

THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

VOL 4

GRAHAM, N. C.,

TUESDAY APRIL 23 1878

NO. 8

THE GLEANER

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY
E. S. PARKER
Graham, N. C.

Rates of Subscription. Postage Paid:
One Year \$1.50
Six Months .75
Three Months .50

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THE PLEDGE PURSE

[From the Sunny South.]

BY EMMA GARRISON JONES.

"George, dear," said Mrs. Prescott, looking up from her basket of mending, as she and her husband sat by their fire-side one winter night, "has it ever occurred to you that it is time our boys were signing the pledge?"

Mr. Prescott tossed aside his paper with a laugh.

"There you go, my dear; and I really expected it. The wonder is you haven't caught the fever sooner."

"What fever, George?"

"Why, this temperance fever that seems to be crazing everybody just now. The town's full of it; every second man I meet wears a gay rosette in his button-hole, and every church is converted into a temperance hall; but the thing won't last—such spasmodic movements never do."

His wife's bright eyes grew wistful, and a cloud crossed her pretty, fresh face. She was a happy little woman, the mother of three promising boys, always busy and full of plans for the comfort of her family.

"It is a good movement, George," she continued. "I trust it will be more lasting than you think; and it would," she added, with spirit, "if the known men of the town, the strong, reliable men like yourself, George, would take hold of it."

"Much obliged for the compliment, my love," laughed her husband; "but I don't think I'm in any danger of becoming a drunkard."

"Nor do I, George, but you are not a temperance man, and there's always danger in having ought to do with sin."

"Why, Lizzie, how much in earnest you seem. You've caught the fever without doubt. You always had a weakness for running after fashions. But really, child I'm in no danger. I'm not a total abstinence man, I'll admit; ever since I can remember I've had my drink or two a day, but I never was intoxicated in my life, and I never expect to be."

"I trust not, George, but you have sons, and there's no telling into what errors your example may lead them."

"Why, Lizzie, do you mean to say I set my boys a bad example?"

"No, George, there never was a better husband and father than you are, but you teach your boys to drink intoxicating liquors. We have wine on the table occasionally, and almost every morning the boys have their toddy."

"And you have always mixed the beverage, my dear, and shared it around to us."

"I know it, George, but I shall never do it again. In the first place, it is a waste of money. The liquor used in this house costs every cent of a dollar a week."

"That's not much, Lizzie."

"No; but it counts up. And how much does your private drinking amount to, do you suppose?"

"Bless my soul, Lizzie, what has come over you? Ten cents sometime, never more than a quarter."

"Each day?"

"Yes. You don't grudge me that trifling amount, do you?"

"I grudge you nothing, George, that will make you and your boys happy," cried his wife, her eyes filling with tears; "but I wish you could see this matter as I do. Let me give you an illustration. The Ashford boys were here an evening or so ago, and they wore their blue temperance badges on their jackets."

"Larry, why don't you fellows sign the pledge! It is so awfully jolly," said one of them.

"Our Lawrence laughed, just as you laughed at me a minute ago, George. He is his father's own son, my handsome Larry, and it would break my heart to see him do wrong."

"It's jollier to drink your social glass, and have your hot toddy when you feel dull," he replied. "My father thinks the pledge a humbug, and so do I."

"Did Larry say that?" asked Mr. Prescott.

"Those were his words, George, and they cut me to the heart. Now, husband, you have never denied me anything since the day you made me your happy wife—don't deny me this. Let's banish all sorts of intoxicating drink from our house, and to you take your boys by the hand and make them sign the pledge. As their father does they will do willingly." And the little woman put by her sewing, and crossing to her husband's chair, took his head in her two hands, and laid her cheek against his face. "Now, George, dear, surely you'll not say no to me for the first time, will you?"

There was silence for a minute, and then the husband drew the pretty face down and kissed it.

"I couldn't say no, Lizzie, if I wanted," he said. "No man could withstand such a witch as you are."

On the following day Mr. Prescott and his three sons signed the pledge, and the boys took great pride in their gay badges.

Intoxicating drinks were banished from their home, and no one seemed to be one whit the worse for it. It the boys had a cold their mother administered hot mullen tea, and she found the remedy even more efficient than the toddies used to be. The boys seemed more speedily relieved, and had fewer attacks.

Three years went by. Times were hard, and money scarce, and Mr. Prescott's business was dull. To make matters worse, he had a long spell of sickness, and a heavy doctor's bill.

"I can't see my way out of it," he remarked, sitting in his arm chair one evening, his pale face seamed with lines of care, "the building association stock will have to go, and I do hate that tremendously."

"What is it, George, dear? Maybe I can help you."

The sick man smiled at the little wife, ever so ready with her help.

"No, dear, you can't help me in this; I wish you could," he said. "It is a note, which must be paid before the tenth."

And to-day is the eighth. What is the amount, George?"

"Three hundred and fifty dollars, and I have not fifty to spare. If it hadn't been for this confounded fever—"

"Hush, my love. Wait till I bring my pledge purse," and his wife darted from the room.

In two minutes she was back, a heavy purse in her hand.

"This is my pledge purse, George. Your pledge purse? What do you mean?"

"Why, you see," and the little woman's face fairly glowed as her boys left their lessons and crowded around her, eager to hear, "the day you and the boys signed the pledge, George, I made this purse, and called it my pledge purse. Every day I have put in ten cents, and every week a dollar, because that much used to go for nasty, intoxicating drink, that did my boys and their father more harm than good. Sometimes, when I had a little spare change, I threw that in too. Larry, my boy, sit down by your father and count over the contents. I hope there may be enough to pay that troublesome note."

Larry obeyed with alacrity, his father looking on with eager eyes as he assorted the dollar notes and piled up the quarters and dimes. When all was told, the amount was four hundred and sixty five dollars.

Mr. Prescott looked at his wife, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Why Lizzie—why, little wife, what can I say?" he began.

She caught his head to her bosom.

"Say nothing, George. I kept my pledge purse for an hour of need, and that hour has come. Pay the note that troubles you, dear, and then get well and strong at your leisure."

Her husband was silent, but the three boys leaped to their feet, and shouted, "Hurrah for the pledge!" until the room rang.

FINDING FAULT WITH THE WORLD.—There is a class of people in the world who make it the chief business of their lives to depreciate existence and its blessings; who speak of this world as a "vale of tears," an "abode of sin and sorrow," a "daily cross," a "realm of blighted hopes," and so on through the entire category of such expressions. In nine cases out of ten, our world is just what we make it. If we choose to live in a cellar, the sun will not be likely to come down out of the heavens, and seek us out in our obscurity.

THE POTTSTOWN TRAGEDY.

[From the New York Times.]

It is well known that the perpetrator of any new variety of crime or outrage is nearly certain to have imitators. For example, Master Jesse Peckroy was no sooner found guilty of carrying small boys with his penknife than other youthful monsters began to put their penknives to a similar use. So common is this tendency to imitation on the part of criminals that the conscientious journalist dreads to mention any unusually atrocious crime, lest he should thereby awaken among them a depraved emulation. Some months ago it became necessary to mention the infamous conduct of a man who in the disguise of a woman, and in the assumed character of agent for the patent garters canvassed three counties of Pennsylvania, and with the aid of a tape measure collected statistics the very thought of which makes one's blood run cold. It was to be expected that the villain would find imitators, and, accordingly, no one will be surprised to learn that the town of Pottstown, Penn., has just been made the scene of a peculiar atrocious outrage.

Nature is a faultless workman—or should we say a working woman? She never makes a mistake. In order to give woman something wherewith to occupy their mind and hands, she gave them long hair. At the same time foreseeing that circumstances might arise in which the possession of long hair would be inconvenient, she made the back-hair of woman detachable, so that it can be taken off and laid aside whenever such a course seems desirable. This is one of those facts of science which the Darwinians cannot reconcile with the hypothesis of development. The fossils of whatever strata give no hint of any progress in the direction of detachable back-hair, and the female ape who is supposed to be the ancestress of woman has no back-hair at all. No more bountiful provision than which permits a woman to shut one end of her back-hair in the bureau-drawer, and to hold the other end in one hand with a view to brushing it, can be found in the whole economy of nature; and no married Darwinian who is asked by his wife to take her back-hair to the hair-dresser's to be "done over," can help losing faith in his hypothesis at least to some extent.

Just after the beginning of Lent two young men came to Pottstown and announced that they were the sole owners of a new process of restoring brilliancy and softness to back-hair, no matter what might be its age or condition. They began their operations by distributing to every house in the town printed circulars, setting forth their business and naming a ridiculously low price for their services. In this circular it was promised that the longest switches should be renovated for ten cents each, while the charge for renovating curls and "fronts" was even lower. The ladies of Pottstown were assured that the process of renovation should be conducted with the utmost secrecy and it would require in no case more than three days. Copies of alleged letters signed by Mrs. Anthon, Mrs. Clara Morris, President Hayes, and Miss Clara Louise Kellogg, certifying that their back-hair had been renovated to their complete satisfaction, were annexed to the circular, and there was not a woman in all of Pottstown who did not fully believe that she was exceptionally fortunate in having the circular brought to her attention.

The next day the two young men, each carrying a large covered basket called at every house to receive orders and back-hair. They had printed receipts with them, which they gave in exchange for hair, and which had an extremely genuine and business-like appearance. Before they visited one quarter of the houses their baskets were full and they were obliged to return to their hotel and empty them before taking a fresh start. Judging from the size of the baskets, a local scientific person has estimated that they had collected a ton and a half of back hair in the course of two days. There was not—so we are assured—a woman in Pottstown who did not trust her hair to these audacious wretches, with the exception of a few ladies of the African descent; and each one believed that within three days at the farthest she would receive back her cherished locks in a greatly improved condition.

For several days after the back-hair of Pottstown had thus been placed in the keeping of the pretended hair renovator no ladies were visible on the Pottstown streets. At the same time every lady at whose house any young man ventured to make a call was either "engaged" or "ill," and declined to receive visitors. On the fifth day the hotel at which the scoundrels had stopped was visited by scores of excited husbands and brothers, who were horrified to learn that the two hair renovators had left town five days before, carrying with them seven large and heavy trunks. Over the scenes which took place when this terrible news reached the ladies of Pottstown a veil must be drawn. Much may be forgiven in a woman who has been cheated out of her back hair, but it is impossible to approve of the want of judgment which several indignant wives evinced in trying to replace their missing hair by drawing upon the short and scanty hair of their innocent husbands.

There will be no parties in Pottstown for some time to come, and so far as the local young men are concerned they will have no female society whatever. The sudden revival of the back-hair business in this city and in Philadelphia, which Western statesmen are ascribing to the passage of the Silver bill, is due wholly to the demands of the Pottstown ladies. The two pretended hair renovators have sailed for Europe with their booty, and the volume of back-hair in this country will be for some time too small for the demand.

WHY WOMEN SHOULD READ.

Laying aside the thought of our own rest and comfort, let us look a little higher. For the children's sake we must make the most of ourselves. Many a unselfish mother has said, "Oh, I cannot take all this time, there are so many things to do for the children." She does not realize that she may do more than in the end by cultivating herself than if she spends all her time on clothes and cooking. A generosity which makes the recipient weak or selfish is not a blessing but a curse. Have you not seen grown-up sons who snubbed their mother's opinions in the same breath with which they called her to bring their stibbers? The meek little woman has "trotted around" to wait on them so long that they have come to think that that is all she is good for. Their sisters keep "Ma" in the background because she "hasn't a bit of style," and is "so uncultivated," forgetting that she has always worn shabby clothes that they might wear fine ones; that that her hands have become horny with hard work that their might be kept soft and white for the piano, and that she has denied herself books and leisure that they might have both. And there are other children, too noble for such base ingratitude, who feel a keen though secret sense of loss as they kiss the dear withered cheek and think how much more of a woman "mother" might have been if she had not shut herself away from the culture and sweet companionship of books.—Scribner for April.

AN ACT OF KINDNESS REWARDED.

—In December, 1873, a young lady of Cooperstown, Pa., met on a railroad train a lady who was very ill, and she kindly ministered unto her, taking care of her, and accompanying her to her place of destination. When they parted the sick woman offered to reward the young lady for her kindness and attention, but she would take nothing. The old woman wrote down the name and address, nodding familiarly to her, and said: "You will be paid some day." The young lady never saw her chance acquaintance again, but the sum of \$90,000 has recently been bequeathed to her. The old woman had no relatives in this country, and left all her money to the girl who had befriended her.

A little boy had one day done wrong, and he was sent, after paternal correction, to ask in secret the forgiveness of his Heavenly Father. His offense was passion. Anxious to hear what he would say, his mother followed to the door of his room. In lisping accents she heard him ask to be made better, and then, with childlike simplicity, he added: "Lord, make Ma's temper better, too."—Boston Traveller.

There are only 1,500 lawyers in Missouri, and every one of them is a candidate for U. S. Senator.—Dayton Democrat.

Gleanings.

"The Baby's Got a Tooth" is the title of the latest comic song out in England.

Mayor Ely, of New York, didn't know he was going to be married until he read it in the newspapers. Another triumph for journalism!

Spurgeon is solid and has close-cut dark hair and full beard. He wears a soft hat drawn over his face. His great voice is as mellow as ever.

It was said of a certain Judge that he was so reserved in his manners that one would never suspect that he had any.

"Thou art so near and yet so far," as the burglar said when he admired the valuable watch in the jeweler's window.

Old Deacon Dobson always boasted that "he was prepared for the worst," and his neighbors thought he had got it when he married his second wife.

Little boy, at the opening of a proposed spelling match: "Let's start fair, grandmother. You take Nebuchadnezzar and I'll take cat."

The surest sign of age is loneliness. While one finds company in himself and his pursuits he cannot grow old, whatever his years may be.—Alcott.

The severest punishment of any injury in the conscience of having done it; and no one but the guilty knows the withering pains of repentance.—Ballou.

Said a philosopher, "My friend conducted his future wife to the altar—and there his leadership came to an end."

The suicide of Mme. Restell is a declaration by an expert that a career even of prosperous crime is necessarily a failure, and that no amount of upholstery can compensate for public detestation.—World.

Longfellow is credited with saying that if he responded to all the requests sent him for his autograph and likeness he would spend a third of his income in photograph and postage stamps.

When Lady Rosberry entered her husband's house in Scotland, the other day the housekeeper met her at the door, and in accordance with an old Scotch custom, broke an oatmeal cake over the bride's head.

THE SLEEP OF CHILDREN.—The Herald of Health cautions parents not to allow their children to be waked up in the morning. Let nature wake them; she will not do it prematurely. Take care that they go to bed at an early hour—let it be earlier and earlier, until it is found that they wake up themselves in full time to dress for breakfast.

DECISION AGAINST WOMEN AS PREACHERS.—Bishop Andrews, of the New York Methodist Conference has decided that the licensing of women as preachers is against the doctrines of Wesley. The disappointed advocates of the new departure have taken an appeal to the General Conference of the Methodist of the whole country in 1880.

JOURNALISM IN NEW YORK.—The New York journals appear to be in a bad way. Said a "managing editor" at a recent meeting of the New York Press Club: "There is not a man here that calls his soul his own. You are a pack of hirelings. I am a hireling. You are all hirelings. You represent the great metropolitan press. There is not one of you that dares to write a line of his honest convictions; there is not one of you who dares to write a line he believes. If you were to write it it would not be published. The soul would be taken out of it. It would be suppressed. I would suppress it if it were brought to me. I get a hundred and twenty-five dollars a week for suppressing the truth, for cutting out the soul of every sentence which comes before me."

A NORTH CAROLINA GIANT.—The Richmond (Va.) Whig of the 11th inst. says: "In his rambles about the city yesterday a Whig reporter met a rather remarkable character, no less than a modern giant—a man who during his brief stay in the city, created quite a sensation on the streets as he walked about, and caused almost every passer-by to turn and look back at him as he passed. Charles Tunley, the character referred to, is 8 feet in height and weighs something over 450 pounds. Tunley arrived from North Carolina on his way to New York in search of work at his trade of plasterer. He is quiet and unobtrusive man in his manners, converses pleasantly and modestly. Tunley says he has three brothers who are nearly as tall as himself, and weigh equally as much, although all of them are younger. This modern giant said to the writer that he never made use of a scaffold to plaster any ordinary room."