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Selected Miscellany.

Twilight Musings.

BY G. W. B.

I am sitting at my window,
Gazing out the waning light
Of the brilliant day of summer,
Warms me of the coming night.

I am sitting at the window,
Gazing out upon the scene,
Which in beauty lies before me
Like the vision of a dream.

There are mountains in the distance,
With their summits wrapped in blue,
There are hills with verdure covered,
Rising on my tongue in view.

Far before me stretch the meadows,
And the murmuring brooks below
Sparkle with the light of Heaven,
In the summer sunset glow.

Now the weary day is over,
And the farmer from his field
Hastens to his humble cottage,
And his aching, frugal meal.

And the cattle from the pasture,
Stand and patiently await
For the coming of the milk maid,
And the opening of the gate.

Not a sound disturbs the stillness,
Save the zephyrs of air
Hastening from the new-mown meadows,
Laden with a fragrance rare.

As I sit and watch the twilight
Slowly fall upon the scene,
Forms of other days assemble,
Like the phantoms of a dream.

Slowly they move in long procession
From the dim old days of yore,
Winging back on fancy's pinion
From the realms of o'ernaime.

And my heart is filled with sadness,
And my moonbeams a sigh,
While the faces seem in my mind
And their forms go flitting by.

There are all the dear companions
From the days of joy and truth,
When the world was fresh and blooming
In the sunny days of youth.

As I sit in lonely musing
In that still and quiet place,
Soon a solitary form flits by me,
With her calm and holy face.

'Tis the shade of one who loved me
With a mother's yearning love,
And who still looks down upon me
From the realms of bliss above.

Vainly now I long for comfort,
Vainly do I seek relief,
From the sorrow that o'erwhelms me,
And my soul is filled with grief.

Yet I know that life is fleeting,
That the time will pass away,
And that soon will be our meeting
In the realms of lasting day.

So I'm sitting at my window,
While the slowly fading light
Of a life-time spent in sorrow,
Tells me of the coming night.

THE GUIGNOLEE.

"New Years Day in the Olden Time in St. Louis."

We clip the following from the *Central Magazine*. It is from the pen of Hon. Wilson Primm, and, as it gives an account of the *Guignolee*, it will doubtless be read with interest by many of our readers:

"So far as we have any record of it the beginning of the new year has ever been the occasion of festivity, whether it commenced with the vernal or autumnal equinox, the summer or winter solstice, or whether it began, as it does now, according to the Gregorian calendar, with the first day of January. In some countries these festivities partook of a sacred, in others of a purely social character. In the olden time, in St. Louis they partook somewhat of both, and this may be explained by the fact, that its inhabitants were mostly descendants of families that had emigrated from the various provinces of France, long before the revolution had proposed the worship of Reason, and who in a new country, from recollection or tradition, preserved and practised the pious customs of the fatherland.

On New Year's eve, soon after midnight, the young men of Saint Louis would assemble together, at some appointed place, dressed out in the most fantastic masquerade costumes, each one provided with a bucket, sack, basket or some other article, suitable for the carrying of provisions solid or liquid. Thus accoutered and provided, at a given signal, they proceeded from house to house, without exempting any from their visit, and, at each place, in full chorus, they sang "*La Guignolee*," thus they called "*courier la Guignolee*," running the *guignolee*.

What the meaning to that word is, I do not know, and no one of the old inhabitants has been able to ex-

plain it to me. The Guais, at the commencement of the new year, were accustomed to present to each other small branches of "*gui*," mistletoe; which had been previously blessed by the Druids, singing at the same time a kind of hymn, the burden of which was "*Au gui l'an nee*," may have been transformed into "*Au gu la nouvelle annee*," and this may have been still further corrupted into *La Guignolle*.

But whatever the etymology or meaning of the word, the *Guignolee* was a quaint song, adapted to the quaint music, and the words ran thus:

LA GUIGNOLEE.
Bonsieur le maître et la maîtresse,
Et tout monde de la logis,
Pour le premier jour de l'année,
La guignolee vous nous devez.
Si vous n'avez rien a nous donner,
Dites nous le.
Nous vous demandons pas grand chose,
Une echime.
Une echime n'est pas bien longue,
De quatre vingt dix pieds de longueur,
Encore nous demandons pas grand chose,
La fille ainee de la maison,
Nous lui ferons faire bonne chere
Nous lui ferons chauffer les pieds
Nous suivons la compagnie,
Et la pions nous excuser,
Si l'on a fait qu'ique folie,
C'estait pour nous desennuyer
Une autre fois nous prendrons garde
Quand sera temps d'y revenir,
Dansons la guignolle,
Dansons la guenille,
Dansons la guenille!

CHORUS.—Bonsieur le maître et la maîtresse,
Et tout le monde de la logis.
I have attempted to versify this song, but finding the effort to be futile, I content myself with a liberal prose translation:—

"Good night to the master and mistress, and to all the people of the household. For the first day of the year! You owe us the *guignolee*. If you have nothing to give us say so. We do not ask you to give us much; only a chine of pork ninety feet long; 'tis no great thing. Again, we do not ask for much—only the eldest daughter of the house; we will feast her and keep her feet well warmed.

"We salute the company, and beg them to excuse us, if we have been guilty of any folly. It was only for fun and frolic. The next time we return, we will be more careful. Let us dance the rag dance, let us dance the rag dance, &c., &c. Good night to the master and mistress of the household."

When the young men come to that part of the song, where they so gallantly propose to feast the young lady, and keep her feet warm, some love smitten swain, would break in with a ditty about doves and cuckoos, nightingales and green bowers, closing with a protestation that he was dying for the soft eyes of his mistress.

The love ditty being concluded, the party received donations from the house and went through the "*rag dance*," capering about like mad, singing at the same time with all their lungs, "*Dansons la guenille*."

In leaving the house, they took up the burden of the song, "*Good night*," and continued to sing the first two lines till their voices were lost in the distance.

At the different houses the party would be sure to receive some contribution of sugar, coffee, lard, candles, flour, maple sugar, *ratatin*, (a kind of New Orleans ram.) eggs, meat, poultry—in fine of almost everything that was necessary for a first-rate ball, to be given at some future period. Having gone their rounds, the provisions which had been gathered were safely stowed away, to be used as I shall hereafter relate.

Before day, the next morning, the whole population attended mass. When that duty had been performed, the next was to receive the parental blessing. And then could be seen the children, grand-children and the great grand-children, each on their broad knees, imploring a blessing from the authors of their being; and that blessing was given, ever coupled with a heartfelt prayer, that G. d., the father, would gratify it in heaven, and so guide and protect them, amidst the joys and sorrow, the snare and perils of this life, as to fit them for another and better existence.

This touching ceremony, repeated at the commencement of each year, gave rise to the woe current of

their thoughts and acts. Filial piety was their guiding star. The young never dreamed of forming matrimonial alliances with each other, without the full and unqualified assent, not only of the immediate parents but of the family relatives, and even grown men settled in life, scarcely ever entered into any important business, without the assent or advice of the parents; and never even when it might otherwise have been to his advantage, has a child been known to repudiate the acts of his parents.

When the consent of the parents had been obtained to a marriage, the affianced pair would together visit the relatives saying: *Nous sommes venus demander votre consente ment, notre mariage*; we have come to ask your consent to our marriage.

Real estate frequently passed from hand to hand, without deed or writing of any kind, and for trifling considerations.

When the population began to increase in immigration, and to become heterogeneus in its character, many of these lands became valuable; and if, upon examining the records, the claim of title to them was found defective, by lack of deed from the original owner, his children never hesitated to affirm the act of their ancestor; and whenever applied to for that purpose, the answer was "I will make good what my father has done." And no remuneration was asked for or expected.

With the consoling influences of the parental blessing around them; with hearts open to all the impulses of kindness and charity and good will, the different families proceeded to interchange visits, and wish each other "*une bonne et heurieuse annee*,"—a good and happy New Year. Former animosities and wrongs are forgiven and forgotten, and all breaches of social intercourse were healed by the kiss of peace and friendship. Of course the young men took advantage of this custom, and kissed the rosy lips of the pretty girls, and at the same time wishing each a good and happy New Year, *et un gros saut a paques*—and a fine husband at Easter. Were they to blame for this? I

Croqueignolles were a kind of crab, made of weathen dough sweetened, rolled out thin, cut into strips thick not. Many of us old men would do the same, had we the opportunity. and thrown into boiling lard, in such manner as that when cooked they formed a convoluted mass. These and pies and cakes, together with a wine glass of home-made cordial, were the usual refreshments tendered to the visitor at each house.

During the course of the day, children visited their respective god-fathers and godmothers, to receive their *etrennes*, and the evening was spent by all in sober, social enjoyment.

These *etrennes*, were small presents given to the children, and consisted generally of fruits, nuts, cakes and sometimes of small articles of wearing apparel. The word *etrennes* is thought to be of Sabine origin. On the first day of the year, a present had been made to king Latius, of a few twigs from a tree consecrated to Strenno, the god of strength. As the year happened to be fortunate to him he decreed the establishment of this custom, and gave to such presents the name of *strennae*, hence *etrennes*. The custom was adopted by the Romans, who on that day made to each other presents of dates and honey; but in the time of Augustus, as in our day, the custom was abused, and the *etrennes*, or New Years gifts, lost their touching simplicity, and degenerated into extravagant vanity.

I will now give you an account of what became of the provisions which were gathered by the young men, on New-Year's eve, when they ran the "*guignolee*." The sixth day of January is the feast of the Epiphany, a feast commemorative of the adoration of the infant Jesus, by the kings who came from the East. This day was usually termed "*le jour de Ree*," the

day of the kings. On the eve of that day, at a house selected for the purpose the young girls of the town were invited to prepare for a supper and dance. Provisions which had been obtained, by running the "*guignolee*," were brought forth, and soon transformed by the girls, under the superintendance of the matrons, into all kinds of savory dishes, and delectable pastries, not forgetting the "*croqueignolles*." A large cake, too, was baked expressly for the girls, and in this were baked four beans. The table is spread; the supper soon disappears, and the dancing begins. They have no orchestra, to form the word of command, they have only the violin, but the player's ear is true, his fingers nimble and his bow arm strong. His music thrills through the nerves. They know nothing of the waltz or mazourka, or schottish, or the German or the lancers, or the languid, listless walk, which nowadays is termed dancing. But they know the good, old-fashioned contra dance, and they spring to it with an active and zest which proved that it is to them a real pleasure.

The ball, however, is opened by some of the older married people, and it is only after they have gone through the *minute de la cour*, the court minute, in a manner that would have done credit to the time of Louis XIV., that the young ones obtain the floor. During the evening, too, some old grandfather and grandmother join the dance, and for a round or two exhibit their fancy steps, the *all de pigeon*, the *chasses* and the *battus*, just to give the young ones an idea of what they could do when they were young.

Before the close of the pleasant reunion, shortly before midnight, the cake containing the beans is produced. Each young girl cuts a slice and the four whose fortune it is to find the beans, are declared queens. Each of the queens then selects a young man, to whom she presents a bouquet, and proclaims him her king. Whereupon a consultation is had, a night and a place are fixed upon, for the first *bal de Ree*—kings' ball—at which all are free to attend, without further invitation.

The expense of the ball are borne by the four kings thus enthroned. But let it not be supposed that these are heavy. The room and fuel cost nothing. The music, the lights, (not gas, but tallow candles, in sconces hang against the walls,) and refreshments consisting of coffee "*bonillon*,"—the most refreshing and invigorating game broth—a few pies, the inevitable *croqueignolles*, a little cordial for the ladies, and a little *ratatin* for the men—these have to be paid for; but the aggregate expense when equally divided, is but a trifle to the four kings.

At the close of this first king's ball, the queens select new kings, and they select new queens for the next king's ball, and thus a series of festivities was kept up during the whole of the carnival.

In this manner were the advents of Christmas and New-Year celebrated in the early days of St. Louis."

A Funny Mistake.—Old negro slumbering with his feet pointing to a glimmering fire. Opens one eye and gets a glimpse of them as they stand up in the obscurity. Mistakes them for two little negroes, and cries: "Gif fun for me," and relapses into sleep. After awhile opens the other eye, and still seeing the intruders, says: "Gif fun fore me. I say: I kick you in the fire if you don't; I will shut" and again he snores. His dream not being pleasant he soon opens both eyes, and still seeing the little pests he draws up his foot for the threatened kick, but is alarmed to see the enemy advance upon him, and exclaims: "Wha, where you comin' to, now? Humph! my own foot, by golly!"

At a "social," the other evening, in this city, a young gentleman asked a lady friend for a kiss. She gracefully inclined her queenly head toward the gentleman aforesaid, and he was about to "let her dicker," when the lady's false teeth dropped out, striking him on the chin. The young gentleman has sworn off.

The name "grass widow" is of French origin. It is derived from the French "grace," and originally meant a widow by courtesy.

Brains on the Slope.

Scene—Ladies on one side of the room, students on the other.

Professor comes in and stands behind the long counter on which he keeps his apparatus and chemicals for making experiments, takes up a bottle and puts it down again, lights his alcohol lamp and calls the roll—a very unusual thing, as the Professor thinks the ladies a sufficient attraction to induce all the students to come to his lecture. The Professor looks over his roll and calls out, "Mr. Cole, No answer. "Mr. Cole." "Here." "Stand up, Mr. Cole; I wish to ask you a few questions."

Mr. Cole stands up and looks as much surprised as if he had just seen some one rise out of the earth.

Professor—What is ammonia composed of?

Student—I am not prepared to-day.

Meanwhile the students have been studying their note-books as if their lives depended upon how much each student could read over the next few minutes.

Professor—Next, Mr. Qum?

Student—I don't think I know anything about ammonia, Professor.

Professor—How do you know that I intend to ask you anything about ammonia? Stand up, sir.

[Titter among the ladies.]

Professor—What is air composed of?

Student—Air is composed of hydrogen, oxygen and some carbonic acid. [General laugh.]

Professor—Take your seat, sir. Mr. Peabody, how do you make hydrogen?

Student—I don't make it.

Professor—Then tell me how to make it.

Student—I think somebody else can tell you how to make hydrogen better than I can. [Applause.]

Professor—(very angry)—Young gentlemen, you see how little good my lectures have done you, so far, and unless you take notes, and study these notes, and also your textbooks, many of you will be found deficient at the end of the term at examination. You came here for something else than to cut up and have a good time, as you will find to your sorrow. I hope the next time I question you I will find you better prepared than you are to-day.

The Professor now goes on with his lecture. Soon you find something between your feet. It is a football which some of the Juniors has brought into the room to create a disturbance with. You give it a kick and set it going. Others kick it, too; after a while, some one more bold than the rest, throws it over his head back of him (when the professor's back is turned) and considerable noise is made. The Professor looks to see who is making the noise, says "be quiet, young gentlemen," and proceeds with his explanation.

In the meantime, those who are taking notes of the lecture are pestered, from time to time, by those who care nothing about it, throwing oak-balls at them.

When the time for closing the lecture draws near the fact is announced by the scraping of feet, rapping on the backs of benches, and other demonstrations. The professor says, "I know what all this noise means; it means that the time is up. But you need not expect to go while you are making such a noise."

Some one of the students who resides in San Francisco jumps up and says, Professor, I weds not go now we cannot catch the boat and have to remain over until 5:30."

Professor [looking at his watch]—You can all go. J. S. C. Oakland, Dec 7, 1872.—*Ventura Signal*.

There are 13 shot-guns, with women at their butt-ends, prowling around the Western States, looking for transient husbands and their naughty feminine companions. Thunder from the West may be expected soon.

A few days since a torn crier took in charge a lost child, and proceeded to beat up its parents. On being asked by a lady what the matter was, he replied:

"Here's an orphan child, ma'am and I'm trying to find its parents."

Oddandendographs.

Hobson's choice—Mrs. H.

A legal conveyance—A convict ship.

A Western settler—The sun at evening.

Case of kidnapping—A young goat asleep.

Motto for grocers—Honest tea is the best policy.

When they make an oyster bed do they use a seaweed mattress?

Why is a note of hand like a rose-bud? Because it is maturated by falling dew.

Why if you are called loudly, must you wear a wig? Because you are howled after.

The husband who devoured his wife with kisses found afterwards that she disagreed with him.

A lady's bustle was successfully used recently to prevent a steamboat collision on the St. Lawrence river.

Old lady—I see you recover umbrellas? Shopman—Yes, m'm, lots of 'em." Old lady—"I want the one that I lost on last Monday."

The strongest kind of a hint—a young lady asking a gentleman to see if one of her rings would go on his little finger.

We're in a pickle now, said a crowd. A regular jam, said another. Heaven preserve us! moaned an old lady.

The wife of a roofer being asked if she was not afraid to have her husband exposed to such danger, trustfully replied, "Oh, he's insured."

A Western widow would like to meet the printer, who, when she advertised for an agent, made her appear to want "a gent."

The New York confectioner, who a few years ago taught his parrot to say, "pretty creature" to every lady who entered his store is now very rich.

A dwarf said to a giant, "we have equal rights." "Very true, my good fellow," replied the giant, "yet thou canst not walk in my shoes." "Pitoo," said the dwarf.

"Where does this horse car run?" said the old gentleman from the country to the boot black. "Dunno," said the imp of the blacking bottle, "the horses run at the nose."

This dispatch was sent from Portland to Chicago, Christmas day: "Nettie's present appeared this morning. Very handsome. Fifteen pounds. A little Samuel. Lucy Stone has a baby, and is not going round the country lecturing to support her husband any more. He asked her for bread and she gave him a Stone."

A physician being asked by a patient if he thought a little spirit now would hurt him much, replied, "I do not know that a little occasionally would hurt you much; but if you don't take any, it won't hurt you at all."

Gravel Roads.

During the season that our farmers do the principal part of their hauling to the various markets of the county, say from the first of March, we suppose that fifteen hundred pounds would be a high estimate of the average two horse loads of produce brought to market. With good gravel roads the same teams might as easily draw a ton and a quarter, making the difference in favor of the gravel roads one ton. Allowing three dollars and a half per day for team and driver, we have by this a clear tax of one dollar and forty cents per day to dirt roads on every day's work of driver and team in hauling farm products to market.

Or, to look at it in another light, if during the season referred to a team will draw on an average twenty five bushels of wheat, or fifty bushels of oats on our dirt roads, while on gravel roads it could draw forty bushels of wheat or eighty bushels of oats, and we have many persons living at such a distance from market as to require a day to make the trip, a clear cost of marketing each bushel of wheat fourteen cents, and each bushel of oats seven cents; while on a gravel road the cost would be, for wheat eight and three-fourth cents, that is, in such case the tax to dirt roads is five and one-fourth cents per bushel for wheat, and two and five-eighths cents per bushel for oats.—*Chillicothe Journal*.