

The Evening Argo

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We Can Make Home Happy.

Though we may not change the cottage
For mansions tall and wide,
Or exchange the little grass-plot
For a boundless stretch of land;
Yet there is something brighter, dearer,
Than the wealth we'd thus command.

Though we have no means to purchase
Costly pictures rich and rare;
Though we have not silken hangings
For the walls so cool and bare;
We can hang them o'er with garlands,
For flowers bloom everywhere.

We can make home very cheerful,
With right course we begin;
We can make it more than happy,
And their trust blessing bring;
It will make a small room brighter
If we let the sunshine in.

We can gather round the fireside
When the evening hours are long;
We can blend our hearts and voices
In happy social song;
We can guide some erring brother—
Lead him from the path of wrong.

We may fill our home with music,
And with sunshine brimming o'er,
If against all dark intruders
We will firmly close the door;
Yet should the evil shadow enter,
We must love each one the more.

There are treasures for the lowly
Which the grandest fail to find;
There's a chain of sweet affection
Between friends of kindred mind;
We may reap the choicest blessings
From the poorest lot assigned.

LAGNIAPPE.

Why do I wear a dog's tooth set in gold for a watch charm? Ah, boys, it is to remind me of an infirmity that has brought Jack Campion trouble ever since he learned to talk.

To begin at the right end: I was just twenty-five when my father bought me a plantation up in the swamp where fortunes are still to be made in spite of the changes of war.

You Northern folks don't know much about life on the banks of the old Mississippi, that's a fact.

Strange that nature should make it easy in the swamp to do everything but live! Some people say you must be half alligator to get along there; but for me I was always tough. Cotton and corn grow higher than the head of a man on horseback; the soil is so fertile that a Northern farmer in the midst of his stony fields would call the tilling it receives mere child's play; and in addition to those blessings, your brains at some seasons are nearly jolted out of your head by the "chills."

My horse stood behind the green levee, which from the river made the trees look as if they had no trunk.

As I sat at the foot of it and fell upon the low muddy banks, like some one carding cotton, and I could see the head light of some steamboat now and then looming up through the dusk like a great red eye, and hear the wild cries, half musical, half unearthly, of the roostabouts. Then came the whistle—low and hoarse at first, and deep as the bass notes of a tremulous organ, and rising and shrilling into a wail of agony.

How unutterably melancholy it used to sound, dying hopelessly on the dead, unchanging flats beyond! Plenty of sport, too, up there for a hunting man—herds of deer, foxes, wild geese, and humbler game, such as 'coons and 'possums.

Well, I went to work with a will, determined to be a model planter. Among other transactions I swapped my ride with Jules Bastien, an aged and dried-up creole, for a stout-bellied Texas cow.

"Vait a meenit," said Jules, hobbling to the back of his cabin. "I geeve you Lagniappe; I trow him een."

Lagniappe (pronounced laynyap), let me explain, is what the vulgar American calls "boot." He returned, bringing with him a big paper bag that might have contained chincapins or pinders.

Then, as it quivered slightly, I was struck by the fear that this present might prove to be crawfish, and that Jules would force the repulsive delicacy upon me. I was comforting myself with the thought that I could toss them into the nearest mud-hole on my way home, when out of the paper popped a brindled beaming eyes and ears.

"Est-ee a fine little puppy doggy," said Jules. "Take heed; he keep off de tieef by de night."

I thanked the old fellow, and was really grateful; for I had no dog, and I fancied that Lagniappe—so I christened him—would prove good company.

As time developed him he became a character study. He was part bulldog and part hound, with more than double the strength of an ordinary dog. The bulldog strain made him hold on like grim death to anything in which he fastened his teeth, and from his hound ancestors he derived the habit of howling systematically for an hour at a stretch if you wounded his feelings.

He had the largest, brightest eyes I ever saw, and a trick of rolling them as comically as a negro minstrel. For the rest he had drooping ears and a tail with a perpetual curl in it, like a pot-hook. He was not much of a beauty, and he did not use his brains to good purpose.

On certain occasions he showed his low degree most plainly. There was the hunger of generations in him. No well-bred dog ever went into such convulsions of delight at feeding-time.

Harold, my father's old setter, would sometimes condescend to a dignified gambol, but he never turned a double somersault in sight of a piece of meat.

As Lagniappe grew older Jacinth, my woman-of-all-work, advanced the opinion that he was "a debbil," and, indeed, his conduct warranted the compliment. Everything tearable he tore.

When he found that he could not climb upon the table he would pull off the cloth and calmly feast upon the fragments of broken crockery. Pillows, cushions, towels—everything movable, in short, he conveyed under the house.

It was part of Jacinth's regular morning work to make pilgrimages thereto, emerging each time with loud groans and declarations that her back was "mos' broke."

If he had been a child instead of a puppy I should have been sure he was going to prove a naturalist, he had such a mania for "specimens." I used to find a small museum on the front gallery every morning—several old bones, a tin can, a discarded sun-bonnet and gigantic shoe of Jacinth's, besides a dead bird. This bird in particular was always turning up most promptly in the most malodorous condition. Forcible arguments could never persuade Lagniappe that it was offensive. He had a fashion of presenting it to me, after his more flagrant misdeeds, as an act of propitiation, until it resolved itself into one wing and a few feathers.

His delight was to scratch the food out of the very mouth of Max, my horse; leaving into the trough and scattering the corn far and wide.

As for having a dog to intimidate thieves, I often wished for a few thieves to intimidate this dog. He possessed an incredible impudence. The only thing that ever put him out of countenance was a concertina owned by Jacinth, one which she could draw blood-curdling strains. At the first note he would utter a howl, and retire under the house, with his tail between his legs.

Among the members of my household was a lean, ghostly white turkey, with whom Lagniappe waged perpetual war. It was not that he was openly abusive, but he bowed and scraped around it with such absurd airs of exaggerated civility that the turkey never could console his temper. This creature was almost as fond of me as Lagniappe was, and sometimes, after going to "my room, I would hear a ghostly chuckle overhead, and looking up, there would be my feathered friend roosting on the top of the old-fashioned bed.

With all his faults Lagniappe was affectionate, and loved to sit beside me, snuggling his black muzzle into my hand. After all, there's no friend like a faithful dog. It never makes any difference to him whether you grow old and ugly or lose all your money. He bears your kicks and curses patiently, and presently, when you are in a good temper again, he is ready to wag his tail and frisk about you.

Poor Lagniappe! he brought me one of the best things in my life. I wish I had been more grateful, but at that time my violent temper often carried me away. The worst of it was that he did not confine his deprecations to my own domain, but sometimes made raids upon our neighbors, so that I was several times under the necessity of restoring stolen articles.

At this time I had been very busy getting things into running gear, when one day I saw Lagniappe trot into the yard with something in his mouth, which he secreted under the front steps. I followed him, and discovered the object to be a thin blue and gold volume of poems. The puppy had been disguised with a cut on the chest. I looked at the leaf, and saw written there: "Anne Page, The Oaks."

Under this masculine hand had appended the words, "Sweet Anne Page"—a compliment smudged by the severe marginal note, "Stiff and nonsense."

Then I remembered that my father had given me a letter of introduction to a Colonel Page—no doubt this young lady's papa.

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she had never allowed to feel the loss of a mother. The colonel was a tall, soldierly-looking man, who told me I looked like my grandfather, and insisted upon rehearsing pages of my family history, while I was long to talk to sweet Annie. He might have been talking still had not the patter of feet made itself audible, and who should come gayly into the room but Lagniappe! Making straight for Annie, he jumped into her lap. This was 'the first thing that puppy ever did that gave me a respect for him.

"Oh, law! oh, gracions!" Annie cried, jumping up and spilling 'im on the floor.

"Please excuse the little wretch," I said, when I had thrust him out forcibly. "And I have another job to make for him," I added, producing the volume of poems.

"My book! Why, gen'ma, you know I have been wondering where it has gone. Do you suppose he stole it out of the summer-house, Mr. Campion?"

"I'm afraid I've did," said I. "His name by rights should be Barabbas."

"What a dear cunning thing he must be!" she cried. "Give him to me; won't you, please?"

"No, Anne; not another dog shall come into this house," the colonel answered, in an aggravated tone. "One can't move at present without tumbling over one or two. That great brute of St. Bernard takes pleasure in making himself look like a door mat, because he knows I am nearsighted."

"Oh, but this is such a smart, interesting puppy," urged Anne, giving an ecstatic spring upon her chair.

"My dear Anne," said Mrs. Page, indignantly, "what will Mr. Campion think of you?"

"I can't let it go, gen'ma," replied Miss Anne, blushing up to the curls on her forehead, but laughing at the same time. "Even if I should be prim now, Mr. Campion would find me out sooner or later. I shook every one; but it is my nature, just as dogs delight to bark and bite. Even Abram—why, Mr. Campion, I can see disapproval in his very back at times."

"He must be hard to please," said I, trying not to look guilty.

"The truth is," replied Mrs. Page, "he is an old family servant, and we endure a good deal on that account"—to me a totally unnecessary explanation.

My acquaintance with "sweet Anne" prospered finely. She had a whole regiment of first, second and fifth-massive cousins, who visited her in platoons, presented her with the latest sentimental ballads, and were never weary of chronicling the smallness of her glove and slipper. There were moments when I hated them. For a time, however, and quickly too, when the out-of-seem length of an eternity, and Max's deetest pace could not keep step with my desire.

As for Lagniappe, he became her abject slave, testifying his adoration by rolling his eyes and lolling out an inordinately long red tongue when she held him in her arms and addressed him as "an old precious," and "too cute to live." His greatest breach of decorum was to bite the ends of her long braid as it tossed over her shoulders, and to take rides on the train of her gown.

Lagniappe's heart was in the right place, that was clear. But all the while was not of our mind.

On one occasion I found Abram leisurely setting a "figger-fo" trap among the cotton as I crossed the field.

He looked up, and remarked, as he pulled his grizzled forelock: "Howdy, Mas' Campion? I hope I see y' well. I's jes' lookin' everywhere fer you."

"So it seems," said I, with sarcasm. He was obtuse.

"Yes," said he, artlessly, "dat's a fact. Missy Anne she sent me ober in a big hurry wid sumpin'—now what was she gimme? A book—or—or—no, 'twas a letter; 'n wherd' I put dat? 'Clare to mussy! I ain't lost it. Won't she skin me alive!"

This was something to a lover's ear.

"You had better try to find it," I advised him.

"Well, ain't I a tryin'?" Law shucks! won't missy be rampagin'! She wryt an' tore up, an' wryt an' tore up, wryt 'n seven times, I reckon."

As he said this he fumbled wildly in numerous pockets too ragged to hold anything, up his sleeves and in his hat, and at last produced it from one of the gigantic pockets that adorned his feet.

I improved the occasion by a few words of advice; but he replied, calmly, mopping his forehead with a dingy handkerchief: "I knowed I'd put it some'ers, only I disremembered precisly whar. Mighty lucky I foun' dat 'ere," he added. "Tell you what, I don't like to git little missy in my wool. Ole missy she'll do pooty good, if y' let her be; but Missy Anne, she's mighty pickin' body. An' I heerd somethin' dat dey do gen'man what marries her! She's little, but, oh, lawdy!"

"Abram," said I, with all the dignity I could summon, "be kind enough to keep your opinion to yourself."

"Yes, sah—yes, sah—yes, sah—sah—sah," responded Abram, obligingly; but he did not seem to be crushed to earth.

The note was merely an invitation to send me out, and I went, but I did not mind it. I had a momentous occasion, for before I left the house sweet Annie Page was my promised wife.

From that time I worked with greater will than ever, inspired by happiness. Meanwhile Lagniappe grew space, not losing a jot of his impudence and trickiness with his increased growth.

Spring was drawing near, and as it had been a hard winter I was expected to be at the breaking-up above. Colonel Page's house was situated on a slope, so I felt tolerably sure of Anne's safety; but she, on the contrary, was certain that she should awake some day to find me swept away by a flood. Although I laughed at her fears, I kept a sharp eye on the levee.

One afternoon I was making a tour of inspection, and I felt generally out of sorts. In the first place, I had not been able to find my mud boots, and naturally their disappearance was laid to Lagniappe's door, although his innocent and cheerful countenance as he frisked about Max's heels should have disarmed suspicion. (I must remark

here that Jacinth blamed Lagniappe for every loss from the frying-pan to her Sunday bonnet.) In the second place, the whole day had been filled with a stinging rain, and a chill, damps that went to one's bones, until just before a sunset, when the west broke up into ragged clouds, from which streamed a garish yellow glow. A clump of willows beside the turbid bayou was half obscured in a cloud of fog. Max's hoofs made a sucking sound in the heavy soil, and left spongy marks behind them.

Lagniappe was ranging a few feet ahead of me, when, just as I had crossed the "branch," he started up a covey of partridges right under Max's nose.

Well, that was the only shabby trick Max ever served me. But 'twas enough; it sufficed as the fellow in the play, for he pitched me off against a tree, and then made tracks for home. I was conscious of a grinding pain in my left leg, and when I tried to get on my feet I found that useful member was—broken.

"This is the deuce of an idea," I said.

Lagniappe was walking round and round me curiously, and I looked at him as a respiration seized me. With some trouble I took a pencil and a scrap of paper from my pocket and scrawled a few lines upon it. Then I called the dog coaxingly and showed him the slip, pointing in the direction of The Oaks, which was not more than a mile away. He seemed to understand, for he grabbed the paper; but he had not gone far before he tore it up and came back to me. I coaxed, commanded, threatened in vain. He looked quizzical, and wagged his comical tail. Then I lifted up my voice and woke the echoes, but there was no answering sound. I fired my pistol several times, but no one came.

"Very well then," said I. "I suppose I must lie here till morning."

I removed the comforter from about my neck—it was some of Anne's handiwork, by-the-by—and began to roll it up into a cushion for my head, determined to be as comfortable as possible, when Lagniappe, with a wicked look, snatched it out of my hands and darted off into the underbrush, to tear it into ribbons, I never doubted.

Abandoned by even my horse and dog, you may believe that my feelings were not untroubled. The pain of the fracture was intolerable—a violent throbbing, varied by a grinding agony whenever I moved a hair's-breadth. I had also the consolation of reflecting that this long delay might make an amputation necessary, and I quailed at the thought of being a cripple. Fever and the want of a proper support had sent all the blood to my head, and between rage and pain I was well-nigh crazy. I longed to strangle Lagniappe.

I was alone in the horrible silence of a winter night. That silence, pregnant with half-uttered sounds, whispered suggestions of evil ten times worse than the broad reality. Not the chirp of a bird, not the stir of a green leaf, only the soughing of the wind across the naked flat and the river booming threateningly against the levee. There was no moon, but a pale trapezoidal light spread itself over the sky. Soon I expected to feel the rain on my upturned face.

Then it seemed to me that the thoughts in my brain began to buzz like bees with an ever dilating and decreasing sound. "God! if I could faint, or die!" I gasped.

There was a crackling in the dead leaves, and I saw Lagniappe. His side heaved and foam hung on his lips. I felt for my pistol; there was still one cartridge in it. My hand was unsteady; he wavered dizzily before my eyes; but the shot sped true to the mark. A sharp howl rang out on the still air, and he fell quite close to me.

The sound sobered me. "Lagniappe!" I cried, in horror at my own deed, and I fired the pistol as far as my arm could send it.

At my voice his large eyes rolled, and he heaved his tall feebly as he dragged himself nearer and tried to lick my hand. Then a quiver ran through his body. I felt him; he was still warm, but he was dead.

Well, boys, I don't mind telling you that I cried like a baby. A moment afterward I heard voices and footsteps. Lights flashed through the dark, and soon a crowd of people came out from behind the trees. In the midst of them was sweet Anne herself, the dark tendrils of hair curling up with the damp around her face, that bloomed like a rose under the shadow of her white hood.

"Anne!" I cried, bewildered.

"Yes, my dearest Jack," she said; "it was all Lagniappe's work. He came running in on me, and when I saw his ugly grin I believe that his malicious influence is got rid of."

The most unpopular man in the ship is generally picked upon as the offending party. Sometimes two or three pictures are burned, one after another, if luck is very bad, and on an average one is burned in each whale ship every season.

The practice is a very old one, and is said to have taken rise from a similar custom which prevailed among the herring fishers of Banffshire, by whom it was introduced on board the Peterhead whalers. A century or two ago not merely effigies, but living men and women were burned on suspicion of casting a blight upon the herring fishery.—*Land and Water.*

Chains and linked rings are among the new designs in satin and velvet brocades. They are prettier than the spades, clubs, hearts and diamonds of last year.

The Mexican government has now issued orders that no soldier guarding a powder magazine can smoke while on duty, and some of the Mexican papers support the arbitrary ruling.

Adam is the patron saint of the West. Adam pork raisers, because he had the first spare rib.

There is no thunder and lightning in the Arctic circle.

Bachelor Quarters.

The New York correspondent of the Buffalo Courier writes: Bachelors as well as Benedictines have to live, and there is probably no place where they can live more comfortably than in New York. Up to a few years ago they had to make out with hotels and boarding houses or accommodate to the furnished room plan. Now they can do better. Homes for bachelors are among the "institutions" of to-day. The unmarried man need no longer wander disconsolate about a hotel or poke himself away in a musty room in a boarding or lodging house. If his purse affords it he can set up bachelor quarters in good style in a house especially designed for his class. Four or five handsome houses of this kind have been built within a few years, and they seem to pay very well. They are called apartment houses for bachelors, and they are arranged much like French flats, the chief difference being that the number of rooms is less. In some cases the bachelor's apartment consists of two rooms, in others of three, and in a case of more than four. The cost of living in this way is considerable, but the life itself is comfortable and pleasant. The fact that there is a demand for such houses is shown pretty forcibly by the fact that among the present building projects is a bachelor's apartment house that is intended to cover four lots, and will cost about \$10,000. Its location is on Forty-first street, near Broadway. This house is by far the largest bachelor's hall yet projected.

How a Fog Whistle Works.

The fog whistle, heard afar for ten miles, consists of two distinct whistles, operated by two engines in a building separate from the lighthouse. Fifty pounds of steam is the force carried, and in a case of more than four. The cost of living in this way is considerable, but the life itself is comfortable and pleasant. The fact that there is a demand for such houses is shown pretty forcibly by the fact that among the present building projects is a bachelor's apartment house that is intended to cover four lots, and will cost about \$10,000. Its location is on Forty-first street, near Broadway. This house is by far the largest bachelor's hall yet projected.

A Snake as a Teething Ring.

Mr. Robert James, who arrived in this city yesterday from Chicot county, tells of a horrifying incident which he stated has just taken place in that county. A farmer returning at noon from the field, while passing through the yard, discovered his little boy, about a year old, sitting near the fence with one end of what seemed to be a leather strap in his mouth, while with both hands he held the strap near the middle. Approaching the father was horrified to find that the child held a snake, and the snake squirmed, but the little fellow pulled and closed his mouth as tightly as though he were trying to bite off the serpent's head. The father seized the child and tore the snake from his hands. The snake was of the black species, and though not poisonous, might have wound its body around the boy and choked him to death. This would seem to settle the old dispute as to whether or not a human being's fear of a snake is innate or the result of education. It may have been that the child was teething and wanted something to bite, and in the absence of rubber or a painted stick adopted the snake as a substitute. Those who naturally feel an interest as to the fate of the snake, may rest assured that it was killed.—*Memphis Tenn. Appeal.*

Superstitions of Whale Fishers.

At the present day it is the commonest thing in the world for whale fishers to burn an effigy in order to "bring luck." If the ship has fallen in with few whales the crew attribute their bad fortune to their having some unlucky individual on board, and by burning his effigy they believe that his malicious influence is got rid of.

Trunks.

One of the porters of the Fifth Avenue hotel, New York, has been talking about trunks to a reporter. He says the secret of handling a trunk safely lies in the knowledge of the fact that the corners are always dented and strongly braced with iron. Let a trunk down on the corners and it's all right. "It looks tremendous," said this practical philosopher, "to see a man take one of them and trot up to the top story, but you want to remember this all through life: Whenever a woman is concerned, things are bound to be light; so when a woman's trunk—and only women have big trunks—comes along, a porter picks it up easily. With a man, though, it's different. Old trunks are mighty heavy, and a drummer will pack half the stock of a dry goods store in his trunk, which is usually small, and then make funny remarks when you nearly break your back lifting it."

Compensation.

For every leaf of green,
A golden leaf;
For every fading flower,<