

A STUBBORN OLD COUPLE.

This Family Has Spited the State For Eleven Years—Refused to Pay an Old Debt and Were Dispossessed.

We cannot vouch for the exact truthfulness of the following remarkable story, which was recently published in the Atlanta Journal, but give it to our readers for what it is worth:

About two miles from Wentworth, the county seat of Rockingham county, North Carolina, on the side of the road to Reidsville, live the queerest combination of man and wife, squalor, madness and stubbornness that ever puzzled the wits of landlords and county officers, against whom there is a constant waging of aggressive war.

Notwithstanding the advanced age of Clem and Eliza Wooten—eighty-six and seventy-three—and the exposure to which the last eleven harsh winters have subjected them, they are today as fiery and as pugnacious as when, in their palmy days, they kept a sheriff's posse at bay forty-eight hours, Clem cracking away with an old musket through the chink holes of an upper story and Aunt Eliza dashing formidable streams of hot water through the crevices in the wall. Claiming the heaven-given promise of "eating the goose that pecks the grass from the grave" of every man in public life at the time of their financial troubles, they are about to realize the fulfillment of their fancied pledge, for many have dropped out of the procession, some by death, some by business failures, and many are snowed under by popular franchise. Yet Old Man Clem and Aunt Eliza still hang on the Christmas tree and gloat over the misfortunes of their downfallen, imagined foes. It is a singular fact and one from which they are fond to draw when hurling anathemas upon humanity in general that never have they been forsaken in the matter of rains, even when districts within a radius of a mile were parched from heat and drought. They were always successful gardeners, but now their truck patches fairly bloom and smile in luxuriant beauty, while, as old Clem put it, "Ah-h-h! They're all a burnin' up." They won't make enough on Nubbin Ridge ter feed the ole 'oman's chickens a week. But here's yo' cabbage an' yo' inghuns, an' thar's yo' co'n an' yo' snaps, higher'n yo' head, an' wa'r'm'ons an' mushm'ons—Ah-h-h, I've sho' got 'em!"

It is a long story of fraudulent transfer of realty to evade payment of an old debt and the subsequent triumph of the creditor in finding the fraudulent grantee in financial straits and purchasing the lands, tendering the old debt in part payment. Then follows eviction in the fall of 1888, their stubborn, spiteful and vindictive natures refusing all proffered homes or to buy a shelter from the approaching winter—for they had money and many household comforts. The provisions of the law were met and they were placed on the Reidsville road, in sight of their old home, and here, they declared, they would stay "till they rotted, just for spite." Their spite, however, was of a too vigorous type, for, after spending the winter in an old wagon, sleeping between the feather beds, and cooking al fresco, with here and there beneath the scrubby oaks pieces of valuable furniture—mahogany sideboards, mirrored walnut chamber suits and bric-a-brac—they were adjudged nuisances and lodged in jail. There was no provision for the household goods, and, as a result, there is little left to indicate the prosperity they once enjoyed. Mules, chickens—a hundred or more—four barns of tobacco, forage provisions, bedding and 200 weight of dried fruit were lawful prey.

After a few months' incarceration, they were released, and, by order of the board of commissioners, placed on a tract of the county's land, near the poorhouse. Nine years they lived there and in peaceable possession, clearing new fields each year, and, after a few winters, improvising a rude brush harbor for shelter, which in time grew by constant additions to quite a cozy home. It was then permanence illumined their homes and he served notice on the county commissioners that he held color of title for all the adjoining lands of the county by seven years' peaceable and unmolested possession. He was his own counselor, however, and his dream of empire had a rude awakening, for, under a suit for possession, he was evicted again in November, 1897, he and his wife being carried bodily, like babies, half a mile to their present home. This step was not taken, however, until after their refusal to pay a rental of five cents per annum for the place or to allow any one else to pay it for them, the tendering of rent invalidating their claims to the land.

Under an open railed, crouch-

ing over a few flickering embers, these old people weathered the horrors of the severest, the longest and dreariest winter ever before known here. The driving sleet and snows, the drenching rains and the biting winds have told a sad and harrowing tale of suffering on their rugged faces. It is no wonder that madness darts out from their every utterance. The only wonder is that they were not frozen, sleeping as they did upon the bare ground with such scanty covering and that drenched by every rain. They cannot be induced to accept a house for life with every comfort age can need. Stubbornness, pride and a general distrust of human motives are the authors of all their woes. They scorn with cynical gesticulation all expressions of sympathy, nor can advice be tendered them through a megaphone.

Calling to see them, I found the old crone drilling a pet chicken in some very remarkable fancy tactics. She said Clem had just stepped down the road to kill Frank Williams for hauling wood from their acres. Williams, I soon learned, was the agent of the legally recognized landlord, and I expected to hear of a sanguinary conflict. It was not long, however, till the old fellow came in, with a bloodless axe on his shoulder, eyeing me suspiciously; and with a countenance bordering midway upon hellish diabolism and smiling welcome, he began to confide the plan of campaign against his oppressors. He would sue the bondsmen of each county officer concerned in his eviction; he had already gained all the county lands; and, by order of the court, he had been placed in possession of 1,100 acres of land on which he now resides, and by the failure of the former owner to forbid prior to ten days' occupation of the premises, he was now in possession, and that wasn't all, for his itemized fortune amounted to half a million dollars, the disposition of which he was now arranging. He asked me, in consideration of the Journal's interest in him, to sign a lengthy and liberally signed document indicating a willingness to become a devisee under him to the amount of a hundred thousand dollars.

At present they are very comfortably quartered in a rude dirt floor hut, surrounded by such pets as hogs, cows and chickens, from which source, aided by the old man's occasional jobs, they derive their daily bread. However, the spectacle presented is one of dissolution, decay and spoliation. All the furniture lies scattered along the road beneath a sediment of mud and leaves. What was a fine cherry clock hung on a little oak till, piece by piece, it went to ruin, and now is stacked with the remainder of the plunder where they spent the winters—beneath the open sky. Looking at this, Aunt Eliza's eyes filled with tears as she said: "Oh, it was such a fine clock, but it was delicate an' couldn't stand it like us. I wish my old weather-beaten wheels could stop, like it, for I'm mighty tired er stayin' out in the cold an' rain."

It is an old and generally accredited story that, as a girl, Aunt Eliza was one of the prettiest girls, and consequently the belle of her native county, that she had danced with numerous men of state and national distinction, and had more than once figured in affairs d'amour with them. Questioned as to this statement of madam rumor, she diverted her wrinkled face, puffed away at her pipe in thoughtful silence and answered: "Naw! I never danced a step in my life, ner I wa'n't no belle, nuther. They say anything 'cept th'er pra'r's now, an' they don't take time 'ter whistle them."

To casualists the whole is a ludicrous picture and diversion. From them originate some of the wild acts for which the fanatical outcasts are credited, such for instance as their recent action in "posting their lands" against all trespassers and felling huge trees across the road running "through their yard." They are now disposed to be more liberal, and announce their intention of allowing the road to remain open, but will establish a toll gate, which being across the main county road, will be a source of considerable revenue to them.

Still their life is only a life of waiting, conscious of being the human football of remorseless kickers and an ever abounding boomerang upon a civilized community. Upon the recommendation of the grand jury at the last term of court, the presiding judge ordered them returned to the county lands from which they were moved, which order has not as yet been executed, the officer to whom it was directed having been advised by his attorney to ignore it.

Thus it is that they are kicked from pillar to post, one order after another picking them up after they have built a comfortable home, and lived in it all through the sum-

mer, drops them out in the sleet and snow and heaves the Levite's sigh that instead their hoary heads could not be pillowed in some friendly potter's field far away from the disturbing scenes that now cast a blot upon the fair page of a christianized community.

STATEMENT BY PHYSICIANS.

Relatives of the Sick at the Normal Express Gratitude.

Last Thursday Hon. C. H. Mebane, chairman of the board of directors, gave out a statement in which he said the board most heartily approved of the management of President McIver and the faculty during the epidemic of sickness at the State Normal and Industrial College. A statement by the attending physicians and an expression of gratitude from the relatives of the sick were also furnished the press. The two statements follow:

Gentlemen:
After a careful examination of the records, and patient review of the history of the sickness at the State Normal and Industrial College since October 6th, we find that there have been two distinct epidemics. The first, beginning about October 25th, purely malarial in character; the second, beginning in the second week of November, distinctly typhoid, though complicated in one-third of the cases with malaria.

There have been in all about one hundred cases. Of these seventy per cent. were primarily malarial and sixty per cent. malarial only, all recovering in from four to ten days. Of the remaining forty per cent., ten per cent. after having had malaria, were infected by the typhoid poison, while the remaining thirty per cent. seem to have had primary typhoid infection. In view of the severity of the typhoid poison, it is surprising that so small a per cent. of the students were infected.

ANNA M. GOVE, M. D.
W. P. BEALL, M. D.
W. J. RICHARDSON, M. D.
CHAS. L. SCOTT, M. D.

Greensboro, N. C.,
November 29, 1899.

We the undersigned, relatives and friends of the patients who have been and are now sick at the State Normal and Industrial College, desire to express our gratitude to the college authorities for the manner in which our loved ones have been cared for.

Having been here, some of us since before the college suspended, and others for a shorter period of time, we wish to say that it seems to us that all that could be expected has been done by the college authorities, faculty, physicians, and the nurses, and we are also deeply grateful to those ladies of Greensboro who have tendered and given their services as nurses of the sick:

W. H. Hagwood, Wake Forest, N. C.
J. D. Davis, Grissom.
Mrs. C. H. Wiley, Winston.
Mrs. C. M. Babbitt, New Bern.
Miss Etta Stafford, Burlington.
Mrs. T. B. Bailey, Mocksville.
N. B. Daniel, Satterwhite.
T. B. Bailey, Mocksville.
H. A. Eller, Berlin.
John G. Blount, M. D., Washington.
G. L. Madison, Thurman.
Jennie M. Shaw, Rockingham.
J. T. Moore.
Jonas C. Williams, Inez, Warren Co.
E. E. Bouchelle, Wilkesboro.
Seth Bridgman, Washington.
Mrs. A. E. Sides, Mt. Airy.

The Moon During December.

The moon will have her phases during the month of December as follows: New, on the 2d; first quarter, on the 9th; full, on the 16, and last quarter, on the 24. She will be nearest the earth on the 7th and farthest off on the 22d. While at the beginning of the month the sun will be 1 degree from the southern limit of his motion in declination, he will reach that limit on the 22d of the month at 7.56 p. m., at which precise moment the winter season begins. At the beginning of the month the hourly variations of the sun's declination is about 23 seconds, while on the day previous to her winter solstice it is only about half a second, proving the slowness of the sun's motion near the solstices. Its motion in right ascension, however, is faster at the solstices than at the equinoxes, which clearly follows from the fact that the path of the sun's motion is inclined to the equator, and hence the motion in inclination tends to parallelism, and is consequently slow, and to perpendicularity at the equinoxes, and is, therefore, quick, while in regard to the motion in right ascension the case is obviously reversed.

Proud of His Son.

Mr. Thos. Coppinger, Dayton, Tenn., says: "I have used Ramon's Liver Pills and Tonic Pellets for years, and cannot say enough of them for the good they have done in my family. I wish to tell you especially what they did for my youngest son. We thought he was too little to take pills, but when he saw the rest of us taking our usual Tonic Pellet at night, he would cry for one also. So we commenced giving them to him regularly, and from a pale, delicate child he improved immediately, and lately he is as robust a lad as ever breathed mountain air, dry checked, and he looks as healthy as any big fat Irishman you ever saw. For sale by Howard Gardner."

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Alfred Millennial.

In 1901 occurs the millennial anniversary of the death of King Alfred the Great. Already preparations are in progress, both in America and in England, for the celebration of the event. It promises to be a gathering unique in history and to leave behind it some substantial mark of the popular administration of the man to whom the world owes such a large debt in the matter of learning, religious freedom, seamanship, defence and culture. It promises to be a remarkable representation of the Anglo-Saxon brotherhood from pole to pole.

Of personal history the data obtainable are very meager, not even a portrait of him being authentically preserved. He was a soldier, an orator, a lawyer and an architect, besides giving learning its greatest spur, encouraging the translation and perpetuation of many sacred and secular works. He died at the age of 53, was buried first at Winchester Cathedral, his remains thence removed to a monastery founded by him, and afterward Henry I ordered his remains deposited in Hyde Abbey, Winchester, where they were when this edifice was destroyed during the Reformation.

It is here that the proposed memorial will be placed, and near where the celebration of the great King's millennial anniversary will be held, which gathering will call together a vast company of hero worshipers, including hundreds from our own country, many of whom can boast of kingly blood in their veins.

God of our fathers! Thou whose hand Upheld them in their time of need, Strong to prevail against the land From whose far away they would be freed, Refresh our faith, from them that came, The Right they saw, make us to see, Shield us, O God, from the deep shame Of fastening bondage on the free!

That Freedom which was thy good gift Unto our fathers in their day, Make it compel us to uplift. All others struggling on the way, The sons of those thou lovedst of old, Dear God, make them to trust aside The Tempter's bid of power and gold For Freedom to their kind denied!

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