Edgefield Advertiser.

DURISOE, KEESE & CO.

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The Advertiser.

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Jan 1 tf

THE SHAKER CONVERT.

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.

When another Sunday came, Bessie went to church, flushed and excited, for the stranger had often haunted her thoughts since she first met his dark, expressive eyes. He was loitering about the doors, as she approached with her companions, but he soon entered the temple and watched her as closely as before.

During that week a man, in a common laborer's garb, applied for work at the Trustees' office; his appearance was so much in his favor that he was employed at a moderate price, and sent into the gardens. None of the people with whom he mingled suspected that he was any other than he seemed—a quiet, diligent man, having no purpose beyond earning his daily bread.

Bessie Percival did not see him for several days, but one afternoon, just as she was dismissing her school, Mary Reed stopped on her way to the flower garden, and asked the young teacher and two or three of the little pupils to go with her. As they tripped along the neat walks, Bessie saw a man at work over a broad bed, gorgeous with flaunting blossoms. Mary wished to gather some for medicinal purposes, and they paused near the laborer. He looked up and bowed respectfully, and with a sudden start, Bessie recognized the stranger who had so deeply interested her at church. There was no mistaking him, though his elegant dress had been exchanged for the simplest costume; that fine, manly face, those dark, eloquent eyes, that well cut, decided mouth, the thick black hair curling beneath his straw hat, and the stately yet graceful figure, she was not likely to forget. The color came and went on her cheeks, her white, veined eyelids drooped, and she commenced plucking the flowers with a kind of nervous haste. Mary Reed noticed her confusion, but supposed it only what might be expected of a modest Shakeress on meeting a stranger of the other sex, and felt secretly pleased. The children at length called her to a shrub, at a short distance, to look at a bird's nest they had found, and Bessie trembled in every limb, as the young man glanced significantly at her, and said, in the lowest of all low tones:—

"You know me, I see—I came here for your sake—do not betray me"

"Betray you! Oh! nay," murmured Bessie.

A smile of singular sweetness rippled over the stranger's face.

"I felt that I could trust you," he continued; "and—and——" he suddenly checked himself, for at that moment Mary Reed came back. He appeared entirely absorbed in his work, till Mary asked some assistance in gathering the flowers, and then, as he handed Bessie a large bunch of them, added:

"Do not forget me. Only the thought that I am near you can reconcile me to my position here."

His eyes dwelt an instant on the beautiful face, under that plain palm-leaf bonnet, and with evident reluctance he turned from the timid young Shakeress.

Time passed on, and Bessie Percival and the stranger occasionally met as they came and went about the village, but no word was exchanged between them for more than a week. At length a severe storm kept him from his gardening, and he was employed in doing up "odd job" here and there. He had come into the office one day for new orders, when, as he stood waiting, he chanced to hear Daniel Pearson, a man who superintended much of this kind of business, say that a pane of glass had been broken at the school house, and somebody must be sent to mend it. A gleam of light flashed from his eyes, and turning to Pearson, he said, carelessly:

"Can't I do it? I've finished those other things, and can't bear to be idling round, if it is wet weather."

"Well," replied Daniel Pearson, "I suppose you can mend it; you're rather ingenious. Yea, you can go, and Reuben," pointing to a lad in the corner, "can go with you; perhaps he'll be some help."

The young man would have objected to this part of the arrangement, but he had ascertained that it was a Shaker custom to have a third person present whenever he had any commission to execute among the females of the sect. Still he trusted to his own shrewdness and tact, which had already gained one opportunity of speaking to Bessie, and started on his errand with a light heart. The boy who accompanied him was a dull fellow, and he found no difficulty in sending him back a few rods to look for a knife which he had purposely dropped.

He rapped at the school-house door, and Bessie answered his summons. She blushed and trembled as she saw him standing on the threshold, and could not help whispering:

"How rash you are! If this boldness should be discovered, how angry our people would be. Go, go, go, I beg of you!"

"No, I cannot," was the quick reply; "don't be afraid. I haven't come here without permission; I know better than to expose myself and you. I managed to be sent to you on an errand. I came to mend a pane of glass—where is it? I await your direction."

He said this in such a comical manner, that Bessie could not repress a smile, but soon resuming her grave air, and continued:

"It is the entry window that is broken; here, friend," and she laid her small hand on the window in question.

"Shall I disturb you if I begin before school is over?" asked her companion.

"Oh! nay," said Bessie, and she was about to leave him, when he said, earnestly:

"Elizabeth, I gathered these for you in the garden; you do not know their language, but if you are disposed to think kindly of me, take them, if not, crush them beneath your feet."

He dropped a cluster of golden-hearted pansies upon the floor. A moment more and she had picked them up and was concealing them amid the folds of her kerchief. The young man would have uttered his thanks, but the boy came sauntering in with the missing knife, and Bessie hurried away.

Even dull Reuben Smith thought the new laborer a great bungler at the kind of work on which he was employed that afternoon. He did indeed seem very awkward in the use of his tools, and was a long time about it. But to tell the truth, he liked to linger there; Bessie's sweet voice came musically to his ear, and more than once he lost himself in a delightful day dream. When the school was dismissed, and the children were flocking out, he appeared to be giving the last touches to his work.

"Is this all there is to be done?" he asked, as Bessie glided across the entry.

"Yea," she said, stopping a moment.

"Are you the only teacher?" he continued.

"Nay," replied the girl; "Jane Dutton is usually here with me; she has taught our school a good many years, but she went home two hours ago quite sick with the headache."

For a time the stranger maintained a thoughtful silence.

"Elizabeth," he said, at length, "look under that door-stone sometimes; you *may* find a token of my regard there," and he hastened on to overtake Reuben.

Bessie Percival went to her usual quarters at the Church Family, whither she had been removed within a year, but her thoughts followed the young man.

His flower-gift she carefully kept out of sight, but her cheek would glow and her eyes kindle whenever she ventured to glance at the hidden treasure.

Two or three days later, Bessie found a note beneath the door-stone, as she passed into school in the morning. That note was the first she had received since she left the great world, which had grown so dim on the horizon of memory. It was genial as sunshine to a pale flower, which has opened its petals in the shade. Its tone was earnest, manly, nay, more; beneath its calm surface flowed the deep under-current of a strong, true heart. It concluded thus:

"For the present I must subscribe myself, as I am known here, John Hudson. But this is not my real name; that you shall know by-and-by, and God grant that at no very distant day I may be able to lay aside all disguises, and show you the depths of a heart which is drawn towards you by an irresistible impulse. If you sympathize with my feeling in any degree, tell me so, in a note—be it ever so brief, it will be a thousand times welcome; and I confess that I shall look for one very anxiously under the friendly door-stone."

Hudson did not look in vain. Ere long he found a reply from Bessie, which, though it contained but a few lines, written by stealth, breathed sufficient encouragement to arouse many a bright hope of success.

Such was the courtship of Bessie Percival and her lover—a look, a blush, a smile; a chance-meeting; a note traced with an unsteady hand, and read by moonlight when all was still; but before the autumn had wailed her last dirge for the dying flowers, each held the other dearer than all the world beside.

At length Bessie received a long and soul-thrilling letter from John Hudson. In it he poured forth the romantic fervor of his love for her, and asked her to be his wife—to fly with him from the Shaker settlement, and be the presiding genius of the home which he had left in a busy city.

It was in the morning twilight that Bessie read this precious missive, and during the whole day her thoughts dwelt upon its contents. That night she gained permission to spend with her mother, who had been quite ill with a low nervous fever for more than a month. Very fondly she bathed the poor woman's hollow temples, and smoothed her white pillows; then she put out the candle and crept into her mother's bed. Folding her plump arms over the slender form of the invalid, she laid her head upon her breast as she had been wont to do in childhood. But she could not sleep, and she whispered, gently:

"Mother, I have something to tell you. Do you think it will hurt you to hear it?"

"Nay, oh, nay!" answered the woman; "I always like to listen to you."

"Well, then," resumed Bessie, and with a slight hesitancy she began the story of her acquaintance with John Hudson. "Mother," she murmured, after she had told her of their stolen meetings and secret correspondence—"he loves me! He wishes me to be his wife!"

Margaret Percival started up, and drew aside the curtain so that the moonlight might fall upon the young Shakeress. "I want to look at you, Bessie," she said, faintly.

How radiant was the face on which she gazed! What delicious emotions flushed the fair cheek to crimson, shone in the soft, starry eyes, and dimpled the sweet mouth with smiles!

"My child, you love him," said the woman; and she grew pale with the memory of a "long ago," when looking into the mirror she had seen her own countenance thus luminous.

"Yes, mother," whispered Bessie, "I do love John Hudson."

"And what then?" queried Margaret Percival; "marriage is not allowed here."

"John has asked me to leave this place and go out into the world with him," resumed Bessie. "Mother, I am going."

"Going?" cried the invalid, a sharp pang convulsing her slight frame; "Bessie, will you leave me *alone*?"

"Nay, nay," said the girl, nestling closer to her mother's side, "I will take you too. John is very generous, as you shall see. I have just received a letter from him, and I have learned its contents already, but I cannot repeat it all to you, mother, dear as you are. You will understand why, because you once loved papa; but there was a paragraph, which I will tell you word for word—'I know, Bessie, there is one strong tie to bind you to the Shakers—your mother. Is she quite content here? Can we not persuade her to go with us? As God sees me now while I write this, I promise to care for her most tenderly, if she will only trust herself to my protection.'"

The woman's wan face lighted up, as Bessie had not seen it for weary years.

"He is kind, very kind," she whispered. "I believe we can both trust him."

"And you will go? You will not let me leave you?" urged Bessie.

There was a long pause, and then Margaret Percival answered, in the sweet and touching language of the Scriptures, which she had not read much since she was a child;—"Where thou goest I will go. Where thou dilest I will die and there will I be buried.'"

Bessie's heart was too full for speech; she lay down again, clasped in her mother's arms, but neither slept. Half-hopefully, half-trembingly they were looking out into the world, which the Shaker faith had taught them to distrust. Vague questionings with regard to her olden home and the husband from whom she fled, haunted Margaret. Phantoms from the dead past rose grim and ghastly before her; hopes which had long lain hushed and dormant, shook off their trance-like slumber, and again wrote their bright hieroglyphics on the strewn pages of memory.

The next morning, as Bessie was making her toilet, she turned to her mother, and said, softly:—

"We have decided to flee with John; I must let him know it."

"How will you do that?" queried the invalid.

"He told me in his letter," resumed Bessie, "that if we came to this decision, I might wear a white handkerchief to-day."

Margaret smiled as the girl drew a snowy kerchief from her pocket, and folded it over her shoulders.

Hours afterwards John Hudson smiled, too, as he chanced to meet Bessie; a look which spoke volumes passed between them, and thus the matter was settled.

From the memorable night when she had heard her daughter's plans for the future, Margaret Percival had rapidly gained both health and spirits. In less than two weeks she was able to walk about the settlement and perform some light labor. Like Bessie, she was eagerly waiting for the time of their escape.

It came at last. One chill November day the village was thrown into a great tumult by the wild, startling cry of "Fire! fire! fire!" Those who have lived in the country can imagine the consternation that prevailed as this alarm rang out on the frosty, autumnal air. Doors and windows were flung open; men, women and children hurried to and fro, and anxious eyes were turned in every direction. Cloud on cloud of smoke began to roll up from the valley, and it was soon ascertained that a fire which had been kindled to burn dry underbrush, had spread to a neighbor's buildings. A large number of the Shakers went down to check the progress of the flames; many more were at work on a distant farm, and those who remained at home were in a perfect panic on account of the fire. In the midst of the excitement, which especially pervaded the Church Family, John Hudson succeeded in conveying to Bessie a slip of paper, on which he had hastily scribbled these words:

"I believe the hour of escape is at hand. The village is all astir, and I think we can get off unobserved. Steal away with your mother at the earliest moment. Take the cross road which leads to Canterbury centre; I shall be awaiting you, and will have everything in readiness for our flight."

Bessie read this quickly, and then cast it into the stove. She was now employed about the Trustees' office as her school duties had closed; but in the course of an hour she had told her mother the secret which made her heart throb with such wild alternations of hope and fear. They agreed to leave the house separately, and meet in the shadow of a group of dwarf hemlocks growing in a pasture that bordered the road, which Hudson had named.

In the keenest anxiety they watched for an opportunity to steal from the office; two or three times they started, and were obliged to turn back. But about noon, when most of the sisters were busy in entertaining and preparing dinner for a party of stylish visitors, they glided away. Margaret Percival reached the trysting-place first, and stood there almost breathless till Bessie, flushed and panting, bounded to her side. At that moment a wagon, drawn by a fleet horse, dashed rapidly down the road. Opposite the two fugitives it stopped; a man in the garb usually worn by the Shaker brethren, leaped to the ground, and hurried toward them.

"My child, my child," gasped Margaret Percival; "we are discovered!"

"Nay," whispered Bessie; "John is disguised, but I should know him anywhere."

"Elizabeth, dearest Elizabeth," were the only words John Hudson could murmur, as he lifted her in his strong arms, and springing over the wall, placed her in the wagon. Then he bore her mother almost fainting to the vehicle, sprang in himself, and drove away.

"Is not my metamorphosis complete?" he asked, after they had driven some distance. "Who would take me for one of the world's people?"

"You certainly are well disguised," replied Bessie; "but where did you get the clothes?"

"Oh! I have made the acquaintance of a man in the neighborhood, who left the Shakers some time ago," said Hudson; "he lent me this suit. I hired his horse and wagon, too, and he is to meet us at the station and take them back."

It was about two o'clock when they reached a little brown depot in the heart of a Canterbury forest—a nook so dark and dismal in my childhood that I used to quicken my pace and look timidly behind me when I passed through it alone. Now, however, the shrill shriek and heavy tramp of the locomotive have broken up its solitude, and it is no unusual thing for the "head Shakers," as they are termed in common parlance, to come there and take the cars for distant cities, where they often have business. It caused no surprise, therefore, when John Hudson bought tickets for himself and his companions, and left in the next train.

When the young moon drifted up into the sky and began to plunge through masses of threatening clouds the fugitives had left far behind them the Shaker settlement on the hill, the dim Canterbury woods, the silver flow of the Merrimack, whose windings they had watched from the car windows, and the blue summit of old Kearsarge. Before them, through the shadows of the gloaming, they saw the Boston lights shining like glowworms; the tapering masts of the vessels in the harbor; the green waters of the Bay; the spires, and towers, and long rows of brick walls, and one grand dome superbly crowning the whole.

All this seemed to Bessie Percival like a half forgotten dream, and she talked about it very earnestly with John, but it was evident that her mother was busy with painful recollections, for she sat there pale and sad, and silent.

Margaret Percival was glad when she reached the place of their destination in a quiet street. John had taken his companions to the house of a friend, and as soon as tea was over, the weary woman was ushered into a neat chamber, and left to her own thoughts.

Either by design or chance, Bessie found herself at last the only occupant of the little back parlor, and leaning against the cushions of her easy-chair, she closed her eyes, and tried to review the events of the day. By-and-by a hand was gently laid upon her head, and glancing up she saw a young man, dressed with extreme elegance, standing beside her.

"Why, John!" she cried, "you look now just as you did that first Sunday I saw you at church." Her lover laughed musically.

"No longer John Hudson," he said. "I told you in my first note, I hoped soon to lay aside all disguises. That time has come! And yet before I begin my revelation, I have a few questions to ask. You said to-day on our journey that when you lived in your old home, those who loved you best called you Bessie. It is a sweet name—a name I have always liked; your parents called you by that pet name, and who else? Say, dearest."

"Wallace, Wallace," replied the girl; "he used to visit us often."

"And who was this Wallace?" queried her companion; "I don't know but I ought to be jealous of him."

Bessie smiled.

"He was a brother of papa's most intimate friend," she said, thoughtfully; "he was several years older than I, but I was very fond of him, and would sit on his knee for hours together. After we went to the Shakers I cried myself to sleep many a night because mother told me I should never see him again."

The young man seemed greatly moved.

"Bessie, oh! Bessie," he murmured, "do you not yet suspect the truth? Here I am, Wallace Lysle Derwent—am I so changed, that you can trace no resemblance to the favorite of your childhood?"

Bessie sprang to her feet; she pushed back his curling hair, she gazed intently into his dark eyes.

"Wallace, dear, dear Wallace!" she cried, "I see it all now? Why did I not know you before?"

"Oh!" resumed Derwent, winding his arm about her waist, "I must have changed a great deal during six years of study and travel; I don't think it strange that you could not recognize me. Yet I knew you were Bessie Lincoln the moment I caught sight of you that Sabbath, notwithstanding you had grown into such a demure Shakeress."

Bessie's soft eyes were full of wonder.

"And you never even hinted that you were Wallace," she murmured, with a slight reproach in her tone.

"No," said Derwent; "it was pleasanter to win you without any memories of old times to bias you in my favor. When I went to Europe I didn't forget you. During my college life at Gottingen, thoughts of you brightened my lonely hours, and afterward, whenever I gazed on anything beautiful in nature or art, I wished Bessie were with me. If I saw a curious relic, or a pretty trifle, which I knew would please you, I transferred it to my portmanteau for Bessie. On reaching home, my first inquiry was for you. What was my astonishment to learn that you and your mother had disappeared from the city and never been heard of since! Then I began to search for you, and when I had almost given you up in despair, your nurse, Susan Morton, after extorting a promise from me that no harm to you should grow out of her confidence, revealed the fact of your seclusion among the Shakers. You promised to be my wife when you sat on my knee, a gleeful child, so I have a double claim to you," and sitting down with her in the red glow of the coal-fire, Wallace Derwent talked eloquently of their future.

Meanwhile Margaret Percival was lost in bitter thought. She had reached a standpoint in her pilgrimage, whence she could look back into the past, and on, on, into the misty unknown. For years her heart had been like an Eastern sepulchre, sealed up with its dead. What white-robed angel should roll away the stone, and bid the silent sleepers there arise to pure and beautiful life? With her muck-rake she had long groped among the rubbish of earth, seeking for that bright treasure, happiness! Who should point her tired eyes upward to the glorious goal shining afar?

She sat, as I have said, absorbed in a dismal reverie, when she heard a deep, clear voice reading in an adjoining room. The door was ajar, and she drew near to listen. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" These words broke upon her ear, as though some high archangel had uttered them from the far heights of heaven. She could not banish them; sweetly they rang through the desolate chambers of her soul—a blessed answer to her wild questionings of the future. Outside the streets were damp and dreary; the fast-falling snow whirled and drifted, and the wind sobbed and sobbed, like a grieved child; but Margaret Percival heeded them not; for within her heart a light rosier than that of dawn, richer than the sunset glow, was beginning to shine.

Three days later, she stole to Derwent's side, and said, falteringly:

"My husband—what of him? I have wished and yet dreaded to ask you."

"He has been very ill," replied Wallace; "and is still feeble. He needs the care of a wife."

Margaret's cheek burned, and tears filled her eyes, as she said:

"He might have had it, had he been kind and generous. Is he penitent? Does he regret that he proved so cruel, so false?"

"Cruel he was in many respects," resumed Derwent; "but he was never false."

Margaret shook her head dissentingly.

"I seem to be living it all over this morning," she said; "ours was a hasty marriage, as you perhaps know. We met at a watering-place, where he had flirted several summers, but that was my first season. I was not beautiful, but they called me brilliant; I was, too, the daughter of a high-born and high-bred, yet decayed family. He was of plebeian origin, and I have since been told that he coveted a patrician bride to give *eclat* to his wealth. We had not been acquainted three months when we went to the altar; we did not understand each other, and I was too young to know the duties and responsibilities of a wife. What could have been expected but dissension and strife? We were both in fault; first there was bickering, then open quarrels, then icy coldness and distrust."

"But through the whole," interposed Wallace, "he suffered as well as you. An enemy deceived you into the belief that he was false, and poisoned his mind by insinuating that you had married him for his wealth. These facts I know, and I know, too, that he loves you yet."

Margaret Percival bowed her head and wept, but those were blessed tears—they were tears of joy.

That afternoon Richard Lincoln was alone in his grand drawing room. Very luxurious were the velvet cushions on which he lay; very pleasant the light falling through those rose-colored curtains; very rare the pictures and sculpture on which his eye rested wherever it roved around. But he was lonely and ill at ease; and his thoughts dwelt regretfully on his long lost wife and child.

"Papa, dear papa," murmured a sweet voice.

The man started; could this be a lingering fantasy of his illness? No; before him stood a graceful girlish shape, and the face of his beloved daughter was actually smiling upon him.

"Bessie, my darling, my pet, my treasure!" he cried, folding her to his heart in a wild embrace. "Oh! Bessie, how I have longed to see you!"

"And my mother"—said the girl, "would she be welcome?"

"Oh! yes, yes, Bessie, a thousand times!"

As he spoke a faded woman in a plain Shakerish garb tottered towards him. For an instant the husband and wife stood looking into each other's eyes; then Richard Lincoln sank at Margaret's feet.

"If your place is in the dust of humiliation mine is beside you," faltered the woman, and she flung herself down at his side.

He gathered her in his arms, his tears rained over her pale face, and then all was confessed, and forgiven. I leave my reader to picture their subsequent life, peaceful and harmonious, and stretching on into a green old age, when both waited not without hope of reunion on the far, the angel who should "loose the silver cord," and shatter the golden bowl.

Three years after her flight from Canterbury, when Bessie Lincoln had matured into beautiful womanhood, she became the wife of Wallace Derwent, and in their pleasant home they still live to talk of the time when they used to correspond, with the school-house door-stone for a post office; Bessie, too, occasionally gathers her long, bright curls under a close cap, a relic of by-gone days and standing prim and demure by her husband sings the Shaker songs.

There was great excitement at the Shaker settlement when it was ascertained that Margaret and her child had absconded, but their flight was shrouded in mystery for several weeks. Then a letter, addressed to Daniel Pearson, shed light upon the matter; it ran thus:

"Enclosed please find $30.00, the amount you paid me for my labor. I did not come among you for money, but for a higher object—to win the heart and hand of Bessie Percival. She and her mother fled under my protection and are now safe in their former home. Yours, &c.,

WALLACE LYSLE DERWENT, *alias* JOHN HUDSON."

"A pretty trick he has served us," muttered Daniel, and hastened to lay the letter before the Elders.

Mary Reed is yet at the Shaker Village in Canterbury; she says she is content to live and die there, and lie down to her last rest in their quiet burial-ground, where there is neither splendid mausoleum, nor tall monument, but only a little grey stone to tell who sleeps below.

SHARP NEGRO.—Yesterday some sharp negro did a "brother" from the country out of twenty dollars in greenbacks in a very cute manner. City darkey was showing the country nigger around and assisting him to make purchases; while in a grocery store he lifted the twenty dollars, stepped into the street and told two white men—evidently his confederates—that the country nigger was stealing something. White men, representing policemen, arrested the country nigger and started for the jail. They had proceeded but a short distance when they told their victim that they would "let him off" for five dollars. The sable rustic forked over. Officers disappeared. The last seen of the poor African he was recounting his woes to a circle of sympathizing friends. We advise the sharp negro to emigrate to New York, where he will have ample room and verge enough to ply his calling and competition worthy his rivalry.—Constitutionalist.

Speaking of the political movements in New York State, the New York *Herald* says: "The town elections thus far in this State have shown Democratic gains over the 50,000 majority in 1867. We have already given the results in the Counties where elections have thus far been held this year. These Counties represent different sections of the State, showing that the Democratic gains cannot be ascribed to local causes."

Thine Own.

Call me no more thine own! The summer hours
So loved by me, shall never come again;
I scarce shall look upon the spring's pale flowers,
And in this life of weariness and pain
Shall be no more thine own.

The spring shall wake fresh verdure in the vale;
Freed from gray winter blue shall glow the sky;
But ere the sweet-breathed violets grow pale,
This fading form in the dust shall lie,
And be no more thine own.

The shadow of the parting hour is nigh;
It falls, dear one, upon my heart and thine:
Alas! to leave thee when life's morning hour
Is goldened o'er by love almost divine—
To be no more thine own!

I soon shall leave thee; thou, beloved, wilt feel
A gloomy shadow o'er thy pathway thrown;
And all too soon the truth wilt o'er thee steal,
That in this dreary world thou art alone,
And I no more thine own.

No more thine own! To wake for thee, at eve,
The chords of music sweetest to thine ear;
To love thee still alike through joy or grief,
To be thy truest friend, of all most dear,
But not on earth thine own.

On those dear hills, whose beauty never fades,
My lingering feet shall rest. Oh! do not weep,
Thou too shall dwell where sorrow ne'er invades,
With him who giveth His beloved sleep—
And I shall be thine own.

A Weary Life it is to Have no Work to Do.

Ho! ye who at the anvil toil,
And strike the sounding blow,
Where from the burning iron's breast
The sparks fly to and fro,
While answering to the hammer's ring,
And fire's intenser glow—
Oh, while we feel it is hard to toil,
And sweat the long day through,
Remember it is harder still
To have no work to do!

Ho! ye who till the stubborn soil,
Whose hard hands guide the plow,
Who bend beneath the summer sun,
With burning cheek and brow—
Ye deem the curse still clings to earth
From olden time till now—
But while ye feel 'tis hard to toil
And labor all day through,
Remember it is harder still
To have no work to do!

Ho! ye upon whose fevered cheeks
The hectic glow is bright,
Whose mental toil wears out the day
And half the weary night,
Who labor for the souls of men,
Champions of truth and right—
Although you feel your toil is hard,
Even with this glorious view,
Remember it is harder still
To have no work to do!

Ho! all who labor—all who strive—
Ye wield a lofty power;
Do with your might, do with your strength,
Fill every golden hour;
The glorious privilege to do
Is man's most noble dower—
Oh, to your birthright and yourselves,
To your own souls be true!
A weary, wretched life is theirs
Who have no work to do.

From the Charleston Courier.

Relief.

Without endorsing the plan proposed in the following communication, we publish it as a matter entitled to grave consideration: because it comes from the pen of one who has occupied a high place in State and national councils:

Messrs. Editors:

It is of the last importance that something shall be done by competent authority to give system to the State, and infuse new life and hope into our people, or we will sink down into hopeless despair and permanent ruin. Let whoever has highest authority in the State, appoint able and just commissioners, who shall divide the State into three territorial divisions. Let the sea coast, or lower division, embrace a line running from the Georgia or Savannah River line, including Beaufort District, and back to the North Carolina line, embracing Horry and Marion Districts, on the North Carolina line; and the second, or middle country division, include Barnwell and Edgefield Districts, on the Savannah River, back to the North Carolina line, including Marlboro' and Lancaster Districts, on the North Carolina border; and the third division to embrace all the balance of the State, up into the mountains, to Georgia and North Carolina. Let there be three commissioners in each of these three divisions, with power to fix the minimum valuation upon lands in each of the three divisions, as to low grounds, oak and hickory, and pine lands, &c., and then grade the different lands. Wherever the lands in any of these divisions shall be forced to sale under the Sheriff's execution, or for division under commissioners' sale, or anything else, then these State commissioners shall have power to purchase for the State; or if large sections can be purchased on the same terms, then let the commissioners purchase for the State. Let State bonds be issued, redeemable in thirty years, at five per cent. interest. Let these bonds be exchanged for these bonds be exchanged for these lands, and let industrious and safe owners, whose lands are forced to sales, be allowed to retain these lands, upon a mortgage of the same to the State, to secure the bonds issued for the amount they sold for, on twenty years' time. Let these commissioners sell also any State lands on the same conditions to foreigners or domestic settlers in small and proper quantities, the State retaining, wherever practicable, each alternate section or tract, all set aside officially to secure these State bonds. This would make these State bonds, the best securities we could offer, for the faith of the State would be pledged as on other bonds; but in addition, we would offer security of mortgages on lands, precisely on the same principles as was done in the Charleston fire loan, some thirty-four years ago.

This would be using the credit of the State for the benefit of her ruined and disheartened people; and at the same time it would open up vast quantities, in small parcels, of land to be purchased, on the very best terms, for the poor and needy. These bonds would make the best investments for widows and orphans, and for the aged and infirm. Gold now is not safe in the hands of individuals, and investments in public stocks are by no means safe or certain. This would put the real estate, or a good portion of it, under the direct control of State authority, for the benefit and prosperity of the State, and would place the State in a position to be built up wisely in the only way that it can be done. It would use the credit of the State in such way for the benefit of her ruined debtor's interest, as to avoid that clause in the United States Constitution which forbids a State to "impair the obligations of contracts." It would give us land offices, to be opened and regulated to encourage settlers, under the direct sanction and protection of State authority. Foreigners would feel safety and encouragement under this system, where they would not under mere private encouragement. These Commissioners would see that foreigners were encouraged to settle in the three different divisions of the State to suit their constitutions, according to the different countries they were raised in. For instance, Holland with the low lands of Belgium and Naples, with Chinese accustomed to rice culture, would suit the lower belt or division of the State. The Swiss and elevated lands of Germany and Europe would furnish settlers suited to the upper and mountain division of the State, and the middle division would be adapted to settlers from almost any country.

All this would involve the exercise of very high and discretionary powers, but the State is totally ruined as it is, and there will be universal imbecility, and crushing in of all hope, unless something decided is done to remodel our whole system and infuse new vigor into our people.

A High State Chancellor might be appointed to supervise and superintend all the Commissioners to be appointed in the three divisions, and with power to give system and form to the whole direction of affairs, and to see that everything was administered exclusively for the benefit and prosperity of the State, as far as her land was concerned. You will see that the bonds are proposed to run thirty years, while the sale of land is for twenty-years, secured by mortgage. At the end of the twenty years it will be safe to say that the enhanced value of the alternate sections of land retained by the State, will more than pay for the whole. Besides, the acquisition of population to the State is itself wealth to the State, and the increase of population gives geometrical increase of wealth. Our Government and its free principles are overthrown, and we have nothing left but the privilege to build up and save a portion of our material prosperity if possible.

"WILLIAM LOWNDES."

South Carolina Reconstruction.

The convention now sitting in Charleston for the purpose of reconstructing the State of South Carolina according to the Radical programme is, in every sense, an outrage on propriety. Aside from the manner in which the delegates were chosen, and the negro ascendancy which exists in the body, the whole thing is a shameful and costly farce, which deserves the severest rebuke and reprobation. For example, Dr. Mackey, the Collector of the Port, is the president of the convention. Apart from the indelicacy of a public officer occupying such a position at all, we should like to know whether he is paid $6000 a year for neglecting the duties of his office and devoting himself to this political business. The people are taxed to pay large salaries like his, and receive no return whatever.

We notice, as figuring among the delegates to this convention, E. W. M. Mackey, a son of the Collector, and one of the Assessoss of the Internal Revenue. So, not satisfied with being well paid by the government for doing nothing, he gets elected upon a sham residence from a country district, and draws pay from the convention. Dr. Mackey's family seems to find Radicalism a good pigeon to pluck.

If the Federal officers at Charleston have nothing to do, as would appear by such facts as these, we hope their places may be abolished. The attention of the pretended reformers in Congress is now called to this glaring abuse. It would also be well for the Secretary of the Treasury to examine the serious charges which have been publicly made against Dr. Mackey, the Collector in question, and to order an inquiry into his appointments, which are controlled by the influence of a secret society. No one ever heard of him as a Union man before or during the war, but after peace was proclaimed and when offices were to be given, then he was very loud in shouting his own praise, and successful in humbugging others into accepting them.—Nat. Intelligencer.

THE DIFFICULTY.—We find the following going the rounds. It is from the New Orleans *Picayune*, and while it is rather *strongly* put, there is too much truth in it to be ignored:

It is contemptible, in this day of desolation and poverty in the South—when the cry of starvation goes into Congress for the benefit of whites as well as negroes—that white men should haunt grog shops and street corners, in city or country, or even hug the caves of the houses, when so much rich land is growing up in brush and weed for the want of men to till it. They can get the use of it for next to nothing, and make thereon a livelihood for themselves and their sisters and mothers, who now, perhaps, have to support them out of scanty savings or petty earnings. Have these men no shame? If they have not, let the community put them to shame and spew them out as worthless!

It is not only the idle negro who curses the South; it is the idle white man, too. That he curses the North also, chiefly its cities and towns, does not make it less true of him here. There are a few men among us who cannot work, by reason of age or infirmity; there are others, who being crippled or otherwise unfit for hard labor, should have lighter or intellectual tasks, and who work courageously and steadily in them; but a multitude of those who are out of employment might find it easily if they were not either falsely ashamed to work, or too lazy to be useful.

To cure such, and to renovate and reconstruct the South, we need to make idleness dishonorable!

A SAVANNAH NEGRO TURNING WHITE.—There is in this city a negro man who is gradually undergoing a transformation—a change of colour—for which no cause can be assigned nor reason ascribed. The man in question is a drayman, and is well-known to parties here, who have for some time remarked the wonderful and curious change of which we speak.

Some months ago white spots appeared upon his chin and cheeks, which have been gradually growing larger. The skin, from a dusky black,