

# THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man.—Thomas Jefferson

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### TERMS:

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### MISCELLANEOUS.

From the Graham's Magazine.

#### A RACE FOR A SWEETHEART.

BY MR. ZEDA SMITH.

Hardly any event creates a stronger sensation in a thinly settled New England village, especially among the young folks, than the arrival of a fresh and blooming miss, who comes to make her abode in the neighborhood. When, therefore, Squire Johnson, the only lawyer in the place, and a very respectable man of course, told Farmer Jones one afternoon that his wife's sister, a smart girl of eighteen, was coming in a few days to reside in his family, the news flew like wildfire through Pond village, and was the principal topic of conversation for a week. Pond village is situated upon the margin of one of those numerous and beautiful sheets of water that gem the whole surface of New England, like the bright stars in an evening sky, and received its appellation to distinguish it from two or three other villages in the same town, which could not boast of a similar location. When Farmer Jones came in to his supper about sunset that afternoon, and took his seat at the table the eyes of the whole family were upon him; for there was a peculiar working about his mouth and a knowing glance of his eye, that always told them when he had something of interest to communicate. But Farmer Jones' secretiveness was large, and his temperment not the most active, and he would probably have rolled the important secret as a sweet morsel under his tongue for a long time, had not Mrs. Jones, who was of rather an impatient and prying turn of mind, contrived to draw it from him.

'Now, Mr. Jones,' said she, as she handed him his cup of tea, 'what is it you are going to say? Do out with it; for you've been chewing something or other over in your mind ever since you came into the house.'

'It's my tobacco, I s'pose,' said Mr. Jones, with another knowing glance of his eye.

'Now father, what is the use?' said Susan; 'we all know you've got something or other you want to say, and why can't you tell us what 'tis?'

'La who cares what 'tis?' said Mrs. Jones; 'if it was any thing worth telling, we shouldn't have to wait for it, I dare say.'

Hereupon Mrs. Jones assumed an air of the most perfect indifference, as the surest way of conquering what she was pleased to call Mr. Jones' obstinacy, which by the way was a very improper term to apply in the case; for it was purely the working of secretiveness without the least particle of obstinacy attached to it.

'There was a pause for two or three minutes in the conversation, till Mr. Jones passed his cup to be filled a second time, when with a couple of preparatory hems he began to let out the secret.

'We are to have a new neighbor here in a few days,' said Mr. Jones, stopping short when he had uttered thus much, and sipping his tea and filling his mouth with food.

Mrs. Jones who was perfect in her tactics, said not a word, but attended to the affairs of the table, as though she had not noticed what was said. The farmer's se-

cretiveness had at last worked itself out and he began again.

'Squire Johnson's wife's sister is coming here in a few days, and is going to live with 'em.'

The news being thus fairly divulged, it left free scope for conversation.

'Well I wonder if she is a proud, stuck up piece,' said Mrs. Jones.

'I shouldn't think she would be, said Susan; for there ain't a more sociable woman in the neighborhood than Miss Johnson. So if she's at all like her sister I think we shall like her.'

'I wonder how old she is,' said Stephen, who was just verging toward the close of his twenty-first year.

'The Squire called her eighteen,' said Mr. Jones, giving a wink to his wife, as much as to say that's about the right age for Stephen.

'I wonder if she is handsome,' said Susan, who was somewhat vain of her own looks, and having been a sort of reigning belle in Pond village for some time, felt a little alarm at the idea of a rival.

'I dare be bound she's handsome,' said Mrs. Jones, 'if she's sister to Mrs. Johnson; for where will you find a handsomer woman than Mrs. Johnson, go the town through!'

After supper, Stephen went down to Mr. Robinson's store, and told the news to young Charles Robinson and all the young fellows who were gathered there for a game at quoits and a ring at wrestling. And Susan went directly over to Mr. Bean's and told Patty, and Patty went over to the widow Davis' and told Sally, and before nine o'clock the matter was pretty well understood in about every house in the village.

At the close of the fourth day, a little before sunset, a chaise was seen to drive up to Squire Johnson's door. Of course the eyes of the whole village were turned in that direction. Sally Davis, who was just coming in from milking, set her pail down on the grass by the side of the road as soon as the chaise came in sight, and watched it till it reached the Squire's door, and the gentleman and lady had got out and gone into the house. Patty Bean was doing up the ironing that afternoon, and she had just taken a hot iron from the fire as the chaise passed the door, and she ran with it in her hand and stood on the door steps till the whole ceremony of alighting, greeting, and entering the house, was over. Old Mrs. Bean stood with her head out of the window, her iron bowed spectacles resting upon the top of her forehead, her shriveled hand placed across her eyebrows to defend her red eyes from the rays of the setting sun, and her skinny chin protruding about three inches in advance of a couple of stubs of teeth, which her open mouth exposed fairly to view.

'Seems to me they are dreadful loving,' said old Mrs. Bean, as she saw Mrs. Johnson descend the steps and welcome her sister with a kiss.

'La me; if there isn't the squire kissing of her up,' said Patty; 'well, I declare, I would a waited till I got into the house, I'll if I wouldn't. It looks so vulgar to be kissing afore folks, and out doors too; I should think Squire Johnson would be ashamed of himself.'

'Well I shouldn't,' said young John Bean, who came up at that moment, and who had passed the chaise just as the young lady alighted from it. 'I shouldn't be ashamed to kiss such a pretty gal as that any how; I'd kiss her wherever I could catch her, if it was in the meetin'-house.'

'Why, is she handsome, Jack?' said Patty.

'Yes, she's got the prettiest little puckery kind of a mouth I've seen this six months. Her cheeks are red, and her eyes shine like new buttons.'

'Well,' replied Patty, 'if she'll only take the shine off of Susan Jones when she goes to meetin', Sunday, I shan't care.'

While these observations were going on at old Mr. Bean's, Charles Robinson and a

group of young fellows with him were standing in front of Robinson's store, a little farther down the road, and watching the scene that was passing at Squire Johnson's. They witnessed the whole with becoming decorum, now and then making a remark about the fine horse and the handsome chaise, till they saw the tall squire bend his head down and give the young lady a kiss when they all burst out into a loud laugh.— In a moment being conscious that their laugh must be heard and noticed at the squire's, they, in order to do away the impression it must necessarily make, at once turned their heads the other way, and Charles Robinson, who was quick at an expedient, knocked off the hat of the lad who was standing next to him, and then they all laughed louder than before.

'Here comes Jack Bean,' said Charles, 'now we shall hear something about her, for Jack was coming by the squire's when she got out of the chaise. How does she look, Jack?'

'Handsome as a picture,' said Jack. 'I haint seen a prettier gal since last Thanksgiving Day, when Jane Ford was here to visit Susan Jones.'

'Black eyes or blue?' said Charles.

'Blue,' said Jack, 'but all-fired bright.'

'Tall or short?' said Stephen Jones, who was rather short himself, and therefore felt a particular interest on that point.

'Rather short,' said Jack, 'but straight & round as your young colt.'

'Do you know what her name is?' said Charles.

'They called her Lucy when she got out of the chaise,' said Jack, 'and as Mrs. Johnson's name was Brown before she was married, I s'pose her name must be Lucy Brown.'

'Just such a name as I like,' said Charles Robinson; 'Lucy Brown sounds well. Now suppose, in order to get acquainted with her we all hands take a sail to-morrow night about this time; on the pond, and invite her to go with us.'

'Agreed,' said Stephen Jones. 'Agreed,' said Jack Bean. 'Agreed,' said all hands.

The question then arose, who should carry the invitation to her; and the young men being rather bashful on their score, it was finally settled that Susan Jones should bear the invitation, and accompany her to the boat, where they should all be in waiting to receive her. The next day was a very long day, at least to most of the young men of Pond village; and promptly, an hour before sunset, most of them were assembled, with half a score of their sisters and female cousins, by a little stone wharf on the margin of the pond, for the proposed sail. All the girls in the village, of a suitable age, were there, except Patty Bean.— She had undergone a good deal of fidgeting and fussing during the day, to prepare for the sail, but had been disappointed.— Her new bonnet was not done; and as for wearing her old flap-sided bonnet, she declared she would not, if she never went.— Presently Susan Jones and Miss Lucy Brown were seen coming down the road.— In a moment all were quiet, the laugh and the joke were hushed, and each one put on his best looks. When they arrived, Susan went through the ceremony of introducing Miss Brown to each of the ladies and gentlemen present.

'But how in the world are you going to sail?' said Miss Brown, 'for there isn't a breath of wind; and I don't see any sail boat neither.'

'Oh, the less wind we have the better, when we sail here,' said Charles Robinson; 'and there is our sail-boat,' pointing to a flat bottomed scow-boat, some twenty feet long by ten wide.

'We don't use no sails,' said Jack Bean; 'sometimes, when the wind is fair, we put up a bush to help pull along a little, and when 'tisn't we row.'

The party were soon embarked on board the scow, and a couple of oars were set in motion, and they glided slowly and pleasantly over as lovely a sheet of water as ever glowed in the sunseting ray. In one

hour's time, the whole party felt perfectly acquainted with Miss Lucy Brown. She had talked in the most lively and fascinating manner; she had told stories and sung songs. Among others, she had given Moore's boat song with the sweetest possible effect; and by the time they returned to the landing, it would hardly be too much to say that half the young men in the party were decidedly in love with her.

A stern regard to truth requires a remark to be made here, not altogether favorable to Susan Jones, which is the more to be regretted, as she was in the main, an excellent hearted girl, and highly esteemed by the whole village. It was observed that as the company grew more and more pleased with Miss Lucy Brown, Susan Jones was less and less animated; till at last she became quite reserved and apparently sad. She, however, on landing, treated Miss Brown with respectful attention, accompanied her to Squire Johnson's door, and cordially bade her good night.

The casual glimpses which the young men of Pond village had of Miss Brown during the remainder of the week, as she occasionally stood at the door, or looked out at the window, or once or twice when she walked out with Susan Jones, and the fair view they all had of her at meeting on the Sabbath, served to increase their admiration, and to render her more and more an object of attraction. She was regarded by all as a prize, and several of them were already planning what steps it was best to take in order to win her. The two most prominent candidates, however, for Miss Brown's favor, were Charles Robinson and Stephen Jones. Their position and standing among the young men of the village seemed to put all others on the back ground. Charles, whose father was wealthy, had every advantage which money could procure. But Stephen, though poor, had decidedly the advantage over Charles in personal recommendations. He had more talent, was more sprightly and intelligent, and more pleasing in his address. From the evening of the sail on the pond, they had both watched every movement of Miss Brown with the most intense interest; and, as nothing can deceive a lover, each had, with an interest no less intense, watched every movement of the other. They had ceased to speak to each other about her, and if her name was mentioned in their presence, both were always observed to color.

The second week after her arrival, through the influence of Squire Johnson, the district school was offered to Miss Brown on the other side of the pond, which offer was accepted, and she went immediately to take charge of it. The announcement at first threw something of a damper upon the spirit of the young people of Pond village. But when it was understood the school would continue but a few weeks, & being but a mile and a half distant, Miss Brown could come home every Saturday afternoon, and spend the Sabbath, it was not very difficult to be reconciled to the temporary arrangement. The week wore away heavily, especially to Charles Robinson and Stephen Jones. They counted the days impatiently till Saturday and on Saturday they counted the long lagging hours till noon. They had both made up their minds that it would be dangerous to wait longer, and they both resolved not to let another Sabbath pass without making direct proposals to Miss Brown.

Stephen Jones was too early a riser for Charles Robinson and in any enterprise where both were concerned, was pretty sure to take the lead, except where money could carry the palm, and then, of course, it was always borne away by Charles. As Miss Lucy had been absent most of the week, and was to be at home that afternoon, Charles Robinson had made an arrangement with his mother and sisters to have a little tea party in the evening, for the purpose of inviting Miss Brown, and then, of course, he would walk home with her in the evening; and then, of course, would be a good opportunity to break the

ice, and make known to her his wishes. Stephen Jones, however, was more prompt in his movements. He had got wind of the proposed tea party, although himself and sister for obvious reasons, had not been invited, and he resolved not to risk the arrival of Miss Brown and her visit to Mr. Robinson's, before he should see her. She would dismiss her school at noon, and come the distance of a mile and a half round the pond home. His mind was at once made up. He would go round and meet her at the school-house, and accompany her on her walk. There, in that winding road, around those delightful waters, with the tall and shady trees over head, and the wild grapevines twining round their trunks, and climbing to the branches, while the wild birds were singing through the woods, and the wild ducks playing in the coves along the shore, surely there, if any where in the world, could a man bring his mind up to the point of speaking of love.

Accordingly, a little before noon Stephen washed and brushed himself up, and put on his Sunday clothes, and started on his expedition. In order to avoid observation, he took a back route across the field, intending to come into the road by the pond, a little out of the village. As ill luck would have it, Chas. Robinson had been out in the direction, and was returning with an armful of green boughs and wild flowers, to ornament the parlor for the evening. He saw Stephen, and noticed his dress, and the direction he was going, and he at once smoked the whole business. His first impulse was to rush upon him and collar him, and demand that he should return back. But then he recollected that in the last scrawl he had with Stephen, two or three years before, he had a little the worst of it, and he instinctively stood still while Stephen passed on without seeing him. It flashed upon his mind at once that the question must now be reduced to a game of speed. If he could by any means gain the school-house first, and engage Miss Lucy to walk home with him he should consider himself safe. But if Stephen should reach the school house first, he should feel a good deal of uneasiness for the consequences.— Stephen was walking very leisurely, and unconscious that he was in any danger of a competitor on the course and it was important that his suspicions should not be awakened. Charles, therefore, remained perfectly quiet till Stephen had got a little out of hearing, and then he threw down his bushes and flowers, and ran to the wharf below the store with his utmost speed. He had one advantage over Stephen. He was ready at a moment's warning to start on an expedition of the kind, for Sunday clothes were an every-day affair with him.

There was a light canoe, belonging to his father, lying at the wharf and a couple of stout boys were there fishing. Charles hailed them, and told them if they would row him across the pond as quick as they possible could, he would give them a quarter of a dollar a piece. This, in their view was a splendid offer for their services, and they jumped on board with alacrity and manned the oars. Charles took a paddle, and stood in the stern to steer the boat, and help to propel her ahead. The distance by water was a little less than by land, and although Stephen had considerably the start of him, he believed he should be able to reach the school house first, especially if Stephen should not see him and quicken his pace. In one minute after he arrived at the wharf, the boat was under full way. The boys laid down to the oars, with right good will, and Charles put out all his strength upon the paddle. They were shooting over the water twice as fast as a man could walk, and Charles already felt sure of the victory. But when they had gone about half a mile, they came in the range of a little opening in the trees on the shore where the road was exposed to view, and there, at that critical moment, was Stephen pursuing his easy walk. Charles' heart was in his mouth. Still it