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# The Old Dominion Magazine.

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No. 2.

## HOW VIOLANTE SPENT HER NEW YEAR'S DAY.

BY MITTIE F. C. POINT DAVIS.

Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good,  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.—*Tennyson.*

"Adelaide, it is time you were starting to carry Miss Carleton's dress to her. Remember it is your turn this week to take the sewing home."

"Oh! mamma, I am sure Violante can carry it to-day just as well as not. To go to Miss Carleton's on New Year's day with a great bundle of work, and meet all our former acquaintances and hear their sneers, is more than I can bear. Violante is younger and not so sensitive as I. Do send her, mamma."

"I do not think it is right, Adelaide," said Mrs. Hamilton in a voice of weak remonstrance, "you impose on your cousin Violante's good nature. I should like to know

why you think she is not as sensitive as yourself on the subject of our lost wealth!"

"Because she never speaks of it, but seems cheerful and contented always; and it is perfectly natural, too, mamma. You must recollect that Violante on her mother's side comes of a family who have been accustomed to working for a living, while I am descended from a long line of aristocrats—therefore it is not natural that she should feel the disgrace of my father's failure and our subsequent poverty so keenly as I do."

While these remarks were in progress the object of them had quietly risen, and was folding Miss Carle-

## BENVENUE.

BY T. B. BALCH, D. D.

Can't account for my attachment to the mountains of Virginia, unless in the following way. The owner of Benvenue farm had written me a letter in which his characteristic humor was manifest. "We know," he remarked, "that your views about farming are practical and profound. Your suggestions to one inexperienced like myself, will be worth all the tin and copper mines of Cornwall. You understand the action of chemical substances on the soil. The ladies too are of the opinion that your pilgrim hat ought to feel the haze of the Blue Ridge. Get here on the last night of April, and remain for a month in the presence of a Queen. She will bind ornaments on the rim of your scallop that will last till you return."

In compliance with this invitation, the writer found himself at the town of Paris, which lay at the foot of the Ridge, somewhat to the northwest of Warrenton. The hamlet bears the name of the French Capital, and yet we saw no Bourbon Palace, or any oblong Garden of Plants. Meadow land was in sight, and we like the violets of a meadow, better than the gaudy sunflowers of a city. But upon ascending the Ridge, the settlement below was forgotten in the splendor

of the prospect. My pedestrian staff was dropped, that my pencil might be seized, but the latter not being charged with the rich colors of Titian, it was relinquished in despair. What! I exclaimed, are the Boulevards of Paris or the environs of Berlin in comparison with the undulation of a Valley that might have challenged the gaze of Cuvier, or bent the knee of Linnæus in homage to the Great Supreme. Not to enlarge. Descending the slope of the Ridge through an avenue of laurel, oak and sycamore the Shen was crossed. We like a ferry boat, for Ezra and Nehemiah were ferried over the Euphrates.

"Could you direct me," said I to the person who managed the rope of the scow, "how to find out a little place called White Post?"

"Been there many a time," he replied. "Can send you straight as a bee to its hive," and he gave directions which made my course plain as the Milkmaid's path.

The reader will of course look out for localities. Well "White Post" at that time had a store, an inn, which steam has probably singed as to custom, and several genteel seats on elevations that were slight. Benvenue was in sight.

"All hail," said its proprietor.— "Come in, for you shall ever share in the last crumb of the last loaf falling to my lot. Uncle Simon, take into your special keeping the gear of this gentleman. Should not like to see you in that apparel," he continued, "for my neighbors might stare at you, as did the people of London at Rousseau when he paraded the streets in his Armenian garb."

"Don't liken me," I said, "to an infidel, for Doctor Johnson declined all intercourse with Deists."

The sun was setting among the Alleghanies. He seemed to be swooning away on a couch of magnificent clouds, but all alive to the people on the opposite parts of the world.

"You are tired with your long stroll," said my host; "but tell me, have you heard any news about our old College comrades?"

"Yes," I replied, "Taliaferro has gone to farming at Peckatone, Westmoreland, Va.; Downman has done the same thing at Layton, Fauquier; Wickham has settled on the Pamunkey, two miles from Hanover Court House, and Randolph on James River, below Richmond. Wickham has a fine library, and his style at College you know, was quite Addisonian."

"They are wise," he replied, "there is nothing like tilling the earth. The first man of our race was a cultivator. Cain instead of keeping to Agriculture went to building cities. But have you heard any thing of our comrades outside of Virginny?"

"Yea; Murray and Seabrook have gone to making rice on the island of

Edisto; Baynard has fixed himself at Hilton Head. His latitude is about thirty-two degrees and ten minutes North. Dunbar, son to a Scotch Baronet, has planted himself on his large estate near the bluffs of Natches. He is not quite so rich as the King of Lydia, and he has pressed me to spend as much time at his seat as Watts passed with Sir Thomas Abney at Newington Green. All of you have broad lands, but your guest has't a barleycorn of what's called terra firma."

"And what difference does that make when every one of us would be proud of you as a permanent fixture. Were Dunbar to spy you from the towers of his palace he would run and array you in his best robe, and put a ring on your finger. He would give you a pair of sandals, on the expressed condition that they should never be used beyond the purlieus of his estate. He told me as much on the day we left College, when we took leave of one another with tears in our eyes."

"It delights me," I replied, "to hear such intelligence. But still one would like to have a cottage in the wilderness that he might call his own."

"Very well," he rejoined, "my second sight assures me that you may one day be the owner of eighteen hundred and forty acres in the county of Richmond, Va., and on Toteskey Creek."

You see the very locality is named, and sure enough that thing actually came to pass. But it took place after my penchant for farming had ceased. At the time such a notion as land

owning had never entered my head any more than the head of a humming bird.

We cannot stay the revolution of the earth, and the next morning was pleasant. After breakfast.

"What seat is that directly fronting Benvenue Cottage?"

"That is Lucky Hit!"

"How did it get that name?"

"It was bought when the Continental currency had begun to fall below par, but confidence in its redemption was not entirely shaken. A gentleman lives there famous for his sheep cotes, and if you could stay till June, we would take you to a shearing where water would be our only beverage, but the rest of the entertainment all first rate. There is no line of life more honorable than the rearing of sheep. Look at David the Psalmist, at James Hogg of Ettrick, at the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, at the Grampian Hills, or to the Pyrenees of Spain, and you will find that wool is an important commodity in carrying on household affairs."

"But whose dwelling is that rather nearer the Blue Ridge?"

"That belongs to a gentleman who was graduated at Nassau Hall in 1808 in the same class with Wm. H. Fitzhugh, of Ravensworth, but he has gone to Georgia for the present. He is a plain man, and fond of dwelling in tents. Some think that he may one day become the Bishop of Virginia."

"Tell me how yon seat came to be called 'White Post!'"

"'Tis said," he replied, "that when Lord Fairfax lived in these diggins that a post was set up as a kind of

Directory to point his tenants the way to his house, where he kept his rent roll. And as the Jews whitewashed their sepulchres every spring, so the people served the post in the same way about the time that vernal buds gladdened the villagers. You must ride and look at the debris of the lord's establishment, for he wrote several numbers of the immortal Spectator. He died in 1781, just after the surrender on the plains of Yorktown."

"Suppose," said I, "that we descend to that White Post settlement?"

"Just thinking," he replied, "of making such a proposal."

"Will make you acquainted with our rich and honorable merchant.— Merchants are valuable men. They have helped Flemish, Italian, French and English artists by shelling out for their pictures. It's my wish to buy some clay pipes manufactured in Richmond. We left some ashes in our College rooms, and a sprinkling of them at least must be left at Benvenue. It's easy for the owner of this farm to find the bee-line that leads to the post."

My host gave every promise of making a first class farmer. He lost something by slighting my suggestions. Notwithstanding my presence, he was bent on attending to his outdoor concerns.

"You are not," he remarked, "without some power of self-entertainment, and for this reason you will excuse my occasional absence. Without toil substantial will not grow, and ceaseless vigilance is the price we must pay for success in the glorious business of

agriculture. This farm must rival in the greenness of its tints the deep blue of our mountains, but you may expect my speedy return. There is a magnetic influence in your colloquies."

Scott's "Lady of the Lake" was on the table. It was looked over upon the withdrawal of the industrious farmer. It is written in a brisk, animated style; the plot is admirable, and the incidents highly romantic and natural. The scene is laid among the rugged Hielands when Baronial Halls were common, when human passions were not easily mastered, when the jealousies of rival clans were quickly aroused, when beauty sometimes dwelt in seclusion, and when the horns of huntsmen and the harps of domestic minstrels were often heard, and we doubt whether Sir Walter ever executed a more felicitous work. But after ruminating awhile on Ben Lawer's and Loch Katrine, the great agriculturist reappeared on the tapis.

"What was your reason," I enquired, "for giving the name of Benvenue to this farm. Didn't know that you were so familiar with Scottish objects. Ben Nevis being higher than Ledi or Voirlich, would have answered as well. It would have given a more aristocratic air to your cottage. Or perhaps it might have been more patriotic if you had ferreted out some Virginy name. What could have induced Col. Oldschool to call his place Sans Souci. It sounds Prussian, or rather Frenchified, but since his wife paid his debts he has probably changed it to *Abbeville*."

"Ah!" replied my interlocutor,

"she is a smart piece. The whole neighborhood is alive with her praise, but give credit to yourself for suggesting to the Colonel her financial ability. This, however, is a deviation from the right line. You asked why this place was called Benvenue. Look at that book. It's the same we used at the College. My imagination was fired by its romance. Venue can be made to rhyme with blue. The north mountain represents the Trosacks, a reach in the Shen reminds me of Loch Katrine, the hedge of my garden induces reflection about the hawthorn, and our ground shrubs make me think of the Perthshire gowans."

"Your eclaireissement is satisfactory," I replied, "but one would suppose from your descent that your mental cogitations would have been English rather than Caledonian."

"That makes no difference," he responded, "don't you know that in 1603 the Scottish was melted into the English crown."

"Beg your pardon," I replied, "there was no crown in England at that time, and James brought over *his* to the south of the Tweed. It was then that the white and red roses of England did homage to the Scottish Thistle, and all the royal sheaves bowed to that of Joseph who fed poor Caledonia out of the corn of Albion."

Several days were passing. They were spent in looking about, in strolling, reflecting and sundry other ways. But at length my host was caught in the act of resting himself sub tegmine fagi. We hurried to the same shade in which he was reclining.

"Unfold," said I, "to your former

comrade the plan of life on which you have fixed. You can take your own time. My watch can be laid on the grass. We must all arrange some kind of a programme."

"When at college," he replied, "my political aspirations were considerable. We used, you know, to spout out the declamation of Junius. Never looked so high, however, as the White House at Washington. My ambition would have been satisfied with speeches at the White Post.—The Legislature of Virginia was the ultima thule of my desires."

"Quite modest in your pretensions," I rejoined. "You should have looked to Congress; but proceed."

"After coming home found myself possessed of this farm, certain lands in Ohio and some stock in the Dismal Swamp, which last will not turn out like Law's Parisian Bank. Saw a lady equal to Ellen Douglas, Flora McDonald and Grace Darling combined. You must stay to the wedding."

"Couldn't," I answered. "My maxim is, hasten slowly, but then we must hasten. Proceed."

"It occurred then to aim at a niche in the galleries of Agriculture. Beautiful Galleries. They have challenged the attention of Alcinous and the admiration of Virgil. Lord Bacon in his New Atlantis treats of the orchards reared by its inhabitants. Rural Life forever. Look at Nebuchadnezzar sauntering on some Chaldean evening in his hanging garden. Look at Montezuma surveying his horticulture floating on the Lakes of Mexico.—Look at that Roman Emperor nursing

his vegetables at his Salona farm. Look at the plantings of Sallust or the vines of Pliny. Look at the choice trees of Shenstone, and the Spanish chestnuts of Sir Joseph Banks and the mulberries of Shakespeare. My highest ambition at present is to reach such an eminence in all arts of tillage that some Richmond Artist may depict me when following the plough turning up the sods and preparing furrows for the crude germs that in due time will thrust out their fruits."

"You will shine in his gallery," I rejoined. "Oh, fortunate Husbandman, and happy will that damsel be who has won your highest regards. You will lead a life of contentment and peace; but you must read and study about farming. Scoresby tried ploughing before he went after floundering whales, and Burns before he became Excisemen. Neither of them reached the climax of their earliest vocation. Let me advise you for the present to try the cereals and keep on the side of the useful before venturing on the ornamental. They will give you a sword with which to cut off the head of wolfish debt. Hope ere long that the Syrian grape, the Damask plum, the Greek currant will be flourishing at Benvenue, and that when you look into your gooseberry bushes you may find them filled with golden drops. You must study Mason's English Garden. That author was Rector of Astor, Yorkshire, and was the friend of Gray and a sound Whig though belonging to a State Church. Let me hear from you about your Chilian strawberries, blue damsons and yellow apricots. 'Tis my wish indeed that

the Equator could pass over your farm and distil its fruits without incommoding you by its heat. But this perhaps is impossible. Let us be content. Virginia has a softer though not so flashy a climate as any within the forty-seven degrees of the Torrid Zone. Survey yonder mountain with its cool and countless rivulets and its long stream of superfine haze. Surely that haze must be the product of celestial censers. But my talk is becoming prolix."

A few mornings after, my friend Dave appeared early in my apartment.

"Since you were at our Kirk last Sunday, invitations are flowing in upon us at a great rate. We are invited to spend a day at Pagebrook, Carter Hall, Clifton, Saratoga, and several other seats. The Nilometer of our hospitality has risen to the height of twenty-two feet, and it would not surprise me if the inundation should make you acquainted with some cornucopian mermaid or aquatic nymph suited to your fancy, who will consent to live with you on dry land all the days of your life."

"Her choice," I replied, "would be unwise as possible, for my velvet hand has never done a hard day's work since it was born. 'Tis afraid to pull a rose lest it might encounter thorns. But love conquers all things. It outstrips mountains, it navigates dangerous seas, reconciles itself to all climates, defies India suns or Canadian snows, unlocks castles, jumps out of windows and hurries off to the Gretna Greens of the world."

"It blossomed finely in the age of Chivalry; but all your bantering will

not avail to put such notions into my cranium."

"But what disposal will you make of such flattering bids to such elegant establishments?" said my host.

"Accept them by all means," was my reply. "Saratoga, built by Gen. Morgan, will remind one of the Cowpens, as the battle of Canaë used to bring back the Punic Wars to the memory of Dr. Johnson."

"Then rise and make your toilet, for this is the day we shall be looked for at Clifton. It is the residence of Madison Hite, nephew to a gentleman who fills the White House. We don't pay fashionable visits in this neighborhood, and Clifton is five miles off from Benvenue."

So after breakfast we rode away.—My host had set me up on an iron grey pony, the gaits of which were delightful. Instead of a coarse earth the thing seemed to be pacing over the silver moon. Reached Clifton.—The house was of brick, and we found its owner in a most pleasant mood. The Shen was running on just below the declivity of the hill on which the dwelling was situated. Quarriers were at work on the opposite side of the river. The company became very agreeable.

"What think you, gentlemen, this College friend of mine, sojourning with me at present, has been sounding strange things on my auditory nerve?"

"What are they?" said the company, by general acclamation.

"Why, he says, even at this early day, that in time to come a gigantic war will take place between North and South."



"Is he a prophet?" asked one of the guests.

"Has he forgotten the name of Washington?" said another of the company.

"Well," said the ladies, who showed some signs of alarm, "none of the enemy will dare to come nigh the sequestered Shen."

A dead silence ensued. It was meant for a hint to vindicate my position.

"Gentlemen," said I, "it would take me till sundown to evince from History the probable truth of my creed. For the present the discussion is declined. Second sight, so common in this Scotch Irish Valley, seems to whisper that the whirlwind may begin on this very Shen though it be a placid and furtive river. Danes, Dutch and men from the island of Jersey may be drowned in its waters. Strange that it should be so, but the transparency of the stream may be defaced by freshets. In crossing they may miss the fords. The hosts of Sisera, Arabs, the French, and indeed men of all nations have been overwhelmed by the Kishon which threads the plain of Esdrælon. History is philosophy teaching by example."

"Behold this dreamer talketh," said the Cliftonian; "but it's amusing. How will the South come out of the affray?"

"If the war," I replied, "could be restricted to the indigenous population of the North the fuss would not last more than ninety days. Deeds of valor unexampled in Human History will be achieved by the South; but we shall be fighting against the world

and his wife. Besides, that astute Scotchman Watt will perfect his Engine, and Steam will come into *general* fashion, and if we be conquered it will be by *General Steam*."

"How?" said Clifton.

"The Southerners," I replied, "are planters. They aspire to be elegant country gentlemen. The Northerners are mechanicians and manufacturers. Without swift travelling and speedy supplies the Cabinet at Washington could not force the people of New England to the war nor would they stay long if they came, and the foreign troops would desert by tens of thousands. The African race among us will probably second every effort of the Cabinet to accomplish their emancipation and an internal may coöperate with a foreign foe."

My college friend and the writer decamped after spending at Clifton a day which has been long held in remembrance.

"We must hurry with our other invitations," said I to my host.—  
"Very anxious to visit Saratoga?"

"Yes indeed," he rejoined. "That will be a splendid affair. You will meet with the elite of the neighborhood. Ladies will be there from Janeville, Annfield and Long Branch. But why do you wish to hurry?"

"Because," I rejoined, "the present month is gliding away. It has passed delightfully. At my advent Queen May seems to have travelled on a wheel, and all the birds emerging from the woods joined in her train. They have clamoured most extravagantly during her march. The Naiads of the Shen, the nymphs of the Blue

Ridge, and the Dryads of the forests have honored Benvenue Cottage by their presence. Now the great duties of life invoke my attention. You ought to be a happy man. Yours will become a model farm. You were taught to remember your Creator in the days of your youth, and of course you are prepared for the loosing of Life's silver cord. From the loop holes of Benvenue you can watch the world of Letters and keep an eye no

our public men. Adieu, my plain, sincere and unsophisticated friend."

But twenty years after this visit the writer happened at Mt. Airy near the renowned city of Warsaw, when unfolding a Richmond paper he read the decease of his artless friend. He sleeps in sight of the Blue Mountain and we wish his grave were shaded by a Kilmarnoch willow, which of all the willow varieties is the most expressive of grief.

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## WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY.

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In entering into the "dictionary war," it may be well to say that we are actuated by no partizan motives, and that we do not write in the interests of either of the firms, whose publications are so creditable to American energy and American scholarship. We write without solicitation from either of the publishers, write simply in the interests of truth as we understand it. We do not know that such a disclaimer is needed, but at a time when much that appears in the columns of magazines and of newspapers originates from purely personal motives, the presumption is that nearly every thing has the same origin.

In the course of this article we shall have to defend Webster's Dictionary from some attacks that have been made on it. We shall try to show that some of these attacks are, to say the least, unfair.

But we shall make this defence in no partizan spirit. Nor shall we deny that Webster's Dictionary is beyond attack. On the contrary, we shall try to be just in this direction by showing that it has at least one grave fault. And when we assert that unfair attacks have been made against Webster's Dictionary, we shall not say that persons interested in the sale of this dictionary have not been guilty of attacks equally as unfair against Worcester's Dictionary; so far as we know, they may have been.—Competition in trade will cause many men to perform acts, which in other relations, or when performed by other parties, they are among the first to denounce. We do not know that the publishers either of Webster or of Worcester have been engaged directly in such unfair attacks, but this we do