



EXPOSITION
PRIZE MEDALS
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CHICAGO 1893
BOSTON 1890
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Southern Wareroom, 5 West Trade Street, Charlotte, N. C., C. H. WILMOTH, Manager.

HOMESPUN PHILOSOPHY

By THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH.

Pandora leaned forward, her lovely face faintly lighted by a last interest. "But why, in the first instance, did she marry him?"

The Optimist grinned hopefully. Pandora's questions were to him a never-ending delight.

Mother Hubbard looked up calmly. The letter in her hand rustled importantly. "Well, my dear," she answered in her patient, homely way. "I'll tell you that when you tell me why any poor little hunted animal runs into the first cover."

"Sort of—er—well, self-preservation, so to speak—first law of nature, and that, as one might say, put in the Optimist with the manner of one who is modestly eager to help everything along pleasant lines."

"Well, that is something like it," reflected Mother Hubbard with a gravity that sat queerly upon her fat and comely face. "Very like it, for this friend of mine was 49 and—she hesitated, looking for her place among the pages of the letter. "Pretty long-chance she'd had," interrupted the Pessimist, with his choicest sneer.

"But O, those fascinating tortions!" gurgled the Optimist coyly.

"Yes, she was well into 40, resumed Mother Hubbard, "and she was alone in the wide world, except for her invalid brother—which only makes a bad case worse."

"The plot thickens. Could somebody attract the attention of the Scribbler?" The Optimist was eagerly and gravely expectant.

The Scribbler, busy with the illustrations that the Plain Little Woman had made for his newest story, nodded appreciatively.

"But, why?" cooed the Pessimist grimly.

"Indeed, I do not know," confessed Mother Hubbard, a perplexed expression finding way to her quiet eyes. "She was extremely pretty, bright and bonny and good to know." Then brightening innocently, and smiling at the clever thought, "Perhaps no one ever asked her."

"Perch the thought! Perhaps she loved and lost," suggested the Optimist, with the manner of one who would compromise on any terms.

"Well, my dear, she lived there on the farm with her father and that brother. When the old man died the farm slipped away—"

"Sort of landslide, so to speak," asserted the Optimist.

"It's a way they have," smiled Mother Hubbard. "And no my friend, no homelike."

"If we are not to be introduced to

the Plain Little Woman, "but would it be better than finding a way—for well, for saving the situation? Would it be a sort of restitution if by some means she might make the tangled straight? If there has been a wrong done, surely just running away from the resulting conditions would not undo it. But if by a beautiful human sacrifice—a sacrifice of self, a renunciation of one's own, the conditions might be sanctified and blessed—"

The sweet little voice trailed off into a silence that was for a long moment unbroken.

"Mother Hubbard, sighed, ponderously. "Yes, my dear, but Beauty considers the situation hopeless."

"May be she hasn't looked all around it," suggested the Optimist, cheerfully. "There is nothing like a new viewpoint. Viewpoints, like opinions, should be frequently altered. The idea is to keep stepping lively from one to another. Now if we could manage to sort of work Beauty round to the Best's side of the matter, she would see it all in an astonishing light. But I'll bet a dime against a dollar that she's been perched on one little bit of a viewpoint—"

"I'll tell you what I'd do," said the Country Bride, "who had been busy with to-morrow's shopping list. "You see the Best is just a man, they are all essentially alike. Of course, it's the trouble, but then she's in, and vain might have been, and excellent ought-to-have-beens are not going to do any good." She pushed back her hair and the first light fell upon her sweet, earnest face. "I'd forget about myself and I'd make that man happy. I could, you know, and wouldn't it be worth while?"

"Heroic treatment," growled the Pessimist.

Pandora smiled. "Well, yes, still it isn't her you. It might be worse, she said severely. Pandora admitted. "It might," agreed the Pessimist grimly.

"That beats running away," put in the Optimist, "sort of taking the field and saving the flag idea. Heroism in petticoats."

"It could be done," Pandora admitted. "A woman with an eye in her head could accomplish a little thing like that. In truth it is done every day and no fuss made about it. But the question is, Does it pay? Is it worth while?"

"The whole matter is boiled down to one proposition," laughed the Scribbler, who was in what Pandora called his "accepted" mood. "Shall Beauty run away from the castle, desert the Best and seek her own happiness, or shall she stay and bring him from the evil enchantment and make him happy?"

"Perhaps by doing the one, she may also accomplish the other," suggested the Pessimist. "He might like to have her go."

"It may have come to that," mused the Country Bride. "But he did want her, if it was only to sweep his floors and cook his dinners. If he has a healthy appetite he's winnable. I'd win him."

"Indeed you would," smiled Pandora. "But really it's worth while? You see she has him. He might never get any better if she goes away and leaves him. Any sort of man is worth saving. The possession of him is rather a settled thing. Do you suppose she'd be any happier—shrieking?"

"But a loveless marriage," began the Optimist with a shocked and virtuous expression, "surely we of the sitting room can't be expected to sanction that sort of thing."

"Can't you see that it's too late to discuss that feature of the situation?" said Pandora, with unusual patience. "When a man's over the cliff there's no good in saying that he shouldn't have gone so near the edge. Any way, Beauty can't expect a partial cure by setting the Best to love her. And she can do that easily."

"You are right," said the Motherly Woman, finishing her beautiful bit of sewing. "That is the remedy. All this tragic despair is nothing but over-day-sickness. The ideal marriage is rare. Common sense and Christian charity often take the lead when the grand passion falls. Beauty's husband is dependent upon her for the comforts of home life. If she has done the man a wrong she must replace the wrong with a right. With his sin, she has nothing to do, directly. Yes, she must stay and do her best, forgetting herself."

"But she's wanting to be made happy herself, you know," said the Optimist, eagerly, anxiously. "We may experience some difficulty in getting her to make this radical change."

"That's all right," said the Country Bride, "reflected Mother Hubbard, gravely, "and perhaps when I come away they will be happier."

"They will," declared the Pessimist with conviction.

"I trust so," smiled Mother Hubbard in perfectly good faith. "I shall give Beauty a hint about the Charm, and she may release the poor Best from the power of the evil enchantment."

"Don't you know the poor, lonely Best will be glad to find his discontented wife changed to a good comrade, interested in his interests? Where is the man who can resist that?" smiled the Country Bride.

"Alas, where?" repeated the Optimist, searching the shadowy corners. "Fraternal friendship ideas," growled the Pessimist.

"Exactly," nodded Pandora. "A close friendship between man and

wife is as rare as rubies. Did you know that?"

"I more than suspected it," confessed the Optimist slyly. "The interest deepens. Can any one arouse the Scribbler? Here is the motif—"

"Alas for the helpless victim of the joy-bearers!" growled the Pessimist. "Whom a woman would destroy, she first makes happy."

But Mother Hubbard was smiling brightly, as one to whom beautiful visions have come. And the fire-fairies sang among the coals, and the light and shadow played a game of hide and seek, and who knows but already beautiful thought waves were breaking against the walls of the Best's enchanted castle?

MRS. BLAIR GOES FREE.

Second Trial on Charge of Murder of Husband Results in Complete Acquittal For Her—Did Not Go on Stand Herself This Time—Faints When Verdict is Announced.

Observer Bureau,
1130 Berkeley Building,
Columbia, S. C., Jan. 30.

Contrary to expectation, the jury in the second trial of the handsome Mrs. Ethel W. Blair for the murder of her husband, Conductor McCulley W. Blair, returned a verdict at midnight last night, acquitting her of the charge, and she was immediately set free by the usual court order. The case went to the jury at the close of the afternoon session, and Mrs. Blair remained in the court room with her relatives doing her best to conceal her agitation. She could not avoid some hysterical demonstrations, however, crying and laughing at intervals. She fainted when the clerk read the verdict, as she did at the former trial.

The defense sprang a surprise by announcing that it had closed when Mrs. Blair, her friend who was boarding with her when the shooting occurred, left the stand. A large crowd was in attendance in the hope of seeing Mrs. Blair take the stand and give the details of the tragedy which occurred at the Blair home on Marion street on the 17th of January, two years ago, and the disappointment was keen when it was seen that the defense would not put Mrs. Blair on the stand, as it had done at the former trial.

With this exception there was practically no difference in the testimony from the last trial. Mrs. Blair testified how Captain and Mrs. Blair had frequently quarreled over his drinking;

Will Be Tried For Assaulting Officer, Special to The Observer.

Gaffney, S. C., Jan. 30.—Last August while Deputy Sheriff Lockhart was attending to some duty in the jail, two young negroes, Jim Dawkins and Will McDrager, attacked him in the attempt to make their escape. Mr. Lockhart was too much for them, however, and the attempt failed. They were both tried at the next term of court for misdemeanor and sentenced to three months each on the public works. Their sentences expired the first of this week, and they were immediately re-arrested and after a preliminary examination before Magistrate Camp, that official committed them to jail in await trial at the next term of court for assaulting an officer while in the discharge of his duty.

Fewest City Move For Waterworks, Special to The Observer.

Furman City, Jan. 30.—A popular meeting of the citizens of the town was held to-day at which steps were taken toward installing a system of waterworks. A committee was appointed to take up the matter and prepare a bill to go before the present Legislature for an order to call an election for voting on a bond issue. It is thought that \$100,000 will be sufficient to begin with. The project seems to meet with pretty general favor.