched to the plow. He was soon busily engaged in turning over the soil, with his mind dwelling on the fun he would have in pulling the fish from the swimming hole in the afternoon when his task should be completed. It was now about ten o'clock. The boy and old Blaze were both getting up a good "sweat."

"Hell fire and holy Moses!" yelled Sam at the top of his breath. "Bumblebees and rattle-snakes!"

Old Blaze was rearing, kicking, plunging, snorting and neighing as if pursed by a host of demons.

"Whoa, whoa, you durned old fool," yelled the boy at the mare,

but old Blaze wouldn't whoa. The plow had turned up a bumblebee's nest and the insects that had been so ruthlessly and unceremoniously disturbed were swarming in every direction and each particular bee was was in a fighting humor. Old Blaze could stand it no longer; she jerked loose and made a bee line for the woods pasture just beyond the horse lot pursued by a host of mad bumblebees.

"Murder! Murder!" yelled Sam as he began to take of his shirt to fight the enraged bumblebees that were coming at him from every direction and stinging him when they found an opportunity to get in their work. He had off his shirt and was making his way to the house for protection and consolation.

Mrs.Brown and her daughter Susie--Sam's sweetheart--had come to spend the day with the Johnsons. Sam was not aware of the fact that "company" was there. When the women heard the yelling of Sam and the neighing of the old mare, they rushed out to learn the cause of the trouble. The women arrived just at the time that Sam was dressed in nothing but thin air and excited bumblebees.

"Oh," exclaimed Susie, hiding her face in her hands as she fled into the house.

"Poor boy," said Mrs.Brown. "I'll go and get the camphor."

"Good Lord," exclaimed Sam when he observed Mrs.Brown and Susie--as he strated in a run for the swimming hole in the creek.

"Come back Sam and let me bathe you with this camphor," shouted Mrs.Johnson to the fleeing boy.

"Not while Susie's there," replied sam as he rushed for the cooling waters of the nearby stream. When he arrived at the creek, he plunged in, bathed the spots where the bumblebees had stung him and in a short time had allayed the pain produced by the stings of the outraged insects.

"Sam," said his mother as she appeared on the bank of the creek,

"--here is a change of garments. Come out and put on your shirt, coat and pants. Come to the house and we'll some have dinner."

"Is Mrs.Brown and Susie still there?" demanded the boy.

"Yes," smiled the mother.

"You'll excuse me," grinned Sam.

The boy remained in the water awhile and after his mother left he crawled out on the bank, put on his clothes, slipped back behind the kitchen, called to his mother and asked that his dinner might be handed to him over the fence. He was not willing to face Mrs.Brown nor Susie --that is not that day.

"Sam," said Mr.Johnson who came out as the boy finished his dinner, "--you have had a pretty tough time of it and I shall excuse you from work the remainder of the day. You may go fishing this afternoon."

"Thank you dad," smiled sam.

"Your mother tells me that you used some ugly language--almost cuss-words, when the bumblebees stung you," queried the father.

"Did bumblebees ever sting you dad?" asked Sam.

"Yes," replied the man.

"Didn't you do some cussing when the bees popped you?"

Deacon Johnson grinned--but made no reply.

Sam got with his pal Dan Boblin and the two spent the whole afternoon fishing and bathing in the swimming-hole.

"I wouldn't care for the stinging," said Sam to Dan, "--if it hadn't been for Susie Brown seeing me without my shirt on my back,"

"Have you got well of your bumblebee stings?" asked Susie Brown of Sam about a week later when the two met at Mr.Boblins.

"Yes," grinned the boy.

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The average country boy at that time led a pretty active and strenuous life. He was the first to be up in the morning, he made the fires, fed the stock, drove up the cows to be milked and helped do the

milking, chopped wood and split the kindling—besides doing a number of other ~~chorse~~ chores—by which time breakfast was ready for him and he was ready for the breakfast.

After eating any and everything in reach--he did the churning, ran to a neighbor's house to deliver a message, over stayed his time and got a threshing for being "so lazy and no account." By this time he was ready to enter on the duties and responsibilities of the day.

If it were the spring or summer time, he had to plow, to hoe, to chop, grub and do a ~~hundred~~ dozen other jobs that always fell to his lot. When the horn blew for dinner, he got a move on himself and was almost there before the welcome sound of the call had ceased to vibrate in the air.

There was no music so sweet or welcome to the tired lad as that of the dinner-horn as its vibrant blasts came wafting to his ever open ears the glorious invitation to "come to the waiting feast."

The re was a whole hour for rest at dinner time--that is it was at least an hour from the time he left the field before he was expected to return to continue the task that had not been completed when the dinner-horn called him from "labor to refreshemts."

During this hour of rest and recuperation, he had nothing in the world to do but hoe a spell in the garden, bring a bucket of fresh water from the spring, split up a little more kindling and attend to a few other things of minor importance.

By the time his dinner had "settled" he was ready and back again in the field with the old mare hitched to the plow--the old wooden mold-board plow--that had never scoured from the time it was manufactured by the village blacksmith until the present time. If there were many roots and stumps in the field, the "jumping-coulter" was substituted for the mold-board affair. The last named agricultural "instrument" --a producer of profanity--persisted in bouncing up and down every few yards and was satisfied only with punching the boy in the short ribs

or stomach until he was sore and worn out. This bouncing and punching was apt to be productive of language not found in the Sunday school lesson or the catechism.

The old wooden churn at the home with its wooden dasher that "sloshed" the milk all over the floor--and caused the boy to get many a box on the ears was trying to both the lad and his mother. It was however the "old fashioned hoe, the home-made hoe, the dull old hoe" that was the boy's special pet aversion.

This hoe which was made from a slab of iron, beaten and shaped by the man who manufactured the mold-board plow, was a load to carry on the shoulder. It was as dull and blunt as a wedge and had a handle made of a papaw pole with the bark skinned off.

After a few hours of labor with this heavy and ill shaped--so called hoe--it seemed to the boy as if it might weigh a ton. And, how slowly the sun would sink in the west on these hot afternoons to the boy with his hoe. He felt certain that from some cause--unknown to him or science--that the sun had got hung up somewhere, as though a modern Joshua had commanded it to "stand still."

What with the big stone-bruise on his heel, the mumps, the measles and whooping cough, each following close on the heels of the other, --the stomach-ache from eating too many green apples which bent him almost double, the tooth-ache that kept him awake at night when he wanted to sleep and swelled his face until it looked like a full grown moon or his mother's soap gourd--with these and a few other afflictions incident to childhood--yet that sturdy young American boy managed to [illegible] the middle of the Atlantic Ocean--and then just as apt as not he will make his escape and in time will turn home some bright morning--ready for fun, frolic, or business.

escape death and became in time one of the valuable citizens of the state and the nation. His hardships had only the better prepared him for the battles of life.

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Dan Boblin and Sam Johnson--the two inseparables-- attended preaching one Sunday at the Bethel church. It was the closing day of revival services of the Baptists. As there were a number of converts who were to be baptized by immersion at the close of the services, it naturally followed that Bro. Turner, the pastor should deliver one of his strongest sermons on baptism and the mode of admisistering the same.

There were about a dozen who were prepared and recommended to receive the ordinance of baptism according to the rules of that congreagtion. While Dan had been taught differently and believed in either "sprinkling or pouring," yet he took great interest in the proceedings. After the baptizing Dan went home with Sam for dinner. On their way the boys discussed the subject and the mode--neither agreeing with the other. When dinner arrived they agreed very readily that they were both hungry and then when the meal was over agreed that the dinner was "a mighty good one."

"See, here is much water," exclaimed Sam as the boys came to the pond in the horse-lot. "What doth hinder us to baptize?"

"A gourd full of water would do just as well as a pond full," responded Dan.

"A gourd full might do for the Methodists but it would not be at all satisfying to the Baptists," retorted Sam.

"Let's baptize Tige and Bulger," said Dan.

The two dogs raised no objection whatever to the performance as the weather was warm and Tige and Bulger were not afraid of getting wet, but really enjoyed the sport.

"Tige's still a Methodist," declared Dan, as the dog shook his body after coming out of the pond.

"Well,he's scripturally baptized," replied Sam.

"Catch the rooster," exclaimed Dan"and see how he will take it."

Chanticleer was by no means pleased with the idea--as roosters are not supposed to be fond of going into water. He squalled,fluttered and tried to make his escape.

"He's a shouting Methodist," said Dan.

"He'll soon be a shouting Baptist," was the reply.

The rooster was unceremoniously plunged under. As he tried to make his escape he struck Sam with a spur and when turned loose ran away to his mates squalling for life.

About this time the family cat came up,rubbed against Sam's legs and mewed.

"Here's a good subject," exclaimed Sam as he grabbed the cat and started for the pond.

Tom did not like the appearance of things and began to show signs of uneasiness. When the boys got to the water's edge,the cat began to scratch and yowl.

"That cat's a Methodist," said Dan. "He's opposed to immersion."

"It looks like it," replied Sam. "Let's sprinkle a little water on him,turn him loose and let him go to the e devil."

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"Dan," said Mr. Boblin one morning, "bridle old Selim,take this turn of corn to mill and get it ground into meal."

"All right Dad," responded Dan who much preferred going to mill than having to plow or hoe in the field.

Two bushels of corn and a bag holding a half bushel more was the usual "turn of corn." This was balanced on Selim's back--the boy sitting on top of the bag.

"Be careful Dan. Don't let the corn get out of balance and fall off," was the parting injunction.

"Here Tige! Here Tige," was the call of the boy to his faith-

ful friend who was as ready for the trip as was the boy.

"Whoa, Selim, you old rascal," said Dan to the horse as that animal shied to one side, having become frightened at a hog that jumped up suddenly from behind a log.

But the bag slid off and Dan slid with it, but being an active boy he fell on top of the bag of corn. Old Selim trotted off a few yards and began to nibble the grass by the road side.

"I can't get this up myself," soliloquized Dan. "I shall have to wait until some one comes along to help me."

He caught the horse, sat down on the bag and patiently waited for some passerby to give him a lift.

"Hello Bud," exclaimed Judge Morgan as he rode up. "What are you doing there?"

"Taking a rest," smiled the boy.

"Are you tired?" asked the Judge.

"I'm rested now," grinned Dan.

It mattered not if the Judge were dressed in his best clothes, --here was a boy who needed help. The man remembered the time when he was a country boy when he had had the same experience that Dan was now undergoing and that he had been helped. No Kentuckian--that is if he were native-born--would refuse to help the lad who was in distress.

"Thank you," politely said the boy when the bag of corn was placed on the back of the horse and the lad was mounted for his journey. "If ever I can do as much for you, don't fail to call on me," added Dan as he rode away.

When Dan arrived at the mill there were several ahead of him. Of course he had to wait until his "turn" came. In the meantime Tige got into a fight with a dog that belonged to another boy who was about the size of Dan. The fight was a draw--both dogs drew blood.

The two boys got into a dispute in regard to the merits of

their respective dogs. The result was that there was another fight, a few scratches, and like the dog fight--the miller declared it a "draw."

"Hasn't Dan got home yet?" inquired Mr. Boblin when he came in from his work in the afternoon.

"No," was the reply of Mrs. Boblin.

At this juncture they heard the boy whistling and the dog barking as Dan turned into the lane that led to the home.

Dan told his father and mother of his trip and his experience --not even omitting the fight between the boys and their dogs.

"Mother, I'm as hungry as a wolf and so is Tige," exclaimed the boy.

"Supper's ready," announced the mother.

"So'm I and Tige," was the response of the boy.

"Sam," said Mrs. Johnson one Sunday morning, "--I am not well today and do not feel able to attend church. I want you to go in my place. Pay good attention to what the preacher says and when you come home to dinner I want you to be able to tell me all about the sermon, the text, the songs and other things you can remember.

"I'll do my very level best," was the prompt reply. Sam was soon on his way to church determined that he would take in the whole service, make a good report and get due praise from his mother for his ability to remember things he heard.

Bro. Turner read that portion of scripture where it says: "Why stand ye idle? Go labor in my vineyard and it will be well with you."

The preacher made some running comments on the lesson. Sam was so interested in trying to keep his mind on the sripture lesson that he heard or understood but little that the preacher said.

The song: "The cross I bear," followed the Bible reading.

There was a long prayer by Deacon Johnson and then followed the text: "An angel came down from heaven and took a live coal from the altar."

The text claimed the boy's immediate attention. He determined to remember that if nothing else. After the sermon came that good old song:

"He moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform,
He plants his footsteps on the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

As soon as the congregation was dismissed Sam was out of the church and on his way home as hungry as a stray dog. He felt proud that he should be able to give his mother a good account of the ~~services~~ experience. When asked about the services he readily replied:

"Bro. Turner read about the boss who found a lot of loafers doing nothing and he said, "what are you fellows doing standing around here doing nothing? Go into my barnyard and get to work and I'll make it all right with you.'"

The boy stopped to get his breath and said: "They sung something about a cross eyed-bear, but I can't remember the words just as they are."

"What was the text?" inquired the mother.

Without hesitation Sam answered: "An Indian came down from New Haven, took a live colt by the tail and jerked it out with a halter."

The mother smiled.

"The closing song was a jim-dandy," continued the boy. It was:

"He moves in a mischievous way,
His blunders to reform,
He went wading in the sea
And got lost in the storm."

"Mother, I'm hungry," said the boy as he broke for the dining room.

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The country boy never forgot his dog. If he was away from home, on his return he would always greet his dog before he had any thoughts, words or congratulations for any of his family--and the faithful animal was always the first to discover the returning master.

The country dog at that time had no pedigree. He was a mixture of all breeds and had as many colors as marked the cows, bulls and heifers that were fed in the cattle pens of Abraham. But to the boy, his dog was the best and finest specimen of the canine race that was ever known. His dog "Tige" or "Bulger," could track more coons, tree more possums and scare up more rabbits than any other dog that ever hunted the forests and when it came to a fight, his dog could whip ony other dog that that ever "barked up a tree or wore hair."

About the only difference of opinion that ever existed between Dan and Sam was which had the "better dog." This difference how never led to a fight between the two boys--though on one occasion it did look for awhile that there would be a break in in their friendship.--that is for awhile.

"Dan," said Sam Johnson, "suppose we have a cider stand at the pic-nic next Saturday. There will be a big crowd of people present and we can sell lots of apple juice."

"A splendid suggestion," replied Dan. "Suppose for the one day that we don't be partners--just for the fun of it and see which can sell out first."

"All right. We'll make the cider together and each one shall take an equal share after it is made," suggested Sam.

On Friday--the day before the picnic--the boys spent the day in making cider. When night came they had enough to full two large wash-tubs. The next morning the boys were on the ground and each erected his stand. Their places of business were about thirty yards apart. A broad plank was covered with paper on which were placed large glasses to hold the fluid. The tubs of cider were placed under the improvised tables. It was agreed that the cider should be sold at five cents a glass.

The boys started off well as the day was hot and the people

81 thirsty. Each boy cried the merits of the beverage he offered for sale.

"Only five cents a glass for the best, the purest and sweetest cider on the ground," shouted Dan.

"Mine's just as good if not a little bit better," replied Sam as he saw a customer approaching the stand of his competitor.

"Here's a drink Susie. Don't cost you a cent," said Sam dippinfg up a glass of cider for the girl.

Dan became somewhat jealous when he saw his sweetheart drinking at Sam's stand. As soon as he could catch the girl's eye he motioned for her to come to his place of business and take a drink with him.

"Here Susie," he said with a smile, "take two glasses with me. Mine's better than Sam's."

"One glass will be suffisient for me Dan," smiled the girl.

While Dan and Susie were engaged in conversation, Sam's dog, Bulger came over to investigate--perhaps thinking he would meet with Dan's dog Tige. Tige was off somewhere--perhaps chasing a rabbit. Bulger was hot and spying the tub of cider under the table came to the conclusion that he would take a bath in the tub.

"Bulger's in your tub of cider," exclaimed Susie as she happened to glance down and saw the condition of things.

Dan made a grab for the dog, caught the animal by the scruff of its neck, dragged him from its bath and hit him with a club that sent the beast howling to its master.

Of course Sam was bound to invetigate matters in order to ascertain why his faithful dog had been mistreated by his competitor in business. After explanations were made the matter was amicably adjusted between the boys--and that without a fight.

Sam went back to his stand and yelled for more customers saying "Here's your good cider, only five cents a glass."

Dan quietly passed the word around that he was selling "two glasses for five cents."

In a short time Dan had more customers than he could wait on. The reduction in price appealed to the cider drinkers who were not of course aware of the fact that Tige had taken a bath in the fluid.

Sam saw the crowd around Dan's stand and walked over to find the reason for the popularity of his friend.

"Two for five cents," said Dan as he dipped up the last glass from the tub and handed it to a customer with a smile. "There's no more at any price."

"Hold on," yelled Sam. "There's been a dog in that cider." He was too late with his warning for there was not another drop in the tub and the last glass had been swalled by a customer.

When he discovered the cause of the slump in the beverage and remembered that he had treated his sweetheart to two glasses, Ben Brown became enraged, grabbed Dan by the collar, gave him a shake and with considerable anger exclaimed:

"What in the devil do you mean by selling cider in which a dog has been wallowing?"

"Because," grinned Dan, "the cider was too good to throw away and more than that you got the worth of your money. The hair sank to the bottom and the fleas hopped off and made their escape."

"Well, dog-gone your skin," replied Ben with a scowl, "I have a good notion to thresh you."

"Better not try it," chuckled Dan as he walked off jingling his money.

Sam and Dan left the picnic grounds that afternoon arm in arm. Although Dan had kicked Sam's dog, it was under circumstances that were pueuliarly aggravating. The insult to Bulger was soon forgotten--Bulger himself did not seem to hold any grudge against his master's friend. The boys had had lots of fun and that made up for all the petty annoyances of the day.

83

There is nothing on earth that is more conducive to ill feelings or a fight between country boys than a misunderstanding as to the particular merits of demerits of their dogs. The boy who will not defend his dog from insult or abuse is too cowardly to own a dog.

The love for the dog is not confined to the boy alone--it even extends to the man. Man nor boy, ever had a more true, loyal of faithful friend--outside his mother--than the common-ordinary-everyday-country dog.

A few years ago in Missouri were two neighbors--John Smith and Bill Brown. Smith owned a dog--Brown was without a dog--he didn't like dogs. One day the dogless man kicked, struck, abused and mistreated his neighbor's dog.

Smith resented the insult to his dog and as a result the men had a fight. Smith threshed Brown and every lick he hit the man, Smith exclaimed: "You kicked my dog, you hit my dog. Durn you take that," as he pounded his adversary.

"I'll sue you for assault and battry," snarled Brown.

"Sue and be damned," replied Smith.

The matter was taken into court. Senator Vest was employed to defend Smith. In his speech before the court in defense of his client Mr. Vest used the following language:

"Gentlemen of the Jury: The best friend a man has in this world may turn against him and become his enemy. His son and daughter that he has reared with loving care may become ungrateful. Those who are nearest and dearest to us, those whom we trust with our happiness and our good name, may become traitors to their faith. The money that a man has he may lose. It flies away from him when he may need it most. Man's reputation may be sacrificed in a moment of ill considered action. The people who are prone to fall on their knees and do us honor when success is with us may be the first to throw the stone of malice when failure settles its cloud upon our heads. The one absolutely unselfish friend a man may have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is the dog.

"Gentlemen of the Jury: A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, when the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer, he will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounter with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince.

"When all other friends desert, he remains. When riches take wings and reputation falls to pieces he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journey through the heavens. If fortune drives the master forth an outcast into the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him, to guard him against danger, to fight against his enemies, and when the last scene of all comes and death takes his master in its embrace and his body is laid away in the cold ground, no matter if all other friends pursue their way, there by his graveside will the noble dog be found, his head between his paws and his eyes sad, but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even to death."

It is a part of the history of the case that the jury,not with unwet eyes,gave a verdict for the Senator's client without leaving the jury box.

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Dan Boblin and Sam Johnson were simply typical country boys of the long ago. While they were full of fun and frolic and up to any and all kinds of mischief,yet they were as far as possible from doing anything that might be regarded as a criminal. They both had good mothers and respected fathers. The boys were thruthful,though at times each one let his vivid imagination get the better of him.

When Dan was about six years of age his mother noticed a growing disposition on the part of the boy to magnify or exaggerate when telling of some incident that had occurred. This was a souce of worry to the good woman.

"Mother! Oh,Mother!" excitedly exclaimed Dan one day as he rushed into the room where his mother was sitting. "The devil is coming up the lane and will be here in a minute and will ceratinly catch all of us. We'd better hide before he gets here."

"What do you mean Dan Boblin?" demanded the mother. She walked to the door and saw Mr.Brown's red bull coming toward the home. The animal had its tail over its back,was pawing up the earth,raising a great dust and bellowing in its loudest and deepest bass voice.

"Son,you know very well that it is Mr.Brown's bull and that it is not old scratch," said the mother

"Well," exclaimed the boy drawing a long breath, "--I really thought it was the devil. He has long horns,his tail was curled over his back and he was bellowing like he wanted to catch somebody. I see now that I was mistaken."

"Now," said Mrs.Boblin, "you know you have told a story. You must ask the Lord to forgive you for this sin. I want you to go into your littl bed-room,talk to the Lord about it and ask Him to pardon you and promise Him that you will never tell another story while you live.

"All right mother," replied Dan as he went to the designated place of prayer and repentance. "Let Tige go with me."

His mother could hear Dan making a noise as if talking to some one--which in fact he was doing--he was talking to Tige. After awhile the boy came out all smiles and seemed to be perfectly happy.

"Did you talk to the Lord about the story you told?" inquired the mother.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Well,what did the Lord say?"

With a merry twinkle in his eye,Dan replied: "I told the Lord that I was mighty sorry that I storied about that old bull and asked Him to forgive me."

"What did the Lord say?"

"He said all right,that ~~that~~ when He made the bull,He thought at first that it was the devil," smiled Dan.

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There is one thing--the mule--an animal in which there has been no change in either its make-up or its deviltry from the time the beast rode beneath the spreading tree some three thousand years ago and left its rider--Absolom--hanging on the branches thereof.

The mule is a happy-go-lucky kind of a fellow. He has neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity. It is his to go through the world apparently uncomplaining of the burdens he may bear or draw or the insults that may heaped on him--yet with an eye ever open to the main chance to dump his rider by the road side or give him a kick in the short ribs or the stomach as opportunity affords.

"Sam," said Deacon Johnson one afternoon, "I want you to take Mr.Boblin's mule home and tell him that I'm much obliged for the use of old Pete today."

"All right dad," responded Sam as he mounted Pete and started on his way to Mr.Boblin's to return the borrowed property.

Sam was delighted as he knew he would meet with Dan and that the two boys would be bound to have a good time while they were together. He carried with him a good sized hickory limb with which to urge the beast.

"What's the matter with you,you old cross-eyed devil?" said Sam as old Pete came to a sudden halt in the road and refused to proceed any farther.

"Get a move on yourself," demanded Sam as he began to wield the hickory with vigor. But old Pete persisted in wheeling round with his head turned in the opposite direction from the ~~Johnson~~ Boblin home. About the time the boy had worn the hickory to a frazzle and had yelled himself hoarse,Dr.Marsum came riding that way. Sam was hot and the mule seemed to be cool and collected.

"Waht's the matter Sam?" inquired the doctor.

"Why sir,can't you see? The mule has balked,he's took the studs," replied Sam as he slid from Pete's back.

"Here,let me fix him," said the doctor as he took a bottle of some hot medicine from his saddle-pockets.

"Look out," said Sam. "The first thing you know that mule will kick the stuffing out of you."

The doctor took hold of the bridle,patted old Pete on the head and poured some of the stuff on the mule's back. Pete soon began to shake himself--the hot stuff was taking effect--the beast gave a smart jerk,snorted and started toward the Boblin "home" he-e hawing" and running as if he had been set on fire.

"Well,I'll be dinged," exclaimed Dan as the mule disapperaed over the hill.

"Say doc,have you got any more of that hot stuff?"

"Yes,plenty of it," replied the man.

"Are you sure you've got a whole lot of it?" asked the boy.

"I think I have all that is needed. But why do you ask?"inquired the doctor.

"Well,I wish you'd pour some of it on me,for I've got to catch that mule," smiled Sam.

The doctor rode on and felt very well satisfied that Sam would in time catch up with old Pete,even if he did not have any of the hot medicine to assist him in the race.

The mule went straight to his home and was followed by Sam,who on arrival at the Boblin home,found old Pete leisurely eating grass in the front yard.

"Did Pete throw you?" asked Mr.Boblin as the boy walked up to gate.

"No,--yes,--well no,not exeatly," replied Sam. "He took the studs and when I got off his back to get a switch he ran away from me."

"Why,here's some of the hair gone from old Pete's back," exclaimed Mr.Boblin observing the place where the hot stuff had been applied.

"Yes," replied Sam. "The back-band scraped him there. Dad said to tell you that he was very much obliged for the use of old Pete and that when he could do as much for you to let him know. Say,Mr.Boblin, that's a mighty fine mule of yours."

"Yes,very,"was the reply.

* * * *

The following apostrophe to the country boy by the Commercial Traveler's Magazine,under the caption of a "List of Exploded Traditions," deserves and is given a place in this chapter:

"I'd like to be a boy again without a woe or care,with freckles scattered on my face and hayseed in my hair.

"I'd like to rise at 4 o'clock and do a hundred chores,saw the wood and feed the hogs and lock the stable doors and herd the hens and watch the bees and take the mule to drink and teach the turkeys

how to swim so that they wouldn't sink, and milk about a hundred cows a and bring the wood to burn and stand out in the sun all day and churn, and wear my brother's cast off clothes and walk four miles to school, and get a licking every day for breaking some old rule and then get home at night and do the chores some more and milk the cows and feed the hogs and curry mules galore, and then crawl wearily upstairs to seek my little bed, and hear dad say 'That worthless boy! He isn't worth his bread!'

"I'd like to be a boy again--a boy has so much fun, a round of mirth from rise to set of sun. I guess there's nothing pleasanter than closing stable doors and herding hens and chasing bees and doing evening chores."

CHAPTER IX.

CRAZY MEG.

"Oh Mr.Boblin. Mr.Boblin," excitedly exclaimed Mrs.Jordan early one morning as she rushed into the Boblin home,--"there's a crazy woman at my home and I tell you that I'm considerably upset about the matter. I don't know what to do about it."

"When did she come? Tell me all about it," replied Mr.Boblin.

"When I got up this morning and opened the front door, the woman was sitting on the steps. When I said 'Howdy', she rose to her feet, walked into the room and took a chair just as if she were a member of the family," said Mrs.Jordan with growing excitement.

"Is she still there and at your home?"

"She was when I left and I have no doubt she is right where I left her."

"This must be looked into," said Mr.Boblin. "I'll go with you and see what can be done."

"I wish you would. I'm so upset that I hardly know what I'm doing or saying," replied the woman.

As the two neared the home of Mrs.Jordan they saw that the woman was occupying the chair which she had taken when she first entered the house.

The strange woman was apparently about twenty years of age. While she showed signs of recent great suffering--both bodily and mentally--yet she was one who was wonderfully attractive. She was well formed, of medium weight and stature, with a finely shaped head which was covered by a suit of beautiful chestnut hair. Her skin was a lovely tint and was as smooth and soft as the finest velvet.

Although the woman's face was marred by pain and lack of recent application of water, yet it was easy to see that it was a face

of more than average beauty and refinement. Her eyes were a liquid hazel,which when at rest were wonderful and most intelligent--and when excited became almost as blazing stars. Her every lineament showed at a glance that the woman was well born,well bred and was even now--though a demented being--a woman--through no fault of hers--a creature of circumstances for which she was in no wise responsible.

Her clothes were of fine texture,well made and well fitting--but were torn and soiled. Her shoes were stylish,of the latest pattern and showed that the woman had waded braches and creeks and that she had walked over stones and other rough places. She was worn and weary and presented a pitiable sight.

It was plainly evident from the appearance of the woman that she did not belong to the humbler walks of life,but that she was born and reared in affluence. There was nothing to indicate that her life had been anything other than that of a pure innocent woman. Her manner indicated one of gentle breeding.

Word soon went out that there was "a crazy woman at Mrs.Jordan's." Before noon most of the women of the settlement had called to see the stranger--some out of idle curiosity--but many for the purpose of extending help and sympathy to one of their sex.

Mrs.Jordan was so excited that for a long time she could scarcely talk or answer questions intelligently. But at last she was able tell how she found the woman at her door and of the queer conduct of the stranger after she entered the house.

"What is your name?" asked Mrs.Boblin of the woman.

After a pause she answered, "He always called me Meg."

"Where is your home?" inquired Mrs.Boblin

"Home,------Home,----- Home," moaned the woman. Then as if trying to call to mind the question that had been asked,she said: "Over there," and then she began to mumble incoherently.

"Poor thing," whispered Miss Mandy Simpson as she knelt by the woman who had been placed on the bed.

The woman opened her eyes with a wild stare, looked into Mandy's face and muttered: "'Twas a lovely night in June-------The full moon was just rising over the hill.-----It was only last night.--------He held my hand.---- He looked into my eyes and oh, then he kissed me.-----I promised to be his wife.------- He said he'd come again." Then the woman moaned and hummed an old love tune.

The watchers looked into the faces of eachother and they at once understood that a tragedy of some kind was responsible for the condition of the sufferer--what that tragedy was, no one present knew, nor did they learn until months later the cause of the suffering of the stranger.

"What is her name? where did she come from? how did she get there and what the cause?" were all questions that for the time being were puzzling and remained unanswered.

The sympathy of all went out to the one who was a stranger among strangers in a strange land. With one accord they believed her to be some unfortunate who was in no way responsible for her present condition. No one would even allow a suspicion to enter his or her mind that the woman was other than a pure and innocent girl--who from some cause unknown to them--had been suddenly bereft of reason and in her delirium had wandered away from home and friends.

At the time of this occurrence there was not in the state of Kentucky--nor in any other state of the Union--what is now known as an asylum for the insane. These unfortunates of all kinds became a charge upon the people among whom they happened to be found.

"What shall we do with this woman?" asked Deacon Johnson in a trembling voice.

"She must be looked after and protected to the best of our

ability. Perhaps the Lord directed her to this community for some good purpose," suggested Miss Mandy Simpson.

The suggestion of Miss Mandy met with a hearty response from every one present. "But what plans shall be adopted?" was a question that had to be settled by the people themselves.

Mrs.Jordan was a widow who lived in an humble,but clean and comfortable home by the road side. She was poor,but respectable,a woman of fairly good education,very well read and was a good conversationalist.She made her living by weaving and spinning for the neighbors. She also kept a cow,some pigs and raised plenty of chickens. She was a christain woman and had the good will and good opinion of all the people of the settlement. She was always ready to go to the sick room and minister to the comfort of the afflicted.

When the crazy woman came to her home that morning,of course Mrs.Jordan was very much excited,but before the day was over she was irresistibly drawn to the poor creature.

While the people were in the front yard discussing the matter of the disposition of the crazy woman,Mrs.Jordan interrupted the conversation by exclaiming:

"That woman is no common ordinary person. I believe she is as pure as the driven snow."

"We agree with you in your belief," was the ready response of all.

"I feel and know that I am right. It is true that when I found her at my door that I was considerable disturbed,but now I am collected and feel at myself again. From some cause I have no dread of her. I am peculiarly drawn to the woman. So far as I am concerned,I am willing to take care of her until other and more satisfactory arrangements can be made for her comfort," said Mrs.Jordan.

"Mrs.Jordan,we'll see that you are assited in this new responsibility that you propose to assume," said Mr.Boblin and others.

The women agreed that they would contribute as needed and that Mrs.Jordan should have the custody of the woman--that is for the time being. A neat bed and bedding was prepared and this was placed near a window where the stricken woman could have a good view of the public road and the passersby.

While the woman was demented and seemed incapable of intelligent thought or expression--or at leat intelligent action--yet she had shown no signs of violence. When a kindness was shown her, she would smile, her eyes would sparkle and she would murmur a simple "thank you."

"I'll spend the night with Mrs.Jordan," said Miss Mandy when the day was almost gone,--"and assist her as she will be lonesome until she becomes more used to her charge."

"Thank you very much," replied Mrs.Jordan. "While I'm not afraid to stay with her and by ourselves, yet I do feel that at least tonight I would rather have company."

The woman slept well during the night and when food was placed before her, she ate with a relish. She smiled, her eyes gleamed and she said: "Thank you."

"Mandy," siad Mrs.Jordan next morning --"do you know that from some cause I feel that the woman who has come to my home is one who is worthy the sympathy and the very best care that can possibly come to her."

"Perhaps Mrs .Jordan, you are entertaining an angel unawares," smiled Miss Mandy.

In a short time the stranger settled ~~won~~ down to a humdrum kind of life. Sometimes when addressed, or a question was directed to her, she would stare into vacancy as if trying to call to mind some important event in her life, place her had to her head and begin to mumble the words about "the lovely night in June, the full moon, the kiss, the prom-

ed return," then as on the first day of her coming she would lapse into a semi-conscious condition and begin her low humming.

As the people had been unable to learn anything of her name--except that she had said it was "Meg," it was not long before she was known as "Crazy Meg."

It was but a short time until Crazy Meg--in a way--adapted her self to the conditions by which she was surrounded. She apparently regained her lost strength--but her mind--as at the time of her coming to the settlement--was a complte blank. She learned the names and the faces of those of those who ministered to her and at times conversed more or less intelligently--but would perhaps in the middle of a sentence, stop suddenly, stare vacantly into space and begin to mumble incoherently. For sometime she seemed to neither improve nor grow worse.

She rarely attempted to stray from the yard. Sometimes she would walk to the front gate, gaze up the road in an eastern direction, look eagerly as if expecting some one, but as the stranger passed by she would simply look disappointed. Perhaps when tired of this watching and waiting, she would cast one more longing glance up the road, turn and walk back into the house murmuring, "Not today.-----May be tomorrow.----Not today----but tomorrow.------He said he'd come."

"Dear Meg; supper's ready," was the usual greeting of Mrs. Jordan as the woman would leave her vigil at the gate and walk wearily into the house and take her place at the table.

"Thank you Mrs.Jordan," was the invariable reply of Meg.

"How's Meg today?" was the every day greeting of Mandy Simpson as she made her almost daily visits to the afflicted woman.

With a smile Meg would reply; "Neither better nor worse----but will be better soon." Then with a smile that was almost angelic: "There is a good time coming.-------Yes, he's coming sometime."

CHAPTER X.

RUTH MARTIN.

"Julia," said Mr. Miller addresing his wife, "-here is a letter I have just received from our niece, Ruth Martin of Macon, Georgia, in which she informs me of the death of her mother which event occurred a little over two weeks ago."

"I am sorry to hear the sad news, but why do you speak of her as our niece?" demanded Mrs. Martin. "She is in no way related to me as you well know."

"Of course I know that she is not related to you by blood, but she is the only child of my now departed sister," replied the man with some ~~worth~~ warmth. "Although she may now be an orphan and poor in this world's goods, I can assure you madam that she is no discredit to either you or myself."

"Pardon my unthoughtful speech," begged Mrs. Miller. "I feared at first that perhaps as she had lost her mother that she might want to come to Kentucky to make her home with us. In that event I want to assure you that it shall meet with my strongest disapproval."

"In this letter she has asked that I, as her only surviving relative-so far as she knows-shall offer her a home," replied the man.

"Waht of her financial condition?" demanded Mrs. Miller. "You know her father died several years ago and left her and her mother in very straightened circumstances. Is she a pauper?"

"Not exactly a pauper," replied Mr. Miller. "She writes me that she has a small income of about one hundred dollars a year and that she is willing to teach or to do almost anything else that is honorable in order to make her way through the world."

"I do not want any poor kin hanging around our home who shall be a braw-back to our daughter Flora, who is regarded as the most de-

sirable catch in the whole settlemen~~t~~," snapped Mrs.Miller.

"Nor do I want any poverty stricken relatives here in the home tagging around after me calling me "cousin Flora," and otherwise causing me to be annoyed and humiliated,'" very impatiently answered Flora the eighteen year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs.Miller.

"You may both rest assured that Ruth Martin is a lady of whom neither of you need be ashamed," replied Mr.Miller. "I visited my sister-as you know-about a year ago and while the world-so far as money is concerned-had perhaps gone wrong with the husband and father before he died and left them with but little property of any kind-yet the state of Georgia never had a better people than they. Ruth is educated, cultivated and refined-is about the same age of Flora and could and should be a pleasant companion for our daughter."

"Poor and pretty," exclaimed Mrs.Miller. "You would bring your niece here who would no doubt show her appreciation of all our kindness by trying to out-shine and otherwise eclipse Flora,who at the present time has some most excellent prospects of matrimonial alliance."

"We don't want nor don't need any cousin Ruth at this stage of the game," rather hotly retorted Flora.

"Nor are we going to allow anyhting of the kind," snapped Mrs.Miller.

"Dad," siad Jack the ten year old ~~son~~ crippled son of Mr. and Mrs.Miller, "-is cousin Ruth a real pretty and sweet girl?"

"Yes,my son."

"Is she good and kind to little crippled boys?" inquired Jack.

"Yes my son. She is a christian woman and I can assure you when she comes that you are going to be perfectly delighted with her."

"She's not coming." exclaime~~d~~ Mrs.Miller and Flora both in the same breath.

"Please let her come. I am so lonesome. I know she will be

good to me and that she wont be cross with me when my legs hurt and ache," pleaded the boy.

"Are not Flora and I kind to you?" demanded the mother.

"Sometimes you are when you have time and feel like it;but I want some one who will not scold me and tell me that I am a nuisance and in the way when company comes,or when I am so sick and tired that I can hardly live," cried the boy.

Looking at the boy the father said:"Jack,do you want ~~y ou want~~ your cousin Ruth to come and make this her home?"

"Yes,Dad," was the prompt reply.

"Ruth is coming," was the positive reply of the father.

"Oh,I'm so glad," joyfully exclaimed the boy.

Mr.Miller s/aw a dark and ominous cloud rise on the faces of the wife and daughter,but they knew full well that if the man determined in his mind to have his niece come and make her home with them that it would be useless to argue the question any further. While the two women felt more or less chagrinned over the matter they saw that they would have to yield to the inevitable. Jack felt correspondingly happy over the decision of his father.

Jack had nearly all his life been a cripple and had been a great sufferer. His mother-while a good woman in a way-had always felt that the son had been sent on her more as an affliction to herself tha something to be loved and petted. She had for her son a certain amount of mother love,but she was so absorbed in other things-so interested in seeing that Flora should be the belle of the country that she often neglected the child that so much needed and wanted the ministrations of an affectionate mother.

Flora was so engrossed in her own affairs-was so thoroughly selfish-that she ever/rarely found time or sought an opportunity to comfort the only brother in his afflictions. Jack soon learned to seek

elsewhere than mother and sister when in need of encouragement or sympathy. Poor child-had it not been for the father who was never too tired or busy-when at home-to minister to the unfortunate son, the life of little Jack would have been one that was cheerless and hopeless.

Yet with all this Mrs.Miller and her daughter Flora managed to keep at least on speaking terms with the people with whom they were compelled to associate. The mother and the daughter were tolerated-if nothing more-perhaps more on account of Mr.Miller than for any other reason.

"Flora," said Mrs.Miller a few days after the announcement of the proposed coming of Ruth Martin, "-I suppose we may make up our minds to accept the decision of your father as final in reference to the coming of your cousin Ruth."

"Mother,please don't refer to her as cousin Ruth," replied Flora with a sneer. I suppose she is my cousin,but even if she is I hope she shall have the good sense not to presume too much on that honor. I wish I had never herad of her."

"One thing is certain," repled the mother, "-whether we like it or not you must not forget that your father will demand that Ruth shall be treated with respect while she is under our roof. We both know him well enough to know that he will not brook any interference with his plans,nor will he fail to notice any slight we may offer to the young lady."

"I wish father was not so"countrified" in his ways and not quite so ready to respond to every "distress call" that comes from others," whined Miss Flora

"so do I," responded the mother.

"I am glad cousin Ruth is coming," spoke Jack who up to this time had taken no part in the conversation.

"We shall appoint you a special committee of one to look after the comfort of your cousin Ruth when she arrives," suggested Flora.

"I accept the appointment with pleasure," replied the boy.

"What room shall Ruth occupy?" asked Flora of her mother.

"As Jack seems to take such an interest in her welfare and as that room is some distance from yours and is rarely occupied, perhaps it would be well enough to give her the one next and beyond that of Jack," suggested Mrs. Miller.

"That suits me to a nicety," smiled Jack. "I want her close to me. Cousin Ruth and I are going to be great friends. I can hardly wait till she comes."

"The greater friends you two may be the better it will suit me," was the unkind response of Flora.

No sooner did Mr. Miller receive the letter from his niece, Ruth Martin of Georgia, asking for a home with the family, than he replied, assuring her-that so far as he was concerned-there was a welcome awaiting her arrival in Kentucky. He thought it better not to acquaint her with the fact that his wife and daughter were not favorable to the proposition.

While Mrs. Miller and Flora had in a way acquiesced in the request-or rather the demand-of the husband and father that a home should be given Ruth, yet it had been with bad grace that they had given their consent to the plan. They however well knew that further opposition would avail nothing.

Mr. Miller was a good, kind and affectionate father and husband and while he was usually inclined to yield to the wishes of his wife and daughter, yet when it came to a matter of right and justice he was as autocratic as if he were a king or an emperor.

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Ruth was expected to arrive at Turpin the next Tuesday morning by stage coach which was due about 10 o'clock. The trip from Georgia

had to be overland to Cincinnati and from there by boat down the Ohio river by Louisville to Redbanks,where the stage coach again became the mode of conveyance.The last lap of the trip was a long and tiresome drive over rough roads--that is from Redbanks to Turpin. The whole trip from Georgia at that time required more than a week in the making.

On the morning of the appointed time of the expected arrival of Ruth,Mr.Miller had his horses hitched to the carriage for the purpose of going to Turpin to meet his neice. Mrs.Miller and Flora offered excuses for not accompanying the man. Jack was however ready and took his seat by the side of his father,happy to know that he was soon to meet with his new cousin,whom he knew he would love on first sight.

On account of a broken harness,which had not been noticed until after Mr.Miller and Jack had left home,it was necessary to stop on the road and make needed repairs before proceeding further. This consumed nearly an hour's time and thus the man and the boy failed to be on time when the stage coach arrived at its destination.

When Ruth alighted from her long and tiresome journey in front of the only hotel in the town,she looked in every direction and was surprised not to see her uncle--as he had promised in his letter to her that he would meet her on her arrival.

After a few moments she walked into the hotel where were assembled the usual loungers found in hotels of the smaller towns of that time. Her pretty face and neat trim figure soon attracted attention. There were present two young men,one of whose name will be mentioned quite prominently in the future pages of this book and one other of lesser note. These two men were strangers to eachother,as they had never met previous to that morning. One of these was a citizen of Turpin,while the other--like Ruth Martin--was a new arrival.

Henry Benton was the son of the leading merchant and business man of Turpin who took a greater pride in wearing fine clothes,part-

ing his hair in the middle and engaging in silly talk than he did in his father's business. Tom Marcum was a young man who had just graduated with honors from a medical school in another state and was seeking a location where he could practice his chosen profession.

Ruth Martin was a southern woman, southern born and southern bred. She had brown hair, brown eyes, a clear skin, pearly teeth, rosy lips and was of splendid form and was about eighteen years of age. She was neatly and well dressed, yet not extravagantly attired and was just such a woman as would attract attention at any time and under any condition.

"Ain't she a beauty?" exclaimed Henry Benton loud enough for her to hear what he said as he looked at Ruth and winked at one or two other young men who grinned in reply.

Dr. Tom Marcum frowned in such a way as to show that he did not approve of this familiarity. Ruth caught the eye of the man and thanked him inwardly--though he did not know it at the time.

"You are a stranger in the town, are you not?" asked Henry Benton.

"Yes," was the reply.

"I have nothing to do at present and if you wish I will take pleasure in showing you over the town," ventured Henry Benton.

"No thank you," modestly replied the girl.

"Well, good by then. I have other fish to fry," said the man as he left the room followed by his companions.

Ruth showed very plainly that she was relieved when Benton and his friends walked out of the door. Turning to Dr. Marcum, who although to her a stranger--yet she felt that he was a gentleman--she asked: "Are you acquainted with Mr. Tom Miller of the Beech Creek Settlement?"

"No, madam," was the polite reply. "I am a stranger here, hav-

ing arrived here only this morning on the stage coach that you perhaps met an hour or two ago as it was on its way to Redbanks."

"I was expecting to meet Mr.Miller--who is my uncle and supposed he would be here before this time."

"Let me assure you Miss ----"

"---Miss Martin," interrupted Ruth.

"---that I would take pleasure in giving you any information possible. Perhaps your uncle will arrive in a short time," said the stranger. "My name is Marcum--Tom Marcum--with apologies--Dr.Tom Marcum."

"Are you going to locate in Turpin?" inquired Ruth.

"I think not. It is my intention to make a visit in a few days to the Beech Creek Settlement with the idea of locating among those people as I have heard good reports of both the people and the country," replied the man.

Looking out of a window,Ruth saw a carriage approaching. She ran to the door and at once recognized her uncle. She sprang to meet him and was introduced to Jack whom she kissed affectionately. Dr.Marcum came to the door and was introduced to Mr.Miller,who upon learning that he was a physician,with the intention of making a visit to the country,urged the young man to investigate the community and expressed the hope that in time Dr.Marcum might become a Beech Creeker in name and reality."

Said Mr.Miller to the man,"Dr.Marcum,I believe there is a good opening for you in our settlement. Dr Champlin who has been the 'family physician' to most of the people of the Beech Creek Settlement for many years is growing old and is wanting some young man--who can come well recommended--to unite with him and help him in his practice. I can safely recommend Dr.Champlin as being a very successful physician and a most honorable gentleman."

"Thank you very much," replied Dr.Marcum. "I shall visit the settlement in a short time and while there shall call to see Dr.Champlin."

"And by the way Dr.Marcum,when you come out to investigate, do not fail to call at my home where I assure you that you shall be cordially received by both myself and family."

"Your kindness is appreciated and I assure you that I shall sooner or later accept you kind invitation," replied Dr.Marcum as he glanced at Miss Martin.

As Turpin was only five miles from the Miller home,Mr.Miller, Jack and Ruth made the trip in a little less than an hour. When they arrived the mid-day meal was ready for the table. While Mrs.Miller and Flora did not evince any very great delight in the coming of Ruth,yet be it said to their good judgment,they received the young lady in a very cordial manner. They had been given to understand by Mr.Miller that the coming guest should be treated with due respect. The mother and daughter were diplomatic enough to know that the requests,or demands of the husband and father must be respected.

Before the arrival at the home,Jack and Ruth had become the very best of friends. Her heart went out in sympathy to the afflicted boy,while her gentleness of manner drew him at once to her. During the short drive of less than an hour they laid their plans for their future comradeship. This pleased Mr.Miller who very readily assented to and agreed with them in their arrangements.

"Flora," asked Mrs.Miller a few days after the arrival of Ruth "What is ~~the~~ your opinion of your ~~aunt~~ cousin?"

"She is very good looking," was the cautious reply.

"Yes,she is all that and even more. She is intelligent,kind and gentle. We must be very cautious about introducing her or having her present too much with your male admirers as she might supplant you in their attentions," siad the mother.

"I shall see that she is kept in the back-ground as much as possible. These 'poor beauties' are sometimes a dangerous proposition," exclaimed Flora. "I do wish I had never seen or heard of Ruth Martin."

"Do not let her meet Henry Benton. When he calls to see you, do not let her know that he is here, nor let him know that there is such a person in existence. I believe he has fallen in love with you and as you know his father is the richest man in Turpin and Henry is the only child."

"Yes, the only child and a spoiled one," answered Flora.

"You yourself are perhaps just a little spoiled," suggested the mother.

"Yes, Henry and I are a pair of badly spoiled ones and perhaps well matched in that particular. Any how he is the best catch I know of anywhere in this country," smiled Flora.

"See that your new cousin does not have a chance at him until after you have the matter settled to your own satisfaction," was the warning of Mrs. Miller.

"Trust me to manage both Henry Benton and Ruth Martin. My dear cousin shall be kept in her proper place while under this roof," said Flora with emphasis.

Flora and her mother did not know that Ruth Martin and Henry Benton had met at Turpin the morning of her arrival. If they had known the circumstances of that meeting and the unfavorable opinion Ruth had formed of that young man they would not have been so much worried about any future meetings of the two.

CHAPTER XI.

PROF.GREEN AS A WIDOWER.

Prof.Green had been the teacher in the Beech Creek settlement for many years. In fact he was the first one who ever taught in that community.When he first came to that neighborhood the school house that was erected for him and the few children of the district,was a decidedly primitive affair.

Now,the old building had been torn down and a new one--more up-to-date--but which ~~at pr~~ as a twentieth century affair would be regarded as a relic of the "good old times"--had taken its place.Population had increased until an assistant teacher was necessary.

The professor had by economy and good management been able to buy a small but fertile tract of land and on this he had erected a neat and comfortable home. Prof.Green was regarded as a fixture and was satisfied with the results of his labors,both as a teacher and a citizen.He had been married,but about two years before this time his wife had sickened and died.

During the long sickness of Mrs.Green,Miss Mandy Simpson had spent many long and weary nights administering to the sick woman.Prof. Green remembered all these kind and unselfish acts on the part of Miss Mandy. He had however not ventured heretofore to pay his respects as a suitor to any woman in the community,though there were times when his mind turned to the woman who had been so kind to his now departed companion. The Prof. had employed a kind old negress who looked after his house-keeping.

Notwithstanding the fact that he was leading a lonely life and frequently determined in his mind that he would some time seek another matrimonial partner,yet when he came face to face with the proposition, he became alarmed and took what is denominated "cold feet."

He was not afraid of any man on top side of the earth; he was ready to thresh the largest boy in school if necessary, but when it came to making love to some woman—however weak and effeminate she might be—the very idea almost caused him to run away from himself. He worshipped from afar.

One afternoon as he sat on his front porch trying in his mind to solve some abstract? problem in Smiley's Arithmetic—or it may be it was that he was discussing with himself how to increase interest in the "big spelling" class—or perhps he was arrainging a program for the big exhibition that was to take place at the end of the school—Bro. Riley rode up to the gate.

"Come in Parson," was the friendly greeting which invitation was cheerfully accepted by the visitor.

After the greetings of the day betwen the two men and after various subjects had been discussed pro and con Bro. Riley said:

"Prof. Green, it seems to me that you are leading a mighty lonely life with no one about here except aunt Sukey—the cook. You need the companionship of a good woman."

"I have my books which I read and study when alone, and frequently friends drop in and thus I am able to pass the time off in a way, perhaps however in a way that is not at all times entirely satisfying."

"What do you do when you get sick?"

"Aunt Sukey looks after me as best she can."

"You need some one else. The fact is Professor, you need a wife. The Bible says, 'it is not good to be alone.'"

"How shall I get a wife? I do not suppose there is a woman in the whole settlement who would be willing to marry me," exclaimed the man in surprise.

"Have you asked any one of them to marry you?" smiled the parson.

"No," was the emphatic reply.

"Why don't you set-up to some one of the marriageable women of your acquaintance?" demanded the parson.

"Oh,well--why,because--oh I don't know," replied the man blushing like a maiden.

"That's no reason," replied the parson.

"Perhaps not. The truth is,I'm out of practice in the way of courting."

"Get in practise! Go about it as you would go about applying for a school.Go about it as you would any other business proposition," advised the man.

"I suppose I shall have to get you to assist me--that is if I should conclude to enter the contest," smiled the Prof.

"Have you ever thought of any one particular woman in this connection?"

"No. Have you?"

"You are acquainted with Miss Mandy Simpson. What do you think of her?"

"Oh,she's too good for me. She woundn't have me at any price," groaned the professor.

"Have you courted her--have you asked her to marry you?" asked Bro.Riley.

"Good Lord, no. I'd be afraid to court her. I don't believe she would marry any man living," responded the professor.

"You are mistaken when you say she woundn't marry any man living. No normal woman ever lived who wouldn't marry if the right man courted her," suggested Bro.Riley.

"Perhaps so. But I doubt if she would for one minute regard me as the right man," said the professor.

"Prof.Green,if I make an engagement for you to call on Miss Mandy some evening will you promise to visit her at her home?"

"Do you mean it Parson?" excitedly asked the man.

"I never was more in earnest in my life."

"Well--y-e-s, n-o, ye-s-s,oh no, y-e-s-s. I suppose so it will be all right and proper," answered the professor turning red in the face.

"I'll make the engagement and shall expect you to be on hand at the appointed time."

"Say parson,say,do you really think it would be all right for me to call on Miss Mandy?"

"Most assuredly."

"Well,now--oh I'm so nervous. I know she will not allow me to to call on her."

"Don't worry about that Professor. I'll see that you are welcomed to the Simpson home."

"Oh,parson,for goodness' sake don't tell any body about this. If Sam Johnson and Dan Boblin should find this out I would never hear the last of it," pleaded the Professor.

"I'll keep your secret for you and wish you the very greatest success. I shall make the appointment for next Friday night."

Then parson Riley mounted his horse and rode off in the direction of the Simpson home. And as he rode he mused to himself and said: "What an excellent match would Prof.Green and Mandy make."

Prof.Green sat on the porch and watched the receding figure of Bro.Riley as that good man rode off down the lane. "Good Lord,what have I done," groaned the man. "Suppose Miss Mandy should become offended,tell the parson to attend to his own business,send word to me never to speak to her again and then tell Mrs.Brown all about the whole affair. I should then become the laughing stock of the whole neighborhood."

Beads of perspiration stood on the face of the Professor. He rose from his seat on the porch,looked in the direction taken by the

preacher and if his voice could have carried that far,he would no doubt have demanded of the parson that he should return and make no further effort in the matter.But he was too late. The die had been cast and now Prof.Green felt that he was "in for it."

"Good afternoon," said Bro.Riley as he rode up to the gate at the Simpson home and greeted Miss Mandy who stood in the door.

"Come in," was the kind invitation.

"Where is your mother?" inquired the parson.

"Visting Mrs.Brown," was the answer.

"I am glad of that," said the man, "--as my business is wholly with you."

"I hope no one is dead or dying," said Miss Mandy.

"Oh,no,not so bad as that."

"Are you making up money for the pastor's salary?"inquired the woman.

"No,it is something far more important to you than mere dollars and cents. I want to know if you are in the matrimonial market?" queried the man with a smile.

"Yes and have been for these many years,but up to the present time there have been but few if any bidders. As you are not a widower why do you ask this question?"

"I think I have found a bidder and one who is in every way worthy your respectful consideration."

"Please name the bidder and what he bids?"

"You are acquainted with Prof.Green?"

"Yes,but what of that?"

"What do you think of him?"

"He's a splendid teacher."

"And made a mighty good husband."

"I suppose so,but what have I got to do with all that?"

"Prof.Green wants to call on you."

"He has been here many a time."

"But this time he wants to call to talk on the subject of matrimony."

"How do you know?"

"He told me so less than an hour ago."

"He did?"

"Yes,he did."

"Why don't he talk with me instead of you?" demanded the woman.

"That's what he wants to do. I am an ambassador from him to you and come with a message in which he most humbly begs the privilege of seeing you at your home for no other purpose than to win your love and affection," exclaimed the parson.

Miss Mandy stammered,blushed and said: "Bro.Riley,are you joking? If not what do you mean?"

"I was never more in earnest in my whole life." Then he told her of the recent conversation he had had with the Proffessor. He held up the man to Miss Mandy as being a gentleman of the very finest qualities and begged that she should consider the proposition in regard to the privilege of the promised call from the man.

"He wants to call next Friday evening at 7.30 o'clock. Shall he have that privilege?"

"Y-e-s, no,n-o-o---y-e-s-s,I suppose so," replied the woman blushing deeply.

"Thank you Miss Mandy. I believe he has acted wisely in asking your permission to call and that you have acted equally as wise in accepting his ~~into~~ attentions," sincerely replied the parson.

"Say,Bro.Riley,please don't say anything to anybody about this little talk of ours. If Sam Johnson and Dan Boblin should find it out and tell Mrs.Brown it would be but a short time until every one in the settlement would be talking about me and the Professor."

"I'll keep mum," was the reply.

Then the visitor left. As Bro.Riley up to the home of the professor, the man of books was walking up and down the porch, his hands clasped behind his back and he was in a deep study.

"Hello," said the parson with a smile as he came opposite the gate. "It's all right and you'll be expected to be on hand next Friday evening promptly at 7.30 o'clock."

"I'll be there unless Providentially hindered," was the reply. "Say parson, don't tell anybody about it will you?"

"Not on my life," said the man as he rode away.

"Oh Lord, bless me and Miss Mandy too," sighed the Professor. "Silas Green, you're an old fool to let Bro.Riley know that you ever thought of such a thing as a second marriage," murmured he to himself. "But I've got into it now. I'll be brave. If I fail, I fail and that will be the end of it."

Mandy Simpson was also in a deep study and if at that moment she could have had the opportunity she would ask Bro.Riley to cancel the engagement for the meeting the coming Friday evening.

"Mandy Simpson, you are a fool," sighed the woman. "Prof.Green don't want me. He's a good man and he needs a woman for a companion who is bette r educated, more refined and more intelligent than myself. Well, I'm into it--but the Lord only knows what is to be the result. What fools we women be."

Friday afternoon came and there were two people--a man and a woman--in the Beech Creek settlement whose minds were in a disturbed and perturbed condition.

The woman was busying herself in putting her home in order for the coming of the man--while he himself was preparing for the ordeal--which to him was almost as great as that which faced the three Hebrew children who were waiting to be cast into the fiery furnace.

"Mandy," said Mrs.Simpson after an early supper that evening, "--why is it that you are so excited and why this preparation--are you expecting company?"

"Yes,mother."

"Who is coming? "

"A friend."

"What friend?"

"Prof.Green," answered Mandy in a tremulous voice.

"Well,he has been here many times in the past. I do not see why his coming this evening should be different from his other visits," exclaimed the mother.

"This is a special call--perhaps what might be termed a 'called meeting.'" smiled Mandy.

"Is he coming a courting?"

"Don't know,mother dear."

"He's a good man--but remember he's a Baptist," admonished Mrs .Simpson.

"There are worse people than the Baptists," smiled Mandy.

"Yes I suppose so--Hottentots for instance," was the reply.

When half past seven o'clock arrived Miss Mandy was sitting in the best room. She was neatly attired and had some neighbor peeped in, the opinion would have been--if expressed--that the woman "looked better and prettier than ever before in all her life--that she was really handsome."

A candle was placed on the table. It's light shone out through the window as a beacon to guide the coming man to the presence of the woman--who sat with palpitating heart--listening for the sound of the foot-steps as he should come up the graveled walk--listening for the gentle tap on the dor that should announce the arrival of the expected suitor.

Yet she heard no sound of human being except that of the belated farmer as he was on the way home from the County seat, or perhaps the voice of the country boy as he whistled to his dog while on his way to meet his companion when the two were to join in the hunt for the fatted 'possum, the timid rabbit or the elusive 'coon. The appointed hour of 7.30 had come and gone, then eight, and eight thirty and soon the hands of the clock pointed to the hour of nine—and yet no Prof. Green had arrived to keep the tryst with the waiting woman.

Disappointed, disheartened and vexed, the woman went to the door, she walked to the gate and gazed down the lane with a heart that beat with increased energy—she looked and listened—she saw nothing but a world of darkness and heard nothing but the sound of the whippoorwill as he called to his mate across the fields and the valleys.

She turned from her lonely vigil, went into the room where she had waited so patiently for the coming man, who failed to come, ~~gazed~~ gazed once more into the blackness of the outside world, haeved a sigh, dropped a tear, let down the shade of the window, blew out the light, retired to her chamber, threw herself on the bed and burst into a flood of tears.

It was long after midnight before sleep came to her eyes and then it was only fitful and waking. In the early morning she was aroused from her reverie by the barking of Nebuchadnezzar, the mewing of Alexander, the lowing of Mary Lou, the crowing of General Jackson and the cackling of the hens.

It was not until the mother and daughter sat down to the breakfast that Mrs. Simpson had learned that the man had failed to keep his appointment.

"What time did Prof. Green leave last night?" inquired the mother.

"He did not leave at all," was the reply.

114 "Is he here yet?" demanded the mother excitedly.

"No, He never came," said Miss Mandy with tears in her eyes.

"Why?"

"I don't know."

"You couldn't expect anything better of a Baptist," scowled the mother.

"Let's not condemn the man until he has been heard," replied Mandy.

Prof. Green was even more disturbed in mind and distressed in soul than was Miss Mandy. During the hours of the watching and waiting on the part of the woman, the man was indeed "up a tree."

By seven o'clock the professor had dressed himself in his very best suit of clothes, his hair had been neatly combed, his face cleanly shaven and as he looked into the mirror and saw his reflection therein he was almost satisfied with his appearance. He determined to walk rather then ride to the Simpson home—as it was only about a half mile distant. By walking he could keep in the shadows and thus escape the ~~gaze~~ observation of prying eyes. He went to the door, gazed carefully in every direction, saw no one and boldly marched forth with high hopes of soon being in the presence of the waiting woman.

He had to pass by Bill Smith's home. Smith owned a big black dog that on account of ~~his~~ its size, its barking, snapping and snarling was regarded by some as being a very vicious animal and yet with all this the dog was perfectly harmless--though the Professor did not know it.

Just as the man got opposite the Smith home, the dog bounced off the porch, came tearing down toward the gate--seemingly threatening to devour the passer by.

"Get back there," yelled the Professor as he threw a chunk of wood at the beast and then set off down the road in a fast trot.

~~Then it became a race between the man and the dog, with the man in the lead.~~

"Good Lord," groaned the man as he haerd the dog jump the fence and come in his direction.

Then it became a race between the man and the dog,with the man in the lead.

"Br-r-r-r,b-o-w--wow,w-o-o-w," howled the dg.

"Go back. Get away from here you black devil," yelled the Professor--every jump getting faster and faster if possible.

A convinient over-hanging limb to a beech tree by the side of the road caught the man's eye. He made a grab,caught the limb and pulled himself up out of reach just as the dog arrived at the foot of the tree.

"Thank the Lord I'm safe,but oh,Miss Mandy. What shall I do?" sighed the man.

"Br-r-r-r--w-o-o-w,b-r-r-r w-o-w," replied the dog as he scratched at the bark on the tree.

"Go back! Good dog!Get away frpm here," exclaimed the man.

But the dog did not accept any of the invitations,but contented himself by lying down at the foot of the tree and occasionally emitting a growl.

The Professor let out a few lusty yells for help--all of which were answered only by the low growls of the dog.

It was now nearly ten o'clock. The man in the tree could not persuade the dog to "get away from there." When he made a move as if leave his perch ,he was threatened by that awful "br-r-r-r--w-o-ow" of the beast beneath him.

Dan Boblin and Sam Johnson were out hunting that night. Dan was accompanied by his dog Tige,while Sam's dog Bulger with with him. As they drew near the heard the Professor yelling for help. It was not long before the boys were on the scene.

"What's the matter Sligo?" said Dan to the dog under the tree.

"He's got me treed," excalimed the man from his seat in the tree.

"Hello. Is that you Professor?" asked Dan recogbizing the voice.

"Yes,that confounded dog has had me me up here for the last two hours," replied the man.

"Sligo's all bark and no bite—he wouldn't hurt a kitten," laughed Sam.

"Drive him away," demanded the Professor.

About this time,Tige,Bulger and Sligo got into a quarrel and in less than two minutes the three animals were engaged in a rough and tumble fight—during which time the Professor crawled down from his unpleasant position.

"Thank you boys," said the Professor. "Come over to my home tomorrow and I'll give you all the apples you can eat and all the cider you can drink."

"We'll be there," exclaimed both the boys. "But say,Professor where are you going?"

"I'm going home to roam no more," was the reply.

"Thank goodness,Dan and Sam didn't ask me where I'd started when I got treed," congratulated the Professor to himself.

"What will Miss Mandy think!" groaned the man when he arrived at home and his mind went back over the events of the last few hours. "She'll never forgive me. I wont know how to explain the situation to her satisfaction. Oh,Lord,did any man ever before have to contend with just such a state of affairs?"

It was long after midnight before the Professor was able to close his eyes in sleep and when he would drop into a doze,his dreams were disturbed by the growlings of the dog and the vision of the woman who had been so impatiently awaiting his coming. He longed for the ending of the night and yet dreaded the coming of the day.

As early in the morning as he thought it compatible with good manners,Prof.Green went to the home of Bro.Riley to pour out his tale of woe and to seek consolation from the man who had been the cause of all this trouble.

"Good morning, Professor," exclaimed the parson as the man walked into the horse-lot where Bro.Riley had been feeding his stock. "How did you come out last night?"

"I made it up a tree," was the reply.

"I infer from that that you made it all right," smiled Bro. Riley. "I hope you and Miss Mandy enjoyed the evening and that in time I shall have both the pleasure and the honor of performing the wedding ceremony."

"Oh,good Lord,"groaned the Professor,"—I am in terrible fix, I'm a ruined man. You've got me into such deep trouble that I'll never be able to get out of it as long as I live."

"Why,Professor,does courting go that hard with you? It don't usually affect widowers that way," exclaimed the parson.

"I haven't done any courting," replied the man.

"Wouldn't Miss Mandy permit you to talk on the subject of matrimony?"

"Oh,parson,I haven't seen the woman for more than a month."

"Didn't you see her last night?"

"No."

"Didn't you make the call according to agreement and arrangement?"

"No,I didn't get there."

"Prof.Green,you're a fool. I promised Miss Mandy that you would be there promptly at 7.30 o'clock last night."

Oh,Parson,Parson. I started,but Bill Smith's big black dog treed me and if it hadn't been for Dan Boblin and Sam Johnson I would stiil be there—a straddle of a limb and yelling at the rascally brute that tried to catch me," groaned the man.

Then Prof.Green explained to Bro.Riley the incidents and the accidents of the night before. The Parson became convulsed with laughter and gave vent to his feelings in loud guffaws.

"It's no laughable matter," snapped the man.

"Yes it is, the most laughable thing that has ever come up in all my history of courtships," and then the preacher laughed louder than ever.

"See here, Bro.Riley," said the man in exasperation, "I want you to go at once and be in a hurry about it—see Miss Mandy and explain to her the reason why I failed to be on hand at the appointed time. Do and say anything you may think best to assure her that it was no fault of mine. Go Parson, go and be in a hurry about it."

"I'll see Miss Mandy. I'll make it all right with her. I'll tell her all about your getting treed by Bill Smith's big dog," and then Bro.Riley broke into another hearty laugh.

"The Lord be with you 'til we meet again," said Prof.Greem as he turned and left for his home. As he walked away he murmured to himself, "I can't see that there is anything so funy about the matter that Bro.Riley should be so tickled as he is."

"Good morning" smiled Bro.Riley as he ~~rode~~ addressed Miss Mandy as she stood in the yard preparatory to milking the old white cow.

"Good morning," was the rather sullen reply of the woman.

"How did you enjoy the Professor's visit last night?" grinned the Parson.

"Bro.Riley," snapped the woman, "--I'll never forgive you nor Prof.Green so long as I live. That was a mean, low down, dirty trick you played on me," as she wiped a tear from her eye.

"Why, what's the matter sister Mandy," said the parson in apparent surprise, "Did you and the Professor have a lover's quarrel and that on the very first meeting?"

"No,we didn't,"snapped the woman. "He didn't come."

"He didn't?" exclaimed the Parson.

"No."

"Why didn't he?"

"I don't know."

Then Bro.Riley broke into a loud and boisterous laugh. Miss Mandy grew furious,grabbed the hickory limb she had used to keep off the calf while milking and made a lunge at her reverened visitor,who side-stepped and by this means failed to receive a deserved blow on his shins.

"Hold on Miss Mandy," exclaimed the Parson,"I will explain." Then he told of the Proffessor's start to keep the engagement,how he was chased by the dog and of his climbing into the tree and how at last he was rescued from his perilous position by Sam and Dan. How it was then too late to make the anticipated call and how sorry and disappointed was the man. He assured the woman that it was no fault of the expected suitor that he failed to be by her side at the appointed hour.

"Well,dog-gone the dog," smiled Miss Mandy.

CHAPTER XII.

MISS MARTIN SECURES POSITION IN SCHOOL.

Between the ten years since the "stars fell" and the opening of this chapter many changes had taken place in the Beech Creek settlement and to the people of that community. There had been such an increase in population and prosperity that it was deemed necessary to erect a new, a larger, and a better school building. The old one had been torn down and in its stead was a room that was forty feet long and twenty feet wide.

The structure was however built of logs, but as the boys and girls said--when it was completed--"It has sure enough windows and is almost fine enough for a church!" In fact it was sometimes used for religious worship. Mr. Silas Green still held the position of teacher and was now designated as "Prof. Green," who contended that the appellation of "school house," belonged to the old building and that the new one should be called "The Academy."

The school had grown in importance and was so widely known that it drew patronage from other sections of the country. Prof. Green had more pupils than he could well look after without help--hence it was found necessary to employ an assistant. Ruth Martin who had recently come to the home of her uncle, Thomas Miller, was an applicant for the position.

Mr. Boblin and Deacon Johnson had been for many years acting as trustees, or chief advisers for the district. The Methodists were in all such matters represented by Mr. Boblin, while Deacon Johnson was spokesman for the Bptists. Prof. Green was a Baptist and that one thing had to a certain extent militated against him with Mr. Boblin, who in speaking of the teacher usually wound up by saying: "Yes, Prof. Green is the best teacher in the state--but he is a Baptist."

It was one pleasant afternoon about the middle of August--soon after the completion of the Academy--that Mr.Boblin and Deacon Johnson were sitting on the front porch of the Johnson residence. They had met for their usual mid-week discussion of the crops,politics and their religious differences. These two friends usually agreed on all questions except when it came to church affairs.

It was the custom with these two friends when they met to talk of the news in general and then other topics that might come to their minds--but these talks were certain sooner or later to drift to the points of difference between the doctrines of the two churches which they represented."The proper mode of Baptism," "falling from grace" and "close communion" were the principal propositions that had to be threshed out by the champions of the cause each represented when they met in council.

It was when there was a lull in the conversation--as each had exhausted all his arguments--that Mr.Boblin said:"Whom shall we have to assist Prof.Green in our school at the Academy when the next session begins?"

"I really do not know. There has up to the present been no applicant for the position," replied Deacon Johnson.

"There is one thing I do know," replied Mr.Boblin, "let it be who or it may,she must not be a Baptist. One Baptist at a time is enough for our school."

"All right,Bro.Boblin," was the reply. "I suppose I shall have to agree with you,as we perhaps ought to have a Methodist for the position."

While the two men were discussing the school question,they saw a young lady riding down the lane toward the house. She reined up her horse and stopped at the gate. The Deacon met her and bowed politely.

"I am Miss Martin," said the woman and I believe you are Deacon Johnson."

"Yes,madam,that is what they call me. Will you get down and come in?" was the cordial invitation.

"I believe that is Mr.Boblin sitting on the porch,is it not?" inquired the lady. "I understand that you and he are the trustees of the school. I want to make application for the position of assistant teacher."

"Yes. Come in and we will talk the matter over with you." Miss Martin slipped down from her horse,the deacon toook the bridle,hitched the animal and the two walked up the path together.

Intoductions followed.Before she had time to open the subject in regard to her mission,both men had been completely captivated by the gentle manners and prepossessing appaarance of Miss Martin. They had both learned of her coming to the home of her uncle--but had never hand any intimation that she had ever had any thoughts of teaching.

"Mr.Boblin," siad Miss Martin after a short pause in the conversation, "I spoke to Mr.Johnson at the gate of my wish to apply for a position in your school. I have with me recommendations from Georgia where I formerly lived." These endorsements were handed to the men.

Just as they began the examination of the credentials,Prof. Green walked up the path,came forward,was introduced and informed of the mission of the woman. Then followed a general talk along educational lines. Prof.Green,who was a splendid judge of human nature, at once became favorably impressed with the many apparent good qualities of the applicant.

After considering the proposition for some time, Deacon Johnson turned to Prof.Green and said: "Are you satisfied with the credentials of Miss Martin and do you believe that she would meet the requirements necessary to acceptably fill the position which she seeks?"

"She is perfectly satisfactory to me," replied Prof.Green.

"What do you say Bro.Boblin?" queried the Deacon.

"I'm for her and believe she will fill the bill to perfection," agreed Mr.Boblin.

"Then we may regard the matter as settled and that Miss Martin shall have the place in our academy," siad Deacon Johnson.

"Certainly," assented both Prof.Green and Mr.Boblin.

"Thank you gentlemen," said Miss Martin with a smile of satisfaction. "I shall do my very best to perform my every duty to both children and patrons."

"Wait! Hold on a minute," exclaimed Mr.Boblin. "There's one more question I want to ask. To waht church do you belong?"

"I am a professed christian and a member of a certain church, but I do not propose to let my religious beliefs interfere in any way with my duties in the school room," replied Miss Martin with a blush.

"Are you a Baptist?" demanded Mr.Boblin with some trepidation.

"No sir," was the reply.

"Well then,what are you?" asked Mr.Boblin.

"I am ashamed of neither my religion nor my church;I am a Methodist," answered Miss Martin.

"Thank the Lord," smiled Mr.Boblin. "I thought when I first saw you that you were a Methodist,but I wanted to be sure that I was correct. Prof.Green is a Baptist,Deacon Johnson is a Baptist,I am a Methodist and I felt that we needed a little evening-up in religious matters. I believe however I'd have voted for you even if you had said you were a Baptist."

"Mr.Boblin is overafraid of much water," smilingly said Deacon Johnson. "He's always falling from grace and is afraid he will accidentally tumble into the creek and drown before he can be restored to full fellowship with his church and his neighbor."

"It's better to have grace to fall from and be restored than to have no grace from which to fall," retorted Mr.Boblin.

"Mary Ann," called Deacon Johnson as he stepped to the door leading into the living room, "you and Miss Mandy come out here and join us."

Mrs.Johnson and Miss Mandy Simpson--who was visiting at the Johnson home that day--came out and were introduced to Miss Martin. The greetings among the women were quite cordial. It was but a short time until Miss Mandy and Miss Martin were talking as earnestly and as confidentially as though they had known eachother for years.

"Miss Mandy," said Miss Martin addressing her newly made acquaintance, "I am as you know a stranger in this community. I have as yet met with but very few of the people of the Beech Creek settlement. I feel that I shall need your friendship."

"Whatever my friendship may be to you,you shall have it," replied Miss Mandy. "I am however a poor girl,my education is limited,my mother is a widow--my father having died more than thirty years ago when I was a small child."

"I too am an orphan. My father died several years ago and only a few months since,death claimed my mother," sighed Miss Martin.

"Poor child and you so young and beautiful to be left in this world without either father or mother," replied Miss Mandy. "I suppose however that you have plenty of means and are in independent circumstances."

"No. I am compelled to work for a living,but I do not mind that in the least as I am strong and healthy," smiled Miss Martin. "I, as you perhaps know, am the niece of Mr.Thomas Miller--who is well off in this world's goods--but I do not propose to become a burden to any one so long as I am able to earn my own living."

"What do you propose to do?" asked Miss Mandy.

"I have just secured a position as assistant teacher in the Academy with Prof.Green," was the reply.

"I am glad to learn that you are to be connected with the school and that you will be with Prof.Gree," answered Miss Mandy.

"I sincerely thank you for your kind expressions,and want to assure you that I appreciate what you have said in reference to the school. I have heard my uncle speak in glowing terms of you and of your goodness of heart. I have also heard your mother highly commended as a good christian woman. I have no doubt that you and I shall be the best of friends. More than ever before in my life do I feel that I need the friendship of some one on whom I may rely."

"Miss Martin, I do not know that my comradeship will add very much to your comfort or happiness,but if such should be the case,I would feel that I have been amply rewarded. I would invite you to visit our humble home--where there is no one but my dear mother and myself--but I feel that it is not such a home of elegance as would be attractive to one in your position ~~in~~ in life or society."

"Is your home a happy one?" inquired Miss Martin.

"Happy! Yes,the happiest one in the settlement," was the quiet and modest reply. "Just mother and I and the chickens,the cow,and the cat and the dog. Mother and I--when we feel despondent--repeat together the 23rd Psalm:'The Lord is my shepherd,I shall not want'--and then we thank the ~~the~~ Lord for all His goodness and His mercies."

"May I come to see you and your mother sometime in your own home?" asked Miss Martin.

"A welcome awaits your coming," was the prompt reply.

Miss Martin arose,thanked the trustees and Prof.Green for giving her a position in the school and promised to do her very best to make the school a success;thanked the ladies for their kindness,

walked to the gate accompanied by Deacon Johnson,mounted her horse and rode away toward the home of her uncle. Just as she turned the lane leading into the road,she was overtaken by a young man--whom the people at the Johnson residence failed to recognize.

"Miss Martin,I believe," said the man as he raised his hat and smillingly added, "I am Tom Marcum--Dr.Marcum--whom you met on the day of your arrival at Turpin,while on your way to the home of your uncle's in the settlement."

"Yes,Dr.Marcum,I remember your face and the occasion when and where we met. I am pleased to meet you again",was the modest reply.

"I have been lucky enough this day to form a partnership with Dr.Champlin--as your uncle suggested--and am now a citizen of the Beech Creek settlement," smiled the doctor.

""And I too have this day been favored with the good fortune to secure a position as assistant teacher in the Beech Creek Academy," said the woman.

"It seems that this has been a most fortunate and propitious day for both of us. May neither of us ever have cause to regret that we have come to this community--that we succeeded in our first effort to secure recognition--and furthermore may we never regret that we have thus accidentally been thrown in eachother's company--not only today,but on the day of our arrival at Turpin," exclaimed the man.

"I hope doctor that unbounded success shall attend you in your mission to heal th e sick and minister to the wants and needs of the suffering. Your calling is a noble one," said the woman with enthusiasm.

"And,may you succeed beyond your highest ambition in your noble work--the training of the minds of the boys and girls of this community--for future usefulness and nobler things. There is no other calling--that of the pulpit not excepted-- that is more worthy the best

efforts and more self sacrifice than that of training the rising generation for useful citizenship," said the doctor.

By this time the man and the woman had arrived at the gate of the Miller home. Dr. Marcum politely lifted his hat and bade Miss Martin a friendly "good afternoon" and rode on.

"Who was that man that came with you and rode by?" asked Flora Miller of Ruth Martin as she stepped on the porch.

"Dr. Marcum," was the reply.

"Dr. Marcum. And pray, who is he?" querried Flora.

"He is Dr. Champlin's new partner," was the answer.

"Did you ever meet him before this afternoon?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"At the hotel at Turpin the morning uncle Tom met me while I was waiting to come out here."

"Did he make an engagement to call on you sometime in the future?"

"No. He said nothing about calling."

"If I did not have an idea that I could catch Henry Benton—the richest young man in Turpin—I believe that I would set my cap for him," said Flora.

"Better not be fooling away your time on poor, young, impecunious doctors who have neither reputation nor practice and who are penniless," suggested Mrs. Miller. "No doubt Dr. Marcum will be trying to marry some one who has money and standing in society. Henry Benton is worth a half dozen young doctors who are without name or influence."

"Dr. Marcum has the appearance of being a very respectable young man," interposed Ruth.

"You may have him so far as I am concerned," sneered Flora.

"If he is seeking a fortune—as aunt Julia suggests—I am certain that I would not appeal very largely to him," said Ruth.

"By the way,Ruth," asked Mrs.Martin, "what success did you have in your application for a position as teacher in the Academy?"

"I succeeded in securing the place," quietly affirmed Ruth.

"Oh,I'm so glad," rapturously responded Jack,who had up to this time been quietly listening to the conversation among the women.

"Thank you Jack," smiled Ruth.

"And cousin Ruth,am I to be in your class—are you to hear my lessons?" queried the boy.

"Yes," she replied patting the boy on the head and drawing him to her side.

"I love you cousin Ruth. You are so good and sweet to me," said the boy as he hugged and kissed the woman.

"I think aunt Julia," said Ruth addressing Mrs.Miller, "that I shall make more than enough money from my school and with the little income that I have that I shall at least be no very great burden to you and uncle Tom."

"I hope so," silently replied Mrs.Miller.

Ruth and Jack went off for a stroll and were soon busy in planning for the coming session of the school at the Academy. Her kindness to the boy had completely won the confidence and affection of the crippled lad. He preferred her company to that of his mother or his sister. When his legs pained him or when he was feeling ill and fretful,a few gentle words or a smile from Ruth was sufficient to make him forget his afflictions.

After Ruth and Jack had left the porch,Mrs.Miller said: "Ruth is a good girl and takes such care of Jack that I feel sometimes as if I ought to treat her with more respect than I do. She takes a whole lot of worry from ~~me~~ us by looking after Jack."

"Yes,but we must remember that she is only one of our poor cousins—your niece and my cousin—who is in a way a pensioner on our bounty," sneered Flora.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BAD BOY IN SCHOOL.

The school without the bad boy, or two of them—as they always go in pairs—would be an unheard of thing in the rural communities of Kentucky—or in any other state in the Union—in the days "before the war."

The Beech Creek school was no exception to the rule. Sam Johnson, the son of Deacon Johnson and Dan Boblin, the son of John Henry Boblin, were a precious pair. They were not "mean boys"--they were just "bad boys"—full of life and running over with mischief. They saw the funny side of everything and cared not for a "licking" from either the teacher or their parents if they could only have the fun before they got the licking."

"Sam," exclaimed Dan as he observed a large bunch of poke-stalks that were full of ripe berries by the roadside one afternoon as the were on their way from school "—just look at that fine lot of poke fruit. Let's get some for ink. We need red ink—it's better and prettier than the black ink we have to squeeze from ink-balls."

"You are right," replied Sam. "Here's enough to make a gallon of the very finest ink in the world."

"Say Sam," exclaimed Dan as he gathered a bunch of the berries and the juice thereof ran on his hnads, "this is presidential year and as you know, James K. Polk is our candidate. Dad is a democrat and so is your dad. They have been carrying poke-stalks in the parade. Suppose we try the poke-berry proposition."

"What is you plan?" inquired Sam.

"Let's gather all the berries we can, get all the juice possible and paint the whole neighborhood a beautiful red."

"I am with you if there is any fun in it, and I know there will

plenty of it before we get through with the job. When shall the painting begin?"

"Let's get up early in the morning, get breakfast as soon as possible and finish the job before school time," suggested Dan.

"All right," was the ready reply. "Now suppose we clip off these bunches and put them in a pile where we can get them in the morning. Be careful not to stain your hands more than you can help, because if we do, our dads might catch on to waht we are up-to and would not let us off as early as we should wish."

The night was a long and almost sleepless one to the boys who lay awake and planned the mischief for the coming day. They got away from their homes earlier than usual and without arousing any suspicion. They had at least a half bushel of ripe berries to be used in adorning anything and everything—animate or inanimate—they could capture, thus showing their loyalty to the democratic candidate for president of the United States.

"Dan, there's Prof. Green's white horse. Catch him and let's make a Polk democrat out of the old animal," gleefully exclaimed Sam.

"All right. You stripe him on one side and I'll attend to the other. Let's make a zebra of old Selim." The job when completed was a success from the stand point of the young painters.

"Here comes Sister Simpson's old white cow, Mary Lou," said Sam. "We'll make a democrat of her. She can't vote, but she can show her colors."

When Mary Lou arrived at the Simpson home a few minutes later ready to yield her morning's supply of milk for her calf and the family, she was unrecognizable. Miss Mandy was at the gate with her pail in her hand. She recognized the lowing and the mooing of the cow—but saw that the animal was decidedly off color. Even the calf became alarmed and ran away refusing to recognize its own maternal ancestor.

"Mother," called Mandy, "come here as quick as you can and tell me whose cow this is."

"Daughter," exclaimed the mother after gazing long and anxiously at the cow, "In the book of Genesis we have an account of the meeting of Isaac and Jacob after the latter had supplanted his brother Esau: "And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father;and he felt him and said: the voice is Jacob's voice,but the hands are the hands of Esau.'" Then taking another look at the animal Mrs.Simpson exclaimed, "The voice is the voice of Mary Lou,but the hair and the hide are as the hair and the hide of some animal,the like of which I never before saw in all my born days."

"If that cow has a mole on her left hind teat and a wart on the right under eye-lid,she is our own Mary Lou;otherwise she is a stranger in a strange land," declared Mandy.

On a close examination the marks of identity were discovered and it was further learned how it happened that there had been such a wonderful change in the personal appearance of the old family cow.

"Heavens and earth!" exclaimed Prof.Green when he saw his horse come trotting up the lane for his morning feed. "What kind of animal is that?" The professor got his shot gun and was just ready to pull the trigger when the animal whinnied in a familiar tone and thus saved its life.

"Now for the school house," said Sam, "after the horse and the cow had been treated to their new dress of poke-juice. "It needs a coat of red paint and we are the boys to do the job in first class style."

In a short time the doors and widows of the Academy were a sight to behold. Even the teacher's desk was not overlooked in the ornamenting process.

Just as the boys completed the job to their entire satisfaction, Prof.Green and Miss Martin appeared on the scene. The boys were caught

red-handed. They had stains on their hands, on their clothes, on their faces and in their hair. They were as ring-streaked and striped as the animals they had painted.

"Boys; what does all this mean"? demanded Prof. Green in a stern and austere voice.

"Oh, Professor," said Sam, "-it means that we are democrats, that we are for Polk for president and that we are celebrating before the election. Forgive us and we will never do so again."

"Don't you boys think you need a real good threshing for your capers?" responded Prof. Green.

"Aint you a democrat?" asked Dan with some trepidation.

"Yes, but what has that to do with it?"

"Do you think Professor that there should be any trouble in the party just before the election?" asked Dan. "If you should whip us it would be one democrat threshing two young gentlemen and all of the same party."

"Prof. Green," said Miss Martin with a smile on her face, "--won't you turn the boys over to me and let me punish them as I think they deserve?"

"Yes, take the young rascals and wear the hides off their backs if you see proper. Don't fail to give them a plenty."

"Come. Go with me," said Miss Martin addressing the boys.

"Oh, Miss Martin," cried Dan. "We are so sorry that we have vexed you. Wont you forgive us?"

"Suppose we walk down to the creek and there talk the matter over," smiled Miss Martion.

"Now boys," said Miss Martin when they arrived at the stream, "bathe your faces and hands and try to get yourselves into presentable shape." The boys obeyed with alacrity.

"Let me fix your hair," said Miss Martin as she took a comb from

her pocket and with tenderness she proceeded to get the tousled shocks of their heads into a presentable condition. Then she kissed both the boys,patted their cheeks and said:

"Boys, I am your friend and I want you to try in the future to be real manly little fellows."

"Miss Martin,you are a peach--a whole basketful of them," exclaimed Dan.

"Yes,two basketsful1 and more too," chimed in Sam.

"Thank you boys," she said as they all marched back to the academy.

"Look here," said Dan to Sam, "--if you ever give Miss Martin any trouble,or disobey her in any way, I'll hold you while she wears the hide off your back."

"Yes," replied Sam, "--and if you ever sass that good woman and I hear it or hear of it I'll fight you all day the Saturday afternoon following."

"Miss Martin was our salvation this time," exclaimed Dan. "If it had not been for that good sweet woman,Prof.Green would have worn us to a frazzle."

"Yes, Dan,Miss Martin and democracy were the only things that saved our hides."

"Hurrah for Miss Martin,Prof.Green,James K.Polk and the democratic party," agreed the boys, "and more especially Miss Martin."

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The next Monday morning after the poke-berry episode,Sam Johnson played truant. He met with Tim Jones who had not as yet entered that session of the school and the two concluded to spend the day in having all kinds of fun.

"Sam," said Tim, "I intend to start to school next week,but for this day and the remainder of this week I intend to enjoy myself. Come,join me and let's have all the pleasure possible while we have the opportunity."

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"If I fail to go to school today,Prof.Green will lick me for truancy and then dad will lick me because he would believe that Prof. Green had not licked me enough," exclaimed Sam.

"Be brave Sam," replied Tim. "Who cares for a whipping--the smarting soon gets well?"

"All right," agreed Sam. "I'm with you from start to finish. I know I shall get a threshing for this,but I shall get a lot of fun before the threshing commences. Now for one day of fun and frolic and the next--well I'll let the next take care of itself."

The day was spent by Tim and Sam by getting into all kinds of mischief. They threw a stone at a farmer's dog,hit the animal on the leg which casued a howl from the hit ~~animal~~ dog. The owner caught the boys,bumped their heads together and ordered them to move on.

"Confound that man," exclaimed Tim rubbing his head where there was a big lump which had been raised by the bumping the boys had just received.

"My bump is bigger than yours," replied Sam as he rubbed his head.

"That's a lie," snapped Tim.

"Your're another," replied Sam.

Then a fight ensued between the boys resulting in a few scratches on their faces and some torn clothes.

"Oh,let's make up and be friends," demanded Tim.

"Agreed," smiled Sam.

The boys soon came up with a man who was driving a cart.Sam and Tim concluded to take a ride by hanging on behind the back of the vehicle.

"Get away from there," demanded the man with a scowl on his face.

For a reply,the boys made a face at the man and told him to help himself."

"Take that," grinned the man as he brought the whip down with force on the backs of the boys which made them fall with a thud on the ground.

"Gosh," said Dan, "--that stung like one of the big hickory switches that Prof.Green uses when he gets his dander up."

"Yes,like the one the professor will use on you in the morning when you get to school," added Tim.

"Oh,hush. Don't talk about it Tim. You make me shudder at the very thought of what's coming."

"Let's chase that cat," exclaimed Sam as he saw Mrs.Smith's famous old mouser.

Before they had followed the cat twenty feet,Mrs.Smith appeared with her broom and before the boys could make their escape,the irate woman gave them what she termed "a good sweeping."

During the day Dan Boblin had been at school and very sadly missed Sam Johnson--his pal and seat mate.He could not account for the absence of his friend,neither was he able to explain to Prof.Green or Miss Martin why the boy was absent from his accustomed place. As Dan did not have his partner with him--he was for that one day a model scholar.

"Where have you been today?" asked Dan of Sam as the two fell in company with eachother as they walked toward their homes that afternoon.

"Oh,just looking after a little business," was the reply.

"Did you get through with the business all right?" asked Dan.

"Yes," was the reply.

"There will be a settlement of unfinished business in the morning when Prof.Green makes an investigation," suggested Dan.

"Oh,hush Dan;I can almost feel that long hickory switch right now swishing across my poor body," sighed Sam.

"Sam Johnson," said Prof.Green the next morning after he had played truant and soon after school "had taken up," "--please step forward."

Sam complied with the request with considerable trepidation.

"Where were you yesterday?" demanded the teacher.

"I was with Tim Jones hickory-nut hunting," whined the boy.

"Did you get the consent of your parents before you left home?" asked the Proof.

"No sir," answered Sam who commenced moving uneasily--standing first on one foot and then on the other.

"Well,Samuel, I suppose it will be my duty to give you a threshing," scowled the teacher as he raised the switch preparatory to administering the punishment.

"Hold on,please Proffessor. I think I have already had enough," pleaded Sam.

"And why should I not lick you sir?"

"'Cause sir,I think I have had about all I need for one little offense and nearly all I am able to stand," whined Sam. "Yesterday Tim and I had a fight and he got the best of me. The man whose dog I threw a stone at bumped our heads together and liked to knock out my brains. Mrs. ~~Brown~~ Smith--whose cat we chased--cracked our shins with her broom and knocked off a big piece of skin and the man with the cart whacked us with his whip and raised a great big whelk on my back."

"Is that all?" demanded the teacher.

"No sir. When I got home mother licked me;and after that dad licked;and mother licked me again for calling her a 'sneak' for telling father," blubbered Sam.

"Well," the teacher said grimly, "--by this time one more licking wont make much difference. I shall therefore take the last whack."

It is perhaps an unnecessary waste of words to say that Prof. Green did not suffer his reputation as a "thresher" to fail him on this occasion.

Sam, feeling that he had had enough lickings for the time being managed to behave himself very well the remainder of the week and yet all this time he was planning some other mischief.

"Sam," whispered Dan as the whipped boy took his seat by the side of his friend, "I'm mighty sorry for you in your recent tribulations and afflictions."

"You're a liar," whispered Sam in reply. "I saw you smiling and grinning all the time old Green was whipping me."

"It was so funny I couldn't help it," smiled Dan.

"It may have been funny to you, but not to me," snapped Sam.

"I guess it will be my time next," soliloquized Dan.

"I hope so," agreed Sam.

When school was dismissed, Dan and Sam were as great chums as ever, as Dan well knew that it would be but a few days until he would be into some mischief that would bring its reward.

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"Sam," said Dan one day about a week after the one addressed had been called to account for his truancy, "--see this squirt-gun? Well, it's a regular squirter."

"You be careful how you squirt, when you squirt and whom you squirt," was the advice of Sam.

"I'm loaded for Bill Jones. He has been making love to our sweetheart--Susie Brown--and I'm going to cool his ardor," grinned Dan.

As it happened that very afternoon Dan saw his hated rival--Bill Jones--sitting near the wall of the building. His ear was opposite a hole where the chinking had ~~aff~~ fallen out. Here was the opportunity of his life and he did not propose to let that opportunity pass to have his fun, even at the risk of detection and punishment.

"Watch me Sam,"said Dan "There's going to be something doing and dont you forget it." Then turning to the teacher he said; "Professor,May I go out?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Keep your eye on Bill Jones and see him get it," whispered Dan as he rushed out with his squirt-gun in his pocket. During this time Bill Jones moved from his position while Dan was filling his gun with water from a puddle that was near by. Horror of horrors,Prof. Green took the seat that had been vacated by Bill. Sam noticed the change in positions,but Dan was not aware of what had taken place in the school room.

When all was ready Dan took a peep into and through the hole and saw that there was an ear wide open and ready to receive the shot from the squirter. He took good aim and with all the force possible threw the water and made a center shot.

"Goood Lord," yelled Prof.Green as he jumped to his feet and placed his hand to his head, "--I've been shot through the head. Run to the door and see who did the shooting."

The water was trickling from the ear and the head of the teacher. Prof.Green believed that he was bleeding to death and was almost in a fainting spell.

"Prof.Green," exclaimed Miss Martin who had now rushed to his side, "--there's no blood,it's only water."

"Yes,it's blood. I feel it oozing from my ear and running down my neck," graoned the man.

"If it's blood,it's the thinnest blood blood that I ever saw. There is no red in it," assured Miss Martin.

"What's the matter?" demanded Dan as he rushed into the room. He did not know until then that he had made a mistake in his victim.

"I'm shot through the head and am going to die," moaned the man.

"You're not going to die," said Dan. "I'll pray for you and you will soon be all right. Dont you feel better now, Professor?"

It was not long before the excitement quieted down and Prof. Green found that instead of being shot with a pistol, as he at first believed, he had been the victim of a practical joke which was intended for another. "But who had used the squirt-gun?" was the question for adjustment.

"I saw Dan Boblin with a squirt-gun in his pocket at dinner time," squeaked little Billy Jenkins.

"Hand that squirter to me at once," deamnded the teacher.

"Here it is," was the meek reply as he handed the instrument of death over to the man.

"Professor, wont you let me settle the matter with Dan?" was the request of Miss Martin.

"Not until I get through with him," was the answer.

The licking that Dan Boblin received that afternoon was in every respect as first class and as well laid on as the one that had been ~~received by~~ administered to Sam Johnson the week before.

"Now what are you going to do to me and with me?" asked Dan of Miss Martin as they started away from the Academy that afternoon.

"I want to bathe your face and hands and comb your hair so that when you arrive at home that there shall be no sign of trouble at the school room."

"Oh, Miss Martin. You are so good. I'm real sorry that I squirted the water into the teacher's ~~era~~ ear. I promise you on my word of honor that so long as I live that I'll never misbehave in the school room --that is if you are present."

"Thank you Dan," smiled Miss Martin.

Dan was honest in his intentions, just as much as he was when he and Sam used the poke-berry juice and pledged Miss Martin that both he and Sam would henceforth conduct themselves with proper decorum in the school room and elsewhere. But they were full of mischief and could not resist the temptation when opportunity offered to naturally fall into some mischief--even though they well knew that ceratin and condign punishment was sure to follow.

"Sam, do you know," said Dan as the boys walked home the afternoon in which the speaker had made the blunder with his squirt-gun, "--I believe that Miss Martin is the best and most sympathetic woman that ever lived."

"You are right," responded Sam. "While you and I are justly recognized as the very worst boys in school, yet Miss Martin is just as good and kind to us as if we were the best scholars in the Academy."

"Suppose we reform and determine that from this time forward we shall become as noted for being good boys as we have been in the past been looked upon as the worst boys in the school," suggested Dan.

"I am agreed. The Lord help us," was the prompt reply.

And for the next two weeks there were not two better behaved boys in the Beech Creek school than Sam and Dan.

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"Gosh Dan," exclaimed Sam one afternoon as they were returning home from the day's study and good behavior at the Academy, "--look at that fine hornet's nest. Ain't it a dandy? It's chock full of regular old bald-headed hornets."

"Bring a cork with you in the morning and as we go to school we'll plug up the hole of the nest, cut off the limb, take it to the hazel patch just back of the school house, hide it in the bushes and may be it will come in quite handy sometime during the day," was Dan's enthusiastic exclamation.

"I'll bet we have plenty of fun out of that gang of stingers," was the areed opinion of the boys.

The next morning the boys were off to school ahead of time and before the hornet's had time to get out for their day's work. They plugged up the hole in the nest, cut off the limb or twig and bore the prize to the designated place where it was carefully concealed from prying eyes.

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When Prof.Green and Miss Martin arrived at the Academy they were greeted by Dan and Sam who were sitting on the front steps, apparently studying their lessons with all diligence possible.

"Boys," said Miss Martin,"--I am glad to see you taking so much interest in your books. I suppose you will both know your lessons".

"I know mine," answered each of the boys.

During the morning session Miss Martin took occasion to publicly express her appreciation of the reformation that had taken place with Sam and Dan and held them up as examples worthy of emulation. Prof.Green also added a few words of commendation and encouragement.

All that morning Sam and Dan--while apparently deeply engaged in their lessons--had their minds more on the hornets than they did their books.

While engaged in hearing the big spelling class, just before dismissing for the noon hour, Miss Martin was seized with a violent head ache and was excused by Prof.Green from the further duties of the day and was advised to go home and take a rest. John Berry, the largest boy and the best scholar in the school was selected to hear Miss Martin's classes for the afternoon.

"We'll walk home with you Miss Martin," suggested Sam and Dan "--as you might get sick on the road and need help."

"Thank you boys. You are so kind," said Miss Martin.

As the boys left the gate at the Miller home, Miss Martin said, "Boys, do your best this afternoon. See how well you can behave."

"We'll remember what you said and shall try not to disgrace ourselves in you absence," was the pledge of the boys.

"Say Dan, while Miss Martin is away from the Academy this afternoon, we had better pull off our hornet stunt," suggested Sam.

"All right Sam. Keep your eyes open for the main chance," acquiesced Dan.

It was just after recess in the afternoon when Dan happened to notice the hole in the wall which he had used for his squirt-gun practice so effectively on the teacher something over two weeks ago. A bright idea suggested itself to that active mind of the boy.

"May me and Sam go after a bucket of water," asked Dan of the teacher.

"Yes," was the reply.

The boys were soon on the outside of the building, the hornet's nest was secured from its hiding place and given a good shaking so as to wake up the imprisoned insects; the stopper was taken from the nest and the opening placed opposite the hole in the wall. In less than a minute every hornet was out of the nest and inside the school room and each one had on its "fighting clothes."

Dan and Sam made a dash for the spring, threw the empty nest into a brier patch and proceeded to get their bucket filled with water, well knowing that there was trouble and lots of it in the Academy.

For a few minutes "there was confusion worse confounded." Prof Green happened to be near the hole in the wall and was the first victim. He received a shot in the way of a sting behind the ear that made him think he had been hit with a bullet from a rifle. John Berry, who was teaching in the place of Miss Martin was hit in the forehead by a big bald headed hornet and felt as if he had been hit by a small cannon ball.

The room was full of hornets and they were striking and stinging any and everything that looked like a human being--they were no respecter of persons. Yell after yell was emeitted as some new victim came in contact with an enraged and avenging hornet. A rush was made for the door, while some escaped through the windows. It was a route that was complete in every respect--a disorderly retreat.

And no wonder there was a hustling and a scrouging to get away from the infuriated insects. When it comes to stopping a mad bald-headed hornet that is traveling at the rate of a mile a minnte by placing the point of the nose in the path of that fast moving object, the said nose is certain to suffer from the contact as well as the impact.

About the time the teacher and scholars were making their hurried exit from the building, Dan and Sam came up the hill from the spring walking as leisurely and as unconcerned as if they were going to the mid-week prayer meeting.

"What's the matter?" inquired Sam as he approached the "hornet fighter."

"Hornets and millions of them," yelled Prof. Green as he looked at the boys through a half closed eye and rubbed the back of the ear that had been stung.

"Two of them stung me," sobbed Susie Brown.

"Poor Susie, I'm so sorry," said Dan.

"I'm sorrier than Dan is," answered Sam.

Both boys bathed Susie's stings from the bucket of water they had brought from the spring.

"No more school today," said Prof. Green. "The Academy is full of hornets. Leave the door and the windows open so that they may get out and go to their homes." The Prof. was not aware of the fact that the home of these insects was at that time in a nearby brier patch.

While the teacher and the whole school had a suspicion that Dan and Sam were in some way responsible for the trouble, yet there was nothing tangible upon which to base evidence of their guilt, or that the boys were in any way connected with the events of the afternoon.

"I'm mighty glad Miss Martin was not at school this afternoon," said Dan as the boys walked home.

"So am I. I would not have had her there to get a stinging for a million dollars," sighed Sam. x x x x x

"When Dan Boblin got religion at school," was for many years spoken of as marking an epoch in the history of the Beech Creek Academy. On the Sunday prior to the occurrence of this event, Bro. Riley had preached one of his powerful sermons at Zion church. It was a sermon that the boys declared was "a regular scorcher." 16

Of course Sister Simpson was presenet and as usual she pulled off her stunt of shouting--but this time she became more demonstrative than usual. She gave vent to "glories," and "hallalujahs" in such fervent and stentorian tones as shook the old house of worship from top to bottom and from center to circumference.

"Mother," inquired Dan when he arrived at home from church, "--what was the matter with Sister Simpson today?"

"My son," answered the mother, "--Sister Simpson is a good woman ,a good christian lady--she is full of religion and was giving vent to her feelings."

"If she had dropped dead while she was shouting, would she have gone to heaven?" inquired the boy.

"Most certainly," was the reply.

Dan sat for sometime in deep study, then he raised his head and said; "Mother, I believe I'll get religion and see what effect it will have on me."

"Mrs. Boblin was pleased that her son seemed to take such a deep interest in spiritual affairs and spoke words of encouragement to Dan.

"Sam " siad Dan the next day on their way to school, "--I believe I'll get religion some of these times."

"Well, you certainly need it," was the reply.

"I don't need it any worse than you do," snapped Dan.

The next Friday afternoon about an hour before time to dismiss the school, Dan was sitting on the end of a bench, thinking more of what he should do the next day than he was of of either his lesson or the plan of salvation. Sam was sitting next and saw an excellent opportunity to do the "scrouging act," and giving a good strong shove, he

landed Dan in the middle of the floor,flat of his back.

Prof.Green was attracted by the confusion,saw the boy scrambling to his feet and grabbed his long hickory switch for the purpose of administering a threshing to the offending boy.At that moment a bright thought struck ~~Sam~~ Dan. He raised his voice,commenced jumping up and ~~won~~ down and began to yell "glory," "hallalujah," "praise the Lord," Sam Johnson," "praise be the----"

"----What's the matter with you?" demanded Prof.Green as he grabbed Dan by the collar and gave him a shake. "Are you crazy?"

"Glory," "glory," "Sam Johnson," yelled Dan with all his might.

"Are you sick?" demanded the teacher,showing some uneasiness.

Dan shook his head.

"Have you lost your senses?"

Another shake of the head.

"For goodness sake,then what is the matter?"

Dan folded his hands across his breast,looked up toward the ceiling and meekly replied, "I've got religion."

While Prof.Green had very serious doubts about the genuineness of the conversion of Dan Boblin,yet he did not feel like taking any risks along this line--not being willing to offend the Lord by refusing to receive this lamb of the fold.

He led the new convert to the seat by the side of his friend Sam Johnson,placed his hands upon the heads of the two boys and called the attention of the school to the "wonderful power of the spirit as manifested on this occasion."

Miss Martin was delighted and felt that the conversion of Dan would soon lead to a like step on the part of Sam. The school was in an uproar and was soon dismissed for the day. Sam Johnson was the only one present who had no faith in the conversion of Dan,whom he declared "was outside the pale of salvation."

"Sam," said Miss Martin, "--go thou and do likewise. Dan has set a good example for the other boys of the school."

As she saw the two boys walk off together toward their homes, she had no doubt in her mind that Sam should be happily converted before he reached his home,or at least before the end of the week.

"Dan," said Sam as they got out of ear-shot of the others, "--what in the devil did you mean by that yelling of yours? You know you did not get religion. It was the work of Satan that caused all that howling and yelling."

"Consarn your skin," replied Dan, "you know well enough that I did it to keep you from getting a threshing. At the time you scrouged me,I was thinking of Sister Simpson and her shouting last Sunday. When I struck the floor,I yelled before I knew what I was doing and I had to keep it to save you."

"You young reprobate," responded Sam, "--you were thinking more about your own hide than you were of mine. You knew I would tell Prof.Green that you stuck a pin in me and that you would then get a drubbing for the act and that I would escape."

"Well," responded Dan,--"one thing is certain;my religion and my active mind in turning the matter as I did,saved both of us from that big hickory switch that stands in the corner for such poor sinful creatures like we are."

Then the two boys sang:

"'Tis religion that can give,

Sweetest pleasures while we live."

CHAPTER XIV.

DAN RICE'S CIRCUS.

"Hurrah!" yelled Dan Boblin as he arrived at the Academy one moring before the school"took-up." "Dann Rice's Big show is coming to Turpin."

"How do you know it?" demanded Sam Johnson.

"Dad was in town yesterday and saw the men putting up the bills and here is a small one he brought to me," replied Dan.

"When is it coming?" demanded a chorus of excited voices.

"It will be here the twentieth of the month."

"Waht day of the week is that," aksed Sam.

"It will be Wednesday--just two weeks from tomorrow."

Prof.Green," querried Dan as that gentleman and Miss Martin arrived,--"Dan Rice's big show is coming to Turpin two weeks from tomorrow,won't you dismiss school that day so that we can all go to the circus?"

"Yes,do dismiss us," demanded the whole school in chorus.

"I shall have to consult the trustees," was the reply.

"Miss Martin, won't you help us?" asked Sam and Dan.

"Will you promise to be good boys if I scucceed?" smiled the woman.

"Yes,we will nemer,no never so long as we live do a thing in the world to worry you if we can get to go to the circus," pleaded Sam and Dan who were seconded by the whole school.

"Come to books," said Prof.Green as he walked into the Academy.

There are very few things in the way of excitement or entertainment that appeals more largely to the average robust,healthy,full-of-life boy or girl of the country than the coming circus. Even the fathers and mothers--unless they should be intensely religious or exceedingly close-fisted--after the bills are out announcing the coming

of the show--become infected with the circus microbe.

Let one boy in a community learn that the "circus is coming" and it is but a short time until the word is passed down the line, and until after the tents are spread and the show leaves for the next town--lessons are forgotten, the catechism laid aside, religious thoughts and meditations banished from the mind and only the coming circus is thought of, talked of, or dreamed of.

There is no doubt that when the word went out about three thousand years ago that Daniel the prophet was going to be cast into the den of lions that every boy and girl, and even the fathers and mothers of Media collected together to witness the contest between the man of God and the hungry beasts. From that day until the present time, the cage of lions with their female trainer--while causing a shudder that makes the blood curdle--has been one of the great attractions that is always "a thriller."

For the next two weeks after the announcement of the coming circus, the boys and the grils--especially Dan and Sam--were on their very best behavior. They studied hard, but it was difficult in their studies to keep their minds off the coming show.

Dan and Sam pleaded long and hard with their fathers--who were the trustees--trying to exact a promise from these men that Prof. Green should not only be permitted but be requested to close the school "show day" so that all could go to the circus."

All the assurance they could get was, "We'll see about it," which was accompanied by a smile and a merry twinkle of the eye that gave promise that their petitions would be reported on with favor.

"Mr. Boblin," said Deacon Johnson,—" what shall we do about having no school the day of the circus?"

"Have the Prof. dismiss the school, Deacon, is my vote," was the reply.

"Bro.Boblin,you are the class leader in the Methodist church and I am a deacon in the Baptist church. What will the people say about us any way?" asked Deacon Johnson with some concern.

"Say and be hanged. Bro.Johnson I am hungry for a good show and so are you. Every body wants to go. The children are crazy about it and to tell the truth you and I are just about as crazy as are the young folks. Assisted by Prof.Green we must go to look after the boys and girls."

"I suppose we must yield to the inevitable," replied the Deacon.

"You wont fall from grace if you do go;" smiled Mr.Boblin.

"If you fall from grace you can climb back again," smiled the Deacon in return.

On the morning before the circus the two trustees went to the Academy and being called upon by Prof.Green to make a talk to the school,Mr.Boblin rose to respond.

"Boys and girls," said Mr.Boblin, "--I suppose you all know that next Wednesday there is to be a show at Turpin."

"We know it," exclaimed all in chorus.

"I want all of you who feel it to be your duty on that day to come to school and try to learn something that will be useful to you, to hold up your hands." A frown and a shade of disappointment came to every face and not a hand went up.

"Well,then,I want every one of you who wants to go to the circus next Wednesday to rise to your feet." Before the words of the speaker were fully out of his mouth every boy and girl in school,including even Prof.Green and Deacon Johnson was on his or her feet.

"You may go," smiled Mr.Boblin.

"Three cheers for our good trustees and Prof.Green," suggested John Berry the largest boy in school.

"Get to your books," smiled Prof.Green as he took his seat at his desk.

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Crazy Meg for the last few weeks had been more restless than usual and therefore needed more careful watching than at any time since she had ~~been~~ come to the home of Mrs.Jordan a little less than a yaer ago. No more was known of her history than had been learned when she was found that early morning at the Jordan home.

Since her coming she had been a charge on the community—which charge had been uncomplainingly borne by the people. The smaller boys and girls,as is usual in such cases,had a vague fear of the woman—though they had no good reason for such dread—other than an excited imagination. Meg really loved children and always smiled on them as she saw them passing by on their way to school,or when she met them on the road.

Mrs.Boblin,Mrs.Johnson, Mrs.Simpson and Miss Mandy had taken it upon themselves,in a way,to look after the comfort of Meg and to assist Mrs.Jordan in the responsibilities she had assumed in caring for the woman.

It was not often that Meg ventured away from the home. If she did it was only for the purpose of going to the spring for a bucket of water,or perhaps on very rare occasions to visit the home of some near by neighbor. When she walked along the path she mumbled to herself:

"'Twas a lovely night in June,-----The full moon was just rising. ----Oh so many--so many yaesrs ago.----He held my hand.------He looked into my eyes.------- He kissed me,I feel that kiss yet.--------I promised to be his wife." Then she would stop,look wildly about,hum some wierd tune and proceed on her journey.

There was no doubt that poor Meg had been disappointed in some love affair.

"Miss Mandy," inquired Miss Martin one afternoon as school closed and the two met just outside the building, "--where are you going?"

"I am on my way to Mrs.Jordan's to visit Crazy Meg," was the reply.

"May I accompany you?" asked Miss Martin.

"Certainly,if you so wish."

"Jack," said Ruth,turning to the crippled boy, "--you may go home and tell uncle Tom and aunt Julia that I shall be there later."

"Don't be too long cousin Ruth," pleaded the boy. "You know how lonesome I shall be without you."

When the two women arrived at the Jordan home,they walked into the room where Meg was sitting. "Who's that?" demanded Meg.

"This is my friend,Miss Ruth Martin," replied Mandy.

"Will she hurt me?" asked Meg with a shudder.

"No Meg,Miss Martin is an angel,a real angel," assured Mandy.

"Angels are scarce. You are an angel,so is your mother and so is Mrs.Boblin and so is Mrs.Johnson and so is Mrs.Jordan--but that's about all--so far as I know," groaned the woman.

"Meg,I'm your friend," said Miss Martin taking the woman by the hand and looking into her eyes with a smile.

"Yes. Yes,I guess you are. How soft and kind that hand feels, and your voice--how sweet. Just like my hand and my voice was once--but oh,so many years ago. He said--oh what was it he said?"

"Dear Meg,what was it he said?" asked Miss Martin.

"Oh,now I remember.-------'Twas a lovely night in June." Then she mumbled over the words that she had been using for the last year.

The woman rocked to and fro,her eyes blazed with a strange light and then she murmured,"Oh that was so long ago." She elapsed into silence and seemed to be peering into the future.

Poor Meg," sighed Miss Martin as she pressed the hand of the woman.

"That's what they all say," murmured the woman. The brightening

up she rapturously exclaimed,"He's coming--sometime.------If he comes not,I shall go to him."

"Meg,shall I come to see you again?" kindly asked Ruth.

"Yes.Yes,come. Come when you can. I want you to be here to meet him," rapturously she said and then after a pause she added,""He was so handsome--so gallant--so brave and so good. " She was silent for a moment and Said, "Yes,come again."

"What a sad case" said Ruth as the two walked away from the Jordam home.

"Yes,the saddest I have ever known," was the reply.

"Did Meg's sweetheart prove false? " inquired Miss Martin.

"I do not know. I can't help but believe that some terrible disaster befel him and that it was the shock thereof that dethroned the reason of the woman," replied Mandy.

"I am gald that I went with you to see poor Meg this afternoon How my heart goes out in sympathy to the woman," sighed Miss Martin.

"I believe you presence did her good," said Mandy.

"I hope so. I am always willing to do my share in making her life as easy as possible."

"Miss Martin,you are certainly a good woman."

"I appreciate your opinion of me," responded Miss Martin. "By the way Miss Mandy,are you going to the circus when it comes to Turpin?"

"No." was the reply. "I should be glad to go. It has been a long time since I have been to a show of any kind,but as most of the people of the settlement are going,I feel it to be my duty to spend the day with poor Meg. She will be very lonesome when she finds that she is left almost alone in the neighborhood."

"You must go,Miss Mandy,"replied Miss Martin. I will spend the day with Meg. I'll take your place and I promise you that I shall look after her with as much care as possible. You must go. You need the outing."

"Oh,no," replied Mandy. "You are almost a stranger here. That is asking too much of you. I am willing to make the sacrifice--if sacrifice it be--there will be other circus days--other times when I can go to Turpin and to a show."

"You shall go to the circus. I am determined on that and intend to take your place by the side of the afflicted woman. I ask it as a special favor that I shall have my own way in the matter."

"Do you really mean it?"

"I certainly do."

"You are an angel indeed," smiled Mandy.

"You know Meg said this afternoon that angels are scarce."

"They may be scarce,but that does not mean that there are not at least a few of them scattered around over the world--one of which you happen to be," affectionately replied Mandy.

"No," replied Ruth Martin to a question asked her by her aunt, Mrs.Miller, the day before the show, "--I am not going to Turpin tomorrow. Crazy Meg has not been well the last few days and I have promised Miss Mandy that I would spend the day with Mrs.Jordan--looking after the poor creature."

"That is certainly very kind of you Ruth. However do as you please," replied Mrs.Miller.

"Cousin Ruth," said Jack, "I wanted you to go with me to the circus. Henry Benton is going to take sister Flora in his buggy and she won't have time to assist me,and mother will be so tired and nervous that she won't want to be botherd with me."

"Don't you think Jack,that it would be better for me to spend the day with poor Meg and let Miss Mandy go to the circus than to attend the show myself?" asked Miss Martin.

"Yes,cousin Ruth. You are right and you are so thoughtful of others. Poor Meg needs you more than I do," was the smiling reply of the boy.

"I'll take you Jack," interrupted the father who had overheard the conversation. "We'll have a good time together and when we get back home you can tell cousin Ruth all about what you saw and heard while at the circus."

"Thank you father," smilingly answered the boy.

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On Tuesday the Dan Rice Circus had spread its tents in the town of Duncan, the County seat of an adjoining County, which was about ten miles west of the Beech Creek settlement. In order to get from Duncan to Turpin, it was necessary for the outfit to travel the public road that led from the one town to the other. This road passed through the settelement and about fifty yards in front of the Academy.

As there were no rail roads at that time in that part of the state of Kentucky, it was necessary that this, as well as all other shows should be transported from place to place in wagons drawn by teams of strong horses.

This cavalcade attracted attention for miles along the route traveled and was witnessed by the country folk with as much—or more—interest than that of the street parade of the "Greatest Show on Earth," now has for the people of the present day.

The show was billed to pass the Academy about sun-rise on its way to Turpin. Long before the time announced for the coming of the procession, every man, woman and child of the whole settlement—who could possibly be there—was present to see the coming and the passing of the most wonderful and most interedting sight that had ever before been known to the people of that community.

Of course Dan Boblin and Sam Johnson were there and they were there in all their glory. While the great majority of the people came in wagons and carts, there were many who came on horseback and others who came on foot. Sam and Dan had persuaded their fathers to let them ride, each his own horse.

The sun was just rising and everything gave promise of a beautiful day--but like the trains are sometimes of the present--behind time,marked,"30 minutes late," so was the show behind time.

"Let's ride down the road and meet it," suggested Dan to Sam.

"Here we go," agreed Sam as they rode off to meet the coming show.

"Mrs.Johnson,"said Mrs.Boblin,"~~are~~ are you really going to the circus today?"

"Well,yes,I suppose so," replied Mrs. Johnson. "The deacon wants me to go to see the animals and of course I'm going just to please him. Are you going Mrs.Boblin?"

"Yes,Mr.Boblin has to go to Turpin today to attend to some business and wants me to go along for company and I guess while I'm there I'll take in a few of the sights," was the reply.

"Do you know Mrs.Boblin," said Mrs.Johnson, "I feel just a little skittish about this business. You know that I was born a Baptist, have lived a Baptist all my life and I expect to die a Baptist. Up to the present time there are two sins that have never been laid to my door that I shall have to account for when I die."

"What are the two sins you speak of?" asked Mrs.Boblin.

"I have never heard a Methodist Presiding Elder preach on infant baptism,nor have I ever before attended a circus,but sin or no sin,I believe I shall go to the show today," declared Mrs.Johnson.

"Well Mrs.Johnson," replied Mrs.Boblin, "I have tried all my days to lead a blameless life myself. I'm a Methodist from top to bottom and from center to circumference. I have never yet seen any one immersed nor have I ever attended a circus--but Methodist as I am,I intend to see everything under the tent today that comes near enough for me to look at it."

"I never expect to see a baby sprinkled," sighed Mrs.Johnson.

"Nor do I ever intend to see a grown up person immersed," answered Mrs.Boblin.

"The show's a coming. The show's a coming," yelled Dan and Sam as they came riding down the road in a mad gallop that would have put to shame Paul Revere on his midnight ride to Concord many years before.

"Look out for the elephants," shouted Dan.

"And the lions and the tigers," yelled Sam.

And then there were craning of necks and straining of eyes to catch sight of the coming pageant as it came up over the brow of the hill.

"There they come," shouted a chorus of voices--and oh what a sight? The giant elephants were in the lead. Their mastadonic proportions caused the more timid to shrink back out of supposed danger. The camels and dromedaries were curiosities as they shuffled along the road and chewed their cuds.

"What was that?" demanded Sister Simpson as a most hideous and unearthly sound issued from one of the closed cages that was about fifteen feet away.

"That was a roaring lion," amswered Mr.Boblin.

"What is it roaring about?" demanded Mrs.Simpson in trepidation.

"I suppose it is hungry and wants something to eat," was the consoling reply of Deacon Johnson.

"Lord have mercy on us poor mortal sinful creatures," exclaimed Sister Simpson in great alarm. "That is a warning to us to flee the wrath to come."

"There is no danger Sister Simpson," assured Deacon Johnson.

"Yes there is. But danger or no danger,I've had enough of this show. Lord forgive me for what I've seen of it. Suppose Gabriel should blow his trumpet and catch me in such a crowd as this. Lord forgive me and I'll never think of another circus as long as I live," Moaned the woman.

"Don't back out now Sister Simpson," pleaded both Mrs.Johnson and Mrs.Boblin.

"I'm not backing out,because I never backed in. I'm going to spend the day with old sister Brown who is almost blind and who is by herself. We'll sing and pray while you all are engaged in serving the devil under the circus tent," was the determined and emphatic reply of the woman.

"Mandy,keep yourself pure and unspotted from the world," was the parting injunction to her daughter as the good woman turned her back on the crowd and proceeded on her way to the home of Mrs.Brown.

"I'll remember your injunction,," replied Miss Mandy with a smile.

When the procession had passed,then the people of the Beech Creek settlement fell in the rear and thus the line of march was taken up and in due time this conglomerate mass of humanity reached the County seat where those from other sections of the country round about had collected--all with one mind and one heart--to visit the circus a and at one o'clock,to enter the tents and witness the "greatest Show on Earth," or at that time the greatest one than had then been known.

And it was a great show and a grand sight. The big brass band that could be heard for more than a mile, the monstrous elephants, the savage lions and tigers,the great cage of the funniest monkeys in the world,besides the other many wild and curious animals that were on exhibition. Then there was the circus ring with its bare-back riders that seemed at times to be a part and parcel of the animals on whose backs they stood,the funny and clever clowns that kept the audience in an uproar of laughter by their antics and amusing jokes and contortions,the red lemonade that always looked better and cooler than it tasted,the hot roasted peanuts that had been left over from the show of the day before,the jugglers and the tumblers that seemed as if made of india rubber. But it was the trick-mule that perhaps caused as much

if not more fun for the aidience than any other one act. Both Dan and Sam believed in their hearts that they could not only ride that mule but any other mule or any other animal that wo re hide on its back. But that mule was too much for the two Beech Creek boys and it was with shame and confusion that they gave up the idea of sticking to the back of that particular animal.

And best off all, Dan Rice himself was the envy of every country boy in the United States who ever saw the genial face of that grand old man. Even after a lapse of more than half a century when one remembers the many antics, the funny sayings and the wonderful feats of that veteran of the old time circus and its saw-~~sut~~ dust ring--pleasant thoughts flood the memory and with grateful hearts we thank the Lord that Dan Rice was a showman and not a United States senator.

If the boys of the long ago had been permitted to nominate and elect the president of this country, they would have laid aside all political prejudices, would have asked no questions as to his religious predilections and with a unanimity never known before or since--would have elected Dan Rice to preside over the destinies of the greatest country on which the sun ever shone.

" Miss Mandy?" said Prof. Green that afternoon when they chanced to be thrown together as they left the tent, "How have you enjoyed the circus?"

"Better than I did one Friday evening not long ago while waiting for the company of a man who was up a tree," was the reply. "And how did you enjoy it Prof?"

"Much better than I did sitting in the fork of that beech tree that never-to-be-forgotten Friday night to which you have just referred," sighed the man. Then looking appealingly into the face of the woman he asked, "May I try again?"

"Try what? Try climbing a tree?" she asked shyly.

"Lord,no. Try calling on you again," whispered the man.

"Yes,I suppose so,but watch out for Bill Smith's big black dog," gently replied the woman.

"I shall," grinned the professor.

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Ruth Martin was at Mrs.Jordan's long before the parade passed. When she arrived,Meg was mumbling her usual refrain about the June evening,the full moon &c.When she saw her visitor coming up the walk her face lit up with a smile,her eyes shone with brightness as she exclaimed,"Angel has come. When did you leave home?" asked the woman, looking Ruth full in the face.

"I have come to spend the day with you if you wish it," was the reply. "But I am no angel."

"Yes you are," quickly retorted Meg. Then she softly murmured, "Yes,she's an aggel,my good angel."

Ruth felt it to be the better part of wisdom not to dispute the angelic proposition with the woman. Then Ruth gently hummed some well known tune,to which Meg gave the closest attention.

By the time the procession reached the house,Ruth and Mrs.Jordan had prepared an easy chair which was placed just outside the building and in front of the door. From the very minute of ~~the~~ her arrival Ruth,had managed to gain and hold the attention of Meg,who all at once began to seemingly take interest in what was being said and done.

Just before the cavalcade came in sight,the band began to play. At the very first note of the music,Meg raised her eyes,looked in the direction from which the sounds came,folded her arms across her breast, gazed upward and exclaimed:

"Behold he cometh in all his glory! I am ready and waiting for his coming." Then she began to sway her body in the chair and softly hummed an old love tune.

Ruth and Mrs.Jordan were so deeply impressed with the solemnity of the scene that they could only stand and look at eachother in dumb silence.

When Meg saw the elephants, she gazed at the monsters with awe. As the chariots rolled by, drawn by the prancing steeds and these followed by the wagons with their painted sides, the poor demented creature seized Ruth by the shoulder and with ecstasy exclaimed:

"Look angel, look! See him coming in his chariot.-----He said he'd come again."

She held out her hands to the passing cortege--no doubt believing that it was her lover who had promised when he kissed her good night in the long ago, that he would return again.

"Some other time," she softly whispered as the merry cavalcade disappeared around the bend in the road and was soon lost to sight.

"Angel, where did he go?" asked Meg addressing Ruth as she gazed down the road.

"To turpin," was the reply.

"Will he come back again?" querried the woman.

"Yes--sometime," nodded Ruth.

While Mrs.Jordan was attending to the household duties and preparing the mid-day meal, Ruth was doing what she could to divert the mind of the woman from her hallucinations and to get her to thinking along other lines. She directed the attention of Meg to the beautiful flowers, the lovely scenery, the balmy air laden with its rich perfume and the sweet songs of the birds as they flitted from tree to tree.

"How lovely," exclaimed Meg. "I remember in the long ago,--all these things, I remember when he kissed me.-----He said he'd come again." The the woman fell into her murmurings.

In the afternoon when tired and worn by the excitement of the

day,Meg lay on her bed as if in a deep sleep. Ruth began in her sweet voice to hum some familiar tune.

"The angel's voice," whispered Meg.

"What is it Meg?" inquired Ruth.

"Please sing for me," pleaded the woman.

Then in a voice that was the sweetest and most melodious ever before heard in that home,Ruth poured out her soul in song. Her very soul was in the effort.

"That's heaven on earth," smiled Meg. "May I sing also?" she begged.

"Yes dear one," was the response.

Then Ruth,as if to out-do her former effort poured out such a song of melody,harmony and sweetness as caused even the birds to stop their twitterings and the angels on their visit of mercy to stop and forget their mission.

What was Ruth's surprise before she had completed the first line of the song to hear the voice of Meg join in with perfect accord.

The two united in such perfect unison that none but the trained in the art of music could distinguish the tones of two voices that seemed to rival eachother in sweetness and melody.

Dr.Marcum who had refused to go to the circus that day on account of the serious illness of some of his patients--one of whom was Meg--rode up to the gate,hitched his horse and just before reaching the door,heard the singing.

He paused--listened and stood as one transfixed with wonder and amazement."What does this mean?" he inquired of himself. "That voice," --then listening intently, "Yes,two of them. Have angels come to pay a visit to poor Meg?" reverently soliloquied the man.

When the sound of the voices ceased,Dr.Marcum approached the door. Ruth was embarrassed,she blushed and was scarcely able to reply to the greetings of the physician.

"How are you feeling today?" asked Dr.Marcum as he addressed Meg.

"I feel better than for many a long day. Angel has been with me," she answered looking at Ruth with a smile.

"Has the angel gone?" inquired the doctor, thinking that Meg in her hallucinations had supposed that she had been honored by some heavenly visitor.

"No! There she is," exclaimed Meg pointing to Ruth.

"Oh,I see," replied the doctor as he shyly looked at Ruth and inwardly thought, "Yes she is an angel--of mercy.

"Won't you sing for me? Please sing the same song you were singing a few minutes ago," pleaded Dr.Marcum.

Without hesitation she began. Then Meg joined in as before. Wonder and surprise rendered the doctor speechless. Unwittingly in the second verse his voice--a splendid one--joined in with that of the two women.

"You are indeed an angel,and well deserve the appellation bestowed on you by Meg," rapturously exclaimed Dr.Marcum.

"I have no wings," smiled Ruth.

"And I am glad you have not," replied the doctor. "I like the wingless one better."

"Meg,it's growing late. I must go home. Mrs.Jordan will look after you. Take the medicine the doctor has preapred for you and sometime soon I'll come again to see you," said Ruth as she prepared to leave for her home.

"Oh,angel,come back again. I've been in heaven today," said Meg. Then after a pause , "I know he'll come again.-----He said he would."

"Miss Ruth,may I have the pleasure of accompanying you to your uncle's gate?" asked the doctor.

"Certainly," was the modest reply.

As the two walked slowly down the road, Ruth related the incidents of the day. She told him of her visits to the woman, of how she had tried to lead Meg's mind from from the great secret trouble that was weighing down the soul of the stricken one. Dr. Marcum was deeply interested in this recital.

"Miss Ruth," said Dr. Marcum recovering from a deep study, "I believe that by your help we shall be able to restore Meg to her right mind--so that ~~she may be able to~~ thereby we shall discover something of her history and perhaps not only learn something of her identity but restore her to her own people."

"Doctor, do you think such a thing possible?" asked Ruth with much interest.

"I believe it not only possible--but very probable," replied the doctor with emphasis.

"God grant it," reverently responded Ruth.

"Angel--excuse me ~~--~~, Miss Ruth--shall I have your assistance in this matter?" querried Dr. Marcum.

"You shall," was the firm and unfaltering reply.

CHAPTER XV.

DAN BOBLIN BACK-SLIDES.

The happy conversion of Dan Boblin in the school room that Friday afternoon produced a profound sensation among and a wonderful impression on the people of that community. It caused more talk and comment than the "sliding picture show," that had been given one night at the Academy two or three months before.

It was generally supposed that at the next regulay services at Zion church that the young convert would present himself for membership--though Dan himself had given no intimation to any one that he would do so.

During this interval Dan made an ideal scholar--giving his teachers no trouble whatever. The patrons of the school attributed the changed life of the boy to the upright and christian lives and the good example set by Prof.Green and Miss Martin--both of whom became quite popular with those who had wayward sons that stood in need of conversion. Neither did the people fail to give due credit to the good mother who had tried so hard to rear her boy "in the admonition of the Lord."

There were times between the incident of the conversion and the coming fourth Sunday that Dan was sorely tried. He saw so many splendid opportunities to get into mischief that it sometimes happened that he could not help but wish that he had never heard of religion. However he held out very well until affter the opportunity presented itself for him to unite with the church.

"Mother," said Sam Johnson as he and Dan came into the kitchen carrying a rabbit which the boys had caught, "--here is the finest and fattest "mollie cotton-tail" that ever nibbled a cabbage plant or skinned an appletree. Won't you cook him for dinner tomorrow?"

"Yes,my son," was the reply. Then turning to Dan she said:"You must come home with Sam from the church after the services are over and you boys shall have all the rabbit you can eat."

"I'll be here and thank you too," was the prompt response.

"I wish it was tomorrow now," exclaimed Sam as he saw his mother take the rabbit and put it in a cool place.

"So do I," replied Dan. "I do hope Bro. King, the circuit rider won't preach a very long sermon."

"Long or short, you boys must stay until the services are over and while there try to behave yourselves while in the church," demanded Mrs.Johnson.

"Um,um,um, I can almost taste rabbit now," said Sam as he smacked his lips.

"Oh,hush Sam;you make me hungry," said Dan.

The boys were at Sunday school next morning wearing their best home-made jeans suits,cottonade shirts and shoes well greased with mutton tallow. They were smiling and happy. But they could not keep from their minds the fact that they were to have baked rabbit for dinner.

The subject for the Sunday school lesson was "Apostles and Epistles." After spending some time with the lesson, the teacher turned to Sam and asked,"What is an Apostle?"

"One sent forth," was the prompt reply.

"What is an Epistle?" aked the teacher addressing Dan.

"The wife of an Apostle," was the ready reply.

Whether or not the answer was satisfactory to the teacher and the members of the class,one thing is ceratin it seemed to satisfy Dan.

During the interim between Sunday School and preaching,Dan and Sam talked about the rabbit until they became as hungry as wolves.

Sam exclaimed, "I'm starving to death."

"So'm I," responded Dan.

When the boys heard the congregation singing, "Hark from the tombs,a doleful sound," they knew that the time had come for them to march into the church. One or two other long metre hymns were sung, which was followed by a long prayer by Bro.Lester. To the boys that prayer seemed to last almost from the begginning of time to the ending of eternity. The thoughts of Dan and Sam were not on the petition of the brother—they thought only of what they were to have for dinner.

"I'm hungry," whispered Dan.

"I'm starving," replied Sam.

The sermon followed the sermon and as was usual at that time in the rural districts—as there was preaching but once each month--the discourse was of unreasonable length— that is so far as the boys and girls were concerned.

About one o'clock the preacher reached at "tenthly,"in his discourse when he wound up by saying:

"Brothers and sisters: How it makes my heart thrill with joy and gladness that is inexpressible when I think of the great beyond—in the New Jerusalem—in that heaven that awaits the finally faithful, and know that in that blessed knigdom we shall have one eternal and everlasting Sunday that shall last from the early morning until the going down of the sum that never sets in that glorious country. Then it shall be nothing but one long,blessed and eternal Sunday."

The preacher stopped to take another hitch on the Sunday business,when Dan jumped up and exclaimed: "Hell for me."

He sat down at once. The words had accidentally slipped from his lips.

The preacher had understood Dan to say: "Help for me," and exclaimed: "The Lord be praised. He will help you and all others who call on His dread name."

A song was sung and an opportunity was given and an invitation extended to those who might wish to join the church. All eyes were turned toward Dan--whom the people supposed would unite with the church at this time. But Dan did not respond--neither did any one else. When the song was concluded the audience sat down somewhat disappointed.

"Now," said the preacher, "--I want all who wish to go to heaven to stand up."

All promptly rose to their feet--except Dan and Sam.

The preacher was non-plussed--the people wondered what had come over the "back-slider."

Brother King, pointing to the boys said: "Young men, why is it that while others have expressed a desire to go to heaven that you have kept your seats and seem to be unmoved so far as your salvation is concerned? Do you want to go to hell?"

Sam and Dan both shook their heads.

"Then where do you want to go?" slowly demanded the preacher.

Dan arose and said as solemnly as if he had been the class-leader, "We want to go home to dinner and eat rabbit."

"Amen," ejaculated Sam.

The congregation was dismissed, the people dispersed and the boys went to Decacon Johnson's where they ate all the rabbit they could hold and felt more than satisfied with the way the day had been passed.

It was the consensus of opinion among the people that Dan Boblin had "back-slid" beyond hope of reddemtion and that his friend Sam Johnson was a "reprobate, for whom there was no salvation."

~~Note by the author.~~

~~It is perhaps not improper to say in this connection that Dan Boblin and Sam Johnson were not more sinned against than sinning. There is such a thing as giving boys, and girls too, such~~

CHAPTER XVI.

MISS MANDY HAS A BEAU.

"If man come not to gather
The roses where they stand,
They fade among their foliage,
They cannot seek his hand."

Courtship, love and mating with the opposite sex, are part and parcel of everything animate. The birds of the air and the beasts of the field--as well as man and woman--have that much of the divine in their make-up. Love is of God for God is love: Where there is no love, there is no God.

Love is the same yesterday, today and forever. The methods of courtship may have changed with man on account of his environment--not so however with the birds--they court and mate today as they did when they sung their first songs in the Garden of Eden: Their homes are in the fields or the woods now as then. From the days when they built their nests in the rafters of Noah's Ark until the present time, there has been no change in the architecture of their dwelling places.

The courtship of the first pair was a very simple proceeding. Adam saw Eve in her plain, common, every-day dress and she smiled on him and right there he lost his heart to the most lovely woman in the world. He proceeded without further preliminaries to tell her that he thought her "the most beautiful creature the Lord had ever made." No further talk was needed. They went to house-keeping that very afternoon.

Whether it were when the world was new, or the time of the Cliff Dwellers, or when Jacob courted Rachel, or when Christ blessed the wine at the marriage feast, or the dark ages when ignorance covered the world, or at a leter period when learning took the place of superstition, or still later in Rural Kentucky during the earlier time of the last

century, or whether at the present day--love has been the same--though through each period of the world's history there have been different methods of showing this love in courtship.

Every country girl--if she lived in Kentucky--just as soon as she was old enough and large enough to attend school was taught to sew, knit, wash and iron clothes, milk the cows and taught to know something of house-keeping in general. By the time she was "sweet sixteen," she was considered old enough to begin to think something about getting married to some respectable young man.

Man must do the courting--woman must wait to be courted--or at least it was that way "out in the country," in the long ago. Miss Mandy Simpson had been patiently waiting--may be sometimes not quite so patiently--for a number of years, but with a "well grounded faith" that in due time she should not only be courted, but should be the wife of some good man with children around the fireside. She was engaged in "watching and waiting."

"Silas, old fellow," said Prof. Green to himself one Saturday afternoon as he sat lonely and alone on his front porch in deep thought,--"It's about time you were making some arrangements to get some good woman to come here to cheer up this home and its occupant. I feel about as lonely and God forsaken as did Adam when he was the only human being on the face of the earth."

For a long time Prof. Green sat and pondered. The longer he sat and the longer he pondered the more lonely and despondent he became.

"Confound Bill Smith's old black dog," said the professor to himself. "The low down barking cur treed me and caused me to break an engagement with the best woman in the whole country. But thank goodness Dan Boblin and Sam Johnson never knew where I had started. I'll try again. Miss Mandy told me at the show that I might make another try and I'll do it. Confound that dog."

Prof.Green rose from his chair,went into his bed room,dressed himself in his best suit of clothes,caught and saddled his horse and rode off down the lane. "Whoa,Whitey," said the man as he reined up the animal when he came in sight of the Simpson home. "I want to do a little reconnoitering." The man peered cautiously in every direction and saw that there was no one in sight. Then he rode forward.

As he arrived at the gate, Nebuchadnezzar roused up from his nap on the door steps,gave a low growl of warning and started toward the man.

"Another big dog," graoned the man as he thought of Bill Smith's dog that had kept him up a tree for more than two hours.

"Come here Nebbie," demanded Miss Mandy of the dog who at once obeyed the command of his mistress. "Get down and come in," was the kind invitation extended to the professor.

With fear and trembling the man got down from his horse,hitched the animal to an overhanging limb,made his way up the walk and into the house where he dropped into the first chair he saw. Miss Mandy took the professor's hat and handed him her mother's turkey-wing fan which he vigonously used,at the same time mopping his face with his bandana handkerchief. At last he said:

"Miss Mandy,have you seen anything of a stray mooley yearling around here that is about twelve feet high--I mean about twelve months old?"

"No," replied the woman just as much at a loss to know what to say as had been the man,--"I haven't seen any strange mule around here for the next ten weeks."

There was a painful pause in the conversation when General Jackson--the rooster--came to the door,flopped his wings and crowed two or three times. This furnished a new subject for ~~conversation~~ discussion.

"That's a fine chicken," decalred Prof.Green. "What's he crowing about. I din't believe he likes me. "

"Oh yes he does. When he found out that you were not a Methdist preacher,he felt so rejoiced that he could not help coming to the front and doing a little crowing over the matter. He's not afraid of Baptists."

While the two were discussing the merits of General Jackson, the favorite hen of the flock set up a terrible cackling. "Excuse me professor," said Miss Mandy, "--Liza Jane has laid an egg. I have promised Mrs.Brown that I would save her a setting the very first I get. I'm afarid Bill Jonese's old hound will beat me to the nest and get the egg."

While Miss Mandy was gone after the egg the professor hitched his chair up about two feet nearer the one that had been vacated by the woman,who--when she returned--seemed to pay no attention to the moving of the furniture--but in her heart rejoiced at the thoughtfulness of the man.

The professor still wielded the turkey-wing fan and mopped his perspiring face with his bandana handkerchief--but all this only made him the warmer and the more ill at ease. To him,he had undertaken a bigger task than controlling the boys and girls at the Academy of conducting the mid-week prayer meeting at the Baptist church.

"Where is your mother this afternoon?" inquired Prof.Green.

"She's gone over to help Mrs.Boblin put up some quince preserves."

"Will she back soon?" nervously inquired the man.

"Not before nearly sundown. Do you want to see her on business, professor?"

"Y-e-s, no,no. I just asked--oh just because," answered the man with embarrassment.

"She won't be back for at least an hour yet," smiled the woman.

"Don't you get mighty lonesome living her, with no one but your mother?" querried the man.

"Well--y-e-s," was the response with a blush, "--but I am getting used to it. However I have lots of company."

"You do?" excitedly exclaimed the man who had fears that he was not the only suitor. "What company do you have,who comes to see you? Is there another suitor for your hand?"

"Well,there's Nebbie the dog;Alaxander the cat; General Jackso the rooster,the hens and the chickens and the cow and the calf and there's my mother--the best mother on earth.So you see I don't have much time to become very lonesome.," replied the woman in tones of content and happiness.

Hitching his chair up about a foot closer he asked, "Wouldn't a man be a good thing to have around the house in case of trouble?"

"Certainly," with a sigh, "--that is if he were the right sort of man. But there are so many men that are not worth the having." Noticing that the professor seemed to be somewhat crestfallen over the last sentence she added,"But mind you professor,I did not say this to offend you. There are lots of good men in this world."

The added assertion was at least consoling to the perspiring man. He said; "I do hope you class me with the good men,though I do not claim any special excellemence along this line."

"I think Professor,that there are many worse men than you are. Men not only in this world but right here in the settlement almost anywhere."

"Thank you," exclaimed the man with enthusiasm.

For a short time there was silence which was broken only by the ticking of the clock on the mantel and the heart beats of the man and the woman as they sat in deep meditation.

Prof.Green mopped his face,rose to his feet, and awkwardly fumbled with his hat and finally blurted out:

"Miss Mandy,I have enjoyed this meeting very much indeed."

"So have I," replied Miss Mandy.

"May I call again?" tremblingly asked the Professor.

"Certainly, if you so wish," was the modest answer.

Prof. Green walked to the door, stood irresolute for awhile, then siad, "Don't tell any body about my calling to see you."

"I won't," sweetly smiled the woman, "--for I'm ashamed about it as you are."

"Oh, I didn't mean that I was ashamed--I meant that I didn't want people to know it and get to talking about it," replied the man.

"Well, that's what I meant too," smiled the woman.

With an awkward bow he left the presence of the woman, walked to the gate mounted his waiting horse and rode down the lane. As he rode he thought of the events of the last hour or two and wondered what should be the outcome of the whole matter.

As the man rode away Nebuchadnezzar barked, Alexander mewed, Generl Jackson crowed, the hens cackled while Miss Mandy stood in the door and watched the receding form ~~form~~ of the professor as he turned unto the main road and was soon lost to sight. She returned to her household duties and felt that a great change was coming into her life --that there was yet something worth living for.

When the man got home he put his horse in the stable, knelt down in the stall, raised his head and eyes toward the rafters above and said: "Good Lord, I feel at peace with the whole world and all mankind. Bless me and Miss Mandy, world without end. Amen."

Mrs. Simpson arrived at home, coming in the ~~back~~ back way, just as Prof. Green was riding down the lane and was almost out of sight. She observed the two chairs that were in close proximity, she also noticed that Miss Mandy was laboring under more or less excitement which she was trying to conceal.

The mother had her suspicions as to who had been visiting in

her absence. "Mandy," she said, "--who was that fellow who left just as I came up? I saw him riding down the lane."

"Oh,it it was Mr.--er--Prof.What's his name," stammered Mandy.

"Prof.Who?" demanded the mother.

"Oh,Prof.Green," was the reply.

"What did he want?"

"He said he was hunting for a stray yearling."

"A stray yearling.A yearling calf?"

"Yes, he said it was about twelve feet high--he meant twelve months old."

"Did he find his lost yearling that was twelve feet high and twelve months old?" smiled the mother.

"He didn't find any yearling here of course."

"Well,what did he find?"

"He found me at home," smiled Mandy.

"Do you ~~really~~ believe the professor was really hunting for a stray yearling?" asked the mother somewaht amused.

"Well,that's what he said any how," smiled Mandy.

"Did he expect to find a twelve foot yearling in this romm?"

"Of course not wmother," replid Mandy with some annoyance.

"That's all right Mandy. Of course I understand what it all means," observed the mother who remembered that she herself had been courted in the long ago. "Is he coming again?" queried the mother.

"He said he would."

The two women talked long and confidentially over the incident of the afternoon and agreed with that line in Lochiel's warning: "And coming events cast their shadows before."

Mrs.Brown,a near neighbor of the Simpson's saw Prof.Green ride up to the gate,saw him get down and go in and noted the time he stayed and watched him as he rode down the lane on his way toward his home.Then she whispered to herself and said:

"Look out for a wedding and that before a great while. Prof. Green has been srpucing up for some time and Mandy has of late been just a little more jolly than usual. You can't fool me."

Mrs.Brown having been the first one to discover that Prof.Green had "set out" and that Miss Mandy had caught him for a beau,it was therefore her secret and she had determined to--"keep it a going." She whispered the secret to Mrs.Jones with the injunction, "Don't tell it."

Of course Mrs.Jones pledged her sacred word that she would keep it to herself,--which she did until she met Mrs.Benson--then she could not resist the temptation to tell that good woman all she had heard from Mrs.Brown,not forgetting to add a few touches to the information she had received.

Before a week had passed there was not a man,woman or child in the whole Beech Creek settlement who had not learned that Prof.Green had called on Mandy Simpson the Saturday afternoon before and that there was no doubt in the world that there would be a wedding at Sister Simpson's before the year was ended.

When any one broached the subject with Miss Mandy,she simpered and giggled--just as millions of her sex have done from the creation of the world and will continue to do so until the end of time.

When Prof.Green was joked about the matter,he neither affirmed nor denied,but it was observed that when Miss Mandy's name was mentioned in his presence that a broad smile always illumined his countenance.

CHAPTER XVII.

BRO.RILEY'S MISSIONARY WORK.

Bro.Riley was truly Methodistic in that he believed in missionary work. While he loved his own people above all others--that is those of his neighborhood and acquaintances--yet he had a love that reached out to others--to those who had not as yet heard the gospel as taught in the Bible.

He had been requested by his church conference to go into the mountain section of the country that lay twenty five or thirty miles north of the Beech Creek settlement for the purpose of investigating the mental, spiritual and financial condition of the people who inhabited that portion of the world--which country at that time was even less known to the outsider, than is now known of central Africa.

The good man did not hesitate to respond to the call. He closed his shop, put a sign on the door thereof which read, "Gone to attend to the Lord's business." Then he boldly set forth on his mission. While absent from his home, he carried not with him the cares or the duties of his trade of beating iron into plow-shares or making grubbing-hoes, but went in the name of his Master.

With only a change of clothing--a bible and a hymn-book in his saddle-bags--he mounted his family horse that was as strong and vigorous as it's rider. By the end of the first day's travel he had come to the foot-hills of the mountains that towered up before him. He put up for the night at a wayside cabin with but two rooms. The accommodation was poor but such as the people had was gladly given the preacher--and that without stint or grudging.

Early in the morning he started on his lonely ride. Before him loomed up hill after hill and mountain after mountain until it seemed as if the tops thereof might be hidden in the deep blue of the skies above. Up one declivity and down another, across one stream and

then the next, the preacher and his horse plodded their long and lonely way.

As the man of God rode, he sang in that deep voice that was so familiar to the people of Zion church back in the Beech Creek settlement--which was now far behind. This song--as the voice of the man echoed over the hills and the valleys of that almost unbroken solitude of wilderness--was a new sound to the beasts and brids of the mountains.

The frightened rabbit and its pursuer--the gray fox--both stopped to listen to the voice that was different from that to which they were accustomed. The twittering birds that nested in the foliage of every tree stopped their chatterings; the frisky squirrel sat sedate on the limb of a near by oak, the owl that had been hooting to his mate across the valley became silent and looked at a hawk that sat on the limb of a giant pine that rose high on the mountain top.

The preacher rode on and up and the higher he ascended, the higher rose his song and the fuller became his heart as he poured out his soul in praise to his creator.

"Hallo stranger," greeted a man who stepped out from where--the preacher did not know. "Whar you gwine?"

Bro. Riley stopped his horse, gazed at the man--who was dressed in checked shirt, a pair of tow linen trousers that were rolled up to the knees and was chewing tobacco. The man wore a straw hat and was bare footed. He also carried a rifle which was almost as long as the man was tall.

"Good morning brother," was the response of Bro. Riley.

"We aint brothers," declared the man.

"Yes, we are brothers in the Lord," smiled the preacher.

"You must be one of these preacher men," suggested the stranger.

"Yes, I preach sometimes," replied Bro. Riley.

"Can't you preach for us next Sunday?" grinned the man with the gun.

"Yes, I suppose so," was the kind response. "Where is your church?"

"We ain't got none. You can preach at my house. I'll let all the people for ten miles round know it and we can have a hell-whooping crowd to hear you parson."

"How far from here is your home?" inquired Bro. Riley.

"Oh, it ain't more'n five or six miles from here. You go up the creek fur about three miles, cross the hill at the forks of the stream and scoot along the path that leads to my cabin, 'Taint hard to find the way," replied the hunter.

"I forgot to inquire your name," smiled the preacher.

"I'm Tom Mercer of wild-cat holler and ef I do say it myself, I guess that I've got about the best cabin in the whole country. We've got three rooms in my shack and a good stable for your critter. By the way parson you aint told me your name as yet?"

"My name is Riley. I'm from the Beech Creek settlement and I am anxious to meet with and get acquainted with the people of this section of the country."

"Now parson, ef you've come to preach, its all right, but darn it, we don't want any of these trading fellows to come prying around into our business."

"My only object is to preach to your people with a hope that I may be able to show them the way to gain eternal life.

"Parson, I ruther like your appearance and the way you talk. We'll expect you next Sunday morning by ten o'clock. Stay Saturday night with Dick Burton--he's a cousin of mine and a pretty good fellow. Tell him that I said ef he didn't treat you right that the devil would be to pay when we meet. Dick, his wife Nance and their son Bill will come over with you Sunday morning. You'll all eat dinner at my house. I guess that you'd better stay with us Sunday night."

Bro.Riley acquiesced in the plan proposed by the man. Just as the two separated and Bro.Riley started to ride off on his journey Mercer siad: "Look here parson;don't forget your appintment. We'll expect you without fail. Ef you don't come there'll be hell to pay."

"Unless Providence prevents I shall be there on time," smiled the preacher

"Providence! What in the devil has providence to do with the meeting. If he tries to stop you all you've got to do is to let Tom Mercer find it out, and there'll be trouble sure enough in the mountains." suggested the man.

It was the next day about eleven o'clock when Bro.Riley began to look about for some wayside cabin where he hoped to find food for himself and his horse that he heard the yelping of dogs not a great way in the distance. He soon came in sight of a clearing and in a few minutes drew rein at the gate in front of a dilapidated cabin.

In front of the cabin sat a man on a rough wooden bench. The man was dressed very much after the style of Tom Mercer--the fellow Bro.Riley had met the day before. There were a half dozen dogs of all kinds,breeds,sizes and colors--some sleeping in the sun,some chasing eachother in a familiar way and all on the hart alert for some coming stranger. When the animals saw the preacher,they all with one accord set up a barking and a howling as though nothing could please them better than to dine off the minister for dinner.

The man had a large chew of tobacco in his mouth and was expectorating as if trying to extinguish an incipient fire in the forest.

"Here,dang you skins," yelled the man as he grabbed up a good sized hickory limb and began to lambast the dogs, "--get out,git away, didn't you never see nobody before?"

As the last dog tucked his tail between his legs and struck out for the back yard the man said:"Git down,hitch your horse,come in,

have a seat here on the bench with me and be more'n welcome."

"Thank you,"replied Bro.Riely as he proceeded to accept the kind but brusque invitation.

"What mought be your name?"

"Riley--John Riley," was the reply.

"What mought be your business?"

"I'm a preacher, a Methodist preacher."

"Well,I'll be danged. Say Parson, I'm glad,real glad to see you. You're more'n welcome. Make yourself at home. My name's Dick Burton."

"Can I get dinner for myself and my horse?" asked the preacher.

"Can you git dinner! Yes and supper too if you want it. Yes sir and stay all night if it suits you. If you'll stay for supper I'll kill a mess of squirrels and Nance will give you the best bed in the house and we'll all go to Tom Mercer's in the morning where they are going to have preaching."

"I am much obliged for your kind invitation and shall gladly accept your hospitality," answered Bro.Riley. "I am the man who is expected to preach tomorrow at Tom Mercer's. I met him yesterday and he invited me to his home.He advised me to stop at your home."

"Well,I'm durned glad that you found your way here. Nance will be mighty proud to have a preacher at our home. She's a sorter half way kind of a Methodist herself. She'll be almost tickled to death and will brag to her neighbors about having the preacher to stop with us. Nance and Bill will be here in a few minutes and then we'll have something to eat."

About this time Bro.Riley looked down the road and saw a woman driving a yoke of cattle,of the small and scrubby kind--one of which was a two year old knotty headed bull and the other a spindle legged heifer about the same age.

The woman and the boy had been at work in the field that was down the road not a great way from the cabin. She had been plowing the cattle while the boy had been chopping sprouts. The woman put up her team and fed them before coming to the house.

"Here,Bill," said the man to the boy,"take this horse,put him up and feed him all he can eat."

As the woman came from the stable and passed where the men were sitting,Burton said: "Nance,this here's the preacher--git us some dinner."

"This is Mrs.Burton I suppose," said Bro.Riley as he extended his hand.

"Yes,I'm Dick Burton's woman,an' if you're a preacher I'm more'n glad to see you. I'll get you some dinner in a jiffy." replied the woman as she went into the kitchen.

While Mrs.Burton was preparing the corn-pone,baking the potatoes and frying the fat bacon for the dinner,the two men were engaged in talking first about one thing and then another. In a short time the woman stepped to the door and said: "Dinner's ready."

"Let's go and git over the misery of Nance's cooking," exclaimed Burton,rising to his feet.

"Set still Bill and shet your mouth," demanded the father as he addressed the son. "The parson will ax a blessin'."

"Now help yourself parson to anything you see. If you think of anything and it's not on the table,speak out and Nance will git it for you," exclaimed Burton as he pushed the corn-pone and bacon to the parson.

"I'm more'n glad to have you with us parson," smiled Mrs.Burton.

"And I am more than glad to be with you and at your table," was the reply.

"Parson," exclaimed Dick Burton enthusiastically, "--we've got the finest country up here that the Lord ever made--the best that a crow ever flew over or that the devil ever visited."

"Yes,"replied Bro.Riley "I'm certain that in some respects that it is a most wonderful country."

"Wonderful! Wonderful don't begin to describe it," said the man. "Just think of the deer,the turkeys,the game of all kinds--and the fine fishing and the best dogs in the whole state of Kentucky. A man has nothing to do to make a living except to take his gun on his shoulder,call the dogs and carry a fishing-pole and in a sh ort time he returns to his cabin loaded down to the very guards."

"That all sounds very well for the men," answered Bro.Riley. Then turning to the woman who up to this time had said but very little except when addressed he asked: "Sister Burton,Bro.Burton has expressed himself quite freely in regard to this mountain life;now what do you think about it?"

"Parson," said she with a look of weariness,"--this is a mighty fine country for men and dogs,but let me tell you--it is hell on women and bull-heifer teams."

The Burtons had squirrels for supper as had been promised by the man of the house. As it was Saturday afternoon,Nance the wife, and Bill the son did not have to go back into the fields to work any more that day. The bull and the heifer were turned loose on the range until needed at some other time. The woman preapred for the guest as best she could and made preparations for the going to Tom Mercer's the next morning.

The cabin consisted of two rooms--one for the kitchen and dining room the other for the family and visitors as a sleeping room. For the night Bro.Riley and Bill occupied the bed in the east corner of the room,while Burton and his wife took the other bed which was in the west corner.

Bro.Riley and the Burtons were up and off early the next morning for Tom Mercer's where there was to be preaching. The parting injunction to the preacher when they parted a few days before that, "hell would be to pay," if he failed to be at the appointment had not been forgotten by Bro.Riley, though it will not do to imagine for a minute that this had anything to do with the parson keeping his word.

At the appointed hour the house and the yard at Tom Mercer's were full of mountianeers, their wives, their children and the dogs. The men were in their shirt sleeves and most of them were bare-footed. The women wore home-made cottonade dresses, plain sun-bonnets and those who were not bare-footed wore moccasins made of tanned deer skins. The boys and girls who were under eighteen years old wore no shoes.

When Bro.Riley started up the song, "Amazing grace," much to his surprise not only Tom Mercer and Dick Burton, but many others joined in the song. "How firm a foundation," was sung with equal energy.

Bro.Riley gave them what he called "His hell-fire sermon," and wound up with his "Glorified saint," --the first named to scare up the sinners and the other as a consolation to those who were on their way to heaven.

There were twenty five conversions that day--among whom were Tom Mercer and wife, and Dick Burton, wife and son Bill. A class was organized and in time a church was erected and dedicated by the preacher.

Bro.Riley spent the remainder of the day and that night with Tom Mercer and his family. Once each month thereafter, for many years, the preacher visited this mountain congregation and was always a welcome visitor not only in the homes of Tom Mercer and Dick Burton, but in every other home in the whole community.

Bro.Riley was a man who was as much at home in the mountain cabin as he was in the better residences of the people of wealth and culture. God was with him whereever he went.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MEG UNDERGOES A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION.

In some respects during the last month or two Crazy Meg showed some signs of a return to a normal condition. She occasionally talked in a rational manner but in a short time these apparent betterments were almost certain to be followed by a relapse that made the last state worse than the former.

Miss Ruth Martin from the first time she had visited the woman in company with Miss Mandy Simpson had taken a deep and peculiar interets in poor Meg. There was scarcely an afternoon wwhen the school had closed for the day that she did not call on her way home to do what she could to cheer and comfort the sufferer. Since the morning of the circus--when Ruth spent the day with the woman aand sung to her --Meg awaited her coming with as much interest as does the child watch for the coming of the mother who has been absent from home the whole day.

"Please sing to me," pleaded Meg one afternoon when Ruth and Jack made their appearance in the door way and a bright smile illumined the countenance of the woman. "Yes,Angel,sing to me as you sung before ."

"How are you today?" asked Ruth.

"I'm still waiting for him.---He kissed me and siad he'd come again. --- I know he'll come," and then Meg began to mumble and to hum an old love song.

"Who is that boy you have with you?" asked Meg as she gazed at Jack. "He's a fine looking fellow."

"My cousin Jack Miller. He has come to see you."

"Come to me," said the woman taking him by the hand."Oh how much like you when he was your age." Then pointing to Ruth she said: "She's an angel. I call her angel."

"She is an angel , " said Jack.

"Sing Angel,sing," pleaded Meg. "I'll help you---perhaps he'll hear my voice and come to me."

Ruth began in her low sweet voice and before she had completed the first bar of the music,the voices of the two women were blended into a harmony that was rapturous.

"I know he'll come now.---Oh,my head," and Meg placed her hand behind her left ear and complained of the pain.

Thus the two women were engaged one afternoon a few days before the summer session of the school at the Academy closed,when Dr. Marcum,accompanied by Miss Mandy arrived at the home of Mrs.Jordan.

"Angel is here," exclaimed Meg when she saw her visitors enter the door.

The doctor noticed the way the woman placed her hand to her head as if suffering from some unknown cause. He made a careful examination and found behind the ear a depression and at once believed that the woman had received a blow sometime in the past that might perhaps be the cause of her present condition. He at once determined that a surgical operation might be beneficial and made up his mind accordingly--though he kept the matter to himself for the present.

In a short time,Ruth,Mandy,the doctor and the boy left for their homes. A silence fell upon the deaprting guests. Dr.Marcum was in deep thought.

"Cousin Ruth,why does Meg call you angel? " inquired Jack as they left the Jordan home.

"I don't know," was the reply.

"It's because she is an angel," declared Dr.Marcum with a smile as he looked at the woman.

"I know she's one," interrupted Jack.

"I agree with you both," exclaimed Mandy.

"Compliments are all right when they are worthily bestowed," answered Ruth.

"I know you better than any of the others," said Jack. "You have been more than an angel to me. I don't see how I could ever do without you. You're an angel if there ever was one on earth."

The doctor and Mandy both nodded assent,which the boy appreciated.

"Miss Ruth," said the doctor, "I believe your school closes next Friday week?"

"Yes."

"Miss Mandy,will you be able to spare a fe w days time as soon as the school closes ?" querried the doctor.

"I suppose so,provided it does not interfere with my plans when it comes to looking after poor Meg. I feel my fist duty,outside that of my mother,to be that of assisting Mrs. Jordan with the suffering stranger who so much needs the help of others,"replied Mandy.

"I am really glad to hear you say what you do. When I tell you why I asked that question you may be surprised to know that I had reference to the very woman you have just spoken of." Dr Marcum was *silent* ~~quiet~~ for a minute and continued:

"I have for some time been studying the case of poor Meg with growing interest. This afternoon while we were there,I made a partial examination of her head and I firmly believe that a successful operation can and could be performed that would restore the woman to her right mind.

"In the event I should undertake this difficult task,I shall need the assistance of both of you. You will be needed--not only at that particular time,but for several days thereafter. Meg will need the watchful and patient care of competent nurses. Can I have your assistance in this undertaking?"

"You shall," was the firm and immediate reply of both the women.

"Let us be prayerful in this matter and ask the Lord to be with us in the work of trying to restore the afflicted one to her wonted health. I have a faith that takes no denial. I believe--I know we shall succeed;God helping us."

"Your faith is our faith," added both of the women.

"Can't I help do something for poor Meg?" inquired Jack.

"Yes," replied Dr.Marcum. "You can pray for her and for us that the Lord shall be with us in our effort to restore the woman to her right mind and to her own people."

"I'll pray the very best and the hardest I can," assured the boy.

"God bless you," said the doctor as he laid a hand on Jack's shoulder.

The afternoon of the Monday week following the conversation in which Dr Marcum had talked with Ruth and Mandy in regard to the case of Crazy Meg,the three appeared at the home of Mrs.Jordan--where lay the afflicted one. All preparations--such as were common at that time --had been arranged for the trying ordeal. Meg was informed as best they could of what was intended. When told that she was to be relieved of the pain in her head she smiled and said: "May be when I am cured he will come to me."

"Yes,when you get well,we'll find him for you and then all shall be well," said the doctor.

"Please Angel,won't you sing for me while the doctor fixes my head and is making me well?" pleaded the woman.

"Yes," replied Ruth. "Now try to be brave."

Ruth began in a low mellow tone to hum a familiar tune--one that she and Meg had sung together. The woman was placed on an improvised operating table. Anaesthetics were unknown at that time. The patient was bound hand, foot and body and was also held by strong hands.

Meg was securely fastened to the table and prepared for the knife. Strange to say she made no resistance. The promise that she should in time be restored to her health and that she should see the man she loved, with the singing of Ruth had such a wonderful and soothing effect on the woman that she became perfectly passive.

Dr. Marcum with knife and scalpel--and with a prayer for success and a steady hand--proceeded at once to perform the delicate operation that meant so much both to him and the patient and willing sufferer. The skin to the bone was cut from right to left and from top to bottom and the skull laid bare. There were twitching of the muscles, a shuddering of the victim, a groan:--"Sing Angel, sing," demanded the woman.

There was the whole trouble revealed as had been diognosed by Dr. Marcum. There was the fracture and the bone pressed heavily on the brain. With the skill of one of greater age and more experience--the bone was removed and a silver plate that had been prepared for the purpose took the place ~~of the roof.~~ thereof. The parted skin was drawn back into its proper place, a few stitches were taken and the work was complete. The patient had fainted under the surgeon's knife and for the last few minutes had been insensible to pain or suffering.

"Would the operation be a success, or would it be a failure? If she should recover would she be benefited, or would she still be Crazy Meg as of old?" These were the questions that were uppermost in the minds of the physician and the two women who had assited in the work. Time alone could answer.

During the remainder of the afternoon and the night that followed, the woman was delirious. The doctor and the watchers slept not, but stood by the bedside watching with alomst breathless anxiety the every movement of the suffering patient. Twice during the night in her delirum, Meg would murmur and whisper: "Sing, Angel, sing."

As carefully and as tenderly as though she had been surrounded by affluence and as if the daughter of the wealthy,poor Meg was ministered to by the man and the women with ~~as much~~ a tenderness that bespoke the christian character of the faithful trio.

Just at break of day the woman fell into a peaceful and restful slumber. "Was it the sleep of death,or was it the sleep that comes from suffering and exhaustion and that portended a final awakening in a renewed life?"

They knew not,but believed,hoped and prayed that it augured well for the patient.

For a week the woman hovered between life and death--it was a race between the two with the chances pretty nearly equal. On the eighth day it was noticed that the fever was gently subsiding and in two weeks the woman was able to sit up a little and it was further noted that there seemed to be evidence that even the mind--which had so long remained dormant--began to show a partial intellectual development.

"I have great hope of a successful termination of the operation performed on Meg a little over a week ago," declared Dr.Marcum as he was taking leave of Ruth and Mandy one afternoon.

"God grant that your hopes may be realized most fully," exclaimed the two women.

"To your patient watching and careful attendance--more than to my skill as a physician--do I attribute the success of the undertaking," declared Dr.Marcum addressing Ruth and Mandy.

"Thank you Dr.Marcum," said Ruth. "To miss Mandy,a great deal more than myself do I ~~give~~ give credit. It was she who who neither ate, drank or slept when her presence was needed at the bedside of the patient. She is the one woman who is thouroughly unselfish."

"Ruth," replied Mandy,--"It was your singing, your sweet voice and the gentle prssure of your hand that soothed her to sleep and restfulness. You have been her good angel."

"You are both angels of mercy," declared Dr. Marcum with a smile. "You ladies must for awhile take it time about in watching over the case. It will be several days yet before Meg is entirely out of danger. While one is at the bedside, or near by, the other must take needed rest.

"Mrs Jordan has proven herself of great value and she will be ready at any time--when necessary--to render any needed assistance. The case is progressing well and the crisis will soon have been passed."

After giving further instructions as to what should be done in case of emergency, Dr. Marcum left to make visits to other patients who were in need of his professional services.

"Remember what the doctor said," reminded Ruth when the two women were alone. "Go and rest while I watch. If you are needed I will call you."

And the two women, Ruth and Mandy--like the angels they were--kept their lonely vigils day after day and night after night until at a later day they were relieved of their responsibility. The operation had been successful in every respect.

CHAPTER XIX.

CRAZY MEG RESTORED TO RIGHT MIND.

A little more than two weeks had now passed since Dr.Marcum had performed the surgical operation on the head of Crazy Meg,with a firm belief and a strong hope that it should result in the restoration of the proper functions of the mind of the afflicted one. The case had been watched with eager interest,not only by the doctor himself and Misses Ruth and Mandy who had so valiantly assisted in the performance of this undertaking and who had so faithfully by both day and night,sat by the bedside of the sufferer--but by all the people of the settlement.

For the first few days there were doubt and uncertainty as to what would be the result--some even going so far as to criticize the young physician and to intimate that it was only an experiment on a poor helpless woman who was without money or friends. But after the end of the first week when it was discovered that the woman was rallying and showing signs of improvement,the people began to come to the conclusion that the young doctor understood his business and later when it was found that such happy results had been obtained,Dr.Marcum became--in the minds of the people--a physicain without an equal,whose praises were sung and sounded both far and near.

Thus it was demonstrated that "nothing succeeds like success."

During this time there was not a minute that either Mandy or Ruth--and most of the time both of them--were by the side of the patient--watching and waiting for the least indication of either a relapse or an improvement of the condition of Crazy Meg. Had the poor woman been a sister,she could not have been watched with greater care or more eager attention than that bestowed by these two faithful and unselfish women.

Meg could now sit up some while propped up in the bed. The

wound had healed much more readily than the doctor had even hoped for or anticipated. Strength was day by day returning to the invalid. She was permitted to do a little talking. She seemed in a way to understand something of the ordeal through which she had passed the last two weeks. She was kept as quiet as possible for fear of a relapse.

"Angel," said Meg one afternoon as she lay in bed, addressing Ruth, --"please sing for me as you have sung in the past."

Then Ruth sang in a low sweet voice some familiar song and it was noticed that before the song had been concluded that Meg dropped off into a gentle slumber. A bright smile spread over the face of the sleeper and as she slept, Mandy and Ruth watched the every movement and listened to the quiet and gentle breathing of the woman as she lay in such perfect composure.

At this moment Dr.Marcum stepped lightly into the room, he nodded affably to the two women who directed his attention to the peaceful attitude of his patient. The three sat in solemn silence afraid to move for fear they might disturb the the sleeping woman on the bed.

After awhile there was a slight movement of the quiet form, as one who awakes from pleasant dreams. She looked into the faces of the watchers with a steady gaze. Her eyes beamed with an intelligence that none of them had ever noted before. A bright smile illumined her pale and wan face.

"Where am I?" inquired the woman as she looked around the room.

"You are among friends," replied the doctor.

"Where is father---and where is David?" asked the woman.

"They will come some time," responded the doctor.

"He said he'd come again. ----But now I remember,----Oh, that terrible accident," and the woman shuddered and uttered a groan.

"Be quiet and rest awhile," gently demanded the doctor.

"I want to go home," murmured the woman as she closed her eyes and sighed like a tired child.

Then the three watchers looked into the blanched faces of each other.

"I want to go home," came the low voice from the woman.

"A bad sign," whispered Mandy.

"Yes," gently whispered the others.

"The dying frequently talk of going home," replied the doctor in a whisper.

There was a silence like that which usually pervades the chamber of death when the soul and the body are parting company--the one going to the God who gave it and the other returning to the dust from which it came.

At the suggestion of Dr.Marcum that Meg should be as quiet as possible and get needed rest,the woman apparently fell into a gentle and refreshing sleep.

"I feel so much better now," said Meg as she opened her eyes after a sleep of almost an hour,"I had such a beautiful dream. I was at my home again and father was there in his arm chair in his office. And David came and talked to me as he did the night I promised to be his wife. It was all so real."

"Poor Meg,her mind wanders," whispered Ruth to Mandy. Again deep silence reigned in the house.

"I'm all right," exclaimed Meg as she raised herself in the bed and sat upright. "I am Margaret Whitthorn. David called me Meg as a pet name. I am Meg or Margaret as you may think best."

The watcher rose to their feet in astonishment. They supposed that it was a wild delirium that had seized the woman. Dr.Marcum gazed into the palid face and saw that a wonderful change had come to the suffering one.

"Meg,do you really understand what has taken place during the past few days--or the last year?" asked Dr.Marcum.

"Only partially," smiled the woman. "I know I am not at my father's home. I remember now that I walked away from that home,that I got lost and have been wandering over the face of the earth,oh so long. I have been seeking for David--but I remember now that he was killed in that terrible accident." Then she sobbed bitterly.

"Do you know where your father lives and what is his name?" inquired the doctor.

As if trying to collect her thoughts she slowly replied: "He is Judge Whitthorn and he lives about five miles below Louisville on a farm. The home is near the bank of the Ohio River. My name is Margaret Whitthorn." She lay back among the pillows and a smile of satisfaction played on the face of the beautiful creature.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow," was sung in a low mellow tone by Dr.Marcum and the watchers.In a murmur that was like heavenly music,Meg joined in the song.

"Let us pray," said Dr.Marcum,when all knelt down by the bedside of the woman and for a few minutes the praise and thanksgiving, went up from the Jordan home to Him on high who notes the fall of the sparrow and hears the petition of His children here on earth.

An opiate was given the woman. She was admonsihed to be quiet and to talk no more until the morning,by which time she was assured that she should be able to make herself more thoroughly understood.

"You'll let father know and take me home will you not?" gently asked Meg.

"Yes," answered the doctor. "Now rest until the morning."

In a short time the woman lay quietly and very soon she had fallen into a deep and refreshing sleep from which she did not awake until the sun was well up in the heavens the next morning.

Mandy remained to be with the woman during the night to watch by the side of the sleeper with the understanding that Dr.Marcum and Miss Ruth should return early the next day with a hope that something more should be learned in regard to the history of Crazy Meg.

"A wonderful change," said Ruth to Dr.Marcum as the two walked away from the scenes of the last few hours.

"Yes,if it should be permanent--and I doubt not it shall be," replied the doctor.

"God grant that it may be," reverently assented Ruth.

Morning came and with the coming a beautiful June day. The air was laden with the rich perfume of hill and valley;the birds that had nested in the early spring time had hatched their broods and these were twittering their merry songs of joy and gladness in the deep shades of the trees that were just outside the open window. The whole world seemed to be an Eden of ecstatic bliss and unalloyed happiness.

When Dr.Marcum and Ruth arrived about nine o'clock,they found Meg "clothed and in her right mind," though at times somewhat hesitating in speech as if trying to remember something that for awhile appeared to her to be rather indistinct. She had had a restful night and had slept through the hours of darkness with scarcely a movement of the body.

"Good morning Dr.Marcum and Angel Ruth," exclaimed Meg when the two entered the room.

"How are you feeling this morning?" asked Dr.Marcum.

"I feel better than for a long time. I am myself once more--though I am at a loss to understand many things that have recently taken place," replied the woman. "Miss Mandy has informed me that I have been here a year. Can that be possible?"

"Yes,one year ago yesterday," answered Dr.Marcum.

"Oh,how long.--And I took no note of time. It seems as if 'twere

only a few days ago,and then again as if ages had come and gone," sighed the woman.

"Can you explain how it happened that you strayed away from home?" inquired Dr.Marcum.

"No---. The whole thing is a blank to me. Father and I lived together in our home in the country. My mother has been dead for several years."--Then she paused and after awhile she continued, "David Fletcher was my sweetheart. He loved me--I loved him.----Oh David--David---my poor David. They told me that when he left me that night to return to his home that he was thrown from his horse and killed."

The woman wept long and silently.

"He was so good--so handsome--so manly. I want to return home to my father. I want to visit the grave of poor David and water the last resting place of my beloved with my tears that I may thus keep green the flowers that grow above the sleeping dust of him who was all the world to me." Then she wept as one who was heart-broken. "Father will come for me when he knows that I am alive."

"Your father shall be informed of your whereabouts just as soon as possible," assured the doctor.

"How far is it from here to my father's home?" eagerly inquired the woman.

"It is about seventy five miles," was the response.

"How did I get here?" asked the woman wonderingly.

"The Lord only knows," replied the man.

"How long will it take for a letter to reach my father?" asked the woman.

"Between three and four days. The mail will leave Turpin tomorrow by stage coach and will be taken to Redbanks;from there it will go by boat ~~and then~~ to Louisville and from there it will be conveyed to the home of your father," answered the doctor.

"It will be about a week before he can arrive here?" she asked.

"Yes,but the time will soon pass. Mandy and Ruth are going to look after you. They have been watching after you ever since you came to this place," smiled Dr.Marcum.

"You have been in the home of Mrs.Jordan,who has been all that a mother could be. You came to her home one morning about a year ago and she has done all in her power to make you comfortable," said the doctor.

"Mother died just as I was at the age of ~~eighteen~~ sixteen and oh how I have missed her--the best and sweetest mother that ever lived. Since I have been here I have sometimes dreamed that she was with me and that she was by my bedside caring for her child. When I awoke from that dream,Mrs.Jordan was by my side watching me with motherly care.To me she shall always be 'Mother Jordan.'"

"I'm so glad you are feeling better this morning," said Mrs. Jordan with a motherly smile on her handsome face.

"Oh mother Jordan,kiss me again as you have done many times since I have been in your home. It is so like the kiss of a mother." Then she added:

"Ruth has been my good angel--Mandy has been my guardian angel. The Lord bless them and Mother Jordan,dear soul that she is, and you too,God bless you Dr.Marcum---Heaven be the reward of each and every one of you," fervently exclaimed the woman.

"Praise the Lord," exclaimed Mrs.Jordan as she wiped the tears from her eyes.

"Sing angel,sing," demanded the woman. "I'm so happy to know that I'm soon going home to my father." Then in a voice that was scarcely audible she whispered; "Poor David.----My poor David---how I'll miss you. I know now why it was that you did not come again.----You were killed.------Oh that I could die and rest by your side."

"Ruth,angel dear,please sing. Your songs are so sweet to me. I know that David will be listening from the courts above. He loved music."

Then in her sweet voice,Ruth poured out her very soul and sang as she had never sung before. The women and doctor Marcum listened as though they were hearing music that could come from no one not a member of the heavenly choir. Heaven opened wide her gates and through the portals thereof and into the glory-land was wafted a melody that was a sweet incense to the Lord.

CHAPTER XX.

JUDGE WHITTHORN HEARS THE GLAD NEWS.

If word had gone out to the people of the Beech Creek settlement that day that Samuel King, the first settler of that community--who had been dead and buried several years before--had risen from the dead--the wonder and surprise could not have been greater than the announcement that Crazy Meg had been restored to her right mind, that her identity had been discovered and an effort was to be made to get in communication with her father, so that she could return to the home from which she had wandered while in a state of mental aberration.

The people flocked from all sections of the settlement hoping to be permitted the privilege of seeing and conversing with the woman who for a year had been known simply as "Crazy Meg," but now in her right mind as "Margaret Whitthorn." Dr. Marcum, having the interest of his patient at heart and fearing that the presence of too many people might excite the woman, asked that they should not obtrude themselves on her presence until she had become more accustomed to her surroundings.

Mrs. Boblin, Mrs. Johnson and Sister Simpson who were regarded as being the most stable and motherly women of the settlement, were called in for consultation. It was soon determined by the women that Margaret Whitthorn should be removed from the home of Mrs. Jordan to a more commodious home and until her father could be heard from. Mandy Simpson--who more than any one else--had been with the woman in her days of darkness and distress--by and with the consent of her mother--urged that the rapidly recovering patient should be taken to the Simpson home.

"Yes," said Margaret,--"I want to stay with Mandy until my

father comes for me. Oh what a debt of gratitude I owe to her--to Ruth, angel Ruth, to Dr.Marcum and to patient Mother Jordan."

"Perhaps under the circumstances, the removal of Miss Whitthorn to the home of Mrs.Simpson would be advisable," agreed Mrs.Jordan. "I know I shall be lonesome without her, but it will be but a short time until she will be at the home of her father. No doubt the change will do her good."

"I think the move advisable," said Dr.Marcum, --"as it will be a change of environment that will no doubt prove beneficial to her."

"Mother Jordan, I want you to come over every day to see me before I leave for my own home in Jefferson County," said Miss Whitthorn.

"I shall be certain to accept your invitation," replied Mrs. Jordan with a smile.

"Dr.Marcum," said Mr.Boblin that afternoon when Miss Whitthorn had been taken to the Simpson home and had been made comfortable,--"it will require three or four days for the mail to reach Judge Whitthorn --the father of the girl. I have some business in Louisville and had intended to go to the city next week. Would it not be a good idea for me to start in the morning and inform the father that his daughter has been found, that she is safe and well and awaits his coming?"

"Your suggestion is a most excellent one," replied the doctor with enthusiasm. "You can arrive there at least one day--perhaps even earlier than the mail could possibly be delivered at the home of the Judge. Time is precious under circumstances of this kind."

"I shall be ready to start early tomorrow morning, long before the sun rises," assured Mr.Boblin.

Dr.Marcum and Mr.Boblin spent an hour or more together in which the doctor advised Mr.Boblin most fully of the incidents of the last few days. The man was well acquainted with other matters in regard to Miss Whitthorn's coming to the settlement.

The next morning--long before the last star had ceased to twinkle in the blue vault of heaven--Mr.Boblin had mounted his favorite saddle horse--Charley--a gallant steed of six years. Long before the sun had shown his smiling face,horse and rider had passed through the town of Turpin while the inhabitants of that quiet country village were yet wrapped in slumber.As the man rode on his way the watch-dog of the farm barked at the passing traveler and went back to his kennel. The cocks were crowing with clarion voice and sending challenges of combat to eachother across the farms and fields that lay on either side the public thoroughfare.

The rider was on a mission of mercy.The steed--as if understanding the importance of the mission--willingly and uncomplaingly climbed the hills or descended the valleys that impeded the progress of the travelers. The mind of the man was busy cogitating the events of the past year and more particularly those of the last few days--while the dumb beast he rode seemed intent on completing the journey.

The removal of Margaret Whitthorn from Mrs.Jordan's to the Simpson home was accomplished with but little difficulty,as the distance between the two places was less than half a mile. Margaret was given the living room--the best room in the house. Everything was done to make the woman as comfortable as possible. Mandy and Ruth had plucked flowers and these were placed on tables and shelves--which with the neat,but plain furniture,the well swept floor,the clean bedding and the smiling faces of the women--made a place that was fit for even a queen.

"The Lord has been good to me,He has watched over me and directed my feet in the road that led to peace and happiness," smiled Margaret as she gazed at the neat surroundings of the home and the bright smiling faces of the two women who had been so kind and faithful in their ministrations to the afflicted stranger.

"How is our patient today?" asked Dr.Marcum as he entered the door and watched the bright countenance of Margaret Whitthorn.

"Oh,doctor;how wonderful! It seems to me as if I had just been aroused from a long sleep." Smiled the woman. "When will father come?" she inquired anxiously.

"He will be here in less than a week. Mr.Boblin left early this morning and is now well on his way to the old home where he has gone to carry the glad news to your father and other friends."

"How kind of Mr.Boblin not to wait for the slow mail. He is a good man." Then with a sigh she said: "Poor David--oh my David. -- How I loved him and how he loved me. ----I shall never see him again in this world,but we shall meet in the great beyond where we shall spend an everlasting eternity together. -- He can't come to me---but I can go to him."

The woman closed her eyes and sighed,while the others kept silence in the presence of the one who longed to see the living and hoped sometime to meet the departed.

About three o'clock in the afternoon of the next day after he left home,Mr.Boblin rode up to the front gate of the Whitthorn residence. Judge Whitthorn was sitting on the porch with bowed head and furrowed cheeks which showed marks of a great sorrow. Mr.Boblin was kindly invited to "get down and come in."

"This is Judge Whitthorn,I presume," said Mr.Boblin as the two men met at the gate.

"Yes sir," was the reply.

"And my name is Boblin. I have ridden seventy five miles since yesterday morning. I am somewhat weary and my horse is tired from the long journey. I should be glad to rest awhile."

"You are more than welcome. Here Zeb," said the man to a col-

ored boy who was in another part of the yard,--"take this horse,water, feed and curry the animal."

"All right marster,"was the reply and the horse was cared for.

"Mr.Boblin," said the Judge after the men had talked for sometime,--"this is a house of sorrow. I hope you will pardon me if at times I shall not appear the genial host that I once was."

"Yes," replied Mr.Boblin,who well knew what that sorrow was, --"this is a world of sorrow,yet it sometimes has its compensations in the end."

"Perhaps so,but only in the world to come."

"We should try to look on the bright side of life and hope that while today may be dark and cloudy,with gloom every where,that may be in time the sun will shine with more splendor than ever before."

"Today is like yesterday,tomorrow will be as today has been. Day after day is only a repetition of the days that have gone before," sighed the Judge.

"Who knows but that tomorrow--or even the next hour--may bring gladness and happiness that are unthought of,or never even dreamed of?"

"Mr.Boblin,you are a stranger to me. We never met before and may never meet again,yet I feel that I cannot help but unburden my haert to you and tell you why the world is so dark and dreary to me."

"I am in sympathy with not only you but with all who suffer. It may be that I can help you. Will you kindly tell me your troubles?"

"The story is a sad one--a long one--and I beg that you shall be as patient as possible. Something tells me that by its rehearsal that I shall in a way be benefited."

"Please proceed. Let me assure you that I shall bear patiently with what you may have to say."

Slowly Judge Whitthorn began: "It was a little over a year ago --I had a daughter,a lovely daughter,she was my only child. She was

engaged to be married to David Fletcher,a prominent young lawyer of Louisville. He called the night before they were to have been married. They discussed their plans for the wedding and their future life. He left the house,mounted his horse,waved a kiss to her as she stood on the porch and rode off down the road in a gallop on his way to the city and was soon lost to sight. She was happy--oh so happy. As she passed by me on her way to her room she gave me a good-night kiss and received my blessing.

"In less than an hour the hoof-beats of a horse in a mad gallop were heard coming up the road. There was a halt at the gate--the rider had dismounted and rushed up the graveled walk and gave an impatient knock at the door. My daughter--who had not retired--responded to the alarm at the door,when a neighbor boy announced in tremulous tones that "David Fletcher had been thrown from his horse and instantly killed." The Judge was overcome with emotion,hung his head and wept. It was sometime before he could proceed.

"The shock was too much for Margaret. She fainted--she fell and in the fall her head struck the corner of a table and for days she lay in a stupor as if dead. In her delirium she called for her lover, crying, 'You siad you would come again." When she recovered from the blow on the head she was bereft of reason.'" It was sometime before the man could proceed with the recital of the story.

"She was not violent. She was not a maniac. She was as one in a dream from which there was no awakening. In a short time she was normal,except in mind. A nurse was employed to watch her day and night. One morning about a month after the accident,the nurse reported that Margaret was missing. It was evident that she had dressed herself and had wandered away while the household was asleep. Immediate search was instituted. There were tracks--her own tracks--the tracks made by my daughter. These led to the bank of the river and to the water's

edge. A handkerchief had been dropped near where she had taken the step that led to a watery grave. The river was dragged for miles,but the body of the poor child was never recovered.Oh how sad,how lonely. No wonder I say the world has no further charm for me. In my sleep I yet hear that awful scream of her's when she heard the news that bereft her of reason,and in my half waking hours I see her as she wandered away from home that night."

"Judge Whitthorn," said Mr.Boblin,-"might it not be possible that your daughter in her wanderings may not have fallen into the river as you suppose?"

"That would have been even worse than death," said the man with a groan. "That would mean starvation or perhaps some other horrible death."

"Perhaps she may have wandered until she came to some home where she could find a lodging with some hospitable people?"

"No!No,we searched for fifty miles in every direction and visited the city with a faint hope that she might have wandered there in search of her lover. No,she was drowned."

"Cheer up Judge Whitthorn. Your daughter lives and in due time she will be restored to you clothed in her right mind."

"Hush! Hush," demanded the Judge rising to his feet and towering six feet high. "What do you mean? Have you come here to torment me with false hopes? You're a fool man! You're a fool! Margaret is dead."

"Judge Whitthorn," said Mr.Boblin,-- "be calm. Listen to me. I tell you that your daughter,Margaret,is alive,that she is well and that she is in her right mind. Furthermore I tell you on my honor as a gentleman that I talked with her not more than fifty hours ago."

"Great God man! Are you crazy? You drive me mad! What do you mean?"

Looking the Judge full in the face Mr.Boblin replied:"Judge Whitthorn,I am not trifling with your feelings. God forbid! I speak the truth and have come to your home today to bring you the glad tidings of the safety of your daughter."

With a gleam of hope Judge Whitthorn looked calmly into the eyes of Mr.Boblin and piteouly asked:"Are you speaking the truth?"

"As God in heaven is my witness,I speak the truth," firmly replied Mr.Boblin.

Judge Whitthorn fell limp into his chair and for awhile was in a swoon. Then he murmured, "Margaret,oh my Margaret,are you alive?"

"Yes thank God--alive and well," answered Mr.Boblin.

"Tell me all about it Mr.Boblin. Oh,tell me all," exclaimed the father.

The next hour was comsumed in the recital of the events of the coming of "Crazy Meg" to the Beech Creek settlement. Mr Boblin was compelled to answer and to re-answer many questions that were asked by the over-joyed father. The Judge was so happy and excited that it was impossible for him to contain himself. Every few minutes he would exclaim;"Margaret,oh Margaret my daughter! We shall soon meet again. The news is too good to be true." Then he would embrace Mr.Boblin and tears of joy flowed down the cheeks of the happy man.

"Zeb,here Zeb", yelled the Judge to the colored boy who had taken Mr.Boblin's horse. "Catch Selim,bridle and saddle him as quickly as you can,come to the gate and I will tell you what to do."

"All right,mars William," said the negro as he hurried to obey the command of his master. "I wonder what's up now?" thought Zeb as he mounted the horse and rode up to the gate to receive further instructions.

"Zeb,I want you to ride at once to Louisville--be in a hurry --go to David Fletcher's office and tell him to come out at once and

spend the night with me," demanded the Judge imperiously.

"I's gwine as faat as I kin," replied Zeb full of wonder as to the meaning of the message.

"If Mr.Fletcher is not in his office,don't stop until you have found him ," was the parting injunction.

"David Fletcher!"Exclaimed Mr.Boblin in surprise. "I thought you said he was killed by being thrown from his horse on that eventful night that your daughter received her shock that caused her to become demented?"

"Pardon me," said the Judge. "When detailing to you an account of that terrible night,I forgot to state that Mr.Fletcher was not killed--as at first reported. When discovered,he was unconscious from the fall. His left leg was broken in two places and he was otherwise bruised and crippled. He was carried to a hospital and was confined there for two months. Before he was able to walk,Margaret had made her escape."

"Was your daughter informed of the fact that her sweet-heart was not killed and that he would recover?"

"Yes. But she did not seem able to comprehend the situation. When his name would be mentioned in her presence,she moaned,sighed, stared into vacancy and seemed not to understand what was being said."

"Poor child," sighed Mr.Boblin.

"David was not informed of Margaret's condition until after the night of her disappearance. His life had been dispaired of. In his delirium he called her name and begged that she should come to him. When apprised of the fact that Margaret had lost her mind through the blow on the head and that she had no doubt gone to a watery grave,it was only through the efforts of his physician that his life was saved. When he was finally dismissed from the hospital,he was worn,emaciated and a cripple. He has of late been able to discard his crutches,though he still walks with a limp."

"Do you often see Mr.Fletcher?" inquired Mr.Boblin.

"Yes,to me,he is as a son--I love him as such.He is the only child of wealthy parents,both of whom are dead. He spends at least one day and night in each week in my home. Poor fellow,his sufferings have been but little less than mine."

"There is no doubt that he shall be as much surprised and gratified ~~XXXXXXXX~~ over the news as you have been. I feel glad for him," said Mr.Boblin.

"Certainly,most certainly. Mr.Boblin,you spoke of going to Louisville this afternoon. You must not think of such a thing. I want you to meet with David Fletcher. I want ~~you~~ him to hear from your lips the glad news. Oh how surprised and happy he will be."

"My business in the city is not so pressing that I should have to go there this afternoon,therefore I shall gladly accept your kind invitation to remain in your home tonight."

Judge Whitthorn was so excited and happy over the news brought by Mr.Boblin that it was impossible for him to sit in any one position for two minutes at a time.

"Yonder comes Zeb," said the Judge as the negro came riding up to the gate. "Here, boy,did you see Mr.Fletcher?"

"Yes sir,I seed him," was the reply.

"Is he coming?"

"Yes sah,he's almost here now."

"That will do. Put up Selim,come back to the kitchen and help Susie about supper."

"All right mars William," responded Zeb as he went to comply with the command of the Judge.

"Thank the Lord," exclaimed the Judge as looked down the raod and saw David Fletcher riding in a gallop in the direction of the house.

"Get down and come in," exclaimed the Judge with a broad smile and a hearty handshake as the man walked up to the porch.

"Get down and come in," said the Judge with a broad smile and a hearty greeting as David rode up to the gate.

"Is there anything wrong Judge?" anxiously inquired David as he walked hurriedly to meet the man who had summoned him to the home. It was the first time in more than a year that he had seen a smile on the face of Judge Whitthorn, or had heard the man speak in such a happy vein.

"No, thank the Lord," as he threw his arms around David,--"it's good news. It's all right. I'm the happiest man now living."

David Fletcher became alarmed and believed that Judge Whitthorn had lost his mind--had suddenly become insane from his long suffering. He looked at Mr. Boblin--a stranger to him--saw the broad smile on the face of the stranger and thought that he too was a lunatic.

"What is it, what is the matter" demanded David with growing uneasiness.

"Margaret has been found, she is safe and well and is perfectly sane and in her right mind. We are going to her and bring her to our home," exclaimed the Judge as he clapped hands with ecstasy and said: "Thank the Lord."

"Poor man," thought David. "I have been afraid of this for sometime." Then after a pause he said, "Be calm Judge. Let us hope for the best."

"I tell you David that Margaret has been found and that she will soon be with us."

"David shook his head and looked toward the forest that lay beyond the home.

"What Judge Whitthorn says is true. Margaret has been found," said Mr. Boblin taking David by the hand.

It was sometime before the excitement subsided so that any of the men could talk intelligently.

 "This is Mr.Boblin," said Judge Whitthorn who until now had found no opportunity for introducing the two men. "He is the bearer of the good news. He will tell you all about it."

Then Mr.Boblin repeated the whole story just as he had done a few hours before to the Judge. During the recital of the story, the two listeners gave rapt attention to its every detail, occasionally interrupting the speaker to ask some question or to give expression of surprise as the story was repeated.

What a change had come over the two men--Judge whitthorn and David Fletcher. Only a few hours before a prematurely old man sitting sad and lonely on his porch, his thoughts upon the events of a little more than a year of the past. A younger man whose every thought was of his beloved whom he mourned as dead--but never forgotten. Now before the going down of the sun, the dead had come to life--dethroned reason was enthroned--the clouds were rolled away and a promise, that as fast as hoof-beats of gallant steeds could cover the distance--that father and daughter--that sweethear, t and sweetheart--should be brought face to face to rejoice together with such rejoicings as are seldom known this side the first meeting in the world beyond.

Preparations were at once made that Judge Whitthorn and David Fletcher should go to Beech Creek settlement to meet with and accompany to her home the long absent one.

Mr.Boblin's business in Louisville--which was only five miles distant from the Whitthorn home--could be transacted in an hour's time. It was also necessary that David should return to his office in the city before making the trip. Therefore the night was spent at the Whitthorn home.

Zeb was ordered to have the carriage ready early next morning to drive Mr.Boblin and David to the city. They were to return as soon as possible that the men might at once proceed on their journey. At high noon--after an early dinner--the three men mounted their horses and set out for their destination.

CHAPTER XXI.

JUDGE WHITTHORN AND DAVID FLETCHER ARRIVE.

About two hours before sun-set, Mrs. Boblin was standing in the front door of the Boblin home and while gazing down the road she observed three men riding in the direction of the house. She noticed that the horses were worn and leg-weary and that they hastened their steps only when urged by their riders. She was surprised as the men approached nearer to discover that one of the men was her husband who was not expected to arrive at home until several days later.

The men, like their horses, were tired--Judge Whitthorn especially, who almost fell from his horse as they stopped at the gate. The men went into the house where introductions followed. When Mrs. Boblin was informed of the conditions of affairs she was greatly surprised that the younger man was the sweetheart of Miss Whitthorn whom the girl had declared had been killed in an accident more than a year ago.

Deacon Johnson and his wife were hurriedly summoned so taht counsel should be taken as to the best mode of procedure. It was agreed that Mr. Boblin should accompany Judge Whitthorn to the Simpson home where the Judge should meet his daughter. It was suggested that it would be the better part of wisdom that David Fletcher should not go with the men, as there was danger that the excitement of meeting with both father and sweetheart--the latter supposed by her to be dead --might be too much for Miss Whitthorn. David Fletcher went home with Deacon Johnson--who lived near the Simpson home, where he was to remain until summoned to the presence of the woman he loved.

"I see Mr. Boblin and a stranger coming up the lane," exclaimed Ruth who had been talking with Margaret and Mandy at the Simpson home.

"I thought Mr. Boblin had gone to Louisville to tell my father that I was here," said Margaret with a sigh as a tear came into her

each eye. "I am afraid he has had some accident and has had to return without being able to accomplish his mission."

"Let us hope for the best," said Miss Mandy.

Margaret watched the two men as they neared the home. Then she exclaimed,"I do believe it is father! Yes,it's father," she shouted as the men entered though the gate.

Like a caged bird that saw the open door to freedom,the girl almost flew down the walk and in an instant father and daughter were clasped in eachother's arms in a loving embrace--each shedding tears of joy and giving shouts of happiness.

It was long before either was able to speak. Their hearts were too full for utterance.

At last she was able to say, "Oh,I'm so happy--oh so happy." Then with a shudder and wistful eyes she moaned, "Oh,David--poor David. If he were here my cup of bliss would be more than full." The girl wept silently on her father's breast.

"You shall see David before a great while," said the father in tones of assurance.

"Yes,I know I shall see him in the better world where he is watching and waiting for me and my coming," replied the girl with a faith that looked into the great and unknown beyond.

"Daughter: You shall see David in the flesh. He is alive and well and will soon call to claim his bride."

"Hush father;hush! You know not what you say. He was killed the night he left me. They told me so. Poor David,he is dead."

"Margaret,compose yourself. I tell you that David is alive. I tell you that he came with me and at this very moment he is at Deacon Johnson's and is only awaiting a summons to come to your side."

Margaret looked wistfully at Mr.Boblin who said; "What your father says is true." Then turning to Mandy he added,"Go stand on the

style-block,wave your sun-bonnet over your head three times in the direction of the Johnson home--the signal agreed on. David is there and is anxiously awaiting the signal that will bring him to the woman whom he loves."

"There," siad Mr. Boblin,pointing in the direction of Deacon Johnson's. "I see a man running in the distance. While he is slightly lame,yet he seems to have forgotten his affliction and is running as if he were running for a prize."

"Yes,it is David," cried the woman as she flew as on the wings of love to meet the man whom she had mourned as dead.

They met in the end of the lane.

It is well enough to let the curtain drop on the scene--that is for awhile at least. When the lovers met,they embraced as all lovers under such circumstances should. They sat down side by side on a fallen log that seemed as if made as a special trysting place for lovers.

The log was silent--if it had ears to hear they were closed, if eyes to see they saw not,if lips to speak there was no sound therefrom. A ground-squirrel took its place ont the top rail of the fence, knowingly looked at the pair,frisked its tail and passed on to join its mate across the lane. A timid rabbit blinked its eye and loped on down the road and was soon lost to sight. A flock of birds gathered in the over-hanging branches of the large beech tree, beneath which the lovers sat and talked. These feathered songsters poured out their notes of joy and were unafraid of the man and the woman who sat beneath them. But none of these told what it was that the pair on the log talked of--we know they talked of love--but the words they said were recorded only by the "Love Angel of Heaven."

There was enough love and happiness round about the Simpson home that afternoon to start a good sized Paradise. It was a happiness that was inexpressible,it was perfect,a love that was complete.

"We certainly have cause for praise,prayer and thanksgiving," said Deacon Johnson. Then taking up the Bible he turned to the twenty third Psalm and read that most beautiful and comforting of all the promises in the book of all books. This was followed by a song of praise in which all joined. "Bro. Boblin will lead the prayer," announced the Deacon.

All knelt around the family altar,then Mr.Boblin poured out his very soul in gladness to his Creator. He prayed as if in the very presence of Deity and as if he talked face to face with Jehovah. When the "Amen" was said by the man as he rose from his knees,there was one united response from every one present.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow," was sung in sweet unison by the happy crowd there assembled in the widow's home by the roadside.

Before the last lamp-light in the homes of the Beech Creek settlement had been extinguished that night,the news that not only the father of the girl--but the lover,who was supposed to be dead--had arrived was passed from lip to lip and from neighbor to neighbor--and all with one accord were rejoicing and offering up prayers and praises of thanksgivings to Him who rules over the destiny of men and nations.

"What can be the meaning of all this commotion?" anxiously inquired Dr.Marcum of himself when he rode up to the gate at the Simpson home about 8 o'clock that night as he was on his way from a visit to a patient. He had not as yet heard of the return of Mr.Boblin and the father and lover. He saw lights in all the windows of the home and noticed the people walking to and fro. He could hear voices of joy and laughter in the home.

"Poor Margaret," thought he,--"is it possible that she has been so unduly excited since Mr.Boblin left for the home of her father that she has been taken seriously ill?"

When the doctor stood in the door and Ssaw Margaret Whitthorn sitting between two men--one a man of perhaps fifty years of age and the other twenty five years his junior--saw the happy expression on the face of the woman and noted the other people, some sitting and others standing--all with faces aglow with joy and happiness--he was for awhile speechless with amazement.

"Dr.Marcum," said Margaret as she rose from her seat to meet and welcome her physician,--"this is my father, Judge Whitthorn," and turning to the younger man, with a smile on her face, she added: "And this is Mr.David Fletcher, who has long been my accepted lover,--the man who was once dead, but is now alive and among the living."

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This reunion occurred Friday afternoon and night. It was found to be impossible for the Judge, his daughter and Mr.Fletcher to be ready to take the stage coach next morning from Turpin to Redbanks. The coach did not run on Sunday--hence it would be Monday before they could start on their homeward journey.

The people of the Beech Creek community were really glad that the visitors should be compelled to remain over for a few days longer. Every home in the settlement was open, to not only these strangers, but to any others that might wish to visit that hospitable community.

It was agreed that Judge Whitthorn should be the guest of the Boblins while Mr.Fletcher should stop with Deacon Johnson and his family.

"Mr.Boblin," said Judge Whitthorn the next morning after the reunion at the Simpson home, "I want make some arrangement to have the horses that David Flethcer and I rode, taken back to Louisville. Neither ~~nor~~ David, nor myself feel that we can stand to be separated from Margaret. Therefore we shall go by stage coach from Turpin to Redbanks and thence to Louisville by boat.

"I think Judge, there will be no difficulty about getting the horses back to your home."

"We are able and willing to pay,not only for the trouble and expense that may occur in taking the horses to my home,but we want to pay any and all expenses that may have occurred in taking care of my daughter during the time she has been a charge upon the good people of this community," said the Judge.

"Don't worry yourself about that," exclaimed Mr.Boblin with earnestness. "The people of Beech Creek settelement don't do deeds of kindness for hope of either pay or reward--they do this because they love their fellow creatures. While you and yours are in this community,any favors bestowed or any kindness offered is without remuneration or even hope of earthly gain."

"We have already been overwhelmed by kindness. No wonder the Lord has so bountifully blessed this noble people."

"Father," said Dan who had been listening to the conversation in regard to the horses,--"suppose you let Sam Johnson and myself ride the horses through the country and make our promised trip to Louisville. You know that Mr.Foster--the newspaper man who stopped here with us a few years ago--invited us to make him a visit?"

"Very well my son,I have no objections whatever. You may run over to Deacon Johnson's and see what he and Sam have to say about it."

"Bet Sam will want to go," exclaimed Dan as he started off in a run on his mission.

"Hello Sam! Hurrah for us! We've got a chance to go to Louisville. Don't you want to go?" shouted Dan as he met with his friend.

"Yes--yes. When and how?" was the quick reply.

Dan then told Sam of the plan that had been formulated by his father and Judge Whitthorn. Deacon Johnson was called into ~~counsel~~ consultation and at once gave his ready consent to the proposed trip.

Dan and Sam were two of the happiest boys in the Beech Creek settlement. They were going to Louisville to see the sights of a great

city. They were going to make a long trip by themselves and return home by steam boat and stage coach, a pleasure and an honor that no other boy of that community had ever known. It was a trip on which their hearts had been set ever since Mr. Foster had invited the boys to make him a visit at the metropolis of the state.

The Whitthorns were to start home the next Monday and it was decided that the boys should not leave until the following Wednesday, thus giving ample time for the former to get to their homes before the arrival of the boys.

"Dan," said Sam after some reflection,--"this is Saturday and it will be four days yet before we can start on our journey. That's a mighty long time to have to wait. I wish we were already there."

"So do I, but I suppose we shall have to be as patient as possible. Aint we in luck, old boy?"

"We certainly are," replied Sam.

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Had the dead been brought to life, there could not have been more rejoicing in the community than there was that "Crazy Meg" had been restored to her right mind and the happy re-union of father and daughter and lover and lover. The exercises at Zion church on that Sunday took the form of a thanksgiving service and were attended by the visitors and most of the people of the settlement.

Monday morning when the visitors left the Simpson home they were accompanied to Turpin by a large number of citizens who went with them to wish the departing guests a safe and happy return to their homes.

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On Saturday afternoon Judge Whitthorn and Margaret paid a visit to Mrs. Jordan, or to "Mother Jordan," as Margaret had so named the woman since her recovery. There had not been a day since Margaret left for the Simpson home that Mrs. Jordan had not called to see the one who had been in care for a year.

"This is my father,Judge Whitthorn," said Margaret as she and the Judge entered the home of Mrs.Jordan.

"Glad to meet you," siad Mrs.Jordan extending her hand to the visitor

"I am certainly proud to make your acquaintance," said the Judge. "Margaret has told me of your great kindness to her during the year she has been in your home. You may rest assured that this is appreciated by me and mine more than I am able to express. I want to pay you well for all your care and trouble. How much do I owe you?"

"Not a cent Judge Whitthorn. What I have done for your daughter has been done without hope of reward,other than a conscience that approves. I feel now that the hardest thing which I now have to endure is that I shall soon be separated from Margaret," responded Mrs.Jordan.

"Mother Jordan,why can't you go home with us and make that your home in the future?" inquired Margaret.

"Mrs.Jordan,if you will consent to Margaret's proposition,I assure you that so long as you live you shall have every comfort that a good home can afford," assented the Judge.

"I have been with the people of Beech Creek so long and they have been so kind to me that I feel that there is no other place on earth,with as good people as these," sighed Mrs.Jordan.

"What you say only makes me the more anxious that you should accompany Margaret to our home. If you have freinds here,you can have friends elsewhere."

"Mother Jordan,do please go home with us. I need you and you need me. Your every wish shall be gratified," pleaded Margaret.

"If I should go with you and get tired or dissatisfied with the place and want to come back to my home,shall I have that privilege?"

"Most certainly," agreed both father and daughter.

"I shall study over the matter and tomorrow I will give you an answer," was the reply.

"Do please go with us," pleaded Margaret.

After consulting with her friends as to the advisability of going home with the Whitthorn's, Mrs. Jordan--with more or less misgivings--consented to make the trip.

When Mrs. Jordan left the community she was followed with the good wishes of every man, woman and child of the Beech Creek settlement.

"Dr. Marcum," siad Judge Whitthorn--"what do I owe you for your services during the time of the illness of Margaret while she has been at Mrs. Jordan's?"

"Well, really, I hardly know. I had never before thought of pay. I have been so much interested in the case that the thought of remuneration had never entered my mind," replied the doctor.

"I want to pay you and I want to pay you well. What do you think would be a reasonable charge?"

After a short silence, Dr Marcum asked, "Do you think one hundred dollars would be exorbitant?"

"One hundred dollars!" exclaimed the Judge in surprise. "Is that all?"

Dr. Marcum supposing from the tone and look of the Judge thought perhaps the man believed that the charge was excessive replied: "If you think the sum named is too much, I shall be satisfied with what you may consider a just remuneration. At the time your daughter was under my care as her physician, I had supposed her to be homeless and friendless, yet I gave her as much thought and attention as though I had known her to be the daughter of the president of the United States."

"Dr. Marcum, you misunderstood me. My surprise was not at the largeness of the bill but at the smallness thereof. You have not charged half enough. No surgeon of the city of Louisville could have done better. You shall be handsomely rewarded and in addition thereto we

shall always hold you in grateful remembrance for your unselfish devotion to the cause of humanity and the afflicted. If you wish to change your location and will move to Louisville, I assure you that David Fletcher and my family shall do our very best to introduce you to the best people ~~of that city~~ and that in a short time you may be regarded as the foremost physician of the city."

"I thank you very much Judge Whitthorn for your invitation to go to the city in hope of a better paying clientage, but I feel that my duty is to the people of the Beech Creek settlement with whom I have become associated. They need the very best there is in me," was the cordial reply of Dr. Marcum.

"Dr. Marcum is the coming man as a physician and surgeon, not only for the community in which he lives, but for the state of Kentucky," thought Judge Whitthorn as the two men separated a few minutes thereafter.

It was but a short time after the arrival of the Whitthorns at their home before Dr. Marcum received by special delivery a package--which on opening--was found to contain five hundred dollars in gold, which Judge Whitthorn asked him to accept as his fee in the case of his daughter. In addition thereto was a letter from Margaret with her very kindest thanks for her restitution to health, family and friends.

CHAPTER XXII.

MANDY SIMPSON'S ENGAGEMENT.

Since his first call on Miss Mandy Simpson about two months ago, Prof. Green had made a number of visits to the Simpson home. He had managed to make these calls at such times as to escape the observation of Mrs. Brown who was the first to discover that "Miss Mandy had a beau." As he was a widower and the woman was a little inclined to bashfulness, each one thought it wise to be guarded in his or her movements.

"I do wonder," said Mrs. Brown to Mrs. Boblin,--"if it is possible that the professor is not going to call again on Mandy Simpson? I have been watching the house for the last two months and have not seen him there since that afternoon when he made his first visit."

"Can't say," replied Mrs. Boblin. "You can't tell anyhting about those old widowers and old maids."

"I think it would make a mighty fine match," obsereved Mrs. Brown.

"First rate," replied Mrs. Boblin.

For the past few weeks Miss Mandy had been very busy in her attentions to Crazy Meg. About once each day--when there was an opportunity--she went home for a change of clothes, or to comfort her mother. While her thoughts were very largely on the sick woman, yet her mind frequently reverted to the courtship that was being very quietly conducted between herself and the professor. They frequently met as she made her trips between her visits to Crazy Meg and her own home. These meetings were of short duration, but long enough that he could speak words of encouragement to her in her work of charity and also speak for himself.

The whole neighborhood was loud in its praise of Dr. Marcum, Mandy and Ruth for the wonderful transformation that had taken place in

the life of Crazy Meg,--now affectionately called "Margaret Whitthorn." The successful operation performed by Dr.Marcum had established him in the estimation of the people and had assured him of his success as a physician--while Mandy and Ruth were regarded as being entitled to but little less honor than that which had come to the doctor.

While Prof.Green delighted to hear the praises that were bestowed on the woman he loved,yet he was just a little jealous for fear that some hated rival might come forth and try to snatch from him the coveted prize that he felt was almost within his grasp.

"Silas," said Prof.Green to himself the Wednesday afternoon following the departure of the Whitthorn's for their home,and while he was preparing to make an important call on Miss Mandy,--"this is to be the ending of the uncertainty--or the beginning of a new and a better life for two people. Before the stars show themselves this evening,I shall know my fate. The Lord be with me."

The woman of course knew of his coming. She had put her house in order and from behind the curtained windows she saw the man as he approached the gate. She watched with bated breath and beating heart as he walked up the gravled path and with steps of love she met the suitor at the door.

When Prof.Green entered the room,he noticed with satisfaction that the two chairs which they had occupied on former occasions were--if anything--just a little closer than when they sat and he had hinted at love.

He took the proffered seat,when:

His heart went pit-a-pat,
While her's went pity-Silas.

"Miss Mandy," said the man after fidgeting in his chair for some time,--"is your mother at home?"

"Yes,--do you wish to see her?"

"Yes--Oh,No--I just wanted to see you."

"Well,I'm here," smiled Mandy.

"Yes,I know it and you are the one I have come to see."

"What do you want to see me about?" innocently inquired the woman.

"I want to know if you have been thinking seriously about--about matrimony since I commenced calling on you sometime ago?"

"It is true professor,that sometimes my mind has drifted in that direction."

"Marriage is a very serious and solemn business and should not be entered into without due consideration," said the man.

"Yes,about the most serious proposition that ever confronted a woman," replied the woman.

"Miss Mandy,I am here on important business--the most important that can come to a man in my condition," blurted out the professor.

"I hope professor that you are not sick,or that you are going to give up your school--nothing so important or so distressing as that?" inquired Miss Mandy pretending not to understand the import of what the man had said to her.

"Miss Mandy let me quote you a passage of scripture. It may be that by so doing you shall be able to more fully understand what I am driving at."

"I like scripture quotations,especially those that are comforting and full of promise," smiled Mandy.

"When Jehu met Jehonidab,he saluted and him and said unto him;Is thine heart right as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonidab answered--its is.If it be give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand." quoted the professor.

"That's a beautiful passage of scripture," assented the woman.

"Can't you understand what I mean?" Taking her by the hand and looking into her face he exclaimed: "Miss Mandy I want your hand."

"It seems to me that you already have it," blushed the woman.

"Good Lord Miss Mandy. Can't you comprehend my meaning? I want you to marry me," excitedly exclaimed Prof. Green as he mopped his face with his handkerchief and looked as if he were ready to faint.

"Oh, professor! This is so sudden," blushed Miss Mandy.

"Sudden or not sudden, I am as much in earnest as I was when I was seeking my soul's salvation twenty years ago," said the man as he colored to the roots of his hair and twisted in his chair.

"When do you want an answer?" inquired the woman.

"Right now is the accepted time, the day of salvation," was the answer.

Just then Miss Mandy heard one of her hens cackling: "Wait a minute, professor," said she,--"until I can go and get that egg old Speck has laid. When I come back I will give you my answer."

The woman was glad to have an excuse to absent herself for awhile so that she might collect her thoughts so as to enable her to give an answer to the very important question that had been propounded by the man. While she was ostensibly looking after the result of the cackling, Mandy had her mind more on the professor and his question than she did upon old Speck or on the product of that barn-yard fowl.

So with the man. What did he care for cackling hens or newly laid eggs? He was courting the woman--who to him at that time--was more important than all the hens of the universe.

Mandy secured the egg, brought it into the house, laid it on the table and said: "You may have it."

"Have which, you or the egg?" eagerly asked the professor.

"Both," was the reply as the woman cast her eyes to the floor.

And thus they were engaged.

Then the two discussed the matter and laid their plans for the future.

It was agreed that after marriage--as she was a Methodist--that he would go with her to Zion church on the fourth Sundays in each month and that she should accompany him to Bethel on the first Sundays. She was to remain a Methodist and he to continue in the Baptist faith. They were not to let their religious duties, opinons or predilections conflict with eachother. She had been a Methodist so long that she expected to live and die a member of that church. He had been a Baptist so long that he was expected to live and die in that faith. Love and respect the one for the other was to be the rule of action that should guide them as they walked along the pathway of life together.

When all these preliminaries had been settled to the entire satisfaction of the contracting parties, the professor felt felt that the contract should be sealed with a kiss. At first the woman hesitated, but finally said:

"Professor, if you don't think there is any harm in it, I shall raise no particular objections."

"The Bible says: Greet eachother with a holy kiss," responded the man.

"I believe in the teachings of the Bible," said Miss Mandy with a becoming blush.

"Let us ask a blessing," suggested the man, taking the woman by the hand and clasping her in his arms and reverently added: "Lord make us thankful for what we are about to receive," and with that he imprinted on her lips the first kiss she had ever received from one of the opposite sex since she was a child.

Miss Mandy blushed deeply, hid her face in her hands, sat silent a moment and then smiled at the man who had kissed her. She was not displeased. She felt such a thrill as she had never before known.

"That was good, very good, most excellent," declared the professor, smacking his lips. "Now let us return thanks," whereupon he raised his eyes toward heaven, took the woman again into his arms, gave her one more kiss and fervently exclaimed: "For the creature comforts which we have just enjoyed, the Lord be praised--may others like unto these follow and be sanctified to our temporal good and our eternal happiness."

While this osculatory bliss was being enjoyed by both the man and the woman, General Jackson, the rooster crowed; the hens cackled, while Nebbie the house dog barked at Alexander the cat, who contented himself by sitting on the fence out of reach of danger or harm.

But the man and the woman paid no attention to the capers of the dog, the cat, or the fowls of the barn-yard. Business of greater import than that of listening to crowing roosters, cackling hens, or barking dogs and growling cats was engaging the minds and hearts of the pair who were rich in their new found love and supreme happiness.

Mother Simpson came in at this time and intuitively understood the situation at once. Then they rehearsed to the mother the events of the last hour or two. It was but natural that the mother--good old soul that she was--should shed a few tears--tears more of joy than sadness. She placed her hands upon the heads of the lovers and pronounced a benediction on the newly engaged pair.

"Prof. Green," said Mrs. Simpson with a smile, "I want you to take good care of Mandy. She's all I have."

"You need have no fear in regard to that," answered the man.

"One thing more," said the mother, --"you know Mandy is a Methodist and I don't want you tp persuade her to join the Baptist church. She was born a Methodist, she has lived a Methodist and I want her to die and go home to heaven a Methodist."

"I pledge you my word and honor that your every wish in this

shall be gratified and that your request meets with my hearty approval. Miss Mandy and I have talked it over and we are fully agreed that religious differences shall never in any way interfere in our marriage relation," was the emphatic reply.

"Just one more request and that shall be the last," said the mother.

"Name it and if in my power it shall be granted," was the instant reply.

Looking the man squarely in the face she said: "In the event there should be any children, I want you to promise me that Mandy shall raise them in the Metodist faith. I could never stand to have it thrown up to me that I was the grandmother of a lot of Baptist grand-children. It would be more than I could bear--it would break my heart. It's bad enough to have a Baptist son-in-law, but it would be a great deal worse to have a lot of Baptist grand children."

"All right mother Simpson. I promise you that if there should be a dozen of them that the whole twelve of them shall be baptised in infacy and become bright and shining lights in the Methodist church," pledged the professor.

"The Lord bless you both," was the benediction of Sister Simpson.

Before Prof. Green left the Simpson home that afternoon it was agreed that he and Miss Mandy should be married three weeks from that date and that it should be a quiet family affair with but few persons present to witness the ceremony. It was also further understood that Bro. Riley, who had been instrumental in first bringing the two together, should be the officiating clergyman.

The sun was sinking low in the west before Prof. Green could make up his mind to leave the woman--who to him--was the most lovely being on earth--the woman who was soon to be his wedded wife. He felt

as if he were walking on air,while she was herself was in the seventh heaven of delight.

When he rose to leave that home, with hat in hand,his heart full of joy,peace and happiness--his mind reverted to the memorable events of the kisses of an hour before. He could not resist the temptation to repeat the performance,even if mother Simpson were present. Neither did Miss Mandy raise any objections to the repetition of an act that was so much in consonance with the teachings of the Bible. The professor felt so good that after he had kissed the bride-to-be, he then kissed to mother-in-law-to-be with such a resounding smack that the good old woman caught her breath in wonder and astonishment.

Of course Mrs.Brown across the way--who had been on the lookout ever since the professor had made his first call--observed both the coming and the going of the man.

"He was there just 2 hours and 49 minutes," said Mrs.Brown to Mrs.Smith who passed the Brown residence a short time after the professor rode away from the Simpson home.

"What do you suppose will be the result of Prof.Green's visit?" asked Mrs.Smith.

"A wedding. I'll bet my life on it," was the prompt reply.

"I bet you're right," siad Mrs.Smith."When a widower sets out he generally means business. I wish I knew when they are going to marry."

"So do I. I'll make a bargain with you Mrs.Smith. Whichever finds out first when it is to be will tell the other."

"It's a bargain," replied Mrs.Smith.

"I'm going over to Mrs.Simpson's this evening after an early supper and see if I can find out anything. If I get any of the secrets I'll let you know," smiled Mrs.Brown.

"I must be going," said Mrs.Smith. "Be sure to find out all you can. Come to see me soon and tell me all the news."

Mrs.Brown was like thousands of other women, she had a curiosity to learn something of other people's love affairs and to be able to say: "I told you so."

"Good evening Mrs.Brown," was the cordial greeting of Mrs.Simpson and Miss Mandy as that visitor entered the Simpson home.

Talk of various kinds was indulged in by the women and all the time Mrs.Brown sought for an opportunity to bring up the subject that was uppermost in her mind.

"Mandy," siad Mrs.Brown, "you seem to be in excellent spirits this evening. "

"Yes," was the reply. "I have cause to be a happy woman. I---"

"--I know it and have come over to cangratulate you," siad Mrs. Brown.

"As I started to say Mrs.Brown," exclaimed Miss Mandy with a pleased expression, --"I have cause to be thankful. This has been the best year for chickens that I have known for a long time. Mother and I have raised nearly two hunderd and not a sick one in the whole lot."

"That's splendid ," replied Mrs.Brown,--"but you have other causes for happiness I suppose?"

"Yes,I'm so glad that poor Meg has been restored to her right mind and that she is now in the home of her father and that she has found her sweetheart--or rather that he has found her--and that such great happiness is in store for them in the future."

"Yes,Mandy and so am I," exclaimed the visitor. "You have dowe well your part by that woman. The people of this community are loud in praise of your disinterested kindness to the woman who came here a stranger a year ago."

"I only did my duty," acquiesced Miss Mandy. To Dr.Marcum and to Ruth Martin--more than to me-should go the credit of the restoration of the woman to her right mind and to her people."

"Mandy,you would make some man a mighty good wife," said Mrs.

Brown trying to switch the subject along matrimonial lines.

"Perhaps so,but I have never tried it. There are those who have tried it that have been dismal failures," smiled Mandy.

"You expect to try it sometime,do you not?" inquired Mrs.Brown with increasing interest.

"Every normal woman hopes sooner or later to become the wife of some good man. I suppose I am in that respect but little different from others,"was the modest reply.

"Wasn't Prof.Green here this afternoon?" inquired Mrs. Brown.

"I believe he was."

"Whom did he come to see?"

"He saw both mother and myself."

"What do you think of the professor?"

"He's a fine teacher,so I'm told--though I never went to school to him."

"Is he coming back again?"

"He may and then again he may not. I believe however that he did say something about his intention to call again sometime. But I do not remember that he said at just what time he would be here."

"He's all right," suggested Mrs.Brown.

"He seems to be," replied Miss Mandy.

"I believe he would make a mighty good husband. Why don't you set your cap for him?"

"He may not be catchable."

Try it any how."

"I'll study about it."

Mrs.Brown had been outwitted. She learned nothing more than she already knew. She knew before she went to the Simpson home that

the professor had acalled about two months ago and also that he had called that afternoon--how much oftener than that she did not know.

Early the next morning Mrs.Smith called at the home of the Bwown's to learn the "latest." For once in her life Mrs.Brown had failed to worm herself into the confidence of Mandy. This was mortifying in the extreme.

"All I know," said Mrs.Brown to Mrs.Smith,--"is that Prof. Green has called twice--that he stayed an hour and ten minutes the first time he was there,and that yesterday afternoon he remained two hours and 49 minutes."

"Couldn't you pump anything out of Mandy that would lead you to learn something of what his visits mean?" inquired Mrs.Smith.

"I pumped--but my pumping didn't amount to a hill of beans.It seemed that the more I pumped the less information I received. I came from the Simpson home last night not a bit wiser than when I went," was the confession of Mrs.Brown.

"Keep your eyes and ears wide open. See if Prof.Green goes back and stays as long or longer than he did yesterday afternoon. You may however set it down that there's something going on out of the ordinary.Widowers and old maids don't waste much time in courting," were the parting words of Mrs.Smith.

"I'll watch and in the event I see anything of interest transpiring about the Simpson home,I'll let you know all about it. Good by --come again."

CHAPTER XXIII.

DAN AND SAM VISIT THE CITY.

Judge Whitthorn, Miss Margaret, David Fletcher and Mrs. Jordan arrived in Louisville the Thursday morning after their departure from the Beech Creek settlement. The city papers had learned that the whereabouts of Margaret Whitthorn had been discovered, that she had been restored to health in both body and mind and that the party would arrive at home on the boat at a certain hour.

Both the Courier and the Journal sent reporters down the river to intercept the steamer so that the Whitthorns could be interviewed in regard to the events of the last year. The next morning the papers had two or three colums each in reference to the matter.

This produced even a greater sensation among the people of the city and surrounding country--where the Whitthorns were known--than did the tragedy that led to the supposed death of Miss Margaret a little over a year before. The incident of her supposed drowning in the Ohio river--while regarded as a most shocking occurrence--had in a manner gone from the minds of the people, except among those of her immediate family or close freinds.

It was as if a resurrection had taken place. The account of the restoration of the woman as recorded in the papers was in no way sensational, but at the same time was none the less gratifying to all.

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Wednesday morning at last came to Dan Boblin and Sam Johnson. They had all their preparartions made for their trip to Loisville, and just as the sun was rising, the two boys mounted the horses that had been ridden by Judge Whitthorn and David Fletcher. As they passed through the main street of Turpin, they were recognized by many of the citizens of that village, who knew the mission of the riders. "A pleasant trip and a safe return," was the greetings of their friends.

When night came the boys had traveled nearly fifty miles of their journey. While the horses showed some fatigue, the lads were so excited over the trip that they were seemingly as fresh as when they started on their way to the city. They stopped at a wayside farm house where they were welcomed by the man and his wife. They also had a son who was about the same age of Sam and Dan.

After supper the boys told of their trip, why they were on their journey at that special time and gave a full and complete history of the past year which was listened to with much interest by the whole family and especially by the son of the farmer--who felt after listening to the recital of events by Dan and Sam--that the guests were young men of great importance.

Next morning when the boys were ready to take their leave of their new made friends they asked for their bill and were informed that there "was not a cent to pay, but that a welcome awaited them on their return."

When the lads informed the people that they would return to their homes by boat and stage, there was a shade of disappointment on the faces of the man and his wife--while the son was almost disconsolate.

Sam and Dan arrived at the home of Judge Whitthorn that afternoon at about three o'clock, where their arrival had been watched for with eagerness. David Fletcher was there and the reception given the boys was a hearty and royal one.

Of course the boys were asked and answered many questions, especially by Margaret and Mrs. Jordan. The former wanted to know of Mandy and Ruth who had been so kind to her in her afflictions. Mrs. Jordan inquired about all the people of the Beech Creek settlement.

When time came to retire for the night, Dan and Sam were ready and willing and in a very short time after they struck the bed they

were sleeping as soundly and as peacefully as if they had been in their own homes and in their own beds.

The next morning Judge Whitthorn had his carriage ordered out and with Zeb as the driver, sent the boys to Louisville where they were to spend the day and night "sight seeing", with the understanding that they should be sent for the next afternoon and brought back to the Whitthorn home where they were to pass the Sunday.

"Hello boys! Where did you come from and when did you get to the city?" was the cordial greeting Dan and Sam received from Mr. Foster whom they met soon after their arrival in Louisville.

"From Beech Creek and have been here but a short time," was the response from both the boys.

"Where are you stopping?"

"We are not stopping anywhere as yet. We are looking for a hotel," replied Dan.

"What do you want with a hotel, do you want to buy one?" quizzed the man.

"No, we don't want to buy one unless we can get it at a bargain. We want a place to eat and sleep while we are in the city," replied Sam.

"No you don't. You boys are going to stop with me while you are in this town. I have not forgotten how kindly you and your people treated me while I was in the Beech Creek settlement."

"Oh, that's all right," replied Dan. "We like to have company out in the country."

"I was born and raised in the country and I like company too. While you boys are in the city you are to be my guests."

"Just as you say," agreed both the boys.

"We'll go to the printing office where we shall make our headquarters while you are in the town," siad Mr. Foster.

It was the first time the boys had ever been in a town that was larger than Turpin, and as they were "wide-awake country youngsters" who were out to see the "sights of the city," Dan and Sam kept both eyes and ears open so that nothing should escape their notice.

The boys were shown the printers setting type, making up the forms for the pages, the presses and the finished sheets of papers as they came from the revolving cylinders of the machinery--these sheets they read before the ink was dry thereon.

When dinner time came the boys were taken to a hotel for the mid-day meal. They were bewildered to see so many people, so many tables and all eating at the same time.

"Sam," said Dan when they were to themselves,--"they must have a lot of company here today. Probably there is a protracted meeting on hand. I never before saw so many people eating at one time. It must take a lot of stuff and cooking for that gang."

At night the boys went with Mr. Foster to a theater, where at first they were dazzled by the splendor of the interior of the building. They were charmed with the music and to them the play that was produced, was one of the most wonderful that had ever before been seen by mortal eye.

"It beats our school concerts all holler," exclaimed Dan when the curtain fell on the last act.

"Yes Dan," replied Sam. "What do you reckon that woman meant by coming out before the audience without her dress and dancing on the stage? She didn't have on a thing but her shirt and drawers."

"I guess she forgot to put on her clothes. The men yelled and clapped their hands like mad, but the woman never did catch on to being so nearly naked. I felt sorry for her," replied Dan.

"Well, I enjoyed it anyhow, even if she wasn't as well dressed as Susie Brown."

"So did I," responded Dan.

After the theater was over, the boys in company with Mr. Foster walked along Main street toward the boarding house where the man had elegant apartments. Dan and Sam were much surprised to see so many people moving to and fro at that late hour of the night.

"Why are so many people up this late?" inquired Dan of Mr. Foster. "Seems to me that it is mighty late bedtime.

"This is not so very late," was the reply.

"Well, it's what I'd call late any how. It don't lack more than an hour of being tomorrow," observed Sam.

"People don't go to bed as early in the city as they do in the country," smiled Mr. Foster.

"Do they get up in time for breakfast?" asked Dan.

"Yes of course."

Soon the boys were ushered into a finely furnished room and informed that it was at their disposal while they remained in the city.

"Dan, a'int this bedroom something great?" exclaimed Sam when the boys were left to themselves after having been instructed how to turn off the light from the gas jet.

"It beats anything I ever saw in the Beech Creek settlement," grinned Sam.

"It certainly does," replied Dan. "Suppose Ben Brown, Bill Jones and Dick Bruce could peep in here and see us, wouldn't they almost have a conniption fit?"

"You bet they would; they'd have two regular old fashioned ones. Poor fellows, they've never any of them been further from home than Turpin. I almost feel sorry for them," grinned Sam.

"This carpet's mighty soft and feels like it might be a half foot thick. It's like walking on a load of straw or hay. It is good enough to sleep on," suggested Dan.

"Dan, be careful how you sit down in that big chair. The first

thing you know,you'll get lost in the softness thereof and I'll never be able to find you."

"Don't you worry buddy. I a'nt afraid of any chair that I ever saw," was the reply. "Now let me warn you not to undertake to blow out that light. It's dangerous young man,very dangerous. Turn it out with that knob you see up there on that rod that is above the blaze," was the ~~WXXXXXX~~ warning.

Then the lads jumped into the bed and felt that they were veritable heroes. They talked for a long time over the incidents of the day. They were excited as any two country boys in the condition would naturally be who were on their first visit to a great city.

After awhile Dan and Sam fell asleep and did not wake until the sun was high up in the heavens the next morning. At home they were always up and at their usual chores before sunrise. When they awoke they were surprised that did not hear the roosters crowing for daylight.

"Get up Sam,I do believe it is broad day light." When the boys looked at their watches they found that it was long past seven o'clock.

"We've overslept ourselves. I wonder why they did not call us. I'll bet a coon skin that we shall miss our breakfast," said Dan.

During the day Sam and Dam took in the sights of the city.They rode on the street cars that were drawn by a pair of mules,they watched the people as they passed up and down the ~~streets~~ pavements and viewed with interest the tall buildings on either side of the streets. They walked down to the river--the first time in their lives that they had ever seen a stream that was larger than Beech Creek. They looked at the great body of water as it flowed past the city on its way to the south and wondered where it all came from and where it was going.

Before the boys left the city they visited a drug store in search of some present as a souvenir to take to Susie Brown--their one sweetheart. They wanted to take to her some token by which the girl

could keep in mind the much-traveled-boys. After looking at and pricing many things, the lads finnally settled on perfumery as the most suitable present for a young lady, such as Susie Brown. Dan bought a bottle of lilac and Sam purchased a bottle of violet--both bottles of perfume being of the same size and costing the same.

The boys were amazed at the great number of people they saw and met as they walked up and down the streets. "It must be election day--there are so many people in town," excalimed Sam.

"I guess so. They all seem to be in a mighty big hurry. I wonder where the voting place is?" inquired Dan.

"I have no idea--guess it's round the corner somewhere." They met men, women and children, all seemingly in a hurry.

"Good morning! Howdy!" saluted the boys as they walked down Main street.

The only recognition or response to their salutations was perhaps a stare, a grin, or a grunt from the people whom they addressed.

"I say Dan, these people a'int very polite are they?" When we say 'good morning' or 'howdy' they act like they do not see us. The people of Turpin and of the settlement always speak back when they are spoken to."

"Oh, I suppose that is their custom," repied Dan.

"Darn such a custom," replied Sam. "I believe I've had about enough of city life anyhow. I'd be glad to meet a common dog from the Beech Creek settlement and watch him wag his tail for a few minutes."

"I wish we had Tige and Bulger here with us. I'll bet they could whip any dozen city dogs we've seen since we have been here," sighed Dan.

"I tell you Sam," said Dan as they got into the carriage that Judge Whitthorn had sent for the boys and after they had bidden Mr. Foster good by,--"Louisville is a very good place for staying a day or

two, seeing the sights and other things, but I'll be dinged if I'd swap the Beech Creek settlement and its people for all the cities of the United States."

"You're right Dan. I'm glad we have been there, but I'll be a heap gladder when I get home."

The night was spent with the Whitthorns where the boys were made to feel almost as much at home and at ease as if they had been back in the country at their own habitations.

Arrangements had been made with the packet company to have a boat stop opposite the Whitthorn's the next morning to take the boys to Redbanks from which place they were to take the stage to Turpin. Judge Whitthorn had secured transportation for Dan and Sam--for which he had himself had paid. While the boys were at the landing waiting for the arrival of the boat, the Judge slipped into the hands of each, a ten dollar gold coin as a remuneration for their services for riding the horses from their homes to the Whitthorn residence. At first the boys refused to accept the money, claiming that they had been amply paid for the service rendered. They were at last persuaded to accept the money.

After the boat had proceeded down the river for a few miles and the lads had gotten over their first excitement of this new method of travel, Dan exclaimed: "Who would have thought it. We are on a great big boat and out in the middle of the Ohio river. A'int it fine?"

"Yes, but suppose the boat should sink, or blow up. Then where would we be?" Suggested Sam.

"We can both swim. But there is really no great danger of either a blow up or a sink. This boat has never as yet been guilty of either trick and I guess it will make it all right until we get off at Redbanks," said Dan.

"No doubt of it," agreed Sam.

For several days after the arrival at home of Dan and Sam, they were looked upon as heroes by the girls, while the boys of the neighborhood could not help but show a little jealousy of the popularity of the two young Beech Creekers who had been to the city.

As they could not agree as to which one should be the first to call on Susie Brown and relate to that pretty Miss the many incidents of their trip to and from Louisville, they compromised the matter by both calling together at the Brown home, which they did the evening after they returned from their eventful journey.

The two bottles of perfumery were not overlooked and each one made his present to the smiling Susie. The young lady, so as to show no preference between the boys and the gifts they brought, used both kinds of perfumery at the same time--which caused the Dan and Sam afterward to declare: "Susie smells like a garden full of violets or a yard full of lilacs."

Susie was particular at all times to show no preference for one of the boys over the other. She really wished in her heart that the two boys were one boy and that one named "Samuel Daniel," or "Daniel Samuel," she didn't care which.

While Susie was wishing that both the boys were one and the same, Dan and Sam were wishing that Susie was two girls so that each should have his separate sweetheart.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PROF.GREEN AND MISS MANDY MARRY.

"Ruth,I am greatly rejoiced that poor Meg has been restored to her right mind,that her identity has been discovered and that she shall soon be at her old home," said Mrs.Miller to the girl the day the Whitthorns left for Louisville.

"The restoration of Margaret Whitthorn to her normal condition is certainly a tribute to the medical skill of Dr.Marcum," replied Ruth.

"Yes Ruth;but to you and Mandy Simpson are due almost--if not quite the credit--that is due Dr.Marcum," responded Mrs.Miller.

"I claim none of the honor. That belongs almost exclusively to the doctor and Miss Mandy," asserted Ruth.

"To you as much as she," asserted the aunt.

"Any how Margaret is well and happy and there is no doubt that she and Mr.Fletcher will soon be married," said Ruth.

"Ruth,I want to make a confession to you."

"A confession! What kind of a confession?"

"Perhaps you do not know that when your uncle Tom invited you to come to Kentucky and make your home with us--that not only I,but Flora--both very seriously objected to your coming. I am ashamed to make this confession,yet it is nevertheless true. Can you forgive me?"

"Certainly aunt Julia. You have furnished me with a home when I had none and no other place to which I could go," smiled Ruth as she embraced her aunt and implanted a kiss on the cheek.

"How we have missed you since the school closed and while you have been looking after the comforts of the--then unknown--poor and demented woman who came to Mrs.Jordan's door. No wonder she called you 'Angel.' Poor Jack has missed you so much too. He has not been well and has fretted much over your absence."

"where is Jack," inquired Ruth.

"He is in his room. That is I left him there only a few minutes ago. He calls you Angel, just like Meg did."

"Poor Jack, I feel that in a way I have neglected him of late--it could not under the circumstances be well avoided. I think I shall be able to be with him more than in the past."

"Do you intend to teach school again this fall," inqured Mrs. Miller.

"I presume I shall, provided the trustees and Prof. Green should want my services. I enjoy the work very much and the pay enables me to make my own living, which to me is a great satisfaction," replied Ruth.

"Ruth," siad Mrs. Miller, "I don't want you to teach any more. You uncle Tom and I have talked the matter over and we have concluded otherwise."

"I know of nothing that I can do better than teaching. In fact it is about the only thing which seems open to me at present whereby I may be able to earn a competency," said Ruth.

"That is all right, but we have a proposition which I think is much better."

"What is it aunt Julia?"

"In the first place we want you to continue to live here with us--to make this your home, as a member of the family. Now that Flora and Henry Benton have married and have set up to house-keeping in Turpin, your uncle and I are lonely. You have proven yourself worthy our love and confidence. We want you as a daughter. If you will agree to make this your home, to live with us, we shall bestow on you every affection we have bestowed on Flora."

"Cousin Ruth," interposed Jack who had come into the room while the two women were talking,--"please do not teach any more. I want you to make this your home as long as we all live."

"You are both quite kind and you may rest assured that I appreciate this kindness more than I am able to express. I cannot yet determine what course I shall pursue in the matter."

"Let that be as it may--whether you teach or do not teach--we want you to feel that this is your home just as much as if you were own daughter," assured Mrs.Miller.

"Or just as much as if you were my own sister," added Jack.

"Thank you both and uncle Tom too," smiled Ruth.

"Ruth," said Mrs.Miller with a smile,--"I have noticed that Dr.Marcum has been somewhat attentive to you of late. I have formed a very favorable opinion of him and I assure you that in the event he wishes to call on you at any time,that his calling shall meet with my entire approval."

"Thank you," smiled Ruth. I think however that Dr.Marcum is really more interested in his profession than he is in making love to any woman."

[illegible]

"Because he is interested in his profession does not necessarily mean that he might not be deeply interested in some one of the opposite sex--and that one you for instance," suggested Mrs.Miller.

Ruth blushed modestly but made no reply. She very well knew in her heart that Dr.Marcum had for her a feeling that was done above that of ordinary freindship.

"Dr.Marcum has made a wonderful reputation for the short time he has been in the settlement," said Mrs.Miller. "The restoration of Crazy Meg to her own name,--Margaret Whitthorn--marks him as a physician who is away and beyond the ordinary practitioner. And better than all,he is a christain gentleman who is worthy the respect and confidence of all."

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"I thank you for your high opinion of Dr.Marcum. I believe all you say of him. He is as gentle as a woman,as kind and considerate as a father or a brother,He is thoughtful of others,charitable towards all and sympathises with those in dsitress. He serves his God and loves his fellowman.," exclaimed Ruth with enthusiasm.

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At this time in rural Kentucky--when a marriage was to take place--there were no such things known as engraved or printed invitations sent out announcing the time,place and "At Home" of the contracting parties. The people to be invited to the wedding were simply summoned by word of mouth," and they always responded with alacrity. No excuses for non-attendance were either offered or accpeted.

In less than a week after Mandy Simpson had agreed to become the bride of Prof.Silas Green,Mrs.Brown had managed to secure the secret--which secret--in a few days was known to every man,woman and child in the Beech Creek settlement.

"I'm not surprised. I've been expecting as much," was the prompt reply of every one as Mrs.Brown went from neighbor to neighbor imparting the information with the injunction: "Don't tell any one that I told you,as it is a profound secret and I got it from Mrs.Simpson myself."

The wedding was however a very quiet affair. On account of Miss Mandy having been for a yaer more or less enaged in ministering to the comforts of Miss Whitthorn,it was thought advisable by all concerned--as well as the neighbors--that the wedding should be without show or ostentation.

"Bro.Riley," siad Prof.Green a few days before the time set for the marriage,--"it is the wish of Mandy and myself that you shall perform the ceremony for us."

"I am at your service," was the reply. "I am not at all surprised that I have been called upon to officiate on this important occasion.

Even now before the marriage takes place I am ready to say,'God bless you both.'"

In addition to other invited guests--as might be supposed--Dr. Marcum and Ruth Martin were present. It was noticed that the doctor seemed to have eyes for no one but Ruth,and no one could blame him for this favoritism. While she was handsome and attractive at all times, yet on this occasion she seemed more lovely,more beautiful and more fascinating than usual.

As Prof.Green and Mandy Simpson took their places in the center of the room--amid breathless silence--Bro.Riley siad:

"Dearly beloved: Matrimony is a solemn institution,ordained of God,sanctioned by the savior of the world at the marriage in Cana of Galilee and commended by St.Paul to be honorable among all men;therefore this man and this woman have presented themselves to be joined in the holy estate of matrimony as husband and wife;if there is any one present who knows any just cause why this couple should not be so united,let him now speak or forever hereafter hold his peace.------I presume there is no objection.

"Please join your right hands. Do you,Silas Green,take this woman whom you hold by the hand to be your lawful and wedded wife,that you will live with her according to God's laws,that you promise to be to her a true and faithful husband,that you will love,comfort,~~comfort~~ and protect her whether in sickness or in health,and that so long as you both live you will cleave to her alone? Do you so promise?"

Prof.Green gave a nod of assent and whispered, "I so promise."

"Mandy Simpson:Do you take the man whom you hold by the hand to be your lawful and wedded husband and do you promise that you will love,honor,cherish,comfort and respect him as such;that you will minister to him in sickness and health,be true to him in prosperity or adversity and that you will cleave to him and to him alone so long as you both shall live?Do you so promise?"

246 "I do," quietly and modestly assented the woman.

"In the name of the Trinity I now pronounce you husband and wife. What God hath joined together let no man part asunder. The Lord's richest and choicest blessings rest upon you both. Amen."

Of course Mrs.Simpson did what her mother did more than thirty years before when she was married to her now long departed husband and what all other mothers have been doing since they have been witnessing the marriages of their daughters. Whether these mothers' tears are tears of joy or of sadness,no man has ever yet been able to understand. It is perhaps a part of the program.

This brings up the question,"why is it that mothers are so anxious and interested in the marriage of their darling daughters if they know that it is going to produce so much weeping?" The average mother will spend sleepless nights and anxious waking hours in planning to get her daughter wedded to some man and just as soon as the ceremony is ended that unites the two as husband and wife is concluded,she breaks into fits of weeping and spasms of tear shedding,which action on her part rarely ever elicits the sympathy of any one.

"Mrs.Green," said Bro.Riley soon after the congratulations were over,--"don't you remember some months ago that I promised to give you the wedding fee--provided I was chosen as the one to perform the ceremony?"

"Yes sir,I remember it very well."

"Here is a ten dollar gold piece that Prof.Green,your now husband handed to me for doing which to me was a pleasant duty. I now present it to you with my very best compliements and beg you to accept the same."

"Thank you ," said the woman smiling," I'll buy something for the home and both the professor and myself will get the benefit thereof."

About this time Mr.Boblin stepped forward with a broad smile on his face--holding in his hand a small package. Handing this to the bride he said:

"This was received by me a few days ago with instructions to present it to you on this occasion. While I know nothing in the world of its contents,yet I do know that it is from the Whitthorns and that it is a wedding present."

It was of course natural that all should want to know what the package contained.

"Thank you," said Mandy as she accepted the gift from the hands of Mr.Boblin.

"What is it?" demanded a chorus of voices.

"Open it," siad Mr.Boblin, and let us know what you have."

On opening the package it was discovered that it contained two hundred and fifty dollars in gold. A letter that accompanied the gift explained that the gold was a token of appreciation from Judge Whitthorn and his daughter to Miss Mandy on account of her unselfish devotion to Miss Whitthorn in her late affliction. Miss Margaret closed the letter by extending best wishes of her father,David Fletcher and herself,with a sincere hope that the lives of both Prof.Green and his bride should be that of unalloyed happiness while in this world and eternal joy in the world to come. Miss Whitthorn also threw out a very strong hint that it would not be a great while until she too,should be a bride and that David Flether would be the groom.

"Here is a letter for you Miss Ruth," said Mr.Boblin as he handed her the missive--"which I received this afternoon while I was at Turpin."

Ruth accepted the letter which was a long one and was post marked "Louisville." "Excuse me while I read it," said Ruth. The letter was from Margaret Whitthorn in which she gave a detailed account

of everything that had occurred since she had arrived at her home. She had much to say of the happiness of herself and David. The closing lines were as follwos:

"And now dear Angel--a few words and I close. David Fletcher and I are to be married on the evening of the 27th of this month. We want you to be present without fail. If possible be here one week before the wedding takes place. Then we want you to remain thereafter just as long as possible. Do not disappoint us. Come! Come! Come!

"Father, David and mother Jordan join me in lots of love.

Margaret (Meg) Whitthorn."

"That is just two weeks from tonight," remarked Mandy when Ruth had finished reading the letter.

"Are you going?" asked Dr. Marcum.

"Unless something prevents."

"Please don't stay long," whispered the doctor.

For a reply, Ruth looked into the face of the man and smiled.

As Ruth and Dr. Marcum walked together that night from the wedding festivities to the Miller home--which was less than a mile distant--they were both in deep thought. The full moon had risen about an hour before and shone with a silvery sheen that made the hour an ideal one for lovers--though the subject of love had never as yet been mentioned by the man.

"Miss Ruth, I shall be very lonesome while you are absent. We have been thrown together so much of late that it seems to me that your presence is almost a necessity to me. Won't you think of me occasionally while you are away from your home?"

"Yes, Dr. Marcum. You may rest assured that you shall frequently be on my mind. I regard you as my very best and truest friend."

"I hope the time may come--and that before a great while--that

you shall regard me more than a mere friend, that you shall look on me as a suitor for your heart and your hand."

As the man completed the last sentence of his almost declaration of love for the pretty girl by his side, the moon shown full on the faces of the happy pair. The woman was blushing deeply, while a bright smile was observed by her companion as they walked silently along the road. Cupid was busy and was shooting his darts with unerring aim.

By this time the two had arrived at the gate of the Miller home. There was a light in the parlor and Mrs. Miller was at the door to meet and welcome the pair on their return from the wedding.

"Won't you come in doctor?" kindly invited Ruth who was warmly seconded by Mrs Miller.

"I should be more than pleased to accept your kind invitation, but the widow Johnson is quite sick and I have promised to be with her even before this time. This is placing important business before a supreme happiness," replied the doctor.

"I shall miss you Ruth. Please don't stay long," whispered the doctor as he pressed the hand of the girl and left to attend to the call of the afflicted.

The doctor went on his way to minister to the needs of the sick woman, for which service he well knew that he would receive no reward further than perhaps the thanks of the widow and a conscience that approved. His thoughts were as much--if not more--on the woman he had left at the gate, than upon the patient who lay on a bed of affliction.

The woman watched the man as he turned and left on his mission of mercy. Her thoughts were of him and her prayers for the one who had just pressed her hand and whispered: "I shall miss you Ruth. Please don't stay long."

C H A P T E R XXV.

A DEATH AND A WEDDING.

"Aunt Julia," said Ruth as the two women sat in the parlor after her return from the wedding,--"I have this eveing received a letter from Margaret Whitthorn informing me that she and David Fletcher are to be married ~~two~~ two weeks from this evening.."

"I am not surprised to hear this. From what I saw of Mr.Fletcher when he was here and from what I learned of Margaret,I felt certain that it would be only a question of a short time until they would be married."

"Margaret wants me to be present at that time and has invited me to be there at least a week before the wedding comes off."

"You will go,will you not?"

"I think I shall unless you should offer some good objection to my making the trip."

"I want you to go. I think the trip would really do you a great deal of good."

"I shall start next Monday if possible."

"Let me see," exclaimed Mrs.Miller. "This is Wednesday. Ruth,we will go to Turpin tomorrow and I shall see that you are provided with the necessary outfit. Anything you may need shall be yours. Your uncle Tom and I will see that you have everything you may want or need for the comfort and pleasure of the trip."

"I shall require but little and still have some of my school money--more than enough to pay all my expenses."

"Keep your money Ruth. Now,you are our daughter--even if by adoption--you shall have the very best the town affords."

"Aunt Julia,you are too kind."

"No,I am not."

"Dear aunt,I am not unmindful of your many kindnesses to me.

I shall at all times try to prove to you that they are duly appreciated."

"You have already more than proved this. You have been more than a sister to Jack. No wonder he calls you Angel and loves you as he does."

"I feel that I have only done my duty by the boy. His afflictions appeal to me."

"The Lord bless you for your thoughtful consideration of others."

"The Lord has already blessed me,perhaps more than I deserve."

"By the way Ruth,I was glad to see Dr.Marcum with you this evening. The more I see and know of the man the more am I pleased with him."

"I thank you for your good opinion of him," smiled Ruth.

The women sat and talked for a long time over the incidents of the Green-Simpson wedding and the many other things that had taken place in the Beech Creek settlement since the time that Ruth about a year ago had come to make her home with the Millers.

When the next Monday morning came Mr. and Mrs.Miller,Ruth and Jack drove to town in the carriage where Ruth was to take the stage for her trip to Louisville--the first time she had ridden in a stage coach since she came to the settlement.

"Cousin Ruth,Angel cousin,don't be gone too long," pleaded Jack as he threw his arms about the girl's neck and kissed her as the stage coach drew up to the station.

"Be a good boy Jack," said Ruth. "I shall not be absent a very great while," when she gave the boy a parting kiss.

Dr.Marcum--as it happened--had business in Turpin that morning. He arrived there a few minutes before the Millers and Ruth drove into town. Ruth did not seem to be in the least surprised when the doctor greeted them as they alighted from the carriage.

"Ruth," said Dr.Marcum as thw two walked up and down the platform before which the stage coach stopped to let off and take on passengers, "I am going to miss you very much while you are absent. My thoughts are going to be continually on and about you. May I not ask that you shall think of me occasionally?"

"Most certainly," was the modest reply.

"I want to say something to you that I have never as yet said to any other woman--except to my mother--I love you."

Ruth looked into the face of the man,she blushed like a full blown rose,while a smile played around the rosy lips of the lovely woman. Her reply was this and nothing more,but though unspoken,the language was intelligible to the man who stood by her side. "That smile," the doctor said in after times, "was the most angelic he had ever before seen on the face of any woman."

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"Dr.Marcum," hailed Mrs.Miller about ten days after Ruth had left for Louisville as he was passing the Miller home,--"I want you to come in and see Jack. He is not so well for the last few days. I am quite uneasy about him."

"Very well," replied the doctor as he alighted from his horse. I will see what I can do for him."

"Jack,here is Dr.Marcum," said Mrs.Miller as the two entered the room of the sick boy.

"Hello Jack,what seems to be the matter with you?" asked the doctor as he took the boy by the hand.

"Oh my legs hurt and I want to see cousin Ruth," replied the boy."Doctor don't you want to see cousin Ruth too?"

"Yes Jack,I should be quite pleased to meet her."

"I love cousin Ruth a whole lot. Don't you love her too?"

"No one could help loving Miss Ruth," smiled the doctor.

"Doctor,you ought to love her a whole lot. She's an angel. I hope she won't stay long,"sighed the boy.

"She will return soon," said the doctor.

"I hope so. If she were here she would know what to do for me. She could sing and make me forget my pains," groaned the boy.

"I'll fix you up some medicine that I hope shall relive you very soon,"replied the doctor .

"I wish cousin Ruth was here to give me the medicine. I like you,but I love cousin Ruth. Don't you doctor?"

Dr.Marcum smiled and to himself he said; "Yes, I love her with all my heart."

That night Jack was worse. He had a high fever. All night long he tossed on his bed,moaned and called for Ruth. He could be quited only by promising him that she would return very soon. The boy did not respond to the treatment. Day after day he grew weaker and kept calling for Ruth.

"You had better send for Ruth," said the doctor a few days later as he was talking to Mrs.Miller and her husband when he saw that Jack was growing weaker. "I doubt that with even her presence we shall be able to save the boy. He is in a very critical condition."

"Send at once for Ruth," said Mrs.Miller to her husband as tears streamed from her eyes."

Stage coaches and steam boats were too slow in sending the message that should call Ruth to the bedside of the suffering lad. A rider was ordered to mount a horse and to proceed with all possible speed to the Whitthorn home.

"Ride until Sampson is too tired and worn to make proper haste, then hire another horse and make the trip as rapidly as possible," was the order given by Mr.Miller to the hired man. "Deliver this letter to Ruth at Judge Whitthorn's. Tell her to come by the first boat and that jack calls for her both day and night."

Within fifteen hours after the messenger left the Miller home, Ruth had been informed of the condition of Jack. It so happened that

a boat would pass down the river three hours later and by that time Ruth could be ready and at the landing to take the vessel that would bear her on the way where she was hastening to the bedside of the afflicted boy, where she arrived in due time.

"Is cousin Ruth coming?" asked the boy more in delirium than with an understanding of what was meant by the words he uttered.

When assured that she was then on her way, Jack would relapse into a fitful sleep, from which on awakening he would ask the usual question about the coming of Ruth.

When Ruth arrived at the Miller home she tripped lightly into the room where the sufferer lay. His eyes were closed and he was apparently in a deep sleep, but all at once he opened his eyes, he threw out his hands and arms and exclaimed: "I knew you would come."

Ruth placed her arms beneath the boy, kissed his fevered cheeks and said: "Yes, Jack I am here."

"Don't leave me cousin Ruth, Angel Ruth dear. Stay with me," moaned the boy.

"I'll stay with you," assured Ruth and then the boy drifted back to unconsciousness.

For more than a week the life of the boy seemed to hang in the balance between life and death. Sometimes for a few minutes and even at times for an hour or two there seemed to be symptoms of a bettered condition which was invariably followed by a relapse.

Night and day Ruth sat by the bedside of the boy ready to respond to his every wish or call that might be indicated by the suffering lad. Although advised by Dr. Marcum and urged by Mr. and Mrs. Miller to take needed rest, the woman refused to be absent from her post of duty more than a few minutes at any time.

As night drew near on the tenth day after Ruth's arrival, it was evident that Jack was rapidly sinking. Just before midnight the boy opened his eyes and murmured: "Sing, Angel, sing."

Ruth sang in a low sweet melody that was like the whisperings of angels. A solemn stillness pervaded the room. Dr.Marcum,Mr and Mrs. Miller and their daughter Flora sat with bowed heads and weeping eyes. The was a slight convulsion of the body,a movement that was scarcely perceptible,a sigh that escaped the lips of the dying boy and all was over.Jack was dead. On the pale wan face was a smile as if kissed by angels' lips and fanned by the zephyrs from the celestial shores of the heavenly world.

"Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,
A shadow on those features fair and thin;
And softly,from that hushed and darkened room
Two angels issued,where but one went in."

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One evening two weeks after the funeral of Jack,Dr.Marcum was a visitor at the Miller home. He and Ruth were in the parlor. Each one was more or less agitated,as the man had come for an answer to an important question that he had propounded to the woman a few eveings before.

From the very hour the two had first met as strangers at Turpin,a little over a year ago,the doctor had been irresistibly drawn to the woman on account of her charm of manner and her striking personality. From the moment he had overheard her singing that afternoon of the Dan Rice circus while she was watching with Crazy Meg,he had felt that his life would be incomplete without the love of the woman on whom he was now calling.

He had watched her as she sat by the side of the demented Margaret Whitthorn and had ministered to the wants of that unknown stranger with as much care and tenderness as if she had been in the palace of the wealthy and watching over royalty itself. He had heard her called "Angel" by the strange woman and to him she had become a "ministering angel."

He had watched with growing interest her thoughtful care of the poor crippled boy,who could be comforted by no one else but the

loving and patient "Cousin Ruth." He saw that the woman was loved and beloved by all with whom she came in contact. No wonder he believed that she was the woman for the wife of a physician.

Meanwhile Ruth herself had not been indifferent to the many little attentions she had received from Dr.Marcum. She had noted with much interest his deep devotion to his profession and had admired the nobility of character of the young physician. While she had been careful to conceal from the outside world her growing admiration for the man,yet deep down in her heart was a spark that needed only a gentle breeze of love to enkindle a flame that should shine with effulgence from the altar of her soul.

"Ruth," said Dr.Marcum,taking her by the hand and looking kindly into the eyes of the woman,--"you know my mission here this evening. I have come for an answer to my question of more than a week ago--in fact for an answer to a question--that in my heart--was propounded soon after we first met. On that answer depends the happiness not only of myself,but your own as well. What shall that answer be?"

"Dr.Marcum,it will not do for me to say that I have not studied the matter with considerable care. I consider the subject of matrimony one of the most important--outside the soul's salvation--of any that can be considered by human beings."

"I most heartily agree with you Ruth. Marriage is a something that should not be lightly considered,nor entered into without due deliberation. Did I not believe that you and I were not suited the one for the other,or that either of us in the future should regret the step we had taken--far be it from me that I would make to you a proposal of marriage. I love you and you alone,and I have good reasons for believing that you love me."

Ruth hung her head and blushingly replied: "Dr.Marcum;I am a moneyless orphan and the only thing that I can bring to you or give

to you, is myself alone, with a heart that knows nothing but love for humanity in general and- - - - - -" here she hung her head.

"----and what?" inquired the doctor.

"You in particular," smiled Ruth as she looked into the face of the man.

"That's all I could ask and all that any man should demand. Then you are mine," joyfully exclaimed the man.

"Yes, as your wife it shall be my chief aim in life to assist you in relieving the distress of those who may be afflicted."

"My happiness is complete. My cup of joy is running over. I hope you shall never have cause for even one minute to regret the step we have taken that leads to matrimony."

"My fears for the future are only such as those which naturally come to one who on entering in upon a life that is new and untried to her. I have unbounded faith in the man with whom I am to make the journey through life and an unfaltering trust in the God who created us both."

It is well enough to drop the curtain on the scene for awhile- at least. The lovers had many things to discuss that concerned no one but themselves. It was not until the clock with its white face, which stood on the mantle smiled down on the happy pair, pointed it's hands to the witching hour of midnight and with it's twelve strokes, that the man could tear himself from the object of his affections.

While no human eye witnessed the sight, yet it is safe to venture the prediction that as the two stood with clasped hands and said "good night", that the man implanted a kiss upon the lips of the woman and that she responded to the osculatory salutation in true womanly style. As DR. Warsum was opposed to a long courtship and as Ruth could find no reasonable excuse to defer the marriage

As Dr.Marcum was opposed to a long courtship and as Ruth could find no reasonable excuse for deferring the marriage,it was agreed that the wedding should take place at as early date as was practicable. Bro.Riley was selected to perform the ceremony which was witnessed by a few friends at the Miller residence and in the same room in which the man and the woman had plighted their troth.

Within half an hour after the two had been united as husband and wife,a letter was handed to Ruth informing her of the death of her uncle,Thomas Martin,the only brother of her father--from whom she had not heard in many years. The letter contained the further information that the uncle had never been married and that he had left a large fortune which was then awaiting her claims.

Her uncle Tom had left his home in Georgia ten years before, had gone to South America where he made a fortune and Ruth was the only heir. The uncle had heard of the death of his brother,Ruth's father,and had left for his old home,but was taken sick and died before his arrival. Hence Ruth was now a rich woman in her own name.

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A few years later,Mr.Foster the newspaper man of Louisville — who had once visited the Beech Creek settlement,returned to that community to call on his old friends and acquaintances. He had just passed by the Academy when he met a boy and a girl on their way to school. The lad was about eight years old and had a pleasing and striking face. The girl was about two years younger than her companion. She had golden hair,blue eyes and was a bright and winsome lass. The man was pleased with the little pair.

"What is your name?" said the man addressing the boy.

"I am Silas Green Marcum," was the reply.

"And I'm Ruth Marcum Green," smiled the girl.

THE END.