

THE AVANT COURIER.

Now and Then.

It is not hard to understand why our forefathers built their houses in the "lean to" style, as it really economized room, and by the low roof gave increased warmth and greater convenience. One hundred years ago, scarcely one of the modern conveniences for cooking, and for warming and lighting dwellings, was known. Not a pound of coal or a cubic foot of illuminating gas had been burned in the country. No iron stoves were used and no contrivances for economizing heat were employed until Dr. Franklin invented the iron frame fire-place which still bears his name. All the cooking and warming in town and country were done by the aid of the kindled upon the brick hearth, or in the brick oven. Pine knots or tallow candles furnished the light for the long winter evenings, and sanded floors supplied the place of rugs and carpets. Water, often at long distances from the houses, was drawn from deep wells by the creaking "sweep." No form of pump was used in this country, so far as we can learn, until the commencement of the present century. There were no friction matches in those early days, by the aid of which a fire could be speedily kindled; and if the fire "went out" upon the hearth over night, and the tinder was damp, so that the spark would not catch, the alternative remained of wading through the snow a mile or so, to borrow a brand of a neighbor. Only one room in any house was warmed (unless some of the family were ill); in all the rest the temperature was at zero during many nights in winter. Yet, although this atmosphere of their bedrooms was colder than that of our modern barns, our hardy ancestors slept soundly, notwithstanding the butternuts or shagbarks, followed by a quart or two of hard cider, consumed by them during the long winter evenings. All our modern conveniences and comforts fail to give us the superlative happiness enjoyed by this robust people, who laughed at the minor ills of life, and did the work given them to do, bravely and well.

Odd Way of Popping the Question.

A recent novel contains a mode of "popping the question," singular in its way. Miss George answers a tap at the front door, and her lover, Mr. Fleetwood, proves to be the visitor. "Miss George, I've come on an errand that makes me nervous. I've walked up to your door three times to-night before I dared to knock, and now I've got in I've hardly courage to say what I want to say. The fact is, when a man has got a favor to ask he doesn't know well how to begin, especially if he's a man of few words." Here Mr. Fleetwood stopped, and an awkward pause ensued.

"I'm sure if there's any favor we can do for you we shall only be too glad to—oblige so kind a friend," I began. "I can never feel grateful enough for all—" "Stop, or you'll be saying more than you may wish. There is something you can do—something that will repay me a thousand times over and make me the happiest man alive. You think me very abrupt, I am afraid, but I want to know if you'll marry me? I'll make you a good and faithful husband, by God's help, if you'll have me, Dorothy. There, I've done it now, and a pretty mess I've made of it!" For I had sat down and covered my face with my hands and I'm afraid I was beginning to sob. It had come upon me so suddenly, "I oughtn't to have blurted it out like that," said Mr. Fleetwood, in an easy tone. "I hope you are not offended with me?" I was still silent, but it was from emotion, not anger or indifference. "If you wish me to go, sit as you sit now, with your face turned from me, but if you only find it hard to say the word I want to hear, just lift up the bit of seaweed there on the table by your side and I'll know what you mean, Dorothy." The words were uttered in a voice full of feeling. I looked up into the manly face bending over me, and—really I can't say whether I lifted up the seaweed or not.

Joke on Henry Clay.

The publication of Congressman Cox's pleasant reminiscences of Congressional wit and humor is bringing out a good many anecdotes of the public men of the past that might otherwise have been lost. Among them is the following of Henry Clay and Governor Metcalf, of Kentucky. Some time before the introduction of railroads Governor Metcalf represented in Congress a district of which Nicholas county was a part. Mr. Clay was Secretary of State under President Quincy Adams. It was the custom to make the trip to the national capital in private conveyance. It was in the days of Mr. Clay's greatest popularity that the two distinguished politicians agreed to travel to Washington in Governor Metcalf's carriage, and all arrangements perfected they started together from the latter's "Forest Retreat" home, in said county. While passing through the State of Pennsylvania Mr. Clay told Governor Metcalf that he had received intimations that in a certain town they were approaching he would be honored with an ovation by the citizens. They, like thousands of his fellow-countrymen, loved him, but had never seen him. Just before coming to town, Governor Metcalf, who had all along been driving, suggested to Mr. Clay that he take the lines and drive, as he himself was tired. Mr. C. readily consented, whereupon the Governor took the back seat in the carriage. The honored statesman drove the team successfully into the town, and they were met by a large concourse of people. Governor Metcalf alighted from the carriage, and being asked whether he was Mr. Clay, answered yes, that he was glad to meet them, etc.; and at this the crowd hoisted him upon their shoulders and triumphantly started with him to the place of reception. Looking back at Mr. Clay, who still sat in the carriage, somewhat nonplussed, the Governor cried, "Driver, take those horses to the stable and feed them." The merit of the crowd when the joke was discovered, Mr. Clay himself as heartily enjoyed it as the rest. Frequently afterward he would refer to it, and said it was one of the best practical jokes he ever heard played on a fellow.

Joke on Henry Clay.

"Mais," observed Mr. Holcomb, as he was putting on his clothes, "there isn't no put on them breeches yet." "I can't fix it now so way; I'm too busy." "Well, give me the ratch, then, and I'll carry it around with me. I don't want people to think I can't afford the cloth."

The Customs of Solomon's Days and Ours.

The style of dress and ornaments of the Hebrew ladies of the present day—and in fact the prevailing toilets of all ladies—is much the same as during the time of Solomon. With all these changes and variations of centuries, the gradation of chignons and crinolines, we now find much of the simple grace and easy symmetry of ancient Greece. The Scriptures narrate a great many things about the style of dress worn in time of Solomon; and in the law of Moses several directions are given concerning garments worn by the Israelites. In the book of Judges the girls of that period are described by Deborah as "a prey of divers of colors of needlework," while Samuel says, "their clothing is of silk and purple." In the frequent intercourse between the Jewish and other nations, the ladies, tired of their simplicity, sought the fashions of the clever Egyptians, the elegant Phoenicians and the luxurious Persians. Even patient Job became impatient at the dresses, and Isaiah denounced "the women of the period," living for nothing but dress and flirtation, with one desire, "to see and be seen." The tunics worn by the ladies in the time of Solomon, was much like the polonaise of to day, and the belts with fancy clasps now worn are about the same as the leather girdles and silver buckles worn of old. We also find recorded that trains were worn to dresses, and that camel's hair shawls were common. Embroidered mantles, fastened with golden pins are also spoken of. The hair was also oiled, dyed and put in curls; little curls were let hang over the forehead, and, strange to say, the girls of Solomon's time it is stated, used paint. Veils were worn, and sandals were made of blue and violet colored leather with fancy latches. Solomon, it is related, said to Shulamite, "How beautiful are the feet with shoes, O princess! daughter!" Hair nets were worn, and carriages of all forms and much value were very common. Bracelets on the right arm, strings of pearl and heavy gold chains around the neck, rings on the fingers, and ornaments, were all worn by the ancient Hebrew ladies.

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