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# THE COMMERCIAL

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#### THE LEGEND OF REELFOOT LAKE.

BY WILL T. CARPENTER.

Many, many years ago, before the great grandfathers of many of us were born, and when the late Mississippi valley was a vast wilderness of cane, cottonwood, oak and cypress brakes, tapered up from the marshy soil in graceful proportions, like dismal sentinels of the lonely solitude, and when the deer, the bear, the panther and other animals of a semi-tropic climate existed in abundance in the freedom of their forest homes, there dwelt, near where Reelfoot Lake is situated, an Indian chief of the name of Montockaquah.

It is said that he possessed great wisdom, and dispensed a sort of rude justice in the management of his affairs that caused his people to reverence him in a way that none of his predecessors had enjoyed. He was always at the head of all important councils, and as a warrior he was invincible, no opposing foe ever having been able to cope with his cunning in the planning of battles or in his deep-laid schemes of attack. He had two sons—Tablequah and Tishomingo. Of these two sons the chief was very proud, for in their very childhood they gave great promise of their future prowess as hunters of game and warriors bold.

At an early age they were taught the use of the bow and arrow, and in all the games and sports of Indian life none excelled them. The old chief watched them grow to manhood with the greatest interest, and to him they were ever objects of the deepest solicitude. He realized that the time was not far removed until he must pass to the happy hunting grounds whither his fathers before him had gone, and that the mantle of his authority must fall upon them, so he taught them many useful things and filled their heads with knowledge far beyond their years.

The youths were inseparable and

the bond of affection that subsisted between them was beautiful in the sight of the dotting father and was the talk of the whole tribe. But suddenly, one day, when the two brothers had reached the age of 20 years, a cloud arose between them. A discord broke harsh and rasping in the music of their lives. They both loved a maiden of another tribe, and both could not take her to wife, even had they so desired.

The maiden was very neat and round and pretty. Her eyes were soft and bright, the eyes of a little wild animal who is gentle and trusting and not afraid. She looked upon both the braves with favor, but her simple, forest-grown heart was pure, like the notes of the lark which danced in the sunlight near her wigwam door. The arts of coquetry and the wiles of her tutored sisters of the paleface race were unknown to her, and when she spoke her soul was in her eyes and deceit had no place in which to abide.

But her heart was Tishomingo's, and that made the heart of Tablequah heavy like the leaden bullet that the white man shot from his gun with the voice of the thunder.

Tablequah's love for his brother now turned to hate, and he could no longer bear to dwell in the same tribe, for the light had gone out and the darkness had set in, thick and cold and damp. So he went away one night when the moon was above the treetops. He crossed the Mississippi at New Madrid, and back several miles from that point he found a cordial welcome in another tribe.

The old chief was greatly grieved at the departure of this much-loved son, in whom his hopes were centered, but he bore his sorrow with the stolid silence of his taciturn race. But the seal of melancholy was on his wrinkled brow and the lines about his mouth grew deeper and deeper and were never lighted by a smile.

Tishomingo wed the maiden with

the wide-set eyes and lived in the village near the home of his father. For many moons the tribe had been at peace with all the world, and the blue smoke from the village fire sides floated tranquilly in the evening air, and when the moon and stars came out they looked upon a scene serene. Little children played about the wigwam door of Tishomingo, or listened to stories of war and the chase told by their father in the evening hours.

Meantime Tablequah was in his new home. He had grown great with his adopted people. He stood high in popular esteem, for his prowess in war and his skill in the chase were wonderful, indeed. In woodcraft he had not an equal in any of the neighboring tribes, and none was so accurate with the bow or so swift of foot. The speed of the wild deer was his, and he had the cunning of the fox and the scent of the hound. About the council fire, too, when the peace

from which little jets of lurid flame belched forth, emitting fine particles of stifling lava, so that the warriors had to fall upon their faces in order to breathe without complete suffocation.

Not a leaf stirred. All was still as death. Even the birds in the branches of the trees sat as though chained to the spot. A buzzard ceased its circling in the air and stood poised as if dead in its aerial flight. Motion and time and sound seemed to stop and lose all power, and a little branch near by ceased its flowing and stood still in the awful silence.

Then the earth began to tremble and trees waved like thistles in a breeze while a deep rumbling noise that seemed to come from underneath the earth's surface was heard, and the poor red savages were filled with a terror that was pitiable, for they thought it was the voice of an outraged God, speaking in the darkness of approach-

last all was quiet and once again order came out of chaos, a beautiful lake of broad expanse arose, where the land had sunk, and they called it "Reelfoot."

Such is the legend of this beautiful lake of sunny Tennessee. It must be true, for an old Indian said that the Great Spirit spoke to him in a dream and revealed his purpose of destruction, warning him to flee for his life and not to make known the secret to a single soul on the penalty of instant death and to be cut off from the pleasures of the "happy hunting ground." The old Indian obeyed the injunction and hence escaped the awful catastrophe. By tradition the story comes to us and skeptical indeed must be the one who doubts, for a single moment, its authenticity. But there are always "doubting Thomases" and always will be until the end of time.

Get your lunch at Dahke's.

#### TENNESSEE STATE FAIR ASSOCIATION.

The benefits that flow from a yearly exhibition of the best live stock, farm, horticultural and mechanical products of a State and its natural resources, and from the commingling of the farmers to compare the results of their labors and interchange views, are so generally recognized that there is no need to dwell on an acknowledged fact. Nor is it necessary that attention be called to the diffusion of prosperity among all forms of industry wherever agriculture flourishes.

The State Fair manifests its value, first upon live stock, then upon the farm itself, in increased fertility and the employment of more scientific and economical methods, and finally upon all the varied business interests to which agriculture contributes so largely.

Farming is progressively prosperous, profit being made without exhausting the capital (the farm) only where live stock growing is made a prominent feature. Live stock growing—as experience has proven wherever it has been tried—cannot be successfully practiced without a State Fair.

A State Fair is strictly educational. The work of the agricultural colleges and experiment stations is most valuable, but their sphere of influence is naturally limited to the students in attendance and the chance visitor. The State Fair is the school of the people, where practical demonstration is made of what is best among the various classes of products; it shows how to attain the best, and proves conclusively that the best is the most profitable.

That Tennessee is to have a State Fair complete in all departments is generally known, and it is the object of this article to acquaint the general public with the magnitude and completeness of the undertaking.

After the failure of a number of different organizations to secure for Tennessee a State Fair, the Retail Merchants' Association of Nashville, a live, up-to-date body of business men, realizing the great importance of such an institution to the State and feeling that Nashville, the industrial and geographical center of the State, was the proper location for a State Fair, decided to secure, independent of any State aid, such an institution.

With this idea in view, they have purchased a beautiful tract of land known as Cumberland Park, splendidly situated and highly improved with buildings, etc., suitable for the purpose desired.

Cumberland Park is situated between three of the great railroad systems of Nashville, which have unloading platforms a few yards from the grounds, is touched on two sides by the city electric lines, and is but a few minutes' drive from the business center of the city. To the many improvements already contained in Cumberland Park will be added, as the means are ac-

[Continued on fifth page.]



One of Union City's handsome new homes, residence and property of Mr. John A. Wheeler. [Photo by Wallace.]

pipe was smoked, old men grown gray in wisdom barked to his words.

One night when a storm cloud was rising when the sun had set a symbol of war was received by the tribe of Tishomingo. It came from the tribe of Tablequah, and the messenger sped away on the wings of the wind.

All was now in preparation for war. The following day but one, the war paint was brought forth and made hideous the red faces of the valiant braves.

The day arrived and the two contending forces stood each upon a gentle rise of ground, nearing each other with war like fronts.

Just before the mad rush of battle was made a darkness fell upon the earth—not the darkness of night, but the dull, leaden gloom that comes just before a storm. But not a cloud was visible. The sun shone like a disc of burnished brass, and the atmosphere was heavy and oppressive and filled with the odor of sulphur. Here and there little cones of sand rose up from eight to ten feet in height,

ing death.

When the earth began to sink and rip open, and into the yawning caverns, the trees went down into the blackness of the bowels of the earth, the universe seemed to gasp like a thing in pain. All the forces of nature seemed to be at war, latent as well as active. The very silence of dormant forces appeared to evince the power of omnipotence and the weakness of man in the hour of distress, despite the arrogance of his conceit, and the vainglory of his boasted strength.

Streams reversed their courses, and ran upstream, and the whole landscape reeled and rocked like a drunken man, or a ship in a storm. For miles around the surface of the earth sank down and down, lower and lower, until everything contained upon it disappeared from sight, including the two contending tribes of Indians. Tradition says that the cause of this great convulsion of nature was the anger of the "Great Spirit," who was moved to wrath at the deadly feud between the two brothers. When at

#### Wheeler's Romance.

The death of Gen. Joe Wheeler, the ex-Confederate veteran, has recalled to the minds of a number of New Orleans people the romantic story of his courtship, says the New York Tribune.

It was in the early years of the war. Gen. Wheeler had been harrying the Federal troops near Chattanooga and had managed to cut off their supplies. During a part of this campaign he made his home on the Jones estate, in Northern Alabama. There he met Mrs. Ella Sherrod, the daughter of Col. Jones, a well-known steamboatman of ante-bellum days. Col. Jones was away at the war. Mrs. Sherrod's husband had died, and she was left alone on the plantation with her crippled son and an invalid mother. Gen. Wheeler fell deeply in love and often slipped away from his command to spend a few hours with Mrs. Sherrod, although the trips were made at the risk of his life.

Finally the Federal troops burned every building on the plantation, and Mrs. Sherrod carried her mother from the burning house at midnight. Gen. Wheeler drove the Federal troops completely out of the neighborhood. At the close of the war Mrs. Sherrod consented to become Mrs. Wheeler.

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