The Ebensburg Alleghanian.

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I WOULD RATHER BE RIGHT THAN PRESIDENT.—Henry Clay.

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Twenty-Five.

'Tis wondrous strange how great the change
Since I was in my teens;
Then I had beaux and billet-doux,
And joined the gayest scenes.
But lovers now have ceased to vow;
No way they now contrive
To poison, hang, or drown themselves,
Because I'm twenty-five.

Once, if the night was e'er so bright,
I ne'er abroad would roam,
Without "The bliss, the honor, Miss,
Of seeing you safe home."
But now I go, through rain and snow,
Pursued and scarce alive,
Through all the dark, without a spark,
Because I'm twenty-five.

They used to call and ask me all
About my health so frail,
And thought a ride would help my side,
And turn my cheek less pale.
But now, alas! if I am ill,
None cares that I revive;
And my pale cheek in vain may speak,
Because I'm twenty-five.

Now, if a ride improves my side,
I'm forced to take the stage;
For that is deemed quite proper for
A person of my age.
And then no hand is offered me,
To help me out alive;
They think 'twon't hurt me now to fall
Because I'm twenty-five.

O, dear! 'tis queer that every year
I'm slighted more and more;
For not a beau pretends to show
His head within our door.
Nor ride, nor card, nor soft address
My spirits now revive;
And one might near as well be dead
As say, "I'm twenty-five."

SIX LOVE LETTERS.

"Are there any more of these letters?"

When her father asked this question, in an awful tone. Lucilla Richmond could not say "No," and dared not say "Yes," but as an intermediate course burst into tears, and sobbed behind her handkerchief.

"Bring them to me, Lucilla," said her father, as if she had answered him, as, indeed, she had; and the girl, trembling and weeping, arose to obey him.

Then Mrs. Richmond, her daughter's very self grown older, came behind her husband's chair and patted him on the shoulder.

"Please don't be hard with her, my dear," she said coaxingly. "He's a nice young man, and it is our fault after all as much as hers, and you won't break her young heart I'm sure."

"Perhaps you approve of the whole affair, ma'am," said Mr. Richmond.

"I—no—that is I only,"—gasped the little woman; and hearing Lucilla coming, she sank into a chair, blaming herself dreadfully for not having been present at all her daughter's music lessons during the past year.

For all this disturbance arose from a music teacher who had given lessons to Miss Lucilla for twelve months, and who had taken the liberty to fall in love with her, knowing well that she was the daughter of one of the richest men in Yorkshire.

"It was inexcusable in a poor music teacher, who should have known his place," Mr. Richmond declared, and he clutched the little perfumed billet which had fallen into his hands as he might a scorpion, and waited for the others with a look upon his face which told of no softening. They came at last, six little white envelopes, tied together with blue ribbon, and were laid at his elbow by his despairing daughter.

"Lock these up until I return home this evening," he said to his wife; "I will read them then. Meanwhile, Lucilla is not to see the music teacher on any pretence."

And then Miss Lucilla went down upon her knees.

"O, dear papa!" she cried, "dearest papa, please don't say I must never see him again. I couldn't bear it. Indeed I could not. He's poor, I know, but he's a gentleman, and I—I like him so much, papa."

"No more of this absurdity, my dear," said Mr. Richmond, "he has been artful enough to make you think him perfection, I suppose. Your parents know what is best for your happiness. A music teacher is not a match for Miss Richmond."

With which remark Mr. Richmond put on his hat and overcoat, and departed.

Then Lucilla and her mother took the opportunity of falling into each other's arms.

"It's so naughty of you," said Mrs. Richmond. "But oh, dear, I can't blame you. It was exactly so with me. I ran away with your papa, you know, and my parents objected because of his poverty. I feel the greatest sympathy for you, and Frederick has such fine eyes, and is so pleasing. I wish I could soften your papa."

"When he has seen these letters there'll be no hope, I'm very much afraid," sobbed Miss Lucilla, "Fred is so romantic, and papa hates romance."

"He used to be very romantic himself in those old times," said Mrs. Richmond. "Such letters as he wrote me. I have them in my desk yet. He said he would die if I refused him.

"So does Fred," said Lucilla.

"And that life would be worthless without me, and about my being beautiful (he thought so, you know). I'm sure he ought to sympathize a little," said Mrs. Richmond.

But she dared not promise that he would.

She coaxed her darling to stop crying, and made her lie down; then went up into her own room to put the letters into her desk; and, as she placed them in one pigeon-hole, she saw in another a bundle, tied exactly as those were, and drew them out.

These letters were to a Lucilla also. One who had received them twenty years before—and she was now a matron old enough to have a daughter who had heart troubles—unfolded them one by one, wondering how it came to pass that lovers were all so much alike.

Half a dozen—just the same number, and much more romantic than those the music master had written to her daughter Lucilla. A strange idea came into Mrs. Richmond's mind. She dared not oppose her husband by a look or word; she had never attempted such a thing. But she was very fond of her daughter. When she left the desk she looked guilty and frightened, and something rustled in her pocket as she moved. But she said nothing to any one on the subject until the dinner hour arrived, and with it came her husband, more angry and determined than ever. The meal was passed in silence; and then having adjourned to the parlor, Mr. Richmond seated himself in a great arm-chair, and demanded:

"The letters," in a voice of thunder.

Mrs. Richmond put her hand into her pocket, and pulled it out again with a frightened look.

Mr. Richmond again repeated, still more sternly:

"Those absurd letters, if you please, my dear ma'am."

And then the little woman faltered:

"I—that is—I believe—yes dear—I believe I have them," and gave him a pile of white envelopes encircled with a blue ribbon, with a hand that trembled like an aspen leaf.

As for Lucilla, she began to weep as though the end of all things had come at last, and felt sure that if papa should prove cruel she should die.

"Six letters—six shameful pieces of deception, Lucilla," said the indignant parent. "I am shocked that a child of mine should practice such duplicity. Hem! let me see. Number one I believe. June, and this is December. Half a year you have deceived us then, Lucilla. Let me see, eh? nonsense. People don't fall in love in that absurd manner. It takes years of acquaintance and respect and attachment. 'With your smiles for his goal, he would win both fame and fortune, poor as he is!' Fiddlesticks, Lucilla! A man who has common sense would always wait until he had a fair commencement before he proposed to any girl. 'Praise of your beauty. The loveliest creature he ever saw!' Exaggeration, my dear. You are not plain, but such flattery is absurd. 'Must hear from you or die!' Dear, dear—how absurd!"

And Mr. Richmond dropped the first letter, and took up another.

"The same stuff," he commented. "I hope you don't believe a word he says. A plain, earnest, upright sort of a man would never go into such rhapsodies, I am sure. Ah! now, in number three he calls you 'an angel.' He is romantic upon my word. And what is all this?

"Those who would forbid me to see you can find no fault with me but my poverty. I am honest—I am earnest in my efforts. I am by birth a gentleman, and I love you from my soul. Do not let them sell you for gold, Lucilla."

"Great heavens, what impertinence to your parents!"

"I don't remember Fred's saying anything of that kind," said poor Lucilla. "He never knew you would object."

Mr. Richmond shook his head, frowned, and read on in silence, until the last sheet lay under his hand. Then, with an ejaculation of rage he started to his feet.

"Infamous!" he cried; "I'll go to him this instant—I'll horsewhip him! I'll—I'll murder him! As for you, by Jove I'll send you to a convent. Elope, elope with a music teacher! I'm ashamed to call you my daughter. Where's my hat? Give me my boots. Here John, call a cab!—I—"

But here Lucilla caught one arm and Mrs. Richmond the other.

"Oh, papa, are you crazy?" said Lucilla. "Frederick never proposed such a thing. Let me see the letter. Oh, papa, this is not Fred's—upon my word it is not. Do look papa; it is dated twenty years back, and Frederick's name is not Charles! Papa, these are your love letters to mamma, written long ago. Her name is Lucilla, you know."

Mr. Richmond sat down in his arm-chair in silence, very red in the face.

"How did this occur?" he said sternly; and little Mrs. Richmond retreated into a corner, and with a handkerchief to her eyes sobbed:

"I did it on purpose," and paused as though she expected a sudden judgment. But, hearing nothing, she dared at last to rise and creep up to her husband timidly:

"You know, Charles," she said, "it's so long ago since, and I thought you might not exactly remember—how you fell in love with me at first sight, how papa and mamma objected; and how at last we ran away together; and it seemed to me that if we could bring it all back plainly to you as it was then, we might let Lucilla marry the man she likes, who is good if he is not rich. I did not need it to be brought back any plainer myself; women have more time to remember, you know. And we have been very happy, have we not?"

And certainly Mr. Richmond could not deny that. So that Lucilla, feeling that her interests might safely be left in her mother's keeping, slipped out of the room, and heard the result of the little ruse next morning. It was favorable to the young teacher, who had really only been sentimental, and not gone half so far as elopement; and, in due course of time, the two were married with all the pomp and grandeur befitting the nuptials of a wealthy merchant's daughter, with the approbation of Lucilla's mamma, who justly believed that her little ruse had brought about all her daughter's happiness.

The Bridge of Sighs.

The famous Bridge of Sighs is a narrow, ornamental enclosed gallery, much higher than other bridges, connecting an upper story of the palace with the prison on the side of the narrow canal. Through one passage the prisoner was passed over to his final trial, and if passed back again, it was to his doom. At one end of this passage, he sat upon a chair, a rope being fastened about his neck, which strangled him by means of a turn of the chair, after which, his body was conveniently dropped through an aperture at the other end of the passage, down into the still waters below, and the time and manner of his departure from this life were not published in the morning papers.

Our first day in Venice was finished by going over the city in a gondola. Our gondolier was the prince of his craft, a handsome, curly-haired, broad-shouldered fellow, the skillful sweep of whose oars sent our gondola gliding with an even swiftness quite equal to one's fancy. Of all modes of getting about, this is the most delicious; no jerking or rocking, but one continuous movement, measured by the regular beat of the soft-plashing oar. At every narrow turn, the oarsman sings out his signal to warn any one from collision, and using a single oar, sweeps on as before.

But the palaces. What better is a marble palace than a granite one, if it is black as iron, which is true of many of those in Venice! Begrimmed by time, and by the action of the salt sea air, it is almost impossible to conceive how radiant they ever have been, except where an occasional one seems to have been furbished up, or a new, gleaming white stone re-set in an almost dead black wall. Yet, apart from all their graceful architecture, they are beautiful in their grimness and majestic in their desertion. The eye never tires of the beautiful balconies, graceful columns and arches, statues and ornamental carving, and above all the half unreal and spirit-like, lifting up from the water's edge of these ancient walls, in grace and beauty worthy to be poetically embalmed of Byron, and in historical interest, the home of Shakespeare's most wonderful characters.

But our gondolier plies on, resting his oar now and then to sing out monotonously the names of the noted palaces we pass, many of which are familiar. Many of these walls set straight down beneath the sea, with only a few steps at the doors where the foot meets the gondola; others have colonnades throughout their whole length, the resting pavements decending to the water, and where several such stand in succession, the promenade looks not inconvenient as well as charming. Before these are often a double set of gaily striped posts, set in water, for the use of gondolas.

Here and there, rich and gay colored awnings, over windows and balconies, still spread, or looped up for the night, add picturesqueness to the scene. The shadows fall, and what is bad for romance, there is no moonlight, and Venice is, apparently, too poor for any other. Here and there a lamp in front of a palace door, throws a solitary gleam across the canal, or, from an occasional bridge, a few signals mark the way. It is deliciously cool, and the summer stars look quietly down, as they usually do, but the walls make the shadows deeper, and we pass on through darkness and silence, closing our first day in Venice at the steps of one brilliantly lighted and beautiful palace, once the home of a Doge, and now the home of the wandering stranger.—*Cor. Cin. Commercial.*

THE Charles Dickens fever has already begun in Boston, and a story is told of one enthusiastic old fellow who wanted to subscribe for seventeen season tickets to the course of readings, provided the price was not to be over $500 a ticket.

Origin of Negro Minstrelsy.

Thirty-six years ago, a young man, about twenty-five years old, of a commanding height—six feet full, the heels of his boots not included in the reckoning—and dressed in scrupulous keeping with the fashion of the time, might have been seen sauntering idly along one of the principal streets of Cincinnati. To the few who could claim acquaintance with him, he was known as an actor, playing at the time referred to a short engagement as light comedian in a theatre of that city. He does not seem to have attained to any noticeable degree of eminence in his profession, but he had established for himself a reputation among jolly fellows in a social way. He could tell a story, sing a song, dance a hornpipe, after a style which, however unequal to complete success on the stage, proved, in private performance to select circles rendered appreciative by accessory refreshment, famously triumphant always. If it must be confessed that he was deficient in the more profound qualities, it is not to be inferred that he was destitute of all the distinguishing, though shallower, virtues of character. He had the merit, too, of a proper appreciation of his own capacity; and his aims never rose above that capacity. As a superficial man, he dealt with superficial things, and his dealings were marked by tact and shrewdness. In his sphere he was proficient, and kept his wits upon the alert for everything that might be turned to professional and profitable use. Thus it was that, as he sauntered along one of the main thoroughfares of Cincinnati, his attention was suddenly arrested by a voice ringing clear and full above the noises of the street, and giving utterance, in an unmistakable dialect, to the refrain of a song to this effect—

"Turn about an' wheel about an' do jis' so,
An' ebery time I turn about I jump Jim Crow."

Struck by the peculiarities of the performance, so unique in style, matter, and "character" of delivery, the player listened on. Were not these elements, was the suggestion of the instant, which might admit of higher than mere street or stable-yard development? As a national or "race" illustration, behind the footlights, might not "Jim Crow" and a black face tickle the fancy of pit and circle, as well as the "Sprig of Shillelagh" and a red nose? Out of the suggestion leaped the determination; and so it chanced that the casual hearing of a song trolled by a negro stage-driver, lolling lazily on the box of his vehicle, gave origin to a school of music destined to excel in popularity all others, and to make the name of the obscure actor, W. D. Rice, famous.

As his engagement at Cincinnati had nearly expired, Rice deemed it expedient to postpone a public venture in the newly projected line until the opening of a fresh engagement should assure him opportunity to share fairly the benefit expected to grow out of the experiment. This engagement had already been entered into; and accordingly, shortly after, in the autumn of 1830, he left Cincinnati for Pittsburg.

The old theatre of Pittsburg occupied the site of the present one, on Fifth street. It was an unpretending structure, rudely built of boards, and of moderate proportions, but sufficient, nevertheless, to satisfy the taste and secure the comfort of the few who dared to face consequences and lend patronage to an establishment under the ban of the Scotch-Irish Calvinists. Entering upon duty at the "Old Drury" of the "Birmingham of America," Rice prepared to take advantage of his opportunity. There was a negro in attendance at Griffith's Hotel on Wood street, named Cuff,—an exquisite specimen of his sort,—who won a precarious subsistence by letting his open mouth as a mark for boys to pitch pennies into, at three paces, and by carrying the trunks of passengers from the steamboats to the hotels. Cuff was precisely the subject for Rice's purpose. Slight persuasion induced him to accompany the actor to the theater, where he was led through the private entrance and quietly ensconced behind the scenes. After the play, Rice, having shaded his countenance to the "contraband" hue, ordered Cuff to disrobe, and proceeded to invest himself in the cast-off apparel. When the arrangements were complete, the bell rang, and Rice, habited in an old coat forlornly dilapidated, with a pair of shoes composed equally of patches and places for patches on his feet, and wearing a coarse straw hat in a melancholy condition of rent and collapse over a dense black wig of matted moss, waddled into view. The extraordinary apparition produced an instant effect. The crash of peanuts ceased in the pit, and through the circles passed a murmur and a bustle of liveliest expectation. The orchestra opened with a short prelude, and to its accompaniment Rice began to sing, delivering the first line by way of introductory recitative—

"O, Jim Crow's come to town, as you all must know,
An' he wheel about, turn about, he do jis so,
An' ebery time he wheel about he jump Jim Crow."

The effect was electric. Such a thunder of applause as followed was never heard before within the shell of that old theatre. With each succeeding couplet and refrain the uproar was renewed, until presently, when the performer, gathering courage from the favorable temper of his audience, ventured to improvise matter for his distiches from familiarly known local incidents, the demonstrations were deafening.

Now, it happened that Cuff, who meanwhile was crouching in a dishabille under concealment of a projecting *flat* behind the performer, by some means received intelligence, at this point, of the near approach of a steamer to the Monongahela wharf. Between himself and others of his color in the same line of business, and especially as regarded a certain formidable competitor called Ginger, there existed an active rivalry in the baggage-carrying business. For Cuff to allow Ginger the advantage of an undisputed descent upon the luggage of the approaching vessel would be not only to forfeit all "considerations" from the passengers, but, by proving him a laggard in his calling, to cast a damaging blemish upon his reputation. Liberally as he might lend himself to a friend, it could not be done at that sacrifice. After a minute or two of fidgety waiting for the song to end, Cuff's patience could endure no longer, and, cautiously hazarding a glimpse of his profile beyond the edge of the flat, he called in a hurried whisper: "Massa Rice, Massa Rice, must have my clo'se! Massa Griffif wants me,—steamboat's comin!"

The appeal was fruitless. Massa Rice did not hear it, for a happy hit at an unpopular city functionary had set the audience in a roar in which all other sounds were lost. Waiting some moments longer, the restless Cuff, thrusting his visage from under cover into full three-quarter view this time, again charged upon the singer in the same words, but with more emphatic voice: "Massa Rice, Massa Rice, must have my clo'se! Massa Griffif wants me—*steamboat's comin'!*"

A still more successful couplet brought a still more tempestuous response, and the invocation of the baggage-carrier was unheard and unheeded. Driven to desperation, and forgetful in the emergency of every sense of propriety, Cuff, in ludicrous undress as he was, started from his place, rushed upon the stage, and laying his hand upon the performer's shoulder, called out excitedly: "Massa Rice, Massa Rice, gi'—gi' me nigga's tings! Massa Griffif wants 'im—STEAMBOAT'S COMIN'!"

The incident was the touch, in the mirthful experience of that night, that passed endurance. Pit and circles were one scene of such convulsive merriment that it was impossible to proceed in the performance; and the extinguishment of the footlights, the fall of the curtain, and the throwing wide of the doors for exit, indicated that the entertainment was ended.

Such were the circumstances----authentic in every particular----under which the first work of the distinct art of Negro Minstrelsy was presented.

Getting Even.

A few days since, a very funny scene occurred at the Railroad House in Troy. Mr. Reynolds, a showman, had just landed in town, with a large collection of wild animals, birds, and snakes. He went to the hotel, secured a room, and took the snakes with him in a large trunk. At a late hour, a second lodger was put in his room for the night. The new comer, pulling off his clothes, lit a cigar, placed a candle by his bedside, and commenced to read a book.

Mr. Reynolds, being much fatigued, politely requested the stranger to put out the candle and let him sleep.

The stranger objected, saying that he had hired half the room and his bed, and had a right to burn the candle as long as he pleased.

Mr. Reynolds turned over and tried to woo the sleepy god, but in vain. No slumber would visit his restless couch. So, in a fit of desperation, he jumped up and addressed his room-mate:

"I say, stranger, if you have a right to burn a candle in this room all night, I have a right to bring in my boy."

The imperturbable stranger looked over his book at him and simply said:

"You can bring in your boy, and your gal, too, if you like," and went on reading.

Mr. Reynolds seized his pantaloons, jerked out of his pocket a key and proceeded to unlock his huge trunk. He took there from an enormous spotted snake, approached the bed of the stranger, and said:

"Permit me to introduce to you my boy," (boa,) at the same time presenting the distended mouth of the monster close to the affrighted man's face.

The stranger gave one look of awful horror----his face became as pale as death ----his book fell from his hand; he overturned his table, candle, and all; gave one leap from his bed, and in *puris naturalibus*, he ran down stairs, out in the street, and yelled for the police. What became of him afterwards was never known.

IT is a singular fact that ladies who know how to preserve everything else, can't preserve their tempers. Yet it may easily be done on the self-sealing principle. It is only to keep the mouth of the vessel tightly closed.

A PRETTY female artist can draw the men equally with a brush and a blush.