

Cotton Creek Anti-Scandal Society

TO THE EDITOR:—I thought mebbe you would like to hear about our Anti-Scandalous Society; and so I'm a-goin' to write you a short 'count of our last meeting.

We met about 2 o'clock of a Wednesday afternoon, at Sister Sawtell's. After we had tuk of our bunnets, an' sat down, an talked about the weather a few minutes, Sister Deacon Buzbee (she's the Presidentess) she rapped onto the table with her thimble an' says:

"This here meeting will now come to order quicker n' scat. An' the fast thing on the program is for the Sectarian to read the minutes."

We all hustled round and come to order, an' Sister Goodall read the minutes; but they might better have been called hours, from the time it tuk her to read 'em. But she got 'em read at last, and then Sister Deacon Buzbee says:

"Before we perced to any futher business, I will egsplain the objecks of this here society, seein' there is some new members come in that ain't never been here before. We hev got two objecks:

"One of 'em is to sew and an' make up different articles, of all sorts, like fancy apurns, lamp-mats, pin-cushings,



and sich, to sell, an' the money to be gave to help s'port the preacher. The money has to be got riz, somehow, fur the Preacher's wife has been grumblin' right smart of late to the Deacon, because they don't get enough sullery to keep 'em in vittles and close.

"Most they do get is donations, an' the things donated is not accordin' to their needs. Fur instants, she says they could have got along a spell yet without a chany shepherdess to set on the parlor mantel. An' they wan't achily sufferin' fur a pair o' bleached domestic pilla-shams, with lace borders onto 'em. But, though, she said, she could use the pilla-shams to make little Tommy a petticoat, and the lace



would do to go round Amelia Alice's Sunday apurn.

"An' when folks did donate vittles, she said a mess of dried beans or potatoes would be more exceptible than eighteen apple-pies an' a dish-pan full of fitters. She hadn't nothin' to say agin the pies an' the fitters, they was good eatin' fur once 'n a while; but fur a real stiddy diet she didn't think they was so healthy as some other things, an', besides, they was apt to colick the chidren.

An' so, as I was a-sayin', one of the objecks of this meetin' is to sew things an' sell 'em, an' raise some money fur the Preacher's family. It's got to be riz somehow, the Deacon states, fur it stan's to reason that a family of two grown-uppers an' nine children can't live altogether on chany shepherdesses an' pilla-shams an' fitters, an' sich.

"An' the other objeck is to prevent the spreadin' of Scandal. Nobuddy belong n' to this society is allowed to tell a scan'alous story, to the detriment of their neighbors or nobuddy else.

"If that their stuck-up Miss Lawyer Greene chooses to air her bed-cloze on the front porch every day of her life, jest to show 'em, an' let folks see how many patchworkers an' tied comforts she's got, 'tain't none of our business. We ain't got to tell it.

"An' if Dr. Pottle's wife has cake onto



her table twice a day, an' gives her husban' fried pies fur breakfast, an' makes her hired gal set down to the second table, like she was a-tellin' my Mahala last week, none of us needn't to say nothin' about it. We hain't got no call to spread it round.

"Or if Nancy Marier Stricklan'

wears year-bobs, an' frizzles her hair over her furrid, an' purtends to be fashionabler than us, tain't none of our consarns. We kin feel sorry fur her, an' be glad we hev got better sense; but we needn't to tell other folks. We all hev our failures, an' we must larn to be forbearing' towards fel-ler-citters,

"An' so, in order to help us keep from tattlin' about our neighbors, we ain't goin' to take turns in tellin' stories. Something we hev heared or read, or else some of our own egsperience.

"An' now the meetin' may perceed to sew, an' Sister Saphelia Crookneck may begin her story, bein' she was



chose synonymous at the last meetin' to do the talkin' to-day."

Sister Deacon Buzbee sat down, an' we all put on our thimbles an' begun to sew; an' Sister Saphelia got up an' sat down in the Boston rocker.

She is one o' these here tall, bea-pony kind of wimen, and allus wears a hoop in the bottom of her under-skeert. It makes her dress stick out at the bottom, an' looks kind o' quare, bein' it's flat all the rest of the way up; but it seems to kind o' match with her nose, that's long and straight and pints upards at the eend. But she's a real pious woman, an' good-hearted, too. She sat down in the Boston rocker, an' tuk out her knittin', fur she said she could talk better if her hands was busy as well as her tongue. An' then she says, "A-ham! Did any of the sisters ever hev any egsperience with a Burgle-er?"

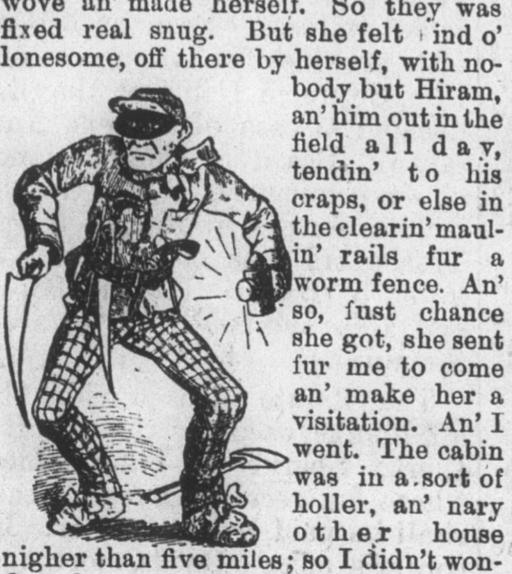
We all shruck, an' says, "La, no!" and Sister Sawtell's biggest gal, Matildy Ann, scrounged so close up to



me I cum nigh jabbin' her in the eye with my needle.

"Oh, I'm so feared o' the burgle-ers," she says. "Do tell us all about him, Sister Saphelia."

An' so she clared her throat, and picked up a stitch she had drappin' in the toe of the sock she was knittin', an' then she says: "Twas a good many year ago, an' Sister Calline—she's the oldest of us gals—she had married Hiram Slinker, an' had went over to Sassafras Holler, where they begun to housekeep in a bran-new cabin. Hiram had built on the forty acres his paw give him. Calline had right smart of a settin'-out, too. She had a cook-stove, and a cow with a heifer calf, an' two feather beds an' bedstuds, an' half a dozen dominicker hens. An' she had plenty of blankets, an' patchwork quilts, an' two blue kiverlids she handwove an' made herself. So they was fixed real snug. But she felt ind o' lonesome, off there by herself, with nobody but Hiram, an' him out in the field all day, tendin' to his craps, or else in the clearin' maulin' rails fur a worm fence. An' so, fust chance she got, she sent fur me to come an' make her a visitation. An' I went. The cabin was in a sort of a holler, an' nary other house



nigher than five miles; so I didn't wonder she was lonesome. But they had a good dog—Jack was his name—an' Calline said she wan't noways afearde to stay alone all day, though I would of been, with Hiram out o' sight an' hearin'; an' tramps comin' round once an' a while to git a bite to eat.

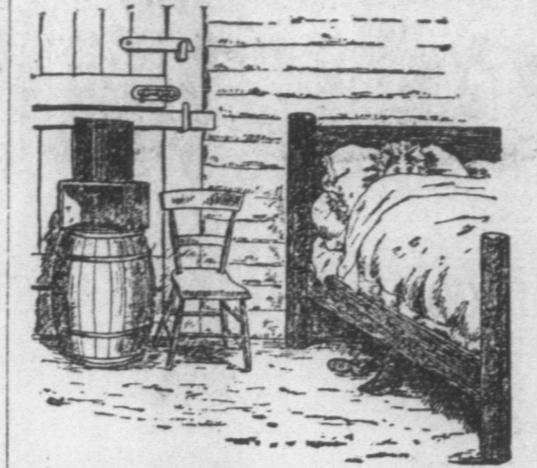
"But Calline hadn't a speck of cowardness about her. She wasn't like me. I was allus afearde o' my own shadder, most, and wouldn't of stayed alone all day in that house fur a pretty. But bein' we was both together I didn't feel so skeery; an' after dinner I an' Calline washed the dishes an' redd up the room, an' then we went to the milk-house, an' skum the milk fur next day's churning. Long towards night the cow come home, an' I milked her, while Calline was a-doin' up the other chores."

"An' did you see the burgle-er, then?" says Matildy Ann.

"Jest you wait," says Sister Saphelia. "I'm a-comin' to him."

"When 'twas too dark to see any more, an' the whip-poor-wills was a-hollering out in the woods, an' the bats an' night-hawks a-flittering round the house, Hiram come, an' we all had supper an' went to bed. The cabin was built like this here one, with a room at each eend, an' a wide, open passage-

way betwixt 'em. Hiram and Calline sleep in the one where they cooked an' eat, an' I sleep in tother'n. 'Twas a



powerful warm night, an' Calline said I better leave my door open. But I was too skeery fur that, so I shet an' bolted the door an' went to bed. I hadn't got quite to sleep, but was jest a-droppin' off, when I heerd something that made me trim'e all over, and the cole chills run up an' down my back."

"Oh," said Matildy Ann, "I'm so skeered!"

"You ain't nigh so skeered as I was," says Sister Saphelia, "fur what I heared was somebuddy a-breathin', right under my bed."

We all struck right out, at that, an' Matildy Ann scrounged up so close to me I come pretty near jabbin' her agin.

"I wonder you didn't holler," says Sister Sawtell.

"I dassent," says Sister Saphelia. "I was afeard he'd jump right out an' cut off my head. So I jest laid an' trim'e an' didn't dass to move; an' I could hear him a-breathin' louder an' louder. I knowed Hiram had fifteen dollars locked up in the bury drawer, 'n' of course I thought right off that was what he was after. 'Mebbe if he gits



it, thinkses I, 'he'll be off an' not kill me.' But I wa'n't sure about it. Burgle-ers air pesky mean, sometimes; an' pretty soon I heared him a-movin' under the bed, an' I felt like I would die. He moved round, an' kep a-movin', sort of easy-like, an' thinkses I, 'Now he's a-goin' to tackle me.' An' my heart most stopped a-beating, I was that skeered; an' even then I couldn't help a-thinkin' if I'd only left my door open, as Sister Calline had told me, how much better 'twould be, fur I might give a jump, an' git cleare afo're the burgle-er could have said beans. But there I was, shet up with him, an' the door bolted."

"But do tell us how you got away!"



says Matildy Ann. "Fur you must of got away somehow, or you wouldn't be here, a-tellin' it."

"I'm a-comin' to the p'int," Sister Saphelia says.

"All to once, he quit movin' around, an' made a snorty, snuffly kind of a noise, somethin' like a snore, an' then he gaped real loud, like he had been asleep an' was half wakin' up. An' at that I jumped right up in bed an' bust out a-laffin'."

"Oh!" says we all, fur we was real dumbfoundered when she said that.

"Yes," she said, "I busted right out a-laffin', fur I knowed that gape wan't made by a man, but a dog. His breathin' had sounded exactly like a human critter; but when he gaped real long an' loud, like this—Ah-ow-wooh!—an' bet on the floor with his tail, then I knew 'twas a dog."

We all had to laug at the way Sister Saphelia mocked a dog-a-gapping, but Matildy Ann looked a leetle grain disapinted.

"No," says Sister Saphelia, "but I was jest as skeered as if it had of been one. But I got up and turned Jack out the door. I s'pose he had snuck under the bed 'fore I went in, an' had went to sleep there. But after I diskivered him, an' turned him out, I went to bed an' slept so sound I never waked up when the chickens crowed day. Calline and Hiram had a good laugh when I told 'em my egsperience; but 'twasn't no laughin' matter to me at the time. An' sence that I allus look under a bed 'fore I git in it."

When she had got through, Sister Sawtell an' Matildy Ann hustled round an' got supper. 'Twas a right good meal o' vittles they got up, too—cold

riz bread, an' warm biscuit, an' blackberry jell, an' peaches an' cream, an' fried chickin' an' aigs, an' custard pie. An' when Sister Sawtell come in an' asked us all to walk out to supper, Sister Deacon Buzbee says:

"This meetin' will now put away their sewin' an' eat supper."

An' after supper we chose Sister Betsy Hopper to talk at the next meetin', Sister Buzbee had invited us to meet at her house next time, an' so then we sojourned an' went home. Respectfully yours, LIBBY LIMBERTWIG.

Cotton Creek, Misouri.

MENUE.

COLD RIL BRED
WARM BIZKET
BLAK-PERY GEL
PEECHIC AN KREEM
FAYD CHIL'M AN AIG
KUSTED PT. AN 20 EAT
FRYD PY

Leprosy in Louisiana.

Mr. Ely and the priest lodged in the house of one of the *petits habitants*. In the evening, when we were alone, the subject of leprosy came up.

"We hear at the North," said Mr. Ely, "vague accounts of the *Terre des Lepreux*, which is said to be some where in Louisiana. What truth is there in them?"

"They are no doubt greatly exaggerated," said Father Nedaud. "A spirituous leprosy, elephantiasis, was so common among the negroes under the Spanish domination that Governor Miro founded a hospital for lepers near New Orleans, on the Bayou St. John. It has been gone these many years, and Leper's Land is now built up with pretty houses. It was in the suburb Tremé."

"The disease is extinct, then?"

"There were some cases of genuine Asiatic leprosy near Abbeville, in this parish, about twenty years ago. An old creole lady was the first. Her father doubtless brought the terrible taint in his blood from France. When the white scales appeared in her face her husband and family fled from her. There was a young girl, daughter of M'sieu Dubois, who went to her and nursed her alone during the three years in which she fought with death. Another of God's servants, m'sieu! Four of this old woman's children, who deserted her, became lepers. The young girl who had nursed her, after she died married a young *fermier*, and lived happily in her little cabin with her husband and pretty baby. But one day a shinin' white spot appeared on her forehead. That was the end."

"She died?"

"M'sieu, after four years. There is no cure. It surely does not matter to her now by what road God called her to Him. There have been since then no lepers in this parish except in these tainted families. The real *Terre des Lepreux* in Louisiana is now on the lower Lafourche, below Harang's Canal. The bayou there is turbid and foul; it flows through malarious swamps lower than itself. The creole planters there are honest and temperate folk, but they are wretchedly poor. They raise only rice, and live on it and fish. The wet rice fields come up to the very doors of their cabins. The leprosy which certain families among them have inherited is developed by these conditions. Five years ago Professor Joseph Jones, President of the State Board of Health, went himself with his son to explore the cypress swamps and laagoons of the lower Lafourche. M'sieu, it is the region of the shadow of death. He found many poor lepers hiding there. They were as dead men who walk and talk. They could handle burning coals; they felt no longer cold nor heat nor pain. Their bodies were as corpses. One man lived alone in a hut, thatched with palmettoes, which he had built for himself, eating only the rice which he had planted. No man nor woman had come near him for years. The *Terre des Lepreux* extends as far as Cheneire Caminada, where the bayou empties into the Gulf."

Mr. Ely remained silent, though a torrent of angry queries rushed to his lips. Why was nothing done to mitigate the horrors of such a life-in-death? How could this priest, a man of God, so calmly discuss these poor accursed creatures from his safe, comfortable point of vantage, jogging on his easy-going mare from one farm to another? He bade him presently a rather curt good-night, and went to the loft where he was to sleep. When he came down in the morning, Pere Nedaud had gone.

"M'sieu," said his smiling host, "le pere haf lef' you bon-matin," waving his hand to the black figure passing southward far across the prairie.

"Where is his charge now?"

"M'sieu—" Gaspard paused a moment. "In hell, I think. It is near Cheneire Caminada, in la *Terre des Lepreux*."

Mr. Ely walked away from him, and paced up and down the levee for a long time.

"God forgive me!" he muttered to himself.—Rebecca Harding Davis, in Harper's Magazine.

Wouldn't Be Locked Out.

Before 10: Judge B. (with emphasis)—"Clara, is that George fellow coming round here again to-night?"

"Clara (hopelessly)—"I believe so, papa."

Judge B.—"Well, daughter, remember this: This house closes at 10 sharp, and—"

Clara (hastily)—"Oh, George will be here before that, papa; please don't worry."—Harper's Bazaar.

HUMOR.

SOUND money—the organist's salary. A COMING man—The man for his rent.

COAL dealers have not only a soft snap but a hard snap. Hard and soft are equally scarce.—New Haven News.

TOO MUCH of Burton's ale at night sometimes introduces you to his Anatomy of Melancholy the next morning.—Puck.

THERE was a man much given to flings and sneers, whom his wife called a fellow of infinite twit.—Texas Siftings.

AN exchange gives a receipt for making a cheap horse cart. You can make a cheap horse do it, we suppose, but you mustn't load the cart too heavily.—Siftings.

SAYD Mr. McFerguson, shaking his head: "I am not to my wife's stronger qualities blind."

And while she can't make up a dress or a bed, You just ought to see how she makes up her mind."

FIRST Florida Man—I thought I would present my little bill this morning." Second Florida Man—"No need of