

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

H. WEBB, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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TERMS:

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POETRY.



FINE OLD BALLAD.

The following touching ballad is of very ancient origin, and probably founded on actual occurrence. We copy it from the 'Ministry of the Scottish Border.'

There were two sisters sat in a bower:

Binnorie, O Binnorie;

There came a night to be their wooer,

By the bonnie mill dam of Binnorie.

He courted the eldest with glove & ring,

But he lo'ed the youngest above a' thing;

He courted the eldest with brooch & knife,

But he lo'ed the youngest above his life,

The eldest she was vexed sair,

And sore envied her sister fair.

The eldest said to the youngest ane (in')—

'Will ye on & see our fathers' ships come

She's ta'en her by the lily hand,

And led her down to the river strand,

The youngest stude upon a stane,

The eldest came and push'd her in,

See took her by the middle sma',

And dash'd her bonny back to the jaw;

'O sister, sister, reach your hand,

And ye shall be heir of half my land.'—

'O sister, I'll not reach my hand,

And I'll be heir of all your land;

'Shame fa' the hand that I should take,

It's twin'd me, and my world's make,—

'O sister, reach me but your glove,

And sweet William shall be your love.'—

'Sink on, nor hope for hand or glove!

And sweet William shall be my love.

'Your cherry cheeks and your yellow hair,

Garr'd me gang maiden evermair.'—

Sometimes she sunk, sometimes she swam

Until she came to the miller's dam;

'Oh, father, father! draw your dam!

There's either a mermaid or a milk white swan.'—

The miller hastid and drew his dam,

And there he found a drowned woman;

You could not see her yellow hair,

For gowd and pearls that were so rare;

You could not see her middle sma',

Her gowden girle was sae bra'.

A famous harper pass by,

The sweet pale face he chanced to spy,

And when he look'd that lady on,

He sigh'd and made a heavy moan;

He made a harp of her breast bone,

Whose sounds would melt a heart of stone;

The strings he fram'd of her yellow hair,

Whose notes made and the listening ear.

He brought it to her father's hall,

And where the court assembled all,

He laid his harp upon a stane,

And straight it began to play alone

'Oh yonder sits my father, the king,

And yonder sits my mother, the queen

'And yonder stands my brother Hugh,

And by him William, sweet and true.'

But the last tune that the harp play'd then,

Binnorie, O Binnorie

Wag—'Woe to my sister, false Helen!

By the bonny mill dam of Binnorie.

When you have a bountiful table, remember the poor this cold weather.

MISCELLANEOUS.

From the St. Louis Reveille:

Swallowing Oysters Alive.

At a late hour, the other night, the door of an oyster house in our city was thrust open, and in stalked a hero from the Sucker. He was quite six feet high, spare, somewhat stooped, with a hungry, anxious countenance, and his hands pushed clear down to the bottom of his breeches pockets. His outer covering was hard to define; but after surveying it minutely we came to the conclusion that his suit had been made in his boyhood; of a dingy, yellow linsey woolsey, and that, having sprouted up with astonishing rapidity, he had been forced to piece it out with all colors, in order to keep with his body. In spite of his exertions however, he had fallen in arrears about a foot of the necessary length, and consequently, stuck that far through his inexpressibles. His crop of hair was surmounted by the funniest lude seal skin cap imaginable. After taking a position, he indulged in a long stare at the man opening the bivalves, and slowly ejaculated—'Istiers!'

'Yes, sir,' responded the attentive operator; 'and fine ones they are too.'

'Well, I've heard tell of isters afore,' says he, 'but this is the first time I've seed 'em and perhaps I'll know what thar made of afore I git out of town.'

Having expressed this desperate intention, he cautiously approached a plate, and scrutinized the unopened shell fish with a gravity and interest which would have done honor to the most illustrious searcher into the mysteries of nature. At length he began to soliloquize on the difficulty of getting them out, and how queer they looked when out.

'I never seed anythin' hold on so—' takes an a-mazin' size of screwin' hoss to get 'em out, and aint they slick and slip'ry when they does come? Smooth as an zell! I've a good mind to give that fellar lodgings, just to realize the effect, as uncle Jess used to say about spekelation.'

'Well, sir,' was the reply, 'down with two bits, and you can have a dozen.'

'Two bits!' exclaimed the Sucker, 'now come, thar's stickin' it on rite strong, hoss for isters. A dozen on 'em aint nothin' to a chicken and there's no gittin' more'n a piece for them. I've only realized forty-five picayunes on my first ventor' to St. Louis. I'll tell you what, I'll gin you two chickens for a dozen, if you'll conclude to deal.'

A wag, who was standing by indulging in a dozen, winked to the attendant to shell out, and the offer was accepted.

'Now mind,' repeated the Sucker, 'all fa,—two chickens for a dozen—you're witness, mister, turning at the same time to the wag, 'none of your tricks, for I've heard tell you city fellars are mity slip'ry coons.'

The bargain being fairly understood, our Sucker squared himself for the onset—deliberately put off his seal skin, tucked up his sleeves, and fork in hand, awaited the appearance of No. 1. It came—he saw—and quickly it was bolted! A moment's dead pause ensued.—The wag dropped his knife and fork with a look of mingled amazement and horror—something akin to Shakspeare's Hamlet on seeing his daddy's ghost—while he burst into the exclamation—

'Swallowed alive, as I'm a christian!'

'Our Sucker hero had opened his mouth with pleasure a moment before, but now it stood open. Fear—a horrid dread of he didn't know what—a consciousness that all wasn't right, and ignorance of the extent of the wrong—the uncertainty of that moment was terrible. Urged to desperation, he faltered out—

'What on airth's the row!

'Did you swallow it alive?' enquired the wag.

'I swallowed it just as gin it to me!' shouted the Sucker.

'You're a dead man!' exclaimed his anxious friend; 'the creature is alive and will eat right through you,' added he, in a most hopeless tone.

'Get a pisen pump and pump it out!

screamed the Sucker, in a frenzy, his eyes fairly starting from their sockets. 'Oh gracious! what'll I do!' It's got hold of my inwards, already, and I am dead as a chicken!—do something for me, do—don't let the infernal sea toad eat me afore your eyes.'

'Wy don't you put some of this on it!' inquired the wag, pointing to a bottle of strong pepper sauce.

'The hint was enough—the Sucker, upon the instant, seized the bottle, and desperately wrenching out the cork, swallowed half the contents at a draught. He fairly squealed from its effects, and gasped, and blowed & pitched, & twisted, as if it were coursing through him with electric effect, while at the same time his eyes ran a stream of tears. At length, becoming a little composed, his waggish adviser approached, almost bursting with suppressed laughter, and inquired—

'How are you now, old fellow!—did you kill it!'

'Well, I did, hoss—ugh—ugh—o o my inwards. If that ister critter's dying agonies didn't stir a ruction in me equal to a small earthquake, than a serpent when that killing stuff touched it; but—and here, with a countenance made up of suppressed agony and present determination, he paused, as if to give force to his words, and deliberately remarked—'If any get two chickens from me for that live animal I'm d—d!' and seizing his seal skin, he vanished.

'The shout of laughter, & the contortions of the company at this finale, would have made a spectator believe that they had all been 'swallowing oysters alive.'

What assured People say.

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sleep, he dare not, lest it seem unpolite to the host, so they both remain slaves, and feel it a relief to part company. A few individuals, mostly in foreign lands, arrange this matter with wiser freedom. If a visitor arrives they say, 'I am busy to-day—if you wish to ride, there are horses and saddles in the stable—if you wish to read there are books in the parlour—if you want to work the men are raking hay in the field—if you want to romp; the children are at play in the court—if you want to talk to me I can be with you at such an hour. Go where you please, and while you stay, do as you please.'

At some houses in Florence, large parties meet without invitation, and without the slightest preparation. It is understood that on some particular evening of the week a lady or gentleman always receive their friends. In one room are books and flowers in another, pictures and engravings: in a third, music. Couples are enclosed in some shaded alcove, or groups dotted about the room in mirthful or serious conversation. No one is required to speak to his host either entering or departing. Lemonade & baskets of fruits stand here and there on the side tables, that all may take, who like, but eating, which constitutes so large a part of all American entertainments, is a slight and almost unnoticed incident in these festivals of intellect and taste. Wouldst thou like to see such social freedom introduced here? Then do it. But the first step must be complete indifference to Mrs. Smith's asser-tion, that you were mean enough to offer only one kind of cake to your company & to put less shortening in the under crust of your pies than the upper. Let Mrs. Smith talk according to her gits; be thou assured that all living souls love freedom better than a loaf of sugar bread.

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it,' which is the only true method of surmounting difficulties, and without which genius itself halts in the race. And two hours a day, or only one, when it is sure, and not to be intermitted on any account cannot fail to accomplish results which will astonish him who has thus been enabled to compass them.

It is difficult, certainly, to return again and again to the same theme—the human mind in general, is disposed to wander and to hunt after new fancies. It will, if it be allowed to take the bit in its teeth, fritter away its strength, attaining little of nothing; and one of the secrets of success is to give it discipline in this respect, that it may wait upon the judgement; and there is no better method of so doing than is pointed out above—certain hours for certain studies.

There is, moreover, a disposition with most people to endeavour to do too much at once—to overrun, as it were, whole fields of literature and science with a single incursion, instead of advancing in compact column towards a specified point. They are thus tempted to lounge listlessly among their books; reading here a little and there a little, coquetting all around negligent of more serious studies, and deluding themselves with the never to be realized intention of hereafter giving up such desultory habits. For the mind has its dissipations as well as the body, and our reading may easily be made a gossip as unprofitable as the idlest intercourse of convivial life. Almost every body has felt how thoroughly he masters an author when detained by accident in some remote and isolated position, with nothing at hand, perhaps, but a single volume, and that probably not of the most attractive character—how in mere self defence against the approaches of ennui, as the rain patters on the window, he prints, preface, text and appendix advertisements, until he not only understands the work itself, but remembers the printer, the publisher, the terms of the copyright and every other particular appertaining to it. The few people about the house may not be of the conversable sort, or are of the kind whose stock of ideas is soon exhausted—the dog, as distant dogs are apt to be, is unsocial, and does not understand your ways; while the cat is uninteresting and uncivilized; and under such circumstances, what a treasure is the General Almanac or antediluvian Directory. The facts thus collected, however trivial strike so deep into the memory that they are rarely forgotten; and there is a lesson in this which might be turned to advantage to direct our reading. No matter how extensive the library, to your use of it be as were, staked out and enclosed; and when you have closely cropped the herbage within your reach, it will be soon enough to move on to a fresh pasture. Otherwise, a wide extent of ground may be skimmed over, to but little profit. It is desirable, of course, to keep up with the lighter literature and the journalism of the day—to read the newspaper is essential—one might as well be out of the world as not to know what is going on within it, and probably there is nothing more awkward than not to have a general acquaintance with the current topics of the time but the more serious study requires to be systematic, and to be prosecuted with concentrated attention—to have its defined objects and its fixed hours, that we may not play the truant from our own school, under all sorts of pretences and evasions.

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