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THE FRANKLIN TIMES.

VOL. XXIII. LOUISBURG, N. C., FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1893. NUMBER 36.

PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS.

The Superintendent of Public Schools of Franklin county will be in Louisburg on the second Thursday of February, April, July, September, October and December, and [illegible] for three days, if necessary, for the purpose of examining applicants to teach in the Public Schools of the county. I will also be in Louisburg on Saturday of each [illegible] and all public days, to attend to such business connected with my office as may be necessary.

J. N. HARRIS, Supt.

Professional cards.

C. M. COOKE & SON,
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Will practice in the courts of Nash, Franklin, Vance, Warren and Wake counties, also the Supreme Court of North Carolina, and the U. S. Circuit and District Courts.

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Will attend the courts of Franklin, Vance, Granville, Warren and Wake counties, also the Supreme Court of North Carolina. Prompt attention given to collections, &c.

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LAND SALE.

In accordance with the decree of the Superior Court of Franklin county made in the special proceedings entitled Thos. Perry, T. B. Riddick and wife, W. H. Battle, Geo. B. Cooper et al. ex parte petition to sell land for division, the undersigned Commissioners will on Monday November 6th, 1893, offer for sale at the Court House door in Louisburg, to the highest bidder, the place known as the Mrs. Nancy Reid property, located on the Louisburg and Laurel road about 8 miles from Louisburg, containing about 210 acres. Terms: One-fourth cash balance in twelve months with interest at 8 per cent.

W. H. MACON,
THOS. B. WILDER,
Commissioners.

Oct. 5th, 1893.

THE SCARLET LETTER.

By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

"It must be even so," resumed the minister. For, if we deem it otherwise, do we not thereby say that the Heavenly Father, the Creator of all flesh, hath lightly recognized a deed of sin, and made of no account the distinction between unhallowed lust and holy love? This child of its father's guilt and its mother's shame hath come from the hand of God, to work in many ways upon her heart, who pleads so earnestly, and with such bitterness of spirit, the right to keep her. It was meant for a blessing; for the one blessing of her life! It was meant, doubtless, as the mother herself hath told us, for a retribution too; a torture to be felt at many an unthought of moment: a pang, a sting, an ever recurring agony, in the midst of a troubled joy! Hath she not expressed this thought in the garb of the poor child, so forcibly reminding us of that red symbol which sears her bosom?"

"Well said, again!" cried good Mr. Wilson. "I feared the woman had no better thought than to make a mountebank of her child."

"Oh, not so! not so!" continued Mr. Dimmesdale. "She recognizes, believe me, the solemn miracle which God hath wrought in the existence of that child. And may she feel, too—what, methinks, is the very truth—that this boon was meant, above all things else, to keep the mother's soul alive and to preserve her from blacker depths of sin into which satan might else have sought to plunge her. Therefore it is good for this poor, sinful woman that she hath an infant immortality, a being capable of eternal joy or sorrow, confided to her care, to be trained up by her to righteousness; to remind her at every moment of her fall, but yet to teach her, as it were, by the Creator's sacred pledge, that if she bring the child to heaven the child also will bring its parent thither. Herein is the sinful mother happier than the sinful father. For Hester Prynne's sake, then, and no less for the poor child's sake, let us leave them as Providence hath seen fit to place them."

"You speak, my friend, with a strange earnestness," said old Roger Chillingworth, smiling at him.

"And there is a weighty import in what my young brother hath spoken," added the Reverend Mr. Wilson. "What say you, worshipful Master Bellingham? Hath he not pleaded well for the poor woman?"

"Indeed, hath he," answered the magistrate, "and hath addduced such arguments that we will even leave the matter as it now stands so long at least as there shall be no [illegible] in the woman. Care must be had, nevertheless, to put the child to due and stated examination in the catechism, at thy hands or Master Dimmesdale's. Moreover, at a proper season, the authorities must take heed that she go both to school and to meeting."

The young minister on ceasing to speak had withdrawn a few steps from the group, and stood with his face partially concealed in the heavy folds of the window curtain, while the shadow of his figure, which the sunlight cast upon the floor, was tremulous with the vehemence of his appeal. Pearl, that wild and flighty little elf, stole softly toward him and taking his hand in the grasp of both her own, laid her cheek against it, a caress so tender, and withal so unobtrusive, that her mother, who was looking on, asked herself, "Is that my Pearl?"

Yet she knew that there was love in the child's heart, although it mostly revealed itself in passion and hardly twice in her lifetime had been softened by such gentleness as now. The minister—for save the long sought regards of woman nothing is sweeter than these marks of childish preference, accorded spontaneously by a spiritual instinct, and therefore seeming to imply in us something truly worthy to be loved—the minister looked around, laid his hand on the child's head, hesitated an instant and then kissed her brow. Little Pearl's unwonted mood of sentiment lasted no longer; she laughed and went capering down the hall so airily that old Mr. Wilson raised a question whether even her tiptoes touched the floor.

"The little baggage hath witchcraft in her, I profess," said he to Mr. Dimmesdale. "She needs no old woman's broomstick to fly withal!"

"A strange child!" remarked old Roger Chillingworth. "It is easy to see the mother's part in her. Would it be beyond a philosopher's research, think ye, gentlemen, to analyze that child's nature and, from its make and mold, to give a shrewd guess at the father?"

"Nay; it would be sinful in such a question to follow the clew of profane philosophy," said Mr. Wilson. "Better to fast and pray upon it, and still better, it may be, to leave the mystery as we find it, unless Providence reveal it of its own accord. Thereby every good Christian man hath a title to show a father's kindness toward the poor, deserted babe."

The affair being so satisfactorily concluded, Hester Prynne, with Pearl, departed from the house. As they descended the steps it is averred that the lattice of a chamber window was thrown open, and forth into the sunny day was thrust the face of Mistress Hibbins, Governor Bellingham's bitter tempered sister, and the same who a few years later was executed as a witch.

"Hist, hist!" said she, while her ill omened physiognomy seemed to cast a shadow over the cheerful newness of the house. "Wilt thou go with us tonight? There will be a merry company in the forest, and I well nigh promised the Black Man that comely Hester Prynne should make one."

"Make my excuse to him, so please you!" answered Hester, with a triumphant smile. "I must tarry at home and keep watch over my little Pearl. Had they taken her from me I would willingly have gone with thee into the forest and signed my name in the Black Man's book, too, and that with mine own blood!"

"We shall have thee there anon!" said the witch lady, frowning, as she drew back her head.

But here—if we suppose this interview betwixt Mistress Hibbins and Hester Prynne to be authentic and not a parable—was already an illustration of the young minister's argument against sundering the relation of a fallen mother to the offspring of her frailty. Even thus early had the child saved her from satan's snare.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LEECH.

Under the appellation of Roger Chillingworth, the reader will remember, was hidden another name, which its former wearer had resolved should never more be spoken. It has been related how, in the crowd that witnessed Hester Prynne's ignominious exposure, stood a man, elderly, travel worn, who, just emerging from the perilous wilderness, beheld the woman, in whom he hoped to find embodied the warmth and cheerfulness of home, set up as a type of sin before the people. Her matronly fame was trodden under all men's feet. Infamy was babbling around her in the public market place. For her kindred, should the tidings ever reach them, and for the companions of her unspotted life there remained nothing but the contagion of her dishonor, which would not fail to be distributed in strict accordance and proportion with the intimacy and sacredness of their previous relationship.

Then why—since the choice was with himself—should the individual, whose connection with the fallen woman had been the most intimate and sacred of them all, come forward to vindicate his claim to an inheritance so little desirable? He resolved not to be pilloried beside her on her pedestal of shame. Unknown to all but Hester Prynne, and possessing the lock and key of her silence, he chose to withdraw his name from the roll of mankind, and, as regarded his former ties and interests, to vanish out of life as completely as if he indeed lay at the bottom of the ocean, whither rumor had long ago consigned him. This purpose once effected, new interests would immediately spring up, and likewise a new purpose, dark, it is true, if not guilty, but of force enough to engage the full strength of his faculties.

In pursuance of this resolve he took up his residence in the Puritan town as Roger Chillingworth, without other introduction than the learning and intelligence of which he possessed more than a common measure. As his studies in a previous period of his life had not been extensively scientific, it was as a physician that he presented himself, and was cordially received. [illegible] were of rare [illegible] by * * *

His form grew [illegible] though still rich and [illegible] certain melancholy peculiarity [illegible] He was often [illegible] alarm or other [illegible] put his hand over his heart, with a flush and then a paleness, indicative of pain.

Such was the young clergyman's condition, and so much at the prospect that his dawning life would be extinguished, all untimely, when Roger Chillingworth made his advent to the town. His first entrance on the scene few people could tell whence, dropped down, as it were, out of the sky or starting from the nether earth, had an aspect of mystery which was easily heightened to the marvellous. He was now known to be a man of skill. It was observed that he gathered herbs and the blossoms of wild flowers, and dug up roots and plucked off twigs from the forest trees, like one acquainted with hidden virtues in what was valueless to common eyes.

He was heard to speak of Sir Kenelm Digby and other famous men—whose scientific attainments were esteemed hardly less than supernatural—as having been his correspondents or associates. Why, with such rank in the learned world, had he come hither? What could he, whose sphere was in great cities, be seeking in the wilderness? In answer to this query a rumor gained ground—and, however absurd, was entertained by some very sensible people—that heaven had wrought an absolute miracle by transporting an eminent doctor of physic from a German university bodily through the air and setting him down at the door of Mr. Dimmesdale's study. Individuals of wiser faith, indeed, who knew that heaven promotes its purposes without aiming at the stage effect of what is called miraculous interposition, were inclined to see a providential hand in Roger Chillingworth's so opportune arrival.

This idea was countenanced by the strong interest which the physician ever manifested in the young clergyman; he attached himself to him as a patient, honored and sought to win a friendly regard and confidence from his naturally reserved sensibility. He expressed great alarm at his pastor's state of health, but was anxious to attempt the cure, and, if early undertaken, seemed not doubtful of a favorable result. The elders, the deacons, the motherly dames and the young and fair maidens of Mr. Dimmesdale's flock were alike importunate that he should make trial of the physician's frankly offered skill. Mr. Dimmesdale gently repelled their entreaties.

"I need no medicine," said he.

But how could the young minister say so when, with every successive Sabbath, his cheek was paler and thinner and his voice more tremulous than before—when it had now become a constant habit, rather than a casual gesture, to press his hand over his heart? Was he weary of his labors? Did he wish to die? These questions were solemnly propounded to Mr. Dimmesdale by the elder ministers of Boston and the deacons of his church, who, to use their own phrase, "dealt with him" on the sin of rejecting the aid which providence so manifestly held out. He listened in silence and finally promised to confer with the physician.

"Were it God's will," said the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, when, in fulfillment of this pledge, he requested old Roger Chillingworth's professional advice, "I could be well content that my labors, and my sorrows, and my sins, and my pains should shortly end with me, and what is earthly of them be buried in my grave, and the spiritual go with me to my eternal state, rather than that you should put your skill to the proof in my behalf."

"Ah," replied Roger Chillingworth, with that quietness which, whether imposed or natural, marked all his deportment, "it is thus that a young clergyman is apt to speak. Young full man not having taken a deep root, give up their hold of life so easily! And saintly men, who walk with God on earth, would fain be away to walk with him on the golden pavements of the New Jerusalem."

"Nay," rejoined the young man, putting his hand to his heart, with a flush of pain flitting over his frame, "were I worthier to walk there I could be better content to tarry here."

"Good men ever underrate themselves too meanly," said the physician.

In this manner the mysterious old Roger Chillingworth became the medical adviser of the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale. As not only the disease internal the physician, but he was strongly moved to look into the character and qualities of the patient, these two men so different in age, came gradually to spend much time together. For the sake of the minister's health and to enable the leech to gather plants with healing balm in them, they took long walks on the seashore or in the forest, mingling various talk with the plash and murmur of the waves or the solemn wind anthem among the pine tops. Often, however, one was the guest of the other in his place of study and retirement. * * *

Thus Roger Chillingworth contrived, his patient certainly, both as he saw him in his ordinary life and as he could be cognizant of, in the range of thoughts he labored in and wrought out, should be the result of his character. He doubtless, it would seem, to know the man and to adapt the medicine to the disease. Wherever there is a heart and an intellect for a disease of the physician, are tempted with the problem of the [illegible] Arthur Dimmesdale [illegible] Roger Chillingworth [illegible] kept him in remembrance. They grew out of his heart, and by virtue of being so near it, they [illegible] with him, and which he had [illegible] to be [illegible] * * *

"Pardon me," said Mr. Dimmesdale, "he earnestly [illegible]

"And why not?" replied the physician. "Wherefore [illegible] powers of nature call [illegible] the confession of sin, that [illegible] wounds [illegible] heart to make them [illegible] cures?"

"Then, good sir, is [illegible] of you?" replied the [illegible] can [illegible] sick of the disease [illegible] which [illegible] embodied [illegible] with a [illegible] hands [illegible] healing balm in them, they took long walks on the seashore or in the forest, mingling various talk with the plash and murmur of the waves [illegible] solemn wind anthem among the pine tops. Often, however, one was the guest of the other in his place of study and retirement. * * *

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