

THE FREE CITIZEN.

W. A. WEBSTER, Editor and Proprietor.

A Weekly Paper Devoted to Temperance, Literature and Politics.

VOLUME I.

ORANGEBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA, SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 1875.

NUMBER 35.

THE BALL.

They sat and talked in beautiful hall,
Their long, bright tresses one by one,
As they laughed and talked in their chamber there,
After the revel was done.

Idly they talked of waltz and quadrille,
Till they laughed, like other girls,
Who over the fire, when all is still,
Comb out their brains and curls.

Robes of satin and Brussels lace,
Knots of flowers, and ribbons too,
Scattered about in every place,
After the revel is through.

And Maud and Madge, in robes of white,
The prettiest night-gowns under the sun,
Stockings, slipperless, sit in the night,
After the revel is done.

But about their beautiful hair,
Those wonderful waves of brown and gold,
Till the fire is out in the chamber there,
And the little bare feet are cold.

When out of the gathering winter chill,
And out of the bitter St. Agnes weather,
While the fire is out and the house is still,
Maud and Madge together—

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ly. Charlie came in while we were talking.

"Katie ill?" he said, with a shadow on his brow. "Is it anything serious, uncle?"

"What business had he to take any special interest in Katie,"

"Only a headache," I answered, coldly. "She is subject to such attacks. Bring in the tea, Bridget."

"We shall have a lonesome evening," Charlie sighed.

I half believed that he was in love with the girl himself.

It was cheerless, though, without Katie. I missed her bright face behind the tea-tray, Charlie left his cup untasted. My jealousy was aroused, and I watched him keenly.

As soon as we were alone, I said, half angrily, "What is the matter, Charlie? You look as if you hadn't a friend on earth. I didn't know before that you liked Katie so well."

The crimson leaped up to his very brow.

"I am glad that you do," I continued, hastily, "for you will soon be connected by ties of relationship. She has promised to be my wife."

"You are jesting, uncle!" he said, doubtfully.

"I was never more serious in my life," I answered.

Charlie showed evident signs of agitation.

"You have no right to sacrifice that young girl," he said, bitterly. "You are old enough to be her father. Of course she accepted you from gratitude. How dare you think of such a thing?"

"No wonder that you rave," I replied, with a mocking smile; "you are disappointed of your inheritance."

At that moment the wind gave a fearful shriek outside, and I thought of Anastasia.

"Are you not afraid to marry again?" Charlie inquired, maliciously. "You remember the warning?"

"Nonsense!" I answered; "it will take something more than a ghost to frighten me out of this marriage."

I had scarcely finished speaking, when there came a gust of wind, and a crashing of glass, and the storm actually swept into the room. We glanced around us in dismay. The boughs of a large elm tree, that stood in front of the house, had fallen against the window.

Charlie gave me a peculiar look as I covered over the fire, and then barred the window in such a manner as to keep out the air. A strange gloom enveloped us both, and we did not return again to the subject we had been discussing. Our conversation was fitful, and it seemed a relief when we separated at bed-time.

There is no use in denying that I was troubled a little with superstitious fears. I peered round anxiously into every corner of the room before retiring, but found no sign of any mysterious visitant. I had such a fear of the darkness, however, that I left the candle burning.

The fury of the storm had not abated, and I lay awake some time listening to the wind. At last, however, I fell into an uneasy slumber. How long I had slept I know not, when I was awakened by an icy touch upon my forehead.

I started up, with a thrill of apprehension. The light emitted a faint, sepulchral gleam. Oh, horror! what was that I saw? A figure, robed in white, came gliding toward me from the foot of the bed. The face was hidden from my view, but I knew from the form that it was the ghost of Anastasia.

"William Raymond," came in a hoarse voice from the figure; "I am here to avenge your infidelity, and to drag you down to the grave in my embrace."

I shrieked with terror as I felt her clutch my throat, and cried, faintly, "Mercy! mercy!"

"You would marry Katie Nelson, would you? whispered the ghost, mockingly. "If you do not wish to die"—and here the icy fingers pressed so tight that I gasped for breath—"promise me that you will not take a second wife."

"Oh, I promise! I promise!" said I, half dead with terror.

"Wee be unto you, if you deceive me!" answered the ghost solemnly. And I heard no more.

It was some time, however, before I ventured to cast a timid glance around the room. The ghost had disappeared. The storm, too, was beginning to subside; but I could not go to sleep again, for I found it impossible to forget that phantom and its deadly clutch upon my throat. I resolved to say nothing about it. Of course, people would ridicule the idea of a ghost. Nevertheless, I did not dare to wed Katie Nelson; yet how could I explain this sudden change of purpose? I fervently hoped that she would not die of a broken heart, the poor child! What should I say to her?

After considerable reflection, I resolved to trust this delicate affair to Charlie. The proposed marriage was so odious in his eyes that I knew he would justify my apparent treachery to her, if possible.

Morning came, and I arose in a feverish state of mind. How I dreaded to meet Katie at the breakfast table! but, fortunately, she did not make her appearance. Charlie looked so troubled that I almost fancied he, too, had seen the ghost.

After breakfast, I said to him, with an embarrassment that I strove to hide, "My dear boy, do you remember what we were talking about last evening? I have been thinking over the matter seriously, and am afraid that a marriage between Katie and myself will result in unhappiness; but I have not the cour-

age to brave her reproaches. Now, Charlie, will you act as mediator, and make known this change in my views?"

"Why, uncle," he answered, and I was almost sure that I saw a gleam of mischief in his eyes, "something extraordinary must have happened. You are not usually so fickle!"

"We won't discuss the matter," said I, in an irritated tone. "Will you, or will you not, grant my request?"

"Of course, I will," he replied; "but it is a difficult task. The poor child will be so disappointed!"

I detected a joyous ring in his voice, and I looked at him rather suspiciously.

His diplomatic mission was successful, however. Late in the afternoon, Katie came down into the library where I was sitting. I had never seen her look prettier.

"Oh, Mr. Raymond!" she said, eagerly, "I am so glad that you have changed your mind! It was so unexpected yesterday. I never dreamed before that you loved me in any other way than as a daughter."

Was this acting? Was she trying to deceive me in her sweet unselfishness? "Then you never loved me?" I asked.

"Dear Mr. Raymond, you know better," she answered; "only it was not exactly the kind of love one ought to feel toward a husband. You are as dear to me as if you were my own father; but you are so much older than I, that—"

She hesitated, and did not finish her sentence. I remembered my gray hairs with a pang of mortified vanity. Was not the ghostly visit enough? Must I be tortured in this manner afterward?

The veil was torn away from the delusion I had cherished. Alas! I had misinterpreted her childish affection. It might be that she loved another. I looked down into the face where a vivid scarlet glowed, and read her secret.

"My dear child," I exclaimed, attempting to control my agitation, "tell me everything."

"Oh, Mr. Raymond," she answered in confusion, "Charlie has asked me to be his wife."

The rascal! No wonder that he remained with her such a long time that morning; no wonder that he boasted of the satisfactory manner in which everything had been explained.

"The impudent fellow!" I muttered, impatiently. "What did you answer, child? Do you love him?"

Low and soft the answer came:—"Yes."

The heart of a woman is a mystery that I cannot fathom. I was certainly outwitted by my nephew. He might have been afraid, however, that my conscience would reproach me if Katie showed her disappointment. I have little doubt that she loved me far better than she would confess.

Ah, well! they were married in due time, and we are all living together. The dear children do everything they can to add to my happiness.

Katie is still a beautiful woman, and Charlie is the staff of my old age.

I never saw the ghost again. In fact, I have good reason to think that the mysterious visitant was a certain graceless nephew of mine, who had fallen in love with Katie. Of course I forgave the deception long ago, as it saved me from a terrible mistake.

I am much happier, probably, than if I had married the young girl whose heart belonged to another. I am not certain, however, that she did not accept Charlie from pique at my rejection. Any way, he has made her a good husband.

The Art of Listening to Music.

A writer in Scribner's says: "There is no greater delusion than that of supposing that the best music can be enjoyed only by the 'musical.' Ordinary people can derive pleasure from a sympathetic listening to great music if they will but believe that they can, and so attend to it accordingly. There is no need of being baffled by a want of knowledge concerning keys; nor by an ignorance of modulation. Your next neighbor may know that the air began in G major, and then passed into B minor, but you can get your own simple pleasure out of it. What is it to me what Titan's secret of color might have been? He had it, and that is enough for one who cannot even draw. The first rule in listening to music is—to listen. We do not want to arouse ourselves to a fey of delight, but we do want to hear what the music is like. A very simple and very good rule for those who are perplexed by an orchestra, and who fancy they are puzzled to know where the tune comes in, is to listen to one instrument, the violins, for instance, alone for a time. These will probably take up the melody and sing it plainly enough, then the movement may become more complicated, and the air seems to have grown more florid, to be broken perhaps into brilliant fragments, but hearken!—the violoncelli have taken it up, and over it floats this new and lovely strain of violins, then the flutes catch the melody, the cornets and the bassoon swell the harmony, the drum makes it rhythmic beats, the whole orchestra is alive with the theme, and before you know it you are in the very center of the music, and what was before involved and intricate now becomes plain and beautiful."

"How is your church getting on?" asked a friend of a rigorous Scotchman, who had separated in turn from the Kirk, the Free Church, the United Presbyterian and several lesser bodies.

"Pretty well, pretty well. There's nobody belongs to it now but my brother and myself, and I'm nae afe of Sandy's soundness."

FROST-BITTEN.

BY GEORGE A. BAKER, JR.

We were riding home from the Carroll's ball, Nelly Sansargent and I, you know; The white frosts fluttered about our lamps, And our steeds rolled silently through the snow.

We'd danced together the evening through, For Bernstein's violin had "played their best," Her fair head drooped, her lids were low, And her dreamy eyes were full of rest.

Her white arms nestled along her lap, Her hands half holding with weary grace Her fading violets—passing sweet Was the far-off look on her fair young face.

I watched her, speaking never a word, For I would not wake those dreaming eyes; But the breath of the violets filled the air, And my thoughts were many and far from wide.

At last, I said to her, bending near, "Ah, Nelly Sansargent, sweet 'twould be To ride together our whole lives long, Low as the violets, you and me."

Her fair face flushed, and her sweet eyes fell; Low as the violets, you and me, she said, Her answer came to me—"Yes—perhaps; But who would settle our carriage bills?"

The delicate blossoms breathed their last; Our wheels rolled hard on the stones just then, Where the snow had drifted; the subject dropped, And has never been taken up again.

Syrian Sponges.

The latest project before the acclimatization society of Paris is the cultivation of the celebrated Syrian sponge in the waters of southern France, a valuable and most useful product, which, like many another gift of the sea, is in danger of extermination through excessive fishing.

The sponge-producing grounds of Syria occur along the coast, from Mount Carmel in the south to Alexandretta in the north, the centers of production being Tripoli, Raad, Latakia, and Bartroun, on the coast of Mount Lebanon. The best quantities are found in the neighborhood of Tripoli and Bartroun.

According to a late report of the British vice-consul at Beyrout, as many as three hundred boats are engaged in the fishery; the annual yield, though falling off through the exhaustion of the grounds, still amounts to \$100,000 to \$125,000. The majority of the boats used are ordinary fishing boats, from eighteen to thirty feet in length, three parts decked over, and carrying one mast with an ordinary lug sail. They are manned by a crew of four or five men, one to haul and the rest to serve as divers.

In former years the coast was much frequented by Greek divers from the islands of the Archipelago; the number is now restricted to five or six boats a year. The skill of the Syrian combined with his better knowledge of the fishing grounds, enabling him to compete successfully with his foreign rival.

Diving is practiced from a very early age up to forty years after which few are able to continue the pursuit profitably. The depth to which the diver descends varies from five to thirty "brasses," or from twenty-five to one hundred, and seventy-five feet. The time he is able to spend under water depends on natural capacity, age, and training; sixty seconds time is reckoned good work—in rare instances eighty seconds are spent under water. The Syrian diver uses a heavy stone to carry him quickly to the bottom, and is drawn up by a comrade. On the bottom, he holds the guide rope with one hand and tears off the sponges with the other, placing them in a net which he carries. No knife, spear or instrument of any kind is used in detaching the sponges; nor does he, like his Greek competitor, ever use the diving dress, having an antipathy to it on the score of its reputed tendency to produce paralysis of the limbs. Two or three fatal accidents occur annually, mainly among the skillful and daring, who sometimes drop the rope to secure a tempting prize, and missing it on their return, attempt to rise to the surface unaided, and are drowned. At other times the diver will be wounded by jagged rocks, or his ropes will become entangled, exposing him to great risks where the depth is great.

It is possible that this high-priced and durable variety of sponge might be cultivated in our southern waters, as a substitute for the beautiful but tender sponge they now yield. The experiment is worth trying.

Tobacco in Connecticut.

At a recent meeting of the Connecticut Valley Agricultural Institute, Prof. Stockbridge is reported, in the New England Homestead, as saying that there was about forty million dollars' worth grown in the United States, in the following order: 1, Virginia; 2, North Carolina; 3, Maryland; 4, Kentucky; 5, Mississippi; 6, Connecticut; 7, Massachusetts, etc. The analysis of tobacco shows it to be a narcotic poison. No other plant is like it in composition. In a small quantity it is a stimulant, in large quantities a deadly poison. It is a rapid grower, and draws from the soil more than any other plant. Clover takes from the mineral element of the soil ten per cent., tobacco twenty per cent., or one ton of tobacco exhausts 400 pounds of mineral substances for every acre. The Connecticut seed-leaf tobacco has a peculiarity, in contradistinction to any other in its fineness and thinness of leaf and texture, and lightness of color. Tobacco is made by its soil. It cannot be heavy clay, heavy loam or alluvial soil. Must be fine, sandy land, having absorbent power, and retaining heat through the night. Taking this poor soil a large quantity of manure must be used. The land is the machine for raising tobacco, and it must be fertilized and not allowed to deteriorate a particle. Tobacco is so exhaustive that no farmer or farm can make it an exclusive crop. Stock must be fed for the manure, and the streams of grain which flow in from the west are to be taken advantage of.

Prof. Stockbridge said if tobacco raising was managed on business prin-

iples, with economy, it is the best business a man can engage in, in the Connecticut valley. There will always be a market for all that will be grown. The reason of the present depression of the business is because the quality has much deteriorated, and this is accounted for in part by not using the right kind of fertilizers, but mainly in the future to ripen and cure it. Tobacco properly cured should be ripened just as much as any other plant we grow, and the modern method of planting it too near together has caused serious evil, and is the great source of pole-sawt. In planting so close together all except the upper leaves are shaded, and the juices of the leaf are not properly elaborated. To make a fine leaf, and to develop the oils and acids of the plant, we must expose it to the direct rays of the sun.

The curing process is defective; by the slow gradual process, much of the essential narcotic oil is lost. Prof. Stockbridge referred to a new system adopted largely in Maryland and Virginia, to cure tobacco by an artificial heat with a furnace constructed for that purpose. And it could be done thoroughly in seven days, first making the heat temperature to eighty degrees, and the course of five or six days increasing to 130 degrees. This artificial curing retains all the virtue of the tobacco, in fact, increases its essential oils.—Rural New Yorker.

Early Marriages.

Discussion in the British house of commons on the subject brought out information as to the earliest ages at which marriage may be legally solemnized in each of the states of continental Europe. In Austria it is 14 for both sexes; Hungary, 14 for males, 12 for females; Russia, 18 for males, 16 for females; Turkey, as soon as they are able; Italy, 18 for males, 15 for females; Prussia 18 and 14; France and Belgium, 18 and 15; Denmark 20 and 16; Greece, 18 and 12. In Hesse Darmstadt and Baden the consent of parents is necessary in the case of men until they have completed their 25th year; in that of women until they are 21. The completion of 18 years by males and 16 by females is necessary in the Netherlands, and in Saxe-Coburg-Gotha no male is permitted to marry before he has attained his 21st year. In Saxony the legal age for males is 18; for females 16 years. According to the amended paragraph of the new German civil marriage bill the ages would be respectively 20 and 16 years, instead of 18 and 14, as in the draft bill. In some of the cantons of Switzerland the law as to the ages of the contracting parties is as high as 20 years for males and 17 for females, and in others as low as 14 for males and 12 for females.

APPREHENSIONS OF DROUGHT.—Says the Sugar Planter: Our planting friends have serious fears of a long drouth so soon as the present rains pass away, and with some show of reason. As we have stated in previous issues of this paper, the rains have been almost incessant since December last, giving our farmers and planters but little opportunity to get their fields in order for cultivation. Now, it seems to follow, as a rule, that long rainy spells produce drouths of an almost equal duration, and should the rule hold good in the present instance, it would be wise to make preparations to meet it. While every one will use his own judgment in the premises, we desire to offer one word of advice, and that is to plant as deep as possible and hill up well when the shoots are above ground the proper height. Plenty of soil around young plants hold the moisture, and should the anticipations of a drouth be not realized, a little labor will remove any superfluous soil from cane, cotton and corn.

HOME LIFE.—It is the fashion of restless and ambitious women to despise home-life as too tame, too narrow, too uneventful for them. They long for a wider arena, set well in the view of the world, whereon to display their gifts or their acquirements; and they think this claustral home, this unexciting family of which they form a part, unworthy of their efforts. And yet in reality the art of living well at home, and making the family life a success, is just as great in its way, if not so important in its apparent—but only apparent—results, as the finest shades of diplomacy and the largest transactions of business. All sorts of talents, both moral and intellectual, are wanted for the task; and it seems slightly irrational, to despise as futile qualities which so few of us are strong enough to possess, or to rate them as beneath the regard of high-minded people, when not one in a hundred has wit enough to employ them to a satisfactory issue.

YIELD A LITTLE.—It is better to yield a little than to quarrel a great deal. The habit of standing up, as people call it, for their (little) rights is one of the most disagreeable and undignified in the world. Life is too short for the perpetual bickerings which attend such a disposition; and unless a very momentous affair indeed, where other people's claims and interests are involved, it is a question if it is not wiser, happier and more prudent to yield somewhat of precious rights than squabble to maintain them. True wisdom is first pure, then peaceable and gentle.

"Herbert," said a perplexed mother, "Why is it that you're not a better boy?" "Well," said the little fellow, soberly, looking up into her face with his honest blue eyes, "I suppose the real reason is that I don't want to be!" "The child gave the real reason why all of us, big as well as little, are not better than we are.

FACTS AND FANCIES.

—Samuel Wilhelm, of Berks county, Pa., eight feet high, has applied for the situation of the late Irish giant.

—The woman who enacted the part of Katie King in the Holmes scenes in Philadelphia is studying for the stage.

—Careful observations have shown that the average temperature of the human body within the tropics is nearly one degree higher than in a temperate climate.

—In a fox-chase in England lately the Rev. C. W. Wilkinson broke his neck and Lady Florence Douglas smashed her collar-bone; but the fox was caught.

—Large apes of naturally intelligent breeds are put to good service in the straits settlements of the east. They are trained to climb the cocoanut palm trees, valuable for their fruit, which, ordinarily, is difficult to reach, and not only harvest the nuts but always select such as are ripe. They twist the nut round and round until it falls down from the stalk, and at each success testify their delight by jumps and chuckles. Apes so trained are hired out by their owners like so many field-hands.

—The coast line of the United States under the supervision of the Light-house board, including the northern lakes, is about 10,000 miles in extent, surpassing that of any other nation on the globe. The number of light-houses and lighted beacons along this coast line is 630; light-ships, 25; fog signals operated by steam or hot-air engines, 40; day or unlighted beacons, 350; total, 1,065, being one beacon for every 10 miles of coast. Besides this, there are 3,000 buoys in position to indicate banks, rocks, and other obstructions in channels of navigation.

—Take a man and pin three or four large tablecloths about him, fastened back with elastic and looped up with ribbons; drag all his own hair to the middle of his head and tie it tight, and hair-pin on about five pounds of other hair and a big bow of ribbon. Keep the front locks on pins all night and let them tickle his eyes all day; pinch his waist into a corset, and give him gloves a size too small, and shoes ditto, and a hat that will not stay on without a torturing elastic, and a frill to blind his chin, and a little lace veil to tickle his eyes whenever he goes outside, and he will know what woman's dress is.

—The thieves of Spain are gayly pursuing their mad career among pictures and statues. The celebrated cartoons of Goya at Madrid have gone after the Sevillo Murillo—which latter, indeed, has been recovered. The Virgin's crown in Saint Ferdinand's chapel at Seville has vanished. So has the "Master Dolorosa" of Alonso Gano at Granada. The latest exploit of these enterprising fellows has been: "implanting carried out at Madrid. Their booty is a small statue of the Virgin, most excellent of workmanship, and dating from the end of the sixteenth century. Its material is wood, gilt and painted. The thieves got it safely into Paris, where they borrowed a round sum upon it from MM. Andre and Mercuad, bankers. The Spanish legation has claimed the statue.

—The banishment of lepers is rigorously carried out in the Sandwich isles. There was a recent official search for persons affected with the incurable malady, many having been secreted by their relatives. Hundreds were found and put into a vessel for transportation to the leper village, to be kept until they die. Their families gathered in loud lamentations. A talented half-breed, called Bill Ragsdale, has long held a high place in the regard of Sandwich Islanders. He is an orator of great natural power, and leader in the district of Hilo, and a man of notorious bad morals. He discovered that he was leprous, though the indications were so slight that he had escaped official notice, and at once gave himself up to the authorities. A procession of natives, singing and carrying flowers, escorted him to the vessel which was to take him and the others to their living graves. He made a speech to the assembly, urging submission to the measures for eradicating leprosy by banishment, and expressing his hatred of missionaries.

Wheeler & Wilson's Sewing Machines.

We call attention to the Wheeler & Wilson advertisement in our columns. This well-known Company, has the most advantageous facilities for supplying the public with Sewing Machines, on as favorable terms as the business will allow. They warrant all their work, and it is a matter of importance to the purchaser to deal with a Company whose position and permanence give assurance that their guaranty will be