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T. A. PLANTS, Editor.

"Independent in all things—Neutral in nothing."

T. A. PLANTS & Co., Publishers.

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D. C. WHALEY, Surgeon Dentist, Meigs Co., Va. All orders promptly attended to.

Poetry.

THE OLD FOLKS HOME.

The old man sat by the chimney side,
His face was wrinkled and white;
He looked like a man who had seen his best days,
And all his work was done.

His coat of good old-fashioned gray,
His pockets were deep and wide,
Where his pipe and his best tobacco box
Lay snugly side by side.

The old man liked to air the fire,
So, near him the logs were kept,
Sometimes he used as his gaze at the coal;
And now and then they talked and slept.

What was he in the embrasure?
An old-fashioned rocking chair,
With a cushioned seat and a high back,
And another old chair.

His good wife sat on the other side,
In a high-backed chair,
And her hands were on her lap;
The sheen of her hair shone.

There was a happy smile on her face,
And her eyes were bright and clear,
And her hands were on her lap;
The sheen of her hair shone.

Their children came and read the news,
And their hearts were glad and true,
And their hands were on their laps;
The sheen of their hair shone.

How it felt the blood in the old man's heart,
To hear the world's way.

'Tis a homely scene, I told you so,
At least I thought it so myself,
And I should like to see it,
If I could see it.

He kind wife sat on the other side,
In a high-backed chair,
And her hands were on her lap;
The sheen of her hair shone.

They taught our youthful feet to climb
The stairs, and their hands to guide,
Then let us lead them gently down
To where the weary sleep.

Miscellany.

PAUL DENTON

THE TEXAS CAMP-MEETING.

By CHARLES HENNINGFIELD.

During the last week in September, 1858, the first successful camp-meeting was held in Eastern Texas. I employ the epithet "successful," because several previous failures had apparently rendered efforts of the kind perfectly hopeless. Indeed, the meridian at this period was most unpropitious to the religious and moral enterprise.

The country bordering the Sabine had been occupied rather than settled, by a class of adventurers almost as wild as the savages whom they had scarcely expelled, and the beast of prey which still disputed their domains of primal forest. Professional gamblers, refugees from every land, forgers of false coin, thieves, robbers and murderers, interspersed among the face of uneducated hunters and trappers, made up the strange and miscellaneous without courts, prisons, or churches or schools, or even the shadow of civil authority or subordination—a sort of unprincipled pandemonium, where fierce passion sat enthroned, waiting its bloody scepter, the bowie-knife!

No one accused me of exaggeration for the sake of dramatic effect; I am speaking now of Shelby county—the home of the Lynchers—the terrible locale, where ten years later, forty persons were poisoned to death at a marriage supper.

It will be obvious that such a country was very few would be disposed to patronize camp-meetings; and accordingly a dozen different trials at different times had never collected a hundred hearers on any single occasion. But even these were not allowed to worship in peace; uniformly the first day or night, a band of armed desperadoes headed by the notorious Watt Foreman, chief judge and executioner of the Shelby Lynchers, broke in the altar and scattered the mourners, or ascended the pulpit and threatened the preacher with a gratuitous robe of tar and feathers.

It is not a pleasant recollection to me that when the first bank of the Sabine, as if it had been invented by a cohort of demons; and two whole years elapsed without any new attempt to erect the cross in so perilous a field.

At length, however, an advertisement appeared, promising another effort in behalf of the gospel. The notice was unique in its tenor and mode of publication. Let me give it verbatim:

"BARBECUE CAMP-MEETING.

There will be a camp-meeting, to commence the last Monday of this month, at the Double Spring Grove, near Peter Brinson's, in the county of Shelby.

The exercises will open with an splendid barbecue. The preparations are being made to suit all tastes; there will be a good barbecue, better liquors, and the best of music.

PAUL DENTON,
Sept. 1, 1858. Miss M. E. Church.

This singular document was nailed to the door of every public house and grocery; it was attached to the largest trees at the intersection of all cross roads and the principal trails; and even the wandering hunters themselves found it in remote dells of the mountains, miles away from the smoke of a human habitation.

At first many regarded the matter as a hoax, played off by some wicked wag, in ridicule of popular credulity. But this hypothesis was negatived by the statements of Peter Brinson, proprietor of the "Double Spring Grove," who informed all inquirers, that he had been employed and paid by a stranger calling himself a Methodist Missionary, to provide an ample barbecue, at the period and place advertised.

"But the liquor—the better liquor—are you to furnish the liquor too?" was the invariable question of each visitor.

"The missionary said he would attend to that himself," said Brinson.

"He must be a precious original," was the response—a proposition which most of them afterwards had an opportunity to verify experimentally.

I need hardly say that intense excitement resulted. The rumor took wings and flew on the wind, turned to a storm, and a score of exasperated—every eye inflamed in its sound until nothing else could be heard but the "Barbecue Camp-

meeting." It became the focus of thought, the staple of dreams. And thus the unknown preacher had insured one thing in advance—a congregation embracing the entire population of the county—which was likely the sole purpose of this stratagem.

I was traveling in that part of Texas at the time, and my imagination being inflamed by the common curiosity, I took some trouble to attend. But although my eyes witnessed the extraordinary scene, I may well despair of the undertaking to paint it: The pen of Homer, or the pencil of Hogart were alone adequate to the sublimity and burlesque of such a complicated task. I may only sketch the angular outlines.

A space had been cleared away immediately around the magnificent "Double Spring," which boiled up with sufficient force to turn a mill-wheel, in the very center of the evergreen grove. Here a pulpit had been raised, and before it was the indispensable altar for mourners.—Beyond these, at a distance of fifty paces a succession of plank tables extended in the form of a great circle, or the perimeter of a polygon, completely enclosing the area about the spring. An odoriferous stream of the most delicious savor, diffused itself through the air. This was from the pits of the adjacent prairie, where the slave flays of Peter Brinson, were engaged in cooking the promised barbecue.

The grove itself was literally alive, teeming, swarming, running over with strange figures in human shape, men, women and children. All Shelby county was there. The hunters had come, rifles in hand, and the dogs barking at their heels; the rogues, refugees and gamblers, with pistols in their belts, and big knives peeping from their shirt bosoms, while here and there might be seen a sprinkling of well-dressed planters with their wives and daughters.

The tumult was deafening; a tornado of babbling tongues, shouting, quarreling, betting and cursing—"Colonel Watt Foreman! Hurry for Colonel Watt Foreman!" and the crowd parted right and left to let the lion Lynchers pass.

I turned to the advancing load-star of all eyes, and shuddered involuntarily at the devilish countenance that met my glance, and yet, the features were not only youthful but eminently handsome; the hideousness lay in the look of savage ferocity, murderous. It was in the red-dish yellow eyes, flashing with lurid flame; in the thin sneering lips with their everlasting, evil smile. As to the rest, he was a tall, athletic, very powerful man. His train, a dozen armed desperadoes, followed him.

Foreman spoke in a voice, sharp and piercing as the point of a dagger—"Eh, Brinson, where is the missionary? We want to give him a plumed coat."

"He has not arrived yet," replied the planter.

"Well, I suppose we must wait for him; put the barbecue on the boards; I am as hungry as a starved wolf."

"I cannot till the missionary comes; the barbecue is his property."

A fearful light blazed in Foreman's eyes as he fairly shouted, "Fetch me the meat, instantly, or I'll fill your stomach with a dinner of lead and steel!"

This was the ultimatum of one whose obeyed without a murmur. The smoking vands were arranged on the table by a score of slaves, and the throng prepared to commence the sumptuous repast, when a voice pealed out from the pulpit, loud as the blast of a trumpet in laudic, "Stay, gentlemen and ladies, till the giver of the barbecue asks God's blessing."

Every ear started, every eye was directed to the speaker, and a whisperless silence ensued, for all alike were struck by his remarkable appearance. He was almost as giant in stature—scarcely twenty years of age; his hair, dark as the raven's wing, flowed down his immense shoulders in masses of natural ringlets more beautiful than any ever wreathed around the jeweled brow of a queen by the labored achievements of human art; his eyes black as midnight, beamed like stars over a face as pale as Parian marble, calm passionless, spiritual, and wearing a singular undefinable expression, such as might have been shed by the light of a dream from paradise, or the luminous shadow of an angel's wing. The heterogeneous crowd, hunters, gamblers, homicides gazed in mute astonishment.

The missionary prayed, but it sounded like no other prayer ever addressed to the throne of the Almighty. It contained no encomiums on the splendor of the divine attributes; no petitions to the tone of commands; no orisons for distant places, times or objects, and implied instruction as to the administration of the government of the universe. It related exclusively to the present people and the present hour; it was the cry of the naked soul, and that soul was a beggar for the bread and water of heavenly life.

He ceased, and not till then did I become conscious of weeping. I looked around through my tears, and saw hundreds of faces wet with rain.

"Now, my friends, partake of God's gifts at the table, and then come and sit down and listen to His gospel."

"It would be impossible to describe the sweet tone of kindness in which these simple words were uttered that made him on the instant five hundred friends. One heart, however, in the assembly was saddened by the evidences of the preacher's wonderful power. Colonel Watt Foreman exclaimed in a sneering voice: 'Mr. Paul Denton, your reverence has lied. You promised not only a good barbecue, but better liquor. Where's your liquor?'"

"There!" exclaimed the missionary, in tones of thunder; and pointing his motionless finger at the Double Spring, gushing up in two strong columns, with a sound like a shower of joy from the bosom of the earth. "There!" he repeated, with a look terrible as lightning, while his enemy actually trembled at the feet: "there is the liquor, which God the Eternal brews for his children!"

"Not in the shimmering still over smoking fires, choked with poisonous gases, and surrounded with the stench of sickening odors and rank corruption, both your Father in heaven prepare the precious essence of life, pure cold water. But in the green glade and grassy dell, where the red deer wanders and the child loves to play, there God himself brews it; and low down in the deepest valleys, where fountains number and the hills sing; and high upon the mountain tops where the naked granite glitters like gold in the sun, where the storm-cloud broods, and the thunder-storms crash; and away far out on the wide, wide sea, where the hurricane howls music, and big waves roar the chorus, 'awakening the march of God—there he brews it, that beverage of life, health-giving water."

And every where, it is a thing of beauty; gleaming in the dew-drop, singing in the summer rain, shining in the ice-cream, when the trees seem turned to living jewels, spreading a golden veil over the setting sun, or a white gauze around the midnight moon; sporting in the cataract; sleeping in the glacier; dancing in the hail shower; folding bright snow curtains softly above the wintry world, and waving the many colored iris, that seraph's zone of the sky, whose warp is the rainbow of earth, whose loom is the sunbeam of heaven, all checked over with celestial flowers, by the mystic hand of sanctification. Still, always is it beautiful, that blessed cold water. No poison bubbles on its brink; its foam brings not madness and murder; no blood stains its liquid glass; pale and starving orphans weep not burning tears in its clear depths; no drunkard's shrieking ghost from the grave curses it in words of despair—"Speak out, my friends, would you exchange it for the demon's drink, alcohol!"

A shout like the roar of the tempest answered, "No! No!"

Critics never need tell me again, that backwoodsmen are deaf to the divine voice of conscience, for I saw at that moment, the missionary held the hearts of the multitude as it were in the hollow of his hand; and the popular feeling in a current so irresistible, that even the duellist, Watt Foreman, dared not venture another interruption during the meeting.

I have just reviewed my report of that singular speech in the foregoing sketch; but alas! I discover that I have utterly failed to convey the full impression as my reason and imagination received it. I cannot be sure, is there—that I never could forget—but it lacks the spirit, the tones of unutterable pathos, the cadence of mournful music alternating with the crashes of terrible power, it lacks the gentleness, now graceful as the play of a golden willow in the wind, and anon, violent as the mountain pine in the hurricane; it lacks that pale face wrapped in its dreams of the spirit land, and those unfathomable eyes, flashing a light such as never beamed from the sun's magnifying eye; that all, it lacks the full impression as my reason and imagination received it. 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