THE NORTH CAROLINA ARGUS.

"This Argus, o'er the People's Rights doth an Eternal Watch Keep; No Blushing Traitor of State's Sun can Lull his Hundred Eyes to Sleep."

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Selected Poetry.

The Drunkard's Dream.

BY REV. CHARLES W. DENISON.

The drunkard dreamed of his old retreat,—
Of his cozy place in the chequer seat;
And the liquor gleamed on his glowing eye,
Till he lifted the sparkling glass to sigh.
He lifted it up with an eager glance,
And sang, as he saw the bubbles dance;
"Ah! I am myself again!
Here's a toast to care, an adieu to pain.
Welcome to me, with its creamy foam!
Farewell to work and a happy home!
With a jolly crew and a flowing bowl,
In her crown pleasures I love to roll!"

Like a flash, there came to the drunkard's side
His angel child, who that night had died!
With look so gentle, and sweet, and kind,
She touched his glass with her little wand;
And ere he raised it up to drink,
She silently tapped on its trembling brink
Till the drunkard shook from foot to crown,
And set the untasted goblet down.

"Hey, man!" cried the host, "what meaneth this?
Is the devil's sight or the dream amiss?
Cheer up, my lad! quick the bumper quaff!"
And he stared around with a foolish laugh.

The drunkard raised his glass once more,
And looked at its depths as so oft before;
But started to see, on its pictured beam,
The face of his dead little child at home!
Then again the landlord at him sneered
And the swaggering crowd of drunkards jeered;
But still, as he thrust that glass to drink,
The wand of his dead one tapped the brink.
The angel spoke, "Poison thy soul thou wilt,
Thou shalt take every drop of this flowing guilt!"

The drunkard bowed to the quivering brim,
Though his heart pent, and his eye grew dim.
But the wind struck harder than before;
The glass was flung on the barroom floor,
And around the ring the fragments lay,
And the poisonous current rolled away.
The drunkard woke. His dream was gone;
His bed was bathed in the light of morn;
But he saw, as he shook with pale, cold fear,
A beautiful angel hovering near.
He rose, and that scene was nigh him still;
It dashed from his lips the maddening bowl,
And victory gave to his ransomed soul!
Since ever that midnight hour he dreamed,
Our hero has been a man redeemed.
And this is the prayer that he prays always,
And this is the prayer let us help him pray;
That angels may come in every land,
To dash the cup from the drunkard's hand.

Our Story-Teller.

NOT ALL BAD; A SKIPPER'S YARN

I've been a good deal about the world in my time (said Captain W.——, stroking his grey beard with his big brown hand), and I've seed a lot o' wargil customers; but it's my opinion that the very worst of 'em all's got some good in 'em, if you only take the trouble to look for it; and that, let a fellow be ever so black, he's not all bad. You don't agree with me? Well, I'll just tell you a story.

It's about eight or nine years ago now—afore ever this Suez Canal, as we cum through yesterday, was made—that I was first mate of a steamer plying from Suez to Djeddah (the port of Mecca, you know) carryin' Gov'ment stores and fighting tackle for the Turks; for of course there was a row going on, an' one the Arabs of the Hedjaz, as it seems to be there always is. I'd a precious rough lot for a crew that voyage—all odds and ends, like an Irish stew—Greeks, Dalmatians, niggers, and what not.

But of these mell o' mine was too thick—full of the mischief, and I managed to get 'em along pretty well on the whole. Preachin' at 'em warn't much good, but when I talked to them with a handspike or a bit o' two inch rope, they understood that well enough. But the worst of the whole lot was a Dalmatian name of Spiro. To give him his due, he was a fust chop sailor like most o' his sort; for Dalmatia's a kind o' nursery of seamen for Austria, just like Finland for Russia. But that was all the good there was to be said of him for a more vicious blood-thirsty dog never breathed. In the parts where he cum from, they take to blood as natterally as a sailor to grog; and he was just like all the rest of 'em—never happy unless he was in a row with somebody.

Now, I may say without bragging that I've a pretty sharp eye for the cut of a man's jib—specially when he's a going to sail along side, and this fellow Spiro hadn't been aboard two days afore I'd pick him out as an ugly customer. He was uncommon smart in picking me out too, as a chap that wouldn't stand no nonsense; and so it warn't long afore we got to eyeing each other, him and me, like two strange dogs making up for a fight. 'Bout a week a'ter we'd sailed on our first cruise, as we was a lyin' in Djeddah harbor, this chap Spiro was rather shy over something I'd told him to do, and I began hollerin' at him; when what does he do but turn round and check me like anything to my very face! I don't take check very kindly, that's a fact; and beside, I was reg'lar mad to have all the work shoved on to me this way; so I just up fist, and let him have it between his eyes, knocking him right t'other side of the deck. It was more a minute afore he knew where he was, but when he cum to he just gave me a wicked look out of the corner of his eye, and hobbled down below. The minute he was gone, up comes my chum Bill Barlow, the engineer (who had see'd the whole thing), and says to me—

"Tom," says he, "now you've done that you'd better just shoot that 'ere fellow right off, if you don't your life isn't worth *that!*"

"Well, Bill," says I, "I'm pretty much of that way of thinking myself; but still, I don't like killing a fellow in cold blood, somehow. Let's wait till he does summut and then we'll let him know."

But Bill's words stuck in my head, and they stuck in it a trifle more two night's a'ter, when, just as we was getting out of the harbor down to Suez, a block from the foremast fell within an inch of my head, and pretty nigh knocked my brains out. There was mor'n a chance it cum up a loft at the time making sail, so of course it might have been a accident; but when I seed Master Spiro scramble down along with the crew, I had my own thoughts 'bout the cent me that 'ere sugar-plum.

"Well, the second day a'ter that, just as we was about half way to Suez, Spiro was on the taffrail coilin' down a rope, when the ship gave a lurch, and his foot slipped, and over board he went. If it had been only that, it wouldn't have mattered a pin to him, for not a man on board could hold a candle to him at swimming; but, d'ye see, he fell somehow flat-ways, and cum such a thump upon the water that it reg'lar stunned him, and he lay out in the water like a log. I see he was the nearest, so I sang out, "Stop her!" and jumped after him, and collared him just as he was a sinkin' the second time. But what with his weight, and the rough sea, I had to do all I knew to keep afloat; and by the time they picked us up, I'd swallowed more salt water than all the grog on board could ha' put away the taste of.

Well, Spiro was put into his hammock, and kept warm, but it was next morning afore he cum straight agin. The first thing he axed was, who saved him? And when they told him it was me, he stared for a minute without sayin' nothin', and then flew up the ladder like a wild cat—came rushing up to where I was standing, and threw himself down on his knees, and took my hand and kissed it, and cried like a child.

"I cum precious near pipin' my eye too, I can tell ye to see so much natteral gratitude in a great hulkin' cut-throat like him. But the minute he got up and stood afore me, as tall and [illegible] as a king, and looks me right in [illegible] and says—

"Capitan [illegible] always called me that)—"Capitan [illegible] know all. You 'member dat [illegible] fall [illegible] your [illegible] de odder night? [illegible] it; a[illegible] when [illegible] kill you, I kill you w' dis kni[illegible] See you take de knife, drive [illegible] into my heart—so! (he gave me the knife, and stripped open his shirt)—"you have revenge, and it done!"

Talk of a play! the way the feller said that, and the way he stood waitin' for the blow, never movin a muscle, beat all the plays that ever was. I said nothin' for a minute—I couldn't ha' spoke to save my life—and then I flung the knife down on the deck and says to him.

"I won't touch a hair of your head my brave fellow—only you be a good boy, an don't let's have any more nonsense!"

He gave my hand a grip that made it ache for a whole day after, and away he went and there (as I thought) was an end of that. But it warn't an end of it, neither.

'Bout a week after, we was lying at Suez, taking in a cargo, and had pretty nigh got it all aboard, when one afternoon I took a thought (the weather being murderin hot) that I might as well have a bathe; and so I did—as jolly a one as I ever had yet. I was just thinking, after paddling about for a quarter of an hour or so, that it was about time to be coming out—when all to once, atwixt me and the ship, I seed a great black pointed thing, that I knowed directly for the back fin of a shark!

I warn't 'exactly' frightened—there ain't time for that in such scrapes, all the right comes after it's over—I just felt my breath go for a minute, as if somebody had hit me in the wind; and then I found myself cooin' down the shark 'ed ketch hold o' me—lengthways or sideways, or with my head right into his mouth. I saw him lunch round in the water, ready for a rush, with all his big teeth grinning—and then suddenly there was a splash and a bubbling, and up rose the shark almost upright in the water, wrigglin' like a speared eel, and the clear water round him turned all dark with blood; and then something gripped me by the shoulder, and I heard Spiro's voice saying quite coolly, "All right, capitano,—he no hurt you now!" The feller had actilly dived under the shark, and cut a gash in him as big as the mouth of a letter box—with the very same knife he'd been a-goin' to kill me with.

The shark wasn't quite dead, but he was too hard hit to go far; and after they picked us up, they settled him and hauled him alcard; and I've got a bit of his backbone now, made into a walking stick.

Well, after that, Spiro and me was the greatest chums goin'; and when the poor feller died o' fever, 'bout a year after, I was as sorry as if it had been my own brother. Just afore he died, he gave me the knife; and this is it hangin' round my neck now. So you see, let a fellow be as black as the mouth of the funnel, there may be good in him yet. And now, let's go up and see what kind o' night it is afore we turn in.

ALICE STANLEY'S VALENTINE.

BY ANNA MORRIS.

"Sister Alice!" called a clear, childish voice.

Sister Alice, obedient to the summons, came to the window where her little sister, Minnie Stanley, stood looking out. A prettier face, or figure, it would be difficult to imagine. Alice Stanley was more than pretty; she was intelligent, cultured, and even-tempered. She never thought of herself, when the happiness, or even pleasure, of others was involved. Hence she came forward now, putting down the book she had been reading.

"I am trying to find a star," replied the child, artlessly, "so that I may wish. Jenny Brooks taught me how."

"It is rather too early to see the stars yet," said Alice. "The sun has just set. See the after-glow in the sky. But ah! there's the new moon."

"O[illegible]! and a tiny bit of a star close by!" cried the little girl. "Now I will [illegible]" and she repeated, eagerly,

"Star light, star bright,
First star I've seen to-night,
I wish I could, I wish I might,
Have the wish I wish to-night!"

Then she stood a moment in silence, and with a long breath of relief, said, "Milton," in a tone of great satisfaction.

Alice laughed. It was a pleasure to hear her laugh. Her laugh was like the tinkle of silver bells.

"What has Milton, to do with the wish?" she said.

"Oh, that's the way!" said Minnie, with much gravity. "Jenny Brooks said I was to say the verse; then wish, and then say the name of some poet; and she told me that Milton was a poet. He was one, wasn't he? She wasn't making fun of me, was she?" Then she looked up to her sister, quite gravely, and said, "Now you wish, Alice. Didn't you know how, when you were a little girl?" she asked, compassionately.

"Oh, yes!" said Alice. "I know how, only instead of saying, "Milton," I put my finger on my lips, and went about until I could get some one to ask me if I had wished. But I think your way is an improvement."

Then some one called Minnie, and she ran away, leaving Alice still looking at the fast darkening sky. The moon was one of exceeding beauty, for another star began to twinkle, till soon the whole firmament seemed palpitating. But she scarcely seemed to heed what she saw. Her thoughts were not on the scene before her. Her sister's simple faith, that a star had the power to grant her wish, had brought back some memory of her own childish days. With a smile and a sigh she repeated the rhyme, and then murmured softly to herself, "If Dr. Cranston sends me a Valentine to-morrow."

As she spoke, even though all alone, her virgin cheeks were dyed with blushes. If the gentleman in question had been listening, and had overheard her, she could not have colored more vividly. Frightened at her temerity, she turned hastily away, and ran down to the lighted parlors below.

At the same hour Dr. Henry Cranston, the gentleman whose name she had used, was visiting his aunt and cousin on his return from some patients. His professional duties seldom left him much time for friendly calls, and though warmly welcomed by the older members of the family, the youngest, a little girl of three years, considered him sufficiently a stranger to justify her in being rather timid.

Her sister's persuasive appeals to know whether she loved Cousin Harry, were met, therefore, with calm silence. But Dr. Cranston himself, rising soon after to take his leave, said, playfully,

"What can I do, little Alice, that we may be better friends next time?"

"Oh," she cried, suddenly relaxing, and to the amusement of all present, "send me a Valentine to-morrow. Sister says, it's St. Valentine's Day, and I've never had a Valentine yet."

Of course, he promised compliance, and on his way home, purchased one for the occasion, brilliant in gold, and color, and lace fringed, a very paragon of a Valentine, as he thought, for a little girl.

Arrived at his office, he found several letters requiring his attention, and among them was a note from Alice Stanley, asking the title of a book on drawing, which he had recently recommended to her.

The note contained but half a dozen lines, yet it occupied him longer than all the rest. He read and re-read, it, looking lovingly at the delicate, lady-like handwriting, and at last, with a sudden impulse, kissing the hot-pressed, scented paper.

The answer seemed very difficult to write, but at length it was finished and carefully revised. "That is cool and business-like enough," he muttered, rather bitterly. "She will never dream how presumptuous I am. If she did, rich and courted as she is, I suppose she would never speak to me again." And he reached up to a pigeon-hole in the desk, for an envelope.

"How I wish I dared write her a letter, full of the love and devotion I feel for her," he said, pausing, with the envelope still in his hand. "But it would never do for me, a young doctor, just struggling into a practice, to speak of love to the daughter of Ralph Stanley, the million aire. True, such an event would with every courtesy. But I owe even that position to chance. If I had not been accidentally [illegible] Mr. Stanley when he fell on the ice and was so badly injured, I should never have held the enviable position. Their former physician had just moved away, and they were satisfied with my skill, and they have ever since employed me. I would be a madman to presume on their kindness." And he sighed.

"No, I must wait until I can at least support a wife," he added, after awhile; "and in the meantime some one else will carry off the prize." And he sighed again.

He sat for a few minutes in moody silence, then, rousing himself, said, "Now for little Alice's Valentine," and drew forth the daintily-embossed sheet he had chosen.

"I suppose it must have some verses to make it complete," he thought, and again took up his pen.

One could see, however, by the tender light in his face, as he wrote, that it was of the larger Alice that he was thinking, rather than of the little one.

Three or four verses, and he had finished.

"A rather poor attempt," was his comment; "but it will have to answer."

Just then the office bell rang. It was an urgent [illegible] from one of his patients, and he hastily made his preparations. As he [illegible] leaving his office, his eyes fell on the letters. "These must go to-night; I will mail them myself," he said, and, hastily slipping them into their envelopes, posted them, on his way to his patient.

Many were the Valentines addressed to Miss Alice Stanley, for she was a universal favorite. She had received quantities every year, ever since she could recollect. She took, therefore, but a passing interest in them. Towards night, however, one was handed her, which brought the quick color to her cheeks, and set her heart throbbing wildly. It was only a common letter, as it seemed at first, with a plain white envelope; but Alice recognized the free, manly writing she had so often seen in prescriptions during her father's illness; and thinking to herself, at first, "Dr. Cranston has sent me the title of that book," she opened it, quietly. But the moment her eyes fell on what was within, a blush, as you have said, dyed her pretty face. No title of a drawing-book was sufficient to send the blood in such waves to her cheeks, or to cause her maidenly dress to rise and fall so rapidly above her bosom.

Fortunately she was alone, and had no one to notice her confusion. Twice or thrice she read the few lines it contained, and on the third page was written, in the same well known hand,

"Wilt thou, dearest, be glad to-day,
To the gracious words of love,
Breathing yet in silence staid,
Which I speak to you of my love?

Long and well and have loved thee,
Dearest lady even before
We each theirs I'd restore.

Be confident in that whisper,
By the love and faith you give,
Now indeed I'll ask with order,
And a gracious boon I'll crave.

Long and well, I've loved thee, Alice,
Loved thee, dearest, and true;
When we wed, will not you whisper,
"Harry, dearest, I love you?"

Critics might have thought the rhymes were not as faultless as they should be, considering the beauty of the fair girl who read them; and certainly Dr. Cranston would have taken more care with them, if he had known who was to peruse them. But Alice saw no deficiencies in the verses.

"It is true, I believe him," she said, softly, with a caressing movement of her hand, over the little messenger of such glad tidings. "I think I have loved him," she whispered to herself, blushing again, "almost ever since I first saw him; but he is so grave and wise, I never thought he would care for me." And she, too, first looking stealthily around, kissed her letter.

"But how could he know that I wished him to send me a Valentine?" she said, after awhile, as she thought of her last night's wish. "No one heard me, and he thanks me for the permission to send it! I shall be inclined to believe in the doctrine that kindred spirits can meet and commune, though their earthly tenements may be far distant from each other. Dear Harry!" and she kissed the Valentine a second time.

She seemed lost in thought for a moment. Then she said, with her finger under her chin, "But what am I to do? Wait until we meet, I suppose, and then Monsieur le Doctier," she added, saucily, about a sudden gayety breaking all over her pretty face, "it will depend upon where I happen to meet, whether I comply with your request. Not if it is in the street, or in a [illegible]" for Dr. Cranston, and it was again before he opened his letters.

Among them was a note, from [illegible] in, little Alice's older sister.

"What could possess you," it [illegible] send an envelope addressed to Alice [illegible] only the inclosed paper in it? She [illegible] it her Valentine, and was much disappointed."

Dr. Cranston opened the paper referred [illegible] It was his note to Miss Stanley, giving the title of the book.

In an instant he comprehended all, and knew that his Valentine had gone to Alice Stanley, by mistake.

"A pretty piece of business!" he exclaimed, jumping from his seat, and running his hand wildly through his hair, a habit of his when excited. Then he began [illegible] up and down the room. "It is easy enough to send little Alice another Valentine. But how explain to Miss Stanley?"

He stopped, smothered his chin in thought, resumed his chair, put his face in his hands, and so turned it all over. But he could arrive at no conclusion.

Again his bell roused him, and on opening the door, he found Mr. Stanley's footman.

"Please, sir," said the man, "Come at once to Mr. Stanley's. Miss Minnie is quite unwell."

Dr. Cranston soon arrived at his destination, and was ushered into the parlor, while the footman went to announce his arrival. The rooms were dimly lighted, and the doctor at first thought them vacant; but a slight figure now rose from the fireside, and advanced toward him.

In a moment he recognized Alice Stanley, and was thinking awkwardly enough an apology he could make for his blunder about the Valentine, when, to his bewilderment, she put both hands into his, and, frankly, but with downcast eyes, said,

"I do not quite understand your errand this, but it has made me very happy."

Could he believe his senses? Was she insane, or in a dream? But he could rally his faculties, he was there to see his little patient, and had to leave the room.

But he had another interview with Alice ere he left the sick-room, for Minnie was suffering from more than a slight catarrh. At first rather shocked, when she learned it was only by mistake, that she had read her precious Valentine. But [illegible] and earnestness, perhaps also the [illegible] of the doctor, soon reconciled her. They had a hearty laugh over the explanations, and Alice was [illegible] before her lover left the house [illegible] more after, to repeat correctly the [illegible] of his VALENTINE.

Mr. John M. Marshall, of Falls, recently lost a colt, which said the effect of eating apple pomace from cider press; and two or three others have died from the same cause in town.

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