TEA TABLE TATTLE

By TEEBEE.

A memebr of the Legislature with a sense of humor or a sore toe (I am unable to learn which) has introduced a bill to make it a felony, without benefit of clergy, for the keeper of a boarding house (hotels inferentially included) to turn a stranger from his doors in the daytime or night, as the case may be, upon the plea that he has no room to spare or that all the beds are occupied. If all the rooms are full and guests hanging out the windows when a stranger applies for lodging it will be the duty of the landlord to supply another room immediately. Should there be as many as six men in a bed at the same time, the boarding house keeper must not expect a seventh man to crowd in with them, but must obtain another bed forthwith by wireless telegraph. Another feature of the bill is that the landlord must enter into bond, with approved security, to be responsible for the safekeeping of the goods, wares and merchandise of the sojourner to the amount of $1,000, which sum may be recovered by an action at law in case of loss.

I feel bound to admit that this bill, if it becomes a law—and I see no reason why it should not—will solve the hotel problem in Raleigh. When the Legislature, the Masonic grand lodge, the state fair or a political convention is with us, it is always a question as to where we will let our visitors sleep; but the ever recurring query has never been answered. It is not such a serious matter in the summer when wearied human frames can take a nap on the benches or the grass under the starlit sky at the capitol square; but it is an entirely different proposition when Jack Frost plays hide and seek with the thermometer half way between the freezing point and the zero mark, as he did last week when the Legislature and the Masons were with us at the same time.

Well do I remember how, on similar occasions in days long ago, the hotel clerk smiled at me with a smile that was childlike and bland, and assured me that there was not a place in the house where a cot could be erected for my accommodation, even though he had the cot, which he hadn't. How vividly do I recall one night when I paid one plunk for the privilege of sleeping on a bare mattress in a room fifteen feet square, where there were fourteen men by actual count, some trying to sleep and some doing their best to keep the others awake. Doubtless the gentleman who introduced the bill to regulate boarding houses has been along there himself. For all I know he may be seeking nocturnal repose on the soft side of a board and wishing for his downy bed at home.

* * *

As I said, this measure ought to solve the hotel question in Raleigh. The chamber of commerce and other public spirited citizens may as well drop the subject, for the hotel keepers will have to wrestle with it and overcome the difficulty themselves, unless they want to go to the penitentiary.

Happy thought! Why not buy the penitentiary and equip it for a hotel? There is said to be plenty of vacant space there with an abundance of beds and facilities for cooking any quantity of plain and substantial fare. I suggest an amendment to the bill, compelling the hotel proprietors and boarding house keepers to pool their issues and buy the penitentiary. That would put an end to worry.

* * *

It will interest members of the Ananias Club to learn that Dr. John Wilber Jenkins the father, first president and patron saint of our noble order, is perfecting his plans to give a North Carolina banquet in Baltimore. The date has not been set, but a committee of one, of which Dr. Jenkins is chairman and secretary, is laboring with the question with some prospect of an early decision. It is understood that the committee is hesitating between St. Valentine's day and the first of April, with the chances evenly balanced at last accounts. The committee will hold a meeting on the 24th of the present month, in one of the regimental armories in Baltimore, where there will be plenty of room for its deliberations. Dr. Olds, who so gracefully wears the honors of president of the club at this writing, has received assurances that each member will be favored with an invitation to the banquet and that Dr Jenkins will provide passes to Baltimore for the crowd. As a special courtesy to the gentlemen in the Idiot annex a little table will be set for them in one corner of the room, and Dr. Jenkins himself will see to it that their wants are provided for.

* * *

At the risk of putting a club in the hands of the enemies—if there be any—of the new order of things in North Carolina since the adoption f the constitutional amendment, I will quote from a letter written since the holidays by a friend of the Tattle Man down in the east. "I have been mama, papa, Santa Claus and housekeeper for three months,"—he writes. "The white supremacy boomerang has settled here so far as servants go; and, for one not used to dressing the children, I am a sufferer."

Now isn't that a tale of woe? And who, in the early summer days of 1900, would have supposed that within three years we should hear of patriotic citizens doing all kinds of housework and charging it up to the fact that North Carolina went white on the great question of whether one race should rule or divide its authority with another? We verily thought that we had made the inferior race hewers of wood and drawers of water in perpetuity; but here we have a good citizen, in the hey-day of white supremacy and lily white ascendancy, building fires, sweeping the floors, making beds, dressing the children, washing their faces and hands and sending them to school, besides having to do the crawling down the chimney act, all because white folks vote under the grandfather clause and the negroes do not vote at all, at least to such an extent as to figure in the returns.

Did you ever hear such a tale of woe? "Well, hardly ever," as I heard at the opera when a boy. But it is not to be doubted that it is the solemn truth. Perhaps more than one of my readers of the masculine persuasion can join with me in offering sympathy on the score of common experience; but I hope that they are few who have had to be all those things, of which my friends writes, for three months in succession. A day or two at a time is sufficient to try the patience of the average head of a family, and most of us would prefer to have none of it at all except the Santa Claus part of the business; and I know some men who are perfectly willing to let St. Nicholas take that responsibility off their shoulders.

But suppose my friend, in addition to being papa, mama, housekeeper and Santa Claus, had been through the mill as cook and washerwoman. Well, human endurance has its limits of possibilities; so I forbear to picture the consequences.

* * *

A bright idea struck a London clergyman who has more than his share of parishioners that have nothing to wear but clothes, and not the best of raiment at that. He has announced that night services will be held in the dark, so women whose hats are not in the latest fashion may attend without fear of criticism by their more fortunate neighbors who can afford to stand off the milliner. Perhaps it would not be a bad idea to try it in the Raleigh churches. What say you, brethren?

CAPTAIN C. B. DENSON'S LAST PUBLIC SPEECH

(Continued from 13th page.)

the fires of hell, until Jackson accomplished his feat, and with the wild animals of the forest fleeing before him, burst like a tornado upon the Germans of Hooker's army, and rolled up his mighty hosts like a crumbling scroll. Rhodes with his North Carolina division in front drove the enemy into chaos, and won the commendation from Lee, sent from the lips of the dying Jackson—the greatest decoration of valor that human annals contain.

At Gettysburg Lee was greater than ever, but Jackson, his right arm, was in the grave, and Stewart his left, did not return in time for the battle. Pettigrew and Pickett carried the heights and their supports would have found seventy-six pieces of artillery in Confederate hands, and the route of retreat to Baltimore and Washington cut off, and the independence of the South virtually in the hands of Lee. The great commander, in the magnanimity of his character said: "I am to blame," but the world knows now, as the army knew then. Fitzhugh Lee says "the troops ordered to support lay on their arms wanting orders from a corps commander, charged with the assault, which were never given." He points out that as the battle of Ligny upon which Napoleon's fate hung, was not made decisive victory, because Ney disobeyed orders at Quatre Bras, so "like behavior of a corps commander at Gettysburg defeated the well devised designs of Lee."

Of the Spottsylvania campaign of 1864, it is sufficient to say that such was the wonderful forethought in divining the exact spot of the spring of the enemy, Grant in the immense circuit from Spottsylvania Court House to Cold Harbor, and such sleepless vigilance, that the sixty thousand under Lee, not only killed, wounded and captured as many as their whole number down to the battle of Cold Harbor, but fully sixty thousand more again from Cold Harbor to Appomattox.

I draw the curtain over the almost Divine fortitude which hid the broken heart at Appamattox. Darkness fell upon the Southern flag, upon earth, and the battle-cross was transplanted to the celestial fields of history, to sparkle forever among the constellations of human patriotism and immortal fame.

Only once a griever, as he requested Gen. Grant to send rations to the Confederate Army: "My men are starving!" were the words of its epitaph.

I wish that by some mental photography it were possible to place before you the image of Lee in physical shape, and in the perfect roundness of his mental and moral character.

It was my fortune first to meet him, at headquarters, in Richmond, in the month of May, 1862. You will remember that after the campaign in West Virginia, he had taken command of the forces on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, whence he was transferred to Army Headquarters, and upon the disabling of Gen. Jos. E. Johnston at Seven Pines, was called to the leadership of the Army of Northern Virginia.

I was the bearer of a letter of introduction to the eGneral from a personal friend, an officer in the navy. When in Georgia a question of etiquette between Gen. Lee in charge of the land forces, and the fiery Commodore Tainall, commanding the Confederate naval station, had unfortunately arisen, and a serious complication was prevented by the greatness of soul of Lee, and the happy tact of my friend, who was the flag lieutenant of the Commodore.

Opening the letter and perceiving the name of the writer, the General invited me courteously to a seat at his table in the private room of the Commander in Chief. His gaze of clear scrutiny broke into a pleasant smile, as he wrote for me, a request rather than an order, for the consideration by a general in another state, of the subject placed before him. What would I give to have these letters—the one penned in my presence in the cabin of the Virginia, which men call the Merrimac, the other from the hand of Lee!

And while he was writing, I studied the grand personality before me. A figure, large and soldierly, well set up. His coat was of gray, with the three stars on the turned down collar, pantaloons of blue, and as I afterwards knew, usually worn out of doors, tucked in the Wellington boots.

No portrait that I have ever seen represented him as he looked then. The dark hair had but few lines of silver, except the coming of the snow at the temples. His face was full, eminently handsome, with finely cut brows, and a forehead of perfect serenity. The feeling was irresistible that here was transcendent greatness itself.

They say that within a few weeks thereafter, when the Seven Days' struggle had passed into history, already the white was thickly seen upon his locks, and deep channels depressed the full and massive face, its look of wonderful youth in age gone before the weight of the responsibility of a country's destiny!

A distinguished officer of the English army who visited him in camp, says "He was of courtly manners and great dignity, and the handsomest man of his age that I have ever seen. He never carried arms(except pistol in the holster on the left of his saddle, for convenience of use when dismounted); was always neat in dress and person, even on the most arduous marches, and what is very pleasing to an Englishman, he rides a handsome horse, which is extremely well groomed."

One who knew him intimately all his life said that he never knew him to utter an impure or profane word. He never used tobacco in any form, or drank any spirituous liquor.

He was gentle in manner, of perfect self-control; never violent at any time; and most graceful in bearing. He had the refinement of a woman, and her tenderness to the afflicted and suffering.

But he knew when to put forth the massive strength of will of which his enduring physique was the outward symbol. When Gen. Pope, directed the execution of citizens as spies, if found in the rear of the United States Army, even if they were quite old men, tilling their own farms that they had never left. Lee issued a stern decree of reprisal and retaliation, and sent a copy to the Secretary of War at Washington, in his language, "recognizing Genl. Pope and his commissioned officers to be in the position they have chosen for themselves—that of robbers and murderers—and not that of public enemies, entitled, if captured, to be treated as prisoners of war." I need not say Pope was soon beaten, and his army broken up at the Second Manassas.

He controlled his own troops as if held in the hollow of his ahnd. The hand as delicate as a woman's, penned these proud words, in his proclamation, after crossing the Potomas to the North:

"Marylanders shall once more enjoy their ancient freedom of thought and speech. We know no enemies among you, and will protect all of you in every opinion. . . This army will respect your choice, whatever it may be."

And when his army had marched into Pennsylvania, Col. Freemantle, an English officer accompanying, wrote: I saw no straggling into the houses, nor were any of the inhabitants disturbed by the soldiers. I witnessed at Chambersburg, the singular good behavior of the troops toward the citizens. To one who has seen as I have, the ravages of the Northern troops in Southern towns, this forbearance seems most commendable and surprising."

His example of personal self-denial was a force incalculable in its effects. His home was in a tent, or the bivonae like his men, declaring the hospitality of the roof open everywhere and his fare was often hardly as good as the humblest in the army, and always simple.

When the City Council of Richmond informed him that a residence for him anr his family had been purchased in that city, their home at Arlington being in the hands of the enemy, he promptly sent his thanks for the gift, but declined it for himself and his family, and begged that the money might be used to lighten the sufferings of the needy, in the Confederate Capital.

When the end came, wealth and position were eagerly pressed upon him both in Europe and America. A manufacturing company in New York offered its presidency at fifty thousand dollars a year. An insurance company offered twenty thousand a year merely for his name at its head, with the stipulation that he was not to leave home or to perform any duties. But to his clear perception, these were the price of the use of a glory which had been bought by the blood of his men—the beloved of the Southland upon the altar of duty.

Turning from them all, he cried, as he lifted his hands, "My countrymen offer me everything except work!" And labor for his bread was all that he would accept. Finally it came, in the request to accept the presidency of Washington and Lee University, at the small salary of twenty-five hundred dollars, which was all its limited means could afford.

It was gratefully embraced, and the five hundred students gathered about him brought the most welcome of task—the guidance of the hope of the South for the rebuilding of broken homes, and the founding of a new prosperity some day, out of the chaos of the times. And his language in regard to the college was, "I shall be disappointed—I shall fail in the leading object that brought me here, unless these young men all become consistent Christians."

His faith in his Saviour and reverence toward God was lifelong, and deepening to the last. To speak of this, is to walk on holy ground. His daily course was such, that in the absence of a chaplain, the men begged that Lieut. Lee would consign their dead to the grave with the prayers of the church in Texas and on the plains.

For many years he was one of the vestry of Christ Church in Alexandria, hardby his early home. Last summer it was my fortune to visit this memorable structure, and look upon the pews of Washington and of Lee across its north aisle, from each other, bearing the name in silver of these illustrious vestrymen, and on either side of the pulpit, upon simple marble tablets, the names inscribed without rank or title, but outshining the grandeur of a Westminster Abbey or any other Walhalla of mankind.

No great step of his life was unaccompanied by profound conviction and humble prayer. Called to the supreme command in the field, he repaired to the bedside of the venerated Bishop Meade, by whom he had been baptized in childhood. There, upon his knees by the dying saint, his mission was consecrated by this farewell: "Robert, Robert, stand up for our country, and God will bless you!"

That conviction of the justice and right of the Southern cause never left him. A hundred times Appomattox can not change eternal truth. Thermopylae did not make Sparta Prison. Warsaw has never made one true Pole a Russian.

It was after the conflict, in 1866, that in a letter to Sir John Dalberg-Actor, Lee replied to an inquiry: "The South has contended only for the supremacy of the Constitution, and the just administration of it."

In the majesty of that utterance, the voice of history speaks. We need not concern ourselves with the wild clamors of prejudice and interest beyond our borders, or the half apologetic murmurs of the ignorant of the present day within our own limits.

The sword that hangs in its sheath above our martyrd dead, was drawn not only by the good right arms of the brave, but for the cause of the good and the true. They lie down with Leonidas and Cato—they rest with Rienze and Wallace, with Tell and Sidney.

Gen. Lee was humble in spirit, never elated by success, always looking to a Power higher than man. When the double stroke of Gettysburg and Vicksburg fell upon the South, and Congress ordered a day of fasting and praying, these were his words in his general order to the army August 21, 1863:

"Soldiers! We have sinned against Almighty God! We have forgotten His signal mercies, and have cultivated a revengeful, haughty and boastful spirit. We have relied too much upon our own arms for the achievement of our independence. God is our only refuge and strength. Let us confess our many sins, and beseech Him to give us a higher courage, a purer patriotism, and more determined will; that He will convert the hearts of our enemies; that he will hasten the time when war, with its sorrows and sufferings shall cease, and that He will give us a name and a place among the nations of the earth."

One more revelation of the heart of the great soldier, who abhored war except as the last necessity of the defence of right. Shortly after the victory of Fredericksburg, he wrote to his beloved wife, on Christmas Day:

"I will commence this holy day by writing to you. My heart is filled with gratitude to Almighty God for the unspeakable mercies with which He has blessed us this day, and particularly for those of the past year. What would have become of us without His crowning help and protection? Oh, if our people would only recognize it, and cease from vain self-boastings and adulation, how strong would be my belief in final success and happiness to our country!

"But what a cruel thing is war—to separate and destroy families and friends, and man the purest joys God has granted us in His world;—to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors, and to devastate the fair face of His beautiful world? I pray that on this day, when only peace and good-will are preached to mankind, that better thoughts may fill the hearts of our enemies, and turn them to peace. . . My heart bleeds at the death of every one of our gallant men."

No fairer picture of his inner life exists than his devoted love for the daughters of his household. Sharing their fondness for flowers he wrote to one, on Christmas Day, when at Savannah in 1861:

"I have sent you what I thought most useful in your separation from me, and hope it may be of some service. . . . To compensate for such 'trash,' I send you, too, some sweet violets that I have gathered for you this morning, while covered with frost, whose crystals glistened in the bright sun like diamonds, and formed a brooch of beauty and sweetness which could not be fabricated by the expenditure of a world of money.

"See how God provides for our pleasure in every way. May He guard and preserve you for me, my dear daughter. . . . . You are homeless now. Your old home, if not destroyed by our enemies, has been so desecrated that I cannot bear to think of it. I should have preferred it to have been wiped from the earth, its beautiful hill sunk, and its sacred trees buried, rather than to have been degraded by the presence of those who revel in the ill they do, for their own selfish purposes.

"You see what a poor sinner I am, and how unworthy to possess what was given me; for that reason it has been taken away. I pray for a better spirit, and that the hearts of our enemies may be changed."

And then he adds that sweet word of counsel that prefigures noble service of the Daughters of the Confederacy: "Occupy yourself in aiding those more helpless than yourself! and thing always of your father!"

Sometimes he turned from his grim duties to brighten these fair exiles with cheering words ,as when he wrote: "And are you now really sweet sixteen? That is charming, and I want to see you more than ever. The time looks dark, but it will brighten again."

The blow at Appomattox was mortal. The strong frame, resisting the storms of years, bowed to the stroke of Providence. Rheumatism of the sore of the heart, it was called, which increasing always, began to shorten his painful steps. The college begged him to rest, and offered a home for life and an annuity for his family. True to his part, he refused to accept a dollar from its funds, needed, as he declared, for its proper work. But a brief rest was taken and a journey to the soft South. Of his visit to the grave of the early dead, his daughter Annie, in North Carolina, he wrote: "I have always promised myself to go, and I think if I am to accomplish it, I have no time to lose. I wish to witness her quiet sleep, with her dear hands crossed over her breast, as it were, in mute prayer, undisturbed by her distance from us; and to feel that her pure spirit is roaming in bliss in the land of the blessed."

In this the last spring of his life, only five years that month from the surrender, he made his final visit to the tomb of his father, General Harry Lee, on Cumberland Island. He whose bones were resting there, wrote this remarkable description of human happiness to his son Charles Carter, then in Harvard University, in the last letter from the father. How verily was it verified in the career of the youngest of his sons:

"My Dear Carter: What is happiness? Hoc opus, hic labor est. Peace of mind, based in piety to Almighty God, unconscious innocence of conduct with good-will to man; health of body, health of mind, with prosperity in our vocation; a sweet affectionate wife; children devoted to truth, honor, right, and utility, with love and respect for their parents; and faithful and warm-hearted friends, in a country politically and religiously free. This is my definition of happiness."

The General wrote, "Agens decorated my father's grave with beautiful fresh flowers. I presume it is the last time I shall be able to pay it my tribute of respect."

He returning to begin another collegiate year of toil, but on the 28th September, the summons suddenly came. Despite the cold and the storm, after his day's work he had gone to a vestry meeting of St. John's parish, where the building of a new church, and the increase of the salary of the rector, his old friend were under discussion three hours.

The fatigue of the day told upon the feeble and wavering steps approaching home. Walking to the tea tabel where all had been awaiting his arrival, he stood to invoke a blessing, but it was beyond his power. One glance of surprise, perhaps of despair, and he sunk over.

The doctor said it was not paralysis, or apoplexy, but the weary and over-taxed brain and heart lay burdened with congestion for two weeks before the hour of release, "Strike my tents. Send for Hill!" they heard those lips command once again, before on the morning of the 12th October, 1870, the angel of death set his seal upon them forever.

(Continued on page 15.)

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