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\$2.00 PER ANNUM
IN ADVANCE.

VOL. 33.

WADESBORO, N. C., THURSDAY, MAY 18, 1876.

NO. 6.

Original Story.

Written for the ARGUS.
FATHERLESS AND MOTHERLESS.

SUNSHINE AFTER DARKNESS.

BY
MISS MINNIE F. DICKSON.

CHAPTER III.

BELVINNE'S ARRIVAL AT OAK LAWN.

Miss after life! what is mine after life?
My day is closed; the gloom of night is come!
A hopeless darkness settles o'er my fate!
Joanna Baillie.

One week after the events recorded in our last chapter, Belvonne Ellwood, seated in Dr. Langdon's large family carriage, in company with her uncle and Jack, the driver, found herself rapidly nearing Oak Lawn. Aunt Voe was some distance behind the carriage, in a small conveyance which held the luggage belonging to the child—rough and old-fashioned things most of them were, but, nevertheless, dear to Belvonne, because "they were mamma's"—driven by Tom, a saucy, impudent-looking negro boy of fifteen years, for whom Aunt Voe had already formed a decided dislike.

"Case," she told him, "he didn't hab no raisin', else he wouldn't talk about dat which 'longed to dem as was his folks' betters, and treat pious on o'er'n himself as he did."

The fact was, he had incurred Aunt Voe's displeasure when he first met them in Huntsville, by some very unguarded remarks concerning what he termed "dat ole plunder ob yorn." The negro was strongly influenced by prejudice in regard to her "white family," and would warmly resent even the slightest intimation of what sounded to her disrespectful. In her opinion it was a predicable fact that the Ellwoods and Langdons were two of the first and most perfect families in all the land. Placing the old-fashioned hair trunk that had belonged to Belvonne's grandmother in the conveyance, the boy muttered in an undertone, too low to reach the sharp ears of Aunt Voe:

"Well, dis beats all! looks as if de barber could do it some good service. I dunno what Mars Gilbert wanted wid sich po' folks 'bout his 'stablishment. Dat ole nigger dar, for all she's so stuck up like, don't look like she'd had nuff to eat in six months. Miss Martha didn't want dese po' trash 'bout her. I hearn her say as much 'fother morain', when mars and her had dat high quar', and I don't blame her if she don't. Guess dat little gal will wish she was a few miles off time she stays wid Miss 'Rely white'."

By this time he had everything in readiness for their departure, and after waiting for Aunt Voe to get a seat, drove off rapidly toward Oak Lawn.

It had taken considerable persuasion upon the part of both Aunt Voe and Dr. Langdon to induce Belvonne to leave her Florida home, and return with him to his Alabama, for, though she had formed a firm feeling of attachment for him, she had strong misgivings in regard to her aunt and cousins, whom she had never seen; but at length she yielded to his persuasions, and promised to accompany him.

As they came in full view of Oak Lawn, that lovely June evening, the child, who had not moved nor uttered a word since leaving the village, with her eyes bent upon the glorious scenes of living beauty, almost unconsciously leaned forward in her seat, and clasped her tiny white hands together in silent, wondering adoration. Never before in her young existence, had she beheld such a gorgeous display of natural loveliness.

"What is it, Belvonne, child?" the Doctor asked, noticing the unusual light in her large, liquid eyes.

"Oh, uncle, it is all so lovely! so lovely!" she exclaimed, pointing toward the beautiful scenery spread out like a kaleidoscopic picture before them.

"Yes, my child, it is all very beautiful; and do you not think that you will be happy now, since you can live there all the time?"

"Oh, yes, uncle; I shall be very happy, I know, if aunt and cousins will only love me like my dear mamma did."

Then, raising her eyes to his, she asked: "Do you think they will, uncle Gilbert?"

A shadow passed over his face, which she did not notice, as he answered her, evasively:

"Strive to be good, like your mamma, Belvonne, and so one can avoid loving you."

The child did not answer; for, just then, the carriage stopped before the high arched gate in front of Oak Lawn.

Springing from the carriage, Dr. Langdon turned to lift the child therefrom, saying:

"Come, Belvonne; we are home at last."

A pleasant home it'll be, too, for de child wid dat high-tempered mistress of our'n; she'll be sorry for de day she ever come here, dat chile will, or dis nigger don't know nuffin 'bout it," muttered the driver, as he turned the horses' heads and drove away.

Just inside the gate they were met by Royal Langdon, a black-eyed, dark-complexioned boy of fifteen, who, after greeting his father affectionately, turned toward the timid, shrinking Belvonne, asking:

"Is this my little cousin, father?"

"Yes, Royal. Can you not give her a welcome to Oak Lawn?"

"A thousand of them, father!" he exclaimed, catching the little trembling hand in his, rough boy fashion, and imprinting a warm, cousinly kiss upon the full, cherry lips.

"But what is your name, little coz? I know it is a beautiful one if it is anything like its possessor."

The child, with a certain air of shyness, raised her clear, expressive eyes to his face as she answered:

"Belvonne."

"Belvonne! that is a boy's name; but nevertheless, a pretty one. I am going to call you Belvie; I never could stand to call such long names."

A smile came to the child's ruby lips as, slipping her hand into her cousin's warm palm, she answered:

"It was papa's name. Mamma always called me Belvie. I like that best."

"Yes, it is much the prettiest, I think—but you are not at all like sis'; she's such a young lady-like piece of perfection that she won't allow me, if she can prevent it, to call her anything except sister, or Aurelia; but I do call her sis' and Aurelie of tenor than anything else just to see her get angry and have her tantrums."

"Roy," spoke Dr. Langdon, "you should not talk about your sister."

"I'm not talking about her, father; I was just telling Belvie what a temper she has. She will find that out herself before she has been here many days—so it doesn't make any difference if I do tell her a little before hand."

Royal's words created in Belvonne's heart an uneasy feeling—a fear of impending evil, undefinable, though, and incomprehensible to her childish mind. For the boy already felt an affection stronger than she had ever given to other except her mamma and Aunt Voe. His frank disposition and cheery manners had won the confidence and love of her impulsive heart.

They had by this time reached the house, and Dr. Langdon, entering, led the way toward a large and elegantly furnished room, closely followed by Royal and Belvonne.

Before one of the open windows in this room sat Mrs. Langdon, a dark frown resting upon her face, and an angry glitter in her light brown eyes. By her side stood her daughter, Aurelia Langdon, a fair complexioned child of twelve years, tall for her age, and very slender—taken all together, she was the perfect prototype of her mother, only more youthful in appearance. She might have been pretty had it not been for the bold expression of the light brown eyes, and the haughty curve of the thin, red lips.

As her husband entered the room the frown darkened upon Mrs. Langdon's brow as she exclaimed:

"You have carried out your determination—we will see if in time you are not made to repent the act by which you crossed my will!"

"Martha, calm yourself," he answered—then, glancing toward the shrinking form of the child in the doorway, he called:

Belvonne, come speak to your aunt and cousin!"

The child moved timidly toward him, and, taking her little hand, he would have placed it in his wife's, but she pushed the little one from her saying:

"There! I don't want to speak to you!"

With flushed cheek and tearful eye Belvonne turned away. Royal, who had been watching from his position in the doorway, came forward, and, taking the hand of his little cousin in his own, led her from the room out upon the vine-wreathed piazza; and there strove, by every device that his ingenious brain could invent, to bring back the smile upon her lip, and make her forget the scene which she had just witnessed. But the little heart was too heavy for gladsome smiles upon the lip; and all Royal's efforts were vain.

"Why do you not look happy like you did when you first came, Belvie?" he asked, seating himself in a low chair, and drawing the little one down upon his knee.

"Oh, because, cousin Royal, I feel so badly—there is no one in all the wide world who loves me, now, since mamma died."

"Yes, there is, Belvie; I love you—so do not weep," stroking the curly head upon his bosom, "for they will not hurt you; it's only mother's way."

"I want her to love me, Royal, like mamma did."

"Well, perhaps she will after a while," answered the boy, though in his own mind he was very doubtful whether his mother could really love anybody or not.

"I wonder who that is coming?" he asked, after succeeding in a measure to soothe the troubled feelings of his little cousin, as he glanced down the broad country road, up which Aunt Voe was being rapidly driven by Tom.

"Oh!" exclaimed Belvonne, starting up with a glad light in her eyes, that is Aunt Voe!" and unclasping her cousin's arms from about her, she ran down the broad steps, and was soon bounding away over the emerald lawn toward the gate. When the vehicle paused before the back entrance way, Belvonne ran forward, and, reaching the side of Aunt Voe, threw herself in her open arms, while her little frame quivered with hysterical sobs.

"What's de matter wid you, Miss Belvie, darlin'?"

"Oh, Aunt Voe, I am so miserable; no one loves me now like you did and mamma did!"

"No, honey, nobody goin' to lub you like your mamma and Aunt Voe; for da

luded you better'n der own lives, and Aunt Voe lub you yit, and alus will. But Miss Belvie, honey, how do you like de folks?" she asked, suddenly breaking off.

"I don't know, Aunt Voe; they are all so proud and cold except uncle and Royal—Aunt won't speak to me," answered the child through her tears.

"Won't speak to you? Well, neber mind, honey; she'll speak arter a while—got one o' her fits ob temper, I spect; I alus hearn she had an awful temper."

"Oh, Aunt Voe, will you ever be happy again, as we were before mamma died?" wailed the little one in a voice of intense grief.

"Yes, honey, I hope so; but if we is neber as happy here, mebbe we'll be when we die and go to Heben; for dar we will be wid her alus."

Here further conversation was cut short by the appearance of Tom from one of the cabins, who called:

"Ole 'oman, Tildy say you kin stay wid her fill morain', den mars'll gib you a cabin to yerself!"

"Listen at dat scamp callin' me ole 'oman. Miss Belvie did you eber hear de like? But you can't spect de niggers to be everything whar some ob de white folk's like da is here. But I s'pose I must go now; for ef I don't, it's no tellin' whether da will let me in at all or not. So good-bye, Miss Belvie, darlin'—Aunt Voe'll see you agin to-morrow," and the negro turned and walked away toward one of the cabins, muttering under her breath:

"I fear dark days ahead ob dat chile, dark days ahead."

Left alone, Belvonne retraced her footsteps toward the house, where she was met at the door by Royal, who had just started out in search of her. Taking her hand and drawing her within, he exclaimed:

"Why, where have you been so long, little runaway? I had just started out to find you."

"I have been with Aunt Voe," she answered.

"Well, come, now," he said, leading her toward the spacious eating room, "the bell for tea has just rang, and if we don't mind we will miss ours."

Upon entering they found the rest of the family already assembled. The meal passed away in silence, and was a long and tiresome one to Belvonne.

Soon after tea she was shown to her room, where had been placed the few pieces of furniture belonging to her mother that she had brought with her. Quickly undressing, the child threw herself upon the little couch, and soon sobbed herself into a fitful, uneasy slumber. And this was the way in which Belvonne Ellwood spent her first evening at Oak Lawn, fit men of all the dark, dark days to come!

(To be continued.)

OUR RADIX LETTER.

JEALOUSY GOETH—MAY DAY—BAD FOR BANKRUPTS—UNCLE SAM'S CASH BOX—OFFENBACH—ART MATTERS—THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION—MATTERS AT PHILADELPHIA—THE LIVELY LAST DAYS—BALLOON ILLUMINATION—THE PRESS REPRESENTATION—RAILROAD FARES.

[From Our Own Correspondent.]
NEW YORK, May 5, 1876.

EDITOR ARGUS:—

Gotham is green with jealousy. Isn't she the biggest town, with the most money, rings, rows, elevated railways and four-in-hands in America? And isn't that sleepy, rambling old village of Philadelphia stealing her birthright, and monopolizing the lion's share of the world's attention which would otherwise centre on Manhattan Island? Of course; and under these circumstances how else should New York feel but injured and indignant? But we must submit to the inevitable with the best grace possible and consent to suffer a partial eclipse for the next six months. And with this fact in view I will notice only slightly the doings of the week here that more space may be left for the Quaker City.

In the first place the week has been one long moving day. The unsettled condition of rent and of the pockets of most of the people has caused a very considerable amount of shifting round. This convulsion of nature, however, is about over now. The stream of drays full of stoves, looking glasses, clocks, beds and chairs is subsiding, and our nomadic tribe is settling down with a sigh of relief for another year.

Mr. Charles O'Connor, who for several weeks has been made the subject of some very ugly stories, accusing him of very serious sharp practice in defrauding a widow who years ago was his client, has turned upon his slauderers, and before a tribunal presided over by ex-Governor Dix, has vindicated himself in a manner to increase, if possible, his high reputation.

In view of the barefaced lengths to which dishonest composition with creditors has been carried of late, the action just taken by a certain manufacturers' association of this city is important and significant. The chairman of this body in a very able letter, brought out by an unusually shameless offer on the part of his debtors of 50 cents on the dollar immediately after saying they were perfectly solvent, very justly says that "when we compel our good customers to compete with rotten concerns who only pay fifty cents on the dollar we stick the knife into the very heart of commercial honor and ability, and offer a premium on fraud and imbecility." He then appeals to business men generally to band together for the purpose of crushing out this enormous evil. The ball thus set in motion is rapidly gathering momentum; the press have taken it up, and I am much

mistaken if within a year's time fraudulent settlements are not made both dangerous and unpopular, at least among merchants dealing with large New York houses.

Now that our sub-treasury is handling so much specie, its guardians feeling naturally anxious for its security, have just put upon their two vaults a set of doors that will make the average "cracksman" scratch his head to get through. These doors are four in number, each four inches thick and made of welded iron and steel, the whole weighing some twenty-five tons, and, as though sixteen inches of cold metal were not enough to discourage the festive burglar, the doors have an aggregate of sixteen combination and chronometer locks. So, on the whole, Uncle Sam may sleep pretty easy so far as his cash box here is concerned.

The great opera bouffe composer Offenbach arrived on the 5th, a barge load of the theatrical and musical profession going down the bay to meet and welcome him. He will open the summer season of Gilmore's concert garden (the scene of Moody and Sausky's late labors) on Thursday next, when a big time in the musical line is anticipated. For his services in this country Offenbach receives the very handsome sum of \$1000 per night.

Two notable art sales have been held this week, one, that of the Blodgett collection of paintings netting nearly \$90,000, and the other, that of the Jenkins collection bringing about \$70,000. It is estimated that the private galleries of this city alone contain paintings to the value of at least two millions of dollars. One of the finest of its size in New York or in the country is that of J. H. Johnson, the well-known Jeweler, of this city. His collection embraces many beautiful gems of the prominent modern painters, of E. Luetze, Cropley, Bierstadt, the elder and one younger Moran, Gay and numerous others, and one magnificent Rembrandt that shines among its modern associates like the Kohi-noor among the lesser jewels of the crown. This admirable work, the subject of which is St Mark and the Lion, caught the practiced eye of Mr. Johnston among a number of ordinary paintings in a picture store here in New York, and was quietly bought by him at a normal figure. Great was the surprise of his artist friends when called to view the new treasure, and much incredulity was at first expressed by them that such a treasure could have existed in their midst with their knowledge, but the proofs were too strong, and he is now generally conceded to be the possessor of a genuine Rembrandt, worth at least \$30,000. At Mr. Johnston's brilliant weekly receptions, when his collection is thrown open to invited guests, may be seen many of the most illustrious artists and literati of the country.

PHILADELPHIA, May 6.

Barring the conflict of opinion and authority between the Centennial Commission and the Executive Committee, to which I made reference in previous letters, everything is smooth and harmonious in these last days of busy preparation; and even in this little jarring is not as serious as some of the papers would have it appear. The subject of recent action are the Sunday and liquor questions. The decision to close both buildings and grounds on Sunday, though sharply opposed, has been confirmed and will doubtless be the order of the season, to the great dissatisfaction of a large proportion of the natives. The authorities declining to act on the various protests received against liquor selling on the grounds, the public will have numerous opportunities to "pizen" itself within the sacred precincts.

Director Goshorn's "General Order, No. 2," positively closes the buildings against the public from May 31 till the opening. This was rendered positively necessary by the curious crowd who seriously interfered with the work. Even now to the uninitiated observer the main building is one great Babel of noise and confusion; in reality, however, the work is progressing orderly and rapidly. Since my last, much has been done toward the completion of the big international village which the main building contains. The entrance to the Chinese pavilion is completed, and is a fine specimen of what is aptly called the "teavaddy" style of architecture. On the front is an inscription in the zigzag lighting which delights the juvenile eye on the red park of a bunch of fire crackers.

Speaking of which suggests the 4th of July, and that in turn reminds me that a Baltimore enthusiast has a plan for illuminating the city and grounds on the evening of that crowning festival—by means of big calcium lights suspended by balloons at a sufficient altitude. The idea may not be very practical, but the effect would be fine if it could be produced. The brilliant white light, hovering above the cradle of freedom, might well be taken for the star of a new and higher destiny of our country in the century to come. (There is no copyright on the foregoing.) Just how the moon would take this usurpation of her peculiar functions is quite another matter.

The Emperor and Empress of Brazil are expected to arrive here on Tuesday from the West, to be in readiness to attend the opening ceremonial on the following day. A suite of ten rooms on the first floor and one of four rooms on the third of the Continental Hotel are being prepared for their accommodation and that of their attendants. The first floor rooms are the same that were used by the Prince of Wales. They are to be newly and handsomely furnished and decorated.

The rehearsal of the music for the open-

ing is progressing vigorously. The chorus now numbers one hundred, and under the magnificent leadership of Theodore Thomas will be made to do wonders.

The "press gang" has already commenced to arrive, and will come faster and faster for several days yet. American journalism is going to have a magnificent representation; actively by the most of reporters and correspondents detailed to keep their respective papers posted during the Centennial, and at the same time show foreigners the workings of the American reporting system, and passively, so to speak, by the "Newspaper Exhibition" which has a separate building and in which files of every American periodical will be kept. This exhibition of one of the most prominent and creditable features of our country, the lack of which would have been a national disgrace, was originated by and is entirely under the management of Geo. P. Rowell & Co. of New York, beyond question the most enterprising house of the kind in the world, and in fact the only one, probably, who could successfully carry out the plan.

The question of railroad fares, to and from Philadelphia, is naturally receiving much discussion and attention. It is probable that the reductions that will be made will generally be satisfactory, though some roads will doubtless try to make hay while the sun shines, by holding prices and trusting to the attractions of the Exposition to make the people pay them. The Pennsylvania Railroad has taken a noble initiative by putting their round trip tickets by excursion train, between New York and Philadelphia, at \$2.00, a reduction of three-fifths. It is also issuing tickets from all parts of the country at proportionately low rates.

The number of strangers which the city and suburbs can stow away at one time is very variously estimated. The Transportation Committee, after a pretty thorough canvass, reports the figures as 118,000, with a possibility at a pinch of taking care of 160,000. So come on, and don't be afraid of having to sleep in the streets.

RADIX.

Miscellaneous.

A Fearful Summons.

"Mr. Smith, I called to see if I could take your life."

"Wh—wh—what d'you say?" exclaimed Smith, in some alarm.

"I say that I've come around to take your life. My name is Gunn. As soon as I heard you were unprotected, that you had nothing on your life, I thought I would just run in and settle the thing for you at once."

Then Smith got up and went to the other side of the table, and said to himself: "It's a lunatic who has broken out of the asylum. He'll kill me if I halloo or run. I must humor him."

"You can choose your own plan, you know. It's immaterial to me. Some like one way, and some like another. It's a matter of taste. Which one do you prefer?"

"I'd rather not die at all," said Smith in despair.

"But you've got to die of course," said Gunn; "that's a thing there's no choice about. All I can do is to make death easy for you, to make you feel happy as you go off. Now which plan will you take?"

"Couldn't you postpone it until to-morrow, so as to give me time to think?"

"No; I prefer to take you on the spot. I might as well do it now as at any other time. You have a wife and children?"

"Yes, and I think you ought to have some consideration for them and let me off."

"Well, that's a curious kind of an argument," said Gunn. "When I take you your family will be perfectly protected, of course, and not otherwise."

"But why do you want to murder me, I—"

"Murder you. Murder you. Who in the thunder's talking about murdering you?"

"Why didn't you say—"

"I called to get you to take out a life insurance policy in our company, and I—"

"Oh, you did, did you?" said Smith, suddenly becoming fierce. "Well, I ain't a going to do it, and I want you to skip out of the office or I'll brain you with the poker. Come, now, skip."

Then Mr. Gunn withdrew without selling a policy, and Smith is still uninsured.

THE MEANEST MAN.—An exchange says: "Old Skinfint," with a speckled hen, was down to O'Brien's Show last Thursday, and hitched his team to a fence in the rear of this office. Pulling out an old ten pound salt sack from under the seat he proceeded to feed the horse. What on earth the hen was for we could not imagine, until just before hitching up to return he tied one end of the string attached to the hen's leg to the hind wheel of the wagon, and the mystery was solved—he had brought along the hen to pick up the last oat left by the horses, that nothing might be lost.

THE DAY IS COMING.—If the negro only knew certain white rads that honey them up for their votes as we know them, with what loathing would they drop them and shake them off from their fingers. But there is this consolation. Providence has so arranged it that hypocrites shall not go through life a success but at some time or other there comes a day of unmasking and they are unstripped and shown before the world in their true colors.

Already the mask is gradually dropping from these fellows' faces and the negro regards them with a cut of the eye which is about half done with them. It will all come around right after awhile. Why, we heard these fellows sit down and laugh among themselves over what fools they had made of the negro, and we thought at the time: "Gentlemen, political lying is as bad as personal lying, and there is coming a day when the negro will find you out, and when it does come, good bye to you, for you will lose your offices, and there isn't one among you that can make thirty-seven and a half cents a day at anything else.—That day is almost here. We predict a larger negro vote this year with the white Conservatives of the State than has ever been known.—Raleigh News.

WASTE LAND.—If a farm of 160 acres is divided by fences into fields of ten acres each, there are five miles of fence. If each fence, now, is one rod wide, no less than ten acres of land are occupied by them. This is equal to six and one-fourth per cent on the whole value of the farm. But nearly every fence now in the country is made a nursery of weeds, which stock the whole farm and make an immense amount of labor necessary to keep them from smothering the crops. Much damage always results to the crops from these weeds, and if those expenses are added to the first one, the whole will easily sum up twenty per cent, or a tax of one-fifth of the value of the farm. To remedy this we would have fewer fences, or we would clean and seed down the fence rows to grass or clover and mow them twice a year. Ten acres of clover or timothy would at least supply a farm with seed, and often tons of hay, every year. We would, in short, consider the fence rows as absolutely part of the farm, and use them as such.—American Agriculturist.

If Grant had been surrounded by thieves for years past, he ought to have found it out before everybody else did, and before the evidence of it were piled up mountain high on all sides. It is absurd to suppose that he could live among a disreputable gang, year after year, seeing their ways, taking part in their colloquies, and observing their fortunes, while yet he took them to be men of high character, honest principles, integrity, and honor! This would imply that he was both blind and senseless, or else that he did not know honor and honesty when he saw them. Put any other man of ordinary intelligence in the company of the men who have been Grant's companions, favorites, and parasites, and he could not help finding out that they were mercenary, greedy, and conscienceless knaves. The trouble with Grant has been that he did not care whether they were knaves or not; that he kept them about him regardless of their being so; and that he gave them places of responsibility without caring what they did in them.—N. Y. Sun.

It was in a New Jersey Sunday school. The superintendent approached a youth of color who was present for the first time, and inquired his name for the purpose of placing it on the roll. The good man tried in vain to preserve his dignity when the answer was returned: "Well, massa calls me Cap'n, but my maiden name is Moses."

Talk about letting out the pin backs! Why, sir, they are tighter this Spring than ever. And now that the weather is getting warmer, and clothes are getting thinner, you can almost tell, if your eyes are good, what color those stockings are, whether the wind blows or not.

After a play a young Frenchman said to his friend, "I could play the lover better than that myself!" She replied, "Then why in heaven's name don't you!"

Durham Tobacco Plant: The mother of our friend John Waller, of Knop of Reeds, lighted her first match on the 27th, of April, and she is 68 years old. She don't believe in the things