

THE ROANOKE NEWS.

JOHN W. SLEDGE, PROPRIETOR.

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QUAINT OLD HALIFAX

A Story of Persons and Places Which Figure in the History of the State.

(WRITTEN FOR THE ROANOKE NEWS.)



UNCLE BILLY CONTINUES HIS STORY. PART 2.

It has been said by one of old that it is a sure sign of old age to like to talk about "the time when you were young," but as it is not my own experience and as I lay no claim to having acted in the drama of life that I am relating, I trust there are some who still cherish the memory of other days and among thoughtful people especially there are those who will pardon me for pausing awhile with those who, having served their day and generation, have fallen asleep and their places filled by others who have come after them. Sage and scholar, soldier and statesman, priest and people, alike blended in one common dust and though imperishable shafts mark their resting place, they, too, will come forth and take their places in that innumerable throng which man can number and which shall gather from all the corners of the earth at the call of the Great Architect of the universe.

With my mind filled with musings like these I arose on the morning after the interview with my quondam friend and prepared for my visit to the old church yard and other points of interest that might be suggested by him. The quiet of the street was marked compared with the day before. The crowd had dispersed to their homes in the surrounding country. The upturned goods boxes and a few loaves and scraps of bread, which were scattered around and being devoured by a lazy looking pig, were the only remains of the feast that had been spread beneath the trees, and the little town, at this early hour of the morning might have been taken for a "Deserted Village."

The houses, grey and gabled roofed, staid and dignified in their setting back from the street, some of them almost hid by the tall cedars and evergreens in front, seemed to look askance at their more modern neighbors. For there have been some attempts at styles of a later date. I had been told by my communicative landlord that there had been a great improvement in the town in the last ten years. When I remembered that it was said that the "Father of his Country," in writing of this little village, had said that it was a "thrifty village," but a little on the decline, it was hard for me to reconcile the two statements.

As I came to the vicinity of my friend's cottage I saw him industriously weeding away among some vegetables in the bit of garden attached to his humble dwelling, now and then peering earnestly at the plants as if in search of something he was anxious to discover.

"Good morning, Uncle Billy," I said. "Sarrant, sah," he replied, taking of his battered hat politely but leaning on his hoe with his eye still on the ground. "You have a nice garden," I continued.

"Yes, sah, but dese yer w'oms is jes' er ruinin' my collard plants dese cool mornin', an' my sallie's all gone to seed an' I wan' dese collards ter make bast an' grow so ez I kin git ter eat 'em."

As he said this he stooped down and ran his finger around a desiccated cabbage plant and bringing up a wriggling grub proceeded to pull him in two with his fingers, wiping them on his shirt. "He finished and looking up with the air of having met and conquered an enemy. "You haven't time for a walk, then?" "Oh, yas, I is, boss. I allers lakos ter 'commodeate nice gentlemen," he replied, as no doubt visions of silver half dollars flitted through his mind. He carefully placed his hoe in the corner of the chimney and wiping his face with a gay colored cotton handkerchief came through the little gate, in his shirt sleeves and with only one string across his shoulders in place of suspenders, saying as he vanished in doors, "Jes' lemme git my yuther coat an' hat."

Presently he came out in a long cut frock coat, that had perhaps in time been black, and a comparatively new straw hat, calling to a little cur dog lying on the porch he said, "you stay dar Jack 'twell I come back." The dog looked up at him and seemed to take in what he said and then quietly shut one eye and then both, resting his head upon his forepaws. Turning to me he said, "dat's de knowledge dorg you ever seed, he wont let

cate bench an' want ter Rolly fas an' lak kase his business tak him dese so much. But Mars Burton an' Mister Tom Burton, he wuz Gov'nor Burton's son, an' his mother wuz er saint on de youth, he added, reverently. "Dey wuz ole n' Mars June but when we wuz all boys he wuz go wid kase he allers wuz er moush water boy. Want feared o' outlin' in de warl an' ever body sed arter he went ter Wes' Pint he wuz jes' ez han' som as he end be. De yuthers dey wuz bo' sorter wile in dey young days—jes' loved ter ride fast an' go ter parties an' dance an' hev er good time, yer' koo, but dey wuz mighty good hearted an' never forgot de manners, no matter who dey wuz wid. Well, de Judge use ter live right over yonder an' arterwards Mars Burton lived dere too. You see when Dr. Eppes would go way up in Buckingham in de summer he'd jes' leave all de plantations under er overseer an' Mister Landis Pearson was garden for us, kase ole Miss lived so far away, but when dey all come back in de fall er de year sich times ez dey would have over ter de Grove er fox huntin' an' er feasin' an' dance. Yer see Dr. Epps an' Mars Burton married sisters an' dey father married Miss Sally, Gov' Burton's widdler, who wuz 'Mister Burton's mother. So you see he wuz 'Mister Burton's mother. Jus' er gran' son an' dey wuz all jes' lak one big family. But dat fox huntin' an' dance an' moush lak de dese days." The old man's spirit seemed to kindle as he talked. "Twas er common thing in dem days ter hev dem an' mos' every gentlem'n in de kenry had er pack er houns an' when dey all met together an' started off er cool frosty mornin' on er fox hunt I tell you dere wuz fun. Whoop, seester me I can hear dem dogs er yelpin' yer, oh-in-me!"

The old man had seated himself on one of the strange looking gravestones and as he finished he buried his face in his hands as if overcome by these memories. In a few moments raising up he said, "well dese all gone an' I'll never hear dem dogs boller no mo', but I 'spects it's all right an' 'twint no er grievin' I reckon we better go over yonder ter de Grove now, dat's on 'ter side er de town, yer' koo."

With this we left the old church yard and turning into another street he said, "dis yer is Granville street, dey ez how it wuz named arter de Yacht er Granville, whosever he must be. I jes' 'bout er now'n' much bo, but I never hear er none er his 'lations no whar 'bout here," referring no doubt to the daughter of that name. A little further on he said, "dis yers de church whar Mister Tom Lowse use ter preach. Ne'er heard er him, neiter? Well, I tell you what, he wuz er big preacher. He wuz er Methodist, yer' koo, wuz er de onliest preacher dere wuz any whar 'round at dat time. He wuz er big mason too, an' use ter preach all de big funerals. He wuz er little talk, lanky looking, tall face man, but when he tho'ed his eyes up like he wuz lookin' right up at de Thob' er son ter preach lak he could, yer' koo, dey wuz de angels swoopin' down ter take yer right ter glory. Why de folks use ter come thirty er forty miles ter hear him preach an' arter he died dey built er church out in de kenry in sake er his memory, an' had er big organ 'bout him when 'twuz dedicated."

Leaving the little church and passing on to and across the railroad, we entered a wood of forest oaks through whose branches the sunlight fell on dead leaves and brown moss which spread as various colored carpets at our feet. "Dis yer ez fine place ter walk, so cool and nice," said my guide taking off his hat to let the breeze play around his wavy hair, which he was mopping with the same kerchief. "Folks don't think nuthin' er dis place now, de dey use ter, his er shame how ever thing is om'ed down. Sin Aggie sed ez how ole Mars Willie Jones wouldn't er let one der ses yer tres his cut down for nuthin' 'tall, but law, me dey don't know nuthin' 'bout Miss Cornwallis' complain' her wuz 'his whole army," he continued, as he walked, as we went on into an avenue that led up to a large antiquated and deserted looking house.

The huge stone steps were covered with moss, the windows were boarded up, and a creeping vine was holding the chimney together. The door had fallen from its rusty hinges and there was nothing to prevent our entering the hall, or vestibule in which was a large, open fire place, hung with cobwebs and barked with moth, fallen no doubt by the return of many years of the swallows to their home in its ample folds. The walls here had been stripped of the papering which, with other parts of the inside of the building, had been carried off as mementoes of the once famous homestead, noted for its hospitality and good cheer. Beside the fireplace was a strange looking window, apparently built in the solid wall and opening on nothing. My guide paused here and said, "No tellin' de secrets dat's bin hid under dese winder. Dey say ez dere er close under dere winder er spring ter it, an' nobody knows whar it is. Dat's whar dey use ter keep all dese secret papers, an' dere wuz some 'portant 'spates in dere fun Gen'l. Green when Cornwallis an' his officers wuz settin' in dis yer room eatin' dinner." As he said this he led the way through a narrow passage into a large room with wide and deep windows, high eaved vaulted, above the huge, gaping fire-place, and a wainscoting of oak which ran around the wall and formed a base for the numerous small paneled windows on each side. Again my mind turned to visions of gay revels held in this room. Of gallant men and courtly dames seated in high backed chairs around a table laden with old-fashioned glass and silver, with the old "side-board" of solid wood and the quaint decanters, the contents of which no doubt had helped in the destruction which was evident all around.

And it was in this lovely dining room Col. Tarleton, of the British army, had been stung to the quick by the sharp tongue of Mrs. Ashe, Mrs. Jones's sister, much to the amusement of 'is superior officer, Lord Cornwallis. As my guide led the way from the house he said, "de kitchen an' yuther houses are gone, but right out here's whar dey use ter be. Dars whar we an' de Judge. Mister Tom Burton's man, use ter come courtin' dem gals, Phyllis an' Nancy. Yer see dey wuz maid here at de house an' ez purty yaller gals ez you see anywhar, an' Joe he wuz jes' er likely ez anybody, an' dressed fine, too. Mister Burton never sorded his close de leas' bit an' allers gin 'um ter Joe. But yer see when Dr. Eppes wud come down here, dere wuz alers er plenty er niggers here, but he'd bring dem boys, Ned and Moses ter drive de kerridges, kase dey wuz ter de baroo an' you know dem Ferginny niggers wuz mighty quineokental an' didn't think any yuther person had any sense but dem, an' when dey'd go ter flyin' round dem gals hit just turned dey heads so ez dey wouldn't hardly look at me an' Joe. But dey yer know de long's pole reaches de simon an' when dey'd go back in de spring why we'd hev our time. What become o' dem? Why, yer see, Mister Burton got in er big nooshan ter sell his plantation an' go out ter Texas. It mos' broke his mother's an' sister's heart, but go he would, and Phyllis couldn't bear ter see Joe go widout her so ole Miss let her go too. What made him go away? Why dere wuz er woman at de bottom er dat, too. You see dere wuz Miss Lizze Armstrong, Judge Armstrong's daughter. De Judge lived way up de kenry but Miss Lizze use ter go ter school wid 'Mister Burton's sisters, an' dat winter she came down ter de Grove visitin'. Dey jes' tuk an' fall in love wid each yuther. She wuz mighty purty, so white an' graceful lookin' she mided you when she walked er one o' dese yer tall white lilies wuz in de sunshine. De Judge wuz monstrous proud er her, an' didn't think anybody wuz good er suff for her, but she had allers had her way an' he finally 'grod dat dey could be married in de fall. Dat summer dey all went to Shocco Springs, dat wuz er big summer 'ort in dem days, an' while dey wuz up dere dey met wid Cap'n Somebody dat wuz er mighty fine er her an' paid her ever sord er nice pension which Miss Burton didn't lak, an' axed her not ter talk ter him no mo'. Dey wuz bo' mighty high spirited an' she didn't gree ter it 'tall. Well no longer arter dat, one night he wuz walkin' on de piazza waitin' for her ter come down from her room, when 'way 'round in er dark corner, he come right on 'em bo' gaged in er close conversation. He didn't say er word but went right arter Joe and told him to pack up quick. He looked so white an' dreafal Joe couldn't tell what was de matter but dey come home dat same night widout givin' her er chance ter 'splain, an' den broke up everything, an' went right off ter Red River in Texas. Dey all had big plantations down dere so he let 'em. Mister sed de law here an' horses, an' sent for de niggers ter come on dere. P'aps if dey had had de mos' so proud dey could er made up, for she wuz er talk in any harm, an' could er told him so, but he jes' wouldn't gin her er chance. You see she had er brother that would gamble an' play kards, an' let on hos races an' de Judge had sed of de done it say more, he wuz gwine ter cut him outen any of his property. Dere wuz gwine ter be er big race run ter fur from de springs in er day or two an' she wuz er beggin' de Captain, who her brother wuz mighty fond of, to try ter git him not ter go nigh de races. Dat wuz all, an' she didn't care er snap er her little white finger for de Capt. any more'n she could git him ter 'friend her brother, but Miss Burton didn't know dat an' so ez I said he went right off an' fore he'd get ter de wud wuz de yaller fever dez hez out dere an' died fo' any an' em could git ter him. Me an' Nancy wuz married soon arter dat, an' we had three chillen fo' de s'ender but we don't know what come er Phyllis an' Joe arter he died."

railroad which passes the town and which being built near the first quarter of the present century was for sometime the longest single line in the world. Of the other over which the county road passes, it is said that while Cornwallis was encamped at the Grove, one of his officers was caught on the bridge, and intrepidly leaped his gallant charger over the railing to the depths below, a distance of seventy five feet, and while the horse was killed, he made his escape down the winding stream, amid a shower of bullets, to the chagrin of his would be captors. Besides this there are other points of interest, one beautiful part of its course having been likened to the meeting of the waters, in the vale of Avoca, and described in such appropriate words that I reproduce them here. "Near the fern fringed banks at this point the stream divided and met, and divided and met, and divided once more making three small islands and when it met around the last receiving into its bosom another branch of itself (which after an excursion of its own through brambly wilderness) one could see hurrying on a thread of silver, through a mass of green mosses to join the parent stream and the two currents meeting gladly made ripples and tiny waves of flaky foam and then united to flow peacefully into the Roanoke, a little further down." The little islands about which Quanky danced so gaily were covered in briars, mosses and fringed with ferns here or there. A tall tree or two arose from them. A growth of wild superannuated vines, which here are on their native soil, and away up hidden in the grapes in a bird sun on clear and sweet to be answered by some other feathered songster from some neighboring tree. Drinking in the beauties of these scenes and a little wearied with my walk I had cast myself down on the shady bank and was only aroused by my friend's inquiry, "Hoss, doan yer think de mos' dinner time?" I inferred dat dorg will leave dat garden an' dem chickens will scratch up my watermill seeds arter me.

Upon reaching the hotel I found the mail for which I had been waiting had arrived, so bidding adieu to my noble friend, after thanking him in a substantial way for his kind attention, I left this little town in which my stay had been so pleasant and now, with no apology for my simple little tale, kind reader, I leave you hoping that you have enjoyed it, at least, enough to go with me to

THE END.

The Woman and the Sphinx

The mystery of womanhood is full of deep unanswerable enigmas. Why should women be compelled to suffer simply because they are women? Why is it that the source of their highest joys is at the same time the cause of their greatest wretchedness? The very attributes which make it possible for women to be happy wives and mothers also render them liable to the most physical misery and pain. The sufferings of body and mind caused by some weakness of the distinctly feminine organs are so almost universal among women that the question might well be asked, "Is this Nature's punishment for the crime of being a woman?" The true answer is No! These sufferings are neither natural nor necessary. They could not exist if the organism was healthy. No woman need to endure such troubles. There is no need of it. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is a perfect and positive cure for feminine weakness and disease. It gives health and strength to the special organs and cures chronic, acute, inflammation, stops weakening drains, promotes functional regularity, and restores the normal, vigorous and painless condition which Nature intended.

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