

# Cotton Creek Anti-Scandal Society



O 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 off 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' seat. An' the fust 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 perceed to any futher business, I will egplain the objects of this here society, seein' there is some new members come in that ain't never been here before. We hev got two objects:

"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 grum-, blin' 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 it 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 want' achilly sufferin' fur a pair o' bleached domestick piller-shams, with lace borders onto 'em. But, though, she said, she could use the piller-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 flitters. She hadn't nothin' to say agin the pies an' the flitters, 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 coddle the children.

"An' so, as I was a-sayin', one of the objects 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' piller-shams an' flitters, an' sich.

"An' the other object is to prevent the spreadin' of Scandal. Nobuddy belong'n to this society is allowed to tell a scandalous 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 patchworks 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 husband 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 furred, an' purtends to be fashionabler then us, 'tain't none of our consarns. We kin feel sorry fur her, an' be glad she hev got better sense; but we needn't to tell other folks. We all hev our failures, an' we must larn to be for-bearing' towards feller-citizens.

"An' so, in order to help us keep from tattlin' about our neighbors, we air a-goin' to take turns in tellin' stories. Something we have heard or read, or else some of our own egspierence.

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

She is one o' these here tall, bean-poly 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 up'ards at the end. But she's a real pious woman, an' good-hearted, too. She sot 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 egspierence with a Burgle-er?"

We all shruck, an' says, "La, no!" an' Sister Sawtell's biggest gal, Matildy Ann, scrouged 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 drapped 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' bedstids, an' half a dozen dominicker hens. An' she had plenty of blankets, an' patchwork quilts, an' two blue kiverlids she hand-wove 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, just chance she got, she sent fur me to come an' make her a visitation. An' I went. The cabin was in a sort of 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 wa'n't noways feared 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.



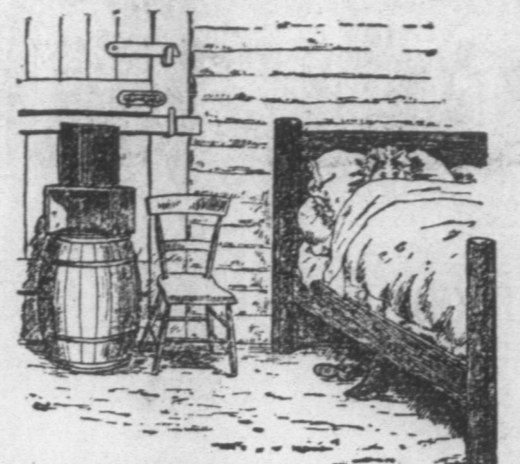
"But Calline hadn't a speck of cowardness about her. She wasn't like me. I was allus afeared o' my own shadder, most, and wouldn't of stayed alone all day in that house fur a pretty. But bein' we was both together I didn't feel so skeery; an' after dinner I an' Calline washed the dishes an' redd up the 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-hollerin' out in the woods, an' the bats an' night-hawks a-flitterin' 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 end, an' a wide, open passage-

way betwixt 'em. Hiram and Calline slep' in the one where they cooked an' eat, an' I slep' 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'le 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 scrouged 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 afeared he'd jump right out an' cut off my head. So I jest laid an' trim'led 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, 'thinks I, 'he'll be off an' not kill me.' But I wa'n't sure about it. Burgle-ers air pesky mean, sometimes; an' pritty 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' 'thinks 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 of left my door open, as Sister Calline had told me, how much better 'twould be, fur I might give a jump, an' git clare out afore 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!"



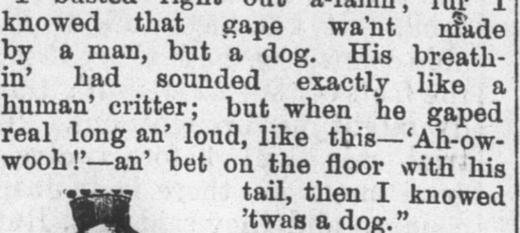
says Matildy Ann. "Fur you must of got away somehow, or you wouldn't be here, a-tellin' it."

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

"All to once, he quit movin' around, an' made a snorty, snuffin' 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 dumbfounded when she said that.

"Yes," she said, "I busted right out a-laffin', fur I knowed that gape wa'n'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 knowed 'twas a dog."



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

"Then, 'twas no burgle-er after all," she says.

"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 disskivered him, an' turned him out, I went to bed an' slep' so sound I never waked up when the chickens crowed day. Calline and Hiram had a good laugh when I told 'em my egspierence; but 'twas 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' black-berry jell, an' peaches an' cream, an' fried chicken 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 Betsey Hopper to talk at the next meetin', Sister Buzbee had envited us to meet at her house next time, an' so then we sojourned an' went home. Respectfully yours, LIBBY LIMBERTWIG, Cotton Creek, Missouri.



## 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 spurious 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 Lepers' 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 shining 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 lagoons 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 palm-branches, 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 Cheniere 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 Cheniere 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 Bazar.*

## 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.*

SAID 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."—*Puck.*

FIRST Florida Man—I thought I would present my little bill this morning." Second Florida Man—"No need of doing that. The mosquitoes attended to that last night."—*Arcola Record.*

The gayest man is sometimes the saddest. The best-humored man is sometimes the maddest; But the heaviest man is never the lightest, And the soberest man is never the tightest."—*Arkansas Traveler.*

OLD lady—"I am sorry to hear a little boy use such shocking language. Do you know what becomes of little boys who swear?" Urchin—"Yes'm. Dey gits to be hoss-car drivers."—*Tid-Bits.*

MAMMA (to Walter, who has just returned from his first experience with a fishing-rod)—What, back so soon? Walter—Yes'm; I thought I'd come home. The worms were so nervous I couldn't get 'em on the hook.

BROWN—"I saw you going home very late last night with a turkey under your arm, Robinson. Robinson—Yes, I was down at Rumangum's with the boys until nearly 2 o'clock raffling. I won it. Brown—Was it a nice turkey? Robinson—I don't know; I was too sick to-day to eat any of it.—*New York Sun.*

At a gathering of a few ministers and others the other day, in New York City, to utter some words of grateful mention and good cheer to the Rev. Dr. Deems, some one declared that "an ounce of taffy" was worth more than a ton of epitaphy! A word in season, how good it is; but words, however kindly spoken over a grave, come too late.

STRANGER—"I notice you drove the President over the same street twice." Omaha man—"Yes, we arranged the route that way. You see, we drove him through that street on his arrival, and then drove him through it when we went back an hour later." "Exactly. I thought it was an oversight." "Oh, no. We wanted to give him a chance to see how Western cities grow."

## HIS CAPABILITIES.

"I've given you your dinner now," The woman to the poor tramp said, "So take this ax and split some wood, And pile it neatly in the shed." "Ah! no, indeed!" the man replied, "I promised to do all I could, But really, ma'am, I never had The least ideas of splitting wood."

"What are you good for, then?" she said, "You thief, you vagabond, you Turk! He answered, backing down the steps, "I can do anything but work."

THE members of a church at Hartwell, Ga., were discussing what they had done to help the cause of religion along during the year, when one good brother, whose cotton crop had turned out better than he had expected, said: "I came very near promising the Lord at planting time that I would give him \$1 for every bale of cotton I should make this year, but, brethren, if I had done so the Lord would have got me sure."

AN Ohio preacher tried to quote the verse in Matthew about "not one jot or tittle," and said: "Not one jot or tittle." Then he saw that he had erred and tried again. "Not one jilt or tottle," said he, and again stopped. But he would not give up, and began, "Not one tit or jottle," and then with a red face he gave it up and went on with his sermon, and there were not a half-dozen of his hearers who could really tell just what the two words were.

"THAT'S 'Boulanger's March,'" said a rustic proudly to the man at his elbow as the country band struck up. "Great Caesar!" replied the other in a stage whisper, "do the people know it?" "I s'pose so—some of them. Why?" "Why? Man alive, can you ask that? Is there no danger of a riot?" "Why, certainly not." "Thank heaven!" he breathed fervently. "Then in this community I shall even dare whistle 'Peek-a-Boo.'"—*Binghamton Republican.*

"GENTLEMEN," said the Judge of an Arkansas court to the attorneys during a trial, "I don't mind your shooting at each other occasionally if the circumstances seem to justify it; but I see that one of your bullets has hit an overcoat belonging to the court and broken a quart flask in the inside pocket. I wish it to be distinctly understood that if there is any more such careless shooting in this court I'll lift the scalp of the galoot that does it. Now go ahead with the case."

AN OLD MAN'S SORROW. "Alas!" the old man sighed, with beaded head, "What brilliant dreams of life have come and fled!"

How have I yearned for fame, and o'er and o'er Spent sleepless nights in searching burning Lord And now in weary age I simply find Folks say: 'He is a man of brilliant mind. He's deeply read in philosophic books, And mathematics, with its turns and tricks. To him is like a volume all unsealed. Its pages opened and its truths revealed. The books he writes are read by learned men, Who wait impatient while he yields his pen. But this, alas, no music has for me When great men on a every hand I see. Oh! why on knowledge did I waste my all, Instead of learning how to play base-ball!"—*Merchant Traveler.*