

ODDITIES OF SOUTHERN LIFE.

EVERY people is known by its jokes. Men are least restrained in their mirth, and give therein the largest play to their likes and dislikes. The humor of Harry Fielding, Thackeray tells us, is wonderfully wise and detective; it flashes upon a rogue and lightens up a rascal like a policeman's lantern. The same may be said of the humor of Rabelais, though the objects of its ridicule are not always cheats and scamps. The difference between *opéra bouffe* and Anglo-Saxon farce represents the difference between the life of the French and the life of the English. With Americans it is not the snob and the husband who are satirized; our domestic jocosity embraces chiefly the small boy, the widow, and the mother-in-law, reserving for its most palpable hits the bully, the visionary speculator, the gamester, and the commercial agent. Thus American humor may be divided into two classes—that which relates to fighting and that which relates to money. In the South this general classification grows still narrower, gaining, however, in whimsicality and local color what it lacks in breadth.

There can be no mistaking the origin of the old story of the traveler who asked a Mississippian whether it was worth his while to carry a pistol, and was told: "Well, stranger, you mout move around here more'n a year an' never need a pistol, but ef you *should* happen to need one, you'd need it powerful." Equally characteristic is the record of a well-known Tennessee case. The principal witness for the commonwealth testified that he was sent to get a fresh pack of cards, that he got them, and, returning, sat down in the grass. Here he balked in his testimony, and would go no further. At last, after cross-questioning and coaxing had been exhausted, the judge threatened him with fine and imprisonment, whereupon he said: "Please, your honor, if I must tell why I drapped in the jimson weeds, I suppose I must. It was just, your honor, to look over the kerd's, and mark the bowers." The following incidents no less reflect the local color of the ante-bellum days: Two Kentuckians went to settle their bill at a hotel in Boston. There being a dispute about the amount, one of them grew angry and began to swear, when the other said: "Remember, John, who you are. Remember you are a Kentuckian. Pay the bill and *shoot the scoundrel!*" Parson Bullen, in his funeral oration over the dead body of Sut Lovingood, observed:

"We air met, my brethering, to bury this ornery cuss. He had hosses, an' he run 'em; he had chick-

ens, an' he fit 'em; he had kiards, an' he played 'em. Let us try an' ricollect his virtues—ef he had any—an' forgit his vices—ef we can. *For of sich air the kingdom of heaven!*"

Such incidents as these could not occur, and therefore could not be humorously narrated, in any part of the world except the South.

In the old steam-boating times the typical Southerner was pictured as a ranting, roving blade, who wore a broad-brimmed Panama hat and a great watch-fob, who was an expert in the decoction and disposition of mixed liquors, who ended all his sentences with "By gawd, sah," and thought no more of betting "a likely nigger-boy" on a "bobtail flush" than you or I, dear reader, would think of betting a button on the result of a presidential election. It was he who was to be encountered during the winter anywhere and all the way from Cairo to New Orleans; during the summer at any of the watering-places, from Saratoga to Newport. He traveled with a dusky valet, a silver-headed cane, two ruffled shirts, and a case of hair-triggers. His morning meal was a simple Kentucky breakfast—"three cocktails and a chaw of terbacker." His amusements were equally simple and few: he could clip the wing of a mosquito at ten or fifteen paces; could stop the launching of a life-boat to tell his terrified fellow-passengers the last good story from "Georgy"; could draw to a shoe-string, as the saying went, and obtain a tan-yard! He affected blooded stock, particularly game-cocks. To him the pedigree of a race-horse, like a question in constitutional ethics, was a sacred subject, to be tampered with under penalty of death. He had the faculty of losing his money, and other people's money, with a charming indiscrimination, if not with a delightful indifference, at all games of chance, from chuck-a-luck to brag. That such an animal would fight was a matter of course; he would fight anything, preferring, indeed, the "tiger." The invention of the comparatively modern pastime called by the fastidious English "American whist," to escape its more vulgar appellation of "draw-poker," was to him the discovery of another world. He felt as the ancient monarch would have felt had the new amusement for which he offered a reward really come into being. It struck him, and it stuck to him. Its very nomenclature tickled his fancy, beginning with its descriptive soubriquet, "draw-poker." He was in the habit of drawing on his commission merchant, on his revolver, and on his imagination, and

here was a chance to draw on all three at one and the same time. He was himself a poker—a poker of fun at all men, a poker of nonsense in the face and under the nose of Providence. Then the titles of the hands were descriptive. There were “fulls” and “flushes,” and was not his own life a perpetual experience of one or the other?—for when he was not flush he was sure to be full, and *vice versa*.

In those days there were no bloated bondholders. We had not even risen to the dignity of the insurance agent. Capital was really timid, and, for the most part, was represented in the South, as far as the East was concerned, by the peddler, the colporteur, and the vender of lightning-rods. These, who made themselves familiar with Southern thoroughfares only, were impressed by the manners of our swaggering hero; they stood abashed before his bullying; they were amused by his vulgarity; being for the most part unversed in the ways of the world, except that of trade, they were bound to fall into mistakes. Not unnaturally, therefore, they mistook the Southern swashbuckler for the Southern gentleman, and carried home a daguerreotype of Southern life taken from their adventures, which, as we may conjecture, were rarely of the nicest. The South, on its part, got its view of the North from the wandering middlemen who were best known to it; and thus a mutual misconception sprang into existence—taking its ideas and examples, not from the better classes of society, but from the worst. The truth is, that behind these the people, the good people, of the North and South lived, moved, and had their being: in the one section, relying upon personal thrift and industry to build up fortunes; in the other section, victims to circumstance rather than design, accumulating debts as they accumulated slaves. I am sure that I am not mistaken in this; and, indeed, events are verifying it. After years of contention and war, the obstructive forces are passing away, and what do we see? Why, in the South, looking northward, we see a race, kindred to ourselves, a little less effusive, but hardly less genial, already disciplined and equipped to struggle against the winds and the waves. In the North, looking southward, the philosophic observer sees, not a huddle of lazy barbarians, composed in large part of murderers and gamblers, but a great body of Christian men and women, who have had a hard struggle with fate and fortune, but who have stood against the elements with a fortitude that contradicts the characteristics formerly imputed to them; he sees the master of yesterday the toiler of to-day; he sees the

mistress of the mansion, still a gentlewoman in the truest sense, striving and saving, patching, piecing, and pinching to make both ends meet; he sees, in short, a people, born to the luxury of a rich soil and a warm climate, and inured to nothing except the privations of disastrous war and unexpected poverty, throwing themselves bravely into the exigencies of real life; nowhere indolent and idle; nowhere demoralized; everywhere cheerful, active, and sober.

It is not of these, however, that I shall speak in these pages. The homely story of their ups and downs will pass into the humor of the future. I wish to introduce here a lower order—to talk of the comicalities and whimsicalities of Southern life, embodied in the exploits of the “howling raccoon of the mountains” and the musings of the epic hero who, describing himself, said: “I am a fighter from Bitter Creek; I’m a wolf, and this is my night to howl. I’ve three rows of front teeth, and nary tooth alike. The folks on Bitter Creek are bad; the higher up you go, the wuss they are; and I’m from the head-waters.” This type is the offspring of a class, and, as humor itself springs from the nether side of nature, he must needs play a considerable part in the veracious chronicle of Southern life.

Running over the pages of Professor Longstreet’s amusing volume of “Georgia Scenes,” certainly a most faithful, as well as a most graphic, series of pen-pictures of Southern life, one is agreeably impressed by the absence of venality and blood-thirstiness which marks the various narrations. The table of contents embraces all manner of inland adventure, from a gander-pulling to a shooting-match, including such suggestive chapters as “The Horse-swap,” “The Debating Society,” “The Militia Drill,” and “The Fox Hunt.” “The Life and Adventures of Bill Arp” is a continuation of the same class of incidents, narrated by the principal actor in backwoods English. Both volumes, however, are bounded by purely local confines. The yarns spun by Sut Lovingood, who describes himself as “a nateral born dern’d fool,” have been more fortunate; at least one of them has traveled across the Atlantic, where, translated into French, it enlivens a scene in one of the ingenious dramas of M. Victorien Sardou. Sut Lovingood is described as “a queer, long-legged, web-footed, short-bodied, hog-eyed, and white-haired” creature, mounted on “a nick-tailed, bow-necked, long, poor, pale, sorrel horse”—a compound of ignorance and cunning, half dandy and half devil, perpetually entangled in “a net-work of bridle-reins, crupper, martingales, straps, stirrups, surcin-

gles and red ferreting." He tells his own story in the wildest of East Tennessee jargon, being a native of that beatific region, and is, of course, the hero of his own recitals. These, be it said, are quite as often at his expense as in glorification of his exploits. There is an extravagant oddity in his experience which rarely fails to arrest attention. On one occasion he tells how, seeing for the first time "a biled shirt," he desires to emulate the wearer and imitate the fashion. He broods over the mystery of biled shirts. He roams in the mountains and dives into the philosophy of biled shirts. At length, he discovers in a female friend an original genius. She has no more practical knowledge of starch than himself; but she has heard that flour, boiled to a certain consistency and smeared over a given surface of textile fabric, will stiffen it. So she undertakes the job, makes the paste, douses Lovingood's homespun into it, and, being in a hurry, he puts it on before it is dry. He goes to the grocery to show himself, drinks deeply, and falls asleep; the shirt congeals upon him, and when he wakes—in a hay-loft—he is a sight to see. How to escape becomes at once a problem. At length, to make a long story short, he loosens the edges of the tails of the unmanageable garment, and tacks these to the four sides of the hole in the floor by which entrance is had to the hay-loft, and plunges through to the ground below—with what consequences one may imagine. On another occasion, the Lovingood family being about to starve, and there being no horse to plow with, Sut's father agrees to be horse and pull the plow, enacting the part perfectly until he gets into a nest of yellow-jackets, when—considering it his duty to act as a horse would act—he runs away, destroying plow, gear, and all, much to the consternation of his son, who plays the part of plowman. Again, being greatly enraged with a local preacher, Sut resolves upon revenge, and goes to camp-meeting to accomplish his purpose. The culmination of this exploit he tells thus:

"I tuck a seat on the steps of the pulpit an' kivered as much of my face with my han's es I could, to show I was in yearnest. Hit tuck powerful, for I hearn a sort o' thankful kin' of buzz all over the congregashun. Thur were a monstrous crowd in that grove, for the weather was fine and beleevers was plenty. The parson give out an' they sung that good ole hym:

"Thur will be mournin', mournin', mournin' here,
And mournin', mournin', mournin' there,
On that dread day to come."

"Thinks I, kin it be possible anybody has tole the ole varmint what's goin' to happen to him? An' then I 'low'd nobody know'd it but me, an' I was com-

forted. He nex' tuck his tex', which was powerfully mixed with brimstone an' trim'd with blue an' red flames. Then he opened. He commenced onto the sinners. He threatened 'em orful, tried to skeer 'em with the wust varmints he could think of, an' arter a while, he got onto the subject of hell-sarpints, an' he dwelt on it. He tole 'em how the ole hell-sarpints 'd sarve 'em ef they didn't repent; how both hot an' cold they'd crawl over their naked bodies; how they'd 'rap their tails roun' their necks, poke their tongues down their throats, an' hiss in their ears. I seed thet my time had come. I had cotched seven or eight pot-bellied lizzards, an' had 'em in a narrer bag thet I had made a purpose. So, when he war a rarin' an' a tearin' an' a ravin' onto his tip-toes, an' a-poundin' ov the pulpit, onbeknows to anybody I ontied my bag ov reptiles, put the mouf ov hit onto the bottom ov his briches-leg, an' begun a pinchin' ov their tails. Quick as gunpowder they all took up his leg, makin' a noise like squirrels climbin' a shell-bark hickory, or a sycamin'. He stopt rite in the middle of the word 'damnation.' He looked for an instant like he were listenin' for somethin'. His terrific features stopped the shoutin'. You could 'a' hearn a cricket jump. Jess about this time one ov my lizzards pops his head out'n the parson's shirt-collar, waggin' his ole brown neck an' surveyin' of the congregashun. The parson seed it, an' it war too much for him. He got his tongue, the old varmint, an' he cries: 'Pray for me, brethren! pray for me, susteren! I is 'rastlin' with the arch enemy, rite now! Pray for me an' save yer-selves! For the hell-sarpints hav' got me!'"

I have abridged the details, which, though very comic, are, it must be owned, very coarse. The book abounds with similar burlesque. It is not real life, indeed, but an attempt, in a rough way, to travesty the shams of the crude life sought to be portrayed and satirized. The orthography is really original, if nothing else, not at all imitative either of Yellowplush or Artemus. The author of the book lived and died among the scenes he describes—a quiet, somber East-Tennessean, George Harris by name. His contributions were made in the first place to a journal in Nashville, and collected thence into a volume. The value of this may not be great, but its quaintness is undeniable.

About thirty years ago there appeared in the New Orleans "Picayune" a sermon which attracted immediate attention and secured wide currency. It was at once recognized as a genuine transcription. It purported to have been delivered by a volunteer preacher, who, making his livelihood as captain of a flat-boat, happened to "lay up" over Sunday by a Mississippi landing. An idle crowd being collected, he organized an impromptu congregation, and produced a discourse which has obtained a standard place in our comic literature. He began:

"I may say to you, my brethering, that I am not an edicated man, an' I am not one o' them as believes an edication is necessary in a minister of the Gospel; for I believe the Lord edicates his preachers jest as he wants 'em to be edicated; and although I says it as

ought not to say it, in the State of Alabama, where I live, there's no man what gits bigger congregashuns nor what I gits.

"There may be some here to-day, my brethering, as don't know what persuasion I am uv. Well, I must say to you that I am a Hard-shell Baptist. Thar is some folks as don't like the Hard-shell Baptists, but, as fur as I sees, it's better to have a hard shell than no shell at all. You see me here to-day, my brethering, dressed up in fine clothes; you mout think I was proud. But I am not proud, my brethering. For, although I've been a preacher of the gospel for nighly twenty year, an' am capting of that flat-boat at your landing, I am not proud, my brethering.

"I am not a-gwine to tell you adzactly whar my tex is to be found; suffice it to say it's in the leds of the Bible, and you'll find it somewhere between the first chapter of the book of Generations and the last chapter of the book of Revolution; and ef you'll go an' sarch the scripters, you'll not only find my tex thar but a good many other texes as will do you good to read, and when you shall find my tex you shall find it to read thus:

"'An' he played upon a harp of a thousand strings—sperrits of just men made perfick.'

"My tex, my brethering, leads me, in the fust place, to speak of sperrits. Thar is a great many kinds of sperrits in the world. In the fust place, thar's sperrits as some folks calls ghosts and thar's sperrits of turpentine, and thar's sperrits as some folks calls liquor, an' I've got as good a article of them kin' o' sperrits on my flat-boat as was ever fotched down the Mississippi River; but thar's a good many other kin' o' sperrits, for the tex says 'he played upon a harp of a thousand strings—sperrits of just men made perfick.'

"But, I'll you what kind of sperrits as are meant in the tex, my brethering. It's FIRE. That's the kind of sperrits as is meant in the tex, my brethering. Now, of course ther is a great many kinds of fire in the world. In the fust place, there's the common sort of fire you light your pipe with, and there's fox-fire and campfire, fire afore you're ready and fire-an'-fall-back, and many other kinds of fire; for the text says 'he played upon a harp of a thousand strings—sperrits of just men made perfick.'

"But I'll tell you the kind of fire as is meant in the tex, my brethering. It is Hell-fire! An' that's the kind of fire a good many of you are coming to ef you don't do better nor what you have been doin', for 'he played upon a harp of a thousand strings—sperrits of just men made perfick.'

"Now, the different sorts o' fire in the world may be likened to the different persuasions of Christians in the world. In the fust place, we have the 'Piscopalians. And they are a high-sailin' an' a hifalutin set, and may be likened onto a turkey-buzzard a-flying up in the air, an' he goes up, an' up, an' up, ontill he looks no bigger'n your finger-nail, an' the fust thing you know he comes down and down, and is a-fillin' hisself on the carcass of a dead hoss by the side of the road, for the tex says 'he played upon a harp of a thousand strings—sperrits of just men made perfick.'

"Then thar is the Methodists, and they may be likened unto a squirrel a-climbin' up into a tree, for the Methodists believes in gwine on from grace to grace till they gits to perfection; an' so the squirrel goes up an' up, an' jumps from limb to limb and from branch to branch, and the fust thing you know he falls, an' down he comes, kerflumix, for they is always fallin' from grace; for the tex says 'he played upon a harp of a thousand strings—sperrits of just men made perfick.'

"An' then, my brethering, thar's the Baptists, ah. An' they have been likened to a 'possum on a 'simon-tree; and thunders may roll and the yearth may quake; but that 'possum clings thar still, ah; and

you may shake one foot loose, an' the other's thar, ah! and you may shake all feet loose, an he wraps his tail around the limb, an' clings, an' clings forever, for 'he played upon a harp of a thousand strings—sperrits of just men made perfick.'

Irreligious as this may seem, grotesque and preposterous, it is not overstated. In the old time, and on the borders of civilization, such sermons were by no means uncommon. They are still to be heard in the "back settlements," as they are called; and, while those who make them pass for what they are worth as preachers, their sincerity goes unchallenged and unquestioned.

It was doubtless the publication of Professor Longstreet's "Georgia Scenes," in 1840, which suggested a continuous story upon the same stage of action, and in 1842 "Major Jones's Courtship" appeared. The author of this homely, natural, and amusing fiction, Mr. W. T. Thompson, an editor in Savannah, is still alive. In 1848, he followed his first production with "Major Jones's Sketches of Travel," which possess a value as contemporaneous pictures beyond and above their humor, abundant as that is. The "Courtship," however, is a novel, originally meant as a travesty, to which time has lent a sort of pathos. It is a graphic portraiture of the interior life of the South. Rough and ready as the farce is, it is never vulgar. Its characters are few, simple, and virtuous. It deals with clean homespun. It carries the mind back to the old brick church, the innocent picnic, the rural Fourth of July celebration, the Christmas frolic.

Joseph Jones, only son of the widow Jones, living near the village of Pineville, in Georgia, is a well-to-do young farmer. He is in love with Mary Stallins, daughter of the widow Stallins, a near neighbor. Joseph has grown up on the plantation, an honest, affectionate, moral young man; Mary has gone off to boarding-school, and comes home a belle. The adventures are bounded on the one side by the barn-yard, on the other side by the hearthstone. Over all a pair of rugged roof-trees cast their kindly shade. The story runs along like a brook, without effort or concealment. There is no villain in the piece—only a would-be wit, called Cousin Pete, who is introduced as a tease. The tribulations of the lovers are very slight; but there is throughout the narrative a naturalness which, being nowhere strained for its fun, is really captivating. As an example, I cannot forbear quoting the culmination of the courtship. You will understand that our hero has had many struggles and trials bringing himself to the point of popping the question; that, although he is almost sure of his sweetheart, he can-

not muster courage enough to make a direct proposal; that everybody is in the secret and approves the match. How the deed was finally done he shall tell himself:

"Crismus eve I put on my new suit, and shaved my face as slick as a smoothin iron, and after tea went over to old Miss Stallinses. As soon as I went into the parlor whar they was all settin round the fire, Miss Carline and Miss Kesiah both laughed rite out.

"There! there!' ses they, 'I told you so! I know'd it would be Joseph.'

"What's I done, Miss Carline?' ses I.

"You come under little sister's chicken bone, and I do believe she know'd you was comin when she put it over the dore.'

"No, I didn't—I didn't no such thing, now,' ses Miss Mary, and her face blushed red all over.

"Oh, you needn't deny it,' ses Miss Kesiah, 'you belong to Joseph now, jest as sure as ther's any charm in chicken bones.'

"I know'd that was a first rate chance to say something, but the dear little creeter looked so sorry and kep blushin so, I couldn't say nothin zackly to the pint; so I tuck a chair and reched up and tuck down the bone and put it in my pocket.

"What are you gwine to do with that old chicken bone now, Majer?' ses Miss Mary.

"I'm gwine to keep it as long as I live,' says I, 'as a Crismus present from the handsomest gall in Georgia.'

"When I sed that, she blushed worse and worse.

"Aint you shamed, Majer?' ses she.

"Now you ought to give her a Crismus gift, Joseph, to keep all her life,' sed Miss Carline.

"Ah,' ses old Miss Stallins, 'when I was a gall we used to hang up our stockins —'

"Why, mother!' ses all of 'em, 'to say stockins right before —'

"Then I felt a little streaked too, cause they was all blushin as hard as they could.

"Highly-tity,' ses the old lady; 'what monstrous 'finement to be shore! I'd like to know what harm there is in stockins. People nowadays is gittin so mealy-mouthed they can't call nothin by its rite name, and I don't see as they's any better than the old time people was. When I was a gall like you, child, I use to hang up my stockins and git 'em full of presents.'

"The galls kep laughin and blushin.

"Never mind,' ses Miss Mary, 'Majer's got to give me a Crismus gift—wont you, Majer?'

"Oh, yes,' ses I, 'you know I promised you one.'

"But I didn't mean that,' ses she.

"I've got one for you, what I want you to keep all your life; but it would take a two-bushel bag to hold it,' ses I.

"Oh, that's the kind,' ses she.

"But will you promise to keep it as long as you live?' ses I.

"Certainly, I will, Majer.'

"Monstrous 'finement nowadays—old people don't know nothin about perliteness,' said old Miss Stallins, jest gwine to sleep with her nittin in her lap.

"Now, you hear that, Miss Carline,' ses I. 'She ses she'll keep it all her life.'

"Yes, I will,' ses Miss Mary—'but what is it?'

"Never mind,' ses I; 'you hang up a bag big enough to hold it, and you'll find out what it is, when you see it in the mornin.'

"Miss Carline winked at Miss Kesiah, and then whispered to her—then they both laughed and looked at me as mischievous as they could. They 'spicioned something.

"You'll be shore to give it to me, now, if I hang up a bag?' ses Miss Mary.

"And promise to keep it?' ses I.

"Well, I will, cause I know that you wouldn't give me nothin that wasn't worth keepin.'

"They all agreed they would hang up a bag for me to put Miss Mary's Crismus present in, on the back porch, and about ten o'clock I told 'em good evenin and went home.

"I sot up till midnight, and when they was all gone to bed, I went softly into the back gate, and went up to the porch, and thar, shore enough, was a great big meal-bag hangin to the jice. It was monstrous unhandy to get to it, but I was termined not to back out. So I sot some chairs on top of a bench, and got hold of the rope and let myself down into the bag; but, just as I was gettin in, it swung agin the chairs, and down they went with a terrible racket; but nobody didn't wake up but Miss Stallinses old cur dog, and here he come rippin and tearin through the yard like rath, and round and round he went tryin to find what was the matter. I scrooch'd down in the bag, and didn't breathe louder nor a kitten, for fear he'd find me out, and after a while he quit barkin. The wind begun to blow bominable cold, and the old bag kep turnin round and swingin so it made me sea-sick as the mischief. I was afraid to move for fear the rope would break and let me fall, and thar I sot with my teeth rattlin like I had a ager. It seemed like it would never come daylight, and I do believe if I didn't love Miss Mary so powerful I would froze to death; for my hart was the only spot that felt warm, and it didn't beat more'n two licks a minute; only when I thought how she would be surprised in the mornin, and then it went in a canter. Bimeby the cussed old dog come up on the porch, and began to smell about the bag, and then he barked like he thought he'd treed something. 'Bow! wow! wow!' ses he. 'Then he'd smell agin, and try to get up to the bag. 'Git out!' ses I, very low, for fear the galls mout hear me. 'Bow! wow!' ses he. 'Begone! you bominable fool,' ses I, and I felt all over in spots, for I spected every minit he'd nip me, and what made it worse, I didn't know whar abouts he'd take hold. 'Bow! wow! wow!' Then I tried coaxin—'Come here, good fellow,' ses I, and whistled a little to him, but it wasn't no use. Thar he stood and kept up his everlasting whinin a barkin all night. I couldn't tell when daylight was breakin only by the chickens crowin, and I was monstrous glad to hear 'em, for if I'd had to stay thar one hour more, I don't beleeve I'd ever got out of that bag alive.

"Old Miss Stallins come out fust, and as soon as she sed the bag, ses she:

"What upon yearth has Joseph went and put in that bag for Mary? I'll lay it's a yearlin or some live animal, or Bruin wouldn't bark at it so.'

"She went in to call the galls, and I sot thar, shiverin all over so I couldn't hardly speak if I tried to—but I didn't say nothin. Bimeby they all come runnin out on the porch.

"My goodness! what is it?' ses Miss Mary.

"Oh, it's alive,' ses Miss Kesiah; 'I seed it move.'

"Call Cato, an' make him cut the rope,' ses Miss Carline, 'and let's see what it is. Come here, Cato, and get this bag down.'

"Don't hurt it for the world,' ses Miss Mary.

"Cato untied the rope that was round the jice and let the bag down easy on the floor, and I tumbled out, all covered with corn-meal from head to foot.

"Goodness gracious!' ses Miss Mary, 'if it aint the Majer himself.'

"Yes,' ses I, 'and you know you promised to keep my Crismus present as long as you lived.'

"The galls laughed themselves almost to death, and went to brushin off the meal as fast as they could, sayin they was gwine to hang that bag up every Crismus till they got husbands, too."

Of course, Major Jones marries his sweetheart, and, as we learn from his book of travels, published many years afterward, the union was in every respect a happy one.

I have hurried over these illustrations of Southern life in a desultory way, in order that I may reach, and give myself a little room to dwell upon, my old friend, Captain Simon Suggs, of the Tallapoosa Volunteers. He is to the humor of the South what Sam Weller is to the humor of England, and Sancho Panza to the humor of Spain. Of course, he is a sharper and a philosopher. But he stands out of the canvas whereon an obscure local Rubens has depicted him as life-like and vivid as Gil Blas of Santillane. His adventures as a patriot and a gambler, a moralizer and cheat, could not have progressed in New England, and would have come to a premature end anywhere on the continent of Europe. Although a military man of great pretension, Captain Suggs never threw out a skirmish line or dug a rifle-pit. He scorned to intrench himself. He played his hand, at no time of the best, "pat," as it were. He "spread it," as certain players do in the game called "Booston," and, indeed, to speak truth, it was generally "a spread misery," for the career of this man, from the cradle to the grave, was one long, ambitious effort to acquire fortune by making the pleasures and recreations of life tributary to its material development, and so, abjuring scriptural injunctions touching the sweat of the brow, to compel fortune to "call" him, when he had provided himself a certainty. If he did not succeed, he at least made a struggle whose failure deserves, as it has received, historic record. No one can read the story of his life without rising from its perusal invigorated and refreshed.

Simon Suggs was the son of a Hard-shell Baptist preacher, Jeddiah Suggs by name. Tradition tells, according to the chronicle, "how Simon played the 'snatch' game on Bill" (a sable companion in the corn-field), "and found an exceeding soft thing in his aged parent." I must quote a bit of this*:

"The vicious habits of Simon were of course a sore trouble to his father, Elder Jedediah. He reasoned, he remonstrated, and he lashed [but all in vain]. One day the simple-minded old man returned, rather unexpectedly to the field where he had left Simon and a black boy called Bill at work. The two were playing seven-up in a fence-corner; but, of course, the game was suspended as soon as they saw the old man's approach. Simon snatched up the money, answering Bill's demurrer with, 'Don't you see daddy's down upon us with a armful of hick'ries? Anyhow, I was bound to win the game, for I hilt nothin' but trumps.' Another thought

struck him. It might be that his father did not know they had been playing cards. He resolved to pretend that they had been playing mumble-the-peg. The old man came up.

"So, ho, youngsters; you in the fence-corner an' the crop in the grass. Simon, what in the round yearth have you an' that nigger been a-doin'?"

"Simon said, with the coolness of a veteran, that they had been playing mumble-the-peg, which he proceeded to explain.

"So, you git down on your knees," says old Jeddiah, "to pull up that nasty little stick with your mouth? Let's see one of you try it now."

"Bill, being the least witted, did so, and just as he was strained to his fullest tension, down came one of the preacher's switches. With a loud yell, Bill plunged forward, upsetting Simon, and both rolled over in the grass. A card lay upon the spot where Simon had sat.

"What's this, Simon?" said his father.

"The jack o' dimonts," said Simon, coolly, seeing that all was lost.

"What was it doing down thar, Simon?"

"I had it under my leg to make it on Bill the fust time it come trumps."

"What's trumps, Simon? This with irony.

"Nothin's trumps," says Simon, doggedly, "sense you come an' busted up the game."

"To the mulberry, both on ye, in a hurry; I'm a-gwine to correck ye," said old Jeddiah. After Bill had received his quantum in Simon's presence, the father turned to his son and said: "Cross them hands, Simon."

"Daddy," says Simon, "'taint no use."

"Why not, Simon?"

"Jess bekase it aint. I'm a-gwine to play cards as long as I live. I'm a-gwine to make my livin' by 'em. So what's the use o' lickin' me about it?"

"Old Mr. Suggs groaned.

"Simon," says he, "you are a poor, ignor'nt creeter. You've never been nowhar. Ef I was to turn you off, you'd starve."

"I wish you'd try me," says Simon, "and jess sec."

"Simon! Simon! You pore onlettered fool! Don't you know that all card-players and chicken-fighters an' horse-racers goes to hell?"

"I kin win more money in a week," says Simon, "than you kin make in a year."

"Why, you idiot, don't you know that them as plays cards allers loses their money?"

"Who wins it, then, daddy?" says Simon.

"This was a poser, and in the conversation which ensued Simon added to his advantage. At last, to satisfy his father that he really had a genius for his chosen profession, he offered to bet him what silver he had against the old blind mare and immunity from the impending chastisement, that he could turn up a jack from any part of the pack.

"Me to mix 'em?" said old Jeddiah.

"Yes."

"It can't be done, Simon! No man in Augusty, no man on the face of the yearth, can do it."

"I kin do it," says Simon.

"An' only see the back of the top card?"

"Yes, sir."

"An' all of 'em jest alike?"

"More alike'n cow-peas."

"It's ag'in' natur," Simon—but giv'm to me."

The old man turned his back to Simon, sat down on the ground and deliberately abstracted the jacks from the pack, slipping them into his sleeve. "As I am bettin' on a *certainty*," he muttered, "it stands to reason thar's no harm in it; I'll get all the money the boy has, and the lickin' will do him jest that much more good." At length he was ready. So was Simon, who, all the while, had been surveying his father's operations over his shoulder.

* In this and the following quotations, Mr. Watter-son does not follow exactly the text of the authorized edition, but has judiciously condensed it.—EDITOR.

"Now, daddy," says Simon, "nary one of us aint got to look at the cards whiles I am a-cuttin' 'em; it spiles the conjuration."

"Very well, Simon," said Jeddiah, with confidence.

"And another thing: you must look me right hard in the eye."

"To be sure—to be sure. Fire away."

"Simon walked up to his father. The two gazed upon each other. 'Wake, snakes! day's a-breakin',' says Simon, with a peculiar turn of his wrist. 'Rise, jack.' He lifted half a dozen cards gently from the top of the pack and presented the bottom one to his father.

"It was the jack of hearts."

"Old Jeddiah staggered back. 'Merciful master!' says he, 'ef the boy haint! Go, my son, go. A father's blessin' with ye!'

"And yit," murmured Simon, as he moved away, 'they say kerds is a waste of time.'

With such a start in life, it cannot be expected that the career of the youthful Simon Suggs, whatever its triumphs may be, will add to the world's stock of harmless pleasure. He had at a very tender age evolved out of his consciousness the theory that mother-wit can beat book-learning at any game. "Human natur' an' the human family is *my* books," said Simon, "and I've seen few but what I could hold my own with. Just give me one o' these book-read fellers, a bottle o' liquor, an' a handful of the dockymints, and I'm mighty apt to git all he's got an' all he knows, an' teach him in a general way a wrinkle or two into the bargain. Books aint fit'n for nothing but to give little children goin' to school, to keep 'em out'n mischief. If a man's got mother-wit, he don't need 'em; ef he aint got it, they'll do him no good, no how." This was Simon's philosophy. His faith consisted in an ineradicable belief that he could whip the tiger in a fair fight. Many defeats had in no wise discouraged him; he had an explanation for each, which at least satisfied his own mind. He had girded up his loins, he had studied the cue-papers, and he was at length master of a system. Nothing was wanting but money enough to carry it out, and this he was assure of raising at short-cards as he was that the day or night would come when he would get the upper hand of the beast, and wear his hide the remainder of his life as a trophy. Half of his sublime aspiration was realized. One fair morning he found himself possessed of a hundred and fifty dollars, the accumulation of many smart local operations—for, after quitting the parental roof and wandering far and near for twelve or fifteen years, he had married and settled in Tallapoosa. It was the largest sum he had ever had at one time before. His dream was about to be realized. He would at once go to Tuscaloosa, then the capital of Alabama, beard the tiger in his lair, clean out the legislature, vindicate his genius and opinions, and live like a fighting-cock off

the proceeds. Considering the magnitude of the proposed expedition, Simon's means, it must be owned, were a little short. "But, what's the odds!" said he, when he started on his foray, "what's the odds—luck's a fortune." A hundred and fifty was as good as a thousand and fifty—perhaps better. He reached Tuscaloosa in safety, having picked up an extra twenty-dollar note by the way, and had hardly bolted down his supper before, like Orlando, he set out in quest of adventure—in point of fact, to seek the tiger. Presently he espied a narrow stair-way, with a red light gleaming above it. He waited for no further assurance. He boldly mounted the stairs and knocked at the door.

"Holloa!" said a voice within.

"Holloa yourself," says Simon.

"What do you want?" said the voice.

"A game," says Simon.

"What's the name?" said the voice.

"Cash," says Simon.

"Then another voice said: 'Let Cash in.' The door was opened and Simon entered, half-blinded by the sudden burst of light, which streamed from the chandeliers and lamps, and was reflected in every direction by the mirrors which walled the room. Within this magic inclosure were tables covered with piles of doubloons, silver pieces, and bank-notes, and surrounded by eager but silent gamesters. As Simon entered he made a rustic bow, and said in an easy, familiar way:

"Good-evenin', gentlemen."

"No one noticed him, and the Captain repeated:

"I say, good-evenin', gentlemen."

"Notwithstanding the emphasis with which the words were respoken, there was no response. The Captain was growing restive and felt awkward, when he overheard a conversation between two young men, who stood at the bar, which interested him. They had mistaken him for General Thomas Witherspoon, of Kentucky. Simon could, of course, have no reasonable objection to be taken for the rich hog-drover, and, having mentally resolved that, if he was not respected as such during the evening, it would be no fault of his, he sauntered up to the faro-table, determined to bet his money whilst it lasted with the spirit and liberality which he imagined General Witherspoon would have displayed had that distinguished citizen been personally present.

"Twenty-five-dollar checks," said he, "and that pretty tolerably d—d quick."

"The dealer handed him the desired symbol, and he continued with a careless air, 'Now grind on.' He put the whole amount on a single card, and it won; he repeated five times, and still won; he was master of nearly two thousand dollars. The rumor that he was a wealthy sportsman from Kentucky had spread through the room, which, joined to his turn of luck, drew a little group about the table. The Captain thought his time had come. He put up fifteen hundred dollars on the deuce. This was amazing, and a little handy-legged dry-goods clerk, who looked on, observed:

"My Lord, General! I wouldn't put up that much on a single turn."

"Simon turned upon him, and glowered. 'You wouldn't, wouldn't you? Well, I would. And I tell you, young man, the reason you wouldn't bet fifteen hundred dollars on the deuce. It's because you aint got no fifteen hundred dollars to bet.'

"This sally was conclusive as to the wit of the supposititious General. The deuce won, and that settled any remaining doubt as to his identity. It made him a hero. Simon took his good fortune, however, with calm deliberation, responding with courtesy, but dignity, to the ovation which began to be extended. 'I do admit,' said he, 'that it is better—just the least grain in the world better—than drivin' hogs from Kentucky an' sellin' 'em at four cents a pound.' At this point one of the young men who had mistaken him for General Witherspoon approached, and, stretching out his hand, said:

"Don't you know me, uncle?"

"Captain Suggs drew himself up with as much dignity as he supposed General Witherspoon would have assumed, and said that he did *not* know the young man in his immediate presence.

"Don't know me, uncle!" said the young man, somewhat abashed. "Why, I'm little Jimmy Peyton, your sister's son. She's been expecting you for several days."

"All very well, Mr. James Peyton," said Simon, with some asperity, "but this is a cur'us world, and tolerably full of rascally impostors; so it stands a man in hand that has got somethin', like me, to be pretty particular."

"Oh," said several in the crowd, "you needn't be afraid; everybody knows he's the widow Peyton's son."

"Wait for the waggin, gentlemen," says Simon. "I'm a leetle notionary about these things, an' I don't want to take a nelly 'bout he's giniwine. This young man mout want to borry money o' me."

"Mr. Peyton protested against such a suggestion.

"Very good," says the Captain, approvingly; "I mout want to borry money of him."

"Mr. Peyton expressed his willingness to share his last cent with his uncle.

"So far so good," says the Captain; "but it aint every man I'd borry from. In the fust place, I must know ef he's a gentleman. In the second place, he must be my friend. In the third place, I must think he's both able an' willin' to afford the accommodation."

"These sentiments were applauded, and the Captain continued: 'Now, young man, just answer me a few plain questions. What's your mother's first name?'

"Sarah," said Mr. Peyton, meekly.

"Right so far," says Simon. "Now, how many children has she?"

"Two—me and brother Tom."

"Right ag'in," says Simon, and, bowing to the company, "Tom, gentlemen, were named arter me—warn't he, sir!"—this last with great severity.

"He was, sir—his name is Thomas Witherspoon."

"Simon affected great satisfaction. 'Come here, Jeems. Gentlemen, I call you one and all to witness that I rekognize this here young man to be my proper, giniwine nephy—my sister Sally's son; an' I wish him respected as sich. Jeems, hug your old uncle.'

"After many embraces and much gratulation, during which Simon shed tears, he resumed his fight with the tiger. But the fickle goddess, jealous of his attentions to the nephew of General Witherspoon, turned darkly upon him. He lost all his gains as fast as he had won them, and with the same calm composure. Indeed, he made merry with his multiplying disasters, such as 'Thar goes a fine, fat porker,' and 'That makes the whole drove squeal.' At length he had not a dollar left. 'My friend,' said he to the dealer, 'could an old Kentuckian as is fur from home bet a few mighty slick fat bacon hogs ag'in' money at this here table?' Of course he could, and presently had bet off the biggest drove that had ever entered Alabama.

"Jeems," says he.

"Yes, uncle."

"Jeems, my son, I'm a leetle behind to this here gentleman here, an' I'm obliged to go to Greensboro by to-night's stage to collect some money as is owin' to me. Now, ef I should not be back home when my hogs come in—es likely I may not be—do you, Jeems, take this gentleman to wharever the boys put 'em up, and see to it that he picks out thirty of the very best of the drove. D'ye mind, my son?"

"This was entirely satisfactory to the dealer, and, having settled like a gentleman, Simon took his nephew into a corner of the room, and says he, thoughtfully: 'Jeems, has—your—mother bought her pork yit?'

"Mr. Peyton said she had not.

"Well, Jeems, you go down to the pen when the drove comes in, an' pick her out ten of the best. Tell the boys to show the new breed—them Berkshires."

Mr. Peyton made his grateful acknowledgments, and the two started back to rejoin the company. But Simon paused. "Stop," says he. "You moutn't have a couple o' hundred about you that I could use until I get back from Greensboro, mout you?"

Mr. Peyton had only about fifty, but he could raise the rest, which he did at once. Then there was a good deal of joking and drinking, and Simon, finding that General Witherspoon had unlimited credit at the bar, treated the whole company to a champagne supper. At last, at four o'clock in the morning, he and James Peyton repaired to the Greensboro coach. Just before entering this vehicle, Simon stopped to bid an affectionate adieu to his nephew. He was very full.

"Jeems," says he, "I say, Jeems. I may forgit them fellers, but they'll never forgit me. I'm—if they do." Being assured that they never would, he continued: "Jeems, has yer mother bought her hogs yit?"

"No, sir," says Peyton. "You know you told me to take ten of your hogs for her—don't you recollect?"

"Don't do that," says Simon.

"No, Uncle?"

"TAKE TWENTY!"

The military career of Captain Suggs sustained the character he had secured for himself in civil life. He commanded at Fort Suggs during the Creek war. His company of Tallapoosa Volunteers were sometimes dubbed by his political adversaries "The Forty Thieves," but this was afterward proved to be a slander. There were only thirty-nine of them. They and their gallant chief were never engaged in regular combat with the Indians, but their exploits upon water-melons and hen-roosts made them famous. Notwithstanding these, however, the close of the Creek war found Simon as poor as he had been when it began. The money which he had obtained by such devious, yet difficult,

operations had melted away. At length, Mrs. Suggs informed him that "the sugar and coffee were nigh about out," and that there were "not above a dozen j'intins an' middlin's, all put together, in the smoke-house." To a man of Suggs's domestic affection this state of destitution was most distressing. He pondered over it with bitter anguish. Then he rose and paced the floor. Presently his features were set, his mind was fixed. "Somebody must suffer," said he. He would go to a camp-meeting, he would get religion, he would enter the ministry and build a church. He did not doubt that his versatile talents would carry him through this new part, and he was more than justified by the result. He went up to be prayed for, he toiled three days with the evil spirits, and when he had made himself the object of universal sympathy and hope, he shouted "hallelujah," and from a miserable, impenitent sinner became at once an exhorter with surprising revivalistic talents.

"'Ante up, brethering,' he cried; 'ante up! I come in on nary pa'r, an' see what I drawn. This is a game whar everybody wins. You jest stick to the devil when he raises yer and raise him back, and he can't turn you off. In the service of the church you allers holds four aces.' This was a new style of religious illustration; but it took amazingly, and in a few days Simon developed his purpose to enter the ministry and build a church, 'ef he could git help.' It was agreed that a collection should be taken; that the proceeds should be placed in the hands of the Rev. Belah Bugg, in trust, and that Simon should be sent back to Tallapoosa, rejoicing in his new-found grace. In passing around through the congregation Simon's appeals were at once persuasive and peculiar. 'Stack 'em up, brethering,' says he, 'and don't be bashful or backward. They'll size theyselves any way you pitch 'em in. Don't you see me? Aint you proud of me? I'm a hoary old sinner, but I kin draw to a meetin'-house, an' git a whole congregation.' Three hundred dollars were thrown into the hat. After the collection Brother Bugg said: 'Well, Brother Suggs, well done, thou good and faithful servant. Let's go and count it out. I've got to leave presently.'

"'No,' says Simon, solemnly, 'I can't do that.'

"'Why, Brother Suggs,' says Brother Bugg, 'what are the matter?'

"Simon looked at him for a moment sadly, and says he, 'Brother Bugg, it's got to be prayed over *first*.' His whole face was illuminated. It looked like a torch-light procession.

"'Well,' says Bugg, 'let's go to one side and do it.'

"'No,' says Simon, sweetly.

"Mr. Bugg was impressed, but uncertain. He gave a look of inquiry.

"Says Simon: 'You see that krick swamp? I'm gwine down in thar; I'm gwine into that lonely swamp, an' I'm gwine to lay this means down *so*, an' I'm gwine to git on these kn-e-e-s, an' I'm n-e-v-e-r gwine to git up ontill I feel its blessin'. An' nobody aint got to be thar but me—jess me an' the good spirits as goes with me.'

"The Rev. Bela Bugg was overcome. He could not say a word. He wrung the hand of the new convert, and wished him 'God-speed.' Simon struck for the swamp, where his horse was already hitched and waiting. He mounted and rode musingly away. 'Ef

I didn't do them fellers to a crackin',' says he, 'I'll never bet on two pa'r ag'in. They are pretty peart at the game theyselves; but live and let live is my motto, an', arter all, gen'us and experience ought to count for somethin' in the long run.'

At various times in his life, Simon appeared before the courts to answer for his sins; but he never failed to come off with flying colors. His last appearance was as a witness before the grand jury. It was an especial panel, embracing the judge of the circuit and all the leading lawyers.

"'Captain Suggs,' said the foreman, 'did you play a game of cards last Saturday night in a room above Sterritt's grocery?'

"'Yes, sir,' says Simon, 'I did.'

"'What game of cards did you play, Captain Suggs?'

"'Well, sir,' says Simon, 'it was a little game they call draw-poker.'

"'You played for money, Captain Suggs?'

"'No, sir; we played for chips.'

"This stumped the foreman; but a talented Alexander, who happened to be on the jury, put in:

"'Of course, of course, you played for chips, Captain Suggs. But you got your chips *cached* at the close of the game, didn't you?'

"'I don't know how that was,' said Simon; 'es for me, I had no chips to cash.'

It was ever thus with Simon, and it was this which saved him. He rarely had any "chips to cash." He was always in a good humor, he was always a willing soul, he was always ready, and he was always short. In his old age he repented of his sins; he had learned by a long life, full of rich experience, that his own motto, "honesty is the best policy," was true. He pinned his faith to that; and he stood to it. In consequence, he was elected sheriff of Tallapoosa County—a Whig county—he being the first Democrat who ever carried it. He died, and had a public funeral, and upon his tombstone may be seen inscribed to this day the following inscription:

"Sacred to the memory of

CAPTAIN SIMON SUGGS,

Of the Tallapoosa Volunteers.

He never hilt an oportune hand in his life; but when he drew upon eternity, it is believed he made an invincible in the world to come!"

I take it that there is no reader of this enlightened magazine who has not heard of the killing of McKissick. It created no little commotion throughout Coon Creek settlement, not only on account of the circumstances attending the homicide, but because McKissick was Jim Gardner's fourth man. According to Joe Furguson's testimony, "Mr. McKissick were sittin' in his back store a-playin' of his fid-dell—not thinkin' of bein' stobbed, nor nothin' of the kind—when the prisoner at the bar comes in an' stobs Mr. McKissick; where-

upon he seizes a i'on mallet, lights out o' the window, lips the fence, an' clars hisself." Circumstances so heinous the law could not brook. The judge sent for the prosecuting attorney, and observed that this time Jim Gardner must go up; but, when the case came to trial, the defense poured in unexpectedly strong. Six or seven witnesses testified that, though a dangerous man when roused, Gardner was peaceful and unaggressive; that his various killings had been in self-defense, and that, if people would let him alone, he'd let them alone. As a last resort, the prosecution, seeing Billy Driver in the court-house, and observing a dreadful scar upon his neck from a wound inflicted by the prisoner some years before, called him to the stand.

"Mr. Driver," said the State's attorney, "do you know the prisoner at the bar?"

"What, Gar'ner there?"

"Yes, sir, Gardner there."

"Oh, yes. I know Gar'ner."

"How long have you known him?"

"What, Jim Gar'ner?"

"Yes, sir, Jim Gardner."

"Well, Jedge—you see I disremember figgers, but as man an' boy it's gwine on twenty years—mout be twenty-one or it mout be nineteen and a half—thar or tharabouts."

"Where did you get that scar across your neck, Mr. Driver?"

"This 'ere scar, sir?"

"Yes, sir, that scar. Didn't it result from a wound inflicted by the prisoner at the bar, sir?"

"What, Gar'ner?"

"Yes, sir, Gardner."

"Oh, yes, that was Gar'ner. No doubt about that."

"Now, sir, tell the jury how it happened."

"Well, you see, me an' a parcel o' the boys was pitching dollars down to the cross-roads, and Jim Gar'ner he was lyin' on the grass, a-keepin' the score. Arter we'd run the pot up to fifteen dollars—it mout ha' been sixteen, and then ag'in it moutn't ha' been more'n fourteen—one o' the boys says, 'Le's go up to the grocery an' git a drink.' We all 'lowed we'd go, and, jes' for devilment—not thinkin' thar was any harm in it, you know—I ups an' knocks Jim Gar'ner's hat off, and says he, 'You cussed, bow-legged, bandy-shanked, knock-kneed, web-footed, tangle-haired vermint, if you do that ag'in I'll cut your ornery throat for you.' Well, we gits a drink and goes back to the cross-roads, an' in about a hour, or a hour an' a half—it mout ha' been two hours—one o' the boys says ag'in, 'Le's go up to the grocery an' git a drink.' So we was gwine along to the grocery to git a drink, and jes' for devilment, you know—an' not thinkin' Gar'ner was in yearnest—I ups an' knocks his hat off, an' the fust thing I know'd he whips out a knife and ducks it into my throat. I didn't have no weapon nor nothin', so I 'lowed I'd better put a little daylight 'tween me an' Gar'ner, and I sorter sidled off, like, he follerin'; but, Lord! I know'd I had the bottom an' the hills, and that he couldn't ketch up with me. So every now an' then I'd stop an' let him closer, jes' to devil him. Arter a while, however, he picks up a hay-fork—"

"Stop, sir! Was that hay-fork of wood or iron?"

"It mout ha' been o' wood, or it mout ha' been o' iron, or it mout ha' been o' steel, or—"

"How many teeth did it have?"

"Well, you see, when I see Jim Gar'ner pick up the hay-fork, thinks I, I better put a little more day-

light between me an' him, an' I disremember the number o' teeth—it mout ha' been two, and then ag'in it mout ha' been four, may be five—I was in a bit of a hurry, an' I didn't exactly count em."

"Go on, sir!"

"I did go on, sir, an' presently we got in sight o' my house, an' my wife happened to be comin' out to cut some wood, and as I rin past her to get out o' Gar'ner's way, she fetched him with the ax."

"Exactly, but for which he would have killed you."

"What, Gar'ner?"

"Yes, sir, Gardner."

"Oh, in course—in course. It stands to reason. Thar warn't no other door for me to get out of, an' he would ha' been in that if my wife hadn't downed him with the ax."

"How far is it from the cross-roads to your house, Mr. Driver?"

"'Bout a mile, or a mile an' a half, Jedge—may be two mile. I never measured it exactly."

"Now, Mr. Driver, will you tell the court what sort of a man you consider the prisoner at the bar?"

"What, Gar'ner?"

"Yes, sir, Gardner."

"I do no nothin' ag'in' Gar'ner, sir."

"Don't you think him a desperate character, sir?"

"What, Gar'ner?"

"Yes, sir, Gardner."

"No, sir; I never hearn Gar'ner so called."

"Why, you say he cut your throat almost from ear to ear, followed you with an iron or steel hay-fork for two miles, and was only prevented from taking your life by the interposition of your wife."

"What, Gar'ner?"

"Yes, sir, Gardner."

"I can't swear he didn't, sir."

"Then, if you don't consider him a desperate character, what do you consider him?"

"What, Gar'ner, sir?"

"Yes, sir, Gardner."

"Well, your honor, of course Gar'ner is a clever man—I've know'd of him gwine on to twenty years—mout be twenty-one, an' ag'in it moutn't be but nineteen and a half—an' I should say that Gar'ner is a man that it wont do to go a-projeckin' with him."

There used to be, and I fear there still are, a good many men in the South with whom "it wont do to go a-projeckin'." It is true that we have reformed that indifferently, and we hope, in time, to reform it altogether; howbeit, there is a deal of misconception abroad touching the character of our murderers. They are not, as is stated so often, young gentlemen of the first families. On the contrary, they are with us, as elsewhere, low fellows—mere brutes and bullies. There is, perhaps, more stealing than killing in the North, and more killing than stealing in the South, because the criminal classes of each section go for that which is cheapest, safest, and most abundant—money or blood, as the case may be; but crime is crime the country over, and nothing could be more unjust than the assumption of superior morality by the inhabitants of any part of it. No people in the world are more homogeneous than the people of the United States. Where differences exist they are purely exterior. The self-governing

principle, the vestal fire of our Anglo-Saxon race, is strong enough and warm enough to maintain our system of Anglo-Saxon freedom and law to the farthest ends of the Republic. Like a touch of nature, making the whole Union kin, it joins the States, and should be left in each to do its work in its own way. The methods which suit one State may not suit another; but in all we may safely trust the result to the good sense and good feeling, shaped by the interest and guided by the intelligence, of the greater number, sure that in the South, no less than in the North, the conservative forces of society, left to themselves, will prevail over violence and wrong. Much, if not most, of the disorder of the last few years has been directly ascribable to a conflict of jurisdictions, State and Federal. Between the two stools justice fell to the ground, while malefactors made their escape. It is absurd to suppose that any civilized people, living within the sound of church-bells, can love lawlessness for its own sake.

If the manhood of the South were less true than it is, it would be held to its standards by the womanhood of the South. During our period of savage contention this shone with a sweet and gracious brightness which dazzled even those against whom it was directed, so that the worst which was said of the Southern woman by soldiers whom only the laws of war made her enemies, related to her fidelity in what they considered a bad cause. But if in time of war she was plucky, patient, and sincere, her triumphs have been ten-fold greater during a peace which has spread before her harder trials still; the transition from wealth to poverty, with its manifold heart-burnings and mischances, joining the sharp pangs of memory to the grievous burdens of every-day life; the unfamiliar broomstick and the unused darning-needle; the vacant clothes-chest and the empty cupboard—

“The desecrated shrine, the trampled ear,
The smold'ring homestead and the household flower,
Torn from the lintel.”

I know nothing more admirable in all the world of history or romance than the blithe, brave woman of the South, grasping the realities of life in hands yet trembling with the interment of its ideals, and planting upon the grave of her first and only love signals of fortitude and honor, cheerfulness and gentleness, to be seen and followed by her children. These, she would have inherited with the misfortunes of the South, the pride of the South—not expressed in noisy vaunt and scorn of honest toil, in idleness and repining, but in a noble nature and a gift for work.

In the full meridian of their prosperity, the people of the South were an easy-going, pleasure-loving people. The reader will not have failed to observe, in the rude examples of Southern humor which I have cited, the conspicuous part played by the literature of the pictorial paste-boards, by cards and gaming. It could not be otherwise if they should be true to nature and reality. Men who dwell upon great estates, who are surrounded by slaves, who have few excitements or cares, are likely to grow indolent. The Southern gentleman had plenty of time, and he thought he had plenty of money to lose. A wide veranda, a party of agreeable neighbors, plenty of ice-water and Havana cigars, a brisk little black boy to keep off the flies, and a bright little yellow boy to pass about the nutmeg—that was the ideal state. Of course the lower orders imitated and vulgarized, as I have shown, the luxurious habits of the upper. The crash came; and, like the unsubstantial pageant of a dream, the pretty fabric fell. The great and the small, the good and ill, were buried under one common ruin. There is hardly anything left of the gilded structure. It is no longer fashionable or respectable to fribble the days away in idle, costly pleasure. Battle-scarred, time-worn, and care-worn, the South that is, is most unlike the South that was. There is something truly pathetic in the spectacles of altered fortune which everywhere meet the eye; for in the old life there were very few shadows. Such as there were gathered themselves about the negro cabins. I have purposely omitted the humors of the Southern black, because, amusing though they be, they are not essentially racy of the soil. The negro is an African in Congo or in Kentucky, in Jamaica or in Massachusetts. His humor is his own, a department to itself, embracing, amid much that is grotesque, more that is touching; for his lot has been as varied as his complexion, and ever and ever of a darksome hue. I know nothing that appeals so directly to the intellects and sensibilities of thoughtful men as the treatment he has received among us, North and South, in the present and in the past, and I declare that when I think of him, funny as he may seem to be, I am moved by any other than mirthful suggestions. I look back into that by-gone time, and I see him, not as a squalid serf, picturesque in his rags, or as we behold him on the minstrel stage,—the clown in the pageant making merry with cap and bell,—but as an image of impending sorrow crouched beneath the roof-tree, God's shadow upon the dial of American progress, whose cabalistic figures the wisest have not been able to read. I turn away dismayed. I dare not look upon the

scene and laugh, if he is to be a part of it. I only know, and to that degree am happy, that slavery is gone with other bag and baggage of an obsolete world; that it is all gone—the wide veranda filled with pleasure-loving folk; the vast estate, without a reason for its existence or a purpose in the future; the system which, because it was contented, refused to realize or be impressed by the movements of mankind. All, all has passed away. The very life which made it possible is gone. The man who, being able to pursue his bent, lives to amuse himself, is hardly more thought of now than the poor parasite who seeks to live and thrive off the weaknesses and vices of his

bettors. Never again shall the observation of the Governor of North Carolina to the Governor of South Carolina be quoted as a wise, witty, and relevant remark; never again shall the black boy's dream of happiness be realized in the polishing of an unexpected pair of boots. If proselytism be the supremest joy of mankind, New England ought to be supremely happy. It is at length the aim of the Southron to out-Yankee the Yankees, to cut all the edges, and repair his losses by the successful emulation of Yankee thrift. Taking a long view of it, I am not sure it is best for the country, although, as matters stand, I know it to be better for the South.

A SPRING MADRIGAL.

THE tree-tops are writing all over the sky,
 An' a heigh ho!
 There's a bird now and then flitting faster by,
 An' a heigh ho!
 The buds are rounder, and some are red
 On the places where last year's leaves were dead;
 An a heigh ho, an' a heigh!

There's a change in every bush in the hedge;
 An' a heigh ho!
 The down has all gone from the last year's sedge;
 An' a heigh ho!
 The nests have blown out of the apple-trees;
 The birds that are coming can build where they please;
 An' a heigh ho, an' a heigh!

The aged man goes with a firmer gait;
 An' a heigh ho!
 The young man is counting his hours to wait;
 An' a heigh ho!
 Mothers are spinning and daughters are gay,
 And the sun hurries up with his lengthened day;
 An' a heigh ho, an' a heigh!

The signs may be counted till days are done;
 An' a heigh ho!
 And watchers can listen while waters run;
 An' a heigh ho!
 Old men in sunshine may skip or tarry,
 Young men and maidens can joy and marry;
 An' a heigh ho, an' a heigh!

But there's something uncounted, unseen, that comes;
 An' a heigh ho!
 If you leave it out you can't prove your sums;
 An' a heigh ho!
 And this is the way to say it, or sing:
 "Oh, Spring is the loveliest thing in Spring!"
 An' a heigh ho, an' a heigh!