

LEWISBURG CHRONICLE.

H. C. HICKOK, Editor.
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LEWISBURG CHRONICLE

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BOOKS AND PAPERS—\$100 to be paid for when handled or delivered.

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O. N. WORDEN, Proprietor.

For the Lewisburg Chronicle.

DARKNESS.

By MARIE ROSEAU.

[Exodus x. 22.]

And Moses stretched his hand—and lo, there came A thick, felt darkness over all the land. A fearful spell seemed resting on the earth—A hush unbroken and profound as death. Hours passed by on the silent plain—The evening note that echoed forth at noon—No sound save the voices of the birds. No gentle breeze stirred through the forest trees. The silvery stream, so calm and clear before, Now bore the hue of midnight blackness, till It seemed to be a Stygian tide of death. The busy insects ceased to hum, and sought Their holes for refuge; while the frightened birds Shrank in their nests; and beasts that toil by day, Now shrank in their new-found terror to their lairs.

And man, with soul as far away, The brute creation—with strong reasoning powers Se gollied in their actions—where was he? Shrinking affrighted like the weakest worm, And daring not to move from out his place For three whole days.

And he, who dared The great Jehovah's law, and held him dear Of fleshly retribution, and laid God's people low, when He had bade them go—Where stayed he then? To mangle upon his throne, Writhing in tortured agony of fear, Yet unprepared to bow his stubborn will?

Terror at length prevailed:—Yes, they may go, And take with them their wives and little ones, To serve their God; he said; "they only will Go home to their God." And he, I can tell Their souls and bodies remain. I can not part with them As yet for sacrifice upon His altar."

As these poor spirits yet living, quite as hard As that of those who are dead, went to yield the exercise of their powers to God? Who, when his fall'n the th'ink, fit, darkness of affliction over them till they crept With strange fear, would even yet refuse To give His all for sacrifice, but fair Would tamer with Jehovah, and retain A portion of His just and righteous due?

For the Lewisburg Chronicle.

Report of the Committee of Publication

To the Board of Trustees of the University at Lewisburg.

Since the last Annual Meeting of this Board, our Heavenly Father has seen fit to take from our midst four of the Curators, viz., Rev. Charles Tucker, of Philadelphia, and John Steans, David Dye, and Jackson M'Fadden, of Union county. Notwithstanding this affliction, we have reason to be thankful to Divine Providence that the rest of us have been spared, and permitted to assemble again to promote the interests of this seminary of learning.

At the time your former Committee reported, to wit, on the 26th of August, A. D. 1850, the examination of students had not occurred, and of course, notice of it could be taken in that report. The examination was subsequently held, and bore credit to both students and teachers. The compositions read would have reflected honor on older heads.

We understand that the Board of Trustees have made arrangements for a successor to Prof. Taylor, so that the University will again be well officered at the beginning of the next session, and strict attention paid to students, as heretofore.

All of which is respectfully submitted:

G. F. MILLER,
G. W. YOUNG, Committee.

JOHN GUNDY,

The Haunted Well.

Those, whose recollection carries them back as far as the year 1816, doubtless remember that the summer of that year, was of a peculiar character, insomuch that it is still spoken of as the "cold, dry season." From the middle of May to the month of September, the dust in many places was scarcely laid; springs, rivulets, and wells of water that had never before failed, were dried up; and great inconvenience was experienced for the want of water.

In the interior of the State, on a limestone range of country, there lived at the time a prosperous and wealthy farmer, whom we shall call Deacon N. He, like the rest of his neighbors, was blest with that most useless of all commodities, a dry well; and the family were under the necessity of bringing the water they used for domestic purposes from an old well, on a remote part of the farm, which held out during the drought, (the task usually falling on Ichabod, the hired man.) This well pertained to an establishment erected by Mr. K., who had emigrated to this country from Ireland during its first settlement, and, as no public roads were yet laid out, selected such a spot as was best adapted to his business. He erected a dwelling and store house, the latter of which he filled with domestic goods; to this he added an ashery, and for several years carried on a successful business with the early settlers. And here it may not be improper to add, that having at the time no children of his own, he brought

the Deacon, in no amiable humor, set out himself for the well, leaving Ichabod to the mercy of his tormentors.

Now that is too bad," said one of the company, "to compel the Deacon to go for the water, which you might just as well have brought yourself. If I was in his place, I would dismiss you and send you home."

"I wish I was there," sobbed Ichabod.

"What, have they no ghosts and witches down in old Berkshire?" said another.

"If they have," replied Ichabod, "folks are not laughed at for being tormented with them."

"Come, Ichabod," said another of the company, "I have not laughed at you, now just tell me what you did see?"

"I didn't see anything," sobbed the poor fellow.

"Did not see anything, and make all this fuss why, this is too bad. If I was the Deacon I would discharge you to-morrow."

"But I heard something; and now, if you'll stop your laughing, I will tell you all about it."

"We will listen with all gravity imaginable," responded one of the company, "and now for the story."

Ichabod then proceeded in a most dolorous tone to relate his adventure; when he came to describe the effect on himself, the scene was so ludicrous that the whole company burst into a roar of laughter.

"You may laugh," said he, "but I tell you, it is a call to some of us."

"To none but yourself then," said one of his listeners, "for no other one heard it."

This was probably a more gloomy view of the scene than he had before taken, as in a most sorrowful tone he sobbed out, "I have no doubt of it, I shouldn't wonder if I should die before a fortnight. Bo-hoo-hoo!"

"Nor I neither," said one of his tormentors; "and now while I think of it, it was two weeks to a day, that old mother Draper died, from the time that you saw the man without a head, wrapped in a winding sheet, which, however, turned out to be the Deacon's old white mare with her tail towards you."

Just at this moment, Deacon N., with a countenance very pale, and emotions somewhat tremulous, entered the kitchen, and set down his bucket of water.

"Why, Deacon," said one of the company, "what is the matter? you look as pale as Ichabod did; have the spirits also been calling for you?"

"Hush, hush," said he, "I am no silly bumblebee, to be frightened at my own shadow, but there is something about the well that I can not comprehend." He then proceeded to relate the same story that had been told by Ichabod, and it was agreed on all hands that the subject ought to be inquired into. They then sat down to supper, with countenances somewhat more grave than had prevaded the company a few minutes before, and as soon as the following morning, the labor was commenced.

Through the tedious hours of the long, sultry day, they continued to ply the pick and the shovel, and when the sun finally went down, so little impression had made upon the masy pile, that men less resolute would have abandoned the task in despair.

But it was so; day after day the work went on, while visitors from far and near resorted nightly to the place. As all who came bore evidence to the truth of the mysterious sounds, the matter became a subject of much grave debate and philosophizing among different classes of spectators. Of those, some were of the opinion, that the whole was a trick ingeniously played off by some lover of mischief; and though they did not attempt to solve the riddle, ventriloquism, legerdemain, and other species of deception, were suggested as the means by which it was probably effected.

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Another class of reasoners, among whom was a certain L. L. D., of a neighboring city, maintained that it was but the result of natural causes—and, though operating in a manner mysterious to us, was nevertheless, in perfect accordance with established laws of matter. The said L. L. D. took so much interest in the affair, that he wrote a lengthy dissertation on the subject, under the title of "The Philosophy of Mysterious Sounds"—in which, by a reference to the celebrated box of Madonna, the speaking oracle of Delphi, and singing statue of Memnon—he attempted to prove that dormant matter could be made to speak, groan, and sing, by a proper arrangement of its particles, which was sometimes caused by accident, as in the case above quoted. The world, however, was unfortunately deprived of the pleasure and profit they would doubtless have derived from these sapient lucubrations, by circumstances hereafter to be mentioned, which prevented their publication.

But for the most numerous class, however, were of the opinion that a murder had actually been committed, and that the groans proceeded from no other than the troubled spirit of the lad, crying like the blood of Abel for vengeance, and encouraging the laborers to proceed in their task, not doubting but that they would be rewarded with such tangible proof of guilt, as should bring the offender within the folds of the law.

When all was in readiness, the worthy Deacon, who had constituted himself as the high priest of mysteries, advanced to the well, and drew down the bucket. As had been anticipated, as soon as the bucket was heard to come in contact with the water, it was followed by a piercing groan, and while some seemed rooted to the earth with consternation, others fled in terror from the spot.

Again the Deacon, in the same solemn invocation as before, demanded who and what was there.

"I have already told you," was the reply.

If the answer was not satisfactory as had been expected, it was sufficient to increase the wonder of the terrified company, who, however incredulous they may have come, were now fully satisfied that there was something rather serious in the affair; and poor Ichabod, who had long been the laughing stock of the neighborhood, was regarded with a kind of veneration from being the first of earthly mortals with whom the troubled spirit had chosen to hold communication.

While some fled from the spot with terror, and others were frightened into hysterics, the graver part of the company held a consultation as to what course ought to be pursued in the mysterious affair.

Some were for having the supposed murderer arrested immediately, before the rumor should reach him, and justice be served.

Others were for proceeding with more deliberation, and first ascertaining whether a murder had actually been committed.

This could only be done by discovering the remains, which, if they existed at all, were in the center of the neighboring mound of ashes, to remove which, was a task, at which Hercules himself might have stood aghast. But, laborious as was the undertaking, and hurried as was the season of the year—such was the zeal for clearing up the mystery, that a competent number volunteered their services on the spot. As many as could work to advantage, were for proceeding with more deliberation, and first ascertaining whether a murder had actually been committed.

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