

The Jersey Herald.

"BE TRUE TO YOUR WORD AND YOUR WORK AND YOUR COUNTRY."

VOLUME II.

J. G. ROGERS, Editor.

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TWIN SISTERS.

Hours With Men and Women of the Revolution.

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On a pleasant day in early March, 1861, I crossed the Hudson River in a small boat with an expert oarsman, from the western shore of Tappan Bay to the mouth of the Croton River. I was then on the quest for materials for my "Hudson from the Wilderness to the Sea," first published in the London *Fort Journal*. We passed little squadrons of thin floating ice on the way, and tarried a while at Croton (formerly Teller's) point, visiting Italian villa and the vineyards of Dr. Underhill, where hundreds of tons of budless grapes were raised every year. We then rowed up to Croton Bay and passed under the drawbridge of the Hudson River Railway into the mouth of the Croton River. We found the current of the stream very rapid, for the tide in the Hudson was ebbing.

When nearly abreast the Van Cortlandt Manor House, the oarsman found it impossible to stem the current any longer, and as the water was too shallow to bear the boat to the right bank, as I desired, I was landed on the rugged left bank. I clambered up the acclivity along the margin of a little brook, cheered by the notes of (to me) the first bluebird of the season, perched on a spray overhead. Following the post-road that skirted the elevated shore of the stream, I reached the rocky "high bridge"—the famous "Croton Bridge" of Revolutionary times—at or near sunset. It was a picturesque structure, spanning a rocky gorge, through which the Croton River was running rapidly. Near the bridge I obtained a charming view of the mouth of the Croton, with Dover Kill Island near, the broad Tappan Bay and the blue hills in the distance beyond.

After making a sketch of the old bridge I strolled down the road on the high right bank of the Croton, as it sloped toward the Hudson, and reached the Van Cortlandt Manor House at twilight. At its entrance gate I met Colonel Pierre Van Cortlandt, the proprietor of the estate, and accepted his cordial invitation to pass the night under his roof. I was kindly welcomed by Mrs. Van Cortlandt, a daughter of the eminent Professor T. Romeyn Beck, of Albany. The house, yet preserved in its ancient aspect, is near the shore of what was once the upper part of the beautiful Croton Bay, in which vessels of considerable size often anchored, and which was also the resort of vast flocks of wild ducks and shoals of shad. Early in 1841 heavy rains and melting snows caused the sweeping away of the great Croton Dam, and an immense volume of water released rushed riverward, carrying with it loosened earth sufficient to half fill Croton Bay and convert much of it into a shallow stream.

The Van Cortlandt Manor House was erected at the beginning of the last century by John Van Cortlandt, son of Stephen Van Cortlandt, the first proprietor of the great domain, whose father, Olof Stevens Van Cortlandt, was a linial descendant of the Dukes of Courland, in Russia. His ancestors, when deprived of their duchy, emigrated to Holland, whence Olof came to New Netherlands in 1630, in the service of the Dutch West India Company. The family name was Stevens or Stevensen, that of Van Cortlandt being only titular. The family became allied by marriage, in time, with the Van Rensselaers, the Schuylers, the Bayards, the De Bysters, the Livingstones, and other leading families in the province and State.

The Manor House was built of heavy stone, and the thick walls of the basement story were pierced with loopholes for the use of musketry in defence. These still remain. The mansion commands, from its broad piazza in front, an extensive view to the southwest of Tappan Bay and the rugged hills beyond. It is sheltered on the north by a high hill covered with sturdy forest trees.

At the time of my visit there was a broad lawn at the front, and a path led through the old garden to the ancient ferry-house, a building occupied during the Revolution as a

guard-house. The Baron de Kalb was stationed there in 1778, and in the winter of 1782 a detachment of New York levies, having just returned there from a scout to Morrisana, were surprised at a barn near the ferry-house by some of the enemy's cavalry. One of the "Continentalists" was killed; the remainder escaped on the ice. The broad entrance hall of the mansion was adorned by the horns of stately stags, killed on the manor when wild deer roamed over the domain. The rooms were enriched with many family portraits, ancient and modern, and other works of art; and the library displayed many precious mementoes of the colonial and Revolutionary period, sufficient to hold the attention of the curious antiquary for days.

On the morning after my arrival at the Manor House Mrs. Van Cortlandt invited me to visit aged twin-sisters living at the village of Croton, about two miles up the river. She kindly accompanied me to introduce me to the nonagenarians—the were over ninety years of age. On the way we drove into the beautifully situated cemetery of the Van Cortlandt family, on the summit of a hill west of the mansion. It commanded an extensive view of the Hudson southward, with the entire range of the Palisades from Piermont to Hoboken.

At a little west of the cemetery, at the neck which connects Croton Point with the main land, is the site of the old fort or castle of *Kitchewan* (the original name of the Croton River) was pointed out. It is said to have been the oldest Indian fort south of the Highlands. It was built by the Sacien Croton, and there he gathered his parties for hunting or for war.

At a little east of the site of the fort we came to *Kitchewan* burying ground, in a beautiful nook at the entrance to "Haunted Hollow," concerning which old superstitions supplied many weird stories of early times. The people believed that they saw in the groves and glens the forms of the departed red-men whom they called the Walking Sachems of Teller's Point.

Only one of the twin sisters could be seen—Mrs. Miriam Williams—the other, Mrs. Eunice McCord, being too feeble in mind and body to receive visitors. Their maiden name was Teller, and they had long been widows. They were descendants of Andrew Teller, who in 1671 married a daughter of Olof Stevens Van Cortlandt, and a sister of the first proprietor of the Van Cortlandt Manor. "Teller's Point" received its name from a descendant of his who occupied it.

The memory of Mrs. Williams seemed to be but very little impaired by age; the recollections of her childhood and early womanhood being very vivid. She well remembered incidents connected with the encampment of the American army at Verplanck's Point, in the fall of 1782. She and her sister were then twelve years of age. She remembered seeing Washington ride up to the gate in front of their house one day, with only a single attendant, dismount and ask her father, who was standing near, for some food, as he had been detained on business below. The twins were standing at the door as the General entered the house, and placing his hands on their heads said:

"You look as much alike as two eggs; may you have long life."

"The wish of the great man has been granted," said Mrs. Williams, "for we have lived long. We were ninety years old last August. We had very little in the house at that time wherewith to entertain such a guest. My mother could set upon the little table only some cold ham, fresh rye-bread, sweet butter, a bit of cheese and some cold water. We children were peeping through the open door into the room, and I remember as well as if it happened yesterday seeing General Washington, before sitting down to partake of the simple meal, place one hand on the table and closing his eyes ask a blessing. Father, meanwhile, stood with his head uncovered in the further part of the room. And here," said Mrs. Williams, "is the very table at which General Washington stood

and asked a blessing," pointing to a small oval table standing near her.

"You seem to have much bodily strength and good health," I remarked, "for a woman so old."

"Yes," she answered, "sister and I have never had any dangerous sickness. We were married when we were quite young; have always lived prudent and generally happy lives; always had plenty of sleep, and were no gadabouts as most women are nowadays! Why, you'll hardly believe me when I tell you that neither of us was ever more than five or six miles from where we were born. The Tellers are a strong-bodied and long-lived people."

The story related to me a few hours later was a confirmation of the assurance that the Tellers possessed great bodily vigor.

"Do you remember the French army encamping near here the same fall when you saw General Washington?" I inquired.

"Oh, yes," she said. "They came from the south. They crossed the river at King's Ferry, and all marched by our house. They encamped at Cromford, below here. I remember how afraid and yet delighted sister and I were as we watched them from our window as they passed by. We never saw so many soldiers, nor such glittering uniforms as some of the officers wore; and we never heard such drums beat. We were bewildered with the show, and dreamed of it many nights afterward."

I said farewell to the venerable woman on whose head the hand of Washington had been laid, and to whom kind words had been uttered by his lips. At her carriage in front of Mrs. Williams's house I parted company with Mrs. Van Cortlandt, and soon afterward rode to the home of a friend about two miles further north. With a neighbor of his we climbed to the top of Prickly Pear Hill, the summit of which, five hundred feet above the river, was quite thickly strewn in some places with a species of cactus bearing that name, from which the eminence derived its title.

From that elevation we obtained a most extensive view of the lower Hudson and its shores, and a cluster of localities of the most stirring events of the old War for Independence. That pinnacle Washington made his chief point of observation while the American army was encamped near, in the fall of 1782. There Washington and his officers and Rochambeau and his French officers had viewed the scenery, together with profound admiration. At one sweep of the vision might be seen the lofty crags of the Highlands and the Fishkill Mountains stretching eastward, with all the intervening country adjacent, to Peekskill, Verplanck's Point and Stony Point, the theatres of important military events during the War of the Revolution, then drawing to a close. Before them was Haverstraw, near which Arnold and Andre plotted; Teller's Point, off which the Vulture lay when Andre went to meet Arnold, and from which she received a cannonading that drove her down the river; King's Ferry, where the American armies crossed and recrossed the Hudson and Andre made his way to the eastern shore; Tarrytown, where he was captured, and Long Wharf at Piermont, near Tappan, where he was executed. All these, with the villages on the eastern bank of the Hudson from Cruger's to York Island, might be seen.

As we were looking at Teller's Point, projecting far toward the western shore of the Hudson, I remarked that I had a most interesting interview at Croton that morning with a member of the Teller family, a woman ninety years of age and possessed of exceedingly great physical vigor.

"One of the twin sisters?" said one of the gentlemen. "I never knew a Teller who was not possessed of an abundance of bone and sinew. Have you ever heard the story of a Fishkill bully who encountered a young daughter of a Teller living in this neighborhood?"

"I have not."

"Oh, you must hear it. That Teller had two buxom daughters, a little more than twenty years of age. It is said that either of them could lift

a barrel of cider. Their father was noted for great strength and also for wrestling and pugilistic skill. One day at the close of the Revolution a large, rough-looking man came to the door of Teller's house—an old-fashioned double door—and leaning on the under one, the upper one being open, asked one of the daughters within, in a rude manner, "Is Bill Teller home?"

"My father is not at home," answered the girl. "What do you want of him? I attend to his business when he is away."

"You can't tend to it this time, anyhow. Nobody but Bill Teller himself can," said the gruff man.

"Come in and tell me what your business is," said the girl, as she opened the door.

As the gruff man and she closed the door, the gruff man went to the upper door and the girl went to the lower door.

"A day occurred," said the daughter, "and the neighbor and see if I can find a way to get him out of the house."

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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Founded in 1781 by a Printer of Gloucestershire.

Sunday schools were founded about the close of the year 1781 by Robert Raikes, a printer in Gloucestershire. Business leading him into the suburbs of the town inhabited by the lowest class of people, he was surprised by seeing multitudes of miserably ragged children, who made the Sabbath day a carnival of noise and riot, in which cursing and swearing had a large part.

To check this profanation of the Lord's day he engaged four women, teachers of week day schools, to instruct such children as he should send them on the Sunday in reading and the church catechism, for which they were to receive one shilling each.

A visible improvement being effected in a short time, both in the manners and morals of the children. Mr. Raikes' scheme attracted general attention. Her majesty Queen Charlotte admitted him to an audience, and expressed high approbation of his plan. Numerous schools formed on the same model sprang up in the principal towns, and a society, under high patronage, was formed in London in 1785 for the establishment and support of Sunday schools throughout the kingdom. This was the first stage of the Sunday school.

GRATUITOUS INSTRUCTION. A great impediment to prosperity was the expense of hiring the teachers. It is not certain who first conceived the idea of gratuitous instruction, but this in time came about, and the result was that by the year 1800 teaching in the Sunday school was almost universally without remuneration.

In 1803 the Sunday School union was formed, which, by its numerous publication, agents and branch societies in the different parts of the kingdom, exercised a wild influence. The Institute of the Church of England, which operated in a like manner, is of a similar date.

Scotland boasts of Sunday schools as early as 1782. But it was not till 1786, when the Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor was formed, that they were publicly recognized, nor until 1797, when the first Free Sunday School society was organized, that free Sunday school became general. At first these met with considerable opposition from portions of the ecclesiastical court, but this soon vanished, and Sunday school unions existed in most of the large towns.

Sunday schools in Ireland had been in a measure anticipated in County Down in 1770, but the system pursued by Mr. Raikes was not adopted till about 1785, since which date its system has been similar to that of England.

In Ireland the Sunday School society was established in 1809.

The Roman Catholics, in the United Kingdom at least, have numerous Sunday schools.

THE FIRST IN AMERICA.

The First Day or Sunday School society, formed in Philadelphia in 1791, is the first permanent Sunday school organization in the United States of which there is trust worthy record. It was composed of members of different denominations, including the Society of Friends. Its constitution required that reading and writing from the Bible and such other religious and moral books as the society approved should furnish the course of instruction. The New York Sunday School union was organized in 1816, the Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School union one year later. These three societies recognized the union of different denominations, and led to the organization of the American Sunday School union at Philadelphia in 1824. The object of this union was to concentrate the efforts of Sunday school societies in different sections of the United States, and to start schools wherever there were children found in sufficient numbers to attend them.

It naturally came, about that as new states were settled and the various denominations were strengthened, increased attention was given by each to its own Sunday schools.

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and denominational unions to promote these were formed. As years passed the question book was added to the original recitation, and at length in a great degree superseded it. Later on came lessons, helps, texts, maps, black-board exercises, etc. In the earlier schools reward tickets were given, and when these had sufficiently accumulated they were exchanged for books. This stimulated the production of works of a character suitable to young minds, and from this has been developed the Sunday school library.

That Noble Animal, Man.

Dearly beloved, it's natural for weak, finite man to turn to the clown for funny things, but really some of the funniest things you read fall from the pen of the wise man. Now read this—I don't know who wrote it. I find it in a "religious-philosophical" paper, but if it doesn't make you smile you are devoid of the sixth sense: "When one looks in sight of the nobler side of humanity it is no longer a surprise that Christ suffered martyrdom for the race." Now, it was a man who wrote that; no woman ever said such a thing; it was a man, and if the man goes to Heaven he will be bitterly disappointed if a delegation of angel and all the apostles do not meet him ten miles outside the gate with an address of welcome and the freedom of the city in a gold box. We are a nice set of fellows for a God to suffer martyrdom for. Says this same complacent man: "Human beings are all right; we are simply darkened by the shadow of a social system that offers a premium upon our worst traits, and deliberately crushes the nobler part of us." Oh, yes, we are all right aren't we? We are naturally, preternaturally, supernaturally, angelically good, but the shadow of a social system "offers premiums" and "crushes" us; a right healthy "shadow" that combines the functions of a country fair and a stone-breaker. How good we are by nature. You have to teach the lisping child his prayers, but he learns to lie naturally at home, and learns to swear the first day he goes to school. He hates his lessons and loves to fish. He plays "hooky" and runs away from Sunday-school, even as he runs to the circus. The man forgets the text before the sermon is half through, and he forgets the sermon next day but he remembers every word of a vile story fifty years. He growls about the water rate, but pays for his whiskey without a murmur. The State has to keep up whipping-posts to keep him from beating his wife; it maintains almshouses for his neglected parents and asylums for his abandoned children; it build jails to keep him from stealing, penitentiaries to keep him honest, gallows to keep him from murdering, and but for the terror of hell fire he wouldn't try to go to Heaven. Oh, yes, man, generally considered, is a sweet bird, and when we come to look at it, the race conferred an undying honor upon its Savior in permitting Him to become a martyr for a crowd of such exalted beings. All that ails us is the "shadow of a social system" that we—by the way, who established that social system—the angels, or these magnificent "human beings" with a trunk full of "nobler part?"

Bob Burdette.

One Meal a Day.

Dr. Tanner, the famous faster, is visiting in Elkheart. He now resides in New Mexico, where he has a ranch of fifteen hundred acres, and is interesting himself in a founding association, to be conducted on vegetarian principal, and a part of his mission to Indiana is to secure forty infants. The Doctor is surgeon for the association, and he expects to secure the children in Elkheart and surrounding cities. He lives on one meal a day, breakfast. The following home is an experiment intended to demonstrate that the baser passion are aroused principally by the use of animal food. He expects to make good children as well as long lived ones by feeding them one meal a day of a light vegetarian diet.

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Children and Money.

Seemingly children are trained in all branches of education but this; yet from earliest childhood they should be taught to value money, not only as a power to be duly respected, but that its consolation is a positive duty, in order not only to provide for old age and as one of the great motive powers of advancement and civilization.

Some may say they do not care for money, yet as a wise woman said: "Oh no, they do not care for money but they want very badly what money will bring." I know of several families who, with the means of starting well in life, with intelligence, and advantageous surroundings, are now drifting into absolute poverty for want of this early training. In one instance old age is harassed and weighed down by the aspects of the "wolf at the door," which, with an early training of the fine talents possessed, would have kept him forever at bay.

In another, parents in their old age were obliged to leave a lovely country home, and went to join the struggling hundreds in a neighboring city with a half dozen children as untrained as themselves. Yet training in the saving and expenditure of money would have kept them by industry comfortable and thrifty. The persons occupying the farm previous to this family supported quite a large family and made enough money besides to buy another farm.

As an instance of what can be done we will draw from the experience of another family. While very small the mother taught her children to count by using articles about the home, such as table and chair legs, windows, doors, and so on. By this means they very soon learned the rudiments of arithmetic. As soon as possible they were sent on errands, and to market, and taught to look sharp after the value received for money, had to be exact in counting the change so as to have justice for both parties, and if anything was wrong they were sent to rectify it, and were made to take the responsibility. They also had tasks about the house, and understood that they were to attend to them without their attention being called to those duties. They were kept busy, and formed habits of industry, and grew up to be excellent business men, and at an early age had the offer of several advantageous situations.

Two boys of the same family, were each given a child's bank of metal and an account book. In their own hand-writing they entered in the book all the sums of money they received as gifts, or which they earned by extra work, etc. The money received was divided into three parts, but into several receptacles, and lodged in the bank. One portion was to be saved, the next reserve for gifts or charity, and the last they were to expend as they pleased, with the exception of a restriction as to candy and cakes. Both these boys were encouraged to take pleasure in some natural taste for mineralogy stamp-collecting, etc. Such tastes are strong protections to boys, and they gain valuable knowledge with the habit of research. Parents should show respect for such occupations, and the continued effort required to follow them thoroughly, which should be insisted upon as a matter of education, and as forming property in the form of valuable knowledge, that always has its use if only in elevating the taste.

In another case a young lady teacher, whose father being one of the enlightened kind taught his daughter how to transact various kinds of business, how to value and purchase property, etc., became so proficient in all such matters that in the savings of some years she at different times made advantageous purchases of small properties, the rents of which would have supported her had her health of powers failed, as they did in after years through deafness. How much more real love of his children had such a father than one who says: "Oh! let them enjoy themselves while they are young," and then sends them forth totally unfit for the contests of life and labor!—Pres. Banner.