

# THE PATRON AND GLEANER.

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## The Matrimonial Venture.

At this season of the year when wedding bells are sounding in the air, and bridal tours and trousseaus are subjects of deep interest to talk over, my mind dwells with great interest on this blissful period of life, and my best and warmest wishes are extended to all those who are and are to be newly wedded.

When we think of it seriously, selecting some one to cling to for life is no trifling matter; now is it? I almost wonder anyone has the courage to venture on such an uncertain sea, in the face of all the conjugal wrecks one sees strewed around; and if there is one thought that I would particularly like to impress on the minds of the girls, it is that they deliberate well before they decide what their course shall be in this important matter.

If there are any contemplating marrying with the hope to reform their choice after the ceremony, I wish they would listen to me, and please don't. How many sinners have you ever seen turned into saints by their wives? In this sort of a venture the chance are mostly against you, and it would be far easier to break your heart over him before you marry than after. To dismiss an agreeable, but unworthy suitor, might cost a few sleepless nights and melancholy days, but it won't kill; while to marry him would plunge you into a lifetime of unutterable wretchedness, if not premature death. I have seen this tried and in every instance it has failed. I have had the confidence of those whose lives are filled with wormwood and gall because of brutality and neglect, when they had every reason to expect just the opposite.

It is well to take no thought of the morrow concerning what you shall eat or what you shall drink, or where withal you shall be clothed, but whom you shall marry, that is quite another matter and demands the deepest of thought.

There is the picture of the drunkard's home for you to contemplate if you have any drawing towards a winebibber. How would you like to spend your evenings alone while he is at clubs or in saloons spending his substance in riotous living? How would you like to go out to wash, or clean house, or do all sorts of work, to eke out a living for yourself and children, and maybe for him? How would you enjoy a vomiting, stupid beast of a man as a protector and companion, anyway? Would you find it pleasant to nurse in infancy and tend in maturity a grinning, gibbering idiot as a result of being married to a drunken brute of a husband? You run the risk of any one, or all of these conditions being yours, if you link your fate with a tippler.

And what would life be worth to you tied to a gay gallant with no stability of character? How should you bear to see the smiles and tender attentions that were once yours, and still are yours by right, showered upon some undeserving flirt, who thinks it rather a good joke to break your heart? Could you smile on, and do your duty patiently, with the money that rightfully should buy home comforts for you and your children spent for diamonds and gewgaws to adorn the person of some unworthy creature? You couldn't, and wouldn't, did you say? Well then have a watchful eye over the company you keep. At best marriage is a lottery, and deception a leading feature in courtship, and only perfect trust can give any assurance of undying respect through long years of married life. If you have any misgivings about the character of your lover, you had best call a halt and pursue life alone. It is more than time that women were

demanding parity for purity, and as high a code of morals for husbands as men do for wives. The poet writes: "Tis sweet to love, but oh, how bitter, To court a girl and then not get her!"

But it will not send these selfish fellows with Godless appetites to an untimely grave to refuse to marry them. You are not the first love of such as these. Self love is first, and if you stood between them and personal gratification they would sacrifice you every time. Character and principle should be firmly established ere marriage is thought of, for it is not a reformatory institution by any means. If it were an easy thing for wives to improve husbands, or husbands to improve wives, there would not be so many ill-assorted pairs. They would all soon be educated to the same moral plane, and such as are in the institution would not be wishing to get out, and such as are out wishing to get in, as is alleged to have been the case since the beginning of the world.

Parents are the best moulders of character, but if they fall short in their duty, and there is not enough innate strength in the child for self preservation, there is trouble in store for somebody. So, girls, don't be in a hurry about marrying. Let your courtship have some length to it, that you may know what you are about.

An editor writes: "No marriage engagement should be more than six months long; the most ardent lover gets tired of living up to his girl's ideal any longer than that." This is good reason why a courtship, not engagement, should go on and on for a long time; for two or three years of walking the chalk line of high merit to please his dear, might be a practice that would cling for life. Really seven years is none too long to find out if a man is really a man "for a that," or only "living up to his girl's ideal." (The Head of the Sidneys says he wishes I had mentioned this to him before we were married, he would have liked a few more years of real single peace and quiet.)

The rule applies equally well when reversed, for girls are not always above deceiving; but the matrimonial venture is not so great a gain for man as woman. He has the world of business and his fellowmen outside of home to absorb a large part of his thoughts, while she has a life of unmitigated woe before her if deceived and neglected, and unprovided for at the family fireside.

The ex-convict Bidwell advises young men "to avoid the spendthrift, the gambler, the libertine, and the drunkard;" and it is even more important, dear girls, for you to shun such society, for a whole family of unborn generations may have to suffer the consequences of your associating with such characters. If you stand aloof from them you will not be in danger of being persuaded to marry such. It is too true that a fine horse and carriage, a silk hat, and broadcloth, with a fat pocket-book are often seductive.

"Maidens like moths are ever caught by glare,  
And mammon wins his way where seraphs might despair."  
—Mary Sidney in Farm Journal.

If Time be of all things the most precious, wasting Time must be the greatest prodigality, since lost Time is never found again; and what we call Time enough always proves little enough. Let us then up and be doing, and doing to the purpose; so by diligence shall we do more with less perplexity. Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all easy; and he that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night; while Laziness travels so slowly, that Poverty soon overtakes him. Drive thy business, let not that drive thee; and early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.—Franklin.

## Public Schools Again.

(For the Patron and Gleaner.)

When the cry of the Israelites went up to God because of the oppression of the Egyptians, and complaint was the fact that "they were required to make brick, not without straw as it is usually quoted, but that after gathering their own straw they were expected to make the same number of bricks in a day as when the straw was furnished." Now it seems to me that the able Editor of the "PATRON AND GLEANER," and the "eminent physician" (the latter of whom if I mistake not is a trustee of one of Bertie's public schools), are requiring even more of the public school teacher than the Egyptians did of the Israelites, when they insist, or even suggest, that anything else, especially a thing so extensive as free hand drawing, be made obligatory, unless at the same time, they insist that more facilities for teaching be added to the public school building. The various educational Journals and some other papers of the State have for sometime (to use a homely but expressive phrase) been pitching into the public school teacher. Now I wish to present a few points on the other side. I have a large amount of sympathy with the public school teacher. Not on the principal that a "fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind" but because as a bishop once remarked of a Methodist Annual Conference—"they are the poorest paid and most liberal set of paupers I have ever seen."

I raise no question as to the advantages to be derived from free hand drawing—indeed I believe that not only drawing, but Music, Latin, and more than all, pathology, should be taught in all schools—but I do insist that salary and facilities for teaching should increase in proportion to the increase in what is required from a teacher.

I have visited some of the public school buildings in this and other counties of North Carolina and have been shocked at their scanty supply of not only comforts, but of absolute necessities. Now let's take a public school building in Bertie—and as it is in a good part of the county I suppose it may be considered a fair average. First there is no well of water on the lot, so regardless of weather the children must be sent off a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards for it. In winter (the time that the schools are usually in session) the grounds around the house are for weeks soaked in water, and the teacher and children must wade through this to reach the building, which, by the way, is good as far as it goes, but is neither ceiled or plastered, therefore is very cold. When the interior is reached, we find it furnished (!) equipped (!) Well, we'll see. The day being cold the first thing we notice is a good stove, but it has an old rusty worn out pipe, which smokes whenever the wind blows, and consequently renders the room uninhabitable unless the windows are kept open, not a pleasant alternative with the thermometer at thirty-five.

The furniture, if such it can be called, consists of an inclined shelf nailed up on one side of the room, (for the children to write on I presume), a chair for the teacher, a water bucket and dipper, eight or ten long benches without backs and a dozen or two nails driven around the wall for hat racks. No desks, no blackboards, no maps, no globes, no dictionary, no table—and I might almost say—no anything, to enable teacher or pupil to do good work. The children are from necessity "buddled" together on the benches and unless child nature was different it is a moral impossibility to keep order.

Now that we have seen how woefully the trustees, state and county superintendents, have neglected their duties, let us look at the parents.

The day for the opening of the free school arrives, and children from far and near are "bustled" off to school. In a school numbering about thirty-five, the teacher when she (I use the feminine because most of our public school teachers are women) begins to examine the books of the pupils, finds the following articles, (with some slight variation): Three good slates, five halves and six pieces four or five inches and of manifold shapes, a half dozen slate pencils, two bottles of ink, one pen, three or four sheets of paper and about a number five copy book with several pages torn out or scribbled over belonging to a child who cannot make a letter. When the books are handed in it would seem there was an educational convention on hand from the number of grammarians, arithmeticians and historians represented, while the readers, oh! "their name is legion," and if the teacher dares to intimate that she would like to classify some of the pupils, and must have new books, the parents complain and say, "It is so expensive to buy books," and ask the committee for some one else next time, and if she tells the trustees that maps, blackboards, etc., are needed, they dab her hand to please and elect some one else.

Now let's get down to facts. You engage a teacher and put her in one of these average schools, with no blackboards, no maps, and children whose parents will not buy books, and it will take her from six to eight hours to go over the lessons—she doesn't teach them much, for it is impossible under the circumstances. When she goes home she studies four or five hours, preparing for next day's work; you pay her \$25.00 per month for eleven hours hard work; she pays out eight dollars for board, one for washing, and two for other expenses; so at the end of the month she has twelve or fourteen dollars left. Can you get a day laborer to do as much work for so little pay? You engage the day laborer for twelve months and furnish him with all necessary implements to cultivate your land; but you expect the teacher to cultivate your children's hearts and brains in three months without the necessary implements. Is that just? Who can complain if she fails? No one should; and yet most parents do. The blame and the failure belong not to the teacher or child, but to the legislators, superintendents, trustees, and the parents of the state.

If you will examine the matter, readers, you will find that the public school teachers are the poorest paid, yet most faithful class of workers to be found; you will not complain that so little but will wonder that so much has been done.

To prove that I am not far from right, I request that the chairman of the board of trustees of every public school in Bertie and Northampton counties, publish in the PATRON AND GLEANER an itemized statement of the condition and furniture of their school building, the length of the school term and the salary paid by them. Let us begin at the bottom and build on a firm foundation.

PROXION.

Which is the better, the gold or its glitter? The picture or its frame? The virtue or the praise it brings? The substance or its shadow? Henry Clay's words, "I would rather be right than be President," are preserved as in a casket of gold in the memories of thousands who recognized in the utterance a gem of brighter radiance than ever sparkled in the diadem of a monarch.

## Free School Books.

The Sentinel believes in education and believes also in free school books. The cost of books in the schools of Boston had been as low as 70 cents a year and furnished books free in all places where it has been tried has been followed by an increased attendance and by more efficient schools. That is the desirable thing—an increase of education without a proportionately increased expense.

School book rings, composed of book publishers, have always fought the free school book proposition, but The Sentinel would go to the full length of the proposition and have the State prepare and print all text books used in the common schools. This is already done in one State where by the tricks of the school-book publishers, parents have had to pay extra large sums for their children's books. One county, for instance, would adopt one set of readers, and the next county another. If a family removed from one county to the other the books they had already bought were useless. They had to buy new text books at considerable expense. The bribery of the book men to influence school boards became matters of scandal and at last the State took the whole business in charge, had its best scholars prepare good books, and they were printed in the State printing office.

People sometimes forget to consider that education is a business proposition. In educated communities property is always more valuable and crime more rare. There is more comfort, better government, less taxation. Our schools are not charitable institutions. They are, in fact, the most necessary and vital mediums of good government. Stand by them. Protect them. Cherish them. Don't let anybody injure them in any way. In them lies the future of this town and this nation.—Winston Sentinel.

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