## THE SCRANTON TRIBUNE-TUESDAY MORNING, JANUARY 1, 1895.



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"Well, parson," McMonigle began at | religiously inclined. ef ever a welllast, "ef I had o' seen you standin' in the dressed city person behaved that way. front o' the sto'e clean to the minute you come back here, I'd think you'd heard more'n names.

"Of co'se we couldn't put it quite ez eloquent az you did, but we had jest everyone of us 'lowed that sense the day May Meredith dropped out o' Simpkinsville the sky ain't never shone the same.

"But for a story? Well, I don't see thet ther's much story to it, and to 'them thet didn't know her I reckon it's a common enough story.

"But ez to the old nigger, Proph', being mixed up in it. I can't eggsac'ly say that's so, though I don't never think about the old nigger without seemin' to see little May Day's long yaller curls, an' ef I think about her, I seem to see the old man, somehow. "Don't they come to you all that-a

He paused, took a few puffs frm his pipe and looked from one to another for confirmation of his story.

"Yus," said the doctor, "just exactly that-a-way, Dan'i. Go on, ol' man. You're a-tellin' it straight."

"Well, that's what I'm aimin' to do." He laid his pipe down on the stove's fonder as he resumed his recital.

"Old Proph'-which his name wasn't Prophet, of co'se, which ain't to say a name nohow, but his name was Jeremy, an' he used to go by name o' Jerry; then somebody called him 'Jeremy, the prophet,' an' from that it got down to 'Prophet' and then 'Proph'-and so it stayed.

"Well, as I started to say, Proph' he was jest one o' Meredith's ol' slave niggers-a sort o' quare, half luney, nocount darky-never done nothin' sense freedom but what he had a mind to, jest livin' on Meredith right along.

'He wasn't to say crazy but-well, he'd stand and talk to anything, a dog, a cat, a tree, a toad-frog-anything. Heap o' times I've seen him limpin' up ain't you, parson?" the road an' he'd turn round sudden an' seemed to be talkin' to somethin' thet was follerin' him, an' when he'd git tired he'd start on an' maybe every minute look back over his shoulder and haugh. They was only one thing Proph was, to say, good for. Proph was a May Day's city beau was goin' to be capital A 1 hunter-shorest shot in the state, in my opinion, and when he'd take a notion he could go out where nobody wouldn't sight a bird or a squir'l all day long, an' he'd fill his game bag. an' they wondered of he'd have gall enough to call out May Day's name "Well, sir, the children round town, they was all afreed of 'im, and the niggers-th'aint a nigger in the county thet don't b'lieve to this day that Proph

would cunjer 'em ef he'd git mad. "An' time he takin' to fortune-tell in', the school child'en thet'd be feerd to go up to him by theirselves, they'd go in a crowd, an' he'd call out fortunes to 'em, an' they'd give him biscuits out o' their lunch cans.

"From that he come to tellin' anythey got him to come to the old year

mantel shelf, seemed like he never would open his mouth to begin, "An' when at last he started to talk, stid o' runnin' on an' laughin' an' pleggin' everybody like he always done, he lifted up his face an' raised up his hands, same ez you'd do, ef you was startin' to read in public prayer. An' then he commenced: "Sez he-an' when he started, he

spoke so low down in his th'oat you couldn't sca'cely hear him-sez he: "'Every year, my friends, I stand befo' you an' look throo de open gate into the new year. An',' sez he, 'seem like I see a long percession o' people pass befo' me-some two by two, sime one by one, some horseback, some muleback, some afoot-some cryin' some laughin' some stumblin' ez they'd walk, an' gittin' up agin', some fallin' to rise no mo', some faces I know, some strangers."

"An' right here, parson, he left off for a minute, an' then when he com-menced again, he dropped his voice "Well, sir, from that day on, he froze toher and, strange to say, every mother clair down into his th'oat, an' he of a marriageable daughter in town squinted his eyes an' seemed to be was jealous exceptin' one, an' that one was May's own mother. An' she not tryin' to see somethin' way off like, an'

he sez, sez he: only wasn't jealous-which she couldn't "'But, tonight,' sez he, 'I don't know 'a'been of co'se-but she wasn't pleased. whar the trouble is,' sez he, 'but, look "She seemed to feel a dread of him hard ez I can, I don't seem to see clair, from the start, and she treated him 'cause I see people darkened,' sez he, mighty shabby, but of co'se the little an while I see people comin' an' goin' girl, she made it up to him in politean' I see de doctor's buggy on the road, ness, good as she could, an' he didn't an' hear the church bell, an' the organ, I can't make out nuthin' plain, take no notice of it. Kep' on showin' the old lady every 'tention, an' when cause the sky is overshaddedered by a big dark cloud. An' now,' sez he,

seem like the cloud is takin, the shape of a great blg bird. Now I see him spread his wings an' fly into Simkinsville, an' while he hangs over it in the sky seem to me I can see everybody stop an' gaze up an' hold their breath to see where he'll light-everybody hopin' to see him light in their tree. An' now-oh! now I see him comin' down, down, down-an' now he's done lit,' sez he. I recollect that expression his, 'he's done lit,' sez he, 'in the limb of a tall maginolia tree a little piece out o' town.'

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lle Saw May Going to Church and Looked

open and above-board, so it seemed.

After Her.

"Yes, I was stationed here at fall con-

ference a year ago this November, you

"Yas, so you was. Well, all this is

"Well, sir, when it was known that

here for the party, everybody looked

to see some fun, 'cause they know'd

how free ol' Proph' made with names,

with the city feller's. Well, ez luck

about two year befo' you come.

recollect.

what fetched 'em.

"Well, sir, when he come to the bird lightin' in a maginolla tree, a little piece out o' town, I tell you, 'parson, you could a' heerd a pin drop. You ee, maginolias is purty sca'ce in Simkinsville. Plenty o' them growin' round the edge o' the woods, but 'ceptin' them thet Sonny Simkins set out in his yard years ago, I don't know of any nearer than Meredith's place. An' right at his gate, ef you ever takin notice, there's a magniolia tree purty

nigh ez tall ez a post oak. ' An' so when the ol' nigger got to he'd be in town, most any evenin' you'd where the fine bird lit in the maginolia go past the Meredith gate you could tree, all them thet had the best mansee his horse tied there-everything ners, they set still, but sch ez didn't keer-an' I was one of thet las' sort-"Well, sir, he hapened to be here the why we jest glanced at the city feller time of the old year party, three year direc' to see how he was takin' it. ago. You've been here a year and over,

"But, sir, it didn't ruffle one of his feathers, not a one. "An' then the nigger he went on

Sez he, squintin' his eyes agin, an seemin' to strain his sight, sez he:

"'Now he's lit,' sez he,-I wish I could give it to you in his language, but never could talk nigger talk-'now he's lit,' sez he, 'an' I got a good chance to study him,' sez he, 'I see he ain't the same bird he looked to be, 'fo' he lit. "'His wing feathers is mighty fine an' they rise in gorgeous plumes, but they can't hide his claws,' sez he, 'an when I look closer,' sez he, ' I see he got owl eyes an' a sharp beak, but

him rise up,' sez he, 'an' fly three times round the tree an' now I see him swoop down right befo' the people's eyes, an'



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an' time the clock was most on the plained down consider'ble when they twelve strike, Froph he stood up an' got settled in years, but the girls there called out e-vents of the comin' year. that night was ez perfec' a bunch of An', sir, for a crack-brained fool nigger, girls ez you ever see-jest ez purty a he'd call out the smartest things you show o' beauty ez any rose arbor could ever hear. Every year for five year turn out on a spring day. Proph called out comin' e-vents at the old year party; an' matches that no- parson, each one seemin' to be the purbody suspicioned, why he'd call 'em tiest tell you'd got a handful, an' you'd out, an' shore enough, 'fore the year was out, the weddin's would come off. up on top o' the vine you'd see one that An' bables! He'd predic' bables a year was enough pinker an' sweeter'n the shead-not always callin' out full rest to make you climb for it, an' when names, but jest insinuatin' so that any-you'd git it, you'd stick it in the top of body that wasn't deef in both ears yore bouquet a little higher'n the would understand.

"But to come back to the story of May Meredith-he ain't in it, no ways that was the way May Day looked that in particilar. It's only thet sense she night. She was that top bud, could walk an' hold the ol' man's hand he doted on her, an' she was jest ez wropped up in him. Many a time when she was a toddler he's rode into town,



Set on the Flo' by Her Bed All Night.

mule-back, with her sitting' up in front of him. An', then when she got bigger it was jest as ef she was the queen to him-that's all. He saved her from drowndin' onc't, jumped in the creek after her an' couldn't swim a stroke. an' mos' drownded hisself-an' time she had the diptheria, he never shet his eyes ez long ez she was sick enough to be set up with-set on the flo' by her bed all night.

"That's all the way Proph is mixed up in her story. An' now, sense they're both gone. ef you 'magine you see one, you seem to see the other.

"An' May Day's story? Well, I hardly like to disturb it. Don't rightly know how to tell it, nohow.

"I don't doubt folks has told you she went wrong, but that's a mighty hard way to tell the story of May Meredith.

We can't none of us deny, I reckon. thet she went wrong. A red-cheeked peach thet don't know nothin' but the dew and the sun, and to grow sweet and purty-it goes wrong when it's wrenched off the stem and et by a hog. That's one way o' goin' wrong.

"Little Dalsy Meredith didn't have no mo' idee o' harm than that mockin' bird o' Rowton's in its care there, thet sings weekday songs all Sunday nights.

"She wasn't but jest barely turned seventeen years-ez sweet a little girl ez ever taught a Baptist Sunday school class-when he came down from St. Louis-though some says he come from Chicago, an' some says Canada-lookin' after some St. Louis land mortgages An', givin' the devil his due, he was the handsomest man thet ever trod Simpkinsville streets-that is, of cos'es for a outsider. Seen May Day first time on her way to church, an' looked after her-then squared back di-rect, an' follered her.) Walked into church de-lib'rate, an' behaved like a gentleman,

ain't got no, to say, ugly girls in townparty one year, jest for the fun of it, never had many, though some has "Have you ever went to gether roses

be startin' to come away, when away

others? "I see you know what I mean. Well "I had three nieces and wife and she

had sev'al cousins, there-all purty enought to draw hummin' birds-but 1 say little Daisy Meredith, she jest topped 'em all for beauty and sweet-

ness an' modesty that night. "An' the stranger-well, I dunno jest what to liken him to less'n it is to one of them princes thet stalk around the stage an' gives orders when they have play actin' in a show tent.

" They wasn't no flies on his shape, nor his rig, nor his manners, neither. Talked to the old ladies-ricollect my wife she had a finger wropped up, an' he ast her about it and advised her to look after it an' give her a recipe for bone-felon. She thought they wasn't nobody like him. An' he jest simply danced the wall flowers dizzy, give the fiddlers money, an'-well, he done everything thet a person o' the royal family of city gentry might be expected to do. An' everybody wondered what mo' Mrs. Meredith wanted for her daughter. Tell the truth, some mistrusted, an' 'lowed thet she jest

took on that way to hide how tickled she was. "Well, ez I say, the party passed off lovely, an' after awhile it came near 12 o'clock, an' the folks commenced to look round for ol' Proph to come in an' call out e-vents same as he always

done "So d'rectly the boys they went out an' fetched him in-drawin' him 'long by the sleeve, an' holdin' back like ez of he dreaded to come in.

"I tell you, parson, I'll never forgit the way that old nigger looked, longest day I live. Seemed like he couldn't sca'cely walk, an' he stumbled, an when he took his station front o' the

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