

The Poem

Editor's Note: This is the fourth and final paper which won \$5.00 as fourth prize in the recent DAR historical contest. The paper was written by Glenn Twiddy and follows:

THE POEM

There's a pleasant little town on the coast of North Carolina called Edenton, but I know it best as Queen Anne's Town. The main street runs down to the water and on the right hand side of the street is the library or what is better known as The Cupola House. Go upstairs to the third floor and go in the door on the right. There you'll see a case holding a tattered doll with a crack down one side of the face. I am that doll.

I wasn't always so tattered and worn looking for I was once a new and beautiful doll under a Christmas tree at a beautiful home called Hayes. I remember that Christmas morning well, and the bright, happy eyes of Hannah Johnston as she hugged me close to her and squealed with delight. Hannah was twelve years old then. Even at that age my little mistress had no extraordinary beauty about her, but she had a quiet, pleasing face and a dignity of manner and a stateliness of carriage that very few children have. Hannah named me "Tabby," not that I was named after anyone but because that was the first name that she thought of. That's the only thing that I ever remember her doing on impulse, for Hannah had good, sound common sense and she usually thought things out for a long time before deciding.

Hannah loved me dearly and I loved my kind, sweet mistress just as much. Instead of being put in the case where she and her sister, Anne, kept their other dolls, I had a special little cradle sitting beside her bed and sometimes I slept with her.

The years during Hannah's childhood were mostly happy ones for her and me. Of course there were times when she cried but then what little girl doesn't cry at one time or another? Then she would take me in her arms and pour out her grief to me and I would have to cry on the inside, all the time wearing that painted smile on my face, for whoever saw a doll cry?

Then before I realized it Hannah was a grown young lady. She still maintained her stateliness of carriage and dignity and she still loved me and whispered all her sorrow and happiness into my little painted ear. Oh! How I wish I could have eased her sorrow by talking to her but of course that was impossible! And how I would have loved sharing her happiness for then her face would light up and you almost got the impression that perhaps she was beautiful after all.

It was almost another Christmas time and the Johnston House seemed to be in a state of frenzy. Everyone was running in and out doors and up and down stairs. Then I heard one of the maids whisper that there was to be a big Christmas Ball in the panel room in the Court House and then the door opened and in rushed Hannah, out of breath and excited. One of the maids came in and laid out a beautiful gown on the bed. Hannah and her mother had sewed for weeks on the dress. As I watched her dress for the ball, I felt perhaps a little jealous because she seemed to forget all about me. I wanted her

to come over and tuck in the little quilt she had made for me and say, "Tabby, I still love you," but of course she didn't, for what young lady would think about a doll while she was preparing for a ball?

After everyone had left for the ball, the room seemed so dark and lonesome, I lay there and thought. How gaily everything would be decorated! Old Saint Nick would come in and everyone would try to guess who he was this year and the young ladies and their beaux would dance and laugh gaily!

Hours later I heard carriages draw up in front of the house and the happy laughter of Hannah and her family. A few minutes later a maid came in and turned the covers down and put another log on the fireplace and in came Hannah. I had never seen her look so radiant. "After she had undressed and prepared for bed, she bent over and picked me up and hugged me tight. She was gaily humming a tune and then she whispered into my ear, "Oh, Tabby! I had the most wonderful time and I met two of the nicest young gentlemen. Mr. James Iredell and Sir Nathaniel Dukenfield. You should have seen how they both tried to dance with me at the same time. Oh! Tabby, they were no nice. Sir Nathaniel is going to call on me next week. Tabby, I do hope that Mr. Iredell will call on me sometimes too."

The fireplace cast a soft, warm glow over the room and somehow as I lay beside Hannah I had a premonition that these two young men would fall in love with her.

Sir Nathaniel came the next week, and the next and the next. Mr. Iredell didn't come. Then one Sunday afternoon he came unexpectedly. He said that he wanted to see Mr. Johnston but somehow I knew that he really wanted to see Hannah. It was in the early part of April and it was an afternoon of premature spring. The trees had tiny green buds on them and a few early flowers were in bloom. Hannah had sat in her room most of the afternoon reading. When she saw Mr. Iredell walking toward the house, she dropped the book quickly, ran to the mirror and brushed her hair and slowly walked downstairs.

The next Sunday afternoon he came again but this time he had no excuse, he came to see Hannah. About a half hour after he came Sir Nathaniel came also. I wonder how Hannah felt sitting there with two young men who were so obviously interested in her? They kept trying to make conversation, not knowing exactly what to say.

The situation soon became a source of gossip for the women in Queen Anne's Town. Which young man did young Miss Johnston favor? I, too,

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sometimes wondered for in the past few months she had almost completely forgotten me. The only way I could gather any news about her was through the maids as they tidied up her room. She was their main object of conversation.

One night as Hannah sat in her room, she picked me up, unfolded a piece of paper and read me a poem, a poem that made me know which young man she favored. Here is the poem that she read me:

In what soft language shall my soul convey
Its dreams by night, and anxious cares
all day,
To her, the object of my fond desires
To call my wife whom my proud heart
aspire?

In whom each female excellence we view
The just decorum of the happy few,
Possessed of elegant, angelic minds,
Where truth with goodness, grace with
virtue shines.

May you, the dearest mistress of my love,
No more the pangs of dire affection
prove,

But everyday and every hour employ
Some new occasion for a rising joy,
And might the penner of this wish
impart

The rapturous feelings of his faithful
heart,
He'd hope to share the bliss, which
you possess

And being blest, have some sweet
power to bless.

It was then that I knew whom Han-

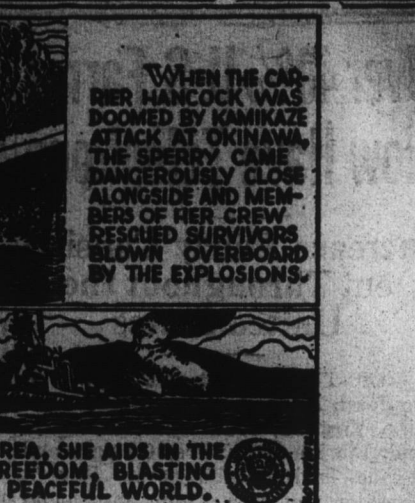
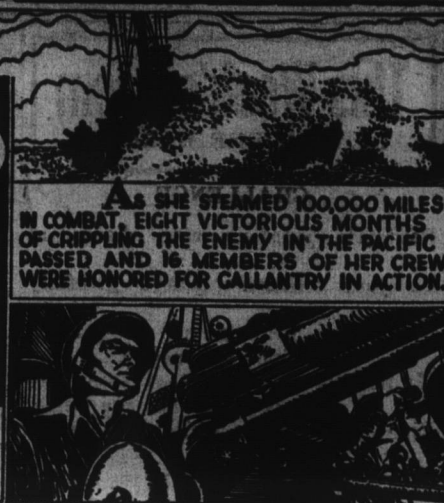
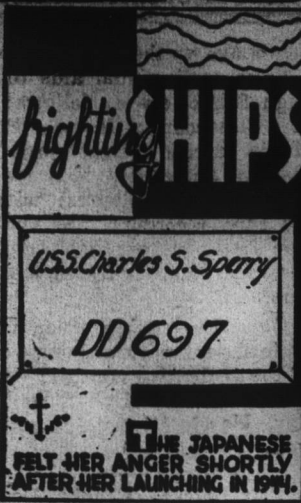
nah loved, James Iredell. He had loved and wooed her and won her hand.

Not long after, Hannah's parents announced the coming marriage of their daughter, Miss Hannah Johnston to Mr. James Iredell. You would have thought that the women in Queen Anne's Town would have stopped their gossip then but they still talked about how "that poor Sir Nathaniel Dukenfield" looked as he walked down the street. I heard the maids discussing it one day. They also said that he would leave for England right before the wedding. Somehow I felt a little sorry for the rejected suitor.

Hannah was so busy preparing for her wedding that she had little time left for me. The maids talked of how much the couple seemed to be in love.

The weeks that followed were the loneliest weeks of my existence. Then one day the maids came in and started to pack all of Hannah's clothes. Suddenly

(Continued on Page Fourteen)



DISTRICT MEETING FOR COMMISSIONERS MARCH 20

A district meeting of County Commissioners will be held at Winton in the Hertford County Court House Friday, March 20. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 10 A. M., when problems common to County Commissioners will be considered.

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