

RURAL CITIZEN.

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THE CURFEW HEROINE.
An Old Story.

The story that is the basis of the well-known poem, "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night," told in prose is as follows:

It lacked quite half an hour of curfew toll. The old bell ringer came from under the watted roof of his cottage stoop and stood with uncovered head in the clear sweet scented air. He had grown blind and deaf in the service, but his arm was as muscular as ever, and he who listened this day marked no faltering in the heavy metallic throbs of the cathedral bell. Old Jasper had lived through many changes. He had tolled out the notes of mourning for good Queen Bess, and with tears scarcely dry he had rung the glad tidings of the coronation of James. Charles I. had been crowned, reigned, and expired; his weakness before all England in Jasper's time, and now he who under army held all the common wealth in the hollow of his hand, ruled as more than monarch, and still the old man with the habit of a long life upon him rang his matins and sorrow.

Jasper stood alone now, hating his dimmed eyes up to the softly dappled sky. The wall of his memory seemed so written over—so crossed and re-crossed by the annals of the years that had gone before, that there seemed little room for anything in the present. Little recked he that Cromwell's spearsmen were camped on the moor beyond the village—that Cromwell himself rode with his guardsmen a league away; he only knew that the bell had been rung in the tower when William the Conqueror made curfew a law, had been spared by Parritt and Roundhead, and that his arm for sixty years had never failed him at eventide.

He was moving with a slow step toward the gate, when a woman came hurriedly in from the street and stood beside him; a lovely woman, but with a face so blanched that it seemed carved in the whited of marble, with all its roundness and dimples. Her great, solemn eyes were raised to the aged face in pitiful appeal, and the lips were forming words that he could not understand.

"Speak up, lass, I am deaf and cannot hear your chatter."
"For heaven's sake, Jasper, do not ring the curfew bell to-night."
"What! no ring curfew? You must be daft, lassie."
"Jasper, for sweet heaven's sake—for my sake—for one night in all your long life forget to ring the bell! Fail this once and my lover shall live, whom Cromwell says shall die at curfew toll. Do you hear? my lover, Richard Temple. See, Jasper, here is my money to make your old age happy. I sold my jewelry that the Lady Maud gave me, and the gold shall be yours for one curfew."
"Would you bribe me, Lily De Vere? You're a changeling. You're nae the blood of the Plantagenets in ye're veins as ye're mother had. What, corrupt the bell-ringer under her majesty, good Queen Bess? Not for all the gold that Lady Maud could bring me! Babes have been born and strong men have died before at the ringing of my bell. Awa'! Awa'!"

And out on the village green with the solemn shadows of the lichen lengthening over it, a strong man awaited the curfew toll for his death. He stood handsome and brave, and tall—taller by an inch than the tallest pikeman who guarded him.

What had he done that he should die? Little it mattered in those days, when the sword that the great Cromwell wielded was so prone to fall, what he or others had done. He had been scribe to the late lord up at the castle, and Lady Maud, forgetting that man must woo and woman must wait, had given her heart to him without the asking,

while the gentle Lily De Vere, distant kinswoman and poor companion of her, had, without seeking, found the treasures of his true love and held them fast. Then he had joined the army and made one of the pious soldiers whose evil passions were never stirred but by signs or symbol of poetry. But a scorned woman's hatred had reached him even there. Enemies and deep plots had compassed him about and conquered him. To-night he was to die.

The beautiful world lay as a vivid picture before him. The Jack green wood above the rocky hill where Robin Hood and his merry men had dwelt; the frowning castle with its drawbridge and square towers, the long stretch of moor with the purple shadows upon it, the green, straight walks of the village, the birds overhead, even the daisies at his feet he saw. But all more vividly than all, he saw the great red sun with his hazy veil lingering above the trees as though it pitied him with more than human pity.

He was a God fearing and a God serving man. He had long made his peace with heaven. Nothing stood between him and death—nothing rose pleadingly between him and those who were to destroy him but the sweet face of Lily De Vere, whom he loved. She had knelt at Cromwell's feet and pleaded for his life. She wearied heaven with prayers, but all with out avail.

Slowly now the great sun went down. Slowly the last rim was hid beneath the greenwood. Thirty seconds more and his soul would be with God. The color did not forsake his cheeks. The dark rings of hair lay upon a warm brow. It was his purpose to die as martyrs and brave men die. What was life that he should cling to it? He almost felt the air pulsate with the first heavy roll of the death knell. But no sound came. Still facing the soldiers with his clear gray eyes upon them he waited.

The crimson banners in the west were paling to pink. The line had ceased their loving, and had been gathered into the rick yards. All nature had sounded her curfew, but old Jasper was silent!

The bell-ringer, with his gray head yet bare, had traversed the distance between his cottage and the ivy-covered tower when a form went flitting past him. There were drops of blood upon the white garments, and the face was like the face of one who walked in her sleep, and her hands hung wounded and powerless at her side. Cromwell paused with his horsemen under the dismantled May-pole before the village green. He saw the man who was to die at sunset standing up in the dusky air, tall as a king and beautiful as Absalom. He gazed with knitted brow and angry eye, but his lips did not give utterance to the quick command that trembled on them, for a girl came flitting toward him. Pkenen and archer stepped aside to let her pass. She threw herself upon the turf at his horse's feet; she lifted her bleeding and tortured hands to his gaze, and once more poured out her prayer for the life of her lover; with trembling lips she told him why Richard still lived—why the curfew had not sounded.

Lady Maud looking out of her latticed window at the castle, saw the great protector dismount, lit the fainting form in his arms and bear her to her lover. She saw the guards release their prisoner, and she heard the shouts of joy at his deliverance; then she welcomed the night that the scene out from her envious eye and sculptured her in its gloom.

At the next matin bell old Jasper died, and at curfew toll he was laid beside the wife who had died in his youth, but the memory of whom had been with him always. —[Haverhill, Mass. Bulletin.]

grin and gargoyles staring at her from under bardo and cornice, with all the hideousness and medieval carving the stairs, flight by flight, growing fainter beneath her young feet; now but a slender net-work between her and the outer world; but still up. Her breath was coming short and gasping. She saw through an open space old Jasper cross the road at the foot of the tower. Oh, how far! The seconds were treasures which Cromwell, with all his blood-bought commonwealth, could not purchase from her. Up—there, just above her with its great brazen mouth and wicked tongue, the bell hung. A worn eaten block for a step, and one small white hand had clasped itself above the clapper—the other prepared, at the tremble, to rise and clasp its mate, and the feet to swing off—and thus she waited. Jasper was old and slow, but he was sure it came last. A faint quiver, and the young feet swung from their rest, and the tender hands clasped for more than their precious life the writhing thing. There was groaning and creaking of the rude pulleys above, and then the strokes came heavy and strong. Jasper's hand had not forgot its cunning, nor his arm its strength. The tender form was dashed to and fro. But she clung to and caressed the cold cruel thing. Let one stroke come and a thousand might follow—for its fatal work would be done. She wreathed her white arms about it, so that with every pull of the great rope it crushed into the flesh. It tore and wounded and bruised her; but there in the solemn twilight the brave woman swung and fought with the curfew, and God gave her victory.

The old bell ringer said to himself: "Aye, Huldah, my work is done. The pulleys are getting too heavy for my old arms; my ears, too, have failed me. I dinna hear one stroke of the curfew. Dear old bell! it is my ears that have gone false, and not thou. Farwell old friend!"

And just beyond the worn pavement a shadowy form again went flitting past him. There were drops of blood upon the white garments, and the face was like the face of one who walked in her sleep, and her hands hung wounded and powerless at her side. Cromwell paused with his horsemen under the dismantled May-pole before the village green. He saw the man who was to die at sunset standing up in the dusky air, tall as a king and beautiful as Absalom. He gazed with knitted brow and angry eye, but his lips did not give utterance to the quick command that trembled on them, for a girl came flitting toward him. Pkenen and archer stepped aside to let her pass. She threw herself upon the turf at his horse's feet; she lifted her bleeding and tortured hands to his gaze, and once more poured out her prayer for the life of her lover; with trembling lips she told him why Richard still lived—why the curfew had not sounded.

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When the Lord made man he put him to tanning; but when the devil came he persuaded him to live by his wits. —[Cooke Co. Independent.]

Up—still—up—beyond the rainbow tints thrown by the stained glass across her death-white brow; up—still—up—past of enarch, with

METHODIST CENTENNIAL.
How the M. E. Church South Proposes to Celebrate the Great Event.

This year, 1884, is a great and notable one in the annals of American Methodism. It will witness the celebration of the first Methodist anniversary of the Methodist Episcopal Church on this continent, and is certain to prove a year of unusual activity and profound interest throughout the wide extended borders of that powerful denomination of Christians. The grand historic facts relating to the beneficent character and wonderful achievements of Christianity through the organized plans and the doctrines of Methodism during its pathway through this century of its existence in America, are truly phenomenal, as acknowledged by the world's leading minds, and is one of the grandest problems of the ages. With more communicants than any other religious body in America, it is a matter of interest to briefly review some of the facts of general interest connected with the history of the Methodist Church. Beginning in obscurity and feebleness, it has achieved for itself everywhere a most wonderful success. This great religious movement has, immediately or remotely, so given an impulse to Christian feeling and profession, on all sides, that it has come to present itself as the starting-point of our modern religious history.

In 1784, the year when the Methodist Church was organized in Baltimore, when Coke and Ashbury were acknowledged and set apart as Superintendents, or Bishops, there were only 14,988 members, 83 preachers, 64 church-buildings, no institution of learning within the bounds of the denomination. But from that time until the present the growth of Methodism has been almost incalculable. This result was achieved by men who can well be denominated heroes in the loftiest sense of the word. Accepting the motto of John Wesley their Church's founder—"The World is my Parish," these men of God traversed every State and Territory of our great country, preaching the gospel with power and in demonstration of the Spirit—building up the Church. Their entire singleness of purpose in spreading the gospel has been their prominent characteristic, and today American Methodism numbers within her various branches 3,993,724 members; 25,839 traveling preachers, and 34,714 local preachers; 32,000 church-edifices valued at \$109,000,000; 258 institutions of learning, embracing universities, colleges, seminaries and high schools; in 1882 had 433 missionaries in foreign fields sent from America, besides 1,996 native helpers; and during that year contributed for the cause of foreign missions the sum of \$551,447.41.

The M. E. Church, has prepared to join in the celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, which will occur in Baltimore on Dec. 27, and proposes to commemorate the great event throughout its entire bounds with suitable services and by raising funds for Educational purposes, Church Extension, and Missions—three noble objects to which the liberality of the church will certainly respond. Two million of dollars is the amount proposed to be raised for these objects, and that this purpose can be accomplished there should be no doubt; it will certainly not exhaust the treasury of this strong Church with its nearly nine hundred thousand members.

It may be interesting to our readers to recount what American Methodism has hitherto accomplished on her Centenary occasions. We first revert to the Centennial of 1839. As the first Methodist Society was formed in London in the month of November, 1739, so 1839, he announced

properly the one hundredth year of Methodism. It was accordingly celebrated in Europe and America. During that Centenary year, with a membership of 749,216 members, including colored members and Indians, the Methodist Church in America raised \$600,000 for missions, educational purposes, and for the support of the worn-out preachers, and the widows, children, and orphans of preachers. The Wesleyan Methodists of Great Britain raised over one million dollars for similar objects.

The next Methodist Centennial was in 1866. It was in commemoration of the First Methodist preaching services held in this country in 1766, and was celebrated by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1866. Education and Church Extension were the great objects of their benevolence, and \$2,000,000 was suggested as the amount to be raised. The result was a magnificent one, the thank-offerings amounting to \$8,709,498.39, or more than four times the amount proposed at the outset.

Able and competent committees have this work in hand, and will spare no effort to successfully consummate it. The headquarters of the Central Centenary Committee is at Nashville, Tenn.

The following is the Committee of Weatherford District.—C. H. Ellis, Whitt; Rev. William Price, Weatherford; Judge B. F. Williams, Graham.

A Survey of the Governatorial Field.
An Austin correspondent to the Gazette says: Political speculation is unusually dull. Nevertheless, as calm as are the political waters to-day, old sailors aver that there are presages of a coming storm.

The question who will succeed Ireland should be defeated for re-nomination is now becoming interesting. The schemers care but little, knowing that they themselves cannot capture the honor. They are making a fight to tear down rather than build up. Any person not too closely identified with the present administration would be satisfactory to them.

Judge Fleming is looked upon as a strong man, who would carry the solid Western vote.

Old Ross they regard with favor, as being very strong, especially among old soldiers.

Peter Smith would be boomed for the governorship were it not for his emphatic declination. He is a man whom everybody regards with admiration as the very embodiment of correct business principles. He is the kind of character whom the people idolize on account of iron will, unimpeachable integrity and recognized sagacity, a sort of Ben Butler as it were, with the obnoxious features of the wily Massachusetts statesman omitted.

Col. Henry of Dallas has many friends, and is a possible candidate. Culberson was once a favorite, and I have reason to believe arrangements were in preparation to actively push him for the governorship.

Judge Reagan is being carefully groomed in the background. Comptroller Swann has also been considered in this connection. Lieut. Gov. Marion Martin would not object to the people saying "come on higher."

As Governor Lubbock remarked the other day, it looks as if most of the incumbents can succeed themselves without trouble. There are, however, several new contestants. Mr. Frymier of Crockett has a hankering to handle the cash balance, but has the shrewdest strategist in the state to fight in the person of Gov. Lubbock.

Hon. I. A. Patton of Johnson is frequently named in connection with the commissionship of the land office and his chances are favorable should he decide to become

a candidate for the position. Mr. Cochran of Dallas, familiarly called "Long John," is said to have one eye on the comptrollership and the other is blinking violently as if it would like to be turned in the same direction.

Sen. Barnett Gibbs also of Dallas, was charged with being a candidate for lieutenant-governor, but "Barney" says that the fellow who started the report was badly off.

Col. J. W. Booth of Decatur is another who is proposed for lieutenant-governor. Sen. Gooch of Palestine, it is said would not be averse to presiding over the Nineteenth legislature.

Charlie Gibson, speaker of the late legislature, was once in a fair way to the successorship to Lieutenant-Governor Martin's mantle, but of late he seems to have been decoyed off by other designs.

W. F. Upton of Fayette is prominently mentioned for lieutenant-governor.

Much speculation is indulged in concerning the nomination of Senator Terrell, who is regarded as the leader of the opposition to the administration. Some think he would like to be governor, but at this stage of the game that seems impossible.

Kansas Cattle Dying With a Strange Disease.
TOPEKA, Kan., March 6.—Gov. Glick has received a telegram from George B. Loring, commissioner of agriculture, saying he had ordered Dr. Trombroun of Sterling, Ill., to investigate the cattle disease at Neosho Falls in this state. Immediately the governor, accompanied by Wm. Sims and Dr. Holcombe of Fort Leavenworth, left for Woodson county to-night. Many cattle have the disease in a very violent form. Some of them have their hoofs off, and the legs of some have rotted up as far as the second joint. The disease is said to resemble and be communicated exactly like small pox.

The Department of State has received information from the United States Consul at Birmingham, England, that the foot and mouth disease is among the cattle in almost every county in England.

The Texas delegation are supporting the bill to retire General Pleasanton with the rank of colonel. He served on the staff of Zachary Taylor forty years ago at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma and in several Texas towns.

Those who are cultivating raspberries and strawberries, says the Nebraska Farmer, should not forget that a stem that has borne one crop is no more value and should be disposed of in order to make room for the new shoots, of which not more than two should be allowed to remain. These should be tied up to sticks or trellises and when blackberries are five feet high the tips should be pinched off and raspberries at three feet high.

The Coffeyville Journal, (Kan.) says that upon examination it is found that at least half of the peach buds have been frozen, so that there will not be near a full crop this year, but then half a crop is about as good as a full one, for it would be a hard matter to dispose of two thirds of the products of our peach orchards when a full crop is had.

A successful fruit grower writing of his experience says, there is too frequently misunderstanding between the owner and his orchard. No one should set an orchard who can not give the fruit trees the first right to the soil. If the orchard is of apple trees then the fruit from these trees should be the leading crop of the land set to apple trees, and whatever else is grown should be as an aid to the trees and not to their damage, not to mention their destruction. There are secondary crops that may be grown in a bearing orchard, but the soil should be manured all the more heavily on account of this extra drain. Any hoed crop may be grown among the trees; but to think of an orchard remaining in meadow with a yearly crop of hay taken off and no return of plant food is folly. The trees do poorly and it is not strange if they never pay for the trouble of setting. Let it be understood that apples may be a paying farm crop if the plants which grow among them are given fair treatment.

