

# The North Branch Democrat.

HARVEY SICKLER, Proprietor.

"TO SPEAK HIS THOUGHTS IN EVERY FREEMAN'S RIGHT."—Thomas Jefferson.

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## SURPRISED.

"Ticket, Sir, if you please? Between dusk and daylight—the warm gold of the sunset sky just fading into crimson, and the train thundered over the iron track, like some strong, furious demon.— Carl Silver became dimly conscious of these things as he started from a brief, restless slumber, wherein his knapsack had served as a pillow, and stared vaguely into the sharp Yankee face of the obdurate conductor. "Ticket! I suppose I've such a thing about me," he muttered drowsily, searching first one pocket and then the other. "Oh here it is! I say, conductor, are we near New York?"

"Twenty minutes or so will bring us into Jersey City—we are making pretty good time." And the sharp faced official passed on to harass the next unfortunate man who had neglected to put his ticket in his hat-band; while Captain Silver dragged himself into a sitting posture, putting his two hands back of his head with a portentous yawn, and smiled to remember the fantastic dreams that had chased one another through his brain during the half hour of cramped, uneasy slumber from which the conductor's challenge had roused him—dreams in which bloody battle-fields and lonely night-marches had blended only with sweet home voices, and the sulphurous breath of artillery had mingled with violet scents from the twilight woods around and gusts of sweetness from the tossing clouds of peach blooms through which the flying train shot remorselessly.

And then Carl Silver began to think of other things.

"Conductor!" whispered the fat old lady opposite, in the bombazine bonnet and small-colored shawl.

"Yes!" said the man of tickets, stopping in his transit through the cars, and inclining his ear.

"That young man in the military cap, conductor—I hope he ain't an escaped fanatic dressed up in soldiers clothes. I've heard of such things. And I don't a bit like the way he keeps grinning to himself and rubbing his hands together. He's acted queer all day, and I'm trav'lin' alone, conductor!" The conductor laughed and passed on.— The old lady bristled in offended dignity. Bless her anxious heart! how was she to know that Captain Silver was only rejoicing in the glorious "surprise" he had in store for his mother and duped faced sister that night? Was it not a year—twelve long, long months—since he had looked upon their faces last? And now—

Oh, speed on your way, express train, through quiet villages where daffodils sprinkle all the garden with gold! Speed over the sloping hills, where springing grass sends up a faint, delicious smell, and brook babble under sweeping willows—past lonely church yards, where the white hands of innumerable grave stones beckon through the gathering twilight and are gone; for every throb of your iron pulse brings one true heart nearer home! Shot and shell have spared him for this hour; fever and pestilence and foul malaria have passed him by, and now—

Suppose there should be an accident! He had heard of such things on lightning routes. Suppose he should be carried home a dead, mangled corpse, the words of greeting frozen into eternal silence on his lips, the glad sight sealed forever under the heavy eyelids! Strange that such morbid fancies should never have assailed him in the fire and smoke of Gettysburg, yet come to him now, like guests that would not be given when he was within twenty minutes of home? Would it break his mother's heart; or would she live on? And would Kate Mariah care? Kate Mariah, the blue eyed, shy, lily fair young woman who would never look at him save through her brown lashes, and whose coy mouth always made him think of scarlet cherries and roses dashed in dew.

"To think!" ejaculated Carl Silver, bringing down his bronzed fist on the window ledge that made the glass rattle ominously and struck a chill to the heart of the old lady in the bombazine bonnet—"to think that I, who would knock down the man who ventured to tell me I was a coward, should be afraid to say frankly to a slender girl that I love her!"

"To think that the very touch of her glove, the sound of her footstep, the rustle of her ribbons, can frighten her self possession away and make a staring, silent idiot of me!"

After all, what is a man's courage worth? There's no use of thinking of it—I shall die an old bachelor, for I will never marry any woman but Kate Mariah, and I never shall dare to plead my case with Kate! I wish I hadn't such an absurd streak of cowardice through me."

Yet Captain Silver's men had told a different tale when he led them over the bridge in that dreadful charge at Antietam. Cowardice! there are several interpretations to that word.

"Carriage! carriage! No, I won't have any carriage! Get away from me, you fellow! You are worse than the locusts of Egypt, and ten times as noisy," cried Captain Silver, energetically elbowing his way through the swarm of eager beckons, who were making

night hideous at the foot of Cortland street. Do you suppose that I am going to spoil my precious surprise with a carriage?"

Broadway by gaslight! How strange yet how familiar, it seems to the returning exile, with its stately facade of freestone and marble, seeming literally to rest on foundations of living fire, and its throngs of people, coming and going in everlasting succession, like the tides of a never resting sea. Carl Silver's heart leaped up in his breast with a quick, joyous throb at the old accustomed sight and sounds. It was good to hear his footsteps ringing on Manhattan ground.

No light in the house! His heart stood still a moment. This was strange—ominous! But then he remembered that his mother was fond of sitting in the twilight, and dismissed the lingering doubts from his mind. How lucky the door was on the latch, and swung noiselessly open.

Hush! not a creaking chair or clanking spur must betray him; through the old familiar hall he passed and into his mother's room lighted only by the ruddy glimmer of a bright coal fire.

"Where the mischief are they all?" ejaculated Captain Silver under his breath, "No matter—they'll be along soon; meantime I'll wheel up this big chair and take a bask, for the air is chilly, if it is the first week in May. Won't they be astonished, though when they come? Upon my word, things couldn't have happened nicer! Faith! what a smell of paint—Whitewash, too, as I'm a living sinner! Confound it—I've kicked over a pair of stuff! If the women folks aren't cleaning house!"

The Captain gave an indignant sniff as he surveyed the desolate scene.

"What comfort a female can find in turning things upside down, and deluging the house with soap and water twice a year. I can't imagine. Carpets all up—floor damp—curtains torn down—not one familiar object to greet a fellow's eyes after a twelve month absence from home, Heigho! I think I'll light a cigar."

Which he did, and began to smoke and meditate.

There was a rattle and tripping foot-fall on the stairs. The Captain took out his cigar and listened.

"That's Minny," said he to himself—Mother doesn't dance up stairs like that."

He rose and leaned against the door casing as the door swung open and nearer. How his heart beat as the firelight shown on the crimson merino dress and the little white apron on the threshold! And the next moment he had caught the slight form in his arms, and was showering kisses on cheek and brow and lips.

"Caught for once, Miss Minny!" he exclaimed. "That's to pay you for presuming to clean house without my permission! No you're not going to escape!"

Such a piercing scream as she rewarded his fraternal demonstrations with! Carl Silver let go her waist and retreated against the wall with a faint idea of breaking through the lath and plaster, and hiding himself in the general ruin. For as truly as he stood there, quaking in his regimentals, the voice was not that of his sister Minny, but—Kate Mariah!

"How dare you!" she ejaculated, with crimson cheek and quivering lips. "I'll ring the bell and call the servants if you don't leave the house this minute!"

"Upon my word, I'm neither a burglar nor an assassin, pleaded Carl, recovering his self-possession, in a measure, as he saw Kate's breathless terror. "Don't you know me, Miss Mariah—Captain Silver!"

"You are an impostor, said Kate with spirit. Captain Silver is in the army of the Potomac!"

"No, he's not; he's here," urged Carl. "How shall I prove that I'm myself? Kate! Miss Mariah—"

For she had sunk in the chair and began to cry. He knelt beside her with a rough attempt at comfort.

"No, she sobbed, only—I was so frightened."

The little, trembling, blue-eyed thing!—Carl Silver had never seen her in tears before. No silly assumption of dignity now—no royal airs, only brown disheveled hair and cheeks like red clover blossoms in a shower. He was the strong one now—how natural it seemed to clasp the tiny palms in his strong hand.

"Kate, dearest, I love you! with my whole heart. Nay, do not be so frightened; I would die to save you one moment's terror. Only tell me that your heart is mine."

And when the tears were dried, leaving the eyes like drenched violets, and the cheeks flushed brightly, Carl Silver had license to keep one little fluttering hand in his, and he knew that he was an accepted lover.

"But where is my mother and sister?" he asked at length. And what is the solution of this strange riddle?"

"Don't you know," laughed Kate, "they do not live here any more?"

"Not live here!"

"Ah, but you would have heard of it, said Kate, if you had staid quietly in camp to get your letter, instead of roving over the country without a word of warning to your friends."

"Give me one more kiss, Katie, and I'm off to see them. One more, my betrothed wife. Does it not seem like a dream?"

"And you are my soldier now," whispered Kate, playing with the gold buttons on his coat with tremulous fingers. "Mine to send out into the battle field to dream and pray for. Carl, I have always repined that I had no gift for my country, now I can give my best and dearest to aid her cause."

"Spoken like a soldier's wife," said Silver, with kindling eyes. "If you but knew how much better we men fight for knowing that woman's love and woman's prayers enshrine us with a golden, unseen armor—nonsense! I'm getting sentimental. Good night."

So there were three surprises that May evening—one for Kate Mariah, (wouldn't you have been surprised, Mademoiselle, to be caught and kissed in the dark and not know who the kisser was?) one for Captain Silver (a very agreeable one though), and the old original surprise, if we may so term it, for his mother and sister. And Carl has not yet left off congratulating himself that his "leave of absence" occurred in the flowery and migratory month of May. For if he hadn't blundered into Miss Mariah's house, and kissed her by mistake, thereby bringing matters precipitately to a focus, the probabilities are that to this day he never would have mustered courage to tell her of his love.

And when the golden armadas of the autumn leaves float down the forest brooks, and the blue mist of Indian summer wraps the hills in dreamy light, Carl Silver is coming back to seal Kate Mariah's destiny with wedding rings.

## FIFTEEN GREAT MISTAKES.

It is a great mistake to set up our own standard of right and of wrong, and judge people accordingly. It is a great mistake to measure the enjoyment of others by our own; to expect uniformity of opinion in this world; to look for judgment and experience in youth; to endeavor to mould all dispositions alike; not to yield in immaterial trifles; to look for perfection in our actions; to worry ourselves and others with what cannot be remedied; not to alleviate all that needs alleviation as far as lies in our power; not to make allowances for the infirmities of others; to consider everything impossible which we cannot perform, to believe only what our finite minds can grasp; to expect to be able to understand everything. The greatest of all mistakes is to live only for Time, and that when any moment may launch us into Eternity.

There is a man in Totness so witty that his wife manufactures all the butter that the family uses from the cream of his jokes.

The fellow who got intoxicated with delight, has been turned out of the temperance society.

An exchange says lovers, like armies, get along quietly enough until they are engaged.

Water isn't a fashionable beverage for drinking your friends health, but it is a capital one for drinking your own.

Let a woman be decked with all the embellishment of art and nature, yet if boldness be read in her face, it blots out all the lines of beauty.

It has been said that a clattering little soul in a large body is like a swallow in a barn—the twitter takes up more room than the bird.

Some mischievous wags, one night, pulled down a turner's sign; and put it over a lawyer's door; in the morning it read, "All sorts of turning and twisting done here."

A genius named Flaherty, of Washington city, has the following posted on his window "Eggs newly laid here on the shortest notice."

A Western Editor says that in the town where his paper is published, a rattlesnake was killed a few days ago by a man with thirteen rattles."

A doctor returned a coat to a tailor because it did not fit him. The tailor seeing the doctor at the funeral of one of his patients, said, "Ah, doctor you are a happy man."

"Why so?"

"Because, replied the tailor, you never have any of your bad work returned on your hands."

Have you a sister? Then love and cherish her with a holy friendship. And if you have none, why love somebody else's sister.

"No; have you forgotten that yesterday terday was the first of May? We occupy this house now—papa, aunt Millicent and I."

"Oh! quoth Carl. "So they've moved, and I never heard of it. Upon my word they

## BASHFULNESS IN YOUTH.

Young people, on their first admission to this outer world, are especially afflicted with false shame; so that it may be regarded as one of the moral diseases of the mind's infancy. It is at the bottom of a great deal of their shyness. They cannot feel at ease, because they mistrust something about themselves or their belongings, and have that feeling of bareness and exposure in the presence of unfamiliar eyes which attaches to sensitiveness under untried circumstances. Everything then assumes a magnified, exaggerated character, the place they occupy on the one hand, and the importance of the occasion on the other. The present company is the world the universe, a convention of men and gods all forming a deliberate and irreversible judgment upon them, and deciding to their disadvantage on account of some oddness, or awkwardness, or passing, slip in themselves or in the accessories about them. But in most persons, time and experience bring so much humility as teaches them their insignificance. It is not, we soon learn, very lovely that at any given time a mixed assemblage is thinking very much about us; and then the horror of a conspicuous position loses its main sting. This on the one hand; on the other, we are not as dependent on the award of society as we were. Even a roomful comprises, to our enlarged imagination, by no means the whole creation. There is something worth caring for outside those walls. And also we have come to form a sort of estimate of ourselves. There is now a third party in the question, in the shape of self-respect. We realize that we are to ourselves immeasurably more consequence than any one else can be to us. Thus, either by reason or the natural hardening and strengthening process of the outer air, most people overcome any conspicuous display of the weakness. By the time youth is over, they have either accepted their position or set about in a business-like way to mend it.

He who waits to do a great deal of good at once will never do anything. Life is made up of little things. It is very rarely an occasion is offered for doing a great deal at once. True greatness consists in being great in little things. Doings make the ocean, and the greatest works are done by littles. If we would do much good in the world, we must be willing to do good in little things.

A lady, whose style of piety was more affected than attractive, once took a friend to task for wearing feathers. "But," said the friend, why are my feathers any more objectionable than the brilliant artificial flowers in your own bonnet? "Oh," replied the censorious lady, "Christians must draw the line somewhere, and I draw it at feathers."

Send your child to bed happy—Whatever cares press give it a warm good night kiss as it goes to its pillow. The memory of this in the stormy years which fate may have in store for the little one, will be like Bethlehem's star to bewildered shepherds.

A softener.—A woman's tears softens a man's heart; her flatteries his head.

Tom presented his bill to neighbor Joe for service rendered. The latter looked at it, and expressed much surprise at the amount.

Why Tom it strikes me you have made out a pretty round bill here, eh?

"I'm sensible it's a round one, quoth Tom, and I've come for the purpose of having it squared."

"How is your husband this afternoon, Mrs. Squiggs?"

"Why, the doctor says as how as has, if he lives till the mornin' he shall have some hopes of him, but if he don't he must give him up."

MARRIED, at Detroit, Michigan, by the Rev. Mr. Cnot, Mr. Thomas Hum to Miss Ella Bug. Who will, after this, say marriage is a Hunbug?

To be ahead of time—carry your watch behind you.

Some wag has thus defined marriage—two nobs and a five dollar prayer.

If you cannot please without being false to yourself, you had better displease.

What part of speech is a kiss? A conjunction. And what form? A lip tickle.

The most curious thing in the world is a woman who is not curious.

Quills are things that are taken from the pinions of one goose to spread the opinions of another.

The man who never says nothing to nobody, was married last week to the lady who never speaks ill of no one.

The worst feature of a man's face is his nose—when stuck in other people's business.

## THE RULING PASSION.

An eminent French artist possesses a monkey, very intelligent, very ugly, but an immense pet of her owner's. Mademoiselle Nounine, however, possesses all the defects which the cynic considers to be particularly feminine. She is lazy, inquisitive, excessively addicted to sugar plums, fruit cake, &c., fidgety, disorderly, touching everything, breaking everything she touches, dabbling her master's pictures, twisting the necks of his wife's canaries, and one upon a time, pulled every feather out of a splendid parrot in imitation of the cook, who she had seen day before picking a fowl. A short time since, the artist, having to go out, and dressing lest Nounine should perform some new piece of mischief during his absence, betook himself of a method of furnishing her with something to do until his return. He accordingly took the monkey in his lap, dressed her in a gay gown which had served as a model in one of his pictures, in which figured a marquis of the time of Louis XV., painted her cheeks white and red, with a black patch under one eye, powdered her hair, hung a huge string of beads around her neck, and then having seated her on the floor, in a corner of the atelier, with a small looking-glass in her hand, left her, not without some misgiving, and promising himself not to be long away. But instead of returning early, the artist was unexpectedly detained, and only got home the next morning. He at the atelier went in terror, expecting to find everything upside down, and half his pictures spoiled.

"I really must get rid of Nounine," said the artist to himself, as he anxiously unlocked the door of his studio, "for I cannot let my work remain at the little wretch's mercy." But to his surprise and relief he found her asleep, exactly where he had placed her, and holding the looking glass in her hands. Not a thing had been touched by her in the artist's absence.

"The fact is," continued the cynic, "that the ugly little beast, as vain as her sex entitles her to be, had been so enraptured with her own beauty and that of her finery, that she had remained through the entire day, absorbed in the contemplation of her charming self in the little hand-glass. Now tell me, he added triumphantly appealing to his listeners, "does anybody believe that a male monkey would have passed a whole afternoon in gazing at himself in a mirror, and can anybody doubt, after such a proof to the contrary, that vanity is the ruling passion of the female sex?"

At the Brady House, Harrisburg, a few days since, two friends were conversing, and one of them asked: "By the way, S—, what are your politics?" "A Democrat, sir," answered the person addressed. "And what is your religion?" "A Protestant, sir, because my father was a protestant." "And why are you a bachelor?" "Because my father was a—" At this moment S— happened to think what he was saying, so he turned away. "Oh, darn! what's the use talking? Don't bother me with your silly questions."

In early youth, while yet we live among those we love, we love without restriction, and our hearts overflow in every look, word and action. But when we enter into the world, and are repulsed by strangers, and forgotten by friends, we grow more and timid in our approaches, even to those we love best. How delightful to us then, are the caresses of children. All sincerity, all affection,