

# THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

VOL. XXXV.

GRAHAM, N. C., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1909.

NO. 40

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## STORIES FOR IDLE HOURS



### A Farm Idyl

By FRANK H. SWEET

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"I ain't 'cuse I don't think he's good enough. Tommie's the best man I ever had on this farm. 'Taint 'cuse of that or anything else, you can't have my Susan, an' I told him so this mornin'."

Pap Hildreth finished filling the old brown basket with potatoes and arose stidily from his knees. There was a peaceful, satisfied look on his seamed face as he wiped his dirty hands on his freshly washed overalls and let his eyes roam about him.

"I'm comfortable," he said, addressing the old drab hen that was industriously pecking holes in the melon red tomatoes just beyond. "I'm comfortable well fixed."

The hen turned her back upon him and sent a spray of dust over the low wire fence with the unerring aim of her kind directly in his face. The dirt settled in his hair and beard, and Pap Hildreth set his basket down and wiped his mouth on his sleeve.

Now, he, Pap Hildreth, was a model farmer not only to his family, but to everything on the farm. To this particular drab hen he had always been kind and indulgent. Time out of number had he let her offenses go unpunished only because his heart was big and he could overlook little mistakes. She was a nuisance, too; he confessed it to himself now as he spat the grit out from beneath his teeth and watched her destroy whole bunches of red tomatoes. She had never acted like other hens that he could remember, and his acquaintance with hens was large. She had never laid an egg in her life. She had simply stood around with a proud, defiant air and waited for the other hens to do their work. Then she would proceed to clean up on the fruits of their labor. She ate the eggs. She was an aristocrat—no doubt of that. She was big and fat and sleek. Her comb was red as blood, and she fairly danced and pranced about, she was so full of life and spirits.

"You sure do seem to be enjoyin' life," continued Pap Hildreth, coming over to the fence and looking over. He smiled at the hen from his lips and heart and on eye. The other had a gravel chip in it and couldn't smile. Pap Hildreth kept it closed.

The hen lifted her head and listened without turning. Then she put her head impudently on one side and said something sotto voce.

"A red flush stole up across Pap Hildreth's already red neck and face. 'If she didn't say devil as plain as I or any man kin say it, then my heart's gettin' bad,'" he told himself.

Now, as usual, Pap Hildreth, being in an amiable mood, had addressed the hen in a gentlemanly way. He had simply said, "I'm comfortable well fixed," and that was all—nothing about such a remark for a hen to take objection to, and he knew it.

He didn't like it a bit, but he simply grinned foolishly and turned to pick up his basket.

Then the drab hen said something that fairly made his short hair bristle. He looked at the hen and he couldn't let go unchallenged. He heard it distinctly and knew there was no mistaking. He returned to the fence, his heavy eyebrows knitted in a frown, and the hen turned and faced him. For a moment they looked into one another's eyes; then the hen turned her back upon him again with all a boss' disdain and sent a handful of gravel into his face at close quarters.

It was a terrible light, an un-pardonable one. Her life must pay the penalty. So decided Pap Hildreth, standing with lips drawn back from dust filled teeth and eyes tightly closed and hands gripping either trouser leg in helpless frenzy. Die she must, and now—right now. She should live to make his life a terror not another minute longer than he could help.

He couldn't see the hen, but he knew she had picked up her head to listen. So he with great difficulty scraped away at his left eye until he had it clean enough to see a little. He still kept whistling, although every note gave him pain, and the dusty perspiration running down his face was all that furnished the necessary moisture for his whistle.

He stopped whistling and began to hum "There Were Ninety and Nine" as he squeezed himself through the fence, keeping his eye on the hen. "Poor man!" she said, sidestepping a yard or two and smiling at him. "Cuss you!" whispered Pap Hildreth. "Jest you wait!"

The hen, which had been scratching in time to his whistle, said something softly to herself and looked so pleased that all the dormant evil in Pap Hildreth's nature that had slumbered on

his wind back they had wisely taken themselves away, and the drab hen he saw quietly disappearing beneath the drive shed. Armed with a two tined fork, Pap Hildreth made his way laboriously to the shed and peered underneath it. Ah, fate was a kind indeed, for the drab hen was there, sure enough. She had settled down, as she thought, secure from all danger beneath the shed floor. Pap Hildreth judged that he could easily reach her with a fork. He tried it. If he could but impale her in its tines he would have the shed torn down if necessary in order to get at her. No; the fork was just a trifle short. He worked his head and shoulders under the shed. Ha, ha! Now he could spear her easily.

Just at this juncture a flock of sheep came round the corner of the shed and gazed wide eyed at the strange sight of a fat little man fanning the air with his fork. The proud leader of the flock went forth to investigate. Reaching over to sniff at the waving feet of Pap Hildreth, this particular sheep received a kick under the jaw that made him see all kinds of green and blue balls and stirred deep resentment within his breast.

Accordingly he backed away and came against Pap Hildreth's exposed person with such force as to drive the poor man under the shed, wedging him between the ground and the shed floor so tightly that he could scarcely budge, let alone breathe.

"Oh, oh!" groaned Pap Hildreth and kicked out lustily, only to receive a more violent shock from the old ram. Pap Hildreth lowered his legs and lay still. He could feel the hot sun on the calves of his legs, which were exposed owing to the fact that his trousers had slipped up on them. Then the little pigs came over to investigate, too, and rubbed their moist noses on those calves until poor Pap Hildreth had to lift his legs again, which was the signal for another onslaught from the ram.

How long he lay there helpless he never knew. It seemed hours to him, wedged in as he was so as to be scarcely able to breathe and receiving at regular intervals a shock from the old ram. He gave himself up to fate. He was sure he would die unless help soon came, and there was little hope of it, as he was on the south side of the shed and even if anybody did by chance happen to come into the barnyard he might never be seen. He tried to shout, but he was too tightly wedged in. He could hardly breathe, let alone call. The old drab hen had looked around at him and called him some more names, after which she had said goodby and left him.

After what seemed hours to him Pap Hildreth heard a voice as coming

"Pull me out, Tommie!"

from a long distance—two voices, in fact—to which he heard his daughter, his own flesh and blood, the darling of his old age, reply:

"Make him promise first, dear." "Pull me out," supplicated Pap Hildreth weakly. "For heaven's sake, pull me out, Tommie!"

"Kin I have Susan?" came the response. "Yes, you kin, on one condition," faintly replied Pap Hildreth. "Make him name it," said the other voice.

"Name it," said Tom. "If you'll catch me that old hen," answered Pap Hildreth. "I'll do it," said Tommie. And he did.

**Life of the Railway Man.**  
Trainmen are the class of workers most subject to long, irregular hours of duty, and there is nothing so likely to make a man unnerved and unfit for dangerous work as this. The strains of long hours and the restlessness of irregularity soon find out the strongest and most robust of men. Little wonder, then, that we find them with prematurely gray heads.—Railroad Review.

**Drawbridge and Mast.**  
At Helmsing Hall, in Suffolk county, in England, the drawbridge is always raised every night over the historic moat, which is more than seven hundred years old. The moat is not dry like so many of ancient date, but is filled to the brim. This is the only English castle where the historic right of raising the drawbridge has come down from the days of chivalry.

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**Exactly.**  
Little Mrs. Hunter had heard so many jokes about the brides who couldn't market successfully that she made up her mind that the first request she made of the marketman would show her to be a sophisticated housewife. "Send me, please," she said, "two French chops and one hundred green peas."

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### Another Conservation Congress.

Washington Dispatch.

Believing that the time has come for definite action looking to the conservation of the nation's great natural resources, leaders in this movement from all parts of the country will gather in New Orleans on November 1 next when the first important steps towards putting the principles of conservation into practical effect will be taken. The occasion will be an important conference of the chairmen of State conservation commissions of the South and others.

It is expected that recommendations will be made for the adoption by the various State Legislatures of specific laws that will have for their object the arresting of the great waste that is now going on in the South's natural resources and there by saving them to prosperity.

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Distressing Kidney and Bladder Disease relieved in six hours by the "NEW GREAT SOUTH AMERICAN KIDNEY CURE." It is a great surprise on account of its exceeding promptness in relieving pain in bladder, kidneys and back, in male or female. Relieves retention of water almost immediately. If you want quick relief and cure this is the remedy. Sold by Graham Drug Co.

### Wife Quick

To better advertise the South's leading Business College, just a few scholarships are offered in each section at less than cost. DON'T DELAY. WRITE TODAY. GA-ALA. BUSINESS COLLEGE, Macon, Ga.

### The West Virginia Synod of the Presbyterian Church, at Elkins, W. Va., unanimously adopted a resolution protesting against the invitation extended to President Taft to address the laymen's Missionary convention on foreign missions at Washington, November 11. The protest is on account of the President's affiliation with the Unitarian Church.

Mothers—Have you tried Hollister's Rocky Mountain Tea? It's a great blessing to the little ones, keeps away summer troubles. Makes them sleep and grow. 35 cents. Tea or Tablets. Graham Drug Co.

The old county system of working the roads of Randolph county will be discontinued, an act creating the township system having been passed by the last Legislature. The convicts of the county will be hired to the various townships.

January 1st. The place of publication has not been announced but it is understood that it will be Charlotte or Greensboro.

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