

ANGEL FOOTPRINTS.

God made the earth: He saw 'twas good,
Green with all creatures' needful food,
Shaded with groves, and bright with rills,
Diversified with plains and hills,
Mountain and valley, marsh and dell,
The whole creation pleased Him well.
The birds trilled all the happy days,
The golden sun gave glorious light,
The twilight came, and then the night,
With moon's soft splendor, starlight's ray,
The night was almost fair as day,
But when the king of day had set
There seemed some beauty lacking yet.

So, then He called his angel host
To search the world from coast to coast,
Across each plain, beside each brook,
To search out every sunny nook,
To go where mountains rear their heads,
Beside the rivers' rocky beds,
O'er knolls wood-crowned, in forest shade,
In every dell and woodland glade,
O'er every crag and headland bold,
O'er rocky steep and grassy wold,
Until they had, without a doubt,
Searched every nook and cranny out.

At His command the angels flew:
They searched the whole world through and through,
And lo! when dawned the morning hours,
The earth was beautiful with flowers.

In every spot by foot creased,
In every place by finger pressed,
Wherever seraph's wing had fanned,
Or garment trailed, of angel hand,
There sprang the myriad flowers so bright
They rivalled all the stars of night.

'Tis given to him who sows the seed
To say it shall be flower or weed;
Then let us sow with loving hand,
These "angel footprints" through the land.

Mrs. J. M. K.

AUNT ANNIE'S TEETH.

BY SHEERWOOD BONNER.

Aunt Anniky was an African dame fifty years old, and of an imposing presence. As a wattle-maker she possessed a gift beyond the common, but her unapproachable talent lay in the province of nursing. She seemed born for the benefit of sick people. She should have been painted with the apple of healing in her hand. For the rest, she was a funny, illiterate old darky, vain, affable, and neat as a pink.

On one occasion my mother had a dangerous illness. Aunt Anniky nursed her through it, giving herself no rest night nor day until her patient had come "back to de walks an' ways ob life," as she expressed the dear mother's recovery. My father, overjoyed and grateful, felt that we owed this result quite as much to Aunt Anniky as to our family doctor, so he announced his intention of making her a handsome present, and, like King Herod, left her free to choose what it should be. I shall never forget how Aunt Anniky looked as she stood there smiling and bowing, and bobbing the funniest little courtesies all the way down to the ground.

And you would never guess what it was the old woman asked for.

"Well, Mars' Charles," said she (she had been one of our old servants, and always called by father Mars' Charles), "to tell you de livin' truth, my soul an' body is a-yearnin' for a han'-sum chancy set o' tee!"

"A set of teeth!" cried father, surprised enough; "and have you none left of your own?"

"I has gummed it fur a good many ye's," said Aunt Anniky, with a sigh; "but not wishin' ter be ongrateful ter my obligations, I owns ter havin' five natural tee. But dey is po' sogers; dey shirks battle. One ob dem's got a little somethin' in it as lively as a speared worm, an' I tell you when anything teches it, hot or cold, it jest makes me dance! An' another is in my top jaw, an' ain't got no match fur it in de bottom one; an' one is broke off nearly to de root; an' de las' two is so yaller dat I's ashamed ter show 'em in company, an' so I lift my turkey tail ter my mouf every time I laughs or speaks."

Father turned to mother with a musing air. "The curious student of humanity," he remarked, "traces resemblances where they are not obviously conspicuous. Now at the first blush one would not think of any common ground of meeting for our Aunt Anniky and the Empress Josephine. Yet that fine French lady introduced the fashion of handkerchiefs by continually raising delicate lace *mouchoirs* to her lips to hide her bad teeth. Aunt Anniky lifts her turkey tail! It really seems that human beings should be classed by *strata*, as if they were metals in the earth. Instead of dividing by notions, let us class by qualities. So we might find Turk, Jew, Christian, fashionable lady and washer-woman, master and slave, hanging together, like cats on a clothes-line, by some connecting cord of affinity—"

"In the mean time," said my mother, mildly, "Aunt Anniky is waiting to know if she is to have her teeth."

"Oh, surely, surely," cried father, coming out of the clouds with a start. "I am going to the village to-morrow, Anniky, in the spring wagon. I will take you with me, and we will see what the dentist can do for you."

"Bless yo' heart, Mars' Charles!" said the delighted Anniky; "you're jest as good as yo' blood an' yo' name, an' mo' I couldn't say."

The morrow came, and with it Aunt Anniky, gorgeously arrayed in a flaming red calico, a baidana handkerchief, and a string of carved

yellow beads that glistened on her bosom like fresh buttercups on a hill-slope.

I had petitioned to go with the party, for, as we lived on a plantation, a visit to the village was something of an event.

A brisk drive soon brought us to the centre of "the Square." A glittering sign hung brazenly from a high window on its western side, bearing in raised black letters the name Doctor Alonzo Babb.

Dr. Babb was the dentist and the old fish of our village. He beams in my memory as a big round man, with hair and smiles all over his face, who talked incessantly, and said things to make your blood run cold.

"Do you see this ring?" he said, as he bustled about, polishing his instruments, and making his preparations for the sacrifice of Aunt Anniky. He held up his right hand, on the forefinger of which glistened a ring the size of a dog-collar. "Now what d'ye s'pose that's made of?"

"Brass," suggested father, who was funny when not philosophical.

"Brass?" cried Dr. Babb, with a withering look: "it's virgin gold, that ring is. And where d'ye s'pose I found the gold?"

My father ran his hands into his pockets in a retrospective sort of way.

"In the mouths of my patients, every grain of it," said the dentist, with a perfectly diabolical smack of the lips: "old fillings—plugs, you know—that I saved, and had made up into this shape. Good deal of sentiment about such a ring as this."

"Sentiment of a mixed nature, I should say," murmured my father, with a grimace.

"Mixed?" rather! A speck here, a speck there. Sometimes an eye, oftener a jaw, occasionally a front. More than a hundred men, I s'pose, have helped in the cause."

"Law, doctor, I you beats de birds, you does," cried Aunt Anniky, whose head was as flat as the floor where her reverence bump should have been; "you know how dey snatches de wool from every bush to make dem nests."

"Lots of company for me that ring is," said the doctor, ignoring the pertinent, or impertinent, interruption. "Often, as I sit in the twilight, I twirl it around and around, a-thinkin' of the wagon-loads of food it has masticated, the blood that has flowed over it, the groans that it has cost. Now, old lady, if you will sit just here—"

He motioned Aunt Anniky to the chair, into which she dropped in a lump sort of way, recovering herself immediately, however, and sitting bolt-upright in a rigid attitude of defiance. Some moments of persuasion were necessary before she could be induced to lean back and allow Dr. Babb's fingers on her nose while she breathed the laughing-gas; but once settled, the expression faded from her countenance almost as quickly as a magic lantern picture vanishes. I watched her nervously, my attention divided between her vacant-looking face and a dreadful picture on the wall. It represented Dr. Babb himself minus the hair, but with double the number of smiles, standing by a patient from whose mouth he had apparently just extracted a huge molar that he held triumphantly in his torseps. A gray-haired old gentleman regarded the pair with benevolent interest. The photograph was entitled, "His First Tooth."

"Attracted by that picture," said Dr. Alonzo, affably, his fingers on Aunt Anniky's pulse. "My par had that struck off the first time I ever got a tooth out. That's par with the gray hair and the benediction attitude. Tell you, he was proud of me! I had such an awful tussle with that tooth! Thought the old fellow's jaw was bound to break! But I got it out, and after that my par took me with him 'round the country—starring the provinces, you know—and I practiced on the natives."

By this time Aunt Anniky was well under the influence of the gas, and in an incredibly short space of time her five teeth were out. As she came to herself, I am sorry to say, she was rather silly, and quite mortified me by winking at Dr. Babb in the most confidential manner, and repeating over and over again, "Honey, yer ain't half as smart as yer thinks yer is!"

After a few weeks of sore gums Aunt Anniky appeared radiant with her new teeth. The effect was certainly funny. In the first place, blackness itself was not so black as Aunt Anniky. She looked as if she had been dipped in ink and polished off with lamp-black. Her very eyes showed but the faintest rim of white. But those teeth were white enough to make up for everything. She had selected them herself, and the little ridiculous milk-white things were more fitted for the mouth of a Titania than for the great cavern in which Aunt Anniky's tongue moved and had its being. The gums above them were black, and when she spread her wide mouth in a laugh, it always reminded me of a piano lid opening suddenly and showing all the black and white ivories at a glance. Aunt Anniky laughed a good deal too, after getting her teeth in, and declared she had never been so happy in her life. It was observed, to her credit, that she put on no airs of pride, but was as sociable as ever, and made nothing of taking out her teeth and handing them around for inspection among her curious and admiring visitors. On that principle of human nature which glories in attracting attention to the weakest part, she delighted in tough meats, stale bread, green fruits, and all other entables that test the biting quality of the teeth. But finally destruction came upon them in a way that no one could have foreseen.

Uncle Ned was an old colored man who lived alone in a cabin not very far from Aunt Ann-

iky's, but very different from hers in point of cleanliness and order. In fact, Uncle Ned's wealth, apart from a little corn crop, consisted in a lot of fine young pigs that ran in and out of the house at all times, and were treated by their owner as tenderly as if they had been his children. One fine day the old man fell sick of a fever, and he sent in haste for Aunt Anniky to come and nurse him. He agreed to give her a pig in case she brought him through; should she fail to do so, she was to receive no pay. Well, Uncle Ned got well, and the next thing we heard was that he refused to pay the pig. My father was usually called on to settle all the disputes in the neighborhood; so one morning Anniky and Ned appeared before him, both looking very indignant.

"I'd jes like tell yer, Mars' Charles, began Uncle Ned, "ov the trick dis uester'ble ole nigger played on me."

"Go on, Ned," said my father, with a resigned air.

"Well, it wer de fift' night o' de fever," said Uncle Ned, "an' I wuz a-tossin' an' a-moanin', an' ole Anniky jes lay back in her cheer an' snored as ef a dozen frogs wuz in her throat. I wuz a-perishin' an' a-burnin' wid thirst—an' I hollered to Anniky; but lor! I might as well a hollered to a tombstone! I wuz ice! I wanted: an' I knowed dar wuz a glass somewhere on my table wid cracked ice in it. Lor! lor! how dry I wuz! I neber longed for whiskey in my born days ez I panted for dat ice. It wuz powerful dark, fur the grose wuz low in de lamp, an' de wick spluttered wid a dyin' flame. But I felt aroun', feeble like an' slow, till my fingers touched a glass. I pulled it to me, an' I run my han' in an' grabbed de ice, as I s'posed, an' flung it in my mouf, an' crunched an' crunched—"

Here there was an awful pause. Uncle Ned pointed his thumb at Anniky, looked wildly at my father, and said, in a hollow voice: "It was *Anniky's* trick."

My father threw back his head and laughed as if he had never heard him laugh. Mother from her sofa joined in. I was doubled up like a jackknife in the corner. But as for the principals in the affair, neither of their faces moved a muscle. They saw no joke. Aunt Anniky, in a dreadful, muffled, squishy sort of voice, took up the tale:

"Neksh ting I knowed, Marsh Charles, somebody's sheezing me by de head, a-jawmin' it up 'gin de wall, a-jawin' at me like de angel Gabriel at de rich ole sinners in de bad plashe—an' dar wash ole Ned a-sittin' like a black cat, an' a-howlin' so dreadful dat I tough; he was de debil; an' when I got de light, dar wash my beautiful chany tee! a-flung aroun' like scattered seed-corn 'on de flo', an' Ned a-swearin' he'd have de law o' me."

"An' arter all dat," broke in Uncle Ned, "she purtends to lay a claim fur my pig. But I says no, sir; I don't pay nobody nothin' who's played me a trick like dat."

"Trick!" said Aunt Anniky, scornfully: "whar's de trick? I tink I wanted yer ter eat my tee! An' furdemor, Marsh Charles, dar's jes dis about it. When dat night set in, dar warn't no mo' hope fur old Ned dan for a foundered sheep. Laws-a-mussy! dat's why I went ter sleep. I wanted ter hev strengt' ter put on his burial clo'es in de mornin'. But don' yer see, Marsh Charles, dat when he got so mad, it brought a sweat dat *broke de fever*. It saved him! But fur all dat, arter munnchin' an' manglin' my chany tee, he has de impudence of tryin' to 'prive me of de pig dat I honestly 'arned."

It was a hard case. Uncle Ned sat there a very image of injured dignity, while Aunt Anniky bound a red handkerchief around her mouth and fanned herself with her turkey tail.

"I am sure I don't know how to settle the matter," said father, helplessly. "Ned, I don't see but that you'll have to pay up."

"Neber, Mars' Charles—neber."

"Well, suppose you get married," suggested father, brilliantly: "that will unite your interests, you know."

Aunt Anniky tossed her head. Uncle Ned was old, wizened, wrinkled as a raisin, but he eyed Anniky all over with a supercilious gaze, and said, with dignity, "Ef I wanted ter marry, I could git a likely young gal."

All the four points of Anniky's turban shook with indignation. "Pay me fur dem chany tee!" she hissed.

Some visitors interrupted the dispute at this time, and the two old darkies went away.

A week later Uncle Ned appeared, with rather a sheepish look.

"Well, Mars' Charles," he said, "I's 'bout concluded dat I'll marry Anniky."

"Ah! is that so?"

"Peers like it's de onliest way I kin save my pigs," said Uncle Ned, with a sigh. "When she's married, she's bound ter 'bey me. Women, 'bey your husbands; dat's what de good Book says."

"Yes, she will *bey* you, I don't doubt," said my father, making a pun that Uncle Ned could not appreciate.

"An' ef ever she opens her jaw ter me 'bout dem ar tee," he went on, "I'll *wash* her."

Uncle Ned tottered on his legs like an unscrewed fruit stand, and I had my own opinion as to his "washing" Aunt Anniky. This opinion was confirmed the next day when my father offered her his congratulations. "You are old enough to know your own mind," he remarked.

"I sole, maybe," said Anniky, "but so is a oak-tree, and it's wigoous, I reckon. I's a purty wigoous sort o' growth myself, and I

reckon I'll have my own way wid Ned. I'm gwine ter fatten dem pigs o' his'n, an' you see ef I don't sell 'em nex' Christmas fur money 'nough ter git a new string o' chany tee."

"Look here, Anniky," said father, with a burst of generosity, "you and Ned will quarrel about those teeth till the day of doom; so I will made you a wedding present of another set, that you may begin married life in harmony."

Aunt Anniky expressed her gratitude. "An' *dis* time," she said, with sudden fury, "I sleeps wid 'em in."

The teeth were presented, and the wedding preparations began. The expectant bride went over to Ned's cabin and gave it such a cleaning up as it had never had. But Ned did not seem happy. He devoted himself entirely to his pigs, and wandered about, looking more wizened every day. Finally he came to our gate and beckoned to me mysteriously.

"Come over to my house, honey," he whispered, "an' bring a pen an' ink an' a piece o' paper wid yer. I wants you ter write me a letter."

I ran into the house for my little writing-desk, and followed Uncle Ned to his cabin.

"Now, honey," he said, after barring the door carefully, "don't you ax me no questions, but jest put down de words dat comes out o' my mouf on dat ar paper."

"Very well, Uncle Ned: go on."

"Anniky Hobbleson," he began, "dat weddin' ain't a-gwine ter come off. You cleans up too much ter suit me. I ain't used ter so much water splashin' aroun'. Dirt is warnin'. Spec' I'd freeze dis winter if you wuz here. An' you got too much tongue. Besides, I's got another wife over in Tipper. An' I ain't a-gwine ter marry. As fur havin' de law, I's a-leavin' dese parts, an' I takes de pigs wid me. Yer can't fin' dem, an' yer can't fin' me. *Fur I ain't a-gwine ter marry.* I wuz born a bachelor, an' a bachelor will I represent myself befo' de judgment seat. If you gives yer promise ter say no mo' bout dis marryin' business, p'raps I'll come back some day. So no mo' at present from your humble worshipper.

NED CUDDY."

"Isn't that last part rather inconsistent?" said I, greatly amused.

"Yes, honey, if yer says so: an' it's kind o' soothin' to de feelin's of a woman, yer know."

I wrote it all down, and read it aloud to Uncle Ned.

"Now, my chile," he said, "I'm a-gwine ter git on my mule soon as de moon rises ter-night, an' drive my pigs ter 'ol' water Gap, whar I'll stay an' fish. Soon as I'm well gone, you take dis letter ter Anniky, but *min'* yer don't tell whar I's gone. An' if she takes it all right, an' promises ter let me alone, you write me a letter, an' I'll git de fast Methodist preacher I run across in de woods to read it ter me. Den, ef it's all right, I'll come back an' weed yer flower yardin fur yer as purty as preachin'."

I agreed to do all Uncle Ned asked, and we parted like conspirators. Sure enough, the next morning Uncle Ned was missing, and after waiting a reasonable time, I explained the matter to my parents, and went over with his letter to Aunt Anniky.

"Powers above!" was her only comment as I got through the remarkable epistle. Then, after a pause to collect her thoughts, she seized me by the shoulder, saying: "Run to yo' pappy, honey, quick, an' ax him if he's gwine ter stick ter his bargain 'bout de tee. Yer know he p'intedly said dey was a *widin'* gif."

Of course my father sent word that she must keep the teeth, and my mother added a message of sympathy, with a present of a pocket-handkerchief to dry Aunt Anniky's tears.

"But 'It's all right," said that sensible old soul, opening her piano lid with a cheerful laugh. "Bless you, chile, it wuz de tee! I wanted, not de man! An', honey, you jes sen' word to dat shifless ole nigger, ef you know whar he's gone, to come back home an' git his crap in de groun': an' as fur as I'm consarned, you jes let him know dat I wouldn't pick him up wid a ten-foot pole, not ef he wuz ter beg me on his knees till de millennial day."

HUMOROUS.

EDITORS are privileged characters. They have a right to be ink-consistent.

THE Boston *Star* hears it rumored that divorce and perjury are American monopolies.

Hood called the slamming of a door by a person in a passion "a wooden oath."

"No, George," she said, in response to his question, "it is not true that a string of new belt buckles in a shop window would make any woman lose a train; but," she added, musingly, "sometimes she might have to run a little."

THE TRAGEDY.

He sits alone, in a darkened room,—
Alone, in the falling light;
Why is his brow so heavy with gloom,
And his cheeks so deathly white?

But though his heart is sick with care,
His courage never bleaches;
His eyes are fixed in a glassy stare,
What is it his firm hand clenches?

A little courage, he murmurs. Yes!
A little, and all is won.
A choking gurgle, more or less,
A gasp, and the deed is done.

Without a shudder, or eyelid wink,
Ah! it makes the heart recoil;
That he so truly, calmly drank
A Glass of Castor Oil!