

The Old Commonwealth.

Volume XI.—Number 35.

HARRISONBURG, VA., THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 1876.

\$2.00 a Year in Advance

MEMORIAL DAY.

Father flowers, pure, fresh flowers,
From lovely gardens and fragrant bowers,
By the running brook, from the pleasant field,
The brightest and purest earth may yield.
Strew them lovingly over the graves
Of those who yielded their lives to save
Their country's honor—a nation's pride,
For which all else is naught beside.
And as the flowers are dying there,
And the perfume is wafted in the air,
The angel spirits of those beloved,
Will be wafted on from their homes above.
Many a mourning one to-day
Is silently weeping her life away,
The years have passed since she was left
Of father, husband, or son bereft.
And each of those utter an earnest prayer,
That on those graves may blossom fair,
By some kind hand, be strewed that day—
"Twill comfort the mourners far away."
Of many an one there will be no trace,
That may be found of their resting place;
But let us hope, with a happy band,
They're tilling flowers in that brighter land.
May all who hold their memory dear,
Thus gather flowers year by year,
For the graves of those who fought so well,
And in the contest nobly fell. Democrat.

THE BEST BED.

A COMEDY OF ERRORS.

The district school in the village of Hollythorn was taught by Miss Eva Stanley, who "boarded around" among the scholars and was considered the paragon of teachers.

The last week previous to the holiday vacation she had been boarding with a Mrs. Carpenter, who was making gigantic preparations for guests she expected from New York.

"You never met my brothers, Eva," she said. "There's Sam, and George, and Johnny, the youngest; and such times as they have when they get out here and rusticate, as they call it. But, dear me, I don't get much rest or peace, for they are like a lot of boys let out of school."

"The last time they visited me together, John and Sam actually cut a pane of glass from the window, and pelted George from my best room with snow!"

"You see, there is always a regular strife for that particular room, for the bed is a spring one, and they say they don't sleep on any other in the city. But they don't get it this time, that's certain, for I intend to give you that room, and so on and the controversy."

"I had just as soon occupy some other room, Mrs. Carpenter, and do not wish to inconvenience your brothers."

"No you shan't, Eva," peremptorily exclaimed her hostess; "and what is the use of your going home vacation week? You can stay here just as well as not, and do your sewing on my machine."

The subject was dropped, and the entire household retired early, for on the morrow the brothers, young, ardent and full of life, were to be there. But without sending any word of their intention, they had concluded to take the train which would land them in Hollythorn about bed-time. George and John did so, and when seated in the cars began to speculate upon the absence of Sam.

"No reason in the world why he should not have been here," said George. "I can't make it out, unless he has taken the 5 o'clock train by mistake."

"Not a bit of it," laughed John, who fancied he understood the entire programme. "It is most likely he took that train on purpose to get into Hannah's parlor bed-room, and make us take up with straw ticks and featherers."

"I didn't think of that, but I reckon you are right. We must contrive to get him out somehow."

The brothers put their heads together and laughed heartily over some scheme for outwitting Sam, and accordingly, when the train reached Hollythorn, about 11 o'clock, they approached the home of their sister in a very stealthy manner.

Climbing the fence in the rear, they softly opened the window and obtained access to the partry, where they demolished a whole mince pie and a quantity of doughnuts. Then with appetites appeased, they removed their boots and prepared to investigate the "best room"; stole along the hall, which was dimly lighted by the moon, ascended the stairs and reached the door. The faint rays of the moon disclosed a chair piled up with clothing, and they could distinctly trace the outlines of a form beneath the bed clothes. A few whispered words were exchanged, and then as lightly as if shod with down they drew near.

"All ready!" whispered George.

Quick as thought they seized upon the form of the sleeper, bed clothes and all, bore it swiftly down the stairs and out into the snow, and were about to deposit it in a huge drift when a shrill scream broke the stillness of the night, and, oh, horror! it was that of a woman! And in their consternation they dropped their burden plump into the middle of the drift.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed George, "isn't Sam, but some woman, as I am a sinner, and she has fainted! Run and call Hannah!"

With admirable presence of mind, he lifted the limp form of Eva Stanley, and carried it into the house. But they had already been heard, and the inmates came rushing into the hall just as he appeared.

"George! John! for goodness sake what does this mean, and who have you there?" asked Mrs. Carpenter, in a breath.

"Blessed if I know," began George; "thought it was a mouse in the snow for getting into the best bed and trying to enure us. Quick! I believe she has fainted."

"Just like you," scolded Hannah, as

she assisted in depositing Eva once more in the bed from which she had been so unceremoniously taken; "beginning your tricks upon each other before you are fairly into the house.—Clear out now!"

Long before she had finished her tirade her brothers had betaken themselves down stairs, where they went into hysterics over the joke.

"A pretty kettle of fish!" said George, rolling over on the floor, and letting off pent after pent of laughter.

"I should think it was," replied John, holding his sides. "Oh, my! But what is to be done about it; and who do you suppose she is, George?"

"Some guest of Hannah's, of course, and young and pretty at that. I don't know how it is with you, but I feel particularly small and cheap—would sell myself at a very low price."

"Cheap," roared John, "cheap! I would actually give myself away this blessed minute, and throw something in to boot. What are we to do? I can't say. I believe I shall dig out of this place and get back to the city before morning. I haven't got the courage to face the music."

He began hastily putting on his boots, and would have carried his threat into execution, but for the appearance of Hannah, who at once asserted her authority.

"You are not going a single step, John. I don't wonder you feel ashamed of yourselves. What on earth possessed you is more than I can tell."

"That's right, Han; pitch in, scold away; I'll take any amount of talking just now. I am as meek as a lamb.—But who is it we've played so shabby a trick on?" replied George.

"Trick! I should think it was.—Why, it is Eva Stanley, our school teacher, and this is her week to board here. I don't believe the poor girl will ever get over her fright. It is too bad; I shouldn't wonder if she has taken her death, being dragged out of a warm bed this time of night and dropped into a snow drift in that fashion. No wonder she cried, poor thing."

"Cried, did she?" repeated George, with a groan.

"I should think she did. I just took her in my arms and let her have her cry out, while I explained to her how she happened to be mistaken for Sam and became the victim of your mad pranks."

"That was neat in you, Han," said George. "I am glad you hugged the poor little thing. Wish you had given her a brotherly squeeze for me—pon my honor I do."

"And how on earth do you expect us to stand and take the consequences?" asked John, beginning to look serious. "I am for taking myself off instantly. I had rather face a masked battery than this pretty teacher, after making such fools of ourselves."

"I don't care if you had," answered his sister, indignantly. "The only way to do is to stay and brave it out, both of you, and apologize for your rudeness."

"But Sam, how the deuce are we to get along with him? You know well enough, Han, we shall never hear the end of it from him."

"If you two can keep the secret, I'll find a way to silence Bridget, and it is a subject Eva will not care to have discussed, and fortunately my husband is away from home. So go to bed and rest contented."

She showed them to the bed she had intended them to occupy, and soon the house was once more hushed in slumber.

Meanwhile their brother Sam had reached the depot a few minutes too late. He found the train he was to have taken already gone, but on consulting a time table he found that another train started two hours later.—He figured to himself, as he impatiently crowded into an empty seat, and was whistled along at a rapid rate, how snugly his brothers had ensconced themselves in the best bed, which by right belonged to him, he being the eldest, and consummated a plan to get even with them.

Sometime after midnight he was deposited in Hollythorn, and rearing his sister's house he scouted around till he found a way of entrance into the kitchen, where he deposited his luggage and removed his boots. Then he quickly stole up stairs and opened the door of the best room. "Sure enough," thought he, "my fine chaps you are in clover!" For there were not to be mistaken signs of the room being occupied.

To think of coping with their united strength by dragging them forth was not practicable, but there stood the pitcher of water, and he knew that a good dousing with the icy fluid would bring them out quick enough.

He lifted the pitcher, approached the bed, raised it and suddenly dashed the contents upon the sleepers.

Such a torrent of scorching as he had never before heard rang through the house, and before Sam could collect his scattered senses the door opened, and Hannah, George and John rushed in, clothed in scanty apparel—Hannah with a frightened look upon her face, and a lamp in her hand that revealed the entire scene.

There, sitting in bed, with hair dripping like a mermaid, her night-dress deluged, was the young school mistress; and there was Sam, with the empty pitcher in his hand, the very picture of imbecility, staring around like an idiot at the havoc he had made. Hannah, George and John instantly understood the situation; and the latter, at the command of their sister, dragged Sam away, while she assisted the drenched and terrified girl to dry clothing, and then took her to her own room, and bed, explaining for the second time the mishaps of the night.

"I'll keep you with me now, my poor child," said she, though with difficulty keeping back her laughter. "The boys

are nicely come up with at any rate, and if it were not for your being so terribly frightened, and the way my best bed has been used, I wouldn't care. But you are safe now."

Hannah kissed her charge, and went down to see the boys, who, as soon as they were finally shut in the regions below, began to appreciate the joke; and now that Sam was as deep in the mud as they were in the mire, gave no quarter.

"I'll be blamed if I know what it all means," said Sam, looking in confusion at his brothers, who were rolling and kicking in convulsions of laughter.

"Means!" said George, holding his sides. "It means that you have stolen like a thief into Miss Eva Stanley's bed-chamber, who is a young lady teacher boarding here; and thinking it was your humble servant and Johnny snug in bed, you attempted to drown us out, and made a grand mistake. How do you like it, Sam?"

"I confess I see the point, but I can't see the joke. It is a most outrageous shame."

At this juncture Hannah came in, and began rating them soundly, thereby letting out the whole story. It was now Sam's turn to laugh.

Miss Eva was not visible the next morning, and Hannah announced that she was sick with a severe cold. Hannah had her unruly crew under her thumb for once in her life, and had the satisfaction of seeing them behave with some dignity. They appeared never to forget that there was an invalid in the house, and went on tip-toe about Sam, who seemed to take the entire responsibility on his own shoulders, sent off slyly to the city for choice fruits and flowers, which he induced his sister to convey to the young lady with the most abject apologies and regrets.

In a couple of days Eva was able to come down stairs. She was looking quite pale, but lovely, and of course divinely, when presented by Mrs. Carpenter to the three brothers, who behaved quite well considering the unpleasantness of the situation.

But Sam, who had broken the ice by means of his presents, was most at ease, and by virtue of his age and experience, constituted himself the proprietor, and was constantly on hand to offer Miss Eva a thousand nameless attentions; and before the week was out John declared that Sam was "done for!"

"Come under completely!" said George with one of his dismal groans.

Hannah, singing Eva's praises, commended Sam's choice, and recommended marriage to all of them as the only sobering process she was acquainted with. It was a piece of advice, however, that they did not appear inclined to follow, notwithstanding Sam's happy lot with the school-mistress of Hollythorn.

She often reminds her brothers in her unceremonious introduction to a snow-drift at the dead of night, and they retaliate with the shower-bath given her by Sam.

A True Story.

One cold day in winter, a lad stood at the outer door of a cottage in Scotland. The snow had been falling very fast, and the poor boy looked very cold and hungry.

"Mayn't I stay, ma'am?" he said to the woman who had opened the door. "I'll work, cut wood, go for water, and do all your errands."

"You may come in at any rate, until my husband comes home," the woman said. "There, sit down by the fire; you look perishing with the cold;" then, suspiciously glancing at the boy from the corners of her eyes, she continued setting the table for supper.

Presently came the tramp of heavy boots, and the door was swung open with a quick jerk, and the husband entered, wearied with his day's work.

A look of intelligence passed between his wife and himself. He had looked at the boy, but did not seem very well pleased; he nevertheless made him come to the table, and was glad to see how heartily he ate his supper.

Day after day passed, and the boy begged to be kept "until to-morrow," so the good couple, after due consideration, concluded that, as long as he was such a good boy, and worked so willingly, they would keep him.

One day, in the middle of winter, a peddler, who often traded at the cottage, called, and, after disposing of some of his goods, was preparing to go, when he said to the woman:

"You have a boy out there splitting wood, I see," pointing to the yard.

"Yes; do you know him?"

"I have seen him," replied the peddler.

"Where? Who is he? What is he?"

"A jolly bird," and then the peddler swung his pack over his shoulder.

"That boy, young as he looks, I saw in court myself, and heard him sentenced, 'ten months.' You'd do well to look carefully after him."

Oh! there was something so dreadful in the word "jail." The poor woman trembled as she laid away the things she had bought of the peddler; nor could she be easy till she called the boy in and assured him that she knew that dark part of his history.

Ashamed and distressed, the boy hung down his head. His cheeks seemed bursting with the hot blood, and his lip quivered.

"Well," he muttered, his frame shaking, "there's no use in my trying to do better; everybody hates and despises me; nobody cares about me."

"Tell me," said the woman, "how came you to go, so young, to that dreadful place? Where is your mother?"

"Oh!" exclaimed the boy with a burst of grief that was terrible to behold—"oh! I hadn't no mother since I was a baby! If I only had a mother," he continued, while tears gushed from his eyes, "I wouldn't have been bound out and kicked and cuffed, and horse-whipped. I wouldn't have been saucy and got knocked down, and run away, and then stole because I was hungry. Oh! if I'd only had a mother."

The strength was all gone from the poor boy, and he sank on his knees, sobbing great choking sobs, and rubbing the hot tears away with the sleeve of his jacket.

The woman was a mother, and, tho' all her children slept under the cold soil in the church-yard, she was a mother still. She put her hand kindly on the head of the boy, and told him to look up, and said from that time he should find in her a mother. Yes, even put her arms around the neck of that forsaken, deserted child. She poured forth her mother's heart sweet, kind words—words of counsel and of tenderness. Oh! how sweet was her sleep that night—how soft her pillow! She had plucked some thorns from the path of a little sinning but striving mortal.

That poor boy is now a promising man. His foster-father is dead. His mother is aged and sickly, but she knows no want. The "poor outcast" is her support. Nobly does he repay the trust reposed in him.

"When my father and mother forsake me, The Lord will take me up."—*The Standard Bearer.*

A Good Reply.

A lady had written on a card, and placed on the top of an hour-glass in her garden house, the following simple verse from the poems of J. Clare. It was when the flowers were in their highest glory:

"To think of summer yet to come,
To think of autumn's golden bloom,
To think of winter yet to bloom,
From dust that falls be I!"

The next morning she found the following lines in pencil, on the back of the same card. Well would it be if all would ponder upon the question, not in view of, and make preparation for an unknown state of existence:

"To think which heaven and earth are fled
And times and seasons o'er,
When all that can die shall be dead,
Who'll then be no more?
Who'll then my portion be?
Where shall I spend eternity?"

The following is said to be an admirable recipe for making a pleasant summer beverage. It will cost very little, because strawberries are now quite cheap: Twelve pounds fruit, cover with two quarts of water, to which add five ounces tartaric acid. Let all remain forty-eight hours, then strain through a flannel bag without bruising the fruit, and to each pint of juice add one and a quarter pounds of white sugar. Stir until dissolved, and then leave it a few days. Bottle it, and, if inclined to ferment, leave the corks out for a few days or more.

A down-east editor says: "The ladies' spring hats are pretty, and worn on the upper edge of the left ear, which makes one look arch and piquant, like a chicken looking through a crack in a fence."

Confederate Surgeon.

He was Delayed.

A Detroit lady purchased a jacket at a Woodruff avenue store the other day and the clerk said he would send it right home inside of an hour. In about four hours a package boy appeared with the garment and the impatient lady exclaimed:

"You boys are the greatest nuisance in town; I suppose you stopped to play nubbles, or hunt up a lost dog!"

"Indeed I didn't," he replied. "I went up home to change hats and she had to try on the jacket and parcels before the glass. Then my sister put it on to make a seal and when she got back she was determined to walk over on Woodruff avenue to stow it off and I got here as quick as I could."

Poetry is truth dwelling in beauty.—*Gifford.*

How Girls are made Pretty.

The Hindoo girls are gracefully and exquisitely formed. From their earliest childhood they are accustomed to carry burdens on their heads. The water for family use is always brought by the girls in earthen jars, carefully poised in this way. The exercise is said to strengthen the muscles of the back, while the chest is thrown forward. No crooked backs are seen in Hindostan. Dr. Henry Spry, one of the company's medical officers, says that "this exercise of carrying small vessels of water on the head might be advantageously introduced into our boarding-schools and private families, and that it might entirely supersede the present machinery of dumb-bells, backboards, skipping ropes, &c. The young lady ought to be taught to carry the jar, as these Hindoo women do, without ever touching it with their hands." The same practice of carrying water leads to precisely the same results in the south of Spain and in the south of Italy as in India. A Neapolitan female peasant will carry on her head a vessel full of water to the very height of a rough road and not spill a drop of it, and the acquisition of this art or knack gives her the same erect and elastic gait, and the same expanded chest and well formed back and shoulders.

A Warning to Bathers.

It has long been known that it was injudicious for any one to go into the water to bathe just after eating a full meal, but it is not so well known that the practice may result in death. This latter fact seems to have been demonstrated by the recent death in a bath in Bristol England, of a boy thirteen years old. He had never had a fit, and is believed to have been in perfect health. When found in the water the crown of his head was just above the surface, and he was standing in a stooping position with his face just under the water. At this place where he was the water was only three feet four inches deep, while the boy's height was four feet nine inches. The temperature of the water was seventy six degrees.—The medical testimony disclosed the fact that the deceased had eaten heartily before entering the water, or at least he had not given his food time to digest. He had vomited a large quantity of food, and when found his mouth and throat were full. The opinion was expressed in the medical testimony, and endorsed by the verdict of the jury, that death resulted from epilepsy, brought on by the dangerous practice of entering the water immediately after eating a meal.

A little boy had a colt and a dog, and his generosity was tried by visitors asking him—just to see what he would say—to give him one or both his pets. One day he told a gentleman present he might have his colt—reserving the dog, much to the surprise of his mother, who asked: "Why, Jacky, why didn't you give him the dog? Say nothing, say nothing, mother; when he goes to get the colt, I'll set the dog on him!"

