THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

VOL. 7. GRAHAM, N. C., MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1881. NO. 1.

The Alamance Gleaner,

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AT

Graham, N. C.

Eldridge & Kernodle,

PROPRIETORS.

TERMS:

One Year	$1 50
Six Months	75
Three Months	50

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	1 sq.	2 sq.	3 sq.	¼ col.	½ col.	1 col.
1 week,	1 00	$ 1 50	$ 2 00	$ 4 00	$ 7 50	$12 00
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POETRY.

THE SWORD OF ROBERT LEE.

BY FATHER RYAN.

Forth from its scabbard pure and bright,
Flashed the sword of Lee!
Far in the front of the deadly fight,
High o'er the brave in the cause of Right
Its stainless sheen like a beacon light
Led us to victory.

Out of its scabbard where full long
It slumbered peacefully,—
Roused from its rest by the battle's song
Shielding the feeble, smiting the strong,
Guarding the right, avenging the wrong
Gleamed the sword of Lee.

Forth from its scabbard high in air
Beneath Virginia's sky—
And they who saw it gleaming there
And knew who bore it knelt to swear,
That where that sword led they would dare
To follow and to die.

Out of its scabbard!—never hand
Waved sword from stain as free,
Nor purer sword led braver band,
Nor braver bled for brighter land,
Nor brighter land had a Cause so grand,
Nor cause a chief like Lee.

Forth from its scabbard! how we prayed,
That sword might victor be—
And when our triumph was delayed,
And many a heart grew sore afraid,
We still hoped on while gleamed the blade
Of noble Robert Lee.

Forth from its scabbard, all in vain
Bright flashed the sword of Lee;—
'Tis shrouded now in its sheath again,
It sleeps the sleep of our noble slain
Defeated yet without a stain,
Proudly and peacefully,

THE JUSTICE'S BURGLAR.

Peregrine Codman was a bachelor, and bade fair to remain so to the end of his days. Not one of the crusty sort, who, in their pin-bed hearts, shrunken for the want of some object of love to expand and make fertile their shriveled affections, nurse a secret wrath against fate for their loveless lives; no, he was mild-mannered, amiable, courteous.

He was now about fifty, very short and rotund. His large florid face was beardless as a boy's, and a round, bald spot, far back on his crown, glistened in the sun like a silver shield.

For pets he had a particular weakness—a big, quarrelsome raven and a sly raccoon being equal sharers in his affections, with numerous birds, a great long-lipped hound and an owl. The poor relations around were recipients of his bounties; all the vagrant and famishing cats in the neighborhood 'came to him,' and tramps imposed upon his kind hospitality.

Yet, in the depths of his benign and generous character, there lurked the greatest antipathy toward smart, small boys and lively girls, who at once, with the penetration of their class, recognizing the hostile disposition, were at great pains to return the sentiment in kind.

But in justice to Peregrine's otherwise congenial disposition, we must explain that he had once been made the victim of their malicious sport. In fact, the reason of his being a bachelor at two score and ten was due to their unfeeling levity. It was brought about in this way:

In the neighborhood where he had been brought up, lived a little crusty old justice of the peace, or squire name Prout, whose oldest daughter, Rhodema, he had fallen in love with. How or when it had ever happened Peregrine was never quite able to discover, far away back, when Rhodema wore long-sleeved frocks his boy heart was filled with admiration of the rosy little girls, making his offerings in sly presents of apples and nuts, or little birch bark boxes of the biggest, reddest strawberries tucked beneath her bench at school, or may be great bunches of fragrant flags stuck into her desk.

Later he could always be seen at church, perched, with great round eyes and puckered mouth, in the furthest corner of his father's deep pew, gazing rapturously at the back of Rhodema's neat little bonnet, just showing above the seat.

He was timidity personified, and suffered all sorts of tormenting agonies when, at evening entertainments, he would see his more adventurous companions step up before him and carry off Rhodema from under his very nose. Then he would turn away and plod home alone.

But the fall he was twenty-one, whether from its emancipating effects, or because he had arrived to the dignity of voting, he seemed to gather courage.

There had been several bonfires about the neighborhood on the occasion of the presidential election. Both girls and boys participated in the amusement. Of course Rhodema was always out, and Peregrine began by degrees to recover from his extreme bashfulness, and to wax very brave, insomuch, that on the occasion he walked with her to her father's gate. It is quite unnecessary to state that the trip was repeated.

One unlucky night in December, after coming from singing school, he stepped gingerly into the Prout sitting room, at Rhodema's cheery invitation to warm himself—whether his chilled hands before the glowing embers in the cozy fireplace, or his heart in the light of Rhodema's bright eyes, is not for us to chronicle here.

However, as he prolonged his stay beyond the limits which Rhodema's brother Luther, a pernicious youngster of fourteen, and his twin, Phœbe, equally mischievous, thought necessary to restore his benumbed circulation, they concocted a plan while eating ginger-cakes and nibbling cheese around the big, hot stove in the kitchen, whither they had repaired on coming home, which did not augur favorably for Peregrine.

The justice had retired. The twins slipped off their boots and began gathering together and arranging their munitions of confusion.

On the very verge of the top-most stair in the front entry, they placed a tin colander, half filled with marrow-fat peas, and on the top Luther poured the contents of his bag of marbles—a pint or more. Beside it came a peck basket, with Cæsar, Phœbe's great black cat, squeezed into it, and securely tied with Mother Prout's baking-apron.

It had been quite a perilous undertaking to capture the vicious feline, sleeping contendedly on a hat of wool in a warm corner of the kitchen, and transfer him to the basket, and they did not get off without sundry long scratches. However, it was at last accomplished amid confuse and angry spitting from Cæsar, and his head was ignominious'y crowded down under the stout apron.

Growling loud defiance, he was carried carefully off and set on the stair to await, in the frosty darkness, further developments.

On the same stair, also, was tilted a six quart tin bucket, filled with tin plates basins and a whole nest of little muffins tins besides a great old fashioned copper horse bell, as big as a tea cup which jingled noisily at the slightest touch.

Caesar's basket and the colander were attached by a string to the latch of the sitting room door, the bucket to the outside or front door.

Then quietly turning the key and withdrawing it, the twins bestowed themselves in a closet at the head of the stairs.

The old clock in the kitchen struck off ten as they finished operations, and they did not count on having to wait long. But half an hour went by, then eleven struck, and no sign of departure.

The twins shook in the chill air as if they had the ague, and nothing short of vigorous pinching would keep their toes from getting numb.

They could hear Caesar, too, rustling in the basket and trying to turn about to ease his crumped position, every now and then uttering a bass growl and prolonged hiss.

'He'll just go tumblety-whop off them stairs and capsize the whole thing!' chattered Luther, as a more violent whirl in the basket proclaimed his increasing restlessness.

'Poor old fellow! he is cold!' said Phœbe sympathetically, 'I do hope he won't get hurt.

'Pooh! A cat's got nine lives, they say. He's all right! more danger of his tearing through marm's apron and flying at Peregrine tooth and toe nail! He's awful gritty! Don't much care though, if he does, staying all this time!' muttered Luther, blowing his chilled thumbs.

But just then a cautious moving about in the sitting room announced Peregrine's departure.

'Look alive, Peed! It's comin, whispered Luther, opening the closet door a crack.

And there sure enough, with the first pull of the door away flew Caesar, bump phump bang!—shrieking spitting and clawing at the basket in his most vigorous style, landing on the floor beside the astonished Peregrine with such a bounce as for a moment to suspend his wild demonstrations.

After him tumbled the colander, scattering its charge of peas and marbles over the naked stairs, and sounding like a volley of musketry.

At this moment the sounds of a sudden uprising in the justice's bed room, and a vociferous shout of, 'Who's there?' brought Peregrine to a sense of his situation, and he sprang to the front door. He tripped the string to the bucket, and a perfect shower of big tins, and little tins came flying about his head, the copper bell handling discordance from stair to stair.

Peregrine worked frantically at the latch but it held fast, then hurriedly groped on the floor for the missing key.

But he could not waste time. The justice armed with his cane now appeared and he dashed back into the sitting room.

At the first sound of her father Rhodema, thinking that Peregrine's egress was assured fled with the candle to her chamber, and in the uncertain light, Father Prout gallantly pursued the unfortunate visiter, who slipped into a large closet off the sitting room and held the door.

The justice had caught a glimpse of his victim, and courageously assaulted the place of retreat, jerking vigorously from the out side, while Peregrine was hanging on inside with the spirit of desperation.

All at once he let go and made a bolt out over the justice and ran for a window. Before he could escape, however, Father Prout had nimbly recovered his equilibrium sufficiently to give him two or three sounding strokes with his cane, ending with a vigorous prod in the back as Peregrine dropped down in a black thorn bush and ran off.

Meanwhile the twins, alarmed at the finale, had sneaked out of the closet and gone to their beds in great dismay.

The justice found his way back to the bed room, where Mrs. Prout was bewailing hysterically, and getting a light proceeded to examine the extent of the burglary, for he had no doubt but that the things he had stumbled over at the foot of the stairs were what the robber had collected to carry off.

But Caesar soon convinced him of his mistake.

The justice looked about and began to surmise that something was wrong, and when he picked up Peregrine's hat which was as well known in the neighborhood as Peregrine himself, he was sure of it.

The matter leaked out, and poor Peregrine was the butt of his companion's jokes for many a day, and before he recovered from the mortification of his encounter, Rhodema had married.

CUTTING THE PLAY.

The nationally gratifying fact that Edwin Booth has just made so palpable a hit in London in 'Richelieu' calls to mind, says the Sanfrancisco News Letter a little story told by our leading star to the writer one Sunday during his visit here, while taking a look at the Golden Gate from the lantern of the Point Benita Light House.

'Once during the days of my early struggles in the profession,' said Booth, and while we were barn storming down in Virginia, an odd thing happened, which illustrates the shifts to which the poor player was then put in order to get along. We were playing—'showing' they called it then—one night at a little place called Lee's Landing, and the tobacco warehouse we had improvised into a theater was crowded by the planters for miles around. We had arranged to take the weekly steamer which they expected would touch there late that night, and between the acts were all busy packing up. The play was 'The Merchant of Venice,' and we were just going on for the court scene, where the Jew insists for his pound of flesh, when we heard a whistle blow and the manager came running to say that the steamer had arrived ahead of time and would leave again in ten minutes.

'As that was our only chance of getting down to the Chesapeake, we were naturally in a terrible quandary. 'If we stop right here and explain said the manager, 'the audience will think they are being cheated, and go in for a free fight. The only thing we can do is for you fellows to get up some sort of a natural, like impromptu ending for the piece and ring down the drop. Go right ahead ladies and gentlemen, and take your cue from Ked here,' and he hurried away to get the luggage on board.

'If it had been any other quarter of the country I would not have had the assurance to do as he said, but the ignorance of the clay-eaters, or ordinary Virginians of those days, was something marvelous, so when old George Ruggles who was doing Shylock, got where he sharpens his knife on his shoes, I walked solemnly up to him and said:

'You are bound to have the flesh are you.'

'You bet your life,' said George, under the impression that he was improving very skilful indeed.

'Now, I'll make you one more dicker,' I continued.

'In addition to this bag of ducats, I'll throw in two kegs or nigger head tobacco, a shot gun, and a couple of the best dogs in the State.'

'I'm blamed if I don't do it,' said Shylock, much to the approbation of the audience, who were tobacco planters and coon hunters from the ground up.

'And to show there is no hard feelings said Portia, turning up her legal gown, we will wind up with a "Virginny Reel."

'And as the prompter struck up 'Money musk,' on his fiddle we danced a couple of figures and made a break for the beat as the curtain fell, amid thunders of applause.

'When we got on board, the steamer's captain, who had watched the conclusion of the play with great delight, tendered the troup the compliment of a hot supper, and remarked as we sat down to what was a rare treat in those palmy days of the drama:

'I'd like to see the whole of that play some time gentlemen. I'm blamed if I thought that fellow Shakespeare had so much snap to him.'

SPILKER'S TOAST.

Maj. Spilker is a little man, very fat, very genial, and with a head as devoid of hair as a porcelain doorknob. His wife, Mrs. Algitha Spilker, is scrawny, sarcastic and deaf as a saw log. A person could kick a tin bath tub down the back steps all night and Mrs. Spilker would snore like a bass horn, in blissful ignorance of the noise, which proves that she is rather deaf.

There are two things in the world of which Mrs. Spilker is very fond—a dinner party and her husband—she never fails to accept an invitation to one or to carry the other with her. For the last twenty years this couple have been in regular attendance at every dinner party given by their friends, and on these occasions Major Spilker, when called on for a toast, would always give one to 'the babies,' in such a happy style that it never failed to create a good deal of mirth. His wife, although she could not hear a word, knew what her husband's toast was, and when he sat down supplemented it by a few appropriate remarks, in which she set forth his fondness for babies. Not long since they attended a dinner given by a friend up town, and unfortunately for Maj. Spilker and the assembled guests, he changed his toast without warning his wife of the fact, who, of course, thought her husband would confine himself to his regular subject.

'Now, Major Spilker,' said Mrs. Barker, the hostess, as the dinner advanced, 'it is your turn to give a toast, and pray say something complimentary to our sex.'

'When my charming hostess,' said the Major, rising, 'requests me to do a thing it is my duty to obey. Therefore I take pleasure in drinking the health of the ladies—God's best gift to men. The ladies, who cherish us in prosperity, soothe us in adversity, and by their tender ministering lighten the burdens of life—I drink to the ladies.'

When the applause subsided Mrs. Spilker, ignorant of the true subject of the toast but glowing with pride and admiration, said:

'Oh, Mrs. Barker, you don't know how fond the Major is of them. I've seen him have two or three on his lap at once, pinching their legs and—'

'Algitha!' gasped the Major.

'Just teasing the life out of the poor dear things. He is such a favorite with 'em, and every chance he gets he is sure to have 'em in his arms or be romping with 'em. He's got the lovingest nature of any man I ever saw, and somehow they come to him when they won't to any one else.'

Maj. Spilker fell back in the chair with a groan, and silence fell on the party like a pile driver.

IT WAS A GENERAL.

One Sunday, during the late war, Brown, the Sexton of Grace Church, was performing the duty of grand usher at the church when a soldier, who presented a seedy appearance, walked up the main aisle and took a seat near the chancel. All at once there was a buzz among the congregation, and the sexton stepped up to the stranger, and tapping him on the shoulder, said:

"I will show you a seat, sir."

The soldier rose and followed Brown, who led him to a rear pew. As he entered the pew and was about to sit down the stranger removed his faded uniform and disclosed a handsome brand-new military suit, with the straps of Major-General upon the shoulders. Then there was another hum of conversation and a rustling of silks as the congregation moved in their pews to get a view of the man. Again Sexton Brown approached the soldier and said:

"General, I'd be pleased to give you a good seat."

"Oh, never mind," said the military gentleman. "I'm much obliged to you, I've been among the commoners for the last year or two, and I guess I can worship God back here among them as well as up in front.

Brown retired as gracefully as possible, and was quite surprised, before the service was over, to learn that the soldier in the seedy overcoat was Major-General Stonewall Jackson.

Where Bangs Originated.

It has often been a subject of wonderment to us where our pretty girls got the notion from of combing their front hair down over their forehead, and cutting off the ends so as to make the fuch and a half of hair which they keep hanging down nearly to their eyebrows, and which is irresistably associated in our mind with an imperfectly sheared mule's tail. The mystery we solved to our satisfaction last night as we dropped into Dr. Jackson's. The doctor received from New Zealand, yesterday, among quite a variety of curios and moses, and other curiosities from that semi-barbarous land, the pictures of two Maori—natives of that country—a boy and a girl—and the latter had her back hair looped upon the top of her head, and stuck through with white-tipped turkey feathers, and the front hair was hauled down in front, the ends mingling with the eyebrows. So it is from the New Zealand savages and not the North American Indian squaws, ladies, that we copy the fashion.

Gleanings.

The candle-wick is up to snuff.

A young man with his first goatee may be said to have a tuft time of it.

Men of the noblest dispositions think themselves happiest when others share their happiness with them.

Open your mouth and purse cautiously and your stock of wealth and reputation shall, at least, in repute, be great.

Men are sometimes accused of being proud, merely because their accusers would be proud themselves were they in their places.

We never yet came across a genuine Egyptian Mummy that appeared in any way to be in a hurry, yet they are invariably pressed for time.

It may serve as a comfort to us in all our calamities and afflictions, that he who loses anything and gets wisdom by it, is a gainer by the loss.

'Providence helps a man, who helps himself,' except when he "helps himself" to some one else's property. Then he has to depend mainly on his legs.

A New York boarding-house took fire the other night, and the flames got as far as the pantry, when they went out for want of fuel.

A Glasgow paper, describing Mr. Gough's lectures to the fair sex of that city exclaimed with emphasis: 'Three thousand ladies hanging on the lip of one man.'

Why is it that men always cross a muddy place on their toes, and women on their heels?—Rome Sentinel. To get over to the other side.—Steubenville Herald.

A new book is out entitled, 'Links in Rebecca's Life.' Rebecca was probably a sausage maker's daughter. What an eventful an mysterious life she must have led!

On the surface of lakes that I have seen, just so long as the wind blew there was nothing but a great black roughness; but when the wind went down, and the water was tranquil, then all the stars of heaven were reflected in it. So in the tumults in this life, in the thunder of anger, in the strife of envy and passion, man's hearts are so disturbed that the divine influences fail to reflect themselves therein.

It is stated that French silk has become so inferior in quality, and American silk so superior, that many ladies in Paris have already sent to America for black silk, despairing of finding ever again a really good and desirable silk in the Parisian market.