

The Lincoln Courier.

LINCOLN, N. C., FRIDAY, MAY 26, 1893.

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March 27, 1891

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Godey's Lady's Book. MISS WILCOX'S WILL.

BY EMILY READ.

"I do wish, mamma, you would not insist upon a thing so disagreeable."

"I also wish, my dear, that you would show a little respect for my opinion. To be sure, I am not a Wilcox by blood, but having been connected with your father's family over twenty years,—how many years over the two decades she did not say—"I may be supposed to understand the family traits, and, I may also say their vagaries."

Poor little Gladys could have sagely remarked that there were traits as well as vagaries in other branches of her family; but luckily for her future husband, she had a sweet temper, and also had learned to be silent on occasions. A more excellent gift in a woman than a low, sweet voice.

"Children in these days," Mrs. Wilcox continued, in her most plaintive tone, "know a great deal more than their mothers, even though they've been cooped up in a stupid village most of their lives. When I was a girl, one's city relative considered it their duty to introduce the girls of the family into society, and if they were in the least bright, they learned a great deal, even in one winter."

"It doesn't require a winter in a city to learn how to avoid doing a mean thing," said Gladys, hotly.

"It requires some knowledge of the world to understand your aunt's vagaries," Mrs. Wilcox replied, dryly.

"Aunt Ruth is a little difficult to understand," Gladys unwisely admitted; "yet that is no reason we should force ourselves upon her, whether she wants us or not."

"Carry out your ideas, and find some day, to your cost, that your worthy aunt considers herself heartily neglected. I flatter myself that I know a few things; one is that attentions 'paid old people are never lost. Fortunes have been lost by neglect of them, but never from a little polite attention."

"If it is a question of money, I would rather neglect dear Aunt Wilcox than court her. I wish she had not a cent in the world, for then these visits would be delightful, but now, I must say, I detest them."

"And you would prefer Dick Blanchford for her heir. No doubt his Aunt Althea would not be sorry, but for my part, I believe in the old saw—'blood is thicker than water.' I can't say I expect the old lady to do the proper thing and make you, her nearest relative, her heir. Of course, she will prefer endowing an orphanage, in preference to her own nephew's orphan, or perhaps she may take a fancy to a put cat or poodle; still, if you are decently attentive, she may leave you a legacy."

"I don't want a legacy, mamma, and I do hope never to see a penny of Aunt Ruth's money," said poor little Gladys, hotly.

"Not if you marry Dick Blanchford? For if you do, you will need every penny you can get to set up housekeeping with. I don't intend to have Mr. Dick living on me, so either his aunt or yours will be obliged to look out for you."

"Oh, mamma!" cried Gladys, her pretty face all aflame with indignation. "Neither Dick nor I want your money, or any one else's; we are not so old that we cannot wait for better days."

"Wait by all means, the longer the better. In the meantime, I am sorry my dear, that these yearly visits to your great aunt are so disagreeable to you. Why they are, I can't see," Mrs. Wilcox continued plaintively. "Ever since you were a baby in long clothes, I have, of course only in your interest, made these annual visits, and I must say to your aunt's credit, that I have always been received with hospitality; indeed, I may say with prodigious profusion; every luxury in or out of season your aunt has lavished upon us, an attention the more complimentary in one who cares nothing

for the table, and does not know a mushroom from a toad-stool, or a truffle from a Jerusalem artichoke."

A telegram brought me to "Wilcox Lodge," though an ox-team could not have drawn me if I had known for what purpose I was sent for; even to entertain Martha Wilcox, the widow of Ruth's nephew.

I was fond of Gladys, and for Dick's sake did my share of petting her, and though I did not altogether agree with Dick, that she was an angel, seeing that she needed food and clothing, and had other characteristics not of the angelic order. That the child had a good temper, I did not need Dick's assurance for, since I knew that she had lived "twice ten tedious years," they must have been) with her mother. Short cornmeal and racy talk had heretofore been the order of the day when I visited my old friend, Ruth Wilcox. "If you want to pormandise, you must go elsewhere," she used to say, and verily her table was near starvation point. But when I went this time, a week before the other guests, I found a complete change. She did not seem to have a thought beyond the table, and every train brought bampers of game and California fruits, canvass-backs and diamond-backs, pastry cookies, and frivolities as she pleased to call the confections, as well as every delicacy the grocer could send.

Of course, I was surprised, and also provoked, to find my old friend make such a display for Martha Wilcox and little Gladys, and I was also surprised to hear—

"It's just old mistresses' way, when Miss Martha comes. She's bound to feed her, tho' it don't fatten her a pound weight." At least this was what old Ben, tradesman, waiter, and head man on the plantation told me. And old Patteny, the cook, had her word also to say, though she did not mind the cooking of the dishes as much as she said, since she did the tasting of them. Certainly a cook's perquisite.

And not only the table, but the stables were on the old friend's conscience. For herself, the shabbiest old carriage and one old horse sufficed to take her to church and to make her yearly visits to her neighbors. But for her nephew's widow and daughter, nothing but a fine coupee and a pair of black horses paid for most extravagantly, would suit. The stable-keeper had the impudence to stipulate, that on the occasion of a funeral the horses were to be at his service, an imposition when one took into consideration that the price paid was usurious and preposterous. I am sure it was the joke of the thing that made Ruth submit to the extortion, for usually she was sharp at a bargain.

I must confess, I was never more astonished than I was at the reckless extravagance of my old friend, and I was really anxious about her.

It was time for us to expect our guests, and Ruth and I went to the porch to receive them, it being a custom of the family to meet all expected visitors on the threshold. There was still enough heat in the sun to keep me from remonstrating when Ruth took a seat in the full rays of the luminary. I thought she looked white and tired when she rested her head on the back of the rockers-chair, but the cushion being of the color named Nile green, which would make a ghost of a Hebe, I gave the hue of the silk the credit of Ruth's wan look.

I knew she was not strong, and she had told me that the doctor had told her to be careful, and not to weary herself, or to allow excitement of any kind. She laughed when she told me the doctor's opinion, for she had very little faith in the profession.

"Althea!" I was startled by the weakness of her voice indeed, I had to bend over her to catch her words.

"You will look after our guests; I have been an old fool, but you won't mind that."

"I'll certainly not let any one call you one," I said.

She smiled faintly at my remark

and laid her head back on the cushion, closing her eyes. In a moment she opened them.

"Some one is coming," she said. Her hearing, ill as she seemed, was quicker than mine, for the village carryall came driving up the lawn. Old Jim must have been bribed to drive his sorry gray at the Jebu rate he was driving. I did not think there was that much life in the poor nag. To my surprise Dick came forth from that vehicle of torture.

I was too much dazed to be even surprised at his appearance. Ruth evidently expected him. Afterwards I learned the cause of the wonderful speed of the poor nag was due to Dick's indignation at the cold shoulder shown him by his future mother-in-law, when they met at the station. The poor fellow having made the journey in a different car, never dreaming Gladys was on the train, and Martha supposed he had taken, in some way, an undue advantage. It was only because of her great amount of baggage, that Dick, with only a bag, managed with old Jim's sorry nag, to beat the fine turnout dear Ruth had hired.

I was glad enough to see Dick, and glad of his help to carry dear Ruth to her bed, her room being like those usually in the country, on the first floor—"the chamber"—as it was called, as if it were the only one in the house.

It seemed a strange fatality that Dick should, after all, be the one to welcome the guests, for I could not leave my old friend, a bitter pill I think to Gladys's mother, who could never be reconciled to the boy's kinship with Ruth.

As for the hostess, the first thing she said when she returned to consciousness was; "See that all my children are satisfied. Promise to see to it, for it is a question of honesty on my part."

Though thinking she was wandering, I promised.

I never knew a duller, more tedious dinner than the one that day. The number of courses seemed to me never ending, and I wondered how four people could ever manage to even taste the numberless articles; and in fact no one had any appetite but Martha Wilcox, and her digestion was a marvel.

I was in hopes that under the circumstances dear Ruth's guests would not tarry long, but I soon found that Martha intended to stay the week she had stipulated upon, even though Gladys urged her to leave on the next train; and so I insisted upon Dick's staying also, having need of help under the circumstances.

It was a dreary week, but of the party, I think Dick and Gladys had the best of it, for from the sick room windows I could see the two steal out of the house for a walk on the lawn, and my blessing went with them as it always does to young lovers.

As for Martha Wilcox, I think dinner repaid her for many dull hours and much vexation of spirit, and that she looked forward to it from one day to another.

It came as death so often does, in the night, a calm passing away, with only her two servants and Dick and me with her. For I would not shock Gladys by the unusual sight, and besides it was according to Ruth's own wish.

It was against Martha Wilcox's idea of propriety to shun a family funeral, so I soon found she intended to stay until the end. I think she still hoped, even against hope, that Gladys was heiress of the property. I would have left home, if Mr. Ayers, Ruth's lawyer, had not told me I would be summoned to hear the will, as a legatee. But I wisely gave up the keys to Patteny, who proved as prodigal as her mistress, I think by order.

I was not sorry when the funeral was over, and only the reading of the will was left us. There was no one who could legally expect to inherit the property, but I am amazed at the number of relatives who cropped out, each one hoping that they might have a windfall, I was the more amazed, since I had always thought my friend singularly desti-

tute of kinfolks, and that on my lad and Gladys depended her limit of heirs. We were all gathered in the best parlor, a goodly show of people; all, save three of us, eager to hear their names read out by good Mr. Ayers, and all doomed to disappointment.

They were generous legacies to the few old servants who had been faithful to her; a handsome sum of money to Dick; her personal belongings, including all wearing apparel, jewelry, silver and bric-a-brac, were mine; Wilcox Lodge, with a sufficient endowment to sustain the place as a comfortable home, for a dozen indigent maiden ladies, was left in the hands of named trustees, Dick and I being on the list. Then there came a pause whilst good Mr. Ayers polished his glasses for a further reading; there being, as he announced, a codicil to the will.

Martha Wilcox's face heretofore, I must say had been a study. She had placed herself comfortable in the most luxurious chair in the room, and had spread out her silken skirts as a peacock does his tail, when wishing to make an impression; if she was disappointed during the reading, she made no sign, only it seemed to me her draperies became less voluminous, as if she had shrunk a little into herself. As for Gladys, her thoughts were evidently fixed on Dick, who sat opposite her; with all her poor mother's efforts to educate her, she had not as yet taken in the full value of money; love, no doubt having hopelessly crowded out all other things.

Dick had expected nothing, and though grateful, was not too much so.

At last the lawyer, in his slow fashion—reading wills was, I fancy, a common thing with him, and so he failed to realize any excitement about them—in his slow fashion, announced a codicil. If he had announced a gold mine, he could not have been more effective, every person in the assemblage at once expected a mention; whereas Martha Wilcox, widow of Henry Wilcox and her daughter Gladys, were only named in the article—a certain amount of Government stock being devised them, dating back from the time Gladys was a baby.

At last Martha's name being heard, her silken skirts rustled pleasantly and contentedly. But why did Mr. Ayers go on? What a long list was he reading of expensive things? Not only board for a week for twenty years, but for dainties provided; and not only canvass-backs and diamond-backs, and every delicacy under the sun, but carriage hire and every other luxury possible, so that a very paltry sum fell to Gladys. According to the list of dainties provided the bill was not an exaggerated one, only the list was preposterous. It was a grim sort of joke, and all the more so since the one who perpetuated it knew she could not join in the laugh, if there had been even a semblance of one—not in any way smooth the ruffled features of the poor mother.

I must say Martha Wilcox behaved admirably, taking the whole situation as a queer freak of an eccentric old maid, and joining in the smile against herself; never denying her expectations for Gladys.

Dick's portion of dear Ruth's property removed all her objections to him as her son-in-law; in fact, she became very fond of my lad, and had no ill-will towards me, since I gave to Gladys, on her wedding day all the jewelry silver and bric-a-brac that dear Ruth had left me, not keeping the articles of clothing which loving hand and hearts devoid of everything but love, should own and handle.

After all Gladys did not have her wish not to receive a penny of her Aunt Ruth's money, for though her own share came almost literally to her wish, Dick was too generous not to divide with his wife, and in fact settled the whole sum on her.

If you feel weak and all worn out take BROWN'S IRON BITTERS

THE RACE PROBLEM SOUTH. Dr. G. T. Winston's Able Address.

In the address recently delivered before the Patria Club of New York, President Winston, of the University of North Carolina, discussed the race problem in the South, essentially, as follows:

The race problem cannot be understood without knowing what intellectual, moral and material progress the negro has made since emancipation and to that extent this progress has effect the social, political and industrial relations between the two races.

Intellectually the negro has made great progress, mainly through education. In North Carolina he enjoys better facilities for higher education are beyond the reach of white people of the same poverty. The States supports for his benefit 2,357 public schools and a school for the deaf, dumb and blind. Northern philanthropy has given him ten colleges and seminaries for higher education, including a medical college, a law school and several theological schools. The race has learned to read and write. In one generation it has educated a supply of teachers and preachers, and it is now rapidly educating its own lawyers and physicians. The mass of the race, however, is less zealous for education than it was twenty or even ten years ago; and the attendance on public school is gradually decreasing. The negro has learned that education is not essential to freedom; nor has it aided him materially as much as he expected. The finer and remoter influences of education do not appeal to him as to the white race. It is possible that his zeal for education will diminish as rapidly in the next generation as it sprang up in this. The dull edge of his intellect has been easily sharpened on the school-master's grindstone, but the quality of the metal has not been changed, and the edge may be turned or blunted as quickly as it was formed.

The moral progress of the race is very discouraging. Both the average white man and the average negro over forty years old in the South will tell you that the young generation of negroes are worse morally than they were in slavery. This is not true of all. There is gradually forming among them a highest class who respect themselves, and who honestly desire to elevate their race. This class includes the best educated of the younger generation. This class, however is small, not exceeding five per cent. of the population, and its moral influence on the mass of the negroes amount to very little. The great mass of the race is probably in the same moral status as during slavery. The restraints of slavery have been removed, and passions hitherto repressed by fear are not yet controlled by character. The younger generation of men are as a rule no more industrious and reliable than the older, while the women are generally quite as lewd.

Besides the highest class and the great mass of negroes, there is a lowest class, which did not exist in slavery. It is made up of drunks, gamblers, loafers, vagabonds, petty thieves, professional prostitutes and others who live by vice instead of labor. This class flourishes mainly in villages and cities. It constitutes about ten per cent. of the population and is steadily increasing by recruits from the younger generation. Its moral condition is almost brutal, and is worse than anything known to slavery.

The criminal propensities of the race are very marked. According to the census of 1890 the negro furnished 32 1/2 percent of the penitentiary convicts in the United States, although he constitutes only twelve per cent. of the population. In the North Atlantic States he is five times as criminal as the white man; in the South Atlantic States one and a half times; in South Central one and a half; in the Western ten times. It is a striking fact that the negro is more criminal in the North than in the South.

The relation between the two races are perfectly understood by both white and black in the South, and thoroughly misunderstood by both blacks and white in the North. So-called there is no relation between them. The black do not expect it, and the whites do not think of it for a moment. Unquestionably there is no deep race prejudice at the bottom of the social chasm. This feeling is taken for granted by both races. Intermarriage is prohibited by law. It is not desired by either race. Even the negro understands that he would get the worst of the bargain in marrying the sort of white woman who would have him. The North complains of Southern prejudice against the negro; but the North is guilty of the same offense, and with less reason. Wherever the negro exists in large numbers in the North, he is socially separated. He has his own churches, his own society, his own quarter for residence. He has a legal right to go to white churches, and of live in white quarters, but he does not go there as a matter of fact, and he is kept away by social prejudice, which is stronger than law.

In New York city he may ride in the street car, but he cannot earn a dollar driving one; he may sit in the theatre, but he cannot lay a brick or drive a nail; he may take the side walk, but he cannot get a contract to pave it; he may be the subject of humane editorials in the city papers, but he cannot set a stick of type; he may go to school with the whites, but he cannot teach them; he may sit in church with the whites, but he cannot be their pastor; he may spend his money at Macy's, but he cannot stand behind the counter; he may study in Columbia College, but he cannot teach there; he may cast his ballot, but he cannot get an office; he has the legal right to marry a white woman, but no white woman will marry him he has all the social privileges he can get, but he cannot get any. Everywhere in the United States he is branded as a negro. The North says to him "You are my equal," and then excludes him practically from social intercourse, from political power, and from industrial opportunity.

The South has a kinder personal feeling toward the negro today than the North ever had, or ever dreamed of. It was Thomas Carlyle who characterized this feeling by representing the South as saying to the negro: Be slave, and God bless ye; while the North said: "Be free, and God damn ye." The kindly feeling between the races, however is not what it was in slavery. There is a social chasm between them that seems to be growing wider. No longer do white and

enjoyed freedom than in the Southern States, where he is still greatly restrained by fear of the white race. The moral status of the race is about this: the best class, being not over five per cent., has made decided progress; the worst class not under ten per cent., has made decided retrogression; the great mass is in the same condition as during slavery.

The material condition of the race is similar to the moral. The great mass is essentially in the same condition as before. Those who had bad masters are probably better off; those who had good masters are possibly worse off. The highest class is very much improved, and enjoys all the comforts of life in a greater degree. The lowest class is much worse off. It includes not only the vicious and the idle, but also weak minded, the afflicted, the uncared for young and old. Under slavery these were all cared for by the master, and shared equally in the common earnings. Now they are driven to the wall by competition, not only with the whites, but also with the strong of their own race. The result is a degree of suffering and a death rate unknown to slavery. The rate of mortality in this class will explain the large relative decrease of the negro population in the South from 1880 to 1890.

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