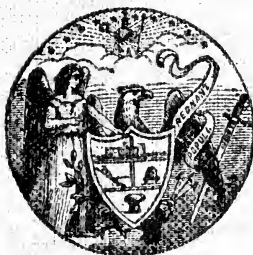


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Arkansas Souvenirs



Oliver W. Jennings



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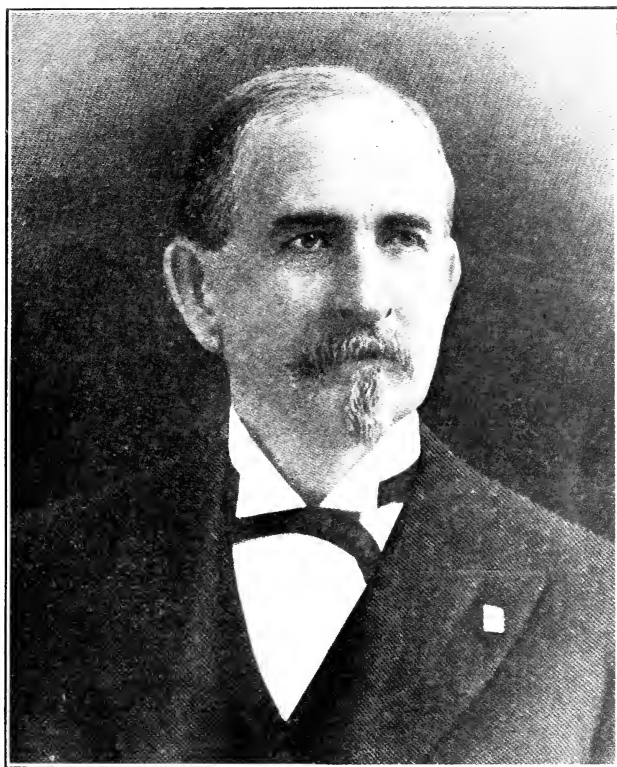
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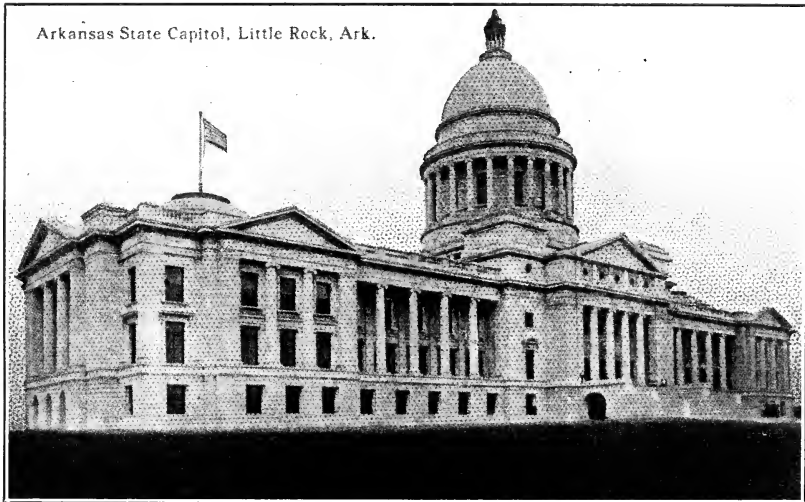




Former Governor Dan W. Jones.



Arkansas State Capitol, Little Rock, Ark.





ARKANSAS SOUVENIRS

By

OLIVER W. JENNINGS

Author of Brief Sketch and Directory of the
First Class of Mississippi Valley
Consistory, etc.



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DAN. W. JONES W. S. DANAHER
JONES & DANAHER
LAWYERS
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

November 13, 1914.

Rev. Oliver W. Jennings,
2141 East Fair Avenue,
St. Louis, Mo.

My dear Sir:

Your very complimentary letter of the 10th inst. informing me of your desire of dedicating your book, "Arkansas Souvenirs" to me has been received. I assure you that I feel flattered by this and will within the next few days send you a good photo of myself and a post card photo of our New State Capitol Building.

With many wishes for your happiness and success in life, I am

Very truly, etc.,

Dan W Jones



Dedication

To the Hon. Dan W. Jones, Little Rock, for two successive terms, Governor of Arkansas, now able and well known lawyer and popular citizen, this modest work, "Arkansas Souvenirs" is respectfully inscribed by his friend, the author, who had the honor of serving as a member of his personal staff, during the year 1898.





First Christian Church, Pine Bluff, Arkansas.



Introductory Statement

In September, 1893, the writer, by means of hard work and economy, found himself possessed of sufficient money to attend the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, but, having read in the Christian Leader an appeal from the little unorganized band of Christian brethren at Pine Bluff, Ark., he decided to give up the pleasure and profit of this long-time coveted trip and go to the help of the Lord's people.

Having secured the services of Brother Samuel Pickens Spiegel, then a student in the College of the Bible, Lexington, Ky., and one of the now widely known preacher brothers of Alabama, as singing evangelist, in the following month, he began a series of gospel meetings in the Presbyterian Church, at Pine Bluff, which meeting at the end of several weeks was transferred to the Jewish Temple, where a preliminary organization was effected.

During the meeting, Brother Spiegel and myself were kindly entertained and greatly aided by

my brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Taylor, to whose personal influence and loyal support our church at Pine Bluff is much indebted for past gratifying growth and present prominence among the Churches in the State. We were also cordially entertained and encouraged by Mr. John M. and Dr. Sam Taylor and their amiable wives, both of these latter couples having since departed this earthly life. The brethren in general, as well as many other good citizens, added their best endeavors to the effective help received from those above named.

We then visited Mr. and Mrs. Ben Taylor and Capt Henry R. Taylor on Hollywood Plantation, about fifty miles distant from Pine Bluff.

While there, we enjoyed the Camp Hunt described in this book.

Bro. Spiegel soon afterwards returned to his home, Falkville, Alabama, while the writer, in the interest of the young congregation at Pine Bluff, visited many cities of the State, including Little Rock, Argenta, Russellville, Dardanelle, Alma, VanBuren, Fort Smith, Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers, and Siloam Springs.

During ten days work at the last named place, he preached in a hall, also in the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, delivering a lecture in the Opera House, and a few days later, laid the corner-stone of the Christian Church.

After having been everywhere cordially received by the big hearted, hospitable people of the State, he returned to Pine Bluff and completed the organization of the Church, in the Jewish Temple.

The writer returned to Arkansas in October, 1897, lectured again in Merrill Institute for the benefit of the Pine Bluff church, again visited Hollywood Plantation, also a number of the towns before mentioned, and in the following Spring, laid the corner-stone of the present Church house at Pine Bluff.

February 26, 1898, he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel and Aide-de-Camp on the Governor's Staff.

In regard to the poems and stories, "The Mystery of a Ring" was written at scenic Horse Cave, Ky., in August, 1897.

The writer remembers with pleasure his cordial

xvi. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

reception at the hands of the intelligent and sociable people of Horse Cave, and deems it here fitting to add that the many lovely views in this city and its vicinity are conducive to the writing of romance.

“Among the Arkansas Bayous ; or, Recollections of a Camp Hunt” was written in Louisville, the great metropolis of famous “Old Kentucky,” in July, 1900, and the poems, “Memories of Hollywood” and “We Shall Meet Again,” at Westport, Ky., in October, 1896, and June, 1900, respectively.

Finally, the writer begs leave to express his sincere admiration for the great State of Arkansas and her wonderful resources, yet but partially developed. May her whole-souled, appreciative people ever continue to prosper!

Yours very truly,

OLIVER W. JENNINGS,

St. Louis, Mo., October, 1915.



First Christian Church, Siloam Springs, Arkansas.





Oliver W. Jennings.



Arkansas Souvenirs



Memories of Hollywood



ARKANSAS SOUVENIRS

Memories of Hollywood

(In remembrance of a visit in the fall of 1893, to the noted "Hollywood Plantation," located on the Bayou Bartholomew, in Drew and Desha counties, Arkansas, owned by the Taylor Brothers.)

To Bayou Bartholomew come with me,
Where the cypress grows and the holly tree;
Where the sweet magnolia scents the air;
And one sees beauty everywhere.

The cotton, like great flakes of snow,
Whitens the fields where'er you go;
While all around, dense forests stand,
That wall in Nature's fairyland.

The southern moon gleams on the trees;
The moss festoons sway in the breeze;
Weird shadows move o'er waters fair,
And Heaven's stars are mirrored there.

The tinkling banjo and the song,
The merry laugh of tenant throng,
And mocking birds delight the ear,
Unused such sylvan sounds to hear.

Three Indian mounds upon the plain—
Of vanished race all that remain—
Add mystic romance to a scene
As fair as traveler views, I ween.

Old homestead, sure thy guests to cheer,
Thine happy inmates need not fear
That those who leave thy friendly door
Will think not of them evermore.

O! come to "Hollywood" with me!
The old plantation let us see;
Come, let us rest, forgetting care,
And halcyon pleasures we shall share.



Among the Arkansas Bayous



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Among the Arkansas Bayous;

Or, Recollections of a Camp Hunt



CAPTAIN Henry Taylor was a very busy man. He rode everywhere about his plantation rallying his tenants to the good work, the double work of getting up a big "Thanksgiving Dinner" and making the necessary preparations for an old fashioned camp-hunt, in the Mississippi River bottoms. The large resources of the plantation proved equal to the occasion. The barn yard supplied the genial and well arranged table with a fine young shoat, and a big turkey, while adjacent fields furnished a fat quail for every guest and Bayou Bartholomew plenty of fish. Vegetables of many sorts, cake, pumpkin, and mince pies, cranberry sauce, coffee, tea and milk formed the principal items of a banquet that proved to be first class in every particular. Captain Taylor, who never failed to make a creditable showing on holiday occasions, had, at this time, exerted his best energies.

The cause of all this was the arrival, the prev-

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ious day, of two special guests, Brother Sam P. Spiegel, a young theological student, traveling with me in the capacity of song-leader in Evangelistic work, and myself.

Captain Taylor and I had met recently at Pine Bluff, after a separation of about twenty years, his father's family having removed from their plantation near Westport, Ky., when I was a young boy. At said meeting, Captain Taylor insisted upon our making him a visit, before we should leave the state, and finding us eager to enjoy a camp-hunt, he readily promised as an additional inducement, to organize a hunting party for our especial benefit.

Our arrival at Hollywood, on Thanksgiving eve, 1893, was the signal for general rejoicing; cordial greetings and hearty handshakings were followed by music, both vocal and instrumental, by the best talent the plantation could afford. The agreeable sounds of the banjo and violin seldom ceased to be heard, until the midnight hour, and furnished the means of a welcome serenade, during the meal hours of the next day.

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Nothing was left undone to render our reception an ever-to-be-remembered event.

After a five o'clock breakfast, the next day after Thanksgiving, we found everything in readiness for the start.

Four horsemen lead the way, namely, Brother Spiegel, and Mr. S. M. Dennis, a foreman on the plantation, Mr. Miles Jones, an experienced hunter, and a colored man named Julius, who accompanied the party in the capacity of cook and general utility man. A four-horse wagon, containing a tent, guns and ammunition, cooking utensils, provisions, etc., and in which rode Captain Taylor and myself, on a cushioned spring-board seat, brought up the rear.

The weather was cool, yet bracing and quite comfortable, lacking the unpleasant chilliness of more northern climates at this period of the year. Our corduroy trousers, heavy hunting shirts and jackets afforded us ample protection. Half an hour out, the southern sun shed its still warm rays around us.

All nature seemed suddenly on the alert. More

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than one rabbit ran timidly across the road, squirrels gamboled up and down the tree trunks and among the branches, and several covies of quail appeared along the road. Captain Taylor and I secured several real lucky shots and bagged five fine birds.

Before reaching Winchester, others of our party increased our quota of quail by several birds and added three fine fox squirrels to the already well filled camp larder.

The general store of Mr. Ben Taylor, at Winchester, supplied us with such articles as were still lacking.

Leaving said town, our course turned toward the southeast, bringing us presently to a great cypress brake around which the road skirted for perhaps a quarter of a mile, after which we entered a forest which grew constantly denser until at night, we emerged into a small clearing on the banks of the large creek where we pitched our camp for the night.

Julius at once cut some wood, which he placed against the trunk of a fallen tree, and soon a blazing bonfire warmed the chilly atmosphere

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about the camp. A well-filled camp-kettle and coffee-boiler added savory odors to the air. Two huge ponies of corn bread, baked in a pot-lid skillet, and rashers of bacon broiled on a spit, under the special direction of Capt. Henry, completed a menu truly fit for the gods.

A hearty supper was followed by a genuine "feast of reason and flow of soul," in the form of animated conversation, varied by jokes and witticisms, as well as by the relation of several incidents pertaining to camp life.

Ten o'clock found us snugly tucked in bed, Julius enjoying a comfortable pallet all to himself, while the remainder of us occupied two large mattresses placed side by side, resting upon small branches cut from neighboring trees, and covered with heavy double blankets and several comforts and quilts.

Overcoats, hunting-jackets, or a saddle covered with the end of a comfort, formed our several pillows, the surrounding trees the walls of our bed room and the now darkly clouded skies our canopy.

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Camp equipage, including provisions for man and beast, guns, ammunition, etc., were securely shielded from the apparently threatening rain-storm.

Before five o'clock next morning, we were roused from our peaceful beds by a sudden shower of rain accompanied by broad flashes of lightning and loud peals of thunder. We hastily put on—almost jumped into—our clothes, and some crawled under the wagon-bed, while others somewhat rashly took refuge under a big tree.

The rain, which for a time fairly came down in floods, soon virtually ceased to fall, and our cook, unmindful of an occasional sprinkling, proceeded with the preparations for breakfast, for we must needs get an early start in order to reach our permanent camping place before the noon hour.

Recrossing the creek, an hour's journey brought us to the great levee, or embankment, that protects the Louisiana sugar lands from the spring floods that cover this portion of the bayou region, in some places, to a depth of fifteen or eighteen feet.

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It required some time to get the wagon over this impediment and into the bottoms on the other side.

After this, we had fairly smooth travelling, until we reached the proposed sight of our camp on the southern bank of bayou Amos, a beautiful and picturesque stream. and the resort, at this season, of innumerable water-fowl, both wild duck and wild goose.

While awaiting the arrival of Julius on the mule, Messrs Jones, Dennis and Spiegel sallied out through the cane-brake across the bayou, in quest of fresh game for dinner. Capt. Taylor and myself remained to guard the camp outfit from any possible intruders, also to clear off the grounds and make a table and puncheon seats.

A log split half in two, with the flatside turned upwards and stout wooden pegs raising the bottom from the ground, formed the table, while a trunk of the fallen tree, with the top roughly faced, or smoothed with an ax, formed the seats. Further along, near the great roots of the tree, we built the camp-fire, dragging up pieces of drift-wood,

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and dead limbs of trees, found here and there, and piling them in a heap upon the blaze.

We had scarcely made these arrangements, ere our huntsmen returned to the camp with several squirrels and a fine canvass-back duck, which were soon dressed, cut up, and placed in the kettle, forming the principle ingredient of a kind of camp stew for the making of which Captain Henry had long been famous. Potatoes, onions, red pepper, butter, salt, flour dumplings, and the necessary amount of water were the other ingredients of a truly palate tempting mess. Corn-pones, cold biscuit, with fresh country butter, cheese, cucumber pickles, and coffee comprised a meal to which hungry men did full justice. I had almost forgotten to add that we had ginger snaps, apple-butter and excellent sorghum molasses for desert.

The only thing that marred the pleasure of this auspicious occasion was the non-arrival of our man Julius by dinner time. Julius had been left in charge of the tent with instructions to bring it on to the camping ground, on the stout mule which he rode during the hunt, and, according to our cal-

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culations he ought to have been on hand more than an hour ago.

His faithfulness and well known promptness made us begin to apprehend that some mishap had befallen him. We felt that we could not well get along without Julius. We could, indeed, contrive to dispense with the tent, by building a rude hut, but this would require the expenditure of much time and labor and delay the carrying out of the programme we had arranged before leaving Hollywood.

At length, when we had decided to send Miles Jones in search of him, we were much rejoiced over beholding him riding down the trail toward the camping grounds.

Upon his arrival, our eyes were treated with a sorry looking spectacle, for rider, beast, and tent were dripping wet and literally covered with slimy mud. An explanation was soon made. Julius, in attempting to cross the creek, some miles back, over a bridge of floating logs moored at each end to the respective banks, had, unfortunately approached too near one edge of the float, whereup-

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on, the tilting logs had precipitated rider, mule and tent into the deep, muddy waters below. Julius clung desperately to both mule and tent, until the former managed to swim almost to shore, where he at once foundered in the heavy-sticky mud, leaving nothing but head and back above the murky waters.

The greatly disconcerted Julius, not knowing what else to do, dismounted and stood nearly up to his waist in water and mud, clutching the bridle with his right hand and shouting for help. It very luckily happened that a negro squatter, living in a clearing on the edge of the swamp country, was beating up and down the woods in search of his wandering drove of hogs, and he, responding to the appeal, helped Julius to draw both mule and tent out upon the dry land.

The dripping tent was rung out and hung before the fire to dry and Julius, after some effort, succeeded in scraping the partially dried mud from his clothing, leaving only a few stains as a reminder of his recent plight.

This having been done, we left him in charge of

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the camp, Messrs. Dennis, Jones and Spiegel setting out for a lake about five miles distant, while Captain Taylor and myself rode down the bayou, in quest of such game as we might be able to find.

For the first time in my life, a dream of my boyhood was realized. Many a time, while reading the adventures of Daniel Boone, the stories of Cooper and other incidents of pioneer life, I had longed to dwell for a season in a genuine forest, not alone, as had these heroic forerunners of civilization, for I am a born lover of congenial companions, but with a party such as the one of which I was now a member.

The Captain was one of the most interesting men it has been my privilege to meet. He was hospitable, agreeable and obliging in his manners, and possessed of that rare, sympathetic disposition that enables one often intuitively to discern another's wishes before they have been expressed in words, and renders one ever ready to gratify their companions' higher desires. Skilled from boyhood in the mysteries of woodcraft and possessing a mind well stored with information, he was

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able to note every object of interest that lay within eye range from pathway, and his comments thereupon were always edifying. He pointed out the various cane brakes, and described the habits of the wild animals that were wont, at times, to seek their shelter, the monster grape vines laden with purple clusters that entwined the trunks and overhanging branches of many a lordly tree, the persimmon and pecan trees, with their profusion of ripened fruits, the various, strange noises of the forest, the slowly crumbling relics of the aboriginal American, the beautiful waters of the bayou, upon whose serene bosom flocks of wild ducks were here and there merrily sporting, or some fish which suddenly leaped above its watery haunts, its silvery scales gleaming in the sunlight ere its agile body fell splashing back into the depths.

On every side, gayly feathered birds flitted from tree to tree, while their gladsome warblings supplied all that was lacking to make our romantic surroundings perfectly ideal in character. What wildly gnarled tree-trunks laden with hanging fes-

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toons of southern moss, the sight of which would make almost any natural woman clap her hands for very glee, more than once greeted our eyes. What bowery retreats deeply carpeted with fallen leaves whose shelter even the "Three Graces," might not have scorned.

Truly, the world is all right; the trouble is that man is not in harmony with his proper surroundings, because he is not enrapport with the God that made him.

Returned to camp an hour before supper time, an inventory was taken of the afternoon's trophies, when it was found that our united party had bagged in the aggregate, seven duck, two geese, and of squirrel more than a dozen—black and red fox and the common grey. No bear had been encountered and only two deer had been sighted, yet at too great a distance to be hit even by Miles Jones, the crack shot of our party.

The inventory over, we at once began the work of setting up the tent, which we pitched in front of a great tree, the door facing the camp-fire.

Everything liable to injury by the weather was

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securely stored away in the rear end of the tent, while the beds were made upon either side, leaving a narrow avenue between them leading to the supplies. Julius placed his pallet at the door, thus sleeping nearest the camp-fire.

At midnight, I was awakened by a shrill cry whose weird echoes resounded through the forest. Startled at first by the unfamiliar call, I raised myself upright and glanced hastily into the surrounding gloom, for, though the rain had not fallen since early in the forenoon of our second day on the road, the sky was still overcast with threatening clouds.

The fire, occasionally replenished during the night by Jones or Dennis, sent a genial heat into the tent, and, at times, blazing upward, cast a bright, but fitful light for many feet around, creating gaunt shadows that, for one moment, stood revealed to the sight in orthodox, ghostly fashion, only to vanish, the next moment, into the depths of the forest. The mystic and almost oppressive stillness was, from time to time, broken by some strange wild cry, after which the occas-

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ional quacking of the wild duck up the bayou, or the "honk" of the wild goose, proved to be quite a relief.

A feeling of great solemnity, akin to awe, came upon me.

How great is Nature! How small, how well-nigh powerless, is man! Although the lord of nature, so long as he intelligently lives in accordance with the laws of nature, he is nature's slave and victim, whenever he violates any of her laws.

God, doubtless, so willed when He created the world and made man the master of it, and thus, from the beginning of time, He has been teaching man the principle declared by the Apostle Paul to the sages, on Mars Hill, "In Him we live and move, and have our being." Acts 17:28. Only through God's grace and with His help can man become enabled to discern these laws, and to obey them so that he may become what God has throughout the ages intended him to be, a being "but a little lower than God," Ps. 8:5; and, consequently, the qualified, and thus fitting, ruler of the world in which he dwells.

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I had listened but a few minutes before the shrill cry was repeated, and I at once, recognized the call to be that of the swamp-owl, a well known inhabitant of this region.

Since then, I have heard this peculiarly thrilling cry almost perfectly imitated by more than one Arkansas hunter, and have found his owl's capacious stuffed body to be an ornament in many a parlor.

Shortly before daybreak, it rained again, the rain coming down in torrents, so that when the storm was over, the air became so chilly that we made haste to replenish the partially quenched camp-fire, until it became a blazing log heap, and to put on our heaviest garments, Captain Henry and I even deeming it necessary, for a while, to wear overcoats.

It was Sunday, and so, out of respect for the day, from breakfast until the noon hour, not a soul stirred from the camp.

Shortly before dinner, at the request of Capt. Henry, I read a passage from the New Testament and offered a brief prayer. Our simple service

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was concluded by the singing of Capt. Henry's favorite hymn, "When the Roll is Called up Yonder," the voice of Brother Spiegel effectively leading the sweet notes of praise sent up to a throne of grace by the little congregation that had been temporarily planted in that section of a vast wilderness.

Yes, we may rightfully call this a kind of informal church service, for a church does not consist in material things, wood, brick, stone, gothic doors and windows, and costly ornaments, but in consecrated human beings—a body of believers, small or large, banded together for the purpose of divine worship and mutual helpfulness. Well says the poet,

"The groves were God's first temples,
Ere man learned to lay the arch
Or hew the architrave."

"The afternoon and night quietly, yet pleasantly passed, and the rising rays of Monday's sun were the bright harbingers of a beautiful day.

This day, we secured much small game, but were disappointed in our hopes of getting a deer.

In the afternoon Brother Spiegel and I sighted

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several wild hogs with a litter of pigs, which, upon our nearer approach disappeared in a canebrake.

This day Capt. Taylor rode across the country to busy Arkansas City, where he had a gun repaired by an expert gunsmith.

The next day (Tuesday), was to be the last day of the hunt, and so we decided to put forth our utmost efforts to secure a deer before breaking camp.

Our chief reliance was upon Miles Jones who had spent a number of winters in these swamps, and had never failed to kill many deer.

He sallied forth from camp, accompanied by Messrs Dennis and Spiegel, Julius remaining in guard the camp, while Captain Henry and myself crossed the bayou on a bridge formed by a fallen tree, whose roots adhered to one bank while its top touched the other.

The Captain carried a breech-loading shotgun charged with buckshot, I a Winchester rifle. Arrived on the other side, we struck out through the cane brake and presently reached the woods again, which we traversed for some time in quest of deer.

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We sighted one deer, but Capt. Henry was prevented from taking a shot at him by myself getting between him and the coveted prize—I was so agitated over seeing my first wild deer that I, unfortunately, became unable either myself to fire or to allow the Captain a chance to do so.

Captain Henry laughingly described my condition as an unmistakable case of “buck ague.”

As we tramped along, we discovered many traces of deer and wild hog and a few bear tracks, but when we started back to camp, our game bags were burdened with nothing except a number of fox-squirrels, and one mallard duck.

Just before sighting the canebrake, we lost our way, and do whatever we could, we failed to find it again.

After we had traversed and retraversed several miles of territory, we, about sundown, found it necessary to shout for help, when to our great delight, we were almost immediately answered by the voice of Julius, thus plainly indicating to us the direction of the camp. We struck out forthwith in the direction of the voice, from time to

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time, hallooing and being answered, until we had again passed through the canebrake and come out within fifty yards of the natural bridge, by which we soon crossed over to the camp.

While we were busy with preparations for the supper, the climax of our enjoyment was reached, by the arrival of Miles Jones and party with a fine buck.

It required but a few moments to prepare and drive down two small posts with the forked ends pointing upwards, from the cross beam of which the animal was suspended head downwards.

The deer and other game we now had in our possession, afforded us all the necessary trophies for exhibition among the home-folks at Hollywood and so we were, at last, altogether happy.

The heart of the deer formed a new ingredient of that night's camp-stew.

Jokes were related with a renewed zest, the various creditable anecdotes and harmless yarns, told by the Captain and Miles Jones, seemed to us to be unusually appropriate to the occasion, and, when late that night, I looked out from my bed

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and beheld the moonlight flooding the woods with its effulgence, the proudest object upon which my eyes rested was that magnificent buck with widely spreading and forked horns slowly swaying in the gentle breeze before the door of the tent.

Next morning, we broke up camp and took the back track for home, arriving there safe and exulting in spirit late Thursday afternoon.

Brother Spiegel and I remained at Hollywood until Saturday, when, much refreshed by our interesting experiences, we returned to work at Pine Bluff.

THE END.



The Mystery of a Ring



ARKANSAS SOUVENIRS

The Mystery of a Ring

BEAUTIFUL Hollywood plantation! There are few people in Southeast Arkansas who have not heard of thee. Thy vast extent—eleven thousand acres—thy great cotton fields, generous tracts of corn lands, wide stretches of sombre forest, fair Bayou Bartholomew dividing thy domain asunder, with its blue waters softly rippling to balmy Southern breezes, and its banks walled in with the moss laden cypress, the fragrant magnolia, and the Hawthorne adorned with scarlet berries—all these and many another charm are thine, charms that seem destined to make thee famous far beyond State lines.

But, kind reader, it is not our present object to give vent to rhapsodies over this earthly paradise, but to sketch, instead, the outline of a human life—a youthful career, blessed, at the outset with all the advantages of gentle birth and earthly riches, pregnant with the brightest promises of future usefulness and success, yet, at the last,

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shrouded with the gloomy clouds of unappeasable grief, enveloped in mystery, till, at length, rudely cut short by a dread physical ailment, which to the sufferer, let us earnestly trust, proved to be but the material garb that oftentimes masks from mortal view the lovely and welcome form of God's ministering Angel of Release.

It is upon a genial April morning that our story opens with the unexpected arrival at Hollywood house of a handsome, noble looking young man, whose face and bearing guaranteed him the reception due to a gentleman, despite the fact that his clothes were "somewhat the worse for wear."

Dr. John Taylor, the owner of the plantation, more familiarly known, in sections of several States as "Dr. Jack," was a personage fully capable of looking beneath the mere surface of things, truly realizing that "A man's a man for a' that", and the other members of his immediate family—six sturdy sons and a fair young daughter—were excellent examples of that type of humanity which, to so large an extent, redeems society from

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the curse of selfishness. So, this stranger met with a cordial welcome, that without further formality, established him as a friend among friends in this sympathetic household.

“But,” near the close of the week, remonstrated the erstwhile stranger, “I feel it would be wrong longer to accept your hospitality without a recompense to you and yours, or, at least, the making of an effort on my part, albeit a feeble one, in that direction.”

“Nonsense, sir!” rejoined Dr. Jack, with royal good humor beaming in his face. “I beg your pardon, sir, for so abruptly gainsaying you, but I know of no milder term than nonsense by which to characterize your scruples. In spite of all my failings sir, I honestly believe I may still claim to be a gentleman. I am a Kentuckian, sir, born and bred as such, and I know how to appreciate the presence of a guest of your merits, if you feel you can continue to put up with the many inconveniences, not to say discomforts, of this place.”

So, Henry St. George, (for such was the guest’s name) was fain to content himself as best he could,

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meanwhile insisting on lending a helping hand in the general business affairs of the plantation. He "clerked" in "the store," sometimes directed certain of the negro laborers in their work, and even went so far, at times, (Dr. Jack being absent from the scene) as to "make a hand" in more menial labor alongside of the Doctor's sons.

Yet one peculiarity marked his every look and action—a manifest lack of real interest in the duties and, especially, the pleasures of life. Though in this world, he seemed not of it. His manners, somehow, gave one the impression of a bird out of its native air, or of a fish out of its watery element.

This air of incessant preoccupation was so apparent, even to the casual observer that few persons could come into his presence without instinctively sympathizing with him. What could be the reason of this strange feeling of apathy? What the cause of this atmosphere of melancholy—in which he veritably seemed to "live, and move, and have his being?" were questions that involuntarily rose to the lips of all who met him.

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But there was none to answer them. And, as for Henry St. George, one might as well expect an answer from the Egyptian Sphinx, as to hope to learn from his sealed lips the secret clew to his evidently interesting past and strange present. In short, all sympathized with and yearned to help him, but he was so dignified in deportment and non-committal in conversation, that none dared trespass upon the sacred domain of his private affairs.

Strangest of all, however, was his veneration for an oddly fashioned gold ring, with a fine opal set, which he constantly wore upon the little finger of his left hand. He would gaze upon it, for minutes at a time, as if oblivious to all things else in this world; he would alternately smile and weep over it, and, again, would kiss it rapturously as if it were a living thing, very precious to him. He always seemed to apprehend that some one would rob him of this treasure. If, for instance, any one attracted by his peculiar demeanor, should be impelled to look somewhat intently at the ring, he would suddenly divert his glance from this grand,

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central object of his interest, and surprise the offender with a haughty, half threatening stare, which was sure to put an effectual damper upon such inquisitiveness.

Dr. Jack and his family prompted by the usual delicacy of feeling characteristic of highly bred people, were careful not to offend their mysterious guest in this as in all other respects, yet, being only human, like the rest of us, they often caught themselves seriously conjecturing as to the meaning of this man's strange actions. "Although I should like to know what the dickens the good fellow means by all this carrying on over a ring," remarked Dr. Jack, one day, "I shall, most assuredly, never allow my curiosity to get the better of my manners. If he does not see fit to take us into his confidence in regard to this matter, it is undoubtedly his privilege to remain silent thereupon."

But, in course of time, an event transpired which caused St. George partially to depart from his policy of complete silence. It so happened, that a young man from Kentucky, yet, thank God!

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by no means a typical Kentuckian, came South to labor on the plantation—a fellow whose chief trait of character was a sort of low cunning. Ignorance, vulgarity of taste and deportment, ungovernable curiosity, and a proneness occasionally to appropriate to his own use the property of others, were other traits that formed a background from which the aforesaid chief trait shone forth as a bright, particular star. Physically viewed, he was likewise equally unprepossessing. To a tall, burly figure, just add a suit of coarse, sandy colored hair, a mustache of the same hue, with mouth and light blue eyes plainly marked with the brand of sensuality, and you have a pretty accurate portrait of this fellow—a being who seemed to be sadly out of his proper element when in the society of respectable people, one, perchance, destined to enact a ruffian's part in the drama of human life.

For sweet charity's sake, and in consideration of the feelings of his relatives by blood and marriage, we shall not give his real name, but, in lieu thereof, shall here employ the title of "Pseudo (false) Kentuckian," and hence-forth, throughout

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this narrative, for the sake of brevity, we shall designate him simply as Pseudo-K.

Well, within twenty-four hours after Pseudo-K's arrival, our devotee of the ring, was made keenly to realize that there are some people in this world whose spirit of curiosity, alas! all too easily aroused, is not only painfully vigilant, but indomitable to the bitter end of every social struggle. Devoid both of refinement of character and self-respect, they pursue their self-appointed task of investigation with a tireless energy of purpose, with a brazen indelicacy, or, rather, sheer heartlessness of feeling which will, as a rule, finally break through the strongest barriers of dignified reserve, and, in a frenzy of delight over the attainment of this triumphant climax, like the vulture, they swoop down upon their shuddering victim, tear at his very heartstrings, gloat over his anguish, laugh to scorn his remonstrant appeals, and invite the whole world to come and admiringly behold another successful operation in the field of social and moral vivisection!

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In fact, almost from the moment of their meeting, Pseudo-K., to use the suggestive language of the "fistic ring" virtually "began to spar for an opening" of attack.

For the time being, it seemed as if the high bred St. George would prove to be more than a match for his vulgar assailant. At any rate, the latter presently retired from the field of combat, with the crestfallen air of a squelched gossip. The victory, however, was apparent rather than real. The afternoon of that same day, witnessed Pseudo-K's return to the attack.

St. George was lounging on the bank of the Bayou, under a fine holly tree, whose wide-spreading and densely leaved branches afforded him a refreshing retreat from the still well-nigh blistering rays of the declining sun. A book of poems was in his hand and ever and anon he turned over a new leaf, listlessly scanning its contents, until, at length, his beautiful, melancholly, dark blue eyes chanced to fall upon the line, "Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

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Straightway he dropped the book upon the ground, a sound half sigh, half a sob burst from his lips, a mist of tears gathered in his eyes, and a tiny stream therefrom fell upon the ring, as he raised it instinctively toward his face. Again and again he kissed it, his bosom heaving the while, through the unutterable emotions of his soul, his eyes more than once turned upon the sky, and his hands clasped, as if he were engaged in silent prayer.

Now, at this solemn juncture, like a hideous discord breaking in upon strains of music, the gruff, uncultured voice of Pseudo-K. smote painfully upon St. George's ear, "Hello! there, Harry! what on earth is the matter with you, anyhow! You act just like a crazy man, fooling with that old ring of yours. Ha! ha! ha! how it almost made me bust with laughin' to see you a kissin' the old trinket, like mad!" Then, before the astounded St. George could find words for a reply, he thus continued: "Why on earth, man, don't you 'make a mash' on some of these purty country girls they

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claim to have around here? I'd hug and kiss some of them, old fellow, and let that pesky ring take care of itself!"

"But say, now Mister St. George," concluded our clown, "ain't you never goin' to tell a body why you prize that ring so high? I declare for a fact you had better do so, right away, as your conduct is causin' a sight of talk all over the neighborhood, and I don't believe Dr. Jack and his folks will keep you much longer, if you don't explain matters satisfactorily.

"You see, if I once understood all about the case, I could soon make everything alright between you and the doctor. I stand in well with him, and for that matter, with all the folks, as I shouldn't be surprised you've already found out for yourself, without my havin' to tell you."

Pseudo-K's victim had now finally regained his wonted composure of manner. Sizing up his inquisitor with one brief, contemptuous glance, he rejoined, "I could not, for a moment, gain my consent to inflict upon your, may I say disinterested (?) ears any discussion of my private personal af-

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fairs. Consequently with due gratitude for your proffered assistance, which I must positively decline to accept, allow me, sir, to wish you a very good evening." And thus, turning on his heel, without further delay, the gentleman once more skilfully foiled the efforts of the boor at probing to the bottom of the Hollywood mystery.

Yes, truly may we say he was merely foiled for the time being in the prosecution of his sinister undertaking, inasmuch as he now determined somehow or other to carry it out to a successful conclusion, unless all the power of his tricky nature should not avail him as a sufficient offset against the sarcastic urbanity of his noble opponent. As far as he was capable of appreciating any sort of reproof, he felt aggrieved by St. George's sharp, yet frigidly courteous reply, but it was the evident air of superiority so naturally assumed by the latter, that nettled him far more than the words, or, indeed, than any words that the gentleman could possibly have uttered.

A new scheme was now evolved from his resourceful brain. It was as follows: He should

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contrive, in some way, to steal the ring from its owner. This would, in all probability, compel St. George to institute a public search for its recovery, and who could foretell but that, under the excitement of his loss and through the intensity of his desire to regain this revered, yet mysterious object of affection, the latter might be surprised into yielding up to public knowledge the tenaciously guarded secret of his peculiar conduct.

“Then too,” thought Pseudo-K., “I shall make a little money out of the transaction; for, what is there to hinder a fellow, after the hubbub over the loss of the ring has quieted down a bit, from slipping off to some neighboring plantation fifteen or twenty miles from here, and selling the old thing for three or four dollars to some ducky? It’ll be pay day all around these parts, week after next, so, I’ll be dog-goned if I don’t manage to do this very thing, or know the reason why, that’s what!”

This undertaking having thus been resolved upon, an opportunity was soon afforded for the taking of the first step in the plot—the attempted

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theft of the ring. St. George, on the second day after his late encounter with Pseudo-K., found himself unable to leave his bed. The malady—typhoid-malarial fever,—had gradually been acquiring a hold upon his hitherto excellent constitution, but, although he had felt badly for some days past—had experienced that increasingly uneasy feeling, so prophetic of impending illness—he had bravely gone forward in the faithful performance of his self-appointed daily tasks, by no means realizing the peril of his condition.

But, now, with the baleful spell of the fever upon him, forced to confront the possibility of a lingering siege of sickness, perhaps, resulting in death itself, he began to appreciate, more truly than ever before, the utter loneliness of his situation.

“Oh, God! why was I ever born into this world!” he moaned, as his fever-burning head lay restlessly tossing among the pillows. “Why, oh why, are human beings given hearts, aye, cursed with hearts, only to have them broken, that they may, at least, find relief in death; sometimes, as in my

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case, broken by slow—Oh, so painfully slow!—degrees? Would to God I had died that morning, when, with the rising sun, began the life-long future of my misery!”

A few days later, the crisis of the disease was at hand. The strong, handsome physique had been wasted to but a shadow of its former self, the sunken white eyelids partially concealed the once glorious eyes, the luxuriant chestnut curls, clustered in dishevelled yet glossy ringlets, around the brow of this, another Apollo, and, as the sunlight, dimly forcing its way into the sick-room, despite the closed doors and blinded windows, fell upon them, their warm, bright color but the more vividly emphasized the deep palor of the sunken cheeks.

Dr. Jack and family had certainly done everything within their power to alleviate the suffering of their guest, and, if possible, to save his life in the end; and, in this laudable work of humanity, they had been nobly seconded by nearly every one living on the plantation, for St. George had, long ere this, won all hearts by his gentle, dignified

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bearing. Everyone felt the better for having formed his acquaintance. His amiable looks and kindly words of greeting for all could not soon be forgotten by any who had met him.

In the negro quarters, along the bayou, the sound of banjo and violin was no longer to be heard. No more did merry shout burst forth from dusky groups gathered in and around the cabins, at night time. The voice of song was hushed in the calm of mournful expectancy. The mocking-bird and its feathered neighbors alone broke the general silence with their sweet notes of life and joyousness. But frequent petition was sent up to a throne of grace, by pious lips, in many an humble abode, and the constant inquiry among the laborers, whether at work in the great cotton fields, now "white unto the harvest," at the big gin-house, or driving the wagons laden with cotton bales, or cotton seed, to the market, was "How's Massa St. George gittin' 'long by dis time?" And the question was quite often followed with some such heartfelt exclamation as "I hope ter de Lo'd he's gwine ter git well, suah!"

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To the solicitous interest of all these people, were added the sympathy and charitable efforts of many others living in the vicinity of Hollywood plantation. Daintily prepared dishes of food, fit to tempt the appetite of an epicure, together with sundry bouquets of fragrant flowers, found their way, from time to time, into the sick man's room. Moreover, more than once, the Doctor's interesting patient was honored by a visit from a bevy of neighboring belles, who gracefully came to proffer their services supplementary to the unremitting labors of the anxious household. Now, that the fateful turning point had been reached, a feeling of great suspense pervaded every mind.

"Just look at his poor, emaciated hands!" cried the pitying voice of a dark eyed rural beauty. "And do look at his ring, for which everybody says he has such a strange love. I don't see how it stayed on his finger at all, since the flesh has fallen away so!"

Only one person out of all this number was indifferent as to the sufferings and final fate of our hero. The reader may readily conjecture as to

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who this person was. It was none other than the wretched Pseudo-K. We have termed him wretched, because a being devoid of the sentiment of honor, and lacking as well in refinement of manners and kindness of heart, is, beyond all doubt, a wretched and pitiable object in the eyes of God and all decent people. Therefore, we sincerely trust that the reader will not fail to render a verdict of justice tempered with mercy, when informed that Pseudo-K. spent his time, during the entire period of St. George's illness, in concocting various schemes in order to get the latter's ring into his own possession.

But, "The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft a'glee". And such proved to be the case in this instance. Only after the period of convalescence apparently had become well advanced, was the invalid left unguarded for a single moment, and, even then, for good and sufficient reasons, (as the reader shall soon learn) only once. It had been the busiest day of the season, both in the fields and in the "big house." Two facts had conspired to bring about this state of affairs; first,

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(for the duty of hospitality is always regarded as being of the most importance, by the members of a genuine Southern household, especially one of the old fashioned type) the Doctor had several additional guests to entertain; second, the price of cotton had reached what was generally judged to be the "high water mark," and all hands were being rushed to get it on the market, before present prices should begin to fall. The one fact necessitated among diverse other things, the preparing of an extra "big dinner," while the other fact, perhaps, involved the gain or loss of several thousand dollars on the aggregate value of the year's cotton crop.

Our patient, who was able, by this time, to sit up in bed, propped among the pillows, and, for a limited period, each day, to occupy an easy rocking chair, having learned the reason of all this unusual degree of activity, begged Dr. Jack just to leave him to himself, at least during the remainder of the day. But the doctor would not consent to this, and the result was that Pseudo-K., for the want of a better substitute, was left alone

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in the room with his intended victim.

“Don’t talk the gentleman to death,” admonished Dr. Jack, upon retiring from the apartment. “Keep your inquisitive tongue to yourself, sir, for this one time, if possible. Mr. St. George still needs rest and quiet; so, you would better speak only when it is necessary for you to do so.”

Thus left alone, and at a fair point of advantage, Pseudo-K. studiously awaited his long hoped for opportunity. Surely it has now come to him. The invalid has, at last, fallen asleep. Upon the very edge of the bed rests the shapely white hand and, from the little finger thereof, gleams the opal set in the quaintly fashioned ring.

Pseudo-K. requires but a moment stealthily to reach the bedside. He has clutched the golden prize. Cautiously he begins to draw it from the unresisting hand. His plan is at once to leave the room, after securing the ring; then send some darkey young or old, male or female—any one he may find shall suffice his purpose—to take his (Pseudo-K’s) place at St. George’s bedside. This will, in all probability, be an easy thing to do,

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since all of the negroes love "poor, sick, young Massa!"

It will then be in order to charge the crime upon the innocent darkey. It is, of course, of little or no consequence what may befall the poor tool of a designing scoundrel. He may be beaten, kicked and cuffed, driven from the plantation in dire disgrace, but what shall it matter anyhow? It's only a black "nigger" that'll get used up a little bit.

It is highly probable that this despicable scheme would have worked out about as its originator complacently intended it should, had not the sleeper awakened in the very "nick of time" to prevent it from so doing.

"What do you mean, sir, by meddling with my ring? exclaimed St. George.

"Come, now, Harry! Oh, come now!" glibly rejoined Pseudo-K. "You don't think I meant to steal it, do you? Why, I wouldn't have the old trinket as a gift, old fellow. It'll be of no earthly use to me, you see."

"Then why, may I inquire, did you slip it off

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my finger?" remarked St. George.

"Slip it off your finger," expostulated Pseudo-K., assuming, as well as he could, the air of martyred innocence. "Why, I was only trying to slip it back on your finger, without waking you up! You know, the doctor said you needed rest and quiet. You see your hand fell over the edge of the bed while you was asleep, and, somehow—I reckon it's because your hand has lost so much of its meat lately,—the ring was about to drop off onto the floor, so, I just thought I'd try to shove it back on again, and then lay your hand further over on the bed, so it'd be more likely to stay on where it belonged."

"Well," replied St. George, "God alone knows the secret thoughts of the human heart. I am not capable of judging you, and, consequently, shall make no attempt at so doing, lest I should judge you wrongfully. I have, therefore, no other alternative but to accept your explanation and to beg your pardon, if I have suspicioned you unjustly."

Then, looking Pseudo-K. somewhat sternly in

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the face, with just a tinge of sarcastic emphasis in his voice, he said, "Oblige me, sir, by never again putting yourself to the least trouble concerning my ring."

Dr. Jack now put in his appearance, and sent Pseudo-K. about his usual business. The doctor's policy toward Pseudo-K. was *sans peur, sans ceremonie*—without fear, without ceremony. Heartily despising his character, he could, at times, scarcely restrain himself from kicking the conceited and meddlesome boor off his premises. So, when St. George narrated to him the recent episode of the ring, he instantly and fiercely vowed that, if this low down fellow should ever again so much as touch the ring with the tip-end of his little finger, he would kick him clear over to Winchester, (the nearest railroad station.)

He also took special pains to assure his patient and guest that he should never more allow Pseudo-K. to enter the sick-room. "I shall detail one of my sons—two of them, if necessary—to guard you against any contemplated outrage, in the future," promised Dr. Jack, as final and indisput-

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able evidence of his disapproval of Pseudo K's conduct.

"Sir, you have won my heart completely!" cried St. George, moved to tears of gratitude, in view of all the doctor's past and present kindness toward him, "and, yet, I have not even now found it in my heart to cease asking for favors at your all too generous hands."

"Ask for what you will, my young friend," was the doctor's cordial reply. "I know you will never make an improper request.

"Since you have been with us," he added, we have been able to offer you only the poor comforts of a widower's home, while on the other hand your presence has proven an ever increasing source of pleasure to all on the place. Hence, I beg of you, Sir, not to refer again to any supposable obligations to us that you may imagine yourself to be resting under. Any such obligation can be only of a mutual nature, since the slightest favor we may have accorded to you has been fully reciprocated by you in return."

"I shall crave, then, yet another boon of you,

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and truly I am inclined to think it may be the last I shall ever ask." As he thus remarked, St. George gazed out through the opposite window upon the glorious noonday sun, pensively bowed his still handsome face, into which a vestige of the old-time color had crept again, and sighed heavily.

"Do you know, Doctor," continued St. George, "I at this moment, apprehend that my earthly life, like yonder sun, has reached the zenith of its horizon? Somehow, within the past few days, the impression has been growing upon me that the end of my pilgrimage—Oh, such a dreary pilgrimage it has proven for nearly these five years past!—is near at hand."

"I was only 27 years old, on my birthday, the 14th of last May, but the experience of these five years just referred to, has made me feel, mentally, at least, like a man of three score and ten."

Of course, the kind hearted doctor did all within his power to remove this gloomy impression, taking care, the while—true gentleman that he was—not to manifest the least interest of an ob-

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trusive character in his guest's romantic past life.

The grateful guest, as the result of such considerate treatment, was tempted, more than once, during this interview, to take Doctor Jack fully into his confidence in regard to the facts of his personal history, and it was only his peculiarly sensitive disposition that actually prevented him from so doing. As Doctor Jack once said of him, "His character combined all the fortitude of mind and high sense of honor of a noble man, with the refined delicacy of a true woman."

"But, now, Sir," said the doctor, "ere I leave you, for the time being, in order to rejoin our other guests, before dinner is announced, I pray you to feel yourself perfectly at liberty to make known to me the nature of the desired favor to which you have recently referred."

"Oh, yes," responded St. George, "owing to the distracting anxiety of the moment, I had well nigh forgotten to inform you as to what it is. It is simply this: Should I die while under your roof, will you kindly see to it that I am buried with this ring on my finger just as it now is?"

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“In such an event,” replied Mr. Jack, firmly and gravely, “I shall certainly see that this is done. Your expressed will in this, as in all other reasonable respects, so far as it may lie within my power to control future events, shall be carried out to the very letter.

“And, now, I must bid you farewell, for a brief season, but, in the meantime, please to make known your every want to the servant who will presently be in attendance upon you.”

The next day, Dr. Jack was unexpectedly called to New Orleans, on business of importance. Before leaving home, he gave all necessary directions in regard to the physical and social comforts of his patient, who was now deemed to be well on the way leading to final recovery. But, in respect to this matter, St. George’s friends were destined to be sadly disappointed. That very evening, a change for the worse occurred. The relapse, so much dreaded in such ailments, had set in.

Dr. Jack did not return home until the morning of the sixth day after his departure. His unfortunate guest had, then, been dead for several hours.

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It was generally believed that could the doctor have remained with his late patient, during this second period of attack, his skill as a physician might have availed to avert this unseemly ending of a young and promising life, dear to the hearts of many people, but the experienced physician thought otherwise.

“He seemed, all along,” remarked the doctor, “to have but little interest in living; indeed, a few days ago, he informed me that he had a strong impression to the effect that he should not get well of this sickness.

“I could not realize, at the time, how correct this impression would soon prove to be, or, of course, I would have stayed by his bed-side even to the neglect of my business duties. But I am satisfied my feeble efforts could not have saved his life. In my experience in the sick-room, covering many years, I have found it practically impossible to save a patient who firmly believes he is going to die.

“We must, now, however,” said Dr. Jack, “make the necessary arrangements for the burial of our friend’s mortal remains. Owing to the heat of

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the season, the interment must take place not later than 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

“Gipson, you will drive over to Monticello and purchase a coffin. Get a nice one, also a neat, black suit of clothes. Here’s the measurement for the suit and a hundred dollar check. Henry will remain here with me, as he had especial charge of Mr. St. George, during my absence from home. Ben and Reeves will serve as my special messengers. Sam and John will please superintend Tom, George and Uncle Pete in their work of preparing the grave. Have them to dig it under the shade of that large holly, near the bayou, where poor Mr. St. George loved to sit and look down upon the flowing waters, and dream about the mystery of a ring.”

Thus spoke Dr. Jack, and, as his several sons retired from the room in obedience to their respective commands, he again addressed himself to Henry, his eldest son, who, by the way, closely resembled the father both in physical appearance and elegance of deportment. Said the father, “It is a pity, considering the present circumstances, that

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we know absolutely nothing as to the whereabouts of St. George's people. If, indeed, it be a fact, that any of his immediate family be now living, it seems passing strange that he should never, in any manner, have referred to them, especially during the time of his late illness. It is thus beyond our power to inform any such relatives as to his death, and to confer with them as to the future disposal of his remains.

“But, by the way, I have not asked you whether or not he left any parting message for us?” “He remained noncommittal, as usual, Sir,” replied Henry, “until within about an hour of his death; at which time he drew this package from his bosom and handed it to me, requesting me to give it to you, upon your return. He also requested that, after you should read it, it should be replaced on his body and be buried with the same. Some time after this, he exclaimed: ‘God bless your generous father and may God richly bless you all!’ And, then, he murmured a few words of prayer; by which time his voice had almost entirely failed him. He next repeated several times,

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though indistinctly, the words 'Tell Dr. Taylor—that—' and thus strove hard to complete some message for you, but the effort resulted in a failure to make me comprehend his meaning. Just before the end, he partially rallied from a spell of unconsciousness, raised himself up, with a last effort, and cried loudly, 'How glad I am!'—then, falling back, with the sweetest smile I ever saw lighting up his face, he whispered, 'Myrtle, my darling! I am coming—to—to—you!' the last word being almost inaudible; drew one long breath, and was gone.

Reverently the doctor opened the package, gently unfolding the silken covering on the outside, next removing two thicknesses of fine tissue paper, revealing a letter written in the dainty, refined hand of a woman. The letter read as follows:

"Caverna Heights, Oct. 5th, 187—

"My dear Henry:

"In compliance with my recent promise, I write to inform you as to the result of my final intercession with my parents in behalf of our mutual at-

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tachment and future hope of happiness.

“Oh! my darling! how can I find words to tell you of my present misery! My heart is surely breaking beneath the weight of it. I can never love another, and life without you would be unendurable, a fate worse than death!

“They have tried to kill my love for you by their mockery; they have reasoned (?) with me 'till my brain was wearied over their labored arguments; begged me; and, now, at last, commanded me to give you up forever under penalty of their parental curse, followed by life long banishment from their presence. Oh! my God! only to think of the lips of those to whom we owe our very existence uttering curses upon our heads! But worst of all, and this is the fact that has constrained me to submit to their wishes, even at what I solemnly feel shall be the cost of my earthly life, was my father's and my brother's threat to hound you throughout the wide world, in case we should wed, until they should meet with you, and shoot you down, and trample your dead body like a dog under their feet!

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“O! these silly, these wicked family feuds! Why should we be made thus to suffer, because, forsooth, your great-grandfather killed my father’s great uncle and namesake in an affair of honor, more properly speaking, of dishonor, called a duel?”

“But, I cannot, cannot bear to go on thus!

“O! my dear one, my poor, wronged Harry! God only knows how this may affect your future life! for I have every assurance, dear, that you love me devotedly with the one true love of a true man’s life! And, O! take courage! Do not forsake your God, in this, the hour of your bitter trial, and He will, in the end, overrule all things for the highest good of us both.

“Now, do not think me hard-hearted, darling, when I inform you I deem it best that we should, on earth, never meet again. Your presence and your eloquent pleading might, yes, I almost know it should, drive me madly into rebellion against those whom, I cannot doubt, would in such an event, shoot you down without mercy, and leave me to die an outcast dependent upon the cold charities of this world.

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“I know that, in the nobility of your nature, you will heed this appeal, and respect this last wish of one who has loved you since her early childhood. Such lives as ours, my Harry, though parted asunder, here, by the cruel chain of circumstances that men call fate, are destined to a glad reunion in a world where all circumstances are under the control not of fallable man, even in a partial sense, as is the case on earth, but of an infallible God. So, unto Him, and to that future life, let us look for reparation.

“I return to you the ring you gave me on my thirteenth birthday.

“I well remember how my parents were vexed when I brought it home. But my father said, at length, ‘Well, well, just let the child wear it for the present, it will not harm her, surely ; and, then, you have doubtless heard the old saw about love laughing at locksmiths. Believe me, ’tis much wiser to smile upon such childish amours than to attempt forcibly and rudely to discourage them.

“ ‘Depend upon it, our Myrtle will, in good time, of her own accord, transfer her affections to a more acceptable suitor.’

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“Never-the-less, I have worn it proudly until this hour, and I, now, take it off my finger where you placed it, years ago, in order that you may wear it, dearest, as a lifelong reminder of my undying love for you.

Farewell, my own true sweetheart, but not, thank God! forever!

“Invoking God’s blessing upon you throughout life, I remain as always,

Yours for both time and Eternity,

“MYRTLE”

At the end was a postscript written by St. George: “Died, of a broken heart, December 23rd, 187— Myrtle ———. O! God witness my vow! Realizing that thine All-seeing eye is upon me, I do solemnly promise that I shall spend the remainder of my life in making preparation for eternal reunion with that one of whose love I hereby acknowledge myself never to have been worthy.”

“HENRY ST. GEORGE.”

Tenderly, indeed, did Dr. Jack replace the treasured letter upon the quiet bosom of another vic-

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tim to parental hardness of heart. Then he re-folded the hands, so that the precious ring should lie uppermost. Tears were in the eyes of both father and son, as they drew the wide-spreading pall over the form of the youthful martyr, and gently pulled down the blinds at the windows.

That night witnessed the final appearance of Pseudo-K on this particular stage of action. While the watchers alternately wakened and dozed in an adjoining room, Pseudo-K. crept, cat-like, into the death-chamber. Pausing a moment, to listen for approaching footsteps, he hears naught but the heavy breathing of the now sleeping watchers. An exultant smile breaks out upon his face, and his sensual lips quiver from anticipated pleasure. He rudely thrusts the pall aside, exposing the form of the unconscious sleeper.

Surely if the dead could but, at times, awake to life, St. George must, now, have arisen, like a startled giant, to defend his own, and chastise the bold aggressor. But no, the mortal body, bereft of its spiritual tenant, the real man or woman, has become but a dull clod of earth, destined soon to

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mingle itself with its fellow clods of the valley. Pseudo-K. cannot, in this instance, again insult poor, persecuted Henry St. George, since the latter is "no longer here."

He has clutched the ring; with a quick movement of his hand he jerks it off the unresisting finger, and moves hastily toward the door, but not to escape with his long coveted booty; only to confront the advancing form of Dr. Jack, and to be felled to the floor by the doctor's fist.

He would, doubtless, have been killed, forthwith, had not the united efforts of three strong boys, almost grown to manhood, availed to pull his enraged assailant off him.

Dr. Jack finally compromised the matter, by kicking Pseudo-K. out of the house, after forbidding him, under the penalty of a dog's death, ever to set foot on the plantation again. Suffice it to say, in this connection, that Pseudo-K. was seen no more at Hollywood.

The closing scene in our tragedy of love was a funeral, to which the people—men, women and children—for many miles around, flocked in con-

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stantly increasing numbers, up to, and even after, the very hour publicly announced as the time of the burial. The sentimental young Henry Taylor had found it impossible to contain himself as to the facts of the letter, and the romantic story, with a 24-hour start before the funeral service, excited that entire section of the country to a fever heat of sympathy and expectation. St. George, at once, became enshrined in all hearts as a hero of heroes. The story of his love and mournful fate, with a thousand variations from the original, was told from house to house, until both St. George and Hollywood plantation became famous throughout all Southeastern Arkansas.

The doctor's home was, for the time being, literally taken possession of by throngs of kindly hearted, yet intensely excited women, married and single, rich and poor, the sweet faced country beauty and the neighboring planter's handsome and accomplished daughter. Flowers and floral emblems of every kind filled the death chamber, and later, nearly concealed the grave from human sight. Strong men vied with delicate women in

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weeping over the minister's pathetic remarks and soul-stirring prayers. Throats choked up, while endeavoring to join in the singing; and, when they lowered the coffin into the grave, a scene occurred which beggars all the powers of description. A number of the women fainted, others wrung their hands and cried aloud—few, very few, indeed, were able fully to control their feelings. The African and the Caucasian mingled their tears together, and united their voices in the general voice of lamentation. The scene illustrated the universal democracy of human sympathy.

Nearly a quarter of a century has passed away, kind reader, since that day of sorrow, yet the memory of it has not perished. Mothers have told our story to their children and their children's children, and St. George's lonely grave beside the winding bayou is still kept green by loving hands, for did not he suffer unto death for the sake of love? and who is it who doesn't know that "All the world loves a lover?"

THE END.



We Shall Meet Again



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We Shall Meet Again

(In fraternal remembrance of Capt. Henry R. Taylor, who died at Waukesha, Wis., June 6, 1900.

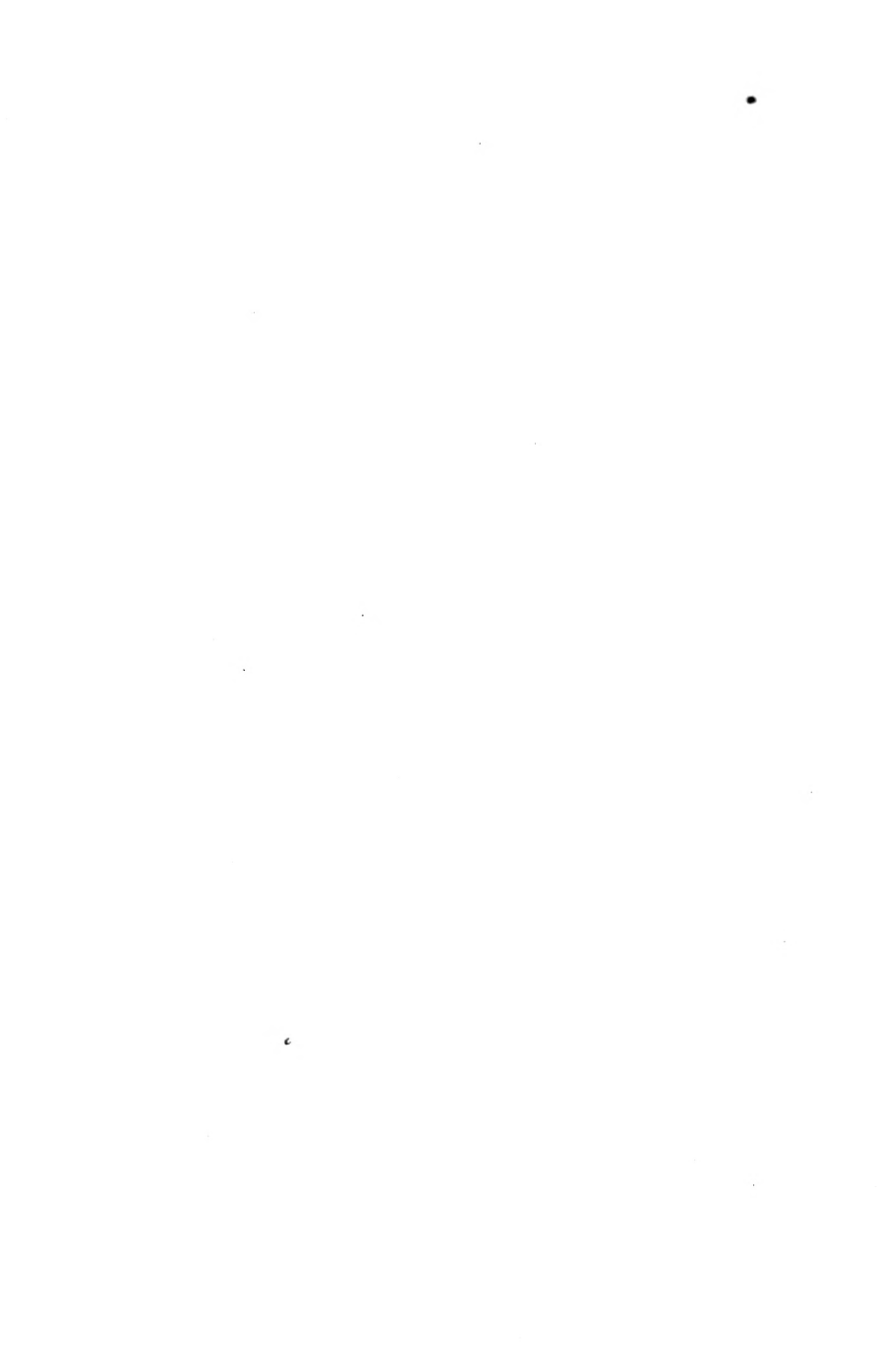
Capt. Taylor was noted for his courteous manners, and hospitable spirit.)

The mystic veil my eyes behold
That hides from earth the streets of gold,
The gates of pearls, and lovely flowers
That bloom in Heaven's unfading bowers.
My bitter tears have ceased to fall,
For, through the meshes of that wall,
My soul doth look upon thy face
And each remembered feature trace.

Oh, worthy Henry, dear, true friend!
This earthly parting cannot end
Our intercourse, our hearts estrange,
For kindred natures never change.
I'll hear the music of that land,
My feet shall press its glorious strand;
I'll be again thy favored guest,
In mansion of eternal rest.

Oh! fair is "Hollywood" below
With cotton fields as white as snow;
But fairer far and whiter, too,
Shines saintly robe in Heaven's blue.
From bayou's bank to Jordan's shore.
We'll view life's pilgrimage once more;
Share mutual joys that shall not cease,
In realms of never ending peace.











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