

THE OLD MAID AND JONES.

The old maid, as I was going to say,
Still wore her hair in curls,
And generally looked about as pert
As any of the girls.

She couldn't bear the days of her youth
Should be brought back to mind,
But she had about the average tongue
Of all the rest of her kind.

She looked on flowers as silly things,
That took a heap of care;
But Canada thistles, that others hate,
Were growing everywhere.

She had a dog, an' I recollect
He chewed my leg one day;
And every man that knew the case
Stopped half a mile away.

Her old gray cat judged all the points
Where the old maid wasn't sure,
An' poked her nose in all the milk,
Ter see if it was pure.

But this old maid an' all her plans
Were soon turned upside down,
An' the spirit of wisdom I'm talkin' of
Went in to play'n' clown.

For the thistles what grew about her yard
Went over to Jones's farm,
And the neighbors were quick as neighbors are,
To give old Jones the alarm.

Well, Jones was an old maid too, so I know,
And he loved to have his say,
And there wasn't dogs enough in the land
To keep old Jones away.

A suit was entered in the court,
Ter give old Jones his right,
An' the old maid to show how she hated him
Was tearin' for the fight.

Now 'tis often in history
We read of an affair
Where a suit that goes to the higher courts
Come back to the country square.

An' 'tis often in any suit
That a fellow runs across
That you can see the one gets beat
An' t'other one pays the cost.

But so it was with Jones's suit,
An', the old maid didn't object,
But just the particulars of the case
I don't quite recollect.

An' maybe I never exactly knew
Just how it come about,
But that ere law suit worried along,
And somehow didn't pan out.

An' even the old gray cat o' hers
I was tellin' of before,
Began to mew and wave her tail
An' put round Jones's door.

An' now the old dog lost his bark,
An' kinder learned to wail,
For two big young ones pull his ears
An' another yanks his tail.

Well, I hadn't orte to tell'n' this,
For tain't no business o' mine,
But somehow rather, after all,
We was glad to see 'me fine.

Well, Squire, I don't much care if I
Set up an' pick a bone,
It's got so late I reckon that Jim
H'll have the milkin' done.

CRYING WOLF.

One hundred years ago there lived on the shores of Stephens river (a small stream emptying into Casco bay), a man named Peter Joliff, an honest, upright fellow, with one abominable habit, that won many enemies and caused much discomfort and even suffering to those around him. This fault was an almost irresistible fondness for practical joking that would not allow him to let an opportunity pass unimproved wherein he could gratify the special passion of his being.

There came a time, however, when the exercise of his peculiarity brought upon him an ordeal so sharp that it cured his unfortunate propensity, to the great joy of his family and friends. The process was disagreeable, but the cure was eternal and permanent.

One day Peter had been at work a few miles from his home. After his day's labor was finished his employer invited him to partake of an evening meal with him; this invitation Peter accepted, and then his system fortified by a hearty supper, he commenced his journey homeward.

The path which Peter trod that night would lead one today through cultivated fields and by many pleasant farm-houses, but then it was an unbroken forest.

It was a dark, cold December night. The wind swept fearfully among the great pines and beeches; strange, meaning sounds went sobbing through the forest; now and then an owl uttered its hoarse cry, or the sudden rattling of the dead leaves told when some timid animal scurried away at the sound of footsteps.

But Peter was strong, stout-hearted, and trudged quietly along, without paying much attention to the signs and sounds around him, until he had achieved, perhaps, one-half of his journey, when suddenly his ears caught the sound of horses' feet descending the long, rocky path behind him. Gradually the sounds drew nearer, until the sharp, peculiar voice of the horseman could be heard urging the beast to a faster gait.

"Ah, ah," said Peter to himself, as he heard the familiar tones, "that is Uncle Tom Barry."

Now Uncle Tom and Peter were neighbors—this is to say, their clearings lay about a mile apart; and none knew better than Peter that the old man was naturally of a timid disposition; and furthermore, that nothing inspired him with a greater fear, nothing which he would rather meet than a wolf. No sooner, therefore, had Peter become convinced that the horseman behind

was his neighbor than he resolved to use his knowledge of Uncle Tom's failing as the means of working out what he considered would be a capital joke. His plans were soon laid, and he proceeded to put them into execution. Creeping through the undergrowth which bordered his path, he crouched down and patiently awaited the approach of his victim. He had not waited long before Uncle Tom, his horse at a sharp trot and himself casting timid glances around, arrived opposite his place of concealment. Peter allowed him to pass a few paces, and then springing forward on his hands and knees, he uttered one or two snarling yelps, instantly followed by the loud, clear gathering cry of the wolves.

The effect upon Uncle Tom was electrical. Springing half way out of his saddle, he uttered a scream of terror, and then stooping until his head nearly touched the mane, he plunged the spurs into the horse's flank, and was off like a shot. As for Peter, he rolled over on his back, and kicked his heels in huge enjoyment at his success. Loud and long he laughed, occasionally varying the performance by making the forest ring with a repetition of the wild, savage cry that had struck such terror into Uncle Tom's timid heart. But there is an end to all things, and so after awhile there was an end to Peter's mirth, and he, wiping his eyes, regained the path, and was about to resume his journey, when he heard a sound that sent cold shivers coursing over his body, and almost froze the blood in his veins. The wolves had heard this successful imitation of their music, and were coming down full cry upon him.

In an instant he realized his position and peril. From the sounds he knew that the wolves were coming down on either side of the path he had just traveled, and, therefore, the nearest point of safety was his own clearing, more than a mile away.

All this passed through his mind like a flash, and then calling all his energies into play he dashed down the path with scarcely less speed and terror than had Uncle Tom Barry himself. Peter was a famous runner, and had come off victor in many a trial of speed when people had come together for a log-rolling, but this was no holiday game. He was not taxing his muscle to win the applause of admiring friends or to gratify an ambition to excel.

The race was for life. Down the long slope that led to Pili-kin's Hollow, and up the ascent beyond died Peter, while hardly a hundred yards behind came a yelping, snarling pack, hungry and fierce. The life of an unarmed man would not be worth a minute's purchase, could they once surround him. This Peter acknowledged to himself, as a thought entered his mind of standing on the defensive; so he abandoned the thought before it was fully formed, and brace! himself anew for flight.

Down another long slope, across a broad sheet of ice at its foot, and Leth-erbee's Hill, with its long, steep ascent, lay before him. He shuddered as he glanced up at its rugged side, for he felt that his strength would scarcely suffice to carry him to the top.

Still he kept on, though it seemed madness to hope, for his pursuers had gained upon him fearfully; he knew it by the beating of their footsteps, but with energies inspired by mortal terror he ran on, hoping only to gain the brow of the hill, for there the cabin became more open, and his own cabin was but a few yards beyond. He felt sure that his pursuers would not carry him beyond the summit; but could he reach it before they would close upon him?

No, not by his own exertions, for just as the thought passed through his mind his foot caught under a gnarled root that extended across the way, and he fell heavily forward, his head struck the frozen ground, and he lay senseless.

When Peter recovered consciousness he found himself hanging over the broad shoulders of his brother John, and about to enter his own door. Here he soon collected his scattered senses, and was able to listen intelligently to his brother's account of the rescue.

Uncle Tom Barry, in his flight, had stopped long enough to shout through the window that the wolves were out, and then hurried on. John, who lived with his brother, knowing that Peter must come the same path, took his gun and walked out to the edge of the forest, where he halted to listen. But a short time elapsed before he had heard the sound of the pursued and pursuers, and rushing down the hill, he arrived upon the scene just in time to leap between Peter's prostrate form and the wolves, the foremost of which was less than ten feet distant.

Taking steady aim, he sent a bullet into the creature's brain, and then, while the pack were fighting over the dead body of their comrade, he slung Peter on his back and gained open ground in safety.

Peter frankly told the whole truth about the affair from beginning to end, and concluded his story with the emphatic assertion that as long as he lived he would never be guilty of another practical joke—a vow which he kept faithfully to the end of his life.

There may be just as good fish in the sea as ever were caught, but this is mighty poor consolation for the man who doesn't get a bite in half a day.

JOSHUA SIMS' SERMON.

Sunday night we had the pleasure of hearing, in the country, an African preacher of the old style. What his subject was it is hard to say, but the following is a part of what we caught:

An' there war a man'n hobben who they called Mr. Michael an' Mr. Michael was Cap'n of all the army, but bimely another man turns up. I don't recollect exactly, my brudders, but if my meun'ry serves me right, they called him Mr. Lucyfur. And Mr. Lucyfur brought his apostellates, and Mr. Michael brought his angels, and they foun', and Mr. Lucyfur pressed him hard, till Mr. Michael said: "Go up inter de third hebbin, lefenant, and tell de Lord to send me seben thunderbolts," and the lefenant went and brought 'em. Den Cap'n Michael flung de fass thunderbolt, and Mr. Lucyfur giv back, and he flung de secon' thunderbolt, and Mr. Lucyfur giv back, and he flung de third thunderbolt, and Mr. Lucyfur giv back, and he flung de fourth thunderbolt, and Mr. Lucyfur giv back, and he flung de fiff thunderbolt, and Mr. Lucyfur giv back, and he flung de six' thunderbolt, and it hit Mr. Lucyfur back on—what we call de banisters here, but dey calls em bat-lements in hebbin. Den Cap'n Michael flung de seventh thunderbolt, and Mr. Lucyfur went ober wild one las' shriek down to hee-l-l-l.

When the preacher reached the last word, he pitched his voice an octave higher than the sermon, and gave forth a shout that could have been heard half a mile.—Macon Telegraph and Messenger.

"MY EMPIRE."

"My empire," says Queen Victoria, in her speech announcing the dissolution of parliament.

"My empire," is the phrase by which Gen. Grant hopes one day to describe the United States of America.

Then Fred, the prince imperial, can indulge the wish he recently expressed in Mexico to put people who approach his august sire too irreverently in the guard house; and the lieutenant-general of the army of the United States can repeat his recent advice, more forcible than elegant, in regard to presumptuous subjects: "Tell them to go to hell."

TWO SIDES OF A HUSBAND.

Not long ago an elderly couple were walking. A lady on the opposite side of the street tripped and fell down. The old gentleman rushed across the street, raised his hat, and offered to assist her in every possible way. His wife followed him across at a slow pace, and witnessed his devotion to the stranger, she got mad and shook her fist at him.

"It's all right—it's all right," he whispered.

"Yes, I know it is," she hotly exclaimed, "ifere an unknown woman stubs her toe, and you plough across the street to eat her up with kindness. The other day, when I fell down stairs, you stood and laughed and chuckled, and tickled your ribs, and wanted to know if I was practicing for a circus."

A "sum" in arithmetic: If you can get one towel out of one yard of cloth, how many towels can you get out of two yards? The end man of the Georgia minstrels says it depends altogether on how many there are on the clothes-line.

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