

The Daily Sentinel.

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RALEIGH, N. C., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1867.

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DAILY SENTINEL.

WM. E. PELL, PROPRIETOR.

From the New York Tribune, etc.

A PRIVATE DINNER WITH CHARLES DICKENS.

Gen. Prosper M. Wetmore has recently published, in a weekly journal, an interesting account of the public dinner given to Mr. Dickens on his first arrival in New York twenty-five years ago; and it dwells with feeling and genuine pathos upon the departure among us of the committee of noble and distinguished gentlemen who formed the committee of reception on the occasion of that memorable banquet. Each member was distinguished by a band of red ribbon, and consisted of the following gentlemen, all of whom are dead except the writer of the tribute to their characters, standing and many virtues. Charles Augustus Davis, David C. Collier, William Kent, Thomas J. Oakley, William H. Maxwell, Valentine Mott, John W. Frazer, Jas. C. Cheeseman and Prosper M. Wetmore.

Mr. Wetmore, in briefly advertizing to the banquet given to Mr. Dickens at the City Hotel, omits any mention of the proceedings. They were remarkable in many respects, not less on account of the character of the participants than of the incidents of the occasion. Washington Irving presided, and in a speech in which the guest of the evening was welcomed to the country, and to the homes and hearts of our people, he "broke down," as the phrase is, through the inconsiderate interruption of a well meaning friend.

Mr. Irving, who had been overpersuaded to "speak on his feet"—a thing, he said, which he could never successfully accomplish—was going swimmingly, and in his most felicitous language, when Mr. Charles Augustus Davis, an intimate friend, and with the best intentions in the world, looking him the while admiringly in the face: "Good! Irving! good! excellent! You are succeeding admirably!" That interruption caused Washington Irving to me the next day, "broke me down completely. It snapped the thread of my discourse, which was unending to my satisfaction, and scattered the thoughts and images which were in my mind, and at my tongue's end, into tiny rags." I mention this little fact as a warning to well meaning but inconsiderate "friends," similarly situated and similarly tempted. My friend Mr. Wetmore speaks of the dinner given to Mr. Dickens by the "Novelties Club" of New York—a society composed of editors, artists, actors, and employees of the public press of the metropolis—"in Park-row." The dinner in question was given at the Astor House, and was in Stetson's unexampled and infinite "manner." It was presided over by the late Judge William Kent, assisted by the late David Graham—Mr. Dickens was completely at home in the society of this club, and was often afterward heard to remark that the dinner was one of the most pleasant and cordial entertainments offered him in America. I come now to speak of a dinner to Mr. Dickens, of which I had the great pleasure to be the host, and of which I may speak, I think, without egotism and without any infraction of the rules of social intercourse. It was literally a feast of reason, and a flow of soul." Of the guests who were present, at least, to me and to Mr. Dickens, too—for in a letter to me, written just one year after its occurrence, he says: "This day twelve months I dined at your house" of the guests, I say, who honored us by being present at that time, how many have gone since, to be no more seen? We are human beings, Irving, not just such a soft autumnal day as that on which my poor wife was laid, with many tears from the eyes of a loving and adoring multitude in a hollowed grave on the bank of his beloved Hudson, and of the "Memorial Church," which consecrates the spot. I can see his smile from here."

Henry Burroughs, the personal genious of the fine scholar, his lifelong friend and intimate companion, has followed him to the "Outer Land." Good Bishop Winslow has, after them, "passed beyond the veil," guided through the Dark Valley by the hand of God, which he had so nobly held both as the support of the weary and heavy laden, in their closing journey of life. Henry Tinker, the noble artist, the accomplished, social gentleman, he too, has gone; and David Graham, the able lawyer, the eloquent advocate, "the friend closer than a brother," repose in the shades of Greenwood. And Henry Cary, the delightful and felicitous essayist of the time—the hospitable, genial, refined gentleman, he, too, from the shores of classic Italy, has "winged his spirit flight" to heaven. The guests were Washington Irving, Mr. and Mrs. Dickens, William Cullen Bryant, Eliza Green Hall, Bishop Winwright, Henry Browne, Henry Inman, Henry Cary, (now at rest, "John Water") David Graham, Jr., T. D. Dakin and wife, including, of course, the honored and gratified host and hostess, and of all these but six survive. The acceptance to the brief invitations were most of them somewhat out of the usual courtesy of reply. Mr. Cary, I remember, and Inman's, were especially happy in their situation to the many sister sentinels whom they were invited of meet. Indeed, a was a characteristically felicitous occasion.

The bridgeman may lead the bride to her resting place, but you, too, may forget the road.

Which memory may forget the bride and the bridegroom?

We may not forget that I am to have the pleasure of dining with you on Thursday evening, to meet that rare painter of human character, Mr. Dickens." Take it that a company more genial could scarcely have been brought together. Most of the persons present were known to each other individually, or by reputation; and there was no stiffness, no unnecessary ceremony. Mr. Dickens brought letters to Doctor Winwright from Society Hall and other eminent English pretties; and there was an opening for mutual pleasant chat and exchange of idle gossip of England with Washington Irving. Truly, so robust when dining out, was he more "at home," nor did his spirits failingly let the entire "meeting." Inman and Dakin had quite a score of anecdotes and table moving talk, a topic just then in vogue; Hallack and Bryant got off all their pleasant experiences abroad; while Graham was enlightened, as were the rest of the guests, by the pictorial differences between the habits and proceedings in the criminal courts of London and those of our city, which latter Mr. Dickens had that day visited, company with his interviewer.—And how we all laughed, being much astounded, when the guest arrived, that he had met at dinner two days before, that

very prototype of his original conception of the immortal Pickwick—the late George Griffi, the patriarch of the New York bar! His first "model" of Pickwick was a tall, dignified, benevolent, this man.

But of these and all-muched-out masters, which "sprang from the occasion," I will write in another concluding sketch. It was something not easily forgotten to Mr. Brown, who describes his first meeting with Napoleon Bonaparte, and Mr. Irving and Dickens exchange notes and impressions of the Duke of Wellington, whom both had met so often; to listen to anecdotes and criticisms of the great English artist, between whom and his new made friend; and I will try to do justice to their kindred tastes in another sketch, and that without violating, in the slightest degree, the proprieties of private intimacy.

L. GAYLORD CLARK.

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REDUCING, SOOTHING, COOLING, by softening the gums, reducing all inflammation, and giving relief at that time, how many have gone since, to be no more seen?" We are human beings, Irving, not just such a soft autumnal day as that on which

my poor wife was laid, with many tears from the eyes of a loving and adoring multitude in a hollowed grave on the bank of his beloved Hudson, and of the "Memorial Church," which consecrates the spot. I can see his smile from here."

SURE TO REGULATE THE BOWELS.

Depend upon it, mothers, it will give you the security and peace of mind, in their closing

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