

THE BOURBON NEWS.

Published Every Tuesday and Friday by WALTER CHAMP, BRUCE MILLER, Editors and Owners

ASSISTED IN COURTSHIP.

There was a report circulated among the gossips of the settlement that Hezekiah Burnet was courting Maria Tilly. In fact, the report had grown to be almost a legend, since many of the gossips had passed to the further side and others had turned gray in the 20 years that had elapsed since Hezekiah and Maria had first begun "keeping company" and the news of it started to circulate around the neighborhood.

In those days Hezekiah had been a lean, lank, loose-jointed, bare-legged, freckle-faced lad driving his father's log wagon, and Maria had been a slim slip of a girl milking her mother's cows and helping her brother with the cotton "dropping" in the spring, "chopping" in the summer and "picking" in the fall.

Yes, no doubt Hezekiah's "liking" for Maria had begun at that period of his callow youth, and in the soft spring days of early "dropping" time. Perhaps the fact that the way from the deep wine woods to his father's rickety lumber mill lay past the little Tilly farm had something to do with this crude awakening of the tender passion in Hezekiah's tender heart in just that particular direction. At all events, it transpired that during that season Hezekiah managed to make more trips in a day than ever before and that somehow or other the heavy ruts of his big wagon wheels ran suspiciously close to the straggling, tumble-down Tilly fence.

It was one early morning, as Hezekiah was making his first trip for the day, that he had seen Maria with a blue sun bonnet on her head and a narrow, short-skirted blue and white checked frock, treading slowly up and down the crumbly, brown rows, dropping cotton seed. So, sliding down from his precarious seat on the long wagon pole, Hezekiah had cracked his long whip at the lazy oxen to urge them to the lane alone, leaned his lank elbows, in their blue-striped sleeves, on the top of the rickety rail fence for a moment, and said as the girl came up close to him: "Better lemme drap a row fur you, 'Ria."

"Don't keer of I do, 'Kiah," she had answered, flipping one gray, lanky seed from her handful up into his grinning, freckled face.

Then 'Kiah had put his two big, freckled hands on the top rail of the fence and swung himself clear of the tangle of vines and weeds in the corner down beside the girl as she stood ankle deep in the mellow earth, and side by side they had marched to the end of the rows in silence.

"Look like them oxen's goin' powerful fas' an't they, 'Ria?" he had said, when they reached the other side of the field at last.

"Don't know but what they is, 'Kiah," the girl had answered, peering through the fence cracks at the reeding wagon as the oxen swung slowly on up the hill.

She was still peering when 'Kiah overtook the team by and by, but when he cracked his whip and turned back to look down the lane 'Kiah ducked her head among the weeds and waited till the wagon was out of sight.

By the time the cotton was up and had begun to show its little thick, round, fleshy leaves in green, straggly lines along the crest of the brown rows 'Ria had grown to look for 'Kiah's wagon as it crept slowly up the lane in the early morning and to count upon his "lift" with her chopping, and hoeing time brought him still with increasing regularity.

But after awhile, when the long summer days stretched and hardened the tender green plant into the hardy stalk and the cotton was "laid by" to wait the blossom time and the swelling and the bursting of the balls, 'Kiah looked in vain for 'Ria's blue sun-bonneted head among the tangle of dewy morning glories in the field. The first week dragged away heavily, and his father's scolding at the mill over the scant pile of logs that told his task made it seem all the heavier. But Sunday afternoon came at length and found 'Kiah, attired in a freshly-washed shirt much too large and blue cottonade trousers much too short, sitting on the steps of the Tillys' rickety back gallery eating peaches with the boys, 'Ria's brothers, Ike and Mose and Pete. As for 'Kiah's self, she sat beside her mother on a little narrow, sagging bench under the water shelf feeling shy without her sun bonnet and her hoe. Between frequent dippings and frequent spittings that out the summer air with keen resonance in her effort to steer clear of the little chicken trough that sprawled in a soggy pool in the yard below, Mrs. Tilly kept conversation going, asking 'Kiah how his ma was, if she had put off many chickens and did the minks and hawks pester much up his way. Once during the afternoon 'Kiah ventured to peel a peach that seemed bigger and better than the rest and handed it, dripping and juicy, on the broad blade of his knife, to 'Ria.

"Don't you want this here one, 'Ria?" he asked, blushing all over his broad, freckled face.

"Don't keer of I do, 'Kiah," the girl had said, and she ate the peach tentatively, looking away off across the fields to the blue smirch of distant pine trees beyond.

Well, the next Sunday and the next found 'Kiah eating peaches with the boys on the Tillys' back gallery and so on for every Sunday thereafter till the fields were white and cotton picking commenced. Then, though he saw 'Ria every day and helped along mightily with his big hands in filling the long cotton sack that trailed behind her,

strapped to her frail shoulders, by that time had gotten used to going to see the boys on Sunday, and, during the fall and winter, would sit with them around the fire peeling sugar cane for 'Ria or shelling great handfuls of gobbers, that browned and parched amid the ashes on the wide hearth. Mrs. Tilly still manipulated the conversation between dips, having much ado to spit clear of the andirons into the bank of ashes that climbed up in the chimney corner.

Thus had passed the first year of 'Kiah's courtship, and in all the 20 of them that followed the gossips had been able to detect no difference. The only change had been, perhaps, that 'Kiah himself had grown bigger and broader and more shambling in his gait; the freckles on his face were hidden by the sandy beard that straggled over it like weeds in a neglected fence corner after the fall frosts, but nothing could hide the blush that mounted to his cheek the same now as it had done that first Sunday afternoon when he peeled the first peach for 'Ria. As for the girl herself, she had grown a little taller and a little more slender, perhaps; there was a shade more wishfulness in her blue eyes when she looked across the fields to the smirch of pine hills beyond; perhaps, sometimes, there was a touch of asperity in her voice when she said: "Don't keer of I do, 'Kiah," but that was about all.

Mrs. Tilly still dipped and talked and spat clear of the chicken trough or the dog irons as of yore. But of the "boys" Ike only was left. Mose and Pete had married and lived with their wives' people down the creek, and this, of course, had left more work for 'Ria to do, helping her mother indoors and Ikey out. Perhaps this last had something to do with 'Kiah's increased energy in log hauling, for, though the years went by, he was still at the same old boy's business.

The gossips, who always knew more than other people, said it was a downright shame that old man Burnet had never given 'Kiah a chance to do something for himself.

"The ol' man mought 'a give 'Kiah a strip er lan' an' a mule an' a cow an' sorter let the boy 'a' felt he had some chancet to start with a little scrap er sump-'nother to call his own. Hit's dog mean er ol' Burnet to keep the boy under like he done." This is what one of the most highly respected gossips had been heard to remark, whereupon another of the same ilk, though next in rank, had said:

"Leastwise, the ol' man mought 'a' up an' died at a decent age, fur he must be turned er 70, an' lef' 'Kiah his own man 'fo' all the pith o' youth is sapped outen them big, loose-jointed bones er his'n."

"Sometimes I gits out er all patience with 'Kiah 'a' not standin' up fur his own sef' mo; then I reckon tain't beholden er me to judge him when them as ought to ain't never gin' him no encouragement."

"That's so; we all know 'Kiah's a good boy, nain better in the settlement, and maybe so if 'Ria had 'a' been a little more demandin' of him, 'Kiah he'd 'a' been a little more respondin'." "T'ny rate, hit would have pestered me fourth Sunday after fourth Sunday these 20 years when church meetin' was over an' 'Kiah would come up an' ax 'Kiah ef so be as he mought g'long home with her, to hear the gals say in that same onexpectin' tone o' hern: "Don't keer of you do, 'Kiah."

"Yes'm that's so, but maybe 'Ria ain't lost nothin' by not bein' forward an' 'o' expectin'." Hit's wuth sump'n to a gal nowadays to keep her dignity, an' 'Ria cert'ly is proud. Pity some er the other younger ones wasn't er little less forward than what 'Kiah and 'Ria is."

"That's so, an' they do say that 'Kiah had the streek to stan' ag'in' his father one time."

"You don't say?"

"Yes'm. Seems 'ef the ol' man had a min' to hire a boy to drive the log wagon an' meant 'Kiah to stay 'round the mill an' run er the rip saws. But then an' thar 'Kiah made th' stan'." "Git who you please to he'p at the mill, pa," he says, "but as fur me, I drives the log wagon."

"You don't say?"

"Yes, but in course 'Kiah kep' to the log wagon 'case the road lay by the Tilly place an' he could contrivate to see 'Ria an' hip her out with the fiel' work."

It is true that the gossips further related that old man Burnet himself had said 'Kiah had refused to accept the elevation from log hauler to rip sawyer, because the boy "was too iog-gone lazy to drive ducks to water," but as it requires no effort even for a lazy man to drive ducks to water, and there is no similarity between that occupation and running a rip saw in the sole mill of a pretty good-sized settlement, it is possible that the gossips were right in their assumption of 'Kiah's reason for refusing the elevation. If he had nothing better to offer 'Ria than the daily help of his two big hands, at least that counted for something in the meager sum of her year's toil.

Well, in all the 20 years of its lagging process there had been in the neighborhood nothing more exciting for the gossips to talk over than 'Kiah's courtship. But suddenly a faint echo from the world outside became vibrant in the slack atmosphere of the little settlement. One little finger, as it were, of life and civilization seemed pointing toward the neighborhood, filling its inhabitants full of vague, apprehensive longings, that by and by the whole land would reach out and drag them and the little settlement out into the great world itself.

THE TOMATO IN ITALY.

Popular with All Classes in King Humbert's Realm. In every home and cottage in Italy the preserving of tomatoes is carried on. Terraces, balconies and even the flat roofs of the houses are covered with plates containing the deep red substance. After gathering, the tomatoes intended for preserving are spread out for some hours in the sun till the skin has somewhat shrunk. They are then passed through a sieve so that they may be freed both from seeds and skins. As they contain a large proportion of water, the substance which has been passed through the sieve must be hung in bags, from which the water exudes, and soon a pool of dirty-looking water is formed beneath each bag. Strange to say, it is in no way tinged with red. The mixture which still remains in the bags has the consistency of a very thick paste. It is then salted, the proportion being a little less than one ounce of salt to a pound of preserve. The process now requires that it shall be spread on flat plates, exposed to the sun, and stirred from time to time with a wooden spoon, so that the upper part may not form a crust while underneath it remains soft. It is a picturesque sight when the women are to be seen flitting about on the roofs and terraces, attending to the deep red preserve, their colored handkerchiefs flung on their heads to screen them from the rays of the burning sun when it is at its fiercest. In the evening the contents of the various plates are taken in and stirred up together, for if moistened by the night dew the whole would be spoiled. After being exposed to the sun for seven or eight days, the same process being repeated each day, the preserve is finished and placed in jars for winter use.

Though it is used by all classes of persons, it is more necessary to the poor than to the rich, for the latter can make use of the fresh tomatoes preserved in tins. Tomatoes may be tinned whole, as we know from those usually imported into England from America. But in Italy the fruit is usually passed through a sieve, the pulp then being placed in tins, which are immediately soldered down and then put in boiling water for five minutes. The cost of a small tin is half a franc, so it is as a rule beyond the means of the poor.—Chambers' Journal.

A DOG TRAVELER. Dachshund That Has Covered 40,000 Miles in Four Years. One of the most traveled dogs on record is Donnie II., a black-and-tan dachshund, which is exhibited in London. Donnie is the property of an officer in the English army, Capt. MacMahon, and in a life of a little more than four years, has traveled some 40,000 miles, 8,000 of them on horseback. He has traversed land and sea, crossed deserts and mountain ranges, and been, with his master, a participant in many deeds of endurance and adventure. Donnie was born September 18, 1892, in England, and when seven months old was sent to Capt. MacMahon in India by friends. The journey, first by sea, then by land, through Sind to Beluchistan, during a time of great heat, was the first test of the puppy's endurance. He stood it well, and soon began his journeys on horseback, a mode of traveling to which he seemed to take naturally. He accompanied his master on long riding tours through Zhoob and other parts of Beluchistan to Simla, and from Peshawar to Cabul.

In the spring of 1894 Capt. MacMahon was appointed British commissioner of the Beluch-Afghan boundary commission and took Donnie with him through the Gomal valley to the Afghan frontier. Here dog and master remained for more than a year, enduring together extremes of heat and cold, hardship and privation. Then came another horseback journey through India and a voyage from Bombay to England. Later a return to India again and a journey through the southern part of the country, something of a pleasure trip this time, Capt. MacMahon being on the staff of the viceroy. This was followed by more travels and hardships in the wilds of Afghanistan and a trip to the Persian boundary. Dog and master are now both in England.

Donnie is a most expert equestrian. With his hindquarters against his master's thigh, and occasionally leaning against his body for support, he rides without even a steady hand. The horse may walk, trot, canter or gallop, but the dog is not disturbed. He even maintains a perfect equanimity during a reasonably difficult jump.—Chicago Tribune.

Cabinet Ages. At the beginning of President Cleveland's second administration the ages of the members of his cabinet were as follows: Gresham, 61; Carlisle, 58; Herbert, 59; Lamont, 42; Bissell, 46; Olney, 58; Smith, 38; Morten, 61. Aggregate, 423; average, not quite 52. The ages of the members of Mr. McKinley's cabinet are as follows: Sherman, 74; Gage, 61; Long, 59; Alger, 61; Gary, 64; McCool, 52; McKenna, 54; Wilson, 62. Aggregate, 487; average, not quite 61. At the beginning of the McKinley administration the head of but one department will be a younger man than was his predecessor at the beginning of the present administration—the department of justice. Mr. McCook is the only member of the McKinley cabinet who is younger than Mr. McKinley himself.—Buffalo Courier.

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