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## THE GLEANER

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## Poetry.

### A SUDDEN CURE.

[From the St. Louis Times.]

A melancholy woman lay  
In sickness on her bed,  
And in a faint and broken voice  
To her sad husband said:

"Dear David, when my earthly form  
Has turned to lifeless clay,  
O wait an' weep a little while,  
Nor throw yourself away."

"I know a woman kind and true,  
On whom you may depend:  
Oh! marry Aramilla Jones—  
She is my dearest friend."

"Yes, Hannah, I have wanted long  
To speak of this before;  
For Aramilla Jones an' I  
Have talked the matter o'er."

"Then you an' Aramilla Jones  
Have been too smart and sly;  
I tell you, David Wilkinson,  
I'm not 'a-goin' to die!"

Her dark eyes flashed; her strength re-  
turned;  
She left her bed of pain;  
A week had scarcely passed away  
When she was well again.

### OLD TIME DUELING.

[From the St. Louis Globe Democrat.]

The latitude of New Orleans has, for three quarters of a century, been the theatre of more thrilling duels than any other part of the United States. One of the most desperate and sanguinary recontres that ever took place there was in the winter of 1844, between Alcea La Branch, a creole planter and politician, and J. H. Huston—a meeting that was rendered the more memorable by the extraordinary events that preceded and inspired it. Though the duel was duly recorded at the time and has been frequently referred to since, there are some facts connected with it which have never before been in print, and which will be of general interest at this time. The new facts refer particularly to the gentleman who had the melancholy fate to fall on "the field of honor," and were related to the writer by the eminent surgeon, Dr. Warren Stone, who staunchly the death wound and bore the corpse back to the city.

The origin of the fight was of a political nature. In December, 1837, the State Legislature was in session, and Alcea La Branch was speaker of the House. He was a gentleman of pronounced ability, of marked French temperament, nervous, fiery, active and enthusiastic. Though popular with a majority of the members, he had a number of enemies, and these were of the most implacable sort. Among these latter was Col. John R. Grymes, of Point Coupee Parish, a leading representative and influential member on the Democratic side of House. Between Grymes and La Branch a feeling of the deepest hostility had grown up, and more than once during the session their hatred of each other had almost culminated in personal collisions. On several occasions Speaker La Branch was accused of treating Col. Grymes with palpable discourtesy while on the floor of the House, and those who knew both men considered a hostile meeting inevitable. But the culmination of the feud between the two came about in a totally unexpected way, and produced a scene which is undoubtedly the most extraordinary which has ever happened in a legislative hall in this country. One day, a moment after the Speaker had taken his chair, and was in the act of calling the House to order, Col. Grymes appeared in the hall and deliberately walked down the main aisle, holding in his hands two dragoon pistols. Arriving within fifteen feet of the Speaker's chair, he quickly raised one of the pistols and fired at La Branch the ball grazing his scalp and clipping off a lock of hair. La Branch, instantly drew a small pistol from his pocket and returned the fire, the ball going wide of the mark and buying itself in a desk, before which a member was seated. Grymes fired a second time, and his pistol having only one charge, La Branch retreated through the door in the rear of the Speaker's chair. Grymes followed in close pursuit, both parties making their way into Canal Street, the fashionable boulevard at that time as well as now. After Grymes was about closing in on his fleeing foe, three ladies, promenading the street, passed before him, and one of them being

brief parley was held, in which, frightened by the evident peril that surrounded her, screamed, whereupon Grymes halted and La Branch got away. The next day Grymes was arraigned before the bar of the House and severely reprimanded for his conduct, and here the affair terminated. Seven years afterwards, however, this singular episode bore sanguinary fruit. The campaign of 1841 was the most exciting that had ever taken place in the State before, and party feeling ran high. In the Fourth Congressional district, Gen. Placide Bossier was the Democratic nominee for Congress, and Alcea La Branch the Democratic candidate in the Second District. Bossier was a noted duelist of his time, and several years before had met Gen. Gainpie, a distinguished Whig leader, in an encounter with rifles. During that campaign J. H. Huston was editor of the Baton Rouge Gazette, a journal of strong Whig proclivities. In an editorial reference to the various Congressional nominations throughout the State, Huston spoke of Gen. Bossier as having been nominated for his "prowess in battle," and of La Branch as having been selected for his "skill and ability in retreat," meaning in the latter case the encounter seven years previously between Grymes and La Branch. La Branch was very much incensed by the offensive allusion, and, taking a friend with him, at once proceeded to Baton Rouge to demand satisfaction of Huston. When he arrived at Baton Rouge he learned that Huston had just left for New Orleans. Returning to the city, La Branch ascertained that Huston was a guest at the St. James Hotel, on Magazine street. He proceeded without delay to the hotel, and inquired for Huston. The latter was in the billiard room, engaged in playing a game of billiards. La Branch walked up to him, and asked:

"Are you Mr. Huston?"

"Yes, sir."

"Of the Baton Rouge Gazette?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then," replied La Branch, "I am Alcea La Branch, and I give you this for your cowardly slander," at the same time striking Huston with a heavy walking cane, and felling him to the floor. He struck a half dozen blows, and Huston was taken to his room in an insensible condition. Huston was seriously injured, and needed constant medical attention for two weeks. At the end of three weeks he sent for a friend, and though very weak from his severe beating, announced his determination to challenge La Branch without delay. The challenge was delivered that day, and immediately accepted, La Branch choosing double-barreled shot guns, loaded with single balls, as the weapons, and named the distance of forty feet.

The terms were promptly accepted by Huston, and on the following day the combatants, with surgeons seconds, and a half dozen friends each, repaired to a dense grove of live oak trees on the Gentilly road, three miles from the city—a spot that had long been famous for the number of noted duels fought there. In the assault made upon him by La Branch Huston had received every blow of the ponderous cane on his head, and had several bad scalp wounds from which he was suffering severely on the day of the duel. His friends and Dr. Stone, his physician, had advised to delay a settlement of the matter until he had regained his strength, but Huston was impatient for satisfaction, and would brook no delay. Though of Northern birth he was as excitable as the typical Southerner, being even more nervous and untamable than his creole antagonist. The party arrived on the field about an hour by sun, and at once measured off the ground and placed the parties in position, La Branch getting the choice. Both men were highly excited and manifestly animated by an intense hatred of each other. La Branch was, perhaps, the coolest of the two, and had the advantage of being in splendid physical trim, while his antagonist was pale and thin from the recent assault and confinement to his bed. La Branch was also an excellent shot with the weapons he had selected, while Huston knew nothing about handling a shot-gun, though he was a good pistol shot. Within ten minutes after arrival on the ground the duelists had been placed the weapons loaded, and one round

fired. Neither shot took effect. A principals, seconds and friends on both sides demanded another shot, and the weapons were accordingly reloaded. The second shot was fired without result, as were the third, fourth and fifth, all parties demanding at the parleys between shots that the fight should proceed. At the sixth exchange La Branch's ball passed through Huston's hat, and the blood was seen to trickle down his forehead and over his face. It was only a slight abrasion of the skin, and Huston excitedly exclaimed: "I demand another shot!" to which his seconds readily consented. As the surgeon wiped the blood from Huston's face, the latter said: "He will finish me next time. I know it." The unmistakable excitement of Huston seemed to have a calming effect on La Branch, and as he took his position for the seventh shot, he handled his gun with the air of a man confident of his game. At the word Huston fired, without effect, while La Branch who had gotten the range of his antagonist, took slow and steady aim, and as he fired Huston reeled and fell full on his face. In a moment he was in the arms of Dr. Stone, who tore the shirt from his bleeding bosom, and staunch the flow of blood with his hand. He was shot directly through the lungs, and was already gasping for breath. He was tenderly lifted and taken to a carriage in waiting, and held in the arms of Dr. Stone, and driven carefully to the city. He was dead before the carriage proceeded a half a mile. He never spoke after the fatal shot, and died almost as quickly as if he had been shot through the heart. His body was encased in a splendid coffin and sent to his friends in Baton Rouge, where he was buried.

Huston was a native of the State of New York. His father had emigrated there from the South, and though he spelled his name differently, was a near relative of the distinguished Sam Houston. As an illustration of how often men fail to practise "what they preach," it is a notable fact that Huston had always been violently opposed to dueling, and had frequently denounced it personally and through his newspaper, as a relic of barbarism and a custom unworthy of the Christian age. And yet he lived to be a challenger himself, and the victim of a folly he had so often deprecated. In a conversation with his surgeon, before proceeding to the battle ground Huston reiterated his convictions concerning dueling, but stated that there were certain imperative and overwhelming reasons that impelled him to seek such a vindication in that instance. One of the reasons is believed to be the fact that he was engaged to be married to a beautiful young lady at Baton Rouge, who would have scorned the consummation of an engagement with a wooer who would fail to exact satisfaction under the code. The night before the duel Huston wrote, sealed and addressed a letter to this young lady, and in it stated that he had a promise of his death. He also stated to his surgeon while on the way to the field, that he had a presentiment of death, and expected to be taken back a corpse. He considered it a fatality that shot-guns had been selected as weapons. His choice would have been dragoon pistols or short swords, and from his acknowledged skill with these weapons the opinion prevailed that, had either been selected, the result would have been different. Huston was quite a small man, and in no way the physical equal of La Branch.

### THE YANKEE AND PIRATE.

There lived many years ago, on the eastern shore of Mount Desert, a large Island off the coast of Maine, an old fisherman by the name of Jedediah Spinnet, who owned a schooner of some hundred tons burden, in which he, together with four stout sons, was wont to go about once a year to the Grand Bank for the purpose of catching codfish. The old man had five things about which he loved to boast—his schooner, Betsy Jenkins, and his four sons.

The four sons were all that their father represented them to be, and no one ever doubted his word when he said that their like was not to be found for fifty miles around. The oldest was twenty-two, while the youngest had reached his sixteenth year, and they answered to the names of Seth, Andrew, John and Samuel.

One morning a stranger called upon Jedediah to engage him to take to Havana some iron machinery belonging to steam engines for sugar plantations. The terms were soon agreed upon, and the old man and his sons immediately set about putting the machinery on board. That accomplished, they set sail for Havana with a fair wind, and for several days proceeded on their journey without an adventure of any kind. One morning, however, a vessel was descried off the larboard quarter, which with some hesitation, the old man pronounced to be a pirate. There was not much time allowed them for debating, for the vessel soon saluted them with not a very agreeable whizzing of an eighteen pound shot under their stern.

"That means for us to leave to," remarked the old man.

"Then I guess we had better do it, hadn't we?" said Seth.

"Of course."

Accordingly Betty Jenkins was brought up into the wind and her main boom hauled over to windward.

"Now, boys," said the old man, as soon as the schooner came to a stand, "all we can do is to be as cool as possible, and trust to God. There is no way that I can see now, but perhaps if we are civil, they will take such stuff as they want and then let us go. At any rate, there is no use crying about it, for it can't be helped. Now get your pistols and see that they are surely loaded, and have your knives ready, but be sure to hide them, so that the pirates shall see no signs of resistance."

In a few moments all the arms that the schooner afforded, with the exception of one or two old muskets, were secured about the persons of our Down Easters, and they quietly awaited the coming of the schooner.

"One word more, boys," said the old man, just as the pirate came round under her stern. "Now watch every motion I make, and be ready to jump the moment I speak."

As Captain Spinnet ceased speaking the pirate luffed up under the fisherman's lee-quarter, and in a moment more the latter's deck was graced by the presence of a dozen of as savage-looking mortals as eyes ever looked upon.

"Are you captain of this vessel?" asked the leader of the boarders as he approached the old man.

"Yes, sir."

"What is your cargo?"

"Machinery for steam engines."

"Nothing else?" asked the pirate, with a searching look.

At this moment Captain Spinnet's eye caught what looked like a sail off to the south'rd and east'rd, but not a sign betrayed the discovery, and, while a brilliant idea shot through his mind, he hesitatingly replied:

"Well, there is a little something else."

"Ha, and what is it?"

"Why, sir, p'raps I hadn't ought to tell," said Captain Spinnet, countering the most extreme perturbation. "You see, it was given to me as a sort of trust, an' it wouldn't be right for me to give it up. You can take any thing else you please, for I can't help myself."

"You are an honest codger, at any rate," said the pirate, "but if you would live ten minutes longer, just tell me what you've got on board, and exactly the place where it lays."

The sight of a cocked pistol brought the old man to his senses, and in a deprecating tone he uttered:

"Don't kill me, sir, don't; I'll tell you all. We've got forty thousand silver dollars nailed up in boxes just forward of the cabin bulkhead; but Mr. Defoe didn't suspect that anybody would have thought of looking for it there."

"Perhaps so," chuckled the pirate while his eyes sparkled with delight. And then turning to his own vessel he ordered all but three of his men to jump on board the Yankee.

In a few minutes the pirates had taken off the hatches, and in their haste to get at the "silver dollars," they forgot all else, but not so with Spinnet. He had his wits at work, and no sooner had the last of the villains disappeared below the hatchway than he turned to his boys:

"Now, boys, for your lives. Seth, you clap your knife across the fore-throat peak-halyards, and you, John, cut the main. Be quick, now, at the moment you have done it jump aboard the pirate. Andrew and Sam, you cast off the pirate's grappling, and then you jump—then we'll walk into them three chaps aboard the clipper. Now for it!"

No sooner were the last words out of the old man's mouth than his sons did exactly as they were directed. The fore and halyards were cut, and the two grapplings cast off at the same instant, and as the heavy galls came rattling down our heroes leaped on board the pirate. The moment the clipper left at liberty her head swung off, and before the astonished buccaners could gain the deck of the fisherman their own vessel nearly a half a cable's length to the leeward, sweeping gracefully away before the wind, while the three men who had been left in charge were easily secured.

"Hallo, there!" shouted Captain Spinnet, as the luckless pirates crowded around the leeward of their prize, "when you get them 'ere silver dollars, just let us know, will you?"

Half a dozen pistol shots was all the answer the old man got, but they did not harm; and crowding on the sail, he made for the vessel he had discovered, which lay dead to leeward of him, and which he now made out to be a large ship. The clipper cut through the water like a dolphin, and in a short space of time Spinnet luffed up under the ship's stern, and explained all that had happened. The ship proved to be an East Indianman bound for Charleston, having thirty men on board, a portion of whom jumped on board the clipper and offered their services in helping to take the pirates.

Before dark Captain Spinnet was once more within hailing distance of his own vessel, and raising a trumpet to his mouth he shouted—

"Schooner, ahoy! Will you quietly surrender yourselves prisoners if we come on board?"

"Come and try it!" returned the pirate captain, as he brandished his cutlass above his head in a very threatening manner, which seemed to indicate that he would fight till the last.

But this was his last moment, for Seth crouched below the bulwarks, taking deliberate aim along the barrel of a heavy rifle, and as the bloody villain was in the act of turning to his men the sharp crack of Seth Spinnet's weapon rang his death peal, and the next moment the pirate captain fell back in the arms of his mate with a brace of bullets through his heart.

"Now," said the old man, as he leveled the long pivot gun and seized a lighted match, "I'll give you just five minutes to decide in, and if you don't surrender I'll blow every one of you into the other world."

The death of their captain brought the pirates to their senses, and they threw down their weapons.

In two days from that time Captain Spinnet delivered his cargo safely in Havana, gave the pirates into the hands of the civil authorities, and delivered the clipper up to the government, in return for which he received a sum of money sufficient for independence for the remainder of his life, as well as very handsome medals from the Governor.

### HOW LIQUORS ARE MADE.

At the recent meeting of the American Temperance Union in Cooper Institute, New York, Mr. Eli Johnson said: "Two years ago a prominent wine importer died in this city. Among his books no record of a single invoice of wine was found, but in his cellar machinery for making it was discovered. There are beer factories which can make beer in fifteen minutes, without a particle of hop or malt. I had heard that drummers of liquors no longer carried around samples of liquors. They took a box of drugs instead, from which to manufacture their wine. For a long time I tried to obtain a similar box, but failed to do so. Finally a young physician committed suicide, induced by the use of poisonous liquor. Among his effects were found one of these sample cases. Here it is." The lecturer showed a black tin box, in which were several bottles containing colored liquids. He continued: "In this box were essential oils for making eight kinds of brandy, six kinds of whiskey, four of gin and two of wine. Each of these bottles is guaranteed to make twenty gallons of liquor. There is a house in this city that manufactures these articles. This bottle of oil made by them contains material for twenty gallons of French Brandy. They also issue a book of directions," which he showed, "which specifies one hundred different oils by manufacturing drinks. All are made of different parts of alcohol, water, sugar, tartaric acid and other deleterious ingredients, together with the essential oil. The oil is the only change made in any of them. This bottle is guaranteed to make twenty gallons of port wine. It is what physicians order for sick people."