

**Weston G. Gales,**  
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

**TERMS.**  
Subscription.—Five Dollars per annum—half in Advance.  
Advertisements.—For every 16 lines, first insertion, One Dollar; each subsequent insertion, 25 cents. COURT ORDERS and JUDICIAL Advertisements will be charged 25 per cent higher; but a deduction of 33 per cent, will be made from the regular price, for advertisements by the year.  
Advertisements, inserted in the Semi-Weekly Gazette will also appear in the Weekly Paper, free of charge.  
Letters to the Editor must be postpaid.

**SELECTED FOR THE REGISTER.**

**THE FIRST AND LAST DINNER.**

A TALE OF LIFE.

The following capital story appeared in Blackwood's Magazine several years ago. Unlike many old stories, it will be read with great interest.

Twelve friends, much about the same age, and fixed, by their pursuits, their family connexions, and other local interests, as permanent inhabitants of the metropolis, agreed one day when they were drinking their wine at the Star and Garter, at Richmond, to institute an annual dinner among themselves, under the following directions: "That they should dine alternately at each others' houses on the first and the last day of the year; that the first bottle of wine uncorked at the first dinner, should be recorked and put away, to be drunk by him who should be the last of their number; that they should never admit a new member; that when one died, eleven were to meet, and so on; and when only one remained, he should, on those two days, dine by himself, and sit the usual hours at his solitary table; but on the first time he so dined alone, lest it should be the only one, he should then uncork the first bottle, and in the first glass, drink to the memory of all who were gone."

There was something original and whimsical in the idea, and it was eagerly embraced. They were all in the prime of life, closely attached by reciprocal friendship, fond of social enjoyments, and looked forward to the future meetings with unalloyed anticipations of pleasure. The only thought, indeed, that could have darkened those anticipations, was one likely to intrude itself at this moment, that of the hapless wight who was destined to uncork the first bottle at his lonely repast.

It was high summer when the frolic compact was entered into; and as their pleasure yacht skinned along the dark bosom of the Thames, on their return to London, they talked of nothing but their first and last feasts of ensuing years. Their imaginations ran out with a thousand gay predictions of festive merriment. They wanted in conjectures of what change would create.

"As for you, George," exclaimed one of the twelve, addressing his brother-in-law.—"I expect I shall see you as dry, withered and shrunken as an old eel skin, your mere outside of a man!" and he accompanied the words with a hearty slap on the shoulder.

George Fortescue was leaning carelessly over the side of the yacht, laughing the loudest of any at the conversation which had been carried on. The sudden manual salutation of his brother-in-law threw him off his balance, and in an instant he was overboard. They heard the heavy splash of the fall, before they could be said to have seen him fall. The yacht was proceeding swiftly along; but it was instantly stopped.

The utmost consternation now prevailed. It was nearly dark, but Fortescue was known to be an excellent swimmer, and starting as the accident was, they felt certain he would regain the vessel. They could not see him. They listened. They heard the sound of his hands and feet. An answer was returned, but in a faint, guttural voice, and the exclamation "Oh God!" struck upon their ears. In an instant, two or three, who were expert swimmers, plunged into the river, and swam towards the spot whence the exclamation proceeded. One of them was within arm's length of Fortescue; he saw him; before he could be reached, he went down, and his distracted friend beheld the eddying circles of the wave just over the spot where he had sunk. He dived after him, and touched the bottom; but the tide must have drifted the body onward, for it could not then be found!

They proceeded to one of the nearest stations where drags were kept, and having procured the necessary apparatus, they proceeded to the fatal spot. After the lapse of above an hour, they succeeded in raising the lifeless body of their lost friend. All the usual remedies were employed for restoring suspended animation; but in vain; they now pursued the remainder of their course to London, in mournful silence, with the corpse of him who had commenced the day of pleasure with them in the fulness of health, of spirits and of life! And in their severe grief they could not but reflect how soon one of the joyous twelve had slipped out of the little festive circle.

The months rolled on, and cold December came with all its cheering round of kindly greetings and merry hospitalities; and with it came a softened recollection of the fate of poor Fortescue: eleven of the twelve assembled on the last day of the year, and it was impossible not to feel their loss as they sat down to dinner. The very irregularity of the table, five on one side and six on the other, forced the melancholy event upon their memory.

A decorous sigh or two, a low, becoming ejaculation, and an instructive observation upon the uncertainty of life, made up the sum of tender posthumous offering to the name of poor George Fortescue, as they proceeded to discharge the more important duties for which they had met. By the time the third glass of champagne had gone round, in addition to potatoes of fine old hock, and 'capital madeira,' they had ceased to discover any thing so pathetic in the inequality of the two sides of the table, or so melancholy in the crippled number of eleven.

Several years had elapsed, and our eleven friends kept up their double anniversaries, as they might aptly enough be called, with scarcely any perceptible change. But, alas! there came one dinner at last, which was darkened by a calamity they had never expected to witness; for on that day, their friend, companion, brother almost, was hanged! Yes, Stephen Rowland, the wit, the oracle, the life of their circle, had, on the morning of that day, forfeited his life upon a public scaffold, for having made one single stroke of his pen in a wrong place. In other words a bill of exchange which passed into his hand for £700 passed out of it for £1,700.

It would be unjust to the ten to say, that even wine, friendship and a merry season, could dispel the gloom which pervaded this dinner. It was agreed before hand, that they should not allude to the distressing and melancholy theme; and having thus interdicted the only thing which really occupied all their thoughts, the natural consequence was, that silent contemplation took the place of dismal discourse; and they separated long before midnight.

Some fifteen years had now glided away since the fate of Rowland, and the ten remained; but the stealing hand of time had written sundry changes in most legible characters. Raven locks had become grizzled, two or three heads had not as many locks altogether as may be reckoned in a walk of half a mile along the Regent's Canal—and was actually covered with a brown wig, the crow's feet were visible in the corner of the eye—good old port and warm madeira carried it against hock; claret and red burgundy, and champagne, stews, hashes, and ragouts, grew into favor—crusts were rarely called for to relish the cheese after dinner—conversation grew less boisterous, and it turned chiefly on politics and the state of the funds, or the value of landed property—apologies were made for wearing thick shoes and warm stockings—and the doors were most carefully provided with hat and sand bags—the fire more in request—and a quiet game of whist filled up the hours that were wont to be devoted to drinking, singing, and riotous merriment. The rubber, a cup of coffee, and at home by 11 o'clock; was the usual cry, when the fifth or sixth glass had gone round after the removal of the cloth. At parting, too, there was a long ceremony in the hall, buttoning up great coats, tying on woollen comforters, fixing silk handkerchiefs over the mouth and up to the ears, grasping sturdy walking canes to support unsteady feet.

Their fiftieth anniversary came, and death had indeed been busy.

Four little old men of withered appearance and decrepit walk, with cracked voices and dim, rayless eyes, sat down by the mercy of Heaven, (as they themselves tremulously declared), to celebrate, for the fiftieth time, the first day of the year; to observe the frolic compact which, half a century before, they had entered into at the Star and Garter at Richmond. Eight were in their graves!—The four that remained stood upon their confines. Yet they chirped cheerily over their glass, though they could scarcely carry it to their lips, if more than half full; and cracked their jokes, though they articulated their words with difficulty and heard each other with still greater difficulty. They mumbled, they chattered, they laughed, if a sort of strangled wheezing might be called a laugh; and when the wines sent their icy blood in warmer pulses through their veins, they talked of the past as if it were but a yesterday that had slipped by them—and of the future as if it were a busy century that lay before them.

They were just the number for a quiet rubber of whist; and for three successive years they sat down to one. The fourth came, and then their rubber was played with an open dummy; a fifth, and whist was no longer practicable; two could play only at cribbage, and cribbage was the game. But it was little more than the mockery of play. Their palsied hands could hardly hold, or their fading sight distinguish the cards, while their torpid faculties made them dose between each deal.

At length came the last dinner; and the survivor of the twelve, upon whose head four score and ten winters had showered their snow, ate his solitary meal. It so chanced that it was in his house and at his table that they had celebrated the first. In his cellar, too, had remained, for eight and fifty years, the bottle they had uncorked, recorked, and which he was that day to uncork again. It stood beside him; with a feeble and reluctant grasp, he took the frail memorial of a youthful vow, and for a moment memory was faithful to her office. She threw open her long vista of buried years; and his heart travelled through them all. Their lusty and blightsome spring, their bright and fervid summer—their ripe and temperate autumn—their chill, but not too frozen winter. He saw in a mirror, how one by one the laughing companions of his merry hour, at Richmond, had dropped into eternity. He felt the loneliness of his condition, [for he had eschewed marriage, and in the veins of

no living creature ran a drop of blood whose source was his own] and as he drained a glass which he filled, 'to the memory of those who were gone,' the tears slowly trickled down the deep furrows of his aged face.

He had thus fulfilled one part of his vow, and he prepared himself to discharge the other, by sitting the usual number of hours at his desolate table. With a heavy heart he resigned himself to the gloom of his own thoughts—a lethargic sleep stole over him—his head fell upon his bosom—confused images crowded into his mind—he babbled to himself—was silent—and when his servant entered the room, alarmed by the noise which he had heard, he found his master stretched upon the carpet at the foot of the easy chair; and out of which he had slipped in an apoplectic fit. He never spoke again; nor once opened his eyes, though the vital spark was not extinct till the following day. And this was the LAST DINNER.

**PROPOSALS** for carrying the Mails of the United States, from the first day of July, 1841, to the thirtieth of June, 1843, on the following route, in North Carolina, will be received at the Department until the twenty-seventh day of May next, at 3 P. M. to be decided by the thirty-first day of said May:

**NORTH CAROLINA.**  
2114a From Concord, N. C. by Mount Comfort, to Beve's Mills, 16 miles and back, once a week.  
Leave Concord every Monday at 2 P. M. arrive at Beve's Mills same day by 7 P. M.  
Leave Beve's Mills every Monday at 8 A. M. arrive at Concord same day by 1 P. M.  
No proposal will be considered unless it be accompanied by a guaranty, signed by two or more responsible persons, in the following manner, viz:  
The undersigned, \_\_\_\_\_ guaranty that \_\_\_\_\_, if his bid for carrying the mail from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ be accepted by the Postmaster General, shall enter into an obligation prior to the first day of July next, with good and sufficient sureties, to perform the service proposed.  
Dated \_\_\_\_\_, 1841.  
This should be accompanied by the certificate of a Postmaster, or other equivalent testimony, that the guarantors are men of property, and able to make good their guaranty.  
The proposals should be sent to the Department sealed, endorsed "Proposals for route No. \_\_\_\_\_" and addressed to the First Assistant Postmaster General.  
For the prohibition of bids, resulting from combinations, and the terms and conditions on which the contract is to be made, see the annual Advertisement now under publication.

**FR. GRANGER,**  
Postmaster General.

Post Office Department, }  
March 15, 1841. } wt20My.

**POST OFFICE—Raleigh.**

**SUMMER ARRANGEMENT.**  
Office opens at 8 o'clock, A. M.  
" closes at 8 o'clock, P. M.  
" opens on Sunday from 8 to 9 o'clock, A. M. and from 4 o'clock to 5 o'clock, P. M.  
The Office is closed on the arrival of each Mail, until it is ascertained and distributed.

**ARRANGEMENT OF THE MAILS.**  
**NORTHERN.**  
Due every day at 5 P. M.—closes every day at 9 A. M.  
**SOUTHERN.**  
Due every day at 8 A. M.—closes every day at 4 P. M.  
**GREENSBOROUGH.**  
Due every night at 1 o'clock—closes every day, 4 P. M.  
**SALISBURY.**  
Due every Wednesday and Saturday at 2 o'clock, P. M.  
Closes every Monday and Thursday at 9 A. M.  
**NEWBERN.**  
Due every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 8 P. M.  
Closes Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 7 A. M.  
**TARBOROUGH.**  
Due Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 1 at night  
Closes Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 9 P. M.  
**ROXBOROUGH.**  
Due every Friday, 10 A. M.—closes Friday at 9 A. M.  
**HAYWOOD.**  
Due every Monday at 10 A. M.—closes Friday, 9 A. M.  
**THOMAS G. SCOTT, P. M.**  
Letters should be in the Office at least fifteen minutes before the time fixed for the closing of the Mails.  
April 22, 1841. 84

**ATTENTION! 35th REGIMENT!**—The Commissaries of the Eastern Regiment of Wake County Militia, are hereby commanded to parade at 11 o'clock on Friday, the 14th of May next, at the Baptist Grove in Raleigh, armed and equipped according to law, for drill and the election of Lieut. Colonel. You are also required to have the Companies under your respective commands, formed at the Baptist Grove at 11 o'clock on Saturday; the 15th of May, for Regimental parade and review.  
**GASTON H. WILDER Ajt.**  
April 21, 1841. 34 4t

**ATTENTION MILITIA!**—The Militia of the Forestville and Raleigh Districts are hereby commanded to parade at the Baptist Grove in Raleigh, on Friday, 11 o'clock on Saturday the 1st of May, armed and equipped, for drill and the election of Officers.  
By order of Col. Commandant  
**GASTON H. WILDER Ajt.**  
April 21, 1841. 34 4t

**Jno. O. Steger & Gales Seaton,**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW,  
RICHMOND, VA.

Will attend the Superior and inferior Courts of the City of Richmond and the Counties of Henrico, Powhatan and Amelia. April 17, 34.

**ALMOND TREES.**—A few of these Trees, selected from France, just received and for sale by  
**LAWRENCE & CHRISTOPHERS,**  
April 21. 84

**INFANT SCHOOL.**—The Infant School, advertised in another part of this Paper, will commence on Monday, the 26th instant, in a Room adjacent to the School-room occupied by Miss Malins. Raleigh, April 22. 34

**Printing Ink,** for SUMMER use, in Kegs of 25 pounds. It will be sold at a moderate profit, for Cash. I intend to keep the article, if encouraged to do so.  
**WILL: PECK,**  
Raleigh, April 20. 83

**TOWN LOTS FOR SALE.**

The Commissioners, appointed by an Act of the last General Assembly to select a site whereon to erect a Court House and other Public Buildings for the new County of Caldwell, having fixed on a very eligible situation, on a beautiful ridge adjacent to the main road leading from Morganton to Wilkesboro, and about half a mile from Waugh's and Harper's Store—We, the undersigned Commissioners, duly appointed for the purpose, have proceeded to lay off a Town, on said selected site, and will, on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 1st and 2d days of June next, offer for sale the Lots thereof, to the highest bidder, on credit of one and two years, by the purchase giving bond with approved security.—Being impressed with a belief that all persons inclined to purchase will view the premises, we deem it unnecessary to go into a lengthy and detailed description thereof, and will only add, that the situation is agreeably handsome, the soil gray, with about a sufficient mixture of sand and gravel, to insure, with proper care, nice streets and yards, and with the aid of some manure, beautiful and productive gardens; the water is good and the air pure and healthy, coming from the lofty mountains in the neighborhood, all of which will contribute much to make it a desirable residence; and being adjacent to and near populous settlements, composed of many one and two years, by the purchase giving bond with approved security.—Being impressed with a belief that all persons inclined to purchase will view the premises, we deem it unnecessary to go into a lengthy and detailed description thereof, and will only add, that the situation is agreeably handsome, the soil gray, with about a sufficient mixture of sand and gravel, to insure, with proper care, nice streets and yards, and with the aid of some manure, beautiful and productive gardens; the water is good and the air pure and healthy, coming from the lofty mountains in the neighborhood, all of which will contribute much to make it a desirable residence; and being adjacent to and near populous settlements, composed of many one and two years, by the purchase giving bond with approved security.—Being impressed with a belief that all persons inclined to purchase will view the premises, we deem it unnecessary to go into a lengthy and detailed description thereof, and will only add, that the situation is agreeably handsome, the soil gray, with about a sufficient mixture of sand and gravel, to insure, with proper care, nice streets and yards, and with the aid of some manure, beautiful and productive gardens; 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