

The Somerset Herald.

GEORGE L. MUNIER.

"Be just and fear not."

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[From the New York Knickerbocker.]

THE OLD FAMILY CLOCK.

A TALK OF THE PAST.
According to me by hereditary right, the time that was my father's and my grandfather's time, is now in my possession, and occupies a prominent place in the vestment of my study. I often have I sat and gazed upon its time-worn exterior, listening to its regular and monotonous ticking, and only longing that it could speak to me what it had seen in younger days. I have seen it gaze on many a scene of blood and slaughter, of reveling and mirth. Doubtless it has lifted its hands in horror at some anarchy, never failing to sound its customary toll for an hundred years, or even if he has confined for so long a time in one position, these been the witness of much that would be interesting. Oh, that the old clock could tell me many bright and sparkling eyes been turned to its paternal-looking face, only its vivacity, by seeing that it pointed its to the dreadful IX! How many—But to try.

Our authors describe their heroes and heroines! should not describe mine? It is enclosed in a right box some eight feet in height, two feet, and the same in depth, so that when it is set, with its black metal face peering through a covering, it resembles more an Egyptian statue, than a chronicle of time. Its mechanism of that complicated character, which is an unsolvable mystery to modern tinkers, who are often unable to regulate its labyrinthine tortuousities. There are a few antique figures carved upon its unit, covered with time-worn and mothered metal, kept bright by weekly scrubbing. A scapular is made of an exceedingly fine wood, stained and varnished; but this may have been done by its later proprietors. The face is capacious enough to admit the body of a stout man; but when the door is closed, it is impossible that a child could be concealed within it. There it stands, in yonder corner, looking away with imperturbable gravity, as if it knew very well that it is the subject of great admiration.

He said that it was once the property of my father. Good old man! He has been dead for years, and I have often seen the venerable piece in his own house. He had been a soldier in the war of the revolution, and always some stories to tell concerning his perilous adventures; but I observed that he invariably stopped the bell of the old clock sounded the hour, and although he were in the very centre of a pressing story, I was unable to get another word from his lips, until the ensuing evening, when he would take up exactly where he left off. I have hinted, too, that there was a story connected with the old clock. Fanny then, indulgent to that you are gazing into a snug little room, a country farm-house.—The old clock stands in a corner, and in the other a smooth and nicely made bed. A bright fire is blazing on the hearth. A small child is before it on one side of its venerable grandmother, "spectacles on," industriously knitting on a pair of woollen stockings. In the corner, in her white-haired dress, with a short pipe in his mouth, "ravelling" the atmosphere of his own creation. Opposite to the old clock, an old wooden chair, sits your great-grandfather. I was younger than I am now; I was I had not seen twelve summers, and the old man delighted to amuse his favorite grandchild with tales of the war.

At length "it was my cue to speak." "What about, child?" "About the war." Silence again ensues. The old man seems meditating what event to relate. At this critical juncture, the old clock, having given its customary warning, lifted up its hammer, and strikes. This seems to touch a chord in the old man's heart. His eye brightens, a smile illumines his withered cheek, the pipe goes to rest and he opens his lips. "I will tell you something about that old clock, boy; something that you have never heard."

A preparatory hum; a stirring of the fire and a snuffing of the candle by the matron, and he proceeds: "Years, years ago, boy, even before your father was born, a little log cabin was the only dwelling within a great distance. Had you lived in those days, your eye would have rested upon nothing, on either hand, save lofty forests, and the gray summits of towering hills. They alone remain as they were in the days of my boyhood. Where the village rears its splendid mansions, and gilded spires, there was then a dismal swamp, considered irreclaimable. A huge oak tree occupied the spot where the church now stands. All around were woods; and the cry of the panther, or the fierce howl of the hungry wolf, often resounded through the forest. The solitary log cabin stood upon this very spot. A little clearing surrounded it, and its inmates lived by the cultivation of a few acres, being forced by necessity to deny themselves the luxuries of life. At the time of which I am speaking, its only occupants were, a man who had seen forty summers, and a little boy, their only offspring. He had emigrated to this country in consequence of some opposition to his matrimonial connexions and instead of remaining upon the seaboard, had buried himself deep in the forest. Here his boy was born, and here he dwelt, until the earth was heaped upon his breast.

"A few years produced a change in the scene. The father and mother had grown old, and the boy had become a young man. He was strong and possessed a disposition rather good than otherwise. I may say that he was very handsome, having inherited a goodly share of his mother's beauty. By this time a few other families had emigrated from England, and by reason of a family connexion, had built their cabin near that of the first settler. It was composed of the same number, but the youngest of the trio was a daughter instead of a son. She was very beautiful. Her form was faultless, and you might see upon her face a very similar strawberry to that you may see upon your grandmother's cheek."

I turned to look at this phenomenon and discovered that the needles of the old lady were flying more busily than ever. There was a slight smile on her lips. My grandfather proceeded: "As the time flew on, the country around began to become more and more settled. The smoke from newly-risen cabins might be daily seen, curling and wreathing above the tallest trees. As the society increased, new ties were formed to bind it together. A building, larger than the few ordinary dwellings, was erected, which served the purposes of a chapel, and public worship upon the Sabbath was conducted by the oldest settler. A school-house was also reared, and the most knowing man in the colony taught his school in the winter months. As the soil grew more and more cultivated, and more leisure allowed, the former customs of the settlers were gradually restored. Parties and merry-makings were held by the young men and the young men amused themselves in more athletic sports. In running, leaping, wrestling, and kindred feats of strength, the son of the old settler, whom I shall hereafter call Harry, that being the name given him by his companions was always victor. He was in a short time looked upon as the 'smartest' young fellow in the colony. On the other hand, the daughter of his neighbor, whom I shall call Mary, excelled the rest of her companions not only in personal beauty, but also was also the best dancer, and could make better butter and cheese, than any one around her; so that in a short time the hearts of all the young men in the settlement were laid at her feet. She possessed one quality that sometimes created a great deal of trouble. She well knew her power over her followers, and was a little addicted to coquetry."

Here my grandmother moved her chair, and related the half-burnt sticks upon the fire, by which means I lost a few sentences, nor could I persuade the old man to repeat them.

"Harry had long desired to obtain the first place in the affections of the belle, but she wouldn't even give him an opportunity to breathe forth his hopes; for as soon as he reared upon the topic that occupied the first place in his heart, her natural vivacity, I suppose, would lead her to talk of the weather, or the crops, or the size of the moon, or something equally vague and general, though she might have repeated the same remark on hundred times before. But she well knew the game she was playing, for if he manifested the least symptom of dissatisfaction, a single look restored her former position at her feet. It was 'too bad,' it was 'outrageous,' and he told her so—but all

to no purpose. Yet he was her follower. He gallanted her home from all the quiltings and parties, and was considered by his companions as her accepted lover, and soon to be her acknowledged husband. This, however, she had never promised.

"At length when Harry was about twenty-one, and Mary eighteen years of age, a series of depredations began to be committed upon the little colony, by the neighboring Indians. They were stimulated to it by the blood-thirsty French—and, in the hope of a trifling reward scrupled not to commit such and such defenceless women and helpless children. In a few months, the number of the colony had so decreased, that but twenty able-bodied men remained. These were afterward accustomed to work together, going in a body to a field of one man, and completing his work, and then to that of another. They always carried their guns with them to be ready in case of a surprise.

"On day while they were at work, the war-whoop of the savages was heard. Hastening to the settlement, they beheld the women and children rushing to and fro, pursued by the enemy. They drove on, attacked the Indians in the rear, and pressed them so hotly, that they fled, but not until every one had inflicted a bleeding scalp to his belt. Perceiving that they were still the majority, they soon returned; and then it was the turn of the colonists to fly. But the aim of the Indians was too sure; all but two or three, who had escaped by secret flight, were butchered. Harry, on the first onset, rushed to his home, hoping that he might protect his parents, who were now old and infirm. The savages perceived him as he entered the door, and pursued him close.—They did not reach the house, however, until he had torn up the floor, and thrusting his parents beneath it, prostrate upon the ground, carefully replaced the boards. Before they entered the door, he himself had vanished.—At this moment, the shout of friends was heard; and the Indians, without stopping to fire the buildings, betook themselves to flight.

"Soon afterwards, Mary, who had contrived to save herself and her parents from the general slaughter, rushed into the house of the old settler. She was the picture of despair. Not a soul was to be seen; and she broke forth into exclamations of the deepest grief. Wringing her hands and beating her breast, she cried out: 'Harry! my dear Harry! where are you? Oh, they have killed him! Would to God they had killed me too!'

"This was enough. The door of the old clock flew open; Harry jumped out, and with one bound Mary was in his arms.—Many were the kisses he imparted on her lips. No absorbing was his happiness, that Harry entirely forgot his parents, who began to grow tired of their imprisonment. Those released, they went out in search of others who might have escaped. A few were found; but the most joyful sight was a company of English soldiers, who had come to remain a few weeks at the settlement. Among them was a chaplain, and even before the dead was buried, the two lovers were united in marriage. But the clock is striking nine, boy; it is time for you to go to bed."

"But what was Harry's other name, grandfather?" "Never mind to-night; ask me to-morrow." "But I long to know; do tell me grandfather!" "No, no; it is nine o'clock." "Please, Sir!—I shall sleep the better tonight." "Ask your grandmother, you young rogue!" I glanced at her. A bright smile was on her withered countenance. She did not speak, but I knew that my aged grand-sire was the identical Harry, and his white-haired partner no other than the Mary he had loved.

J. L. C.

Fashion.

We take the following most excellent remarks from the Newark Daily Advertiser. Good ideas and elegantly expressed. The foolish notion to up the splendid exterior of the more wealthy, has plunged many young women, who might have been bright ornaments in the domestic circle, in the very depths of degradation and crime.

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