

The Carolina Watchman

States Library

VOL. XXIII—THIRD SERIES.

SALISBURY, N. C., THURSDAY, MAY 5, 1892

NO. 27.



A DRUMMER'S STORY.

A STORY OF MORE THAN ORDINARY LOCAL INTEREST.

BY R. D. WICKER, TALKER, N. C.

"You don't seem to take hold, Fred," said Bob Maitland, as he pushed the d-canter across the table and blew a cloud of smoke toward the ceiling.

"No, thank you. I never indulge now, and only have it here for my friends who take a glass occasionally. I have not touched a drop since I was married, let summer."

"Married! The d-uce you say. This must be another of those dry jokes of yours, Fred. Did you ever hear anything of it, George? Did you, Carl?" addressing two other young men who sat opposite, tramping on the table abstractedly.

"Never a word," replied both, looking up in surprise.

The above conversation occurred in a room of one of Raleigh's hotels not long since.

Fred Bolton was a drummer for a Baltimore house, and was one among the most popular young commercial tourists who ever visited the city, and while in town might be found almost any night in his room one or two jovial companions, for while he could not be termed what is known as a drinking man, he was fond of a glass of brandy and soda, and generally had a reserve fund of jokes on hand.

"Tell us how you come to get caught in this net matrimonial, and why it has such an influence over your moral conduct, for I am sure there must be something out of the ordinary in it," said Bob.

"It did border somewhat on the romantic, but it is rather a long story, and my wife being somewhat sensitive on the subject, I think it hardly worth while to tell it."

"Pshaw! Let us have it. Here's a light. Now go."

Being thus urged, Fred Bolton proceeded as follows, but we will omit the many interruptions during its recital, and give it in his own words, as near as possible:

"You remember I was here last summer, and intended, when I left, to make Columbia, S. C., my objective point. The evening was rather a fine one, and my spirits were buoyant, as I stepped on the train bound for Greensboro, but the first trivial incidents sometime shape our destinies, and turn the current of our whole lives. The whistle of a locomotive, the change of the wind, the troading on the trail of a lady's dress, or the tossing away of a cigar stump, may be the turning point in our lives either for weal or for woe."

"As I got on the train I went immediately for the window, lit a cigar, raised the window and gazed out at the whirling landscape, and indulged in a day-dream of fairy-like air castles as the train sped on to the monotonous tone of its everlasting clatter, clatter, clatter, plat, plat, over the ties, speeding through meadow, woods and dale, while the sun sank slowly to rest in a halo of glory behind the western hills. But I have ever found it true, that when we imagine ourselves most happy and contented with ourselves and the world in general, a disturbing element is sure to pop up. There were several parties on the car who seemed to think that in order to keep one's spirits up it was necessary to pour them down, and their loud discussion of politics in general, and 'Why Farmers are Poor,' in particular, was not very edifying to me, so I retired to the sleeper."

"As I entered the coach and looked around for a vacant seat, I was confronted by a pair of daisy-blue eyes, fringed with long drooping lashes, and a face of such exquisitely beautiful peach-blossom tint, that I was for the moment completely dazed—I could scarce get my breath—and I was so nervous I am sure I was awkward, in the extreme, for I could no more control myself than I could fly."

"There is no I-talking, gentlemen, it was love on first sight, and I felt then and there that it would be a pleasure to die for just such an angelic face as the one before me, surrounded by a cluster of brown curls, with a nervous, twitching little rose-bud of a mouth, which seemed to be asking for sympathy, aid and love."

"The only entirely vacant seat was just behind this paragon of loveliness, and I dropped down in it in a state of complete 'collapse,' so to speak, and slowly there came stealing over my senses, imparting a balmy feeling of dizziness, the faint sweet odor of the delicate perfume of violets indescribably delicious."

"Just across the aisle from me, sat two gentlemen, one seemingly about fifty years of age, with an intelligent face and dignified bearing, wearing a neat-fitting iron-gray suit, a modest gold watch chain and eye-glasses. He smiled amably at me as he nodded his head in polite recognition of my entrance, then buried his face in the folds of the newspaper he had been reading. His companion (for he seemed to bear that relation) was one of entirely different type, being rather thick-set, red-faced, short-necked, and with small, restless black eyes, and dressed in a loud, braagadocio style, with a self-satisfied air, and a sinister smile over-riding a rather villainous-looking countenance. I could not help drawing comparisons between these two

men, and my mental deductions were not very flattering to the short individual, for I flatter myself that I am a pretty good judge of human nature, as most drummers are. Then my eyes would involuntarily wander to the fair vision before me, and I observed that she constantly cast furtive glances at the parties opposite. I watched this for some time, all the while feeling ill at ease and nervous, as if partially under some mesmeric spell, and felt that I must do something in order to divert the magnetic influence which seemed unconsciously to be stealing over me; so I took out my order book and turned over the leaves in an abstracted manner, when it slipped from my fingers and fell over the seat in front of me, almost in the lap of the lady sitting there. This so confused me that I scarcely knew what to do—whether to apologize to the lady and ask a return of the book, or whether I should lean over and secure the book without attracting her attention. At this moment she picked up the book, cast a wistful, timid glance at me, drew a gold pencil from a reticule in her lap, and turned her face determinedly the other way.

"To say that I was dumbfounded would mildly express it. She deliberately commenced to write in my book, and shortly after threw that fair rounded arm and shapely little hand carelessly over the back of the seat, with the book clasped in her fingers, but never looking at me, or turning in her seat the while. Scanning the book, I read, to my intense surprise, the following:

"Your face looks like a kind one, and I am in dire distress. Will you help me? My name is Lydia Moss, from Tennessee, and the gentleman in the opposite seat is my step-father, who is taking me home to become the bride of the brute beside him in order that between them they may control my property, which is considerable; but I had rather die than wed him. But there seems to be no way to avert their wishes; but I will kill myself before I will become the victim of their vile machinations. Will you marry me? I am aware that this is not maidenly; but there is no time for false modesty. If you are free I will trust you, and prove to you that all I say is true, and that I am worthy of your confidence. I do not know you, but will trust you. If your answer be yes, we must arrange to leave the cars at Greensboro, without their knowledge, and have the ceremony performed at once."

"I was bewildered. I knew not what to say or think. I was placed in a position where it was necessary to make a decision at once, without actually knowing anything whatever of the young lady; but I recklessly decided that matrimony was a lottery at best, and I felt that I could die for the fair being before me; and without stopping to reason, I wrote on a leaf of the book:

"I WILL."

"This sealed my destiny; and just before reaching Greensboro I saw the two gentlemen go into the smoking car. I followed. I drew my cigar case, and offered each a smoke which was accepted. We conversed for some time, during which I learned that they were to go through to Columbia."

"As the whistle blew for Greensboro, I felt that I must do something in order to keep them where they were and suggested that we have a drink of some very superior old apple brandy, which I told them I had in my valise in the sleeper. They accepted, and I requested them to keep their seats until I could go for it."

"On entering the sleeper I seated myself behind the young lady and said:

"Are you determined on this step?"

"I am if you are willing to trust me."

"Then follow me out to the rear end of the car."

"The wheels of the car had hardly ceased to roll before we were off and safely in a back standing near."

"Where to, boss?"

"Drive to Mr. Blank's, naming a personal and intimate friend of mine."

"Arriving there we alighted, and I explained the circumstances and my wishes to my friend, who seemed amazed, but having all confidence in my judgment, agreed to assist me, and while Lydia was left in the hands of his mother and sister we left to secure the license and the services of a minister. Shortly after, standing in the dimly-lighted parlor, with only four witnesses, Lydia Moss and Fredrick H. Bolton were duly made man and wife."

"I then had my darling good-night, not daring to steal even one fond little kiss, promising to call in the morning, and reluctantly departed for the hotel."

"Sleep seemed out of the question for that night, for my mind was in a state of chaotic bewilderment which precluded anything like tranquility; I revolved in my mind the events of the day, the strangeness of the situation, and conjured up all kinds of probable and improbable theories without arriving at any definite or satisfactory conclusion, until tired nature asserted itself and I dozed off gently, that divine face being ever present in my dream."

"It was long after nine o'clock the next morning before I opened my eyes

and realized in all their vividness the reality of the preceding night's events, when, upon a calm review of my conduct I could scarce credit its truth and consequences; but that beautiful and bewitching face again arose before my mind's vision, and I fully determined that be the consequences what they might, I should be loyal to the one love of my life, though I had no reason to think my affection reciprocated; but I realized the dread and abhorrence on the other hand, and fondly hoped in time, by sheer force of my vast love, to win her affections."

"On entering the office before going to the breakfast room, I saw the clerk taking in a somewhat confidential tone of voice to a stranger, and I imagined they cast suspicious glances at me as I entered, and while I had done nothing I regretted, and for which I was amenable to the law, I realized the truth that a guilty conscience needs no accuser."

"The clerk beckoned to me, and I drew near."

"Allow me to introduce you to Mr. Pointer, Mr. Bolton."

"Happy to meet you, sir."

"Mr. Pointer then asked if he could see me privately for a few minutes, and being assured that he could, we withdrew to the further end of the room."

"Was there a lady on the train—young, timid-looking, with brown hair and blue eyes?"

"There was. Her name was Miss Lydia Moss, but I am happy to say she is now Mrs. Bolton."

"What! Married?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, sir, all I can say is, I am sorry for you!"

"What do you mean, sir? Explain! or you may regret your impertinence."

"I simply mean what I say, that I am sorry for you, for the lady is as crazy as a March hare. I am an officer, and have in my possession a telegram from her step-father, Mr. Colbut, to retain her until he can return from Charlotte this evening and reclaim her. It seems she gave him the slip here last night, as the train passed through. Himself and a friend were taking her back home, somewhere in Tennessee, from some medical institution in Baltimore."

"My God! Let me think, or I shall go mad, I cried. 'Say nothing about this. The lady is safe, and I shall remain here until the arrival of Mr. Colbut, and we will then do what is best to be done under the circumstances.'"

"With this Mr. Pointer retired, expressing his sympathy for me, and I was left with my sul and distracting thoughts, a prey to the most dismal forebodings. I knew not what to do; I did not know whether to call on my bride or not; I could not realize that what I heard was true. I could not doubt my love, and the whole circumstance to my overtaken brain seemed to point to the truthfulness of her assertions. I walked the town over in nervous perturbation, waiting for the Charlotte train. I finally concluded to call on Lydia, but to say nothing of the events of the morning, but to let circumstances shape my course in this matter—this matter of vital importance to me."

"I found her as lovely as a May morning, with a bunch of forget-me-nots in the bosom of a white Swiss dress, with love-lit eyes, long flowing brown hair, and a tantalizing little pout, and as I looked into the liquid depths of those melancholy blue eyes, I knew—I felt—that she loved all, reason to the contrary; in fact, I was in no frame of mind to listen to reason—I was again under their mesmeric spell. My God! how could any man doubt her insanity. I shall drop the curtain over that one meeting—it is sacred—I shall never live to forget its ecstasy."

"Before leaving I related to her my circumstances in life, family connections, etc. I had her a gentle and affectionate good-bye, until the evening, mentioning that we should board the train for Asheville that night, as this unlooked-for delay had caused me to forego, for the present, my intended visit to Columbia."

"I met Mr. Colbut at the depot that evening; we repaired to a private room at the hotel, and there I told him the whole circumstances, omitting nothing; I showed him the note she had written in my order-book in confirmation of what I had said, and he seemed both distressed and angry, but calmly asked me what I proposed to do. He stated that the lady had been thrown from a horse while on a fox hunt the year before, injuring her head, which threatened her life; that she had recovered physically, but her mind had been so impaired that she required constant watching for a long time. She seemed to forget almost everything pertaining to the past, and imagined herself to be persecuted by her friends, and especially himself, who she claimed to be in league to force her to marry in order that he might have complete control of her property, which was in mining stocks and real estate in Tennessee, left to her by her deceased father. He pointed out the folly of this, as he was her lawfully constituted guardian; he said he had sent her to Baltimore for treatment, where she had been much benefited, but being informed by the physician there that her case was hopeless owing to

some intricate fracture of the skull, which seemed to press the brain, and which would necessitate a dangerous operation being performed, he had been to take her home, and I knew the rest."

"At the close of this statement he suggested a divorce, but said if I did not desire that, for the sake of keeping the matter as quiet as possible, he would turn over her property to me, now her lawful guardian, and that her mind might be restored, as she was never violent or hysterical, but labored under such hallucinations of mind as described."

"I informed him that I should cling the closer to Lydia, and that if she continued insane enough to love me, I should be only too happy, and that he might express her trunk to Asheville, and I should say nothing to her of her return, but would visit him and her mother immediately after transacting my business at Asheville."

"I satisfied him also on the score of family and eligibility, and we parted."

"That night we took the train for Asheville, and I was once more in an elysium, as I clasped that little hand in mine, and thought how innocent, helpless and dependent she was, and my heart warmed to her with a more intense glow than before, if possible, on account of her affliction."

"I shall never forget that night—the 25th of August, 1891—if I should live to be a hundred years old. I lay back in my seat and revolved in day dreams of the future, with the fair picture of Lydia ever in the foreground. My nervous system, which had been so highly strung for the last twenty-four hours, compared to the present blissful calmness now settled over me, relaxed, and I soon found myself in slumber, while the cars sped on through the midnight gloom, taking us on to a home beyond the skies. Suddenly the cars gave a crash, a crash, there was a medley of groans, shrieks, prayers and imprecations."

"The next I remember, I opened my eyes to find that my legs were imprisoned by a pile of broken seats from behind; the window glass, or something else, had cut my face, which was bleeding profusely, and I knew that I was in a railroad wreck. My first thought was of Lydia, whom I found lying partially under me. I let her be as unharmed as I could, and I could see that she looked like a corpse; but I could render her no assistance on account of being so pinned down. At this time some gentleman, thinking not of himself, out of others, shouted that he was free to render aid to those needing it. I called out, and he lifted the debris from me, and then he and I succeeded in extricating Lydia, who, to all appearances, was dead."

"I did not stop to succor others, but finding I was comparatively unharmed, I clasped my darling in my arms, and succeeded in bearing her to the track above, and hastening with all the speed which fear and despair could lend to me, up the track. A small light soon glimmered in the distance, which I knew to be a light from some house. I bore her there, awake the surprised and alarmed inmates, explained, as best I could, and resorted to all the homely remedies at hand to resuscitate her. To my great joy I found she was still alive, and I immediately dispatched the kind-hearted husband of Statesville for a physician and resumed my efforts. By the light of a pine torch (the only available light on the premises) I discovered a deep gash on the back of her head, around which were clots of blood and knots of hair. With the aid of the lady of the house, we dressed the wound, and shortly after I was overjoyed to see her open her eyes, and look around bewildered."

"Where am I? What has happened?" she asked.

"Hush! you have been sick and must not talk. Try to sleep, and when you awake you shall know all."

"She lay back like a tired child, and slept."

No tongue can tell how I prayed God to spare her. He answered my prayer, for as the dawn came peeping through the tree tops, and the strange but sweet notes of birds were piped through the morning air in a grand chorus of melody, heralding the morn, she opened her eyes to light and reason, and while the light of reason shone in those beautiful orbs, I was shown in those beautiful orbs, I was pierced to the heart to find that she had no welcoming smile for me; that in gazing her reason I was lost to her and love! I felt that if ever I possessed her love I should have it to win, over again."

"Dr. Scott soon arrived, and after dressing the wound and making a thorough examination of her injuries, informed me that with good care she would be all right in a day or two, and hastened on to Boston Bridge, the scene of the wreck, little dreaming that the wound on the patient's head had been the means of relieving a pressure from the brain which restored to the world the reason of one of God's love-best children."

"It is useless, as well as impossible, to describe the honors of that fatal wreck, so graphically portrayed by our journals, and which are to this day so harrowing to the feelings of those who suffered, and to the friends of the lost."

"During Lydia's convalescence I explained to her that we had been pinned in wedlock, the circumstances attending it, and the decision I had arrived

at upon finding out the true state of affairs. When I exhibited to her gaze the note she had written in my book, she blushing said:

"Why, Mr. Bolton, you might have known that any lady who could be guilty of such conduct as that was an insane creature, but acknowledged that she remembered my face, as in a dream."

"I will agree with you, if you will only substitute Fred for Mr. Bolton."

"Fred!"

"I clasped her in my arms, but could say nothing more than—

"Thank God!"

"We left the home of the kin but simple-hearted couple the next day for Asheville after liberally compensating them. I found Lydia's trunk had preceded us, which helped her and myself both out of a dilemma which I think I never could have been equal to."

"We stopped at different hotels—she registered under her maiden name, as we both agreed that another ceremony was necessary to make us one, the first marriage not being lawful because of her insanity."

"When we arrived at her mother's, three days later, and they were apprised of Lydia's mental transition through the Boston Bridge wreck, words are inadequate to describe the joy of her mother and surprise of Mr. Colbut."

"A few days later there was another wedding, under more favorable and happier auspices, and I am to-day the happiest man in three States."

"This is my last commercial trip, gentlemen. I shall spend the remaining days of my life at home. I only gained Lydia's consent to fill this engagement with the firm upon the promise that I would never drink another drop, and that, when tempted, to think of her and the Boston Bridge wreck."

"Good night, gentlemen."

AN OPEN MEETING.

Mr. Sanders Attends an Open Alliance Meeting and Finds a Big Split.

EDITOR OF THE WATCHMAN:—I want to tell you about a little experience I had not long ago.

I had been hearing a bit of talk about the great split in the Alliance on account of politics. Not being a member I thought it was fully as large as reported. The other day an Alliance held a meeting near my house and I attended. There was about thirty-five members present out of a total of forty. I didn't think the concern was going down so badly after all.

After the regular business was over, Capt. Jones, who is pretty much of a politician, and myself were invited in. Capt. Jones had come to talk to them and to try to persuade them that the St. Louis conference was a scheme to defeat and break up the democratic party. I had been invited to help him provide he couldn't kill the concern at the first or second shot. Capt. Jones looked like he felt that it was but the work of a few minutes. The members all looked quiet like and in a good humor. They knew what we were there for and gave us all the attention we could desire. Capt. Jones was called on first. As near as I can remember he said about this: "My dear friends and neighbors, I am indeed glad to have this opportunity to talk to you all about matters that we are all equally interested in. I know you don't realize that danger you are about to encounter. This St. Louis platform, which I understand you have adopted, is dangerous to liberty, it can never be made into law. You are all wrong, all wrong. If you continue in this way you will ruin the great old party that has done so much for us. At this point some wrote in the back part of the school house ground long and loud. Everybody laughed. The old fellow with his hair a-foot long and his eyes a-foot wide said: 'What's the grand old party had no use.'"

The captain said 'Just now, I will come to that for white.' 'Yes,' said the old gentleman, 'I am a democrat.' 'My friends,' continued the captain, 'you complain that there is a scarcity of money. That is true to a certain extent, but when was there a time when you could buy so much with a dollar?'

At this, another old man who I knew to be industrious and economical, said, 'say captain, you are right, but we haven't got the dollar. The capitalist with a few dollars can buy all my cotton and tobacco and then I won't have enough left to pay my taxes. Captain, tell us how to get a dollar clear out of cotton at six cents and tobacco at four cents the same?'

The captain didn't look as bright as he did before he started his speech, but he replied: 'Of course, Boy, Sam, I know there is no money in farming nowadays, but it is the same in everything. The merchants and everybody are falling in well as the farmers.' Another man in the crowd said: 'Of course the merchants are falling. Why have no money and they can't sell goods to people without money.' Another fellow said: 'Oh plain, how about national banks. I hear they are making forty per cent. Cotton and tobacco are paying from twenty to thirty per cent. Prof. real stock in railroads can't hardly be bought. Of course there is a lot of extra profit that is being blown away but real stock is paying at from twenty to fifty per cent. Building and loan companies are prospering, but they are

like banks, they represent the misfortunes of the people rather than their prosperity. If money was easy they could not exist.' 'Yes,' said another old haysed, 'look at the insurance companies. They are making fortunes and they fail so they can hold on to their money.'

By this time Capt. Jones looked as if he would rather be in Congress than acting as a peace-maker in that crowd. I was really surprised to know the readiness with which they met everything.

The captain concluded to shift the tide of his discourse. He said: 'My friends, all this trouble has been brought on by the republican party. They de-monetized silver in 1873. This has made money scarce and tendered to concentrate it. The wicked tariff, which robs you of forty-seven per cent. on every dollar's worth of goods you buy, is what you must fight.'

By this time three or four were on their feet. Order was restored and one asked 'how much the democrats proposed to get out of the tariff.' Capt. Jones said 'six per cent.' 'Well, captain,' said the old haysed, 'I've been figuring on that. If forty-seven per cent. is robbery I want to know if forty per cent. ain't robbery, too. I would just as soon be robbed all the way as to be robbed just enough to make me feel mean and poor as Job's turkey.' Another fellow, who looked to be about twenty-one years old, asked Capt. Jones if the present Congress didn't have 148 democratic majority. 'I believe it has,' said the captain. 'Well, didn't they refuse to re-monetize silver three or four weeks ago?'

'Yes,' said the captain, 'but you must remember that, this being campaign year, they must go slow in such matters.' Another young, sunburned fellow got up and asked the captain how much the free coinage of silver would increase the per capita? 'Only about fifty cents or three dollars for every family in the country,' said the captain. 'Well, don't you think we need at least fifty dollars per capita, while, at present we only have about six or eight dollars in actual circulation?'

'I suppose we'd need that much,' said the captain. 'Then,' said the sunburned young man, 'if the democratic party is afraid to pass a bill to increase the per capita fifty cents on a campaign year, how long will it take the party to get its courage-screwed up high enough to increase it forty-two dollars higher, and that is what you ought to be doing?'

This hot brought down the house. Capt. Jones said he wasn't feeling well, so they would please excuse him, and that Mr. Sanders would now be heard on the political question.

In answer to calls all over the house I arose and said: 'Gentlemen—and fellow citizens: after all that has been said I know that you don't care to listen to anything I might say now. But I want to tell you that all doubt is now removed from my mind. I have been reading the WATCHMAN and other reform papers now and then. I thought they had been over-zedded. I thought they had an axe to grind. I thought the Alliance was being led by demagogues. But what I have seen and heard today has convinced me that had any one of your demands are unjust. I am further convinced that a great work of education is going on. Few people outside of the Alliance are aware that the farmers are half as well posted as I had thought that you are here. Judging from what I have seen the organization has been worth ten times all it has cost, in education alone. It is hard to believe that our farmers are so well posted and that they are so much in earnest for reform, but, for one, I am no longer a doubting Thomas. Come to think about it we have twenty times as much to complain about as our ancestors had when they declared their independence and went to war with England.'

I sat down amid liberal applause. Capt. Jones looked like he thought that a lot of converting the crowd he had made one convert on the wrong side.

The chairman then called for a vote on the St. Louis platform. Everyone arose quickly except Capt. Jones. I was one of the first ones up.

I tell you Mr. Editor, if this is the way all the Alliance are splitting up and if the politicians are having the success in 'splitting' them that Capt. Jones and I had, then the organization will split up in such large pieces that nobody can handle them to advantage. I don't think the captain was converted, and I don't think he will try to save any Alliance soon.

Success to you in your grand work. I will write again some time, especially if I hear of another 'split.'

Respectfully,
—JAKE SANDERS.

Good Looks.

Good looks are more than skin deep, depending upon a healthy condition of all the vital organs. If the liver be inactive, you have a Bilious Look, if your stomach be disordered, you have a Dyspeptic Look, and if your kidneys be affected you have a Pinched Look. Secure good health and you will have good looks. Electric Bitters is the great all-around remedy. It acts directly on the liver, stomach, and kidneys, cures Biliousness, Bloating, and gives a good complexion. Sold at Kuntz & Co's drug store, 50c. per bottle.

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ONE WORD.

Come to you with a small affair that you may need. In England, the Continent and many foreign countries, myself and wares are well known.

Many American families in their return from abroad bring my articles with them, for they know them pretty well, but you may not be one of these.

Confidence between man and man is slow of growth, and when found, its rarity makes it valuable. I ask your confidence and make a reference to this Journal to indorse that confidence.

I do not think it will be misplaced.

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