

A Democratic Newspaper. Published every Friday in Louisburg. RATES OF SUBSCRIPTION, One Copy 1 year... 2.00 6 Months... 1.00 TERMS CASH IN ADVANCE

The Franklin Courier.

DEVOTED TO POLITICS, LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND ART.

VOL. 2.

LOUISBURG, N. C., JANUARY, 10, 1873.

NO. 11.

RATES OF ADVERTISING. (10 LINES OR LESS - 36 SQUARES) One square one insertion... One - Each subsequent insertion... One - One month... One - Two months... One - Three months... One - Six months... One - Twelve months... Contract for larger space upon liberal terms

Two Little Girls.

BY JOAQUIN MILLER.

I saw a low-roofed cottage, Far, far below, at slant of day, Red glinting in the tinted ray, A lone sweet star in twilight sky; Saw children sporting to and fro, The busy housewife come and go, And white cows come at her command, And none looked larger than my hand. The sight I could no more withstand; But, worn and torn and tanned and brown, Headless of all, I stole and late, A wanderer, wandering long and late, I stood before that rustic gate.

Two little girls, with a brown front face, And tangled, tawny, yellow hair, I lay on the green fantastic daisies, Around a great big ornamental birch, That lay her resting on its breast, And with his red mouth open wide, Would make believe that he would bite, As they nestled him left and right, And then spring to the other side, An flier with shouts the willing air, Chased sweeter than the fly or bee, To my then hot and thirsty tea, And better still, so wholy route, Were those sweet voices calling there! Though some sweet voices calling there!

SELECTED STORY. Frank Garland's Story.

WRITTEN FOR THE METROPOLITAN RECORD. BY M. L. M.

"So you think my wife is beautiful, captivating, and all the other things—oh, Charlie? Really, I had no idea that you were possessed of such good taste and sound discernment, social behavior as you are and incorrigible woman-hater as you profess to be. My Bessy is all you fancy her, and a thousand times more. To satisfy your laudable curiosity, I'll tell you how I found such a treasure, though I doubt if the information will assist in your proposed search for a similar prize in the lottery matrimonial. Our courtship, let me warn you, began in an out-of-way, that would shock a stickler for the proprieties of etiquette like yourself; and even could you muster up fortitude for such an ordeal, I know not where you would find the witching fair one willing to act her part in the affair. However, take another cigar, and attend to my story.

"When I returned home after that never-to-be-forgotten tour, which fitted closed our collegiate course, I soon perceived that I was an object of particular interest to the belles of my native village. Nay, never smile at my vanity, old fellow, for you well know it could scarcely be otherwise. I did not for a moment attribute all this visible interest of my personal attractions, though I certainly thought myself tolerably good-looking, nor to my own merits, of which I had probably a comfortable conviction; but set down in any rural community a young lawyer with fair prospects of his own and the elect of being the acknowledged favorite and heir presumptive of a rich old uncle, and said uncle a distinguished Senator, the greatest 'great man of the district'—and how, let me ask you, could the sweet creatures be insensible to such a prize? So I may, without any imputation of self-conceit, acknowledge that I could have had my pick and choice, in village parlance. But I was in no hurry to make a choice. My heart remained untouched, and I distributed my attentions with praiseworthy impartiality among my fair friends, and found time pass in a decidedly pleasant way.

"Meanwhile the villagers began to talk, as usual in such cases, and there were many speculations afloat as to who would catch the lawyer. It was generally agreed that the good fortune was reserved for Miss Anabel Colman, the daughter of the richest man in the place, and as such, independent of her own charms, the reigning queen. She was a stately girl, faultlessly beautiful, and thoroughly accomplished—certainly the one of all others for a ris-

ing young lawyer's bride. Moreover, her father and my uncle were the two leading men of the county, and the union of the fortunes and the influence of the two families would secure me success above all rivals in the political career I contemplated; there was no office to which I might not aspire. Thus the good-natured gossips had arranged matters. I heard it all from my clerk, Joe Dickson, but I did not feel like carrying out the programme.

"Matters were in this state when a grand picnic came off. I will not bore you with a description of our pleasures and amusements; truth to tell, there were more of the first and fewer of the last than usually fall to the lot of picnickers, and all owing to the thoughtfulness and good-nature of one little sprite, merry as a child, ubiquitous as a fairy. I had not seen Bessy More since her childhood, when she was a pretty little thing enough, rosy, fat and playful, but giving no promise of the exceeding beauty and grace which developed with her girlhood. In the course of our chat I learned that she had been absent from the village during the past months which accounted for my not having met her before.

"Of course you fell in love forthwith," interrupted Charlie; "no uncommon termination to a picnic."

"Of course I did nothing of the kind," returned Mr. Garland. "I was as heart-whole when we came back as when we set out; but now I will tell my story, having hitherto given but the preface.

"The morning after the picnic I sallied forth to make polite calls on the young ladies with whom I had danced and promenaded in the green groves. My first call was on Miss Cessy. I found her elegantly dressed, reclining on a sofa, and looking perfectly listless and amused. Her talk, which was all about her fatigue, was as insipid as talk could be; the utmost stretch of politeness could not dignify it with the name of conversation. Yet she was bewitching, there is no denying it, in the midst of her elegant surroundings; languor became her style of beauty, and affectation was in her so perfect that it had the charm of naturalness. As I gazed upon her I began for the first time to think seriously of the plan of action the village gossips had chalked out for me. Other visitors coming in, I made my parting bow, and continued my round of calls. Everywhere I found young ladies decked out in the latest style, and engaged in fancy needlework or reading novels. Not one of them appeared to have anything to do, though most of the families were in very moderate circumstances. The pretty village girls affected the elegant leisure and deep-air of sentimental city ladies, and were nearly dead from the fatigues of the previous day. All this did not strike me at the time. The hours passed pleasantly, and I was not in a mood for criticizing.

"I had not yet been to Mrs. More's home, although I had met her occasionally when visiting some mutual friend; but upon reaching her charming cottage home I thought it would be only civil to call on Bessy. The hall door was open to admit the breeze from the vine-shaded piazza; so, merely rapping to announce the intrusion, I entered the cool, inviting parlor. In the dim light I could not for an instant see, but presently I found the room was untenanted; I knocked again, but no one appeared, and hearing the wobble of a sweet, merry voice, which I recognized as Bessy's, I ventured to go in search of the fair songstress. Passing down the hall, I came to the kitchen, a large, airy room, bright and cherry-looking, and there stood Bessy, busily at work kneading dough. It was no dainty pie or cake business, but real down-right bread, and the way she worked that mass of dough was something worth seeing. I stood in the doorway an instant watching the motions of the round white arms, and listening to the gay snatches of melody; then, as she turned to get more flour, she saw the intruder, started a little and blushed with the sud-

den-surprise, but she did not fly from the room, or stammer forth an awkward and untruthful apology. She merely advanced a pace or two with a graceful salutation, and holding up her hands with a pretty gesture of dismay, said gaily:

"I can't shake hands with you, Mr. Garland, as you see. If you condescend to take a seat in the kitchen for a moment, I'll call mother."

"Charmed with her easy, natural deportment under circumstances which I now felt to be somewhat embarrassing, I imitated it by helping myself incrementally to a chair, as I begged her not to disturb her mother. I could only make a few minutes' stay, as I merely called to inquire how she bore the fatigues of yesterday."

"Fatigue!" echoed Bessy, and her ringing laughter told that she felt the absurdity of the idea.

"Why, how could one think of fatigue after having enjoyed such a delightful time! Don't you wish, like the children, there could be a picnic every day?"

"We fell into chatting with the freedom of old acquaintances, while Bessy resumed her occupation, working and kneading until the dough was light, as she informed me in answer to my grave inquiries; then it was made into smooth loaves, nicely fitted into pans, covered with a cloth as white as snow, and put to rise a little more ere it was ready for the oven. I watched the entire process most intently; really I had no idea that bread making was such an interesting affair. As we were leaving the kitchen Mrs. More made her appearance. She pressed me so cordially to stay for dinner that I complied; and furthermore—would you suspect me of such effrontery?—when Mr. More in his frank way invited me to drop in often and take dinner or tea with them, I actually accepted the invitation for that very evening, in order to partake of the fairy-made bread, which I fancied would taste different from any that ever was made before. The parents laughed pleasantly at my declaration and I kept my promise to come to tea, and feasted on that delicious bread, which seemed to me the crowning charm of the repast, although there was an abundance of what are properly considered dainties.

"That bread decided my fate. The contrast was striking, you will admit between those thoughtless girls, playing the fine lady in the parlor while their mothers toiled in the kitchen, and Bessy, the dutiful daughter, engaged in household duties as cheerfully as if they had been pastimes. As I walked home in the light of the harvest moon, I found myself coupling all sorts of endearing adjectives with her sweet homely name, and to cut short my story, on the next New Year's day I astonished all the village by taking the portionless daughter of a mere nobody for my bride. The moral—"

"Don't draw one," interrupted Charlie. "You're a unique, Frank, but give the credit to the loaf of bread—an odd match-maker truly, and one I scarcely expect to come my way."

Humorous.

An exchange asks: "What is a bustle?" We could not tell, and as a young friend of ours has recently got married, we propounded to him. After blushing quietly, he thus explained: "It is a thingumbob!" [Now what in the world is a thingumbob?]

An extravagant School Committee in Schuyler county, Ill., pay a school teacher \$12 a month. Go West young man, go West particularly if you have just graduated and wish to pay off your debts.

Little Willie F., of Greenfield, was recently presented a toy trumpet, to which he became greatly attached. One night, when he was about to be put in his "little bed," and was ready to say his prayers, he handed the trumpet to his grandmother, saying, "Here, grandma, you blow while I pray."

Kentucky Jokers.—It was during the Presidential campaign which resulted in the election of Buchanan, that the writer of the appeal sketch, in company with three other politicians, rode from Paducah to Benton, Ky., in a hack. They were bound for one of the old-fashioned barbecues and he tells what happened on the way thus.

The joking Judge M. was one of the party, and the bottle that popped out from the basket under the seat seemed to improve the sparkle of his wit, the flavor of his jokes, and the music of his laugh, until the happy contagion even reached the driver.

Our fun was at the highest, when, on turning a curve in the road, we saw, down its low, dusty stretch, a solitary ox-cart, with its owner perched upon what proved to be bags of corn. As a kind of advance guard, a great ugly brindle dog came trotting along in advance, and attracted by our noise, he threw himself into an attitude of defiance, determined to dispute our ad-

vance. With his savage growl, red eyes and erect bristles, he indeed presented a formidable appearance. Judge M. could not let such an opportunity for a practical joke pass.— Said he:

"I'll bet the drinks for the day that I can run that dog off the road."

"Done," said he. Stopping our hack, he got out, and threw the skirts of his "awallow-tailed" coat over his shoulders, suck his old snout back on the back of his head, and going down on all fours, he scampered toward the dog with most frightful yells, reminding one of the fable of the ass in the lion's skin. This was too much for the dog, and, howling with fright, he took to the bush. The ox man also saw the fearful monster coming down the road, and with one wild bel-low they took to the brush, with their tails standing straight out behind. Away they went, with wheels bounding high in the air bags of corn bursting open and spilling their contents in a continuous drizzle.

"Whoa, Blaz! Whoa, Bill! O, Lord! what aall I do!" come from the frightened man on the cart, as he was bounding from side to side, now grabbing a cart-pole, then catching at a bag of corn as it went over the side. [This kind of performance couldn't last long without a change for better or worse, and so it came for worse, as the oxen went tearing down the steep bank of a little creek and overturned everything into the water about waist deep. One ox getting loose, went up the opposite bank and soon disappeared, while the other cowered down bellowing as we came up to the scene of disaster. There stood the poor man in water to his waist, his wagon overturned, and half of his corn soaking in the water, while the other half was scattered in the woods. He looked scared and pitiful, and said:

"O Lordy, stranger! don't never do that at any more. I'm ruined!" It was a splendid success, that joke, and there stood the judge holding, on to a snapping, and laughing till the tears ran down his cheeks.

We took up a subscription for the poor fellow. The judge headed the list with an amount nearly covering the damages and I volunteered to until we left the man in thankfulness that he had sold his corn so well. At the paragon the Judge bet all his money on a little horse race, and lost, and from that, and the effects of his drinks at our expense, we had to carry him to our hack on a barn door. On his way home he insisted upon standing on his head.

Which was the ruined man? "Do you go to school now Charlie?" "Yes sir; I had a fight to day, too." "You had? Which whipped?" "Oh, I got whipped," he replied, with great frankness.



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