DENTON JOURNAL.

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This Is the Busy Season

with the agriculturist, who will find, as the season progresses, that there will be many things needed in his work—things which cost little and yet add greatly to the satisfaction of life on the farm.

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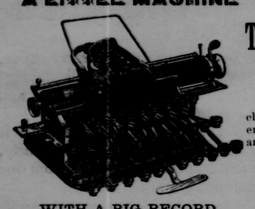

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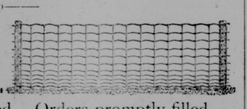

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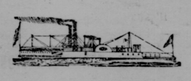

On and after August 15th, 1896, steamers will leave Pier 5 Light Street Wharf daily except Sundays at 7 p. m., for Oxford, Trappe, Cambridge, Chancellor's, Clark's, Medford's (Choptank), Lloyd's, Dover Bridge, Kingston, McCarty's, Ganey's, Todd's, Downes', Towers', Williston, Tuckahoe Bridge, Reese's, Coward's, Covey's, Hillsboro and Queen Anne.

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Steamer leaves Hillsboro Sundays at 6 a. m.; Coward's, 7 a. m.; Williston, 8.30 a. m.; Medford's (Choptank) 11 a. m.; Cambridge 12.30; Trappe 1.30 p. m.; Oxford 2.45 p. m., arriving in Baltimore at 8 p. m. Sundays.

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FROM "THE HYMN TO THE SEA."

Miser whose coffered recesses the spoils of eternity cumber,
Spendthrift foaming thy soul wildly in fury away,
We, self ambrous mortals, our own mutitudinous image
Seeking in all we behold, seek it and find it in thee!
Seek it and find it when o'er us the exquisite fabric of silence
Perilous turreted hangs, trembles and duhactly falls;
When the aerial armies engage amid orgies of music,
Braying of arrogant brass, whimper of querulous reeds;
When at his banquet summer is purple and drowsed with repletion;
When to his anchorite board taciturn winter repairs;
When by the tempest are scattered magnificent ashes of autumn;
When upon orchard and lane breaks the white foam of the spring;
When in extravagant revel the dawn, a bacchante upleaping,
Spills on the tresses of night vintages golden and red;
When as a token at parting munificent day for remembrance
Gives unto men that forget Ophirs of fabulous ore;
When invincibly rushing in luminous palpitant deluge,
Hot from the summits of life, poured is the lava of noon;
When as yonder, thy mistress, at height of her mutable glories,
Wise from the magical cast comes like a sorceress pale,
Ah, she comes, she rises—impassive, emotionless, bloodless,
Wasted and ashen of cheek, zoning her ruins with pearl.
Once she was warm, she was joyous, desire in her pulses abounding.
Surely thou lovedst her well, then, in her conquering youth!
Surely not all unimpassioned at the sound of thy rough serenading,
She, from the balconied night unto her melodist leaned—
Leaned unto thee, her bondsman, who keepest today her commandments,
All for the sake of old love, dead at thy heart though it lie.

—William Watson.

THE BLACK VIRGIN.

Upon one of the rugged coasts of Finland, facing the little fishing village of Liedsmarken, there rises a barren peak, a solitary rock in the middle of the sea. When the weather is fine, you can distinguish, from the coast, the jagged outlines and steep slopes of this peak, its forbidding aspect unrelieved by any trace of vegetation. It is an unfavorable place for sailors and fishermen, for the sea is deep just there and landing becomes a very difficult matter as soon as the wind begins to blow a little. The only inhabitants of the rock are the sea birds, which gather there in great numbers at evening time.

As you draw near to it you can see a recess in the cliff about half way up—a recess which, with a slight stretch of the imagination, may be compared to a chapel—in which a human figure, probably the figure of a woman, has been roughly cut in the rock. The worship of this singular divinity dates back without doubt to the time of paganism. In later years it has been looked upon as the statue of a virgin. It is called the Black Virgin and is supposed to watch over the destiny of the village of Liedsmarken.

The Black Virgin, however, is not looked upon as a benevolent divinity. For a long time it exercised a fatal power, and if at the present time this power is not used it is because it was conjured many years ago by devotion and love.

Here is the story as it was told to me by a fisherman of the village:

The village of Liedsmarken has always been inhabited by fishermen and peasants, honest, poor and hardworking, and all thoroughly convinced of the power of the virgin on the rock.

Every year the virgin demanded a victim, and, as a matter of fact, each year one of the inhabitants of Liedsmarken had been struck by death—one year it would be an old man, another year a child in the cradle, a third year a brave sailor, whose frail bark would be lost in a storm.

In the year 1656 the Black Virgin was once more awaiting a victim. The year was drawing to a close—it was already in the latter half of December—but not one of the good people of Liedsmarken was missing. One of the inhabitants, however, was ill, and it was upon him, no doubt, that the Black Virgin's choice had fallen. He had only a few days more to live, for it was the 23d day of December, and it was certain that little Axel would not see the 1st of January.

Poor little Axel! He was lying in bed, his head buried in the pillow, his white hands—you could almost see through them—wandering over the rough bedclothes. The fire was crackling in the room. Outside the snow was falling, spreading its white mantle over the dark ground, and little Axel, who knew the legend, was saying to himself that the virgin of the rock had marked him and that he would soon go to sleep under the white snow.

Axel was an orphan under the care of his sister Frida, a handsome, stout hearted young woman. Night and day she sat at his bedside, holding his hand and telling him all sorts of wonderful stories, despair in her heart and tears in her eyes; yet she tried to smile and to sing, in the hope of bringing a gleam of pleasure into the boy's eyes.

Frida's resources being insufficient to meet expenses, her affianced husband, Robert, assisted her, and Frida, looking upon this help as quite natural, had accepted it, for she loved Robert, and her love was returned. Their marriage had been a settled matter for months. Every evening, after a hard day's fishing, Robert came to see Frida, but when he pressed her to fix the wedding day she shook her head and without replying looked at Axel.

That evening—the 23d of December—when Robert entered the cottage, Frida and Axel were not alone. Their neighbor, an old fisherman named Christian, was talking to Frida in a low voice while Axel slept. Robert sat down silently by the side of Frida and listened to the old man.

"Yes," said Christian, "I am quite sure that it is possible to cure Axel. People in a worse state than this poor child have been restored to health. As to the Black Virgin—well, she is not so bad as people say, and it is possible to turn her from her purpose if you choose a favorable moment."

"Alas!" said Frida. "How can I believe in so much happiness? Everything tells us that dear little Axel is doomed. My mother left him to my care, and this is all I have been able to do for him. Is it not cruel, Christian? Look how pale he is. Hark how hard it is for him to breathe. No, no, the Black Virgin has never spared a victim. My poor Axel."

"Do not say that the Black Virgin is unrelenting," said Christian gravely. "Why should I not tell you something which probably no one in the village knows? I was spared by the Black Virgin. I was as ill as your brother, but my father, a bold and vigorous seaman, went on the night of Christmas eve to the virgin herself in her chapel, and she heard his prayer, for she can refuse nothing to those who manage to reach her on that night. From that moment my strength returned, and I got well, to the great astonishment of the whole village."

Frida's eyes sparkled; her look, usually gentle and tender, became energetic and determined.

"Thank you, Christian," she said. "Your advice is good, and I will go tomorrow to the black rock."

"Alas!" sighed Christian. "It is useless to think about it. This year the Baltic is not completely frozen, and you would be obliged to cross an arm of the sea in which no boat could be taken with safety on account of the enormous blocks of ice which are floating about. A large boat would be crushed by the icebergs within a few minutes. How could you hope to succeed in a small one?"

"I will dare anything to save Axel."

Christian and Robert then endeavored to convince her of the madness of the undertaking. At first she would not listen to their arguments, but after a time, without entirely yielding, she seemed to regard them as irrefutable.

"Let us say goodby till tomorrow," she said, rising from her seat.

Robert was the last to leave. As he went out he kissed her forehead tenderly. "My Frida, I love you, I love you!" he cried. "Swear to me, Frida, dear," he added, "that whatever happens you will never forget me—never."

"Never, never, Robert, dear," she replied, resting her head on his shoulder. "Am I not wholly yours? How could I forget you?"

"Come, hurry up!" exclaimed old Christian from outside. "You evidently forget that I am waiting and that it is very cold."

And the lovers separated.

During the evening, when Frida was alone, she thought over what Robert had said before he left her and wondered why he had spoken such sad words. What did he intend to do?

Little by little she understood. Yes, there was no doubt about it. Robert had resolved to go to the rock to beg the Black Virgin to spare Axel. Why, it was certain death to try it. Axel was dear to her, but Robert must not be allowed to sacrifice himself for Axel, and sacrifice himself uselessly, for all that had been said about the virgin was only an idle, childish superstition. Christian had related a circumstance which proved nothing. No, Robert must not risk his life.

All night long Frida sat at the bedside of Axel, who slumbered with half closed eyes. She did not sleep. She pondered over Robert's words, "Swear to me that, whatever happens, you will never forget me," and she could still see fixed upon her the bold, proud and tender look of the man she loved.

The next morning—it was Christmas eve—Frida went out to find Robert.

"Robert," she said, "answer me frankly. I know you, and I know you are incapable of telling a lie. Tell me, Robert, do you think of going to the rock tonight?"

Robert lowered his head and said nothing.

"I will not have it," continued Frida. "Do you hear? I will not allow it. You have no right to risk your life in that way. Are you not the sole support of your old father? And do you think that I could live without your love, without your dear presence, especially if my silly superstition were the direct cause of your death? Hark, how the wind howls! We seldom have such a gale as this, and the sea yonder is raging. If you attempt it, Robert, I will never forgive you. See, dear, how criminal such an attempt would be. You cannot save Axel — for Christian's story is absurd—and you will perish before reaching the rock, and I should be miserable for the rest of my life."

Robert promised her everything, but he did it without really comprehending what he was doing. He only knew one thing—he must not make Frida unhappy.

"Let us go and see Axel," he said.

Axel was rather feverish that day. There was a ring in his voice, and his lips trembled. He motioned to Robert and Frida to sit down by his side, and he took Robert's hand and Frida's hand.

"You will be together," he said, "when the Black Virgin has taken me away."

Frida could not restrain her tears, and she sobbed bitterly. As for Robert, he knelt by the bedside, kissed the boy's thin hands and rushed out of the cottage.

During the winter, night falls about 2 o'clock in Finland. Without thinking, without a glance backward, Robert hurried to the beach. A wide stretch of snow covered ice lay before him. In a very short time he had crossed it. He knew that a boat was moored to an islet some distance from the beach and believed that from this point the sea was free or nearly so. He could not bear to think of Frida's grief. He must get away from it. He would go to the islet, but would not get into the boat—it would be certain death, for the wind was blowing fiercely, driving the snowflakes before it in a blinding shower and precipitating the blocks of ice against each other with great force.

However, near the islet the sea appeared pretty calm. The black rock did not seem to be so far off. "In an hour," thought Robert, "with the help of this favorable wind, I should reach the rock. Why should I not do the same as Christian's father did? I promised Frida that I would not go, but if, thanks to me, Axel should be restored to health she will pardon me. After all, it is better to struggle heroically against the waves and the blocks of ice, like a brave seaman, than to stand powerless and fearful and watch the agony of a child and the despair of a woman."

All these thoughts passed rapidly through Robert's mind. Like all men of action, he acted quickly, and, before he really knew what he was doing, he found himself in the boat, with the sail spread to the wind, holding the rudder with a firm hand as he set the boat's head to the rock.

The force of the wind nearly overturned the boat, but she righted herself gallantly and rode on the crest of the waves. Enormous blocks of ice drifted silently past like gigantic phantoms, Robert skillfully avoiding them. Many times the little craft was on the point of being sunk, but Robert was one of the most vigorous sailors of Liedsmarken, and he was nerved to the task by the thought of reaching the rock. Were not the life of Axel and the happiness of Frida at stake? What joy there would be when he returned!

In the midst of the gale, blinded by the snowflakes, his boat reeling half over, his existence threatened every minute by the gigantic blocks of ice which drifted around him, Robert went bravely on, upheld by the thought of the welcome he would receive from Frida when he brought her the news that Axel would live.

The hours passed — 9, 10, 11 o'clock—and still the little craft pursued its way, but how slowly it went! It was impossible to steer straight for the rock. Robert was obliged to steer first to this side, then to that, in order to avoid the floating ice.

At last the rock was reached. The heavy surf rendered it difficult to land; but, having selected a suitable spot, Robert lowered the sail with considerable trouble, and, taking hold of the rope, he sprang from the boat upon the ledge. His foot slipped. By a tremendous effort he managed to clutch a point of rock, and, in spite of the foaming waves, he succeeded in reaching a small platform of rock, upon which he scrambled, safe and sound. He still retained his hold of the rope, and, although the boat had been driven violently against the reef, he knew that her planks were solid, and he was not at all uneasy about getting back. Robert made his way to the figure of the Black Virgin, and, kneeling down, implored her to work a miracle—yes, a miracle, for Axel was nigh unto death. But this was the favorable night, and the virgin ought to reward the heroism of one who had gone through so many perils to implore her help.

When he had finished, he looked toward the sea.

"Am I dreaming?" he exclaimed. For out at sea was another boat, similar to his own, and this boat was apparently making for the rock. Here and there, between the blocks of ice, the second boat made its way, boldly pursuing its course in the midst of those moving mountains. There was no doubt that its destination was the rock of the Black Virgin.

A sudden thought flashed through Robert's mind and made him shiver with anxiety. Suppose it were Frida in that boat! Suppose she had been so imprudent as to undertake the journey after all! He hurried down to the sea and called to the occupant of the boat:

"Frida! Frida!"

"Robert! Robert!"

Merciful heavens! It was Frida!

But there was no time for sentiment. Never had Robert felt braver or stronger than at that moment.

"Throw me the rope!" he cried.

With all her strength Frida threw a rope, which whistled past Robert. He seized it, drew in the boat and took Frida, who was now quite exhausted, in his arms.

"Saved! We are saved!" he exclaimed thankfully.

He did not think of reproaching her for her rashness in undertaking the journey. He was too happy at finding himself by the side of the woman he loved. Both felt that Axel would not die, that the virgin would be touched by their courage.

"How did you come?" asked Robert. "That is Christian's boat, is it not? Then Christian allowed you to come? What a terrible night! Frida, my love, my love!"

The next morning, as soon as the pale December sun appeared on the horizon, they set off on their return journey, but before they had gone far their boat was crushed between two great blocks of ice. Some fishermen, who were anxiously watching, saw the wreck floating about among the icebergs for some time, then it slowly disappeared toward the north. No trace could be seen of Robert and Frida.

As to the Black Virgin, she granted their prayer. Axel got well, and from that day the evil destiny of the Liedsmarken was conjured, for the virgin of the rock never afterward demanded an annual victim, and now we have nothing to fear.—From the French in Strand.

Pharaoh the Oppressor.

The worst blot on Pharaoh's character was his ruthless destruction of the works of his predecessors. No doubt, in such a time of distress, it would be difficult to supply workmen for public monuments, but his utter disregard for everything that went before him outdoes even his orgillous father and is painfully in contrast to the careful restoration made by his artistic grandfather, Seti I. He planted his funeral temple just behind the magnificent building of Amenhotep III and proceeded to smash up every portable stone, whether statue or tablet, to throw in for his own foundations, and then reared his walls with the noble blocks of the great temple, and even stole the very bricks. Not content with taking what he wanted, he further defaced what he could not use, and all over Egypt the statues of the kings may be seen with his name rudely cut over their inscriptions or battered with a hammer on the exquisitely polished surfaces of the other monarchs. With little of scruples, of taste or of feeling, he was yet not devoid of ability and energy for a difficult position, and though we may not rank him with a Trajan, a Belisarius or an Alfred, yet it would be hard to deny him the company of a Vespasian or a Claudius Gothicus, a George II or a Victor Emmanuel.—Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie in Century.

Opening Her Letters.

Jinks—Has a husband the right to open a wife's letters?

Blinks (a lawyer)—Certainly, sir, certainly. Open all you please.

"Well, here is a letter my wife has written your wife and handed me to deliver. I feel pretty sure there's something unpleasant in it about me. I wish you'd open it, and if there is just burn it up."

"Humph! Does my wife know your wife is going to write to her?"

"Yes."

"And if my wife doesn't get this letter she'll find it out, won't she?"

"Of course."

"On second thoughts, I believe there is a new law which makes it a criminal offense to open a wife's letters. I couldn't take the risk, sir; indeed I couldn't."—Pearson's Weekly.

A Wesley Letter.

The wife of Bishop Wightman of the Methodist Episcopal Church South has given to Bishop Hurst for the American university an autograph letter of John Wesley, written March 31, 1790, the closing paragraph of which is as follows:

As soon as possible you should put the Believers in Bands and introduce ye whole Methodist Discipline. But, I pray, do not introduce slouched hats; let us not imitate Clowns or Quakers. Next to the Bible, I love Common Sense. Therefore I wd never be singular for singularity sake. I am, dear Billy, your affectionate Friend and Brother, J. WESLEY.

Beware of women.

—New York Tribune.

A New England Peddler's Retort.

One day, with a party of "fellow boarders," I was driving to a glen which bears the dismal name of Purgatory. We became somewhat doubtful if we were on the right road and halted for consultation. A country peddler with his tin trunks hove in sight. Our party was a merry one, and perhaps the old man unjustly surmised that some of the levity which he witnessed was at his expense. I asked him if he knew the way to Purgatory, and he answered, "Y-e-s."

An awkward pause ensued, followed by a burst of laughter at my expense. I then begged him to impart the desired information to us, and he said, "You'll get there if you keep right on 'bout's your goin."—Frank French in Scribner's.

Whistler Saved Him.

It is not generally known that the greatest living English poet, whose name the reader must be left to fill in for himself, was once threatened with expulsion from a west end club for dancing a fandago upon the silk hats of other members. James McNeil Whistler, however, interposed and saved him with his eloquence. One man of genius, Mr. Whistler urged, was worth any number of silk hats, seeing that silk hats could be replaced and men of genius could not. Then and not till then the irate committee reconsidered its decision and accepted the apology which was tendered.

Would Be Dangerous.

Doctor—Did you follow my prescription?

Incorrigible Patient—No; I didn't care to break my neck.

Doctor—I don't quite understand.

Incorrigible Patient—I threw it out of the window.—Washington Times.