

Swim Marine Berton

VOL. XI

LEONARDTOWN, MD., THURSDAY MORNING

NO. 34

ST. MARY'S BEACON

IS PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY BY
J. F. KING & JAMES S. DOWNS.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.—\$2.00 per annum in advance. Single copies 5 cents. Advertising rates on application.

Advertisements for the first insertion, 10 cents per square for the first insertion, and 5 cents for every subsequent insertion. Eight lines or less constitute a square. If the number of insertions be not marked on the advertisement, it will be published until notified, and charged accordingly. A liberal deduction made to those who advertise by the year.

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CALIFORNIA CORRESPONDENCE.

LOS ROBLES, NEAR LOS ANGELES.

March 26, 1874.

Twenty-eight years ago General Geo. Stoneman, then a Lieutenant in the United States Army, camped with his command, after a day's march, upon the spot which he is now converting into one of the most beautiful estates in California. To use his own language, the site which he has chosen as his homestead was "his first love"—that is to say, so far as regards his choice for a home. More fortunate than most men, he has succeeded in realizing his dreams; and his selection does infinite credit to his taste. He purchased originally some five hundred acres, paying then for an average price of \$50 per acre. He has disposed of about one hundred acres in small tracts at \$100 per acre, and the same land cannot be bought to-day for less than \$150 per acre. The four hundred acres remaining he has named "Los Robles," the generic Spanish for "The Oaks," a beautiful natural park of which skirts the southern boundary of his lands, forming a portion of the old Galardo grant formerly known as "Pacqualitos." A long and agreeable ramble, accompanied as I was by the General, over the entire estate led me to the conclusion that he was the fortunate owner of the most beautiful property I had seen in the country; but subsequent similar tours of observation over other estates in this section have convinced me that I am in a region where a man has no business whatever to concern himself in the least about degrees of comparison, since he can go in no direction without finding fresh marvels of God's goodness unfolding themselves in ever varying forms at every step.

Your composer made it appear that "A burriel bumbled," etc. I saw no "burriel" on the place, (not even a burro) and heard nothing "bumbled," so there must have been a mistake, but it is an old saying that mistakes will occur. I suppose my eulogy was at fault. This same lovely dell is one of the loveliest nooks imaginable. If it is not like that "green nook" spoken of in "Festas,"

"Shaded by Larch and Hornbeam, Ash and Yew," it is nevertheless so mantled with the verdure of the indigenous trees of this section as to make it "a most fit place for nursing men" and as it will be, when the carriage drives and walks, which will in due time follow its picturesque and irregular course, as charming a retreat as can be imagined. Numberless perennial springs keep the stream which winds through its dusky shade of even flow and temperature throughout the year, as I have previously intimated it is General Stoneman's intention to stock it thoroughly with trout. The reservoir into which it debouches, a deep, dark looking tarn where in due time the Black Falls of the Eastern lakes will find themselves domesticated. The present supply of water obtained from the springs and streams added to, amounts to about 800,000 gallons daily and can be increased almost indefinitely. Compared with some other estates in this neighborhood in some particulars, at least, "Los Robles" is but in the infancy of its productive capacities. Nevertheless, it is not idle. There are on the place 100,000 vines in full bearing, one hundred full bearing orange trees and nearly one hundred walnut trees. The vineyard is being rapidly enlarged by planting choice foreign varieties. His young orange, lemon and lime orchard, embraces about 1,200 trees, to which new additions are being made each year. Upon the place are also to be found figs, pomegranates, olives, six varieties of apples, five of pears, three of peaches, four of plums, cherries, nectarines, almonds, apricots, citron and several varieties of berries. The General is also experimenting with bananas, guavas and tamarinds. His vegetable garden, moreover, without which no home ought to be considered complete, shows a generally assortment of those homely but essential adjuncts of the table of a thrifty housewife.

The vintage of "Los Robles" amounted last year to about 20,000 gallons of wine and a proportionate amount of brandy. General Stoneman having to some extent entered into the construction of a wine press and distillery, selected a location in which he, to use his own expression, "determined to make steam power and the power of gravitation do all that could be done in the premises." His press, receiving vat, tanks, etc., were therefore built upon successive terraces and from the first expression of the must to its final delivery into packages for market, a succession of easy falls supplies and takes the place of the repeated handlings and pumpings which take up so much of the time and so large a share of the net profits of other less well arranged establishments. The distillation of his brandy is effected by steam power, just exactly how I do not believe I can intelligently explain. The General, however, will take pleasure in explaining the *modus operandi*. He has provided himself with all the means and appliances for all necessary repairs to his farm tools and machinery; a portable army forge and complete kits of carpenter's and cooper's tools leave little room for delay when anything from a simple tree to the axle and of his steam engine gets out of order. He has introduced what seems to me a most marked and valuable improvement in the running gear of his ploughs. Instead of a single tree twenty inches wide with iron ends to hold the traces in their place, he passes a leather trace over and around a fourteen-inch angle tree and the result is that the horse or mule passes through the vineyard with the plough attached without jarring or breaking off a load. Intelligence has set itself to work on General Stoneman's place with a view to "labor saving," and will accomplish the result aimed at. It is his intention to build large reservoirs at several points on his estate, but as the same design will be carried out by other proprietors, the future result of their united labors in this direction will be noted at a future time. At "Los Robles," I saw for the first time what I had often heard of, an orange tree upon which there were ripe fruit, fruit half grown and orange blossoms lovely enough to adorn the brow of a bride. Near by was another marvel of nature; a rose bush, the parent trunk of which is fifteen inches in diameter, some of the branches of which are full sixty feet in length, since they have climbed to the top of an oak tree and depending thence trail nearly upon the ground. The entire tree has been overrun by the rose bush, and in a few days will be a scarlet tint. The interior arrangements of the General's homestead are in keeping with the beauty and wealth of the exterior. Books, new and old; pictures and engravings, rare and elegant, in endless profusion; music; a hospitable and charming hostess, healthy and smiling and happy children, in short, all that can be desired to make a pleasant home, ought to make the possessor of "The Oaks" a contented man.

VIATOR.

THE RIGHT OR LEFT ARM?—The question, whether a gentleman walking with a lady, should give her his right or left arm, is frequently discussed. Custom and written etiquette are rather in favor of the right, although there are excellent reasons in behalf of the left arm. Either one or the other, permanently retained, is vastly better than the absurd habit of changing arms, so as to place the lady on the inside of the promenade. One advantage of giving the left arm is that the person on the right naturally takes the lead, so that, in the country or city, in the street or park, he thus readily directs the way, instead of waiting to consult with his companion, or causing a jostling by each of them trying to move in opposite directions. Another advantage is, that in a crowded thoroughfare such as Broadway, for example, where the sidewalk is invariably encumbered with merchandise and thronged with people, a gentleman needs his right arm to remove obstructions and keep rude or careless folks out of the way. —*Scribner's for June.*

ON SHARES.—A good story, and all the better in its being true, is told of one of our citizens, who let a piece of ground to a man on shares. The man would hire the lot, but the owner, doubtful of getting any money of the tenant, proposed to let it upon the promise of receiving half the produce. Occasionally during the summer he passed the spot, and was pleased with the cultivation it was receiving, and with its goodly show of vegetables. Harvest time came and passed, and he heard nothing from his tenant, till, in response to a hint, the latter sent to him one watermelon and three shrivelled cucumbers. Indignant at this shabby treatment, he called upon the man, and asked him what it meant. "Why, you see, 'squire," replied the tenant, "the posky boys stole all your half, but the melons and cucumbers."

Why are ladies the biggest thieves in existence? Because they steal their petticoats, bone their stays, crib their babies and hook their dresses.

Next to the sweetness of having a friend whom you can trust, is the convenience of having a friend who will occasionally trust you.

"De mortuis nil nisi bona" "em" is the way the Richmond Enquirer looks at the new mortuary movement.

I HAVE DRANK MY LAST GLASS.

No, comrades, I thank you, not any for me! My last chain is rivet, henceforward I'm free! I will go to my home, and my children to-night. With no fears of liquor their spirits to blight. And with tears in my eyes, I will beg my poor wife To forgive me the wreck I made of her life!

"I have never refused you before!" Let that pass. For I've drank my last glass, boys, I have drank my last glass!

Just look at me now, boys, in rags and disgrace. With my bleared, haggard eyes, and my red, blooded face!

Mark my faltering step and my weak, palsied hand, And the mark on my brow that is worse than Cain's brand;

See my crownless old hat, and my elbows and knees. Alks warmed by the sun or chilled by the breeze;

Why, even the children will hoot at a pass— But I've drank my last glass, boys, I have drank my last glass!

You would hardly believe, boys, to look at me now, That a mother's soft hand was once pressed on my brow,

When she kissed me, and blessed me, her darling, her pride, Ere she lay down to rest by my dead father's side.

But with love in her eyes, she looked up to the sky, Bidding me meet her there, and whispered "Good-bye."

And I'll do it, God helping! Your smile I let pass, For I've drank my last glass, boys, I have drank my last glass!

Al! I recited home last night—it was not very late. For I'd spent my last sixpence, and landlords went wail.

On a poor fellow who's left every cent in their till, And has pawned his last bed, and the coffers to fill. Oh! the torments I felt, and the pangs I endured!

And I begged for one glass—just one would have cured; But they kicked me out of doors—I let that, too, pass,

For I've drank my last glass, boys, I have drank my last glass!

At home, my pet Susie, with her soft golden hair, I saw, through the window, just kneeling in prayer,

From her pale, bony hands, her torn sleeves were streaming down, While her feet, cold and bare, shrank beneath her scant gown;

And she prayed—prayed for bread—just a poor crust, For one crust—on her knees, my pet darling, please!

And I heard, with so many to buy one ale! But I've drank my last glass, boys, I have drank my last glass.

For Susie, my darling, my wee six-year old, Though fainting with hunger and shivering with cold, There, on the bare floor, asked God to bless me.

And she said, "Don't cry mamma! He will! For you see, I believe what I ask for!" Then, sobbed, I crept Away from the house; and that night when I slept,

Next my heart lay the Paper—You smile! Let it pass, But I've drank my last glass, boys, I have drank my last glass!

My darling child saved me! Her faith and her love Are akin to my dear sainted mother's above!

I will make her words true, or I'll die in the race, And e'er I'll go to my last resting place, And she'll all kneel there, and, weeping, thank God.

No drunkards lies under that daisy-green sod! Not a drop more of poison my lips shall'er pass, For I've drank my last glass, boys, I have drank my last glass!

A GLANCE FROM THE SITTING ROOM.

It is a most attractive face, in the eyes and at length, after a long bachelor's career, the accomplished mistress of the house being absent on a visit to her friends. Other estates in the vicinity whose proprietors have given their attention to their improvement, have "ring the widow's period" which Col. Keen has spent on his place, become more desirable last only a few years with the benefit of the millinery and millinery, in affording a princely income to a general proprietor, who for years has been warring in law courts, and who has at length nearly ready to sell to their interminable labyrinth. Where, at his rejoicing greatly and your correspondent congratulated him. Two hundred acres of the ranch are enclosed, upon which there are 90,000 vines, "grapes which were sold to neighboring vineyards. There are 100 orange trees in bearing and 2,500 of various ages which in a very few years will hang full of the golden fruit, 600 lemon and 500 lime trees and 700 English walnut trees all arrived at maturity, besides pecan, black walnut and hickory trees which will soon swell the list of products. There are also besides the fruits of the temperate zone enumerated in a former letter, two banana trees which are expected to bear fruit during the coming summer; they having already attained a height of about eighteen feet. The remaining two hundred and fifty acres are sown to wheat and barley, the stands of both of which grains have as favorable an appearance as could be desired. The Colonel is an enthusiast upon the subject of grain and fruit growing, and now that he is in a position to give his undivided attention to his farm it is as certain as anything can be that all its natural charms and advantages will be enhanced and cultivated by whatever a refined and cultivated and poetical taste can suggest in the premises. Already fountains, flowers and grassy lawns point to a future which will make "Rancho del Molino" a garden of Gul, and if the music of the "enamored nightingale" shall be lacking, the mocking birds will furnish a melody to fill up the pauses of conversation of the cultivated men and women whose feet will instinctively turn thitherward as to one of the "Delights of the mind."

The Meccas of the mind!

I write thus glowingly of the mill ranch not from a desire to indulge in fulsome adulation, for I think that nothing is so foreign to my nature than a disposition to wander in that direction; but as a simple tribute to the pleasurable emotions which I experienced during my sojourn with my host, who was a stranger to me until I entered within his gates, but in whom I seemed to have met some of those wandering years ago among a thousand scenes of beauty familiar only to those who have lived as much among books as among men, if indeed not more.

"Rancho del Molino" is another of these favored spots which by location and surroundings is exempt from any impossibility of a failure in crops, the supply of water being perennial and capable of very great increase, not half the present supply being utilized. But of the water question more anon.

VIATOR.

A TRUE LADY.—Beauty and style are the surest passports to respectability—some of the noblest specimens of womanhood that the world has ever seen have presented the plainest and most unprepossessing appearance. A woman's worth is to be estimated by the real goodness of her heart, the greatness of her soul, and the purity and sweetness of her character; and a woman with a kindly disposition, and a well balanced mind and temper, is lovely to have met, even so homely, so plain and her figure even so homely, she makes the best of wives, and the truest of mothers. She has a higher purpose in living than the beautiful yet vain and superficial woman, who has no higher ambition than to flaunt her finery on the street, or to gratify her inordinate vanity by exacting flattery and praise from a society whose compliments are as hollow as they are insincere.

A FEW days ago a hungry party sat down at the well-spread supper table of a Sound steamer, upon which one of the dishes contained a trout of moderate size. A serious-looking individual drew this dish toward him, saying, apologetically, "This is fast day with me." His next neighbor, an Irish gentleman, immediately inserted his fork into the fish and transferred it to his own plate, remarking, "Sir, do you suppose anybody has a soul to be saved but yourself?"

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REMEMORANDA.

When not sleeping, whether standing, sitting or lying down, the feet should be kept warm. The feet are the seat of the nervous system, and if they are cold, the system will be affected. It is a good plan to wear warm shoes and stockings, and to rub the feet with oil or ointment before going to bed.

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A TRUE LADY.—Beauty and style are the surest passports to respectability—some of the noblest specimens of womanhood that the world has ever seen have presented the plainest and most unprepossessing appearance. A woman's worth is to be estimated by the real goodness of her heart, the greatness of her soul, and the purity and sweetness of her character; and a woman with a kindly disposition, and a well balanced mind and temper, is lovely to have met, even so homely, so plain and her figure even so homely, she makes the best of wives, and the truest of mothers. She has a higher purpose in living than the beautiful yet vain and superficial woman, who has no higher ambition than to flaunt her finery on the street, or to gratify her inordinate vanity by exacting flattery and praise from a society whose compliments are as hollow as they are insincere.

A FEW days ago a hungry party sat down at the well-spread supper table of a Sound steamer, upon which one of the dishes contained a trout of moderate size. A serious-looking individual drew this dish toward him, saying, apologetically, "This is fast day with me." His next neighbor, an Irish gentleman, immediately inserted his fork into the fish and transferred it to his own plate, remarking, "Sir, do you suppose anybody has a soul to be saved but yourself?"

"There is one good thing about babies," said a recent traveler; "they never change. We have girls of the period, men of the world; but the baby is the same self-possessed, tearless, laughing, voracious little heart in all ages and in all countries."

An Essex street man bought a pig Saturday, says the *Daily News*. "What do you feed your pig?" asked a neighbor. "Corn," he said. "Do you feed it in the ear?" asked the friend. "Do you think I am a fool?" said the Essex street man, sarcastically.

It is now succeeded, on the authority, of course, of an eminent physician, that it is not considered healthy to rise before eight o'clock in the morning. This applies only to men. Wives can rise at seven and start the fire, as heretofore.

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