

# The Weekly Observer

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### His Care.

God holds the key of all unknown,  
And I am glad;  
If other hands should hold the key,  
Or if he trusted to me,  
I might be sad.

What if to-morrow cars were here  
Without it's rest?  
I'd rather He unlock the day,  
And all the hours swing open say:  
"My will is best."

The very dimness of my sight  
Makes me secure,  
For groping in my misty way  
I feel His hand, I hear His say,  
"My help is sure."

I cannot read His future plan,  
But this I know;  
I have the smiling of His face,  
And all the refuge of His grace,  
While here below.

Enough: this covers all my want,  
And so I rest;  
For what I cannot He can see,  
And in His care I sure shall be  
Forever blest.

### Artie's "Amen."

By Paul Hamilton Hayne.

They were Methodists (twain, of the an-  
cient school,  
Who always followed the wholesome rule  
That whenever the preacher in meeting  
said

"Amen" that was good for the heart and head,  
His hearers should pour their feelings out  
In a loud "Amen" or a godly shout.

Three children had they, all honest boys,  
Whose youthful sorrows and youthful joys  
They shared, as your loving parents will,  
While teaching them over through good  
and ill.

One day—'twas a bleak, cold Sabbath  
morning—  
When the sky was dark and the earth  
forlorn—  
These three little children all alone  
Were left by the elder folk at home.

But scarce had they gone when the  
wooded frame  
Was seen by the tall stove-pipe flame;  
And out of their reach, high, high and  
higher,  
Rose the red coil of serpent fire.

With startled sight for a while they gazed,  
As the pipe grew hot and the wood-work  
blazed;  
Then up, though his heart beat wild  
with dread,  
The eldest climbed to a shelf or head,  
And soon, with a sputter and his  
steam,

The flame died out like an angry dream.  
When the father and mother came back  
to pray—  
They had gone to a neighboring church  
to pray—  
Each looked, but with half-averted eye,  
On the awful doom which had just passed  
by.

And then the father began to praise  
His boys with a tender sweet amazement.  
"Why, how did you manage, Tom, to  
climb  
And quench the threatening flames in  
time  
To save your brothers, and save your-  
self?"

"Well, father I mounted the strong oak  
shelf  
By help of the table standing high."  
"And what," quoth the father, suddenly,  
Turning to Jimmy, the next in age,  
"Did you do to quiet the fiery rage?"

"I brought the pail, and the dipper too,  
And so it was that the water flew  
All over the flames, and quenched them  
quite."

A mist came over the father's sight,  
A mist of pride and of righteous joy,  
As he turned at last to his youngest boy,  
A gleeful grin scarce three years old,  
With his dimpling cheeks and his hair  
of gold.

"Come, Artie, I'm sure you weren't  
afraid."  
Now tell me in what way you tried to aid  
This fight with the fire. "Too small  
am I."

Artie replied, with a half-drawn sigh,  
"To fetch like Jimmy and work like Tom;  
So I stood just here for a minute dumb,  
Because, papa, I was frightened some;  
But I prayed 'Our Father'; and then—  
and then  
I shouted as loud as I could, 'Amen.'"

### That Englishman.

By May Preston.

"I am not going to like him."  
"Ned!" said Mrs. Ellis, in the reproving  
mother-tone that a boy learns to dread.

"Mamma, how can I? And insuffer-  
ably Englishman! I don't know them—  
riding by the house every day, their  
English settlement, with veils on their  
heads, like girls, and such preposterous  
costumes! As if a fellow couldn't go  
bustling without leather stockings, knee  
breeches and an abbreviated jacket!  
Look like a lot of jockeys!"

"You don't know, my son, that this  
young gentleman is insufferable. Your  
father seems particularly pleased with  
his manners—think he will be an ad-  
vantage to you as a companion.

The last sentence touched the sensitive  
pride of the boy, and he turned sharply,  
that he might not further offend his  
mother's sense of hospitality by making  
more disparaging remarks about his ex-  
pected guest.

son to visit Florida, while in the States,"  
—is that any reason for my being bored  
by British strippings of all my precious  
vacation? But I suppose I'll have to  
swallow him in silence, for the little  
mother's sake. Oh, I'll be proper, polite,  
young Rexford. So you're to be a great  
advantage to me, are you? and Ned  
frowned savagely.

The pleasure of seeing his father again  
after long absence in England, and the  
modest, genial manner of Charlie Rex-  
ford, vanished Ned's grievances, for a time,  
and at the end of a week, the two boys  
with rifles over their shoulders, were walk-  
ing briskly through a Florida forest,  
keeping step and talking gaily like sworn  
comrades.

The pine forest, dark and stately, af-  
forded a welcome shelter from the  
scorching sun beating so mercilessly upon  
the sandy road they had been traversing,  
and the two young sportsmen halted in  
the shade, on the shore of a clear, blue  
lake. Bright, many young fellows they  
were, with the clear eyes and smooth,  
fresh skin, that bespeak good health and  
good spirits. Sixteen-year-old Ned, a  
year younger than Charlie, but yet the  
taller of the two, leaned against a live  
oak and lifted his broad palmated hat,  
showing a well-shaped head, and moist,  
dark rings of hair around a fine fore-  
head.

"Where can the boat be, Ellis?" asked  
his companion, who had thrown him-  
self at full length upon the russet car-  
pet of pine needles.

"Ask me no more; the moon may  
draw the sea, as your Laureate says; but  
no moon could draw Abbot here until he  
comes of his own sweet will. He cer-  
tainly promised to meet us here, and as  
certainly he hasn't kept the trust—as  
yet."

"Did you pay him in advance?"  
"Charles the Cynic! No, I just let  
him see a gold piece, and then put it up  
again—I don't think he'll fail us."

Just then a sound of oars caught the  
ear of the other lad, and he started to  
his feet as a boat shot into sight.

"Hello! Hello! We've been waiting  
for you," and seizing a strong branch  
of jessamine that overhung the water, Ned  
swung himself down into "the little row-  
boat, and shook hands heartily with the  
disheveled, a long, uncouth specimen of  
the Florida "Cracker." Almost as war-  
ily as an Indian, only his pale blue eyes  
and sandy hair showed his Saxon origin.

Without taking the trouble to remove  
a quid of tobacco from his mouth, he  
said—of drawn rather—"You fellows  
from the North air in such a mighty  
hurry. Down here we take the 'long  
way. Air the rifle at the landing, or  
did you all pack 'em along o' you?"

"Pack them along o'?" whispered  
Charles to his friend, as he, too, sprang  
into the boat, with the guns. What  
does he mean?"

"Hu-uh! 'Pack' means 'carry,'"  
explained Ned sotto voce: aloud:  
"What's the prospect for alligators to-  
day, Abbot?"

"Wall, mighty uncertain. You see  
it's a pore time for them varmints now—  
so many firms 'at 'em and skerin' 'em—  
—hain't much like the old times hyar  
when they was as thick as skaters and  
nigh as tame. Most of 'em he been  
skert away by them English thump-  
—padding Master Ned! I can forget your  
friend hyar come outen that that next!  
You all been in Florida long?" turning  
to Charles Rexford.

"A few weeks only," said the young  
fellow, with his ready bluish and frank  
blue eyes, that opened a little curiously  
upon this new specimen of the American  
citizen. "Landed in New York on the  
7th of March. I like the States, have  
had an awfully jolly time so far. I'm  
sorry, Abbot, that you don't like English  
men," he added, shyly, "for I find Amer-  
icans the best of good fellows—honest,  
Ellis!" and he gave Ned an affectionate  
glance.

The Cracker's face flushed over all of  
its sun-burnt surface. Nothing disturbs  
the Florida as much as to fear he has  
been guilty of rudeness.

"Pardon, sir," he said awkwardly,  
"You all don't seem to be one of the kin'  
I don't like. An' you're bein' a chum of  
my friend Ned hyar tells me you air a  
good sort. But the fellers down to the  
Settlement haint took no pains to be liked—  
—drinkin' and cussin' and shootin'  
game right and left—and they don't look  
attractive, with their short pants and  
vests a flyin'—a mighty pore lot to my  
thinkin'—meanin' no offence to you  
all, sence you all don't resemble 'em."

"Thanks," cried Charles, with a laugh.  
"I'll try to deserve your good opinion.  
What does he call me 'you all' for?" as-  
ide to Ned.

"Oh, it's just 'Cracker' for you." No-  
body can explain the suffix. You'll get  
accustomed to the dialect—you may  
adopt it, old fellow, and go back to mer-  
ric England with your mouth full of  
'mighty' and right pearts."

"If you all 'rove a true prophet,  
my friends will be 'skert' remarked  
Charles, with a mischievous glance to-  
ward Abbot, who was carefully scanning  
the shores of the lake.

"Hyar it is, boys!" he cried sudden-  
ly.

"Here's what?"

"The openin' inter the river. Don't  
you see? Ther'! and Abbot pointed to  
a clump of huge water oaks heavily  
draped with gray festoons of Spanish moss.  
"Openin'! No! It looks more like a  
'closing.' You don't row straight  
through the heart of a tree to reach the  
river, do you?"

"Wait till you get ther'," laughed Ab-  
bot, good-naturedly. "Fellers do get tired  
sometimes 'naturally' alligators. Now he-  
down and be keerful."

A few dexterous strokes brought the  
boat under the drooping branches of a  
monster water-oak. A heavy gray cur-  
tain of moss swept across their faces, as  
they passed under the pendant boughs.  
Then they looked up into a great, dusky  
dome of larch green the huge trunk,  
column like, under the long-arching  
branches, beneath which the narrow  
river flowed with swift and deep current.

"Them branches hav a skech of a  
hundred feet," remarked Abbot, looking  
up. "An' five men couldn't grip han's  
'round that trunk."

"The 'river' was little more than a  
winding lagoon linking two lakes. After  
it passed out from the sheltering oaks, it  
widened into a sluggish broad stream,  
making its slimy way with such serpen-  
tine contortions, that Charles was un-  
pleasantly reminded of the sinuous path  
of a moccasin. The low shores were  
covered with shrub palmetto and a tangle  
of blackberry vines laden with ripe fruit.

"Let's land and get some berries—I'm  
thirsty," cried Ned.

"Land in that jungle!" exclaimed  
Charles. "No, thank you! It is a reg-  
ular swamp? We'd be up to our eyes  
in mud, and it looks like a real Eden  
for snakes. Anyway, you don't mean to  
land in such a marsh as that!"

Certainly not, if you are afraid, Rex-  
ford, responded Ned, with a touch of  
contempt in his tone. It was the first  
jarring note. Rexford's face flushed an-  
grily, and the flash in his blue eyes showed  
more of the Celt than of the Saxon.  
But he repressed retort, and the boat  
crept down the river under Abbot's  
slacking strokes.

"See hyar, boy," the Cracker said, at  
length, "I'm tuckered out. S'pose you  
sit take a pull. You're a heap younger  
than me."

Ned laughed, and stretched his long  
limbs lazily. "Too warm, my good Char-  
on! I'll row to-night, coming back in  
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Charles started up, "Let me take the  
oars, Abbot, I'm not afraid to work, he  
said, with bitter emphasis.

Ned stared. "Oh, if blistered hands  
amuse you—very well! But Abbot is a  
humbler, he's the strongest man I know.  
Your sympathy is wasted on him, I as-  
sure you! Abbot! I'm going to sleep,  
and do you get a sharp look out for  
game—if Rexford rows you'll have no-  
thing else to do. Whimper 'gators' in my  
ear, and I promise to be awake." Ned  
drove his broad hat over his eyes, while  
Charles rowed on in sullen silence.

"Hyar are the Oaks," said Abbot at  
the end of an hour, during which not a  
sawfish had been seen; and Ned started  
up at once.

"Oh, I must stop and see Mammy!"  
"Who's Mammy?" asked Charles, rest-  
ing on his oars, and turning his face  
about.

"Oh, the dearest old creature in the  
wide world. She'd never forgive me if  
I should pass the Oaks' without visit-  
ing her. Pall toward the cypress stump  
that's a good fellow!" cried Ned, quite  
forgetting, in his eagerness, to be oddly  
polite to "that Englishman," as he had  
intended. Charles brightened and re-  
sponded genially, as he skillfully brought  
the boat to land. The river curved  
around the cape higher than the surround-  
ing swampy tere, and covered with  
beautiful live-oaks. Behind them a  
small orange grove, a tiny garden, and  
an old cabin, over which rose-bushes  
climbed in laughing luxuriance. An  
old negro came running out of the open  
door to meet them. Her bright brown  
flushed like a red bird among the rose-  
bushes; and in a moment she had Ned  
in her arms, laughing and crying to-  
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"Is it you, honey? Laws, child, I  
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