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## PIOUS SHERMANITES.

A Peculiar Class of People Living in Alabama.

They Are Honest, Temperate, Wash One Another's Feet, But Never Cut Their Hair—Religious Enthusiasts Full of Quaint Concepts.

The other day a rough-looking countryman walked into a general supply store in this city and stated to the proprietor that he wanted to purchase \$100 worth of goods on credit, writes a Birmingham (Ala.) correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial Gazette. The man wore his hair long like a woman, and his beard reached almost to his waist. His clothes were all made at home; they were ill-fitting and of the cheapest material, and altogether he was a strange specimen of humanity. "What is your name?" asked the merchant, when the man stated his business. "John Smith," answered the countryman. "When can you pay for the goods?" "I'll pay you in November, when I sell my cotton crop."

"All right, Mr. Smith; you can have the goods." The goods were soon loaded on Smith's wagon, and he drove away without giving the merchant a note or any kind of security. "Do you know the man?" I asked of the merchant. "Never saw him before." "Will he pay you for those goods?" "Certainly." "How do you know?" "Because he is a Shermanite. He is a member of a remarkable religious society, and if he failed to pay a debt he would be expelled from his church, and driven from the community in which he lives, in disgrace. I may not see or hear of him again until next November, but if he is living he will come and pay me every cent he owes me. The Shermanites all wear their hair long like this one, and they are easily recognized any where."

In Leed's Valley, in the northwestern part of this county, there is a colony of Shermanites. There are about one hundred families, and a happier, more contented people can not be found in the world. Their religious rites and ceremonies are peculiar. Who founded the society none of them seem to know, but it is very old, as the fathers and grandfathers of the present generation were Shermanites. They claim to follow the teachings of the New Testament in spirit and letter, and they believe that only Shermanites will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. They have churches and preachers and worship in a manner similar to many other religious sects. One of their peculiar rites is the washing of feet. A foot-washing service is held once every month, at which the preacher washes the feet of every member of the church. The members then in turn wash the feet of the preacher and of each other. This service usually lasts all day, being interspersed with singing and praying.

Members of all other religious denominations they regard as heathen, and send missionaries among them instead of sending them to foreign lands. Shermanites never cut their hair or beard, claiming that Christ never patronized barber-shops. In every home may be found ancient woodcuts representing Christ and His Apostles as wearing long hair and beard. A Shermanite who falls from grace is lost forever, and he must always live up to certain moral and business rules which are very rigid. To pay all debts is a part of their religion. No man can be saved, they say, who does not pay his neighbor what he owes him. They never charge one another interest on a loan, and no written acknowledgment of a debt is ever given. The word of a Shermanite is his bond, and it becomes his sacred duty for him to fulfill every promise made. They are an industrious people because industry is a part of their creed.

The Shermanites are all small farmers, but most of them own their farms and some stock. Many of them are compelled to purchase a few supplies in this city every summer, for which they are unable to pay cash. Where their peculiar religion is known they have no trouble in obtaining all the credit they want. They give no notes or security of any kind, but merchants who have done business with them for years have never lost a dollar due from a Shermanite customer. Their preachers accept no pay for preaching the Gospel, working on their farms during the week as hard as any member of the Church. Divorce is something unknown among these people, and the women are all virtuous. Drunkenness is another vice unknown among these people, as they follow to the letter the advice of the Apostle, who said: "Be temperate in all things." Their homes are models of neatness and comfort, and the stranger is always welcome within their gates. It would be almost an insult to tender them payment for food, lodging or any other favor shown a stranger. The Shermanites make few converts to their peculiar religion, but they lose no members, and seem happy and contented in simply holding their own.

One remarkable thing about them is that they will have nothing to do with courts and lawyers. A law-suit in which a Shermanite was plaintiff can not be found on the court records of this country. They never seek legal advice unless it is actually necessary. All their differences are settled by arbitration, mutual friends being the arbitrators, and the civil courts are never under any circumstances resorted to. They seek in every way possible to avoid jury duty or being summoned as witnesses in any cases. They take no part in politics, and a Shermanite was never known to hold an office of any kind. Some of them vote at every election, but they have no campaign clubs in their community, and every man is allowed to vote as he pleases. Many of them never vote at all.

The first settlers of this Shermanite colony came to Alabama from South Carolina and Georgia about forty-five years ago. The oldest of them say their ancestors came originally from New England, but they are unable to say who was the founder of their society.

### Thoughts of the Dying.

It is affirmed that a dying person in his last moments thinks of the chief events of his life. Persons resuscitated from drowning, epileptics with grave attacks, persons dying and already unconscious, but momentarily brought back to consciousness by other injections to utter their last thoughts, all acknowledge that their last thoughts revert to momentous events of their life. Such an ether injection revives once more the normal disposition of cerebral activity, already nearly extinguished, and it

might be possible at this moment to learn of certain important events of the past life. Brown-Sequard mentions the remarkable fact that persons who, in consequence of grave cerebral affections, have been paralyzed for years, get back at once when dying their sensibility, mobility and intelligence. All such facts clearly show that at the moment of dissolution important changes take place, reacting upon the composition of the blood and the functions of the organs.

### MISSION SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

A Place Where One Needs to Keep All His Wits About Him.

If there is any place where one needs to keep all his wits about him it is in the mission Sunday-school, says the Boston Courier. The youths who are there gathered together have no reverence for either things sacred or things profane, and they are ready to question anything and everything said to them with a frankness and a boldness which is eminently disconcerting to any one not accustomed to this sort of thing. They are not above playing tricks and laying snares for their teachers. On one occasion a young rascal in a North-end school remarked in a sanctimonious tone:

"My father drinks.  
The unwary teacher falling into the trap, began to talk to the class of the evils of intemperance, and of how much little Johnny was to be pitied for having a father who was given to the dreadful habit of intemperance. She waxed eloquent and spoke at considerable length, secretly feeling that she had never done better and that she must surely make an impression upon her pupils.

And then when she had made an end of speaking and all the class were supposed to be in an eminently edified condition of mind little Johnny finished his sentence with an air so innocent as to deceive, if it were possible, even the very elect.

"My father," he said, "drinks water."  
And he smiled confidently into the face of his teacher as if he were sure of her approval and as if he enjoyed the approval of a clear conscience, as indeed very likely he did.

On another day when a teacher was endeavoring to impress upon a class of newsboys the beauty of righteousness and to give them some sort of a leaning toward the paths of decency, sobriety and godliness, an impudent, saucy-faced youngster, known among his companions as "Bully Sam," leaned forward and, holding out to her a battered nickel which had the general appearance of having been run over by a horse-car, observed:

"I say, now, I'll give you that to stop."  
It may be judged how much effect the lesson had after that.

Still again, a clever Boston girl had undertaken the task of instructing a peewee of newsboys, bootblacks and telegraph messengers, and the lesson chanced to be upon the raising of Lazarus. Taking into account the fact that the boys knew of the telegraph, and finding that it was very hard to interest them, she turned the talk to electricity by asking if there was any way in which the dead could be raised to life, and going on to say that there had been people who believed that it could be done by electricity.

She found that she had at last gained their attention, and, dreading to lose it again, she went on a little with her talk about the force and its manifestations. The boys listened intently, and presently one of the dirtiest and most reprehensible of the gang gave a hitch to his ragged trousers, expressive of satisfaction and interest.

"Well, now," he said, "we're learnin' suthin'."

### JOHN RAY'S COURTSHIP.

A Question Which Rather Surprised an Old-Time Methodist Minister.

Colonel John W. Ray, himself now a venerable gray-headed man, tells, in the Indianapolis Journal, the following story of the courtship and marriage of his grandfather, Rev. John Ray, who figured largely in the Methodist church in the latter part of the last and the early part of this century: "My father joined the traveling connection in 1790," said he, "when there were less than 150 ordained members in the United States and but one conference, extending from Massachusetts to Florida, along the coast. His early work was in Virginia and North Carolina, where he traveled ten years, of course a single man, for in those days to marry was to locate. He traveled in 1800 the Tar River circuit, which extended from the coast into the interior a hundred miles or more. He was thirty-two years old and had made up his mind to marry and locate and go West, which meant into Kentucky, his former home. Among his stopping-places on his circuit was the plantation of a rich widow, by the name of Lewis, well stocked with slaves and the luxuries that a wealthy slaveholder of that period was expected to possess. The widow had also a grown daughter, who had made such an impression upon the bachelor preacher that he had concluded to ask her to go with him, nothing doubting that she would do, and go on his own terms, but he had said nothing to her on the subject until one evening, toward the close of the year, he took a scrap of paper and wrote: "Are you under obligations to any man? Are you in the spirit of slavery? Will you go West? Will you go with me?" "He expected an immediate answer, and, of course, a favorable one, for how could a girl refuse such a man? But she carefully folded the paper, put it in her pocket, and soon after left the room, to be seen no more until the next morning. To the surprise and perplexity of the lover, she appeared the next morning in the family circle as merry as usual, and went about the ordinary duties of the morning as though nothing unusual had happened. The suspense became painful and embarrassing, until he finally got an opportunity to ask if she could now answer the question he had propounded. She asked for further time to consider.

"No," said he, "I must know now. I am going away to-day, and I want to know before starting."

"Well," said she, "I have some questions to ask before deciding. Will you give up your pipe?"

"The lover was dumbfounded. It had never entered his head that a girl had any right to propound such a question on such an occasion, but that the extent of her prerogative was to say: 'Yes, with all my heart.' Presuming upon his own importance, and assuming that she would be only too glad to say yes after this little episode, he said: 'No, not for the best woman on earth.' It was now her turn to speak, and she said, in a tone that indicated earnestness: 'Then you can have my answer once for all. I will never marry a man who thinks more of his pipe than of me.' No man ever did more thinking in a few minutes than he did then and there. She had put the pipe question in a new light. 'Think more of my pipe than of her' he soliloquized. 'Why, certainly not; yet it looks like it if I can not give it up for her. But there is another question: Shall a girl force me to do what four conferences have failed to do? Can I be happy without this girl—happier without her and with my pipe than with her and without my pipe?' and the man found himself deeper in love than he had ever suspected, and he was not long in settling the question. If it is a girl or a pipe, farewell pipe, and he turned to her, as she sat apparently as heartless as a stone, and said: 'Well, Elizabeth, if it is to part with you or my pipe, I give up the pipe forever.'

What followed immediately is more easily imagined than told. In a few weeks they were married. As soon afterward as the papers could be made out all of her slaves were manumitted, and the two went West, which meant Montgomery County, Ky. There my father was born, and there my grandfather spent many years as a local preacher, rejoining the conference in 1819, moving later to Indiana, where he died near Greencastle in 1837. He never resumed his pipe. His plucky anti-pipe wife survived him several years."

### IMAGINARY HEMORRHAGE.

The Peculiar Experience of a Gentleman Afflicted with Weak Lungs.

A man who had suffered several hemorrhages from his lungs describes how the fear of a return of the trouble forever haunts and hangs over victims to any pulmonary trouble. This gentleman, says the Chicago Journal, was lodging a few nights ago at the home of a friend. On his bed was a rose blanket, across the end of which was the usual stripe, and in this case it was a brilliant red. The day had been a tiresome one for the guest, and in consequence on going to his room he was unusually depressed. In his chest was the old, familiar, foreboding sensation, though for more than a year he had escaped a hemorrhage. The last he could remember as he sank into a fitful slumber was the well-defined hope that he might escape the return of his malady, at least until to-morrow. He didn't know how long he slept before awakening, but when he did awake the light from a lamp-post, burning in the street, streamed through the window and on his bed. The rays fell directly on the red streak which crossed the rose blanket. This was the first thing his eyes opened upon, and the evidence was clear that the tissues of his lungs had again broken down; again he was bleeding, this time possibly to death. His hand went to his lips, where there was a little warm saliva. In addition to the ocular evidence of hemorrhage before him was the evidence the sense of touch gave him. The depression of his chest was terribly increased. A load like a ton rested upon it. In this semi-conscious condition, this nightmare with eyes open, he thought to call for help, but he could not speak. The crimson fluid had clogged up his throat. He staggered from the bed, and, holding his hand over his mouth to stop the flow, reeled across the room for the door. He would take his shoe and drop it down the stairway, and the noise it would make would arouse the family, and in that way he would get some medical aid. He seized his shoe, and, as he did so, stumbled against the dresser on which were matches, and by the side of which protruded a gas jet. He wanted light, light, and so scratched a match, turned on the gas, when, lo! there was no blood on his hands. He hurried back to the rose blanket, and by the aid of a brilliant light discovered the deception for which the pale rays of the street lamp were responsible. The joy at the discovery awoke him to full consciousness, and then, panting like a hound-fawn, he again sank upon his bed, and, exhausted, slept till morning.

### The Voice of Envy.

Envy can not be hid. It accuses and judges without proofs; it exaggerates defects; its conversation is filled with gall, exaggeration and injury. It stands out with obstinacy and with fury against striking merit. It is hasty, insensible and brutal.

### SEARCHING FOR GEMS.

How the Work of Collection Is Carried on in Ceylon.

A correspondent of the Ceylon Observer in a recent issue of that journal describes the district in Ceylon in which gems have hitherto been most commonly found and the method employed by the natives in digging for them. Ratnapura, or the "city of gems," is the center of a district twenty to thirty miles square, in almost all of which a stratum of gravel six feet to twenty feet under the surface exists. Throughout this area gem pits are to be seen near the villages—some being worked now, others being abandoned. The natives work there in companies of six or eight, and pay a rupee for the privilege of working a certain allotment, where they begin by marking off a square of about ten feet. After removing about three feet of soil the sounding-rod—a piece of iron about one-half inch in diameter and six feet long—is used to sound for gravel. If successful, the digging is begun in earnest till about four feet deep. On the second day gravel is taken out by means of baskets handed from one man to another till all within the square is excavated. On the third day it is all washed in wicker baskets by a circular jerking motion, which throws out all the surplus light stone and rubbish, till a good quantity of heavy gravel is left in the bottom, which is carefully examined. There is hardly a careful that does not contain some gems of inferior value, which are usually sold by the pound for about nine rupees. Should no valuable stones be found another pit is sunk, and so on till one or perhaps two or three really valuable gems are unearthed, when the work is stopped, and the whole party goes off to Ratnapura with the prizes. If these are worth, say a few thousand rupees, they are kept secret and only shown to one or two men of money, who make the owners an advance and look after the safe custody of the precious stones. They then gamble and drink for some time till another advance becomes necessary, and so on till half the value is obtained. Then the party, with the mortgage, proceeds to Colombo, or Italutara, where rich Moor traders are summoned to purchase, and the gems soon find their way to London. The general public know nothing about these transactions, and valuable gems are never heard of in Ceylon, and seldom see the light of day till they reach Bond Street. The natives have a great fear of exposing their finds till they are sold, and they have most extraordinary, superstitious ideas about showing them. This system has been in vogue for centuries past.

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The first term of the Collegiate Year 1889-90 begins on the 29th of August next, and the 2nd term on the 2nd of January, 1890.

For further particulars address the President by a Calendar.  
Sackville, Aug. 10, 1889.