

John Workman's Notions.

[From the Raleigh Constitution.]

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John Workman sat in his old splint-chair,
At the close of a summer day,
And smoked his pipe with its long reed stem
And its blackened bowl of clay.
His head was bared by the scath of Time
And his flowing beard was white:
He seemed the peer of the oaks above,
As he sat in the pale moonlight.

Beside him, half hid by the roof-tree's shade,
Sat the wife of his early days,
With the holy calm on her furrowed face
Which chastened womanhood only has.
The flowers that bloomed by their mid-day
path,
Of fragrance and beauty rare,
The Reaper had cut in the eventide
And their darkling way was bare.

Quoth John: "It's upward uv fifty years
Since we started to pull together,
An' we've tried, in that time, all sorts uv roads,
An' a'most every kind of weather.
We've been a mighty hard-wukkin pair,
Ez none knows better nor you,
We've tilled an' briled, just arly and late,
An' bin rite fortunite, too.

Time's tuk the peach-bloom from yer cheek
An' the gold bands from yer brow,
An' I don't s'pose that even to you
I'm much of a youngster now;
An' I hoped we'd be allowed to live
In peace a few short years,
Till we're both closed out, for good an' all,
In this troublous vale uv tears.

But the war came on us in Sixty-One,
An' things got wuss than bad,
Till the conscript officer tuk away
The only one that we had!
An' then, too, we lost the little store
We'd gathered year by year,
Till hope hed fled an' want hed come
Jest as the end was near.

My weakness made me surety's slave:—
Weakness akin to stealin',
Though in them times I never thought
'Twas aught but kindly dealin'—
Until this house and these thin roods—
The little which is left—
The Homestead law could hardly save
From shysters keen and deft!

An' glad wuz I to find it safe,
For though 'taint uv the best,
It's served us well in years gone by,
Our cosy, old home-nest!
I know the winders, doors an' ruf
Are gettin' rite smart an' old,
An' the walls are failin' ez well as we,
But it keeps out the rain an' cold.

But I'm feared we'll lose the home-place yet,
An' perhaps we'll hev to go
On the county, to end in shame an' want
The days we're 'lotted below!
They're workin' round, some sort uv way,
I don't know edzactly how,
To hold a Convenshun to change the laws
An' git up a ginerall row.

I've been to hear the candidates speak;
They're makin' a terrible pother,
Whatever one on 'em this minit says
Is denied, the next, by the other.
But jist a word one on 'em drapped,
Seemed right good sense to me,
That people should not count *too much*
On what they *mout* not see!

It seems to me that at this time,
When folks are gettin' along,
They oughtent to be deviled round
'Less ther's sumthin's *mighty* wrong!
An' ef I kin see who's to be bettered
By changin' what we've got,
'Cept some that want the offices,
John Workman may be shot!

It's only been about four years
Sence, on a reg'lar vote,
The State was square agin it,
With Kuklux at its throat.
An' folks aint ready now to ventur
The good that they hev got,
For naught but jest to keep a bilin'
A pesky party pot!

An' we aint the only ones, mother,
By a purty considerable heap,
That uv holdin' by that sort uv title
Convenshuna mout make mighty cheap!
An' this is the ginerall feelin',
So far ez I'm able to learn,
That them ez is livin' on homesteads
Aint takin' Convenshun in ther'n!

They say they won't hurt us, but then,
'Twas that way in Sixty-One,
They *seed* they want gwine to secede,
But the fust that we knowed 'twas done!

I thought that I never should keer
Again about matters uv Stait,
Nor once think to ask after 'lection
What mout be a party's fate;
But now that I think I diskiver
The sperrit uv Sixty-One,
I'd ruther just ventur with what we've got,
Than hev any tinkerin' dun!

I know that the winders an' doors an' ruf
Are gettin' right smart an' old,
An' the walls are failin' as well as we,
But they *du* keep out the cold!
So I'll go to the polls once more, my dear,
An' du what I kin to save
A place for yer old gray head to rest
Till it's laid away in the grave.