

# The Old Commonwealth.

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## MORNING.

Night wanes—the vapors round the mountains curled  
Nell into morn, and Light awakes the world.  
—Lord Byron.

Now morn her rosy step in the eastern clime  
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl,  
—John Milton.

Wake up! The sun presents an image in his rays,  
How man can shine at morn to his Creator's praise.  
—Rushert.

Not on the eastern summit, clad in gray,  
Morn, like a hoversman, get for travel, comes;  
And from his tower of mist,  
Night's watchman hurries down.  
—H. K. White.

See, the time for sleep has run;  
Rise before or with the sun,  
Lift thy hands and humbly pray  
The Author of eternal day,  
That as the light, serenely fair,  
Illumine all the tract of air,  
His sacred spirit so may rest,  
With quick'ning beams upon thy breast,  
And kindly cleanse it all within  
From darker blemishes of sin;  
And shine with grace and truth  
The real it glides with glory too.  
—Thos. Parnell.

## ROSINA SALVITA.

On the estate of Count Fernando Carnati, about a mile outside of the beautiful city of Naples, stood an humble cottage the abode of a poor basket maker. The occupants consisted of an old man, Luigi Salvita, and his beautiful daughter, Rosina. The interior of the cottage was neat and clean, though scantily furnished. Baskets and osiers were piled up in one corner of the room, and seated on a low stool, with troubled countenance, was the old man, with Rosina at his knee.

My child, said the father, to-day our quarter's rent is due, and I have no money to pay it. Count Fernando will put us out, and then what will become of us? I care not for myself, but for you, my child.

Do not be discouraged, father, answered Rosina; yet, if he does, we can gain a living on the streets of Naples.

Just then there was a loud knock at the door, and the figure of Count Fernando darkened the portal. He was a short, thick, disagreeable-looking man, whose whole face betokened avarice, cruelty and wickedness.

Well, my pretty dear, how are you to-day, he said, addressing Rosina.

The maiden made no reply, but turned her head away.

Receiving no answer, he turned to the old man.

Have you my rent to-day, Luigi?

Count Fernando, I am sorry to say I have not, answered the old man.

Then out you go to-morrow I said the Count.

Have mercy, noble sir, if not for me for Rosina.

None, cried the Count, unless you accede to what I now propose to you.

Give your attention, that you may hear all. I have long regarded your daughter with much favor, and would like to make her my wife. I will not press you for an answer now, but will give you two months to decide. I will make an easy life for you and her. But if you refuse, out you go to find your living among the swine! Think well of this till I come for an answer.

Then he left the cottage, mounted his horse, and rode away.

For full five minutes not a word was said by father or daughter, but at last the old man spoke.

Rosina, my child, what do you think of this offer?

Father, said Rosina, the alternative is hard, but sooner than be the wife of Count Fernando I would gain my bread by singing on the streets of Naples. I hope it will never come to that, but let us trust to God and our own exertions for the future. I have a plan which I will now tell you. You know the brothers at the convent of the Sacred Heart, and told me I would become a great singer. I shall go to-morrow to Father Baptiste, the prior, and ask his advice.

Little sleep came to the eyes of the father and daughter that night. The next day Rosina went to the prior, and stated her case to him. He advised her by all means to go to Florence, and gave her money to pay her expenses. He also gave her a letter to Signor Marti, conductor of the grand duke's opera, and then, giving her a blessing, sent her home. The hardest thing of all was the parting from her father, but that was accomplished at last, and soon she was in a diligence on her way to Florence. When she arrived there she at once presented herself to Signor Marti. After reading the letter, he gave her a chair and invited her to sit down.

It seems you have just come in time as I am in a quandary. One of my singers tell me this morning, and I am left without anybody to take her place. I see by Father Baptiste's letter that you have an extraordinary voice. Let me hear you sing, spoke the conductor.

Rosina commenced to sing one of those touching ballads for which Italy is so famous. When she had finished, the conductor almost overwhelmed her with his praises. This infused new vigor and confidence in Rosina.

We rehearse in a few moments, spoke the conductor, and you will have to participate, so as to get used to your part. As you have no wardrobe, I will procure a suitable dress for you.

After rehearsal, Rosina sought out Countess de' Medici, and was introduced to her by a friend. The day seemed long to her anxious mind, and she was impatient yet fearful for the night to come; but at length it came, and with it its attendant excitement. She wended her way to the theatre, where she was met by the conductor, who led her to the green room. She was nervous and trembling, being new to the situation, and placed among a

company who had been accustomed to the stage, whereas this was her first essay in this line.

Soon the orchestra commenced the overture, and her excitement increased. Then the conductor went before the curtain, and informed the audience that one of the singers was ill, and of Rosina's appearance in her place. The audience, with whom the absent songstress was a favorite, and to whom Rosina was a stranger, met this announcement with hisses and groans. The conductor brought Rosina out in the midst of this storm of disapprobation, and introduced her to the audience.

When she beheld that vast concourse before her she felt faint, and all her courage seemed to forsake her; but with a mighty effort she recovered and commenced to sing. The vast concourse grew still as death, as if bound by a spell; but when she had finished, they found relief in one grand outburst of applause. Rosina had achieved a grand triumph; and she was compelled to appear time after time, until she could sing no more.

Night after night this continued, until Rosina had nearly supplanted their former favorite. The name of Rosina Salvita became known all over Florence.

She was sent for by the archduke, and invited to sing at the castle. She was followed by suitors of the highest rank, but would listen to none, as her whole life was devoted to her father and her new profession. One day, while at the archduke's castle, he asked her to tell her history. She told him her father's poverty, her being persecuted by Count Carnati, and of her subsequent resolve to aid her father.

I have long had my eye on the count, and now I will see him, replied the archduke. I will save your father in time.

After several weeks of continued success, the season ended, and Rosina was free to go where she would. She at once resolved to go home to her father. The next day she started, her mind happy with the thought of the surprise in store for her father.

In the meantime, the time specified by Count Carnati was fast arriving, and at last the fatal morning dawned. The old man was sitting in his old room, thinking. He was sorely troubled for two reasons. To-day he would be turned out of his home. The other reason was that he had not heard from Rosina since she went away, and he did not know whether she was dead or alive. He was roused from his reverie by the harsh voice of Count Carnati, who appeared at the door.

Well, where is Rosina? Have you acceded to my proposition?

Sir Count, replied the old man, I cannot answer. Rosina went away the day after you were here, and I have not seen her since. I know not whether she is dead or alive.

Then out you go at once, cried the Count, calling to two of his servants to execute his commands.

Just then they were startled by the sound of wheels, and of a carriage stopping at the door. A few moments later, and Rosina entered and threw herself into her father's arms.

Ho! my beauty, cried the count, I see you have come back in time to save your father from being turned out, and for you to become my bride, moving toward her at the same time.

Back! cried Rosina. Do not dare to touch me! And, turning to her father, she said, look father, I have come to save you; here is the money I have earned. Then, turning to the Count, she said, here, take your money, and be gone; we would be alone.

The Count grew violently angry, for he saw he was foiled in his plans.

Go, cried he, I will not take the money! You must both leave at once.

Ho! Luigi, Guiseppo, obey your orders!

Hold! cried a voice. The Count, looking around, saw the leader of the guard which, at the archduke's orders, had escorted Rosina to the house.

Arrest you, Count Fernando Carnati, by authority of archduke Ferdinand, for treason and conspiracy against the state.

The same conveyance that brought Rosina in triumph from Florence took her persecutor back in chains and shame. He was thrown into prison, where he soon after died.

There was a happy couple in the old cottage that night, as the old father listened to his daughter's story.

They soon moved to Florence, where Rosina was still received with favor.

She continued in her chosen profession until she was married to a count of the archduke, and she became a countess. Her father lived an easy and happy life until he died, and always blessed the day Rosina resolved to save them from starvation by the use of her voice.

Judge Brady, in a recent lecture, told a story of an ambitious Yankee who aspired to the State Senate. He gave \$100 for the influence of a friend. His hopes were high, and he most willingly parted with the money. But when the returns came in he found he had but three votes. He at once rushed to his friend.

"See here, I've but three votes!"

"Have you," was the reply. "Let me see. You voted for yourself and I voted for you, but who was the other fool?"

The modest virgin, the prudent wife, or the careful mother, on each more servicable in life, than petticoated philosophers, blustering heroes or virago queens. She who makes her husband and her children happy, who reclines the one from vice and trains the other to virtue, is much greater than those whose sole occupation is to murder mankind with shafts from their quiver or their eyes.

## A Lecture on Education and Politics.

I make no pretensions towards literary attainments—not having had one hundred days of schooling, and but very little time or means for mental culture—but have to keep the muscles strained to their utmost capacity most of the time.

I hope you can appreciate my condition, and hope the incentive that actuated you to come was not to hear something grand, but that you are content with little, as the old colored preacher said blessed are they that expect but little, for they shall hear but little; and in reviewing all the circumstances and drawbacks I think it my duty to contribute, if but a mite, towards the welfare of our race, illustrations, but now degenerate old mother.

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# OLD COMMONWEALTH.

HARRISONBURG, VA.

C. H. VANDERFORD, Editor.

THURSDAY MORNING, APR. 19, 1877.

We have received a programme of the Spring meeting at Westminster, Md., May 29, 30 and 31. The racing is to continue three days, and the premiums offered amount to \$2,000. On the first day a tournament will take place, at which three watches are offered as premiums.

There seems to be no doubt that Hayes will remove the military from Louisiana. This, we believe, he had determined to do even before his inauguration, and why he should have sent a commission to that State is past finding out. To one not acquainted with his motives, it looks like child's play.

The Petersburg Post is very severe upon Senator Muffett's new liquor law. It says:

"The law is a miserable Yankee innovation upon the ancient customs and laws of Virginia, and we hope its operations may be defeated."

To be consistent the Post editor should refuse to have the bell rung over his juries. That is one way to assist in defeating its operations.

The talk of reviving the old Whig party will probably end in talk merely. The thing is hardly practicable as much the larger portion of that old party is underground, and it may well be asked—shall these dry bones live? A Whig party may be formed, but it will not be the old Whig party, but a new one, the old party having been dead for twenty-five years, and a majority of its surviving members actively co-operating with the Democratic party.

The Radicals did a little mild crowing over Cincinnati, Chicago, and one or two other municipal elections recently held, but they don't crow over the recent election in Rhode Island. In November the majority was 5,075. Week before last it was only 711. In 1876 the Radicals polled 15,787, the Democrats 10,712. In March the Republicans polled 12,334, the Democrats 11,623, a heavy gain on the previous election.

The Doylestown Democrat has found a text appropriate to the Electoral Commission, in Ecclesiastes II, 2:—"Give a portion to seven and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." The Democrat complains that the commission didn't give anything to seven, but all to eight. Mr. Hayes' incumbency is, therefore, neither scriptural nor constitutional, but a mere eight-by-seven affair, in opposition to a majority of the people.

In the New England Methodist Conference recently, the resolutions expressing sympathy for the policy of President Hayes, reported in lieu of the anti-Hayes resolutions of Dr. Malhalien, were adopted by an unanimous vote.

When will these New England clergymen learn to preach the gospel and let politics alone? They turn their conferences into party conventions, and bring reproach upon themselves, even from their own brethren in other localities. The average New Englander, however, cannot keep from meddling. If he did not "fix" things, the world, he thinks, would not sit upon its axis, and chaos come again.

In another column we publish the latest developments in the Louisiana case. It will be seen that the commission sent South by Mr. Hayes has come to a sort of an agreement with the Nicholls Legislature, by which the latter will have a majority of Democrats. Hayes has been acquainted with the plan, and should be regarded favorably it will be submitted to Packard.

In view of this favorable overture to the Nicholls government the Nicholls Senate passed a string of resolutions complimenting Hayes; proclaiming their support in his Southern policy; endorsing his inaugural address, and promising and pledging many things. The resolutions are in bad taste and unworthy of freemen. The citizens of Louisiana, as we understand the matter, are simply striving for their rights as guaranteed under the law. To obtain them no fawning was necessary.

The Laborer is worthy of his Hire.

Under Gen. Mahone's management of the A. M. & O. Railroad the employees were eight months without pay. The poor men were reduced to almost starvation, but yet such was the influence of Mahone or rather his military despotism, that little was known of it until after he was deposed from the control of the road. As a Norfolk paper just says:

"The press of Southern Virginia were informed of these facts there, but were so busy in praising the skill, energy, and ability of the President as utterly to forget the ragged, starving operatives of the road."

We are glad to see that these men will soon receive one month's pay long since due them.—Lexington Gazette.

The grasshoppers have begun to make their appearance in the vicinity of Omaha, Nebraska, during the warm weather of the past few days.

For the Commonwealth.

Mr. Editor.—What we have nothing to say against your personal choice for the nominee of the Conservative Convention for Governor, and will support Col. Holliday most cheerfully if he shall be the choice of the Convention, we desire to express the opinion that the people of Rockingham county regard Col. Ho. Johnston's qualifications for the position of Governor as superior to those of any other gentleman whose name has been mentioned in connection with the position. He is well and favorably known throughout the State as a lawyer of the first talent, of superior literary attainments, of fine administrative ability, and as a man of incorruptible integrity. His familiarity with the affairs of the State, his knowledge of her wants, necessities and resources will enable him to discharge the duties of the office to the entire satisfaction of the whole people. True, he has not taken an active part in politics since the war, but during and since the war he has ever acted the part of a true Virginian. It will be nothing to the discredit of the Convention if it shall call for his retirement some one of Virginia's own able sons, who has not been mixed up with any of the numerous rings and plots gotten up for the purpose of political preferment. It adds nothing to the qualifications of a man for the position of Governor that he has been engaged in politics, been an elector-at-large, or done service in some other capacity for his party. Time was when men, on account of their fitness for office position, were called from their retirement by the people and placed in positions of trust and responsibility—when the position sought the man, not the man the position. If this could be done in this year of 1877, it would be adding a little variety to the thing, at least, and might work well. Let the Convention summon as its standard-bearer in the next contest, one of Virginia's most intelligent, purest and best sons, no matter what his occupation or where his residence may be, and with such a man, selected solely on account of his fitness for the position, the nomination itself will settle the canvass. We do not know that Col. Johnston is an aspirant for the position, but we believe him to be the choice of almost the entire people of

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY.

The COMMONWEALTH is not wedded to any candidate. Of those heretofore mentioned Col. F. W. M. Holliday was undoubtedly its choice above all others for Governor, but should Col. Johnston's friends—and among them we number ourselves—determine to put him forward for the position, he will have no warmer supporter than the COMMONWEALTH.

War Nearly Certain.

Since the refusal of Turkey to accept the protocol, all thoughts of peace seem to have been abandoned, and the preparations now look to an active resumption of hostilities. The Russian charge d'affaires has been ordered to quit Constantinople. The Turkish commander-in-chief has gone to the front on the Danube; munitions of war and subsistence are going forward, and both armies are getting ready for action. It is not probable, however, at the present time, that Russia will take the aggressive on the Danube. This might lead to complications with the other powers, and that is what Russia at present wishes to avoid. For the same reason the Turks may incline to force the fighting on the Danube, believing that they will thus be more certain of the sympathy of Europe. Peace negotiations have been so decidedly repulsed that they will hardly be renewed until at least one decisive battle has been fought. Should Russia strike a telling blow within the next sixty days, it is probable that the powers would again intervene in the interest of peace; but it seems hardly possible to avoid at least one great engagement. Russia will mobilize her Asiatic armies and send them along the southern shore of the Black Sea into Asia Minor. It is reported that they will advance and occupy Pales tin. This will compel Turkey to withdraw strength from the Danube, and carry the war a long distance from her base; and should the Russians succeed it would give them the upper valley of the Euphrates, and isolate Turkey from all Asiatic support. It would seem, however, that a more dangerous attack could be made by an advance along the southern shore of the Black Sea direct for Constantinople. The army could be supplied by water transportation, and could move in concert with the Russian navy. This is a campaign which Europe could not consistently object to, being fought wholly on Asiatic soil. But it is almost certain that within the present month the artillery and masonry will begin to rattle.—Balt. Gazette.

THE NARROW GATGE RAILROAD TO WICOMICO.—A correspondent of the Richmond Dispatch writing from King George Court House says:

"The routine business of court was varied by Judge Settle politely yielding the court-room to Judge Critcher, who desired to address the people of the county on the subject of extending the Narrow-Gauge railroad from Fredericksburg to Wicomico, in the county of Northumberland. Before the Judge's contract with the Royal Land Company of Virginia was fully explained, there seemed to be some diversity of opinion among the people, but as the subject became more thoroughly understood opposition seemed to disappear. After Judge Critcher's address the chairman of the meeting, Mr. Charles Mason, submitted the question to the people whether the court should order a vote to be taken at the May election for or against the donation, and a prolonged shout of ayes arose from the enthusiastic crowd; and when the negative was put not a voice was heard. The Judge entered the order. The people will donate the money."

The English steamer John Bramall will sail from New Haven, Conn., in a few days, with ammunition for Constantinople. This is the seventh steamship taking war material of late from this country to Turkey, besides five or six sailing vessels.

Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Gazette.

## A HOLOCAUST IN ST. LOUIS.

Destruction of the Southern Hotel.

Occupants Awaking in the Middle of the Night Only to Perish in the Flames.

HEARTRENDING SCENES.

Kate Claxton's Marvellous Escape.

St. Louis, April 18.—Shortly after one o'clock this morning an explosion from the Southern Hotel, an immense brownstone structure, six stories high, and occupying the entire block bounded by Fourth, Fifth, Walnut and Elm streets, discovered smoke issuing from the basement, between the office and the stores which occupy the Walnut street front. A hasty examination showed that the storehouse beneath was on fire, and at twenty-five minutes past one the alarm was struck. The hotel was thoroughly equipped with hand extinguishers, and the employees drilled for any emergency, but almost before the alarm was given the flames had burst through the floor and gotten beyond control. Directly in front of the office there is a large lobby, above which rises a rotunda, open at every story, up to the roof. This seemed to serve as an air shaft for the fire, and in scarcely more time than it takes to write it the flames had mounted both the stairs and the lobby, and the same instant the fire enveloped the main staircase and the elevator shaft, thus cutting off all means of escape from the upper floors. So rapid, indeed, was the spread of the conflagration that almost before the guests had time to get dressed, the hotel was a scene of horror. The fire department responded promptly to the alarm, but before a single engine had gone into service it was evident that the hotel was doomed and the means of escape would be to reach the street by the fire escape. The scene at this moment was indescribably awful. At the first alarm the guests, nearly all in their night clothes, had rushed from their rooms, intending to reach their escape by the regular staircases, only to find, in most cases, their retreat cut off by a wall of flame and smoke, and to realize that the only hope of safety lay in the men's ladders. Many of the lodgers on the lower floors had succeeded in forcing their way out before the flames had barred the passage to the main stairs, and had made their way to the balcony which encircled the Walnut street front, up to the second story; but above that the lurid light of the conflagration revealed tier after tier of windows, filled by faces blanched with the fear of desperation and despair. The hook and ladder companies worked with heroic energy, but when all their equipment had been brought into service, the flames had become so intense that the tallest ladders would not reach beyond the fourth story. Then ensued a terrible scene. The sixth floor was occupied exclusively by the women, mostly women, and with many of these it was simply a choice between death by the most cruel of known tortures and the risk of certain death by jumping from the pavement below. How many preferred the latter cannot yet be ascertained, but the ghastly rows in the morgue this morning will tell the story. A similar fate befell many of the lodgers on the fifth floor, who jumped recklessly from the windows, and were picked up a mass of quivering, though lifeless flesh. Of marvellous escapes there were a few. One woman, Kate Claxton, the heroine of the Brooklyn Theatre holocaust, who only last evening began an engagement here in the "Two Orphans." With astonishing swiftness she wrapped her face and head in a wet towel, and half walking, half tumbling, reached the foot of the staircase, and made her way to the street perfectly unharmed, save a few trifling bruises.

DETAILS OF THE FIRE.

A 2 o'clock scene in the immediate vicinity of the hotel was indescribable, the excitement being at its height. The windows in the upper stories were crowded with shrieking men and women, whom it seemed impossible to save. A few were rescued by the firemen, who, according to the police, were on the street, but on the other three sides of the building, bounded by Fifth, Walnut and Elm streets, the longest ladders fell far short of reaching the windows. Mr. Brainerd, the proprietor of the hotel, was seen running on the sixth floor and succeeded after strenuous exertions in escaping with his life and a broken arm. The building was six stories high, and the fire spread rapidly, and the majority of the inmates of the two upper stories of the building must have perished. Two men, unrecognized, were killed by jumping from the front of the building, and a third man was badly mangled. 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