

FRANKLINTON WEEKLY

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, DEVOTED TO THE MATERIAL AND INTELLECTUAL ADVANCEMENT OF OUR COUNTRY.

IN POLITICS, DEMOCRATIC; IN PRINCIPLES, UNCHANGEABLE; FOR THE RIGHT, YESTERDAY, TO-DAY AND FOREVER.

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EUNICE'S PENSION MONEY.

FRANCES E. WARDLEIGH.

"I do declare for, Eunice, them pesky hens hain't laid but six eggs!" exclaimed Mrs. Martin, entering the kitchen door which led to the shed.

"I'd better stop to the postoffice too, hadn't I? The mail must a come in by now," replied Eunice Hillyer, Mrs. Martin's hired girl, and second cousin also.

In this part of our our land, servants, so called, were unknown; if a farmer's wife could not do all her own work, some neighbor's daughter was hired to help her; but though she bargained for a weekly stipend, she did not thereby lose caste; she ate with the family who employed her, entered into all their plans and amusements, and not seldom married the farmer's son or brother.

"Yes, I would if I was you. Mebbe you'll git that pension o' yours," said Mrs. Martin, laughingly. "If so be's you're ever to get it, that is."

"Julia Perkins was watin' three years, but hers come at last."

"That's so. Well, patient waitin', no losin' the sayin' is. An', oh, Eunice, as you come home, spos'n you pick some o' them round wood-berries; they'd look kind o' nice on the parlor mantelshelf."

After a brief absence Eunice came back, without any letters, but with the eggs and a huge bunch of the brilliant scarlet berries of the rowan-tree, which Mrs. Martin and her neighbors called "round wood-berries." As she handed the latter to Mrs. Martin, she said:

"Do you remember that big, squatty blue vase in the attic? I mean the one Uncle Joe brought home from China an' giv' to mother, the very last voyage before he was wrecked. I see one somethin' like it, only not near so handsome, when I was down to Augusty last week; a neighbor o' Mis' Parker's had it settin' on her hearth, full of flowers. Spos'n I git mme to put these berries in?"

"I would, but what a creature you you be fur ideas, Eunice! Now I'd never a took note o' such a thing." So Eunice went up to the attic and presently returned with a large and valuable china jar which her mother had, for many years, used as a sort of catch-all. When after Mrs. Hillyer's death, the little house and all its furniture were sold to pay the funeral expenses, doctor's bill, etc., this jar was put aside for Eunice among the few things she might keep for herself, because it was old and useless, save as a memento of former days.

The Hillyers were once in comfortable circumstances, but when Eunice's father died, his widow sold the farm-lan's because there was no one to attend to them. Basil, the only son, had no taste for farming; he preferred to work in one of the many sawmills near Bangor, and was doing well when the war broke out. He had always given a liberal share of his wages to his mother, and when, shortly after he enlisted in the army, he received a commission as second lieutenant, his pride and joy were more on account of the widowed mother and little sister at home than for himself. Twice afterward he was promoted, and with increased pay for himself there came increased comfort—for the loved ones. Then, in the awful Wilderness, a bullet whizzed through the air, and Captain Basil Hillyer, after but a few seconds of suffering, passed into the better land; and there was mourning in the little farmhouse where he was born.

And now, beside deep grief, the trouble of poverty came to Mrs. Hillyer and her little daughter. The former was not strong, and the aid that ten-year-old Eunice could give was slight, so the two struggled along, hopeless of better days, until at last news came to their ears that a soldier's mother, a dependent upon him during his lifetime, was entitled to a pension. The law granting such pension had been in force before Mrs. Hillyer heard of it, and then weary

months were consumed in obtaining all the apparently needless information which the Pension Office insisted upon.

Now and then a fellow-townsmen actually did get a pension; in one case a widow (just preparing to take to herself a second husband) was well known to have got nearly a thousand dollars; this possibly was something tangible to live and hope for. At last a piece of good fortune came quite near home.

Mrs. Hillyer's cousin's daughter, one Julia Perkins, received a little over twelve hundred dollars pension money, which should have come to Mrs. Perkins, but that she died a few weeks before her case was acted upon at the office in Washington.

Just about the time that that spur was given to her hope, Mrs. Hillyer received an unusually explicit letter from the Pension Office, which said, without very much circumlocution, that the one evidence now needed was some proof, either by letters from the dead soldier or by sworn statements from responsible persons who paid or saw paid to her money which her son sent her before and during his service in the army; that she was actually dependent upon Captain Basil Hillyer for her maintenance.

Many such letters had been received; some of them had been lost or destroyed, but Mrs. Hillyer was very certain that at least a dozen of them, tied together with a bit of tape, had been but in that very indefinite place—somewhere. And as the son had always been so careless as to send his money directly to her in a bank-note, there were no witnesses to any payments by him.

During the search for the lost letters death came to Mrs. Hillyer and ended all her anxieties and privations. In the general overhauling incident upon the sale and removal of her own effects, Eunice could find no trace of the much desired letters; so she concluded that her mother had unconsciously destroyed them; and now she spoke of her pension much as one speaks of one's ship that is to "come in," but which so rarely ever does make port.

As she was emptying the jar of the bits of old string and torn newspapers which it contained, she said to Mrs. Martin:

"Be you goin' campin' with Ezry Knight's folks?"

"Well, dunno; I kind o' thought I sh'd like to; we ain't so very drove just now. I wonder if they've made up their minds w here best to go?" answered Mrs. Martin, pausing in her work of beating eggs.

"I see Ida when I was to the store, an' she says they've about' dec ided to go to Sink Haze Medder; 'tain't so very far. Morse's folks is all goin'."

"Then, of course, you be, too; so I'll hev to go to keep an eye on you an' Eben."

"There's a good lot o' nice strong twine in this jar," said Eunice, irrelevantly.

"Eben's as good a fellow as ever trod shoe-leather," continues Mrs. Martin, not to be arrested in her remarks by Eunice's twine. "He ain't so awful smart as some folks, mebbe, but 'outness ain't all one looks for in a husband. I s'pose he can't help his natur'; 'twan't his choo-in' that he was born o' that money-lovin' Morse tribe; there never was a Morse that wouldn't squeeze a cent till it hollered! Ah, Eunice, if you'd only git that pension, Eben'd marry you quick enough then! Well, you might easy get a was man, if he is one—Why, Eunice, what's the matter?"

The last words were caused by the unwonted sight of Eunice in tears; the girl had dropped into a chair beside the table, and, holding a letter in her hand, was weeping bitterly, sobbing as if her heart would break. "Look," said she, with a sob; "one of Basil's letters! I found them in the jar!"

"Sho now!" exclaimed Mrs. Martin, sympathetically. "Poor Basil!" Then remember the importance of these letters, she added, excitedly; "Not his army letters that you've been a searchin' for? Well, well, but I be glad! Now you'll git your pension—and Eben, too!"

No one who knew the Morses was at all surprised that Eben, who had planned a long visit to relatives in Philadelphia, should offer to take the precious letters to Washington, and, if possible, close up Eunice's business for her.

As soon as he arrived in Washington Eben took himself to the Pension Office (which was then in its old quarters on Pennsylvania Avenue), and on being asked by a colored man who sat at the head of the long flight of stairs which led from the street to the Commissioner's room, the lower part of the building being occupied by a store, what his errand was, he said he had come to see about a pension for Mrs. Hillyer, Captain Hillyer's mother. This was so, much more lucid and exhaustive an answer than the man usually got to such questions, that he did not send Basil very far, only to the room of the chief Clerk, directly behind him. Here too, Eben, being a man of few words and knowing just what he was after, in one sentence stated his errand so clearly, that he was told to whom to go for exact information.

Through one or two swinging-doors, up three or four steps, through a narrow and crooked passageway, and then down three or four steps, he went with a messenger, till at last he was ushered into a small room where four clerks sat, probably at work, though three of them were listening to some quotations from the Revised Statutes which the other, a spare, upright old gentleman, was reading aloud. On making his errand known to the clerk who sat nearest the door, Eben was directed to a fatherly-looking man, with snow-white hair and beard, who sat by a window.

He answered various questions put by this clerk, who presently said: "Oh, I see! The dependent mother is dead, you say?"

"Yes, sir; she died in March, 1882, nigh on to two years ago."

"What papers are those which you have? The doctor's bill and—"

"No, sir; the letters which you wrote so many times for—letters from Captain Hillyer when he sent money to his mother."

"Ah, yes; the evidence of maintenance. They'll have to go to the Auditor's office. Let me see, continued the clerk, consulting several ledgers while he spoke; "no, the Hillyer case has not yet gone to the Auditor, so I will take those letters. You haven't sent on the bills yet, have you?"

"Bills! What bills, sir?"

"The undertaker's, the doctor's—"

"But Captain Hillyer didn't need no doctor, poor fellow! He was shot through the head in the Wilderness, an' died where he fell."

"The soldier's! Oh, yes, that evidence is all right. Now, what we want is the bills for the mother's last sickness and burial; this is an accrued pension case, you know."

"A what, sir?" asked puzzled Eben.

"If Mrs. Hillyer were alive she would receive twenty dollars a month pension, with back pay from the date of the soldier's death. But she being dead the money reverts to the government, who, however, will pay all properly certified bills for the mother's funeral, also bills for her board, nursing, medical attendance, etc."

"Do you mean that her daughter can't have this money?"

"Only in payment of the bill!"

"Other folks' daughters have got their mothers' pensions!"

"Oh, yes that used to be the custom; but the Third Auditor has decided that the law did not so intend dependent parents' pensions; that such were payable only to the parent, and not to his or her heir, except in case a dependent father had left a second wife."

"Then a soldier's step-mother could draw his pension money even if he never saw her, or hated her like poison, while his sister can't touch it?"

"Yes."

"I call that an abominably unjust law!" exclaimed Eben, indignantly. "Perhaps Captain Hillyer's sister can get a few years' pension as a dependent sister. How old was she when he died?"

"No offense to you, sir, but Eunice Hillyer'll not have anything more to do with a Government that takes back the money it owed to her mother. If I, or any one else, owed money to Mrs. Hillyer, this very same Government would make me pay my debt to her heirs. Poor old lady! She ste her heart out waitin' for this money; she died from sheer anxiety and overwork. If she'd had a quarter part of what was owing to

her, she'd be alive now!" and with these words Eben took his leave.

A rich golden haze was in the air, and a sense of rest and contentment of feeling that it was afternoon and the day's work was done, and even the busiest might sit idle for a brief period—came over Eunice Hillyer the day before Thanksgiving. Mr. Martin's butternut was full of overflowing with spicy mince pies. Yellow custard, golden pumpkin, deep-red cranberry, and numerous other pies, were ranged in tempting rows on the shelves; in the stone jars below were cookies and doughnuts enough to have fed a regiment of hungry boys; in the deep drawers were loaf after loaf of cake—fruit, pound, cup, caramel, walnut, marble, spice, silver and gold, jelly—and there was no cakemaker in town equal to Eunice. Mrs. Martin had said to her that very morning,

"Well, Eunice, as Eben got home yesterday, an' there ain't no word of your pension, I guess there's no hope of it. It's an ill wind that blows nobody good, you know, an' what should a' done this Thanksgivin' without you to make my cake I'm sure I don't know; for my cousins from Bath, who are to be here to-morrow, are famous cooks, an' I sh'd hate awfully not to have a mite of decent cake to set before them; an' somehow I do have a dreadful heavy hand with dough of all sorts. So it's a mercy to me there ain't no prospect of your marryin' Eben Morse."

Which doubtless was a comfort to Mrs. Martin, but not so much so to Eunice. The girl was coming slowly home from the store, where she had been to make some last purchase for the morrow's festivities, and recalling to mind what Mrs. Martin had said, was sorely tempted to a cry out there in the gathering darkness all by herself. She had been so sure that, now the missing letters were in her hand, the long-for money would be hers. But she was not mercenary; it was not the coin she regretted; it was those far visions she had allowed her mental eyes to see, of a snug home where, within another year, she and Eben should have their own Thanksgiving to keep, their own fat turkey to roast, their own butternut full of appetizing jainties.

She tried not to let herself say, even if only to herself, that there was little for her to give thanks for this year, and little for her to look forward to which would ever be worth remembering on any future Thanksgiving Day. Of course Eben would not stay single for her sake; he was too fond of home-life to be willing to go wifeless all his days, and there were at least two girls of her acquaintance who would gladly marry him.

As she thus meditated, Eben's voice sounded in her ear:

"Well, Eunice, here I am."

"Had a pleasant journey, Eben?" was her calm reply. She did hope her eyes would not look red in this dim light.

"Pretty good. But, Eunice, your pension is all a humbug."

Eunice was not surprised, yet the news, so placidly told, was depressing.

He went on to describe his adventures and his interview with the clerk, adding:

"Now, if you'd a' got your rights, you'd had about five thousand dollars pension money; an' that's a good deal, ain't it! Enough to make a girl worth marryin' for, ain't it?"

At the reiterated question, Eunice felt obliged to answer:

"Yes, Eben."

To herself she said:

"Ah, well, he can't help his disposition, an' I can't help bein' poor."

"I hear," continued Eben, slowly and emphatically, "that the boys 'round town have been sayin' that soon's you got your pens on I was goin' to ask you to marry me. You know's well as I do that we Morses have always been powerful money-lovin', don't you?"

"Yes," she said, again, with a little sigh.

"Now, I never had no faith in this pension; but bein' a Morse, no one would a' believed I was sure you'd never git it; now I am sure, an' everybody knows it—knows I ain't, very far my money now. Eunice, I've been waitin' on you for nigh on to two years, an' you've known me always; what's to hinder our gettin' married to-morrow, Thanksgivin' Day?"

Again Eunice said, "Yes, Eben," but without a sigh.

"For Congress--Jno. Nichols."

At the several polling places in the 4th Congressional District, in November next, tickets bearing the name of John Nichols for Congress, will be offered to voters. In the weeks that intervene between the election every voter ought to ask himself these questions:

1st—How, when and by whom was Mr. Nichols nominated? and why is he a candidate?

2nd—What is Mr. Nichols' record as a party man, and as an officer?

3rd—What claim has he for the support of voters in the Fourth District?

4th—What does he propose to do if elected to Congress?

[Each of these questions will be answered in succeeding numbers of the Chronicle.] Mr. Nichols has recently published an eight page pamphlet, printed in small type, entitled "An Address to The Voters of the Fourth District." It is probable that not one in ten of the voters in the district will read this long address or learn of its contents. To do Mr. Nichols justice, in as much as we shall criticize some of his positions, to-day we give his points in brief and in the weeks following will discuss the questions which the address raises, and which we have said every voter ought to desire answered before the day of election.

After the usual stereotyped expression of all self-nominated candidates "At the earnest solicitation of a large number of friends," etc., an allusion to the political unrest in the country and an announcement that "circumstances over which he has no control" will prevent his canvassing the district, Mr. Nichols begins his address with an article on "The Labor Question." The fact that this is the first question that commands his attention is, if we had no other evidence, sufficient to show that he hopes to go to Congress by the vote of the Knights of Labor in the district, added to the vote of the Republican party. He says that the great laboring element of the country, failing to secure recognition and protection from either of the National parties, has determined to assert its demands.

He gives as the causes, 1st—The importation of cheap labor; 2nd—Land grants to corporations. He neglects to say, by the way, that all these fraudulent land grants to corporations were granted by the Republican party, of which for many years he has been an active member and that the importation of cheap labor has been mainly by Republicans who howl themselves hoarse in their demands for protection. Mr. Nichols next discusses the question of "Hours of Labor," and after a column in reference to the time which laborers should work, says "it is a matter belonging more to the States than to Congress." His heart bleeds for the children who are compelled to work in the factories at a tender age. The Chronicle has spoken plainly in favor of a law forbidding the employment of children in factories more than a reasonable number of hours. If Mr. Nichols is really in earnest in his desire to help the working men in North Carolina and holds the amelioration of their condition dearer than a \$5,000 salary paid to a Congressman, he will withdraw from the Congressional and become a candidate for the Legislature. From his own admission Congress cannot regulate the hours of labor or similar needed reforms—the State Legislatures alone can legislate on these questions. In Congress, even if he had influence, Mr. Nichols could not aid the workmen and the Territories. In the Legislature he might aid them—but the salary of a North Carolina member of the Legislature isn't quite five thousand dollars, and Mr. Nichols therefore prefers that there be no legislation that will aid workmen rather than forego what he thinks is an opportunity of getting a \$5,000 salary.

Mr. Nichols next with a great flourish takes up "The Blair Bill" and by the liberal use of italics emphasizes his oft-repeated statement: "Think of it! Fourteen million dollars for the River and Harbor and not one cent for education!" Now for clap-trap argument this is fine. It is

calculated, upon first blush, and by the sophistry with which he surrounds it, to make one think that our representatives are opposed to the education of the laboring class. Mr. Nichols doesn't tell the people—if he had been frank and candid he would have made the statement that in all the history of Congress, not one cent has been appropriated for the cause of education in the States. Once there was a division of a part of the public lands for that purpose, under a Democratic administration, but Congress never has done anything to educate the people. And why? Because it is not in the province of Congress to appropriate money for that purpose. The only plea upon which the Blair Bill was advocated was that the North had freed the negro and ought to educate him by distributing the surplus in the Treasurer to the several States on the basis of illiteracy. The reasons for the failure of the Blair Bill are many. Both our Democratic Senators and most of the Representatives favored it. Could Mr. Nichols have done more?

The Republican party was in power in the nation twenty-four years. Mr. Nichols ("Nichols and Gorman are with us") was, and is to-day, in full accord with his party—and yet they never passed any bill to help educate the laboring classes. Mr. Nichols did not raise his voice to advocate it. He is only now heard because he hopes to gain support by riding on the tidal wave of popular belief in public education.

The Blair Bill was only to give aid for a few years. There was no purpose to put the schools under the control of Congress. The States alone have entire charge of the education of the children, and the Blair Bill was entitled "a bill to amend" in the next Legislature the most important legislation to be considered will be that relating to public education. The State can and the State will educate its children, and men who honestly desire to promote the education of all the people, would naturally aspire to a seat in the Legislature. Congress cannot educate the people—it ought not to—and Mr. Nichols, if elected, could not secure a dollar to add to the school fund of North Carolina more than could Maj. Graham.

The business depression is the next topic to which our Statesman gives his attention. He is frank enough to say "there is no universal panacea." We had hoped that he had some patent plan by which men were to become rich and all this vast domain be converted into a modern utopia. His remedies for depression, or rather his remedies are, to quote from his address, the following glittering and plausible generalities:

[Legislation] can indulge in a conservative care in extending railroad enterprises and in facilitating the organization of manufacturing corporations. It can restrict the grants of the public domain. It can enact uniform bankruptcy laws, extending the provisions of such laws so that the poor man, indebted but a few hundred dollars, shall be able to readjust his financial affairs as readily as the large debtor. It can regulate transportation on a just and uniform basis, to the end that the stockholder shall not grow too suddenly rich by combination nor be robbed by ruinous competition, and that the workman may calculate with some degree of certainty the cost of his living, and the farmer the cost of production and marketing so far as transportation is concerned. It can see that a stable currency be guaranteed, that the workman may know the purchasing power of his stipulated earnings. It can consider what reasonable and humane regulations may be adopted relative to immigration, and see to it that labor is not lowered either in standing or through earnings by the pernicious method of importations by contract; that every lawful endeavor be made to stimulate industrial education in all parts of the country, that there may result a legitimate increase in the consuming power of the people. It can stimulate the growth of the principle of industrial co-partnerships through methods of profit-sharing by wise permissive laws. Public sentiment can encourage the perfect organization of the forces involved, to the end that each shall treat with the other through representatives, and that production shall be regulated by the demand and not by the ill-advised

eagerness of men to push their work individually to the detriment of others, that there may come the universal adoption of shorter hours of labor, and that the contracts of labor be as free as contracts for commodities under fair agreements for services rendered.

He gingerly treats of the "Internal Revenue," and charges the Democratic party with bad faith because they have not repealed the law. He omits (by oversight, of course,) to say that the Democratic party is not pledged to secure a repeal of the internal revenue laws. North Carolina Democrats are pledged "to secure the repeal if they can." If any man will read the Congressional Record carefully and say that our Congressmen did not almost run themselves out of breath in the endeavor to repeal or modify the law, he's a most unreasonable man. Now, why does Mr. Nichols want the internal revenue law repealed? Hear him: "Its repeal would to a great extent, stop the agitation of the tariff question." He desires it because he favors protection, the favorite Republican tenet, not because he cares about the burdens of the tax on whiskey and tobacco.

Mr. Nichols declares himself to be a high tariff man and says: "I hold that a tariff for protection, with incidental revenue, is the correct principle." In other words he declares himself in favor of robbing five men to help one—in favor of the doctrine that the more tax you pay the richer you become. He devotes over a page to his advocacy of this pet Republican idea. We shall discuss this question in a separate article before the people go to the polls. To our mind his position on this question is sufficient to defeat him, even if there were not other good reasons.

This concludes the address with the exception of a short article favoring postal saving banks, and a reform of the civil service. Concluding, Mr. Nichols says of himself, that he is about fifty years old (his sophistry has so completely taken possession of him that he is like a maiden of uncertain age and doesn't speak clearly and explicitly even about his age); that he followed the plow until he was fifteen and then served as apprentice in a printing office six years; and that he has faithfully performed every public duty. He says he has filled several public positions, but neglects to say that he was appointed to them because of his devotion to the Republican party, the principles of which, although he claims "not to be a partisan, he is still advocating."

The Chronicle is not going to say anything about Mr. Nichols' personal life. We respect every man who by honest and legitimate means, from humble surroundings, has won success and prominence. While we may think it indelicate for him to parade it, as we think it unbecoming a soldier to speak in public, when aspiring for office, of his wounds, it is creditable to Mr. Nichols, as he says of himself, "with no heritage of greatness nor aristocratic lineage," that he has filled responsible public positions acceptably to the public.

We have thus—honestly and fairly, we think,—reviewed Mr. Nichols' card, making a few observations in passing. We shall hereafter tell about his official career and refer to his positions on public questions. Some of them are totally untenable and most of them are cunningly hid in a multitude of words. We are free to say, however, that it is a plausible presentation of public questions. Mr. Nichols manifests much smartness and ingenuity. Maj. Graham need want no easier task than to reply to Mr. Nichols' address and strip his arguments of the sophistry with which he has clothed them and hold them up in their naked deformity.

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