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The Planters' Advocate.

By THOMAS J. TURNER. "TRUTH ALONE IS KNOWLEDGE—KNOWLEDGE IS POWER." TWO DOLLARS PER ANNUM.

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Interesting Story.

From Household Words.

KATIE:

OR,

The Daughter of the Evil Eye.

I.

In the cottage to the left hand of the forge at Harwood, there lived, about five and twenty years ago, a man of the name of Christopher—or, as the country-folks abbreviated it Kester—Pateman. He had formally held the post of village blacksmith and farrier, but had long since retired from the exercise of his craft. He was said to have the gift of the evil eye; not that he was a malicious man, but that involuntary his look blighted whatever it fixed upon. Friend or enemy, his own children or aliens, it was all one: Kester's eye settled on them, and they withered away. No single thing prospered with him.—The crops on his little farm were always either frosted, blighted, or miserably thin; or, if they were good and abundant, rain came after the corn was cut, and it lay out until it sprouted and rotted away; once he got it all stacked and the stack took fire; another time the grain was threshed out and stored up in safety, but the rats devoured a third of it. His cattle were the leanest in the country; his sheep died of disease; his children perished one by one as they grew up to manhood, and womanhood; every horse he shod fell lame before it had gone a mile. Kester was a miserable man; all the country avoided him as if he had got the plague.

Kester had one child left; a daughter born long after the rest; she being the offspring of a young Irish girl whom he had chosen to marry in his old age. The Irish girl ran away soon after the child's birth, on the plea of having a husband in her own country whom she liked better.

Kester made no attempt to bring her back, but contented himself with spoiling Katie. Katie was not a bit like his other children had been; she was her mother over again. Two wide opened dark blue eyes, a white skin considerably freckled, black elf lock always in a tangle, a wide red mouth, and little teeth like pearls; a figure smart and lissome, and a step that lifted along as it kept time to an inward tune, made of of Katie a village beauty and coquette.

The strangest thing of all was (so the people thought at least) that Kester's evil eye had no effect on Katie. She grew as strongly and bloomed as hardily, as the wild briar on the hedge row. Everybody remembered the five children who were born to him by his first wife; how they pined from their cradle. They had a sickly hectic in their faces like their mother; while Katie's cheeks were as red as a damask rose; they crept about home weary and ailing always, while Katie was away in the woods, nutting and bird-nesting like a boy. Kester could deny her nothing, and she grew up to the wonder of the village, healthier, more wilful, and bonnier than any girl in the district.

II.

The blacksmith who had succeeded Kester Pateman a the village forge was a young man of Herculean strength, and a wild character. He was more than suspected of a tenderness for the Squire's pheasants, but the gamekeeper had not yet been found bold enough to give him a night encounter in the woods; his name was Rob McLean; he had been a soldier, and was discharged with a good conduct pension, after ten years service, and two wounds. He was Katie's first sweetheart. She was very proud to be seen walking with him in the green lane on Sunday nights; but it was more child's pride than anything else, for, when he began to talk about marrying, she laughed and said no, she was not for him, he was too old.

Jasper Linfoot, the miller's eldest son, next cast his eyes upon her and followed her like her shadow for a month; but no—Katie did not fancy him, he was too ugly, he squinted, he had red hair, and his legs were not both of the same length. Then there was Peter Askew, the Squire's huntsman, but he was a widower; and Phil Cressy, the gardener, but he was a goose; and Tom Carter—Katie could never abide a tailor.

While Katie, very hard to please, was coquetting with her would-be lovers, perfectly safe and perfectly heartfree, Kester Pateman had settled all the time whom she should marry—Johnny Martin—and nobody else. Johnny was the only son of Martin, the Squire's coachman, who had saved money. He was a simple young man, with lank hair, a meek expression of countenance, and some gift for expounding, which he practised to small select congregations in Pateman's barn every Sunday evening. When Kester announced his intention to his daughter, Katie pouted her lips and tossed her head, saying with an accent of superlative contempt: "That Johnny!" But she answered neither yea nor nay to her father's words; and the next Sunday "that Johnny" came courting with a little basket of cabbages on his arm, as an offering to his belle.

Katie looked as if it would have done her heart good to fling them, one after the other, in his fat, foolish face, but she restrained the impulse, and only said:

"I'll plant 'em out to-morrow, Johnny."

"Plant them out, Katie? Why they're to eat."

"Pigs?" asked Katie in innocent bewilderment. "We don't keep any."

"No, they're for you, Katie; they're the finest white hearts."

"Hearts! Oh, Johnny, take 'em away directly; hearts!—I never saw a heart before;" and she peeped into the basket with a face of horrified curiosity.

Now, Johnny had proclaimed that his affections had fallen on Katie because she was such a clever girl, and could do everything; but this exhibition of her talents by no means equalled his former impressions. He tried her again.

"Can't you cook, Katie? Did you never stuff and roast a heart for your father's dinner?"

"Oh, Johnny, and you putting up for the schoolmaster's place; what wicked nonsense you are talking! Surely you've called at the Blue Cow by the way?"

Johnny at this monstrous insinuation broke out into a cold prespiration; he was the most abstemious of young men, and had a name in the village for every variety of excellence; and Katie was quite capable of telling her suspicions everywhere. He endeavored to take her hand and put his arm around her waist; but Katie brought her palm against his cheek with such hearty good will that he was fain to subside upon his chair in meek dismay.

"If you do that again, Johnny Martin, I'll tell my father," she cried; and, with an affectation of great anger she bowled his cabbages out into the garden, and ordered him to march after them in a double quick time. He took up his hat and obeyed her, casting on her, as he went, the most pitiful and expostulatory glances.

"Don't stop at the Blue Cow, Johnny; go straight home," she cried as he went out the gate, and the defeated swain crept away quite dejected.

Katie returned into the house, and began to sleek her hair before the little glass by the kitchen fire, humming a tune all the while, and thinking how well she was rid of Johnny, when that worthy's voice sounded through the open window:

"I didn't stop at the Blue Cow, Katie." She turned smartly around with such a shrewish face that Johnny added, in haste to depreciate her wrath, "I left my basket, Katie; let me get it—it's in the corner."

"At your peril set foot over the door-stone, Johnny!" Johnny's pulmp countenance instantly disappeared. She snatched up the basket, threw it after him, and then took a hearty fit of laughter to herself.

III.

It was the beginning of harvest: and, on the evening of the day after Johnny Martin's inauspicious courting visit, Kester Pateman and Katie were sitting on the wooden bench before the door; she knitting, and he bemoaning, when a party of Irish reapers, with their sickles in their hands, came up the lane. They stopped at the gate, and one of the men asked if Kester wanted hands for his corn?

"No, I see nae the use o'hands," replied the old man, "it'll all be spoilt."

It had been a splendid season; and Kester's little fields showed as rich and ripe a crop as any in the country; it was quite ready for cutting, and the weather was settled and favorable.

"But, father, you must have hands," said Katie, who had a most irreverent disbelief in the evil eye; "two reapers and a binder, with you and me, will get the crops in this week, and I'll overlook 'em for luck." Kester stopped two men and a lad, and bade the others go higher up the lane to Marshall's farm. "But where's the good of it, Katie?" he added. "You'd have had a tidy fortune but for me. Go into the barn, lads, you'll get your supper 'enow." The old man was very despondent; for he had just lost a fine calf, which he thought to sell at a good price. Katie bade him cheer up, and went indoors to set out the supper for the reapers. When it was ready, she called them to come; three as Ragged Robbins as ever might have served for scare crows appeared at her bidding.

One of them was a tall, fine young man, with a head well set on his shoulders, a roguish eye, and a very decided national tongue. He looked at Katie, and she at him; and, for the first time in her life, the girl's eye fell, and her color rose. Alick seemed slightly bashful, too, very slightly—for, after dropping his glance on his plate for a second, it followed Katie too and fro in the kitchen without intermission, until she went out into the garden again. Alick could see her through the branches of briar across the window, standing at the gate with her father, talking to Rob McLean, and he immediately conceived an intense dislike for that well-built son of Vulcan, with the scar across his forehead.—Alick jumped to conclusions very quickly; he had fallen in love at first sight, and was ready to quarrel with any man who so much as looked at Katie.

Having made an end of his supper, he went out into the lane to his comrades, who were sitting under the hedge resting and munching lumps of bread and cheese.—Marshall's kitchen not being big enough to hold them all. Alick kept Katie at the gate in sight; and though she seemed never to look his way, she knew as well as if how he watched her; and moved perhaps by the natural spirit of coquetry, she marched with her knitting into the house, and shut herself up in her bed-room. It had a window looking on the lane, and Katie sat near it with her pins and stockings, peeping out sometimes to see how the evening went on, and whether there was promise of fine weather next day to cut the corn. Alick wandered off by-and-by. How should he know that tiny lattice in the bushy pear tree was Katie's?

IV.

Alick, Kester, Katie, and the rest were all in the fields next morning as soon as the sun was up. The reaping began. Katie would bind for Alick, and, during the day, the two exchanged a good many sharp words. Rob M'Lean came to lend a hand in the afternoon, and the men soon found each other out; but Rob had a decided advantage over the other. "Was there ever such a wild Irishman, all tattered and rags, ever seen in the country side before?" whispered Rob to Katie, as they sat under a tree, at four o'clock, eating the 'lowance that had been brought from the house; Katie gave Alick a sly glance and said "No." And, as Alick overheard both question and answer, he vowed vengeance against Rob.

That night in the lane there was Jasper Linfoot and Phil Cressy; and Katie talked and laughed with both of them; and the next day she was gossiping with Peter Askew over the field stile; and in the evening Tom Carter brought her some shreds of scarlet cloth that she wanted to weave into a mat, and Katie chattered with him; and the next day Johnny Martin came with an offering of summer apples, which (Alick being there to see) were graciously accepted. So Johnny was heartened into staying half an hour, sighing and smiling spasmodically. Alick went out very wrathful. "So many rivals are too many for one man," thought he. And, all the following morning, he took no more notice of Katie than he did he did of Kester—I mean, he seemed not to take notice of her.

Katie was as cross as sticks, and pretended she was ill, and must go home. Home, accordingly, she went, and tangled her knitting horribly. She had not been there long, when Alick came in at the gate with a long face, holding his hand in a handkerchief all stained with blood. Up sprang Katie, the color going out of her face with fright.

"You're hurt, Alick! O how have you done it? Let me see and bind it up."

"The least bit in creation, Miss Katie; but you're the best binder in the world, and it'll heal under your eyes," replied the wily Alick, uncovering the injured hand.

Katie got a sponge and water, and bathed it, and her pity fled.

"It's not much more than a scratch," said she; so Alick groaned miserably.

"Surely, Miss Katie, it's the hard heart you've got, for all your bonnie face," said he, reproachfully.

Katie blushed. Nobody else's compliments had ever had that pleasing effect before; and Alick suddenly took heart of grace, and said one or two more pretty things that did not seem to vex Katie very much. The dressing of the wound being done, Alick was obliged to go back to the field; carrying the 'lowance was an excuse for Katie to return too; so leaving her ball to the mercy of the cat on the floor, she got the basket and stone bottle of beer ready, and followed Alick. The reapers said 'lowance was early that day, and her father found fault about it.

Alick's reflections were of a more cheerful turn now. "Too many rivals may be as good as none," he thought. Indeed, he had found out—who knows by what freemasonry?—that Katie liked nobody so well as him; and he turned his discovery to good account. Did she encourage Rob, or Jasper, or Peter, or Johnny, or any one of her numerous admirers, by word or smile, he devoted himself to Jennie, the pretty Irish girl who was binding at Marshall's farm; and Katie's pillow could have testified that he had ample revenge.

Thus they went on till the last shock was in stack, and the Irish reapers began to travel north in search of fresh pastures. All went but Alick; and he, from his quick wit and sharp eye, had won favor with the squire's head keeper, who retained him as one of his watchers.

Although he had arrived at Harwood a scarecrow of rags, who so trim and spruce now as Alick? Katie had a secret pride in his appearance, as, with his gun on his arm and his gamebag slung over his shoulder, he followed the squire in the woods,—looking, as she thought, far the finer and handsomer gentleman. That Johnny's face had now become perfectly sickening to her, and none the less so because Kester would talk of their marriage: for the young man had been chosen village schoolmaster, with a salary of thirty pounds, a cottage and a garden rent free, and coals ad libitum; so that he had a home to take her to.

Katie was having a good cry one afternoon in the house by herself, over the thoughts of Johnny, when there came a knock to the door. She got up and opened it expecting to see a neighbor come in for a gossip; but, instead, there stood Alick.

Directly he saw what she had been about, he cried, "who has been vexing thee, Katie? Only tell me—tell me Katie!" And a smile broke through her tears, as she said, "O, Alick, it's that Johnny!" And they looked in each other's faces and laughed.

What Alick said more this tradition betrayeth not; but, whatever it was, Johnny's prospects of a wife were not increased thereby; and when Alick went away home to his cottage at the park gate, it was with a triumphant step, and his curly head in the air; and Katie cried no more over her knitting that afternoon.

V.

Village gossip soon proclaimed the fact of Alick's visits to Kester Pateman's cottage; and amongst the first to hear of them was Johnny. He went and remonstrated with Katie, and threatened to tell her father. Katie's blood was up, and she dared him to tell at once. So Johnny did tell, and Kester bade Alick keep away. Katie's for no Irish beggar, but for a decent Harwood lad," said he, surlily. "And you'll come about my place no more, Sir Gamekeeper—d'ye hear?"

Alick feigned obedience, but he and Katie met in the green lane Sundays. There was a little gate from the pasture where Kester's cows were, into the wood; and often at milking time, you might have seen Alick leaning over the gate, talking to Katie at her task; but, as the evenings grew cold, and the cattle were brought up to the house, these meetings were less frequent, for Kester began to watch his daughter as a cat watches a mouse. He suspected her.

The neighbors noticed Katie become graver and paler, and shook their heads portentously. "She's fading like the rest of them," they said; "she'll not see the spring—Kester's smitten her, poor man!"

And, by-and-by, Kester saw the change himself. When he did see it, his heart stopped beating. "Why, Katie, my bairn! Thou'st not going off in a waste like thy brothers and sisters?"

Katie was knitting by the firelight, and as her needles went, her tears fell. "I don't know, father, but the neighbors say I look like it. I'm sick and ill"—and her tears flowed faster.

Kester kissed her, and went out in a black mood.

"Oh, what'll I do? What'll I do for thee, Katie, my bairn?" said he, aloud. "I'm fit to tear my eyes out o' head! What have I done, that all goes ill with me?"

It happened that Alick was loitering about in the hope of a chance word with Katie, and he overheard Kester's lamentation.

"What's the matter, Master Pateman? Katie's not ill, is she?" he ventured to ask. Glad to unfold his misery to anybody, Kester told Alick of his daughter's changed looks, and what everybody attributed them to.

"Go to the wise man, 'Bram Rex, at Swinford, to-morrow: he's got a charm agen the Evil Eye," suggested Alick, in haste. "He'll tell you what to do; you may trust him."

Somewhat comforted, Kester re-entered the house. Alick went off to Swinford to prepare the sage for his visitor the next day.

VI.

"Where are you going, father?" Katie asked, the following morning, as her father came to breakfast dressed as if for church or market.

"I'm going to 'Bram Rex, Katie, to hear what he says about something. He's a wonderful wise man."

"It is about the stacks, father? I'd fear none, all's right so far. Them Irish reapers brought you luck, I'm thinking."

"It's not about the corn, Katie, but thee. I maun't lose thee, my bairn. Alick says 'Bram has a charm, and I'm going to get it for thee. I don't like thy white looks and thy crying."

Katie dropped her spoon, and smiled to herself as she stooped to pick it up again, with a face like a rose, which she was fain to hide by looking away from the window for ever so long.

After breakfast, Kester mounted his old grey mare, and went slowly to Swinford, very mournful, and much troubled in his mind. The village of Swinford was, by the river, seven miles from Harwood, and the high road ran along the bank, with a steep fall to the water, which was covered with hazel and low shrubs. "Wherefore shouldn't I fling myself in there, and save the poor bairn?" he said to himself, as he saw the river shining and glancing through the bushes. "But, after all," he added, "it will be as well to see old 'Bram Rex first, and hear what he's got to say to her. My poor bairn! Poor Katie!"

So he went forward to a small slated cottage at the entrance of the village, and knocked at the door.

"Come in," said a rough voice. Kester fastened his bridle to the paling of the garden, and entered.

The wise man was sitting in a large chair by the fireside, stirring a composition in a pan, which had far more of the perfume of a poached hare than hell-broth, which the gossips said he was in the habit of making. 'Bram was an old man, with a long beard, and the suttlest and most wily of smiles. He looked up at his visitor from under his brows cunningly and shrewdly, then motioned him to be seated by a wave of his hand. Kester was not here for the first time: many a half crown had he paid 'Bram for prognostics touching the weather, information about lost articles, and charms for his cattle against disease, and his crops against blight, but he had never felt such a perfect submission to the awful sage in the chair covered with cats' skins.

"I know your errand, Kester Pateman," said 'Bram solemnly. "I have been working out the horoscope all night. It is a case of difficulty."

Kester was profoundly impressed by this prescience, and his poor old hands shook as he drew out his leathern purse, and said:

"'Bram, it's not money, nor corn this time; it's my bairn, Katie."

The sage nooded and echoed.

"Katie! I knew it."

"What must I give you? This?"

And Kester took out a gold piece, and laid it on the seemingly unconscious palm of 'Bram.

"Enough, Kester Pateman," replied he enough. Tell me what you want—your daughter is smitten——"

"Yes, 'Bram; but there was one told me you had a charm agen the Evill Eye. Would it save her? Will you sell it?" asked Kester, trembling all over with anxiety, and stretching out his feeble hands with the purse to 'Bram.

'Bram took the purse, but said severely:

"I do not sell. Kester Pateman—talk not of selling. Describe to me your child's symptoms and be at peace."

The wise man had a voice of such preter-natural depth that it really seemed asif his words were also of superior sagacity. Kester listened to him with the profoundest faith, and then gave a description of Katie's state—her pale cheeks, her stillness, and her crying. 'Bram shook his head.

"I don't say she'll die, Kester, and I can't say she'll live; but there's one chance, if you'll try it."

"I'll do anything, 'Bram—why I'd die for that bairn! You don't know how I love my Katie. What's the chances 'Bram?"

"The stars will not be hurried, Kester Pateman; they have not spoken yet. Come and see."

The sage led the way into a second room, in the middle of which was a table whereon lay a sheet of paper with sundry figures and scrawls thereon.

"Look here," and 'Bram began to trace a line with his forefinger. "This is the girl's line of life. Mark it well, Kester Pateman."

Kester, dizzy with anxiety, fixed his eyes on it intently.

Kester nodded his head.

"She must not marry any one of these with the cross agen 'em. Not this with the spade, nor the figure with the sack, nor him with the tailor's goose, nor yet this man leading off a horse, nor yet that one with the peacked cap and ferule—the stars have spoken agen 'em all."

Kester wiped his forehead, and said he saw that clearly enough.

"Mark me again, Kester," pursued the sage, sinking his voice until it sounded as if it came up out of the toes of his boots; "mark well, for I can't show you it a second time. This is the sign of a powerful man who has come over the sea—he's got a sickle and a gun. The sickle means that he shall reap abundance o' corn, and live on the fat o' the land all his days, and the gun is a token that he's a brave man; and his face being to Katie's line o' life is a sign that he loves her, and that she has a thought for him.—Are you hearkening, Kester?"

"Yes, 'Bram, I hear. Oh! but you are a knowledgeable man. These," following the first marks with his fingers, "are surely Bob M'Lean, and Jasper Linfoot, and here's Phil Cressy, and Peter Askew, and Tom Carter, and Johnny Martin——"

"Them's their names! None o' 'em must your Katie marry, the stars has otherwise bespoke for 'em. Do you know who this last is, Kester?"

"It maun be Alick, the wild Irish reaper, him that's at the Squire's now."

"Him it is, and no other! The interpretation thereof is just!" said 'Bram, emphatically, and he rolled up the sheet of paper.

Kester Pateman was greatly in awe of 'Bram, but he endeavored to protest against the conclusion.

"'Bram, couldn't you bring forward another?" said he, hesitatingly.

"Can I alter the stars, Kester?" replied the sage in his sternest tone; "I do not make, or mend, or mar, I only read for the blind what is written. You must give your bairn Katie to Alick, or she'll die."

"O! I will—surely I will, 'Bram," in great haste cried poor Kester. "He's honest if he's poor, and Katie'll not have a penny. Tell me, Kester, will I sell my corn well this time!"

"You shall," responded 'Bram; "you shall sell it as others do."

"Have you that charm agen the Evil Eye that one told me of, 'Bram?" Kester humbly inquired.

"Yes, Kester; but it is not to be bought with silver nor gold. Send me half a bushel of your best nits, and you shall have it. I've parted with a many, but I've only one on hand now, and it's a good one."

"Let me have it, 'Bram. "You'll get the nits to-morn."

'Bram went to a drawer in the dresser, and after rumaging for some minutes amongst its contents; he brought forth a hare's foot with a string attached to it. He smoothed it carefully with his hand, muttering a formula of words to himself as he did so.

"You must put this in your pillow, Kester, and every morning, the first thing when you get up, open the window, and fix on some particular tree or bush, and look at it steady, while you spell your own name backwards three times.—You must look every day fasting at the same thing, and in time it will wither away and die. And so you'll be cured, and in smiting the tree the rest o' your things 'll be safe."

Kester took the hare's foot as tenderly as if it had been a sacred relic, and put it in his bosom.

"Thank you, 'Bram—and you're sure Kate 'll be well if I let her wed Alick?"

"Yes, man! You'll find the lass's face shining when you get home, for she's feeling that your heart's changed towards her already. The stars has been whispering of it to her."

Quite cheerfully Kester trotted the grey mare home, and, as if immediately to prove the sage's words true, Katie came to meet him at the gate as rosy as a peony. Alick, at that minute, was escaping by the cow house door into the pasture, after telling Katie of his visit to 'Bram Rex, and preparing her for its probable result.

VII.

In the centre of the great meadow directly opposite Kester Pateman's chamber window there was a fine old oak tree, quite in the maturity of years and strength. Under its wide spreading branches a herd of cattle could find shelter from the summer heat, and in its giant bole was timber enough to build a frigate almost. When Kester rose the morning after his visit to 'Bram Rex, he opened his window and his eyes fell on this tree the first thing, as they had probably done for many a year. This time he gazed on it fixedly, half expecting to see the leaves and branches shrivel under his gaze; but he spelt his name backwards three times, and there was no visible effects. He went to market after breakfast and sold his corn, and bought a new cow; so implicit was his faith in 'Bram's charm; meeting Johnny Martin, told him ruefully, that he must leave off thinking of Katie; for she was not permitted to be his wife.

"Why not, Master Pateman?" demanded Johnny, to whom this sudden change was incomprehensible.

"Because thou's bespoken, Johnny, for another woman; and there'd be contradiction and the mischief and all in we to go agen what's ordained. I spoke to 'Bram Rex yesterday—it was he tell's me."

"'Bram Rex! the vagabond fortune-teller!" exclaimed Johnny, puffing out his fat cheeks in token of contempt, for Johnny pretended to more light than his neighbors. "Is that Katie's best reason, Kester Pateman."

"Maybe not, man; she's no inkling that I've changed my mind yet. I 'ant spoken to her, but I maun."

"But it's not fair to jilt a poor fellow, because 'Bram Rex tells you a pack of lies," remonstrated Johnny. "I'll speak to Katie myself, with your leave, Master Pateman, and ask her her reasons."

"Her reasons, Johnny, is that she can't abide thee; thou's a good lad, but it goes agen the grain with her to think o' thee. She's a saucy lassie, and her that's bespoken you by the stars has a mint of money."

This happy invention of Kester's was uttered boldly as a consolation to the forsaken swain, and he, as such, accepted it. Johnny was a credulous as his neighbors.

In about a month after Kester Pateman's visit to 'Bram Rex there was a wedding at Harwood, and such a dance in Kester's barn as had never been heard of in the country-side before. All the defeated swains were there. Johnny Martin and Tom Carter made the music on two independent minded violins, and lost, in this opportunity of distinguishing themselves, the sore sensation of disappointment. Johnny behaved nobly; he presented Katie with half a peck of apples as a wedding present, and looked glorious all night. When Katie came near him once he whispered—

"Katie did you tell anybody about the Blue Cow?"

"No, man; it was only my fun," replied she mischievously; and Johnny drew a long breath of relief.

What a dance that was to the tune of Merrily danced the Quaker's wife and merrily danced the Quaker! It seemed that it would never come to an end. So loud and hilarous was the mirth at the supper after it, that nobody heard the thunder rattling overhead, or saw, when all separated and went home, the lightning leaping about the hills. But there had been certainly a terrible storm that night though few people at Harwood recollect it; and the next morning, when Kester opened his window, as his custom was, to give the charmed gaze at the oak tree in the meadow, behold! one side was reft entirely of its boughs and a black scarred trunk faced him instead of yesterday's majestic growth. Kester started back affrighted. Could this be the effect of his Evil Eye?

If you ever go to Harwood, as you ride into the village, in the meadow opposite the blacksmith's forge you will see the blasted trunk of the giant oak tree, and, should curiosity prompt you to ask how it came to be destroyed, any gossip will tell you that one Kester Pateman withered it away by the poor of the Evil Eye—he having gazed at it every morning, fasting for that purpose. They will tell you also that, from having been one of the most unlucky of men, he became one of the most prosperous in the district, with grand-children, and great-grand-children, and flocks and herds innumerable.

Alick and Katie still live in the farm-house down by the water pasture, which the Squire let them have when they were married. By dint of talking of it, they have come themselves to believe in the Evil Eye. 'Bram Rex's descendants live and flourish in various districts; though 'Bram himself, for some mistake respecting another person's property, was transported to a distant colony to exercise his craft there—with what success this tradition sayeth not.

Selected Poetry.

From the National Intelligencer.

FLOWERS.

Ere heaven's last angel flew from Eden's bowers
He sought the drooping Eve, and, offering flowers,
"Take these," he said; "in their immortal bloom
Resides a charm to cheer thy future gloom."

She pressed them to her bosom, and the while
Looked up and caught the angel's holy smile.

Those flowers had been her favorites many a day,
When the glad angels thronged around her way;
O, doubly dear they were now all was o'er,
And Eden closed, a home for her no more!

She called their music-names, and kissed them still.
The name of one, that by a happy rill
Stood modestly, she "Virtue" called, and this,
For memory's sake, received her lingering kiss—
The lily, thus since known, and next the rose,
Worthy to bear the name its guardian choose;
That name, save Virtue, every name above,
The soul-enchanting, heaven-revealing "Love."

Dear were these flowers to Eve where'er she went,
Restoring Eden even in banishment,
Or whispering of an Eden yet to be,
Happy, eternal, from the Tempter free.

Dear were these flowers to Eve; and, as she died,
Calling her favorite daughters to her side,
"Take these," she said, and in a little while
Left them the memory of an angel smile.

Since then Eve's favorite daughters ever wear
The blooming rose and lily, tender fair,
Are still with Virtue crowded, adorned with Love,
And that angelic smile that lures the soul above!

WASHINGTON, *January*, 1857. J. S. D.

Selected Miscellany.

Correspondence between Daniel Webster and Daniel S. Dickinson.

There are few, probably, who have not read with feelings of the highest gratification the noble and fervid expressions of respect and affection contained in a letter addressed by the great and incomparable Webster to the Hon. Daniel S. Dickinson, on the retirement of the latter from the Senate of the United States, in 1850; but the reply, which may be found in Webster's private correspondence, edited by his son and lately issued, which is as felicitous in expression as it evidently is sincere and heartfelt, few have seen this being the first time, we believe, it has been published. They will doubtless both be perused with deep interest, emanating as they do, the one from a great, departed statesman, who possessed one of the most profound, clear, and logical minds the country has ever produced—the other from one who still remains with us, and moves in the peaceful shades of private life, and whose powerful attainments, great honesty of purpose, indomitable energy of character, and enlarged experience in political life, places him in the foremost rank of living statesman:

Mr. Webster to Mr. Dickinson.

WASHINGTON, *Sept.* 27, 1850.

MY DEAR SIR: Our companionship in the Senate is dissolved. After this long and most important session, I am about to return to your home; and I shall try to find leisure to visit mine. I hope we may meet each other again two months hence for the discharge of our duties in our respective stations in the Government. But life is uncertain, and I have not felt willing to take leave of you without placing in your hands a note, containing a few words which I wish to say to you.

In the earlier part of our acquaintance, my dear sir, occurrences took place which I remember with constantly increasing pain, because the more I have known of you the greater have been my esteem for your character and my respect for your talents. But it is your noble, able, manly, and patriotic conduct in support of the great measures of this session which has entirely won my heart and secured my highest regard. I hope you may live long to serve your country; but I do not think you are ever likely to see a crisis in which you may be able to do so much, either for your own distinction or for public good. You have stood where others have fallen; you have advanced with firm and manly step where others have wavered, faltered, and fallen back, and for one I desire to thank you, and to commend your conduct out of the fulness of an honest heart.

This letter needs no reply. It is, I am aware, of very little value; but I have thought you might be willing to receive it, and, perhaps, to leave it where it would be seen by those who may come after you.

I pray you, when you reach your own threshold, to remember me most kindly to your wife and daughter, and I remain, my dear sir, with the truest esteem, your friend and obedient servant, DANL. WEBSTER.

Hon. D. S. DICKINSON,
U. S. Senate.

Mr. Dickinson to Mr. Webster.

[PRIVATE.]

BINGHAMTON, *Oct.* 5, 1850.

MY DEAR SIR: I perused and reperused the beautiful note which you placed in my hands as I was about leaving Washington, with deeper emotion than I have ever experienced, except under some domestic vicissitude. Since I learned the noble and generous qualities of your nature, the unfortunate occurrence in our early acquaintance, to which you refer, has caused me many moments of painful regret, and your confiding communication has furnished a powerful illustration of the truth, that "to err is human, to forgive is divine." Numerous and valued are the testimonials of confidence and regard which a somewhat extended acquaintance and lengthened public service have gathered around me; but among them all there is none to which my heart clings so fondly as this.

I have presented it to my family and friends as the proudest passage in the history of an eventful life, and shall transmit it to my posterity as a sacred and cherished memento of friendship. I thank Heaven that it has fallen to my lot to be associated with yourself and others in resisting the mad current of disunion which threatened to overwhelm us; and the recollection that my course upon a question so momentous has received the approbation of the most distinguished American statesman, has more than satisfied my ambition. Believe me, my dear sir, that of all the patriots who came forward in the evil day of their country, there was no voice so potential as your own. Others could buffet the dark and angry waves, but it was your strong arm that could roll them back from the holy citadel.

May that beneficent Being who holds the destiny of men and nations, long spare you to the public service, and may your vision never rest upon the disjointed fragments of a convulsed and ruined confederacy.

I pray you to accept and to present to Mrs. Webster the kind remembrances of myself and family, and to believe me friendly yours,

D. S. DICKINSON.

"If you ever think of marrying a widow, my son," said an anxious parent to his heir, "select one whose first husband was hung, that is the only way to prevent her throwing his memory in your face, and making annoying comparisons." "Even that won't prevent it," exclaimed a crusty old bachelor, "she'll then praise him and say hanging would be too good for you."

Touching Incident.

A correspondent of the *Methodist Protestant*, after alluding to the attacks of the Northern journals on slavery, relates the following anecdote:

Being in Surry county, Virginia, in the fall of 1850, I attended a religious meeting held in an old colonial church, one of the relics of our union with England. After a warm sermon, an invitation was given to seekers of religion to approach the altar of prayer. Among others who availed themselves of this invitation was a gentleman, I judge, of forty-five years of age. There seemed to be much sympathy felt for him by those present, and I judged him to be a man well thought of in the neighborhood, which I learned was a fact. But I was particularly attracted by the manifest sympathy of an aged negro in the congregation. I judged him to be a man of eighty years; his frame, once athletic and erect, was now bent beneath the accumulated weight of years. I learned the relation of master and slave subsisted between the penitient at the altar and the weeping old man at his seat, which was near to the end door of the church. The penitent, truly agonized in prayer, and old Jeffrey, for this was the name of the negro, evidently joined with deep feeling in the prayer of the wrestling mourner. It was not long ere a shout, as from those victorious in battle, went up, and the wall of the house resounded with the praises of the victor; the wrestler had prevailed, prayer was answered, and the happy convert was now here, and now there, embracing friends and receiving their hearty congratulations. But none in the house were more joyous than old Jeffrey, and, raising himself on his staff which gave him support, he made his way towards his happy young master, (as he called him,) and the master at the same time making towards his slave, they met about midway the church, and the convert fell on the neck of his old servant and wept with joy in the aisle of the house of God, and in the face of the congregation. And words like these were spoken by Jeffrey, "Bless God, my poor boy, I have been praying for you this long time."

There was not a dry eye in that assembly; and the two, master and slave, were the only objects of attraction for the time.

Girls' Boarding Schools.

The Medical Journal is down upon the fashionable *boarding school*. Many parents regard these schools as almost essential to a finished education, and girls passing into their teens look forward to them as an earthly elysium. The Journal finds little to recommend, and much to condemn in these institutions. It says:

A few weeks ago we were called upon to see a young girl suffering from general debility, neuralgic pains, vertigo, and headache. She had just returned from a boarding school in a neighboring city, where she spent only a month before her health, previously good, failed. On inquiry we found the routine of the school to be as follows, and to be certain of the correctness of her account, we have made inquiries of others familiar with its management:

The pupils rise at five in the morning. They study from 5 to 7 o'clock. From 7 to 8 o'clock they have breecadfast. From 8 in the morning to 2 P. M., is spent in the school room, a period of six hours. At 2 they have dinner, and 3 to 5 are allowed to walk or take other exercise.—From 5 to 6 they have tea, and then study from 7 to 9, when they are sent to bed.

Their diet is light and unsubstial, and their appetites under such a regimen are as feeble as the diet.

Now, here the day of a young, growing and spirited school girl is divided into periods of seven hours for sleep, three for meals, two for exercise, and twelve for study. Every person under full adult age needs eight or nine hours sleep, and, in order that sleep should be healthful and refreshing, they require at least six hours of recreation and active exercise.

The time for meals is sufficiently ample in the instance here mentioned, but to allow only two hours for exercise, and that in the afternoon, when heat and fatigue dispose them to rest, is positively murderous. And twelve hours' study per day is at least five hours too much for any young person.

A child in full, vigorous health, will acquire more knowledge in six hours daily than in twelve, for full health and mental vigor are incompatible with the discipline we have described.

This system of education takes young, robust, romping girls, and transforms them to slow, languid, worthless women. To acquire skill on the piano, a little bad French, and a namby-pamby knowledge of the "English branches," they sacrifice health, energy, all capacity for the duties of womanhood, and not unfrequently for life itself.

A Poetical Effusion of Daniel Webster.

On an afternoon preceding the evening of a ball, a lady of Mr. Webster's acquaintance trod upon some sharp tool and cut her foot. Wrote upon his muse, which, to use his own words, had slept some years, broke out "like an Irish rebellion," and produced the following:

"Rust seize the axe, the hoe or spade,
Which in your foot this gash has made!
Which cut through kid and silk and skin,
To spill the blood that was within;
By which you're forced to creep and crawl,
Nor frisk and frolic at the ball!

"But Clara, Clara! were thy heart
As tender as thy pedal part;
From thy sweet lips did love but flow,
Swift as blood gushes from thy toe,
So many beaux would not complain
That all their bows and vows are vain."

"A LADY."—The word "lady" is an abbreviation of the Saxon *laffday*, which signifies *breadgiver*. The mistress of a manor, at a time when affluent families resided constantly at their country mansions, was accustomed, once a week, or oftener, to distribute among the poor a quantity of bread. She bestowed the boon with her own hand, and made the hearts of the needy glad by the soft words and gentle amenities which accompanied her benevolence. The widow and orphan "rose up and called her blessed"—the destitute and the afflicted received her praises—all classes of the poor embalmed her in their affections as the *laffday*—the giver of bread and dispenser of comfort—a sort of ministering angel in a world of sorrow. Who is a lady now? Is it she who spends her days in self-indulgence, and her nights in dissipation and folly? Is it she who rivals the gayety of the butterfly, but hates the industrious hum of the "busy bee?" Is it she who wastes on gaudy finery what would make many a widow's heart sing with joy, and who, when the rags of the orphan flutter about her in the wind, sighs for a place of refuge, as if the pestilence were in the breeze? This may be a "woman of fashion"—she may be an admired and admiring follower of the gay world.

A Clergyman lecturing one afternoon to his female prisioners said: "Be not proud that our Lord paid your sex the distinguished honor of appearing first to a female after the resurrection, for it was only done that the news might circulate the sooner."

TOUCHING.—Two chileren the daughter, of a minister in California, died recently within five days of each other. Their names were Bertha and Amy. Bertha, a few moments before her departure, said: "Amy, come!" Amy died saying: "To-morrow I shall see Bertha!

A little girl hearing her mother speak of going into half mourning, said: "Why are we going into half mourning, mamma; are any of our relations half dead!"

Fortune sometimes is heaped up like the snow, and like snow melts and thaws to nothing again.

Daniel Webster in a New Character.

The New York *Express*, in a very pleasant notice of Mr. Barney's book, speaks of the manner in which that gentleman has figured though his long life, having been feted and courted by the *tip top* society of all the great cities, and been on a footing of the most friendly character with the greatest statesmen of his time, and with Presidents and Foreign Ministers, by many of whom he has been *domesticated* in their establishments. With these opportunities, the *Express* is now his memory is good and his pen lively, and he may write a book that will make the people stare. We hopes, however, that he will not omit the scene in which Daniel Webster figured in a light, and which it describes as follows:

There is one incident in the life of Barnum's droll—very droll—that we hope he will not omit. In 1850, soon after the passage of the Compromise Bill, he invited about thirty members of Congress and others, to dine in a restaurant on Pennsylvania Avenue, and he prepared places and dinners for only about ten or twelve—but the whole thirty came—and the night happened to be a most uncomfortable one. The dinner was to be at 6 o'clock, P. M., but it was not ready until 9 o'clock. There was Webster, growling like a hungry and starving lion—and men of all parties the most eminent in position in the United States. Never were let loose upon a dinner a crosser or a hungrier set of men:—but when, at 9 o'clock, the th