American Union.

VOL. 7 DENTON, MARYLAND, THURSDAY, JAN'Y 31, 1867. NO. 235.

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Poetry.

THE LONG AGO.

Oh! a wonderful stream is the river of time,
As it runs through the realm of tears,
With a faultless rhythm and musical rhyme,
And a broader sweep and a surge sublime,
And blends with the ocean of years!

How the winters are drifting like flakes of snow,
And the summers like buds between,
And the ears in the sheaf—so they come and go
On the river's breast, with its ebb and flow,
As it glides in the shadow and sheen!

There is a magical Isle in the river of Time,
Where the softest of airs are playing;
There's a cloudless sky and a tropical clime,
And a song as sweet as a vesper chime,
And the Junes with the roses are staying.

And the name of this Isle is Long Ago,
And we bury our treasure there;
There are brows of beauty, and bosoms of snow,
There are heaps of dust, but we loved them so!
There are trinkets and tresses of hair.

There are fragments of song that nobody sings,
And a part of infant's prayer;
There's a lute unswept, and a harp without strings,
There are broken vows and pieces of rings,
And the garments she used to wear.

There are hands that are waved when the fairy shore
By the mirage is lifted in air;
And we sometimes hear, through the turbulent roar,
Sweet voices heard in days gone before,
When the wind down the river is fair.

Oh! remembered for aye be that blessed Isle,
All the day of life till night;
When the evening comes with its beautiful smile
And our eyes are closing to slumber awhile,
May that "green wood of soul be in sight."

THE DYING SOLDIER.

The clock had just struck the midnight hour, when the chaplain was summoned to the cot of a wounded soldier. He had le him only an hour before with confident hopes of speedy recovery—hopes which were shared by the surgeon and the wounded man himself. But a sudden change had taken place, and the surgeon had come to say that the man could live but an hour or two at most, and to beg the chaplain to make the fearful announcement to the dying man.

He was soon at his side, but overpowered by his emotions, was utterly unable to deliver his message. The dying man, however, quickly read the solemn truth in the altered looks of the chaplain, his faltering voice and ambiguous words. He had not before entertained a doubt of his recovery. He was expecting soon to see his mother, and, with her kind nursing, soon to be well. He was therefore entirely unprepared for the announcement, and at first it was overwhelming.

"I am to die, then; and—how long?"

As he had before expressed hope in Christ, the chaplain replied, "You have made your peace with God; let death come as soon as it will, He will carry you over the river."

"Yes, but this is awfully sudden, awfully sudden." His lips quivered; he looked up grievingly—"and I shall not see my mother."

"Christ is better than a mother," murmured the chaplain.

"Yes." The word came in a whisper. His eyes were closed; the lips still wore that trembling grief, as if the chastisement were too sore, too hard to be borne; but as the minutes passed, and the soul lifted itself up stronger and more steadily upon the wings of prayer, the countenance grew calmer, the lip steadier; and when the eyes opened again, there was a light in their depths that could have come only from heaven.

"I thank you for your courage," he said more feebly, taking the hand of the chaplain; the bitterness is over now, and I feel willing to die. "Tell my mother—" he paused, gave one sob, dry, and full of the last anguish of earth—"tell her how I longed to see her; but if God will permit me I will be near her. Tell her to comfort all who loved me, to say that I thought of them all. Tell my father that I am glad he gave his consent, and that other fathers will mourn for other sons.—Tell my minister, by word or letter, that I thought of him, and that I thank him for all his counsels. Tell him I find that Christ will not desert the passing soul, and that I wish him to give my testimony to the living, that nothing is of real worth but the religion of Jesus! And now, will you pray with me?"

With swelling emotion and tender tones the chaplain besought God's grace and presence; then restraining his sobs, he bowed down and pressed upon the beautiful brow, already chilled with the breath of the coming angel, twice, thrice, a fervent kiss. They might have been as tokens from the father and mother, as well as himself. So thought perhaps the dying soldier, for a heavenly smile touched his face with new beauty as he said, "Thank you; I won't trouble you any longer. You are wearied out; go to your rest."

"The Lord God be with you," was the firm response. "Amen!" trembled from the fast whitening lips.

Another hour passed. The chaplain still moved uneasily around his room.—There were hurried sounds overhead, and footsteps on the stairs. He opened his door, encountered the surgeon, who whispered one little word, "Gone." Christ's soldier had found the Captain of his salvation.'

This history, with many similar cases, impressively teaches how necessary it is that the soldier should always be ready to die. Life, uncertain to all, is peculiarly so to him. Death often, and indeed generally, is to him "so sudden." He may not even for a few days linger upon his cot. Struck down upon the battle field by some swift messenger of death, not one moment may be left him to cry for mercy. If smitten with disease it is but little better. Delirium or lethargy often shut out all hope of repentance, and he rapidly sinks in death. What opportunity had this "dying solder" to prepare for death after the sudden announcement from the chaplain? If he had not before "made his peace with God," it seems almost certain he would have died in his impenitence, passed into eternity with no title to heaven, no preparation for its holy joys Thousands thus die, and the darkness of the second death settles upon their doom.

Especially are we taught in this case how precious is the Christian hope in the dying hour. Death in its mildest form and best circumstauces is an event full of mystery and dread. It removes us at once from all the fair and lovely scenes of earth; severs the tender ties that bind us to kindred and friends so much loved and delighted in; blights many long and fondly cherished hopes of earthly good; consigns the body to the cold, dark grave; introduces the spirit to an unseen, untried world, to scenes of which we have but the most dim and faint conception. Is it wonderful that nature shrinks from such an event, and clings to life? But besides this instinctive dread, there is to the impenitent the just apprehension of coming wrath. Death ushers him into the presence of a holy God, whom he has offended by his sins, whose overtures of mercy he has rejected, and all whose graciouse influences he has resisted; and what hope can there be that he will escape the righteous anger of his Judge? Before him stretches out a long and dark eternity full of images of woe. With such a prospect, how can he die? He turns to his friends, implores them not to let him die. But all in vain. Urged by a resistless power, full of anguish and horror, he groans and dies.

Oh, what a contrast between this and the Christians, departure—so calm, so peaceful, so triumphant! Though a sinner, he feels that he is forgiven; God is now reconciled to him. Jesus has borne his sins, and intercedes for him above—His presence takes away the fear of death and the bright prospect of soon entering heaven fills him with serene and holy joy. He welcomes the stroke that separates him from all earthly charms, and lets his ransomed spirit rise to those pure and blisful scenes that open before him.—Sweetly and triumphantly he sings, "O, death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory?" and departs to be with Christ.

And this is but the beginning of that endless happiness which is before him.—Purified from sin, perfectly conformed to the image of God, he is destined to go on from glory to glory, increasing in knowledge and rising in bliss through ages that know no end.

Who does not say, "Let me die the death of the righteous?" Well, my friend, if you wish thus to die, now is your time to be ready. Wait not till the hand of death is upon you. That is the madness of presumption. Thousands who have done so are now reaping the bitter fruits of their folly in the woes of the bottomless pit. God now invites you, the Savior is ready to receive you, the spirit strives, conscience admonishes, everything urges you to improve the present time. Oh, be wise! Listen not for a moment to the suggestions of unbelief, to the pleadings of carnal appetites, to the allurements of ambition, to the temptations of an ensnaring world. Press through all opposing influences, lay yourself at the feet of Jesus, give yourself away to him, and entreat his grace to keep you to the end.—So shall you "die the death of the righteous," and your "last end be like his."

How he Told the News.—Here is a specimen of breaking the news gently:

During the summer of 1849, a Mr. James Wilson, of West Jersey, died of the cholera while some fifty miles from his home.

John Rogers was employed to convey the dead body in a wagon to his friends at home. By inquiry he learned the precise house of the deceased. On driving to the door he called to a respectable looking lady, who was in fact the newly made widow, and asked:

"Does Mr. Wilson live here?"

"Yes," was the reply, "but he is not at home to-day."

"I know he is not at home now, but he soon will be, for I've got him here dead in the wagon."

NASBY.

Mr. Nasby Tries to Weep at the Tomb of a Friend and Witnesses a sisterly Fight —The Disadvantage of the Patriarchal System.

Post Office, Confederit X Roads, (Which is in the State uv Kentucky) December 16th, 1866.—I heard nearly two months ago that my old friend, John Guttle, of Mobeel had departed his life and gone to that other and better world where the wicked cease from troublin and the weery are at rest, and was profoundly shocked John Guttle wus my friend, and I much fear his like I never shall look upon agin. He was a Democrat uv the old skool, one uv the links, which remained to connect the present generation with the past. Well do I remember the glorious old man! How often hev I set in the square room in his country residence, and drank whiskey and water with him until we neither on us cood see a hole thro a forty foot ladder; how many times hez he flogged niggers for my amoozement, to show me the proper way uv managin uv em; and how many times hez he lent me small sums uv money, varyin from five to thirty one dollars, akkordin to the State uv mellernis he wuz in when I approached him on the delekit subjik! Alas! poor John Guttle! Let not the skoffer say that I regret his death becoz his sons will be apt to try and kollect the notes the old man departed holds uv mine! No! no! they know me too well to waste any time on that. I mourn b coz I loved him and becoz uv the misfortunes which drove him to the prematoor grave.

A. Linkin is responsible for his dark shadder out of my pathway. John Guttle hed three hundred niggers on his plantashens and in his house in town—these wuz wrenchd from him by the proclamashun and turned out from his paternal care to starve, wich the most uv em are industriously doin at about $3 per day. He had em of all hues—there wuz the full blooded black, the disgustin Mulatter, the pleasant Quadroon, the beautiful Octoroon, and them which hed so nearly lost the cuss of Ham ez to be hardly distiuguishable from the Caucashun, and it wuz noticeable that the nearly white niggers on the Guttleses plantation wuz all beautiful. The Guttleses theirselves wuz perfeck specimens uv manly beauty, and it probably hed its effeck upon the blacks. The niggers is an imitative animal.

It wuz this robbin uv him uv his property—this overturnin uv the normal condishun uv things—which killed John Guttle. He never held up his head after the Proclamashen but faded away like a frostid flower!

I wuz in Mobeel last week on bizinis connected with our college (it was solicitin funds to endow my professorship,) and I felt that I cood not leave the city without droppin a dozen teers or sich onto his grave. I felt ez he had contribbitted at various times so much to moisten my clay that it would be ungentlemanly not to do sumthin toward moistenin hizzin. And in pursuance ov my resolve, I wended my way sadly to the cemetery, and fiindin the tomb, struck an attitude of despair, and leaning pensively onto the monument strove to the best of my ability, to weep, but it was a futile endeavor. My eyes wouldnt give down. I strove to recall his virchoos, but sich is the weakness of human nacher that, whenever his form rose in my memory, my mind involuntarily wandered to his whisky, and my mouth would water to sich an extent ez to monopolize all the moisture in my system. I cood hev spit onto his grave, but weep I could not. Alas! for poor humanity.

While I was standin there trying to weep, and making a bad fist of it, I notist three beautiful young ladies approachin, with baskets uv hot-house flowers a hangin onto their arms. I recognized them to wonst. They wuz John Guttle's daughters, and they wuz a comin to strew flowers onto the grave of their parental ancestors on their fathers side. It was a techin site, and feeling that I wuz a introoder, not bein a blood relashun and only connected with the deceest by note uv hand, I withdrew a short distants.—Skasely had they got to the tomb, when from the other side approached three more ravishingly beautiful young ladies, with baskets uv hot-house flowers on their arms. The last ones resembled in a striking manner the fust ones, cepting they wuz a shade darker, and their hare wavered bootiful, whereas the hare of the first was perfeckly strate.

The two parties faced each other on opposite sides uv the toom, and party Number One glared fiercely at party Number Two.

"Lize! Flora! Jane!" said the oldest uv party Number One. "What are you doin here?"

"Sisters," sed the oldest uv party Number Two, "we're here dischargin a fillyel dooty. Beneeth these sods lies the remains uv our father, and we are goin to strew these flowers onto his toom. Jine us in the strew?"

"Father!" shreeked the three uv the party Number One. "Yoor all niggers and was servants unto—"

"Our half sisters," sed the spokesman uv party Number Two, "but Linkin removed the cuss of Ham, and we're now free and hev as much rite to strew the grave uv our commen parient, which wuz John Guttle, ez yoo. Oh! our sisters, our father was a good man—let us bedew his grave with our teers and—"

"What impudence!" shrieked party Number One, all in korious.

"Impudence yoorself!" retorted party Number Two, gettin red in the face.—"We are John Guttle's daughters precisely ex much ex yoo, and the only advantage yoo hev over us is in the articele uv mothers. I shel command myself and thus proceed to perform a act uv fillyel dooty.

And she histed out the flowers and commenst to strew.

The tother wun wuz gettin hot. The oldest wun cood stand this impudence no longer, and droppin her basket, went for her, followed by her sisters. It was a sperited conflict, and lasted perhaps four minits, or until I parted 'em, when they gethered themselves together, and departed—one party went one way and tother tother.

Fillyel love hed done more in the strewin bizinis than it sot out to do. The six lovin daughters of the deceest John had not only strewed flowers onto his grave, but hair, and collars, and bosom pins, and shreds uv silk, and wafer-falls and cotton, and false teeth, and pieces uv almost everything wich goes to make up the sum total uv female attire.

Ez I gazed at the wrecks and saw their tattered forms vanish in the dim distance I cood not help admittin that when it come to strewin the graves uv deceest ancestors there wuz sum disadvantages attendin the patriorkle systum.

Petroleum V. Nasby, P. M., (Which is Postmaster,) and likewise Professor uv Biblikle Politicks in the Southern Classikle & Military Institoot.

The Fool and his Money—When the first oil fever broke out in Pennsylvania in 1863, one of the earliest and best oil-producing farms was that of the widow McClintock, in Venango county. Several wells, with products ranging from 200 to 2,500 barrels a day, were struck at intervals during 1863 and 1864, and the income in money from the territory was almost fabulous in amount. The old lady owning the property did not live long to enjoy her good fortune, but died in 1864, and left her all, without reservation, to her adopted son; then about twenty years old. This youth, like the hero of Miss Edward's pleasant novel, "Half a Million of Money," who came suddenly into possession of a like amount, had not been taught to understand the value of dollars and cents, and, unlike that character, he had no refined tastes, and threw his wealth away with the most lavish folly. Of course he rushed to New York and there, in a year and a half, he squandered two millions of dollars. Of course the most ingenious extravagance was necessary to accomplish this enormous amount. The nephew not only entered into every species of debauchery—not only lost a hundred thousand dollars in two nights at faro—but bought superb teams and gave them away after an hour's ownership, supported a swarm of human leeches of both sexes, and even equipped a negro minstrel troupe, presenting each member with a costly diamond ring and pin. His brilliant career is now over, and oddly enough, he fills the position of door-keeper to the travelling minstrel company which his own munificence organized, and his farm on Oil creek has been disposed of at public sale for arrears of government tax.—*Exchange.*

Hold on, Boys.—Hold on to your tongue when you are just ready to swear, lie or speak harshly, or use any improper word.

Hold on to your hand when you are about to strike, steal, or do any improper act.

Hold on to your foot when you are on the point of kicking, running away from study or pursuing the path of error, shame or crime.

Hold on to your temper when you are angry, excited or imposed upon, or others are angry about you

Hold on to your heart when evil persons seek your company, and invite you to join in their games, mirth and revelry.

Hold on to your good name at all times for it is much more valuable to you than gold, high places or fashionable attire.

Hold on to the truth, for it will serve you well and do you good throughout eternity.

Hold on to your virtue—it is above all price to you, in all times and places.

Hold on to your good character, for it is, and ever will be, your best wealth.

The following epitaph is actually to be seen on a stone in Wolverhampton church dated 1690.

Here lies the bones
Of Joseph Jones,
Who ate while he was able;
But once o'erfed,
He dropt down dead,
And fell beneath the table.
When from the tomb,
To meet his doom,
He rises amidst sinners;
Since he must dwell
In heaven or hell,
Take him—which gives best dinners.

Easy Lesson—The Earth.

The earth is an old subject—we don't know how old. Wise men have endeavored to ascertain its age various ways, and have succeeded very well, only differing in their calculations a few thousand centuries or so.

We have several reasons for writing upon the earth, the principal one being the imperfect facilities afforded for getting upon any other planet to write.—Nothing prevents our writing upon the sun or the moon, except the difficulty of getting there.

The earth is the third planet in order from the sun, and the largest within the belt of the planetoids. We have wondered, sometimes, why the earth did not have a belt all to herself, being the Champion of the Universe.

The ancients looked upon the earth as a flat dice, swimming upon the water like a piece of toast in a basin of milk. Once upon a time a lot of adventurous young ancients started out to find the jumping off place, and continuing on a straight line, they were astonished to find themselves on the very spot whence they started. They informed their parents of the circumstance, and they, after about a century of painful and laborious thought upon the subject, came to the conclusion that the earth must be round, "because if it aint," triumphantly asked a jolly old ancient, "how could the boys ha' got *around* it?"

There was no getting around that, and the earth has been of a spherical form ever since.

It is estimated that about two-thirds of the surface of the globe is covered with water. Although millions of living creatures slake their thirst daily, the quantity of water has not been materially diminished for centuries past, at least not since the introduction of whiskey shops, which prove a great saving of water, and are therefore of immense benefit to navigation.

The great distance from the earth to the sun is 96,000,000 miles, and the least distance something over 94,000,000 miles A saving of 2,000,000 could be effected if a railroad should ever connect the two, by taking least distance. This would shorten the time consumed in running, and reduce the expense very materially. Any railroad man will tell you that.

The mean distance from the earth to the sun is 95,000,000 miles, which is no mean distance, either, when you try to walk it.

The earth moves round the sun from east to west, consuming 365 days and 6 hours in every revolution, travelling nights and Sunday. Joshua, it will be remembered by some commanded the sun to stand still, and she is standing *still*. It ain't every fool of a planet that can get around the sun. The earth does it, however. She would get around most anything.

The earth turns upon its axis, making one revolution every twenty-four hours, except in Mexico—there they have a revolution two or three times a day. The earth and her axis were thick as peas together at one time, but one day the earth got down on her and turned on it.

It is revolutions of the earth that make night and day, to everybody but printers and editors who work on morning papers—it is all day with them.

After digging a certain depth into the bowels of the earth the temperature becomes warm and it grows warmer as you warm to your work, so that at the depth of thirty miles, (as we are informed by a gentleman who dug that distance one July morning,) everything is like molten iron at a white heat. There is good reason for believing that people who cheat the *printer*, are sent thirty miles into the depth of the earth when they die.

The earth is not such a dismal place to live upon as many try to make it out. So far as our knowledge extends, it is far preferable to any of her sister planets as a permanent residence. At least, we are satisfied with it, and intend to remain here as long as we are "on earth."

The Spirit of a Man—It seems that we've a woman or two in this city who is capable of handling the reins of government, as will be shown by what follows:

Our reporter was around hunting a house for a friend, and called to see a family who were preparing to vacate a cosy dwelling As the door stood open, reporter walked in without knocking, and his eyes straightway lighted on the dame of the household, who was making frantic lunges with a broom-stick at some object under the bed.

"Good morning, madam. Ah! you have a troublesome cat under there?"

"Troublesome cat?—no, sir! It's that sneaking husband of mine; and I'll have him out, or break every bone in his body!"

"You will eh?" said a faint voice under the bed. "Now, Susy, you may rave and pound, and pound and rave; but I'll be dogged if I'll come out from under this bed while I've *got the spirit of a man about me!*"—*Exchange.*

To economize is to draw in as much as possible. The ladies apply this art to their persons, and the result is a very small waste.

A Ghost Story.

That appartitions do not always wander without sufficient cause, is proved by the following, which is said to be well attested:

Last Tuesday fortnight, as Mrs. B., a lady of rather literary taste and studious habit, sat reading in the drawing room, the clock on the mantle piece struck twelve and as the last stroke reverberated thro' the apartments, the door was flung wide open! In the act of raising her head to repel the intrusion, her eyes rested on the form of her late husband! She screamed and fell senseless on the carpet! This brought up the members of her family; restoratives were administered, and when Mrs. B. had regained her suspended faculties, and being a woman of strong mind and highly cultivated intellect, she felt disposed to consider the whole distress she had undergone as the result of certain associations between the melancholy tale she had been perusing and her late loss. Last Tuesday night, however, retiring to her chamber, she went to bed a little before ten o'clock. Exactly as the clock struck twelve she was awakened from sleep, and distinctly beheld the aparition she had before seen, advancing from the table, on which stood her night lamp, till it stood opposite to and drew aside the curtains of her bed. The countenance of her beloved in life wore not its benevolent aspect; the eyes once beaming with affection, were now filled with stern regard on the trembling, half dissolved being, who, with the courage of desperation, thus adjured him, "Charles! dear Charles! why are you come again?"

"Jessie," slowly and solemnly spoke the shadowy form, waving in his hand a small roll of writing paper, "*Jessie pay my newspaper accounts, and let me rest in peace!*"

The Marriage Fee.—The late doctor Bounton was once disputing with a farmer about the ease with which a minister earned his money.

'Now,' said the farmer, when you are called on to marry a couple, you never expect a sum less than three dollars—this for a few minutes' service.'

'Pooh!' replied the doctor, I would agree to give you half of my next marriage fee for a bushel of potatoes.'

'Very well,' said the farmer; I'll take your offer, and send you the potatoes.

A few days afterwards the doctor was called on to splice a couple at Dogtown a place about four miles from where he lived. When the ceremony was over the bridegroom said to the worthy minister:

'Well, parson, I s'pose I must fork something over for your trouble. What say you to taking one of my terrier pups? The best breed I tell you, in the country. Shockin' nice to have in the barn. Worth full five dollars—and I suppose a figure 2 would do for the splice?'

The doctor took the pup with joy; was too good; he hastened to the farmer, saying:

'Now, friend, here is my fee—how shall we divide it?'

The farmer relished the joke so well that he increased the potatoes to half a dozen bushels.

A Minister in Maryland was called to the door one bitter cold night in January, by a young man who asked him to perform the marriage ceremony.

'Certainly,' said the minister. 'When do you require my service?'

'Immediately,' was the reply.

'But where is the bride?' inquired the astonished pastor.

'Why,' said the groom, 'Sal was so bashful she hid herself behind the woodpile till I had asked you to tie the knot. Come out, Sal' Being thus admonished, the blushing bride came forth from her place of concealment, followed her affianced into the parsonage, and the loving pair were soon made happy.

A Raw Pickle.—'Mother,' asked a tall gawkey, "what did you and dad used to do when he came courting you?'

'Good arth and seas! what put that into the boy's head? What do you mean, Jedediah?"

'Well, I went over to see Peggy Haskins tother night, and she told me I didn't know how to court. I asked her to show me, and sez she, 'Ax your marm!' What did you do, mother?"

"La sus! Why, Jed, we used to sit in the corner and eat roast turkey!"

"Good gracious! times aint as they used to be, mother. sartin—the only thihg Peggy gin me was *a raw pickle!*"

'That's a pretty bird, grandma,' said a little boy.

'Yes,' replied the old dame, 'and he never cries.'

'That's because he's never washed,' rejoined the yougster.

A Patient Lad.—'Ben,' said a father the other day, 'I'm busy now; but as soon as I can get time I mean to give you a flogging.'

'Don't hurry yourself, papa,' said he, 'I can wait.'

Modesty in a woman is like the color on her cheek—decidedly becoming, if not put on.

The worst organ grinder—a hollow tooth that plays the deuce.

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