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THE FRANKLIN TIMES.

VOL. XXIII. LOUISBURG, N. C., FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1893. NUMBER 41.

TO PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

The Superintendent of Public Schools of Franklin county will be in Louisburg on the second Thursday in February, April, July, September, October and December, and remain three days, if necessary, for the purpose of examining applicants for teachers in the Public Schools of this county. He will also be in Louisburg on Saturday of each week, and all public days, to attend to business connected with my office.

J. N. HARRIS, Supt.

Professional cards.

C. M. COOKE & SON,
ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW,
LOUISBURG, N. C.
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.

D. R. E. E. MALONE.
Office two doors below Thomas & Aycocke's Drug store, adjoining Dr. O. L. Ellis.

DR. W. H. NICHOLSON,
PRACTICING PHYSICIAN,
LOUISBURG, N. C.
Office on Nash street.

E. W. TIMBERLAKE,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
LOUISBURG, N. C.

F. S. SPRUILL,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
LOUISBURG, N. C.
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.

N. Y. GULLEY,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
FRANKLINTON, N. C.
All legal business promptly attended to.

THOS. B. WILDER,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
LOUISBURG, N. C.
Office on Main street, one door below Eagle Hotel.

W. M. PERSON,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
LOUISBURG, N. C.
Practice in all courts. Office in the Court House.

Coffins and Caskets

We have added to our already large stock a full line of Coffins and Caskets. Our prices are as low as is carried by any of our critics. Our stock is complete in every line.

Respectfully,

B. R. HARRIS & CO.

Louisburg, N. C.

Bank of Louisburg

Does a General Banking Business.
Collections made and returned promptly.
Northern Exchange bought and sold.

COUNTY ORDERS CASHED

Interest paid on deposits after three months.

W. P. WEBB, President.

LAND SALE.

By virtue of authority given in a mortgage deed to Geo. F. Allen by Dal Privitt and wife, dated April 17th 1891, and recorded in book 87, pages 317 and 318, Register's office of Franklin county, I will sell at the Court House door in Louisburg, N. C., on Tuesday, January 2, 1894, a tract of land described in said mortgage, adjoining the lands of E. C. Denton, C. E. Denton and J. B. Denton. Terms cash.

GEO. K. LEONARD, Exr.,
of GEO. F. ALLEN, dec'd.

NOTICE.

Having qualified as Administratrix on the estate of J. R. Perry, deceased, all persons indebted to said estate will make immediate payment and all persons holding claims against said estate must present them for payment on or before 6th day of October, 1894, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. This October 6th, 1893.

MRS. M. A. PERRY,
Administratrix.

NOTICE.

By virtue of a decree of the Superior court of Franklin county, in the special proceedings entitled W. V. Clifton and others, ex parte, I shall sell at the court house door in Louisburg, on Monday the 4th day of December 1893, at public auction to the highest bidder the tract of land in Harris township, said county, on which the late Mrs. Emma Clifton resided, containing sixty-two acres. Terms—One-third cash, balance on credit of twelve months with 8 per cent interest from day of sale.

Nov. 2nd, 1893. C. M. COOKE,
Commissioner.

THE SCARLET LETTER.

By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

It was with a feeling which neither of them had ever before experienced that they sat and watched Pearl's slow advance. In her was visible the tie that united them. She had been offered to the world these seven years past as the living hieroglyphic, in which was revealed the secret they so darkly sought to hide—all written in this symbol—all plainly manifest—had there been a prophet or magician skilled to read the character of flame! And Pearl was the oneness of their being. Be the foregone evil what it might, how could they doubt that their earthly lives and future destinies were conjoined, when they beheld at once the material union and the spiritual idea in whom they met and were to dwell immortally together? Thoughts like these—and perhaps other thoughts, which they did not acknowledge or define—threw an awe about the child as she came onward.

"Let her see nothing strange—no passion nor eagerness—in thy way of accosting her," whispered Hester. "Our Pearl is a fitful and fantastic little elf sometimes. Especially, she is seldom tolerant of emotion, when she does not fully comprehend the why and wherefore. But the child hath strong affections! She loves me and will love thee!"

"Thou canst not think," said the minister, glancing aside at Hester Prynne, "how my heart dreads this interview and yearns for it! But in truth, as I already told thee, children are not readily won to be familiar with me. They will not climb my knee, nor prattle in my ear, nor answer to my smile; but stand apart and eye me strangely. Even little babes, when I take them in my arms, weep bitterly. Yet Pearl twice in her little lifetime hath been kind to me! The first time—thou knowest it well! The last was when thou ledst her with thee to the house of yonder stern old governor."

"And thou didst plead so bravely in her behalf and mine!" answered the mother. "I remember it, and so shall little Pearl. Fear nothing! She may be strange and shy at first, but will soon learn to love thee!"

By this time Pearl had reached the margin of the brook, and stood on the farther side, gazing silently at Hester and the clergyman, who still sat together on the mossy tree trunk, waiting to receive her. Just where she had paused the brook chanced to form a pool, so smooth and quiet that it reflected a perfect image of her little figure, with all the brilliant picturesqueness of her beauty, in its adornment of flowers and wreathed foliage, but more refined and spiritualized than the reality.

This image, so nearly identical with the living Pearl, seemed to communicate somewhat of its own shadowy and intangible quality to the child herself. It was strange, the way in which Pearl stood, looking so steadfastly at them through the dim medium of the forest gloom, late in the afternoon, while, all glorified with a ray of sunshine that was attracted earthward as by a certain sympathy, in the brook beneath stood another child—another and the same—with likewise its ray of golden light. Hester felt herself, in some indistinct and tantalizing manner, estranged from Pearl, as if the child, in her lonely ramble through the forest, had strayed out of the sphere in which she and her mother dwelt together, and was now vainly seeking to return to it.

There was both truth and error in the impression: the child and mother were estranged, but through Hester's fault, not Pearl's. Since the latter rambled from her side another inmate had been admitted within the circle of the mother's feelings, and so modified the aspect of them all that Pearl, the returning wanderer, could not find her wonted place, and hardly knew where she was.

"I have a strange fancy," observed the sensitive minister, "that this brook is the boundary between two worlds, and thou canst never meet thy Pearl again. Or is she an elfish spirit, who, as the legends of our childhood taught us, is forbidden to cross a running stream? Pray hasten her, for this delay has already imparted a tremor to my nerves."

"Come, dearest child!" said Hester encouragingly, and stretching out both her arms. "How slow thou art! When hast thou been so sluggish before now? Here is a friend of mine, who must be thy friend also. Thou wilt have twice as much love henceforward as thy mother alone could give thee! Leap across the brook and come to us. Thou canst leap like a young deer!"

Pearl, without responding in any manner to these honey sweet expressions, remained on the other side of the brook. Now she fixed her bright, wild eyes on her mother, now on the minister, and now included them both in the same glance, as if to detect and explain to herself the relation which they bore to one another. For some unaccountable reason, as Arthur Dimmesdale felt the child's eyes upon himself, his hand—with that gesture so habitual as to have become involuntary—stole over his heart. At length, assuming a singular air of authority, Pearl stretched out her hand, with the small forefinger extended and pointing evidently toward her mother's breast. And beneath, in the mirror of the brook, there was the flower girdled and sunny image of little Pearl pointing her small forefinger too.

"Thou strange child, why dost thou not come to me?" exclaimed Hester.

Pearl still pointed with her forefinger, and a frown gathered on her brow—the more impressive from the childish, the almost babylike aspect of the features that conveyed it. As her mother still kept beckoning to her, and arraying her face in a holiday suit of unaccustomed smiles, the child stamped her foot with a yet more imperious look and gesture. In the brook again was the fantastic beauty of the image, with its reflected frown, its pointed finger and imperious gesture, giving emphasis to the aspect of little Pearl.

"Hasten, Pearl, or I shall be angry with thee!" cried Hester Prynne, who, however inured to such behavior on the elf child's part at other seasons, was naturally anxious for a more seemly deportment now. "Leap across the brook, naughty child, and run hither! Else I must come to thee!"

But Pearl, not a whit startled at her mother's threats, any more than mollified by her entreaties, now suddenly burst into a fit of passion, gesticulating violently and throwing her small figure into the most extravagant contortions. She accompanied this wild outbreak with piercing shrieks, which the woods reverberated on all sides; so that, alone as she was in her childish and unreasonable wrath, it seemed as if a hidden multitude were lending her their sympathy and encouragement. Seen in the brook once more was the shadowy wraith of Pearl's image, crowned and girdled with flowers, but stamping its foot, wildly gesticulating, and in the midst of all still pointing its small forefinger at Hester's bosom!

"I see what ails the child," whispered Hester to the clergyman, and turning pale in spite of a strong effort to conceal her trouble and annoyance. "Children will not abide any the slightest change in the accustomed aspect of things that are daily before their eyes. Pearl misses something which she has always seen me wear!"

"I pray you," answered the minister, "if thou hast any means of pacifying the child, do it forthwith! Save it were the cankered wrath of an old witch, like Mistress Hibbins," added he, attempting to smile, "I know nothing that I would not sooner encounter than this passion in a child. In Pearl's young beauty, as in the wrinkled witch, it has a preternatural effect. Pacify her, if thou lovest me!"

Hester turned again toward Pearl, with a crimson blush upon her cheek, a conscious glance aside at the clergyman and then a heavy sigh; while, even before she had time to speak, the blush yielded to a deadly pallor.

"Pearl," said she sadly, "look down at thy feet! There!—before thee!—on the hither side of the brook!"

The child turned her eyes to the point indicated, and there lay the scarlet letter, so close upon the margin of the stream that the gold embroidery was reflected in it.

"Bring it hither!" said Hester.

"Come thou and take it up!" answered Pearl.

"Was ever such a child!" observed Hester aside to the minister. "Oh, I have much to tell thee about her! But in very truth she is right as regards this hateful token. I must bear its torture yet a little longer—only a few days longer—until we shall have left this region, and look back hither as to a land which we have dreamed of. The forest cannot hide it! The mountain shall take it from my hand and swallow it up forever!"

With these words she advanced to the margin of the brook, took up the scarlet letter and fastened it again into her bosom. Hastily, but a moment ago, as Hester had spoken of throwing it to the deep sea, there was a sense of inevitable doom upon her, as she then perceived back this deadly symbol from the hand of fate. She had flung it into intervening space—she had drawn an hour's free breath—and here again was the scarlet misery, glittering on the old spot! Such ever is, whether man's law be right or no, that an evil deed invests itself with the character of doom. Hester next gathered up the heavy tresses of her hair and confined them beneath her cap. As if there were a withering spell in the sad letter, her beauty, the warmth and richness of her womanhood, departed like fading sunshine and a gray shadow seemed to fall across her.

When the dreary change was wrought she extended her hand to Pearl.

"Dost thou know thy mother now, child?" asked she reproachfully, but with a subdued tone. "Wilt thou come across the brook and own thy mother, now that she has her shame upon her—now that she is sad?"

"Yes; now I will!" answered the child bounding across the brook, and clasping Hester in her arms. "Now thou art my mother indeed! And I am thy little Pearl!"

In a mood of tenderness that was not usual with her she drew down her mother's head and kissed her brow and both her cheeks. But then—by a kind of necessity that always impelled this child to alloy whatever comfort she might chance to give with a throb of anguish—Pearl put up her mouth, and kissed the scarlet letter too!

"That was not kind!" said Hester. "When thou hast shown me a little love, thou mockest me!"

"Why doth the minister sit yonder?" asked Pearl.

"He waits to welcome thee," replied her mother. "Come, thou, and entreat his blessing! He loves thee, my little Pearl, and loves thy mother too. Wilt thou not love him? Come; he longs to greet thee!"

"Doth he love us?" said Pearl, looking up with acute intelligence into her mother's face. "Will he go back with us, hand in hand, we three together, into the town?"

"Not now, dear child," answered Hester. "But in days to come he will walk hand in hand with us. We will have a home and fireside of our own, and thou shalt sit upon his knee and he will teach thee many things and love thee dearly. Thou wilt love him, wilt thou not?"

"And will he always keep his hand over his heart?" inquired Pearl.

"Foolish child, what a question is that!" exclaimed her mother. "Come and ask his blessing!"

But whether influenced by the jealousy that seems instinctive with every petted child toward a dangerous rival or from whatever caprice of her freakish nature, Pearl would show no favor to the clergyman. It was only by an exertion of force that her mother brought her up to him, hanging back and manifesting her reluctance by odd grimaces; of which, ever since her babyhood, she had possessed a singular variety, and could transform her mobile physiognomy into a series of different aspects, with a new mischief in them, each and all. The minister—painfully embarrassed, but hoping that a kiss might prove a talisman to admit him into the child's kindlier regards—bent forward and impressed one on her brow.

Thereupon Pearl broke away from her mother, and running to the brook stooped over it and bathed her forehead until the unwelcome kiss was quite washed off and diffused through a long lapse of the gliding water. She then remained apart, silently watching Hester and the clergyman, while they talked together and made such arrangements as were suggested by their new position and the purposes soon to be fulfilled.

And now this fateful interview had come to a close. The doll was to be left a solitude among its dark, old trees, which, with their multitudinous tongues, would whisper long of what had passed there, and no mortal be the wiser. And the melancholy brook would add this other tale to the mystery with which its little heart was already overburdened and whereof it still kept up a murmuring babble, with not a whit more cheerfulness of tone than for ages heretofore.

CHAPTER.

THE MINISTER IN A MAZE.

As the minister departed from the presence of Hester Prynne and little Pearl he threw a backward glance, half expecting that he should discover only some faintly traced features or outline of the mother and the child slowly fading into the twilight of the woods. So great a vicissitude in his life could hardly be received as real. But there was Hester, clad in her gray robe, still standing beside the tree trunk, which some blast had overthrown a long generation ago and which had ever since been decaying with moss, so that these two fateful ones with earth's heaviest burden on them might there sit down together and find a single hour's rest and solace. And there was Pearl, too, lightly dancing from the margin of the brook—to shun the intrusive third person was her object—and taking her stand place by her mother's side. So the minister had not fallen asleep and dreamed.

In order to free his mind from this distinctness and duplicity of impression, which vexed it with a sense of unreality, he recalled and mentally reviewed the plans which Hester and himself had shaped for their departure. It had been decreed between them that the Old World, with its crowds and cities, offered a more eligible shelter and concealment than the wilds of New England and America, with the exception of an Indian wigwam or two, a few log huts and Europeans scattered thinly along the seaboard. Not a person of the Puritan family, not a single one of the Puritan friends, would intentionally cross the path of Hester Prynne. Her husband, too, the man of learning, who had come so strangely into the sphere of her life, was a resident in London. Doubtless, he might ere now have encountered some of his countrymen who would be on their way hither, in the train of the new governor and his retinue, and might have received from them the minutest details concerning the ignominious punishment of Hester Prynne. The fact that no such evil had befallen her was a sufficient token that no such had been in her husband's path. Of all these circumstances the minister had been informed by Hester. He had, moreover, himself, ever since his residence in the town, been in the habit of conversing with the sailors and other men who had sailed to and fro between the port of Boston and the various towns along the coast. By them, too, he had been informed of the character and manners prevailing among the people of the region where he and Hester had decided that they might most safely and securely hide their head from the world. It was a wild, rough, yet beautiful and romantic region, with a mixed population, some of whom had their abodes in the forest, while others, though living in the midst of civilized life, had contrived to make their own quarter of the world as wild as they could by the force of their evil passions and propensities. Among such people, the fugitives could hardly fail to find a congenial home, or, at the worst, could easily lose themselves in the depths of the forest. Hester had spoken of her husband as of a man in extreme intellectual decay, whose ponderous mind had been shaken to its centre by the disgrace and misery that had come upon him through his young wife's sin. She had even hinted that, if the old man should ever be her husband in the flesh, she would not feel herself bound to recognize him as such in any other sense than as the husband of her dishonor. He was a cold, dull, stupid, and ugly man, she had told him; and she could never love him, nor even pretend to love him, though he had married her when she was young and had taken her from her own home, where there had been warm sunshine and kindly faces, to be his companion in a cold, dark, and strange land. It was a dreary fate, indeed, and she had a dreary story to tell! Such was the purport of what Hester had told the minister concerning her husband. Her husband was a physician, and had been much among the Indians, and was well versed in their language and in that of other tribes scattered along the shores of the Atlantic. Such a man might easily make his way among the Indian jugglers and sorcerers, and might become a member of their band, and might be recognized as a brother by the chief who ruled the tribe. This was the sum of what Hester had told the minister concerning the character and position of her husband.

The minister had inquired of Hester with no little interest the precise time at which the vessel might be expected to depart. It would probably be on the fourth day from the present. "This is most fortunate!" he had said to himself. Now, why the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale considered it so very fortunate that we hesitate to record. Nor will we hold nothing back from the reader, lest it be because on the third day from the present he was to preach the election sermon, and as such an occasion formed an honorable epoch in the life of a New England clergyman he could not have chanced upon a more suitable mode and time of terminating his professional career.

"At least they shall say of me," thought this exemplary man, "that I leave no public duty unperformed nor ill performed!" Sad, indeed, that an introspection so profound and acute as this poor minister's should be so miserably deceived! We have had and may still have worse things to tell of him, but none we apprehend so painfully weak; no evidence, at once so slight and irrefragable, of a subtile disease that had long since begun to eat into the real substance of his character. No man for any considerable period can wear one face to himself and another to the multitude without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the true.

The excitement of Mr. Dimmesdale's feelings as he returned from his interview with Hester lent him unaccustomed physical energy and hurried him townward at a rapid pace. The pathway among the woods seemed wilder, more uncouth with its rude natural obstacles, and less trodden by the foot of man, than he remembered it on his outward journey. But he leaped across the plashy places, thrust himself through the clinging underbrush, climbed the ascent, plunged into the hollow, and overcame, in short, all the difficulties of the track with an unweariable activity that astonished him. He could not but recall how feebly, and with what frequent pauses for breath, he had toiled over the same ground only two days before. As he drew near the town he took an impression of change from the series of familiar objects that presented themselves. It seemed not yesterday, not one, not two, but many days, or even years ago, since he had quitted them. There, indeed, was each former trace of the street, as he remembered it, and all the peculiarities of the houses, with the due multitude of gable peaks, and a weathercock at every point where his memory suggested one.

Not the less, however, came this importunately obtrusive sense of change. The same was true as regarded the acquaintances whom he met, and all the well known shapes of human life about the little town. They looked neither older nor younger now; the beards of the aged were no whiter, nor could the creeping babe of yesterday walk on his feet today; it was impossible to describe in what respect they differed from the individuals on whom he had so recently bestowed a parting glance, and yet the minister's deepest sense seemed to inform them of their mutability. A similar impression struck him most remarkably, as he passed under the walls of his own church. The edifice had so very strange and yet so familiar an aspect that Mr. Dimmesdale's mind vibrated between two ideas—either that he had seen it only in a dream hitherto, or that he was merely dreaming about it now.

This perception, in the various shapes which it assumed, indicated no external change, but so sudden and important a change in the spectator of one familiar scene that the intervening space of a single day had operated upon him like a long lifetime. The minister's own will, [illegible] Hester's [illegible] the fate that [illegible] wrought this change. [illegible] the same town as [illegible] but the same town [illegible] forest. He might [illegible] who greeted him. "I am not the man for whom you take me!" [illegible] der in the forest, [illegible] doll by a [illegible] melancholy brook, [illegible] ister and [illegible] than the [illegible] kissed [illegible] a cast of gaunt [illegible] doubt, would [illegible] him, "Thou art thy [illegible] the error would have been their own [illegible].

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