

American Volunteer

"OUR COUNTRY—MAY IT ALWAYS BE RIGHT—BUT RIGHT OR WRONG OUR COUNTRY."

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Poetical.

THE OLD POLKS' ROOM.

The old man sat by the chimney side,
His face was wrinkled and wan,
As he lean'd his hands on his stout oak cane
As if all his work were done.

His coat was of good old fashioned gray,
The pockets were deep and wide,
Where his "specks" and his best tobacco box
Lay snugly side by side.

The old man liked to stir the fire,
So near him the logs were kept,
Sometimes he stooped as he gazed at the coals,
Sometimes he sat and slept.

What saw he in the embers there?
Ah! pictures of other years;
And now and then they wakened smiles,
But often started tears.

His good wife sat on the other side,
In a high back seat chair,
I see 'neath the pile of her mantle cap,
The sheen of her silvery hair.

There's a happy look on her aged face,
As she busily knits for him,
And Nellie takes up the stitches dropped,
For grandmother's eyes are dim.

Their children come and read the news,
To pass the time each day;
How it stirs the blood in the old man's heart,
To hear of the world away.

'Tis a homely scene, I tell you so,
But pleasant it is to view;
At least I thought it so myself,
And I sketched it down for you.

Kind unto the old, my friend,
They're worn with their work's strife,
Though bravely on perchance they fought
The stern, fierce battle of life.

They taught our youthful feet to climb
Upward life's rugged steep;
Then let us gently lead them down
To where the weary sleep.

Miscellaneous.

THE OLD CLOCK; OR, RALPH VANE'S WOOLING.

The sunset was plucking its temples of fire
And amidst over the dark hills that seemed
To touch the flaming east—the whippoorwill,
Mourning its plaintive cadence on the ruinous
fence beyond the old mill, was answered by
the ripple of the stream in the glen below,
and the whole landscape was wrapped in the
sweet, dreamlike repose of a summer twilight.

Ralph Vane had stood waiting at the mossy
stile for two long hours—waiting and
watching in the ineffable satisfaction
of knowing that I am a fool! She never loved
me—she never cared for me, else she would
have come here to tell me good-bye. It may
be the last time she will ever look upon my
face. Much she cares, the pretty, deceiving
little coquette—yet I fancied, blind blockhead
that I have been, that she loved me.

He dashed a suspicious drop of moisture
from his eye lashes as he spoke, and plunged
in the dunes, fragrant woods as if he would
fain himself away from human kin.

Such magnificent wild strawberries as I
have found down in the pasture lot, mother.
Only look!

And Rachel Bensley held up her apron
full of scarlet berries blushing through silver
green leaves.

She was a pretty, rosy cheeked girl, with
shining blue hair, and brown eyes that had
the velvet softness of a gazelle's—a rustic
beauty, whose sun bonnet was tied as coquet-
tishly under the chin as if it had been a
French chip that had cost forty dollars.

"Put them down, daughter," said Mrs.
Bensley. "Widow Moore has just been here
and what do you think she says?"

"I don't know."

"She says that Ralph Vane has enlisted
and gone off to the wars. He left the village
last night."

Rachel sat down, the rosy bloom dying
out of her cheeks and leaving a ghastly paler
bluish tint. "Mother, she said, 'do you be-
lieve that it is?'"

"I'm afraid so, daughter. Do not fret—
it isn't worth it, to leave you in this sort of
way. You that he was as good as engaged to!"

"Rachel, I could not have believed it!"

Rachel laid aside her bonnet, and began
mechanically to pluck the green stems from
her strawberries, but she said no more. From
that moment she never mentioned Ralph
Vane's name; all the tears she shed were
wept in secret.

And Farmer Bensley, leaning against the
porch pillar drew a long breath of relief.

"She don't take it very hard after all," he
muttered. "I've plant it all over. Ralph
Vane never would have made a good husband
for her."

Three years passed away, and Capt. Vane
was walking up a crowded city street absorb-
ed in his own meditations, when suddenly he
stopped.

Now what was it that brought the wide old
kitchen at Farmer Bensley's so suddenly to
his mind just then? "I could not," he said,
"take my oath I saw the old clock, just as it

used to stand above the chintz-covered settee.

And—truly it there it is!"

There it was—standing monotonously away
in the window of a dingy little second rate
paw-broker's establishment on the corner
where two narrow streets met.

Following the first impulse of the moment,
he opened the door and went in.

"What is the price of that old-fashioned
clock in the window?" he asked.

"That clock?" said the Jewish-looking in-
dividual in attendance. "Well, you can have
it for five dollars. There's something else
that clock cheap, been there's something else
the striking apparatus, and it was such a
shackly old thing we didn't care to have it
overhauled. Two dollars for that clock is
a very pretty fair."

"I should think so," observed Capt. Vane,
"as it probably cost no more than that when
new. However, I'll take it, for the sake of
old times," he murmured to himself.

"Yes, sir; I'll do it directly."

"By the way, where did you get it?" he
asked, with an affection of carelessness which
he by no means felt.

"Well, sir, it was left here by a respecta-
ble old female, about six weeks ago. I be-
lieve I've got her address here somewhere,
for they've brought a good many little items
here one time and another. Oh, here it is—
Rebecca Bensley, No. —, Barbet street."

Ralph Vane laid down his two dollar bill
and walked out of the store, with the clock
under his arm.

"Why did I ask any question?" he mutter-
ed. "What are they to me? And yet it
gives me a keen pang to think of Rachel's
mother being destitute and in want. When
I heard of Farmer Bensley's death I never
fancied they would be left in indigent cir-
cumstances."

How strange the wooden clock looked on
the carpeted marble mantel of his elegant par-
lor at the St. Ambrose Hotel—how singular
its solemn "tick, tick," blended with the silver
chime of bells and the rattle of omnibuses
on the pavement below. Yet Captain Vane
felt his heart soften as he looked at the time-
worn dial.

"I wonder what all the striking machin-
ery," he thought, opening the little door. "I
suppose it has a genuine Yankee facility for
tinkering—perhaps it has not entirely de-
fied its maker yet."

He drew out the dusky weights—they were
wedged in by some stiff paper; he examined
it more closely.

"The very letter I wrote to Rachel Bensley
three years ago—the letter I entrusted to her
father's care, with the seal unbroken still.
A flood of light seemed to break in upon
his trembling brain.

"Jacob Bensley!" he ejaculated between
his teeth; "my Heaven forgive you for this
deed of treachery, for it seems to me that
I never can!"

"How late is it, Rachel?"

"Six o'clock, mother. Are you better,
now?"

"Yes, but my head aches still."
"Will come and bathe it for you, mother,
when I have this piece of work."

"You are tired, dear—I am afraid you
over-work yourself. If I could only help you
—but my sight fails me every day. Oh, my
daughter! what is to become of you when I
am gone?"

"God only knows!" sighed Rachel, her fair
head drooping over that endless basket of
work. "Mother I dare not fancy what the
future may bring forth."

She arose to open the door as a gentle tap
sounded on the panels—a tall officer in the
uniform of a captain in the Federal army
stood before her astonished eyes.

"Rachel!"

"Ralph! I scarcely wonder that you look
coldly at me, Rachel, but I have been true
to you all these years. Here is the letter I gave
you three years ago, with the seal unbroken
still. When you gave me no answer either
by look or word, I fancied you were being
played with my affections. Now I see how
orphanously I have judged you. Rachel, will
you read the letter? Will you give the answer
I waited for, so long and vainly, the night
before I enlisted?"

She broke the seal with trembling hands,
and glanced over the contents of the time-
worn note.

"Oh! Rachel!" she murmured, bursting
into tears, "can you ever forgive me for the
hard things I have cherished toward you?"

"Then you will be my wife, now, Rachel?"

"I cannot tell you how gladly—how wil-
lingly!"

"Will you give her to me, Mrs. Bensley?"
said the tall soldier, kneeling on one knee
beside the girl's chair.

"May God deal with you as you deal with
my child, Ralph Vane!" uttered Mrs. Bens-
ley, solemnly.

Late in the glorious moonlight of the
August night, they sat and talked. Rachel
learned that riches and honor had been show-
ered upon her betrothed husband from the
liberal hand since he had left the little
New England village and gone soldier-
ing. She learned that he had been the savior
of Jacob Bensley's father and death, and
his widow's poverty.

And then he told them how the antique
fingers of the little old-fashioned clock had
guided him back to the heart whose constant
love was to be his wife's sunshine hereafter
and forever.

And the most treasured ornament in Mrs.
Captain Vane's exquisite boudoir is the wood-
en clock, time stained and rarely carved.
Yet she would not exchange it for the most
time piece of alabaster and gold that ever
sparkled through Tiffany's plate-glass win-
dows.

QUIDDITIES.—A ten party without scandal
is like a knife without a handle.
Words without deeds is like husks without
seeds.
Features without grace are like a clock
without face.
A land without laws is like a cat without
her claws.
Life without cheer is like a cellar without
beer.
A master without a cane is like a rider
without a rein.
Marriage without means is like a horse
without beans.
A man without a wife is like a fork with-
out a knife.
A quarrel without a fight is like thunder
without lightning.

"Where do you hail from?" queried a
Yankee of a traveller.

"I hail from your rain from?"

"Don't rain at all," said the astonished Jon-
athan.

"Neither do I hail, so mind your own busi-
ness."

An old Indian who had witnessed the
effect of whiskey for many years, said that a
barrel of whiskey contained one thousand
songs and fifty fights. Pretty correct Indian
part.

WOLVES IN BENGAL.

A STORY OF THEM.

When I was a very little boy, I was ex-
ceedingly partial to stories about wolves.—
Now, mamma, a story? was the coaxing
request, as we drew round the winter fire.
"A story; well, let me see, what shall it be
about? What was it last night—oh, wolves,
was it not? What shall I tell you about this
time?" "Wolves, mamma, I've almost the
invariable answer. Wolves and sheep-
sheepwolves and wolves, of these two subjects
could never hear enough. I wonder how
my dear mother ever collected a sufficiency
of facts about wolves, or if she now remem-
bers the stories she then needed to relate.
I know I entertained a very wholesome dread
of wolves for many years of my early life;
and a more intimate acquaintance with these
creatures in after years has not tended to
lessen my dislike to them. Stories about
wolves may interest grown-up people as well
as children. They are, most undoubtedly,
creatures of whom very many most extraor-
dinary tales may be told, and nothing that
is told of them will astonish those who have
had much opportunity of observing their
habits.

In India no one concerns himself very
much about wolves. There is a reward for
killing them, which varies in amount in dif-
ferent districts. In the central provinces I
think the reward is five rupees, for a wolf
for a tiger being one hundred rupees—it was
only fifty, but has been recently raised. In
the Allahabad district the reward for a wolf
is three rupees, for a tiger twenty-five.
There are very few tigers in this district.

The wolves are tolerably numerous in some
parts of the Zillah, but I do not hear of their
being much so serious mischief. Don't they
kill sheep and calves? "Yes, they do," said
my informant. "But the government reward for
a wolf is, I think, for a male, five rupees and
for a female, six rupees, and the cattle
of the village in which the creature
is killed, generally, are sent to the village
of the wolf. The rajah of Benares allows his
woodmen to kill wolves, leopards, bears and
hyenas, but must not kill a tiger. The rajah
uses these beasts for his own shooting. I
remember in 1855, when railway work was
in progress between Mirzapoor and Al-
lahabad, during the hot weather, when the
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