

# The Port Tobacco Times

AND CHARLES COUNTY ADVERTISER.

PUBLISHED AT PORT TOBACCO, MARYLAND, EVERY FRIDAY MORNING, BY COX & DALLY, EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS, AT ONE DOLLAR PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

Established in 1844.

PORT TOBACCO, MARYLAND, NOVEMBER 6, 1885.

Volume XLII.—No. 21.



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## A Set of Story.

TOWN POOR.

They were both "town poor." She had been left in a basket at the gate of the institution. He had only come to it a year before her story opened, clinging to his dying mother's hand. She remembered nothing but the bare walls and desolate grounds of the old poorhouse; the scabbings and snappings of mutton and assistants; the sparse, comfortless meals; and the un- homely-like piece of that was the only home she knew. He had had glimpses of the world outside, and was, besides, two years older—that was not very old, for he was only ten.

It was to be bound out to a farmer; she to some good housekeeper, who would promise to teach her to read the Bible.

She was happier than he, for she was more ignorant, besides she had a doll! Such a doll! It was a thick lump of wood, about two feet long, with holes burnt into it for features, and looked somewhat like an Indian idol. Of course she never called it a doll; it was always her "chickid."

There was a knot hole in the wood on the left side of the male and female sides of the poor-house grounds. He peeped through one morning and saw a strange child sitting with her doll on a large stone.

"I say," said he, "come here."  
She went to the fence at once.  
"What's your name?"  
"Jane. What's yours?"  
"Tom. You live here?"  
"Yes. Do you?"  
"What's that you've got?"  
"My child. She isn't well to day."  
"Bother!"  
"Are there any more little girls in there?"  
"Yes; but one has a broken back and goes to bed all the time; and two are bigger than me and work. Are there any boys in there?"  
"Lots. I hate them all. They make fun of me."  
"Then I hate 'em, too," said she. He came closer to the fence.  
"Are you hungry all the time?" he asked.

"Yes. Every day before dinner she gives me a piece."  
"What was the matter, and a 'piece' was a slice of bread and butter."  
"Ah!" said he, "I'd like to see any of us ask for a piece. I'm most starved."  
"I'll tell you what I'll do. Next time I get my piece I'll give you half. You come here to-morrow to this hole and I'll fetch it."  
"Ain't you good!" said the boy, admiringly.

So the friendship began. Every day the thick slice of bread and butter was shared at the knot hole. It was a good thing for Tom. As for Jane it was at the knot hole that she learned how unhappy it was to be a poor-house child; learned that other little people had a pleasant freedom un- known to her. He had lived in the outer world, had Tom. When? He only knew that it was before his father went to the war and was shot and before his mother died. Long sedi- tions talks did those two boys con- cerning the authorities of the poor- house. One Tom came to the knot- hole with a great red bruise on his face, where he had been struck with a tattle.

"Lots more on my shoulders," said he. "Jane, when I am big I'll beat that man—beat him till the blood runs. I hate him!"  
That day Jane went compassionate- ly and gave Tom all her "piece," pretending she had "outlet allowance." Moreover, she struck the "chickid" through the hole and told Tom to kiss it. "But neither bread and butter nor kindness could help Tom very much. He grew more and more wretched. He became a young blind man in the poorhouse. He was tormented by the small and bigged by the great. At last he came to the knot hole one day, and told Jane that he was going away.

"Of course I shall bring the child?" "Oh, yes," said Tom, "and bring all of your clothes."  
Then they decided how they were to escape, where they were to meet, how Jane was to make bold to ask for an extra "piece" that day, pretending the dog had stolen hers, and how Tom was to hide half his dinner in his cap.

Then, as some summoning bell rang, they parted—Tom, bright and brisk with his new ambition, poor little Jane, limp with fear and remorse, but determined to follow Tom, whatever his fortunes might be.

At ten that night, Jane with a tear- swollen face, a little bundle of calico frock and red-fannel petticoat under her arm, and "the chickid" clasped to her heart, met Tom at the big tree outside the poorhouse fence. There was nothing to steal in the establish- ment; so, as no one ever wanted to get it, it was not very hard to get out.

Besides "the chickid" and the frock, Jane had her bread in a bit of news- paper and Tom had made quite a bun- dle of possessions. He had his little bag of corn and beans, a fire stove, a pair of old shoes and a long stick with a hook at the end, once the handle of an umbrella. On this he slung all their joint property, except the doll, and addressed Jane as follows:

"Remember, now, you are my wife, and must do exactly as I say—that's the law; and I must be good to you, and do all the hardest work; but you must cook and mend for me, and I think you'd better begin to call me husband right away."  
"Yes," sobbed Jane. "Oh, isn't it dark?"  
"No," said Tom; besides, if it is, all the better. We'll get into the woods before they catch us. We shall be out of town by daylight."

Then they walked on—poor Jane stumbling after, but Tom leading her hand and did not let her fall. At length the last little white house was passed; then came the church with its tall spire, and then long paling fences about bits of meadowland. They were in the country, but not yet in the woods, and both children were grow- ing very sleepy and very tired—so very tired that finally there was nothing for it but to sit down on the grass and have a haystack, with Tom's head on Jane's knee and go fast asleep.

Sunrise awakened them. They ate their bread and butter, started on a gain, and in a few hours the woods were all around them.

"We're safe at last," cried Tom. "Nobody can ever find us here. I'll build my house and plant my corn right away. Do you know how long it takes corn to grow? And beans?"  
"No," ventured Jane, doubtfully. "not long, I guess."  
"I guess not," echoed Tom; "but I wish we had some more bread and butter."  
By and by the two explorers came to a nice little spot in the woods close to a pretty brook. It was very damp, but there was a clearing which was easy to plant. Tom dug it over with his fire shovel, and put his beans and corn in straight rows. Then, with an old knife that was his greatest treas- ure, he cut underbrush and branches enough to make a queer kind of leafy but big enough for both to creep into.

"We can eat outdoors. We shall only want a home at nights and when it rains," said Tom.

But Jane was doubtful. Her little head was black and blue already, and her face, where she had been struck with a tattle, was very sore. Besides she wanted her warm milk and bread and butter. Tom found some huckle- berries near by, but they did not help the empty stomachs much, and even at sunset the corn had not begun to grow, neither did the beans show their heads above the earth. So the grassy an- dal thought struck little Jane.

"When it grows, Tom," she cried, "we have no saucepan to cook it in."  
"More we haven't," said Tom. Then he hoped dawn upon him. "We could roast the corn," said he, "and I bet there's an apple tree about some- where."

They wandered about looking for the tree or for more berries of some kind. The tree did not appear, but at last they found some berries—just one or two at a time—and the poor chil- dren had nothing else to eat. Hungry Tom could have devoured his own shoes. Meek Jane, before she lay down on the hard wet damp ground, asked just one question:

"Do you think the beans will grow to-night, Tom?"  
"I told you they would," said Tom, then added, graciously, "Yes, Ma." I suppose they will."

"Yes, ma'am," said Jane, "but he's sick. I don't know what ails him. He shivered, and then he was hot, and he seems so strange. And our farm didn't come up—I mean the corn and the beans—and it rained yesterday and came through the house and wet- ted us all over. Oh, please come and see what is the matter with my hus- band!"

"Lord preserve us!" cried the good old lady; "is that child crazy? Come, Peter, let's see what she means."  
"Wherever they come from we must take them home to-night," said Mrs. Morton. "Poor babies! You carry the boy, Peter; I'll fetch the little gal."

Jane looked up thankfully into the old lady's face, and said: "Wait, till I get 'the chickid,' please!"  
"The chickid!" cried Mrs. Morton. "Land sakes!"  
Then Jane dived into her hut, and brought forth her doll, with its yellow robe and scorched face, at sight of which the old lady laughed so heart- ily that she had much ado to get into the gig again.

The children were very comfortably housed that day, and the whole truth was coaxed from them at last, but no one had the heart to return them to the poorhouse. Jane stayed with Mrs. Morton to be brought up as "help," and Tom was apprenticed to a carpenter. The innocent little family was broken up, and "the chickid" carefully treasured in Jane's trunk—for soon she had a trunk of her own and clothes to fill it—was only a memento of the past.

So the years glided on. Jane grew a tall, slim girl; Tom, a big, brown young man. There was no sign of being "town poor" about either of them. They were wholesome, well-fed, bright young people as you would wish to see. But one Saturday afternoon Jane, washing the dishes beside the kitchen window, looking up saw Tom gazing at her, and blushed a rosy red—which certainly was odd in a wife of so many years' standing.

"Come to ask you to walk a little, if you will," said Tom.

Jane promised to come as soon as "the chores" were done; and this im- portant act being duly accomplished, put on her round hat and a clean white apron, joined Tom, and the two, saying very little, sauntered down into the woods and along the wagon path to the edge of the little brook that with all the changes that had come to them sobbed and gurgled just as it did long ago.

"Remember this place?"  
"Yes," said Jane, shyly.  
"And how when we were 'town poor' we ran away and thought we were married and had our house and farm?"  
"Yes," more shyly than before.

"It's a long time ago," said Tom. "But this place doesn't alter much; seems just the same. You haven't altered either Jane. You were very, very sweet then."  
"Answer."  
"Jane," said Tom, "I'm going to have another little house, somewhat bigger than we built then—not much—and a little garden where our beans will grow. Will you run away with me again, Jane, and call me 'husband' for good? I'll try to make you more comfortable than I did then, my dear."  
There was a hand laid softly on the young girl's shoulder and Tom look- ed down into the blushing face. Sud- denly the tender eyes were lifted and their lips met.

"Land sakes!" exclaimed good Mrs. Morton, wiping her eyes as she kissed the girl, who had become as a daughter to her. "I bet you're a real man and wife after all!"

railroad and president of the Lexing- ton and Big Sandy road.

Although in the convention that met before the war General W. C. Wickham, now vice president of the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad, voted against secession, he galloped the first troop of horse into Capitol Square and tendered his sword to the State and Confederacy. He commanded a brigade through the war, and although his home was within the lines he did not cross its threshold but twice, and was each time carried in wounded.— When he surrendered with Lee at Appomattox he disowned the Confed- erate leaders and, returning home, built the first school-house for colored children in the South. He became the leader of the Republican party in Virginia and did much to make it respectable. He was driven out of the party by Mahone and is now support- ing Fitzhugh Lee for Governor.

Dark as an Indian and straight as an arrow, standing over six feet four inches, General R. Lindsey Walker has not changed much. He has re- cently gone to Texas as superintendent of construction of the State House at Austin.

Gen. Taliaferro, who commanded the Virginia militia at the time of the John Brown trouble, is still an active man, over six feet high and attends his large estates, near Gloucester Point, Virginia, bordering on the Chesapeake bay.

One of Mahone's fast friends is Gen. W. D. Groner, now living at Norfolk and occupying the position of pres- ident of the National Express Com- pany.

Physically Mahome weighs 150 as than 90 pounds. He was an engineer when the war broke out, and rapidly rose to position. He had command of the defenses of Petersburg and distinguish- ed himself in the battle of the Crater. Lee singled him out of all the generals to accompany and stand by him at the time of the surrender.

General Beauregard continues to act as counsel and promoter of the Louis- iana State lottery.

It is curious that General Custis Lee, though grandson of Mrs. Custis, bears a most marked and striking re- semblance to the pictures of Wash- ington.

General Hooker, who lost an arm at Vicksburg, is now practicing law in Mississippi and is the closest personal friend of Jefferson Davis. During the war he was at the Virginia War- ren Springs.

General Walker, who commanded the Stonewall Brigade after Jackson's death, is now over 60 years of age. He is a practicing lawyer in Virginia, and has been lieutenant governor of the State.

Ex-Lieutenant Governor and Gen- eral Robert Withers, of Virginia, is six feet and stout and gray, and is an active lawyer, with good practice.

**A Headless Ghost.**  
The region of Cream Ridge, Burling- ton county, N. J., so a New York *Sun* correspondent says, has in process of production a ghost story which is a modern improvement. A few nights ago a party of four persons driving along a country road near Ellisdale saw the figure of a man standing by the roadside ahead of them, motion- less. It neither moved nor spoke as they passed it, and each noticed that it was headless. The negro driver lashed his horse into a gallop. The others looked, but there was nothing to be seen on the spot where the head- less man had been standing. All agreed that the figure had on a white shirt and red suspenders, and was without a head. It was seen distinct- ly in the moonlight.

Hard-headed farmers laughed at the ghost idea, and say that figure was either a scare-crow set up by boys or a tramp who had temporarily removed his head to rest his shoulders. Half a dozen negro farm hands, however, have already succeeded in remember- ing that they have met the same head- less phantom in lonely roads and dark corners of the woods recently, and as soon as somebody can think of a murder to fit, an elaborate and highly orna- mented story will be ready for publica- tion.

The interest over the headless phan- tom of Ellisdale has revived a story of a few years ago, when two respectable citizens, driving a young colt along a narrow road with a steep embankment on either side, saw another horse and buggy coming towards them at a ter- rific gait. To avoid a collision they swung out lustily to the approaching driver, and just as he had almost met them, his horse turned sharply, dashed up the bank, and disappeared. The gentlemen stopped, and, getting out, went up the bank to apologize to the other driver, but scuttled down again and drove off at a gallop when they found the bank crowned to the very edge with a thick growth of pines, into with a horse could by no means have penetrated. It was a case of Flying Dutchman on wheels. They endeavored to keep the story quiet, but it leaked out, and several other persons testified to having seen the same mysterious vehicle disappear be- fore their eyes, on roads in the same vicinity, just as it was about to run into them. A man, driving along near there several years before, it was said, had been shot from an ambush.

Cleopatra's needle is in such a state that unless it has a coat of something it will fall to pieces. This is quite the reverse of ordinary affairs. It is gen- erally the coat that wants the needle. Married men will understand this without the aid of a map.

If you wish to lay up something for a rainy day steal an umbrella.