

# CHARLOTTE MESSENGER.

VOL. I. NO. 26.

CHARLOTTE, MECKLENBURG CO., N. C., DECEMBER 16, 1882.

W. C. SMITH, Publisher.

## Two Epitaphs.

["Memento mori." "Gedenke zu Leben."] "Think of Death!" the gravestones say— "Peace to Life's mad striving!" But the churchyard daisies—"Nay, Think of living!" "Think of Life!" the sunbeams say, O'er the dial flying: But the slanting shadows—"Nay, Think of Dying!" "Think of Death!" the night birds say, On the storm-blast driving: But the building swallows—"Nay, Think of Living!" "Think of Life!" the broad winds say, Through the old trees sighing: But the whirling leaf dance—"Nay, Think of Dying!" "Think of Death!" the sad bells say, Fateful record giving: Clash the merry Yule-peal—"Nay, Think of Living!" Dying, Living, glad or loth, On God's Road relying: Pray He fit us all for both— Living, Dying!

—Charles W. Stubbs.

## "MONCHEER."

I still remember distinctly, although it was many years ago, the afternoon when, just as I was finishing my dinner, I heard Ted Perrone shouting to me from the street.

I ran out and found him sitting astride the fence, looking as if he would burst with excitement.

"I say, Jean! half holiday this afternoon! Big funeral over at Bollesville, and Mr. Limcox is one of the barbers! Hokey!"

Just as he spoke Mr. Limcox, the teacher, drove by toward Bollesville in Deacon Wright's buggy.

Mother had been putting up cherries that morning, and had kept me from school to solder the cans, so that I was late in hearing the good news. But the soldering had been finished, and I was ready for the afternoon's fun. Ted and I started off at once, and had not gone far down the road before we joined the other boys.

"Let's go berryin'," said Phil Burr. "There's somethin' down in Wright's swamps that ketches our chickens," said Ted. "Bet ye a dollar it's a lynx. Let's get some dogs and go for him."

"Lynx!" said Harvey Douglas. "You dunce, mebbe it's a Bengal tiger! I'm goin' crabbin'."

The dusty road led to the inlet which was bordered by brown swamps and stretches of gray sand, and to-day was dark blue and sparkling in the sunlight. Beyond lay the sea.

All the boys straggled down the road after Harvey. We had been born and reared in the fishing village, and took to the water as naturally as did the crabs. In five minutes, armed with crab nets, we were up to our waists in the water and chasing the brown "hard shells" as they skurried over the sandy bottom.

To this day I can feel the delight of that chase, the cool water splashing about my legs, the bright sunlight and the free salt breeze.

"There's Moncheer!" cried Harvey, who was near me. "Right alongside of the shore, too. Let's skeer the old man."

The other boys, smelling mischief in the air as they saw us consulting, came hurrying up, and we all went through the shallow water together to the shore. An old scow was lying there that had been dragged up and left by some clam digger.

The old Frenchman, Monsieur, or as the people of Cedar Haven called him, Moncheer, was sitting in the scow, busy with some herbs which he had spread out to dry.

As we drew near he took off his faded old cap to us with a laugh and flourish. He was gentle and smiling, even to the roughest boys in the village, and seemed anxious to conciliate and make friends. I can remember now that there was a sad, lonely look in his eyes, as if he was dreaming of happier days in his far-off native land. But at that time such thoughts never entered my head.

Back of the sandy beach where he was sitting in the scow was his little cabin. A rope stretched between two cedars growing near it, was hung with clothes freshly dried. Between his drying and herb-gathering the poor old Frenchman managed to pick up a scanty livelihood.

"He's the reglar old coward alive!" said Ted. "He's as feared of the water as if he had the hydrophobia. My father says 'taint like a human bein' to be so skeert of water."

By this time we had ranged ourselves about the scow. Moncheer looked up confidently from his herbs and nodded to us with a smile.

"Mais, messieurs," he said, in his gentle voice, "Que voulez-vous?"

Now it was heartless in us to think of playing the friendly old man a cruel trick. He had seen Ted making a kite one day, and had given him an old piece of scarlet silk and showed him how to cover the frame with it. He had brought me some cough syrup for a sore throat the winter before. And when we were rigging a tiny schooner he had volunteered to dye the sails for us—a bright blue. Indeed, there was not one of us to whom he had not done some little kindness.

But the whole village had received Moncheer, when he had come among them a year before, under protest—not because he was poor, for we were all poor. But he was a foreigner and a Catholic, and following the fashion of most of the world the people of Cedar Haven looked with suspicion on him because he differed with them in language and religion.

But the women were the first to be won over by his gentle, kindly ways. They were not used to such profound bows and such deference as they received from him.

The men soon began to tolerate him as a quiet, harmless old body, and the boys found him a shrewd, merry comrade. They would have liked him heartily but for his terror of the water. They could not help despising him for that.

Years afterward I heard from Dr. Debreit, the physician of the village, to whom the old Frenchman had told much of his story, that this physical terror was due to a terrible experience of his childhood, since which sudden contact with water in motion had always brought on a dangerous affection of the heart.

Now the boys had never seen Moncheer actually in the water.

"Let's heave him in," whispered Ted, "an' see what he will do."

But though Moncheer was lean and old, he looked wiry, and the boys were a little unwilling to grapple with him. And so, as we were really afraid to touch the poor old man, we cast about for a safer method of accomplishing our mean design.

"Pull the scow down to the water," suggested Harvey.

We were all leaning over it looking at Moncheer, who was sitting in the middle. From the place where the boat lay the sandy beach sloped suddenly away to the breakers. To start the scow was but the work of a moment. A pull, a push, a shout—and the rotten tub was rocking on the surf.

The old Frenchman had started wildly to his feet with a cry, but the shove of the boat had thrown him violently down. He rose to his knees in the scow and stared out at the heaving breakers about him. His face was the color of lead, his teeth chattered.

"Mes enfants! Boys! Ah-h, you do not understand!" and with a shudder he sank down. We thought he was dead.

"Now you've done it! You've killed him!" shouted Harvey, who was always first to get into a scrape and first to get out of it.

Two or three of the larger boys waded into the water and dragged the scow up again on the beach. The old man was unconscious when we lifted him out and laid him on the sand. But he soon staggered to his feet and crept away to his cabin.

I suspect that his trouble arose largely from mortification at the disclosure of his weakness. Some of us ran along by his side.

"I'm real sorry," whimpered Ted.

"Yes, yes," he murmured, quietly. "But let the old man alone now, mon enfant."

He seemed to recover before long from the effects of his fright, except that he looked still thinner and paler than before, and he seemed to shun the village people more than ever.

Among my boyish recollections I find but few remembrances of the poor old foreigner for the two years that followed.

He dyed the old clothes of the fishermen and packed his little bundles of herbs for the city market. On sunny days his thin, bent figure trotted to and fro in the swamps or up through the laurel thickets on the hills.

One day I ventured to peep into his cabin. There was a little white cot in the corner, a fire with a pot of soup simmering at the side, and a shelf of books with rare bindings.

Old Dr. Debreit, who was his only

visitor, was there, and they were engaged in a heated argument over one of the books. Dr. Debreit could never be induced to talk to any one of Moncheer, but the village was certain that if there were any mystery about him the physician had guessed it.

Cedar Haven treated the old man with silent but universal contempt after the day we had pushed into the water. Ted Berrone's father said he "hadn't no use for a man that was sech a coward," and he expressed the feeling of the whole community.

One day late in August all the men in the village had gone to the banks, four miles distant, in their fishing-boats. During the afternoon Harvey and Ted started off in an old skiff for an island that lay about two miles out to sea.

The boys had planted some clams there, and meant to bring home a couple of bushels of them. It is probable that they overloaded the boat. But this, at any rate, is certain, that not long after they had left the island one of the planks in the rotten bottom gave way, the clams fell through, and the boat filled with water.

The sun was sinking in a cold, gray sky, and a chill wind was rising. I was strolling along the beach and caught sight of a dark object, rising and falling into the sea. Two figures were clinging to it.

It was too far for them to swim ashore, and if they lost their hold of the boat they were lost.

There was not a boat on the beach with which to reach them. As I looked hurriedly about I saw a man down in the marsh, and ran toward him, shouting:

"It's Ted and Harvey! They're drowning! Oh, it's you!" for it was only old Moncheer, and what could that coward do?

But poor Moncheer came running toward me. He had evidently understood my cry and appeared much agitated.

He drew me to the beach, where the old scow lay, and motioned me to help him in shoving it down to the water.

His face was drawn and set, and his voice was shrill, as if he had lost control of it.

"Is dere no men but me?"

"No, Moncheer."

He pushed the scow into the surf. It seemed to me that he was trying to look over the water and to see only the drowning boys.

He got into the scow and so did I. We had no oars—only two boards for paddles; but I thought we could make them answer.

There would have been no trouble if the sea had been calm. But there was a heavy under-swell and a current dead against us.

Moncheer did not speak. He put all his strength into the paddle, but he shook from head to foot. I could see plainly enough that he was simply sick with fright in body and soul.

However, we urged the old scow along until she reached the outer ridge of the breakers; there she stopped. Built as she was it would have taken two of the strongest men in Cedar Haven to get her over that mighty breaker.

"We can't do it, Moncheer," I said, after we had tried a dozen times in vain. I was wet with a cold sweat, and my bones all felt as if they were broken. "It's no use; they've got to drown."

The old man stood on the bow, shading his eyes with his hand and trying to catch sight of the boys. They were not far distant now, but between us and them was this solid advancing wall of incoming breakers, green and dark.

Even to me, who had always lived by the water, it looked horrible then; it was a visible death.

I remembered wondering what the shivering old man, who was so afraid of the calmest water, thought of this. Whatever he thought, it quieted him. When he turned to me he had ceased to tremble.

"I must go," he said, taking up the end of a rope which was coiled up in the bottom of the boat and tying it under his arms. "You shall draw us in—even I have reach zem."

Before I could catch his meaning he had thrown himself into the rushing waves, and the coil of rope at my feet was playing out with terrible speed.

He passed under the breaker, but was brought back and again hurled out by the current.

Harvey saw him and understood what he was trying to do. Seizing the moment when Moncheer was washed nearest to him he threw himself to-

ward him, caught the rope, and swam back a stroke or two to bring it within Ted's reach.

The next moment both boys were grasping it, and I began to draw them in. It was an easy task, for the incoming breaker dashed them toward the scow. As soon as they were alongside the boys scrambled in and pulled Moncheer in after them.

He rallied when we reached the shore, and laughed once or twice gayly, as the women, who had gathered on the beach, crowded about him, crying and praying to God to bless him. But when he tried to stand on his feet he fell down helpless.

We carried him to his cabin and sent for Dr. Debreit.

Moncheer beckoned to me as he lay on the bed and asked for a pen and piece of paper, and then he scrawled two or three words. It was a telegram directed to some one in Washington, and written in French.

"It is the time to send it now!" he muttered. "Quick, my boy! quick!"

Dr. Debreit came in and he looked up to him with a gentle smile on his poor, thin, old face. I never saw him alive again. That night he died.

The next morning, by the early train, two gentlemen arrived and hurried to Moncheer's little cabin. It was said that they were men of rank—members of the French legation.

"We have found him at last," one of them said to Dr. Debreit; "but only when it is too late."

The story was whispered about in Cedar Haven that Moncheer had given up his little income in France and emigrated, that his grandson might be educated, marry and live in comfort.

It was for this purpose that he had hidden himself for years in Cedar Haven. I do not know, even now, how true the story was. But it is certain that his body was sent back with great ceremony to Bordeaux, and that the members of the French legation, who superintended the arrangements, paid the most profound respect to his memory.

I remember the quiet summer Sunday when the village people went in a funeral procession to the little cabin to say good-bye to "Old Moncheer."

We boys came last, together. The old man was dressed in a faded uniform which had been stored away for many years in his trunk. His white hair was pushed back from his gentle face.

One of the strangers had fastened on Moncheer's breast a little symbol attached to a bit of red ribbon. Dr. Debreit, standing beside the coffin with uncovered head, pointed it out to us.

"He had the soul of a hero always in his weak body," he said. "That was given to him when he was scarcely more than a boy for signal bravery on the field of Marengo. It is the Cross of the Legion of Honor."—*Youth's Companion.*

## Thurlow Weed's Span of Life.

The late Thurlow Weed's life almost spans the history of the country under its present Constitution, says a New York paper. He was born before Washington died, and when Webster, Clay and Calhoun were making their reputations he had edited several country newspapers and fought in the battles of his country. He was older than Seward or Lincoln or Greeley, and when Clay, Webster and Calhoun were dead he had not entered upon the most important part of his career. He was alive when Napoleon's star appeared in the darkness of the French revolution, and was already a young man when the battle of Waterloo was fought. He lived and worked with three generations of public men. Most of the men who are now beginning to attract attention might have been his grandsons. Benjamin Franklin died seven years before Mr. Weed was born. The lives of these two journalists take the world back into the reign of Louis XIV., and beyond the birth of Frederick the Great. Another such would very nearly reach the time of Shakespeare.

Texas leads the Union in crops this year. According to the United States crop reports, Texas scores nothing below ninety, and runs from that, the lowest, to 106, the highest. Other States get down to forty's and fifty's, and sometimes crawl above 100 in one article alone. But there is not one in the whole list of thirty-eight States which has the general average given to Texas crops.

The Harvard faculty have forbidden any student after this year to row in any crew unless able to swim.

## The Bank of England.

The following is an interesting account of the manner in which the greatest financial institution in the world is conducted: The constitution and government of the Bank of England are not fully understood, even by many otherwise well-informed residents in the city of London itself. It differs from most corporations in the fact that it has no permanent governor nor chairman, and furthermore that the remuneration paid to the directors for their services is individually small. The governing body consists of twenty-six directors, that is to say, one governor, one deputy-governor and twenty-four directors. This body does not change except by death or resignation, etc., but the governor and his deputy, who act as chairman and deputy-chairman of the board or court of directors, change every two years, the deputy becoming governor and all the directors being deputy and governor in rotation. The salary of the governor, as well as that of the deputy governor, is now £1,600 per annum, while that of the other twenty-four directors is £500 each. According to Francis, whose history of the Bank of England is practically out of print, the management of the bank is vested in the whole court of directors, which meets weekly, when a statement is read of the position of the bank as regards its securities, bullion and liabilities. The directors have equal power, and should a majority disapprove of the arrangements they may reconstruct them. Eight directors go out and eight come in annually, elected by the court of proprietors. The list of candidates recommended by the court of directors is transmitted to the proprietors, and the eight so recommended uniformly come in. When any person is proposed as a new director, inquiry is always instituted concerning his private character. Those who survive this fiery ordeal, and are approved of by the court of directors, never fail to be elected. The qualifications for a director are the possession of bank stock to the amount of £2,000; for the deputy-governor, £3,000, and for the governor, £4,000. The directors are responsible for the management of the affairs of the bank, and penalties are attached to their office individually and collectively on certain occasions. By their charter, however, they are not answerable to the government for the management of the monetary department, and the security which the public has for a good administration of affairs depends upon the discretion of the directors, subject to the charter.

## A Pretty Experiment.

The following experiment in the way of physics without apparatus is given by a correspondent of *La Nature*. A clay pipe is laid over the top of a large wine glass, and a person is required to bring it down to the table, without touching either pipe or glass, without agitating the air or moving the table. The solution of the problem consists in taking up another like glass, rubbing it vigorously on your sleeve, then bringing it near the pipe stem, which is thereupon strongly attracted, so that the pipe falls. This experiment is a pretty variation of the electric pendulum, and shows that pipe clay, a very bad conductor of electricity, yields readily to the attraction of an electrified body.

## Music Hath Charms.

He who has not heard the merry matin song of the tuneful mule, knows nothing of the power and potency of music in her wildest, freest mood. When in solo or concerted opera, the four-footed choir is head and ears above all human possibilities. The music begins with an andante movement, soft and sweet as the ungreased wheelbarrow's plaintive voice; then comes the staccato furioso, the adagio fortissimo, spitty-rarsos, followed by the tremulous yee-haw, which is the crown and summit, the cloud-capped mountain top of ecstasy and joy. Talk not of music, fellow-citizens, till you have heard the song of the mule.—*Boston Transcript.*

The fastest time in which a mile has been run in the United States is 1:39, made by Ten Brock, five years old, in a race against time at Louisville, Ky., May 24, 1877. Ten Brock carried 110 pounds. Olitipa has the fastest half-mile performance to her credit, she making the distance at Saratoga, July 20, 1874, in 47, seconds. She was two years old and carried ninety-seven pounds.