

THE JONESVILLE QUIRE.

BY JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE.

The quire meets to practice every Friday night, and the last time they met, Thomas Jefferson came home, and says he—

"It does beat all how that quire goes on. I guess you'd get sick, mother, to hear 'em sing, as I do, rehearsing."

"I'll be hanged if I would rehearse," says Josiah; "what makes 'em?"

"Let 'em rehearse," says I, sternly. "I should think there was need enough of it, for of all the singin' I ever heard, they beat all."

A few nights after this conversation word was given out that Eld Linden was going to preach to the red school house, and Josiah harnessed up the old mare, and we all went to hear him.

Josiah and I sat right behind the quire, and we could hear every word they said, and while Eld Linden was reading the words, "How sweet for brethren to agree," Deacon Gowdey whispered to Mr. Peedick in wrathful accents:

"I wonder if you will put us all to open shame to-night, by screechin' two or three notes above us all!" He caught my keen gray eye fixed sternly upon him, and his tone changed in a minute to a mild and sheepish one, and he added, smilingly, "As it were, dear brother Peedick."

Mr. Peedick deigned not to reply to him, for he was shakin' his fist at one of the younger brethren in the quire, and says he—

"Let me catch you pressin' the key agin to-night, you young villain, if you think it's best."

"I shall press as many keys as I am a minter, for all you; you are always findin' fault with sunthin' or other," muttered he.

Betsy Bobbet and Sophrenia Gowdey was lookin' at each other all this time with looks that made one's blood run cold in their veins.

Mr. Peedick commenced the tune, but unfortunately struck into short metre. So he couldn't get any further than "How sweet for brethren to agree." As they all came to a sudden halt there in front of that word, Deacon Gowdey, looking daggers at Peedick, took out his pitchfork as if it was a pistol and he was going to shoot him with it, but applying it to his own ear, he started off on the longest metre that had ever been in our neighborhood. After adding the tune to the words, there was so much tune to carry, that the best calculator in tunes couldn't do it. At that very minute, when it looked dark and gloomy indeed for the quire, an old lady, the best behaved in the quire, who had minded her own business and chawed caraway peacefully, come out nobly and started it to the tune of "Oh, that will be joyful."

They all joined in loud and strong, and though they each one put in flats and sharps to suit their own taste, they kinder held together till they got to the chorus, and then Deacon Gowdey looked round and frowned fiercely at Shakespeare Bobbet, who seemed to be flattening most of any of 'em—and Betsy Bobbet punched Sophrenia Gowdey in the side with her parasol, and told her she was "disgracin' the quire—and to sing slower," and then they all yelled:

How sweet is unitee e
How sweet is unitee
How sweet for brethren to agree
How sweet is unitee.

It seemed as if the very feather on my bonnet stood up straight, to hear 'em, it was so awful. Then they collected their strength, and drawin' long breaths, they yelled round the next verses like wild Indians round sufferin' whites they was murderin'. If any one had iron ears, it would have went off well, all but for one thing. There was an old man who insisted on bein' in the quire, who was too blind to see the words, and always sung by ear, and bein' a little deaf, he got the words wrong, but he sung out loud and clear like a trombone.

How sweet is unitee e
How sweet is unitee e.

The minister made a dreadful good prayer about trials purifyin' folks and makin' 'em better, and the same patient look was on his face when he gave out the next him. This piece begun with a long duet between the tenor and the alto, and Betsy Bobbet, by open war and stratagem, had carried the day, and was to sing this part alone with the tenor. She knew that the editor of the Gimlet was the only tenor singer in the quire. She was so proud and happy thinking she was going to sing alone with him, that not rightly sensin' where she was and what she was about, she pitched her part too low, and here was where I had my trial with Josiah.

There is no more sing to Josiah Allen than there is to a one horse wagon, and I have tried to convince him of it, but I can't, and he will probably go down to the grave thinking he can sing bass. But there is no sing in it, that I will contend for with my last breath, it is nothing more nor less than a roar. But one thing I will give him the praise of, he is a dreadful willin' man in the time of trouble, and if he takes it into his head that it is his duty to sing you can't stop him no more than you can stop a clap of thunder, and when he does let his voice out, he lets it out strong, and can tell you. As Betsy finished the first time I heard him say to himself:

"It is a shame for one woman to sing base alone, in a room full of men." And before I could prevent it, he struck in with his awful energy. You couldn't hear Betsy's voice nor the editor's no more than you could hear 2 flies buzzing in a car whistle. It was dreadful. And as he finished the first verse, I lame, and says I, "If you sing another verse in that way, I'll part with you," says I, "what do you mean, Josiah Allen?"

Says he, lookin' down on me with the perspiration on a pourin' down his face:

"I am a singin' base."

Says I, "Do you set down and behave yourself; he has pitched it too low, it haint base, Josiah Allen."

Says he, "I know better, Samantha; it is base. I guess I know base when I hear it." But I still held him by the vest, determined that he shouldn't start off agin if I could hinder it, and just at that minute the duet began agin, and Sophrenia Gowdey took advantage of Betsy's indignation and surprise, and took the part right out of her mouth, and struck in with the Editor of the Gimlet after him too, and she broke out with the courtesiest variations you ever heard. The warblings, and quaverings, and shakings she put in was the courtesiest of anything I ever heard. And thankful was I that it took up Josiah's attention so, that he sank down on his seat and listened to 'em with breathless awe, and never offered to put in his note at all.

I waited till they got through singin' and then I whispered to him, and says I,

"Now do you keep still for the rest of this meetin', Josiah Allen."

Says he, "As long as I call myself a man, I will have the privilege of singin' base."

"Sing," says I, in a tone almost cold enough to make his whiskers frosty, "I'd call it singin', if I was you." It worried me all through meetin' time, and I don't know as I was ever more thankful than when he dropped off into a sweet sleep just before meetin' was out. He never heard 'em sing the last time, and I had to hunch him for the benediction.

A Laugh in Church.

She sat on the sliding cushion,
The dear wee woman of four;
Her feet in their shiny slippers,
Hung dangling above the floor.
She meant to be good; she had promised,
And so, with her big brown eyes,
She stared at the meeting-house windows,
And counted the crawling flies.

She looked far up at the preacher;
But she thought of the honeybees
Droning away in the blossoms
That whitened the cherry trees.
She thought of the broken basket,
Where, curled in a dusk heap,
Three sleek, round puppies, with frisky ears,
Lay snuggled and fast asleep.

Such soft, warm bodies to cuddle,
Such queer little hearts to beat,
Such swift, red tongues to kiss you,
Such sprawling, cushiony feet!
She could feel in her clasping fingers
The touch of the satiny skin,
And a cold, wet nose exploring
The dimples under her chin.

Then a sudden ripple of laughter
Ran over the parted lips,
So quick that she could not catch it
With her rosy finger-tips.
The people whispered: "Bless the child!"
As each one waked from a nap;
But the dear wee woman hid her face
For shame in her mother's lap.

—Emily Huntington Miller.

"Be Ye Kind."

"Be ye kind to one another,"
Little sister, little brother;
Hear the gentle Master saying—
Heed his words, no more delaying:
"Be ye kind."

"Be ye kind" for tears are falling,
"Be ye kind," 'tis Love's voice calling;
Little lives are often dreary,
Little hearts grow often weary:
"Be ye kind."

"Be ye kind," lest your to-morrow
May bring bitter pain and sorrow,
For the words of cheer unspoken,
For the links of love's chain broken:
"Be ye kind."

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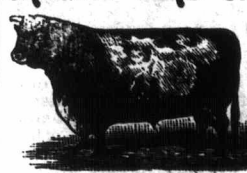
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