The North Branch Democrat.

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BY HARVEY SICKLER.

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Poet's Corner.

THE SOLDIER'S WIDOW.

BY MRS, PIDSLEY.

She knelt beside his dying bed,
And kissed his pallid brow;
She vainly pressed his icy hand—
He cannot heed her now,

She calls his name in accents low,
Her tears are on his face;
He speaks not, moves not, for he lies
In death's last cold embrace.

They tell her that the angels wait
To bear him to his rest;
She hears them not, she only strives
To clasp him to her breast.

She only knows that he has been
The sunlight of her home;
She only feels that she is left
To walk the world alone,

Where is the hand that strewed her path
So lovingly with flowers?
Where is the heart that clung to hers
In sunshine and in showers?

That hand is cold that heart is still,
Her dream of love is o'er;
And now, upon this dreary earth.
They'll cheer her path no more!

Select Story.

LOVE IN A STAGE COACH.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

The stage coach was nearly full.

Everybody knows what that means on a burning August afternoon, when the sun glows like a live coal in the fervid sky, and the dust raises up in dense columns around the slowly revolving wheels. All the passengers—poor, travel worn mortals—were tired and cross; veils became an abomination, and the palm-leaf fan, wielded by the stout lady in the corner, was eyed with envious glances by everybody.

Old Mr. Thorne was fast asleep and snoring in his nook—probably wandering through green fields where dust never sullied the daisies and hot roads were unknown, in his peaceful slumbers. But Isabel and Minnie, his two daughters, could not sleep and consequently reaped a full benefit of dust and sun and jolting wheels, Isabel's pretty forehead was corrugated with a rather unbecoming frown, and her red lips were slightly elevated, while Minnie leaned out of the window, trying to be patient, but finding it very hard work, poor little thing!

"I wonder if we are almost there," she said, at length, with a soft, weary laugh.

"Not within half a dozen miles," answered Isabel, pettishly. Why on earth don't they have some more respectable conveyance than a lumbering stage coach to carry people to the Sulphur Springs?"

"It is not so very bad," sighed Minnie, meekly; "that is it would not be if the weather was not quite so warm, and the dust was not so intolerably thick."

"No, of course not," returned Isabel, ironically. "But you alwas were a poor, little, mean-spirited creature, Minnie, perpetually trying to make the best of everything. Dear me! what are we stopping here for? Good gracious! if they are going to squeeze in any more passengers I shall certainly faint away.'

Regardless, however, of Miss T's despairing countenance, the driver ruthlessly opened the door, and their party was augmented by a tall, rather pleasant looking gentleman, followed by a trim English nurse, carrying a rosy little babe, with a nest of lace around its head, and long, sweeping skirts of white cambric, loaded with dainty embroidery.

The woman looked around hesitatingly.

Isabel gave her flounced draperies an extra toss over the cushions, and applied her cut-glass vinaigrette to her nostrils, without seeming to notice the intruder. Minnie, however, whispering "Move, Isabel, there is more room on this seat," compressed herself to a small a space as possible, and beckoned to the nurse to take the place thus vacated.

"Minnie, how can you be so absurd?" said Isabel, petulantly. "See how you are crushing my dress! O, dear me, if that child isn't beginning to cry! I hate babies!"

Old Mr. Thorne straightened himself into a sitting posture, and rubbed his heavy eyes, as the feeble wail of the little one fell on his ear.

"What's the matter, Bell? he asked, sleepily.

"The matter? Why, a cross baby, to be sure. A pleasant ride we shall have to Rockdale, with that squalling in our ears the whole time. I do think babies ought to be left at home."

"Bell," remonstrated Minnie, blushing to the very tips of her ears with mortification. But Isabel merely tossed her head without looking around, too ill-humored even to notice the soft pleader at her side. And still the incorrigible baby, after the fashion of all babies, kept up its precious wail, in spite of the attempts of the nurse to soothe it and attention. The woman looked in divert the gentleman's brow flushed with despair—the gen annoyance.

"Let me take it," said Minnie, softly.—"I think I can quiet the little thing."

"I am afraid it will annoy you," said the gentleman opposite. "I am sorry—"

"Oh, no, not a bit," said Minnie. "I am very fond of babies. Do give it to me, nurse!"

It was strange how soon that baby discovered that it was in loving hands. Gradually the little wrinkled forhead smoothed out like white wax—slowly the tears ceased, and the scarlet lip stopped its quivering, as Minnie laid off the smothering cap which all nurses seem to consider a necessary ingredient for the suffocation of infants, and smoothed the silky hair, and whispered, coaxingly, "baby talk" in the little pink ears.

"Bless me, Miss, I do believe you have got a spell about you!" ejaculated nurse, as the little creature's dimples broke out into a smile, which revealed six infinitesimal teeth.

Yes, Minnie had a spell; but it was only a spell of sweet good humor and sunny temper.

"I wonder who has arrived this season," said Isabel, as she arranged her rich brown masses of hair before the mirror in her room at the principal hotel of Rockdale Springs. "They tell me every room is crowded. Laura Todd wrote me word that Col. Tremaine was to be here, and he alone is sufficient to bring plenty of belles to the place."

"Who is Col. Tremaide?" asked Minnie who was patiently helping Isabel to braid the long, shining tresses.

"Why, the wealthy widower who owns that superb place at Rivermont; don't you remember hearing of him? My dear, your memory is getting defective."

"O! now I recollect," said Minnie. "But I should never have thought of him again."

"Just like you! Minnie Thorne, I'll wager anything you'll marry a nobody yet!"

"Very likely," returned Minnie, with a laugh. "Wealthy widowers do not trouble themselves about insignificant little mites like me. You may win the golden prize, Bell, if you choose to try."

"I shall certainly do my best?" said Isabel, glancing at the mirror with a throb of conscious pride.

Truly the face reflected might give pleasure to the most fastidious, with its golden-brown braids, and velvety black eyes, contrasted so royally with her peach-blossom cheeks, and lips like the scarlet heart of pomegranate. While Minnie's blue eyes and smiling mouth had but the charm of truth and frankness to set off their delicate outlines.

"I say, girls, what do you think," exclaimed Mr. Thorne, thrusting his bald head into the room, as his daughters were preparing to descend to the dinner table. "Col. Tremaine is here, and is none other than the tall gentleman who came down in the stage coach with us?"

"Not the gentleman with the nurse and baby?"

"Yes."

"Nonsense, Papa, some one has been grossly deceiving you," said Isabel. "Col. Tremaine, who owns the finest horses and carriages in the country, would never dream of traveling in a rusty old stage coach."

"Not under ordinary circumstances, perhaps," returned her father; "but I was just introduced to the Colonel himself, and in the course of conversation he mentioned that his carriage breaking down, compelled him to inconvenience the passengers in our coach with his presence. And he expressed, in very warm terms his gratitude to my daughter for her kindness to his motherless infant—what do you think of that, Minnie?"

It would be hard to tell which blushed deepest, Minnie or Isabel—but the rosy colors were called to their cheeks by widely different emotions.

The long bright summer days crept on, with skies of blue, quivering light, and sunsets of fire and carandine! Newport and Saratoga, Lake George and the Catskills succeeded each other on the travelling programme of the Thornes, and greatly to the annoyance of the reigning belles in general, Col, Tremaine accompanied the party.

It was a lovely morning in October, when Minnie Thorne came into Isabel's room in the hotel at Niagara Falls. She had been wandering through the leafy wilderness of Goat Island, but that was not sufficient reason for the deep color that suffused her cheek, nor was the moisture upon the eyelashes altogether the spray of Niagara.

"Isabel," she whispered, laying her head upon her sister's shoulder, "I am very, very happy. Col. Tremaine has asked me to become his wife!"

Isabel was naturally good-hearted, and she smothered the pangs of her own keen disappointment with an effort, as she folded Minnie in her arms.

"I am glad of it, Minnie; you will make him an excellent little wife. But to think of his choosing a homespun body like you."

The real clue to this matrimonial mystery was not discovered until one day, not long after the wedding, when Mrs. Tremaine was bending carelessly over her step daughter, murmuring the melody of a sweet cradle song. Suddenly a hand was laid on her shoulder. She started and smiled to meet the tender light of her husband's eyes.

"Sing on, darling," he said fondly. "I like to see you with Bessie on your lap.—You were sitting just in that attitude with that same smile on your face, the day I fell in love with you.

"I don't know what you mean."

"Don't you remember a warm day in August, in a crowded stage coach, with a baby that would cry, and a blue-eyed little maiden who soothed the child and tended it, even though her haughty sister declared 'she hated babies?' I felt a sort of intuition that the blue-eyed lassie would make a tender mother to the little orphaned one, and then and there I lost my heart. Dearest I have never regretted my loss!"

Isabel, sitting in the next room, heard every word of this little conversation, and she could not help thinking how light had been the words and glances that had decided the destiny of her sister's life and her own.

If you throw a stone into the glassy bosom of the stillest lake, the circling ripples widen, with constantly increasing sphere, long after the stone is forgotten. And even so it is with every word and deed of our lives.

"To Whom it May Concern."

[From the New York Tribune, Nov. 10.]

Give us but the Union with universal freedom, and we will do whatever we can to secure the most liberal—nay, even generous—terms to the insurgents on every other point *And if the Democratic party of the free States will do their utmost to secure an early peace on these terms* (and we are sure they may, if they will, not only make further bloodshed on the part of the confederate madness, but convince them that it is so,) *we are prepared to give them a quit claim to the possession of the government for the twenty years following the close of Mr. Lincoln's second term.*

There now you "copperheads," "sympathizers," "secessionists," you have been threatened with execution at the lamp-posts—who have been proscribed, insulted, vilified and abused by "loyal leaguers," walk up and take position in line. Don't hesitate when you see the old sinners penitent upon their knees, begging you for aid. Lincoln says, now, that you are not disloyal; Forney barks it too; came gentlemen, *they* have got the elephant, and if you will only bolt him, nigger and all, Greeley promises you, a "quit-claim to the possession of the government for the twenty years following." Only think of the bounty. *Don't you see it?* Hurry up, before they wear big holes in the knees of their shoddies.

THE MOTHER.—Despise not thy mother when she is old. Age may wear and waste a mother's beauty, strength, limbs, senses, and estate; but her relation as mother is as the sun when he goes forth in his might, for it is always in the meridian, and knoweth no evening. The person may be gray-headed, but her motherly relation is ever in its flourish It may be autumn, yea, winter, with a woman, but with a mother it is always spring Alas! how little do we appreciate a mother's tenderness while living! How heedless are we in youth of all her anxieties and kindness! But when she is dead and gone—when the cares and coldness of the world come withering to our hearts—when we experience how hard it is to find true sympathy—how few love us for ourselves—how few will befriend us in misfortune!—then it is that we think of the mother we have lost.

☞ During a recent raid in Missouri a young man was seized by guerrillas and compelled to drink whisky untill he was stupidly intoxicated. Before he could get sober, another gang seized him and treated him in the same manner, and after that another party, s that for the period of four days he was kept dead drunk the greater portion of the time.—He relates his experience now with a great deal of sober earnestness.

We know several young men in these diggings, that would like to be victimized in this manner, every day. ED.

HIGH PRICES IN WASHINGTON.—Artemus Ward says he went to Washington and put up at a leading hotel, where seeing the land lord, he accosted him with—

"How d'ye do, squire?"

"Fifty cents, sir," was his reply.

"Sir!"

"Half a dollar. We charge twenty-five cents for lookin' at the landlord, and fifty cents for speakin' to him. If you want supper, a boy will show you to the diningroom for twenty five cents. Your room bein' in the tenth story, it will cost you a dollar to be shown up there."

"How much do you ax a man for breathin' in this equinomikal tavern?" said I.

"Ten cents a breath," was his reply.

☞ Mr. Jenkins was dining at a very frugal table, and a piece of bacon near him was so very small, that the lady of the house remarked to him: "Ptay, Mr. Jenkins, help yourself to the bacon. Don't be afr aid of it. "No, indeed, madam—I've seen a piece twice as large, and it did not scare me a bit."

HOW HE CAME TO BE MARRIED.

It may be funny, but I've done it. I've got a rib and a baby. Shadows departed—oyster stews, brandy cocktails, cigar boxes, boot jacks, absconding shirt buttons, whist and demijon. Shadows present—hoop skirts band boxes, ribbons, garters, long stockings, juvenile dresses, tin trumpets, little willow chairs, cradles, bibs, pap, sugar teats, paregoric, hive syrup, castor oil, Godfrey's cordial, soothing syrup, rhubarb, sena, salts, squills, and doctor's bills. Shadows future—more pound babies, more hive syrup, etc., etc. I'll just tell you how I got caught; I was almost the darndest, most tea custard bashful fellow you ever did see, it was kinder in my line to be taken with the shakes every time I saw a pretty gal approaching me, and I'd cross the street any time rather than face one; twasn't because I didn't like the critters, for if I was behind the fence, looking through a knot hole, I couldn't look at one long enough. Well, my sister Lib gave a party one night, and I stayed away from home because I was to bashful to face the music. I hung around the house whistling "Old Dan Tucker," dancing to keep my feet warm, watching the heads bobbing up and down behind the window curtains, and wishing the thundering party would break up so I could get to my room. I smoked up a bunch of cigars, and as it was getting late and mighty uncomfortable, I concluded to shin up the door post. No sooner said than done, and I soon put myself snug in bed.

"Now," says I, "let her rip! Dance till your wind gives out!" And cuddling under the quilts, Morpheus grabbed me.

I was dreaming of soft shell crabs and stewed tripe, and was having a good time, when somebody knocked at the door and woke me up. "Rap" again. I laid low. "Rap, rap, rap!" Then I heard a whispering, and I knew there was a whole raft of gals outside. "Rap. rap!" Then Lib sings out.

"Jack, are you in there?"

"Yes," says I.

Then came a roar of laughter,

"Let us in." says she.

"I won't," says I, "can't you let a fellow alone?"

"Are you a-bed?" says she.

"I am," says I.

"Get up," says she.

"I won't," says I.

Then came another laugh.

By thunder! I began to get riled.

"Get out, you petticoated scarecrows!" I cried: "can't you get a beau without hauling a fellow out of bed? I won't go home with you—I won't—so you may clear out?"

And, throwing a boot at the door, I felt better. But presently oh! mortal buttons! I heard a still, small voice, very much like sister Lib's and it said:

"Jack, you'll have to get up for all the girl's things are there!"

Oh, Lord, what a pickle! Think of me in bed, all covered with shawls, muffs, bonnets and cloaks, and twenty girls outside the door waiting to get in! If I had stopped to think I should have pancaked on the spot. As it was, I rolled out among the bonnet ware and ribbons in a hurry. Smash! went the milinery in every direction. I had to dress in the dark—for there was a crack in the door, and the girls will peep—and the way I fumbled about was death on straw hats. The critical moment came. I opened the door, and found myself right among the women.

"Oh, my Leghorn?" cries one. "My dear darling, winter velvet!" cries another, and they pitched in—they pulled me this way and that, boxed my ears; and one bright-eyed little piece—Sal———her name was—put her arms right around my neck, and kissed me right on my lips. Human nature couldn't stand that, and I gave her as good as she sent. It was the first time I ever got a taste and it was powerful good. I believe I could have kissed that gal from Julius Cæsar to the Fourth of July.

"Jack," said she, "we are sorry to disturb you, but won't you see me home?"

"Yes," said I, "I will."

I did do it, and had another smack at the gate, too. After that we took a kinder turtle doving after each other, both of us sighing like a barrel of new cider, when we were away from each other. 'Twas at the close of a glorious summer day—the sun was setting behind a distant hen-roost—the bull frogs were commencing their evening songs—the polly wogs, in their native mud-puddles, were preparing themselves for the shades of night—and Sal and myself sat upon an antiquated backlog listening to the music of nature, such as treetoads, roosters and grunting pigs, and now and then the mellow music of a distant jackass was wafted to our ears by the gentle zephyrs that sighed among the mullen stalks and came heavy laden with the delicious odor of hen roosts and pig styes. The last lingering rays of the setting sun, glancing from the buttons of a solitary horseman, shone through a knothole in a hog pen full in Sal's face, dying her hair an orange peel hue, and showing off my thredbare coat to bad advantage—one of my arms was around Sal's waist, my hand resting on the small of her back—she was toying with my auburn locks of jet black hue—she was almost gone and I was ditto. She looked like a grasshopper dying with the hiccups, and I felt like a mud-turtle choked with a cod-fish ball,

"Sal," says I, in a voice as musical as the notes of a dying swain, "will you have me?"

She turned her eyes heavenward, clasped me by the hand, had an attack of the heaves and blind staggers, and with a sigh that drew her shoe-strings to her palate, said "Yes!"

She gave clear out, then, and squatted in my lap. she corkscrewed and curflumixed, and rolled in. I hugged her till broke my suspenders, and her breath smelt of onions she eat two weeks before.

Well, to make a long story short, she set the day, and we practiced for four weeks every night how we would walk into the room to be married, till we got so we would walk as graceful as a couple of Muscovy ducks The night the company and the minister came, the signal was given, and arm in arm we marched thro' the crowded hall, we were just entering the parlor door, when down I went kers lap on the oil-cloth, pulling Sal after me. Some cussed fellow had dropped a banana skin on the floor, and it floored me.

It split an awful hole in my cassimers right under my dresscoat tail. It was too late to back out, so clapping my hand over it, we marched in and were spliced, and taking a seat I watched the kissing the bride operation. My groomsman was tight, and he kissed her till I jumped up to take a slice, when, oh, horror, a little six year old imp had crawled behind me, and pulling my shirt through the hole in my pants, had pinned it to the chair, and in jumping up I displayed to the admiring gaze of the astonished multitude, a trifle more white muslin than was pleasant. The women giggled, the men roared and I got mad, but was finally put to bed, and there all my troubles ended. Good night.

The Lady's Repentance.

In the life of Dr. Raffles, just published the following story is told in connexion with a preaching journey in 1814:—"On our way from Wem to Hawkestone we passed a house of which Mr. Lee told me the following occurrance:—A young lady, the daughter of the owner of the house, was addressed by a man who, though agreeable to her, was disliked by her father. Of course he would not consent to their union, and she determined to elope. The night was fixed the hour came, he placed the ladder to the window, and, in a few minutes, she was in his arms. They mounted a double horse, and were soon at some distance from the house. After a while the lady broke silence by saying, "Well, you see what a proof I have given you of my affection: I hope you will make me a good husband." He was a surly fellow, and gruffly answered. "Perhaps I may and perhaps not.' She made him no reply, but, after a silence of a few minutes, she suddenly exclaimed, "O, what shall we do? I have left my money behind me in my room."

"Then," said he, "we must go back and fetch it." They were soon again at the house, the ladder was again placed, the lady remounted, while the ill-natured lover waited below. But she delayed to come, and so he gently called, "Are you coming?" when she looked out of the window, and said, "Perhaps I may, and perhaps not;" then shut down the window, and let him to return upon the double horse alone. Was not that a happy thought on the lady's part—a famous joke?"

☞ Tommy, my son, what are you going to do with that club?"

"Send it to the editor of course,"

"But what are you going to send it to the editor for?"

"He says if anybody will send him a club he'll send them a copy of his paper."

The mother came pretty near fainting, but retained consciousness enough to ask—

"But, Tommy dear, what do you suppose he wants of a club?"

"Well, I don't know, replied the hopeful urchin, unless it is to knock down subscribers as don't pay for their paper."

☞ "Where are you going?" said a young gentleman to an elderly one in a white cravat, whom he overtook a few miles from Little Rock.

"I am going to Heaven, my son; I have been on the way eighteen years."

"Well good bye, old fellow; if you have been travelling toward Heaven for eighteen years and got no nearer it than Arkansas, I'll take another route."

RABBI JOSHUA once met a boy who carried something in a covered vessel. "My boy," said the Rabbi, "what have you in your covered vessel?" "If it was intended for you to know," replied the boy, "it would not be covered."

ARTEMUS WARD says: "If I am drafted I will resign. Deeply grateful for the unexpected honor thus conferred upon me, I shall feel compelled to resign the position in favor of some more worthy person. Modesty is what ails me That's what keeps me under."

Oil of lemon and oil of turpentine are composed of the same elements in the same proportions; an atom of either being formed by the combination of five atoms of carbon and four of hydrogen.