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## THE GLEANER

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Any kind of marketable produce taken in exchange for work.

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## WAS IT LUCK.

BY JENNIE STERLING.

There appears to be a streak of ill-luck running through the genealogy of some families, their undertakings never prosper, or if it happens that good luck seems about to "turn up," disappointment invariably follows as if some Nemesis pursued them.

An individual with just such a family history, on a certain day in the year 1875, was sitting at the small window of a poverty-stricken looking dwelling in the outskirts of Brooklyn.

He was a middle aged man, pale and melancholy, yet having an aristocratic bearing, which even shabby looking clothes could not quite conceal.

While appearing to gaze at the view without, his thoughts were in reality concentrated upon himself.

"Lena," he said, suddenly addressing his companion, "there is no use in striving against fate. The family curse pursues me even here; now just as I expected to be installed as clerk in Hopkins' employ, a younger man steps into the position.

"To-day, I find I have reduced the slender soles of my faithful boots to such extreme extension that I doubt if they can carry me much longer in search of employment. I am thoroughly discouraged."

His wife responded with a sigh; all through the years of their married life he had been discouraged. It was the same old cry under all circumstances, whether good or evil.

She was of that gentle type of woman who are born consolers, who suffer in silence, but are accustomed to look at the bright side of things, to point to the silver lining of the cloud, to the rainbow of promise; but now she, too, was losing hope and courage, being under the influence of torturing poverty, which was slowly pinching and grinding their lives away.

"Hermann," she said at last, "you are right; fate is against us." Her husband turned quickly, and looked inquiringly and anxiously into her face.

It was a pale, wan face, possessing traces of former beauty; she answered the look by repeating, "I say fate is against us."

"This from you, Lena? then I am discouraged; let fate do her worst!" he said bitterly, folding his arms and sitting listlessly back in his chair.

"Hermann, you must sell the ring!"

"What! sell the only reminder of former greatness—our heirloom. What can you be thinking of, Lena?"

"I am thinking of gold," she replied, "with an empty purse and no credit, an exacting, importunate landlord, and no prospects for the future. It is folly to hoard the glittering bubble for surely it is nothing more to us, shut up as it is in its leather case."

"Yes, yes, I am God forsaken. I have been selfish enough in dragging you down to my own level. I will sell the ring for your sake; but Lena, do not forget that a curse may follow."

Hermann Ulrich emigrated from Germany with the expectation of improving his condition in the land of freedom.

He belonged to a 'good old stock' family having a fatality to its history. His father from the wreck of fallen fortunes retained the ring which he placed on his son's finger when dying.

"I charge you not to part with it," he said; keep it for your boy's sake, for whatever good or fortune is in store for its possessor, it brings—loss or sell this family legacy a heavy curse will inevitably follow, so says our tradition, so say I, and thus was the good baron's bequest brought safely over the ocean and kept as a sacred treasure, not so much for its intrinsic value, as for its associations, and the superstitions connected with it.

The grandchild to whom it would descend in the order of consanguinity died shortly after their arrival in New York city.

The small sum of money at their disposal was soon exhausted; obliged to move from place to place in search of cheaper rent, they located themselves in Brooklyn, and there, strangers in a strange land, starvation seemed probable. Nothing remained but to sell the ring, and it was not without many severe struggles that Ulrich consented.

It was Lena's words decided his wavering purpose. "My boy is dead and I cannot see my wife starve,"

he said to himself apologetically.

About a mile from the dwelling where these unfortunate victims to superstition were fighting poverty and adverse fate, there lived a poor withered old woman in a miserable shanty called the 'rookery.'

She was out every morning long before the dawn of day with her basket and hook, diving into gutters and barrels in search of something to exchange for bread.

She worked industriously at her calling with a will; because she had a motive, a motive as strong as any which moves the heart to action—it was love.

Yes, it was a loving heart which beat beneath those rags.

To watch her, bending over a filthy barrel, searching through its mass of rubbish, to note the scant faded dress and the old rag which served for a shawl, and the dirty hood drawn over the wrinkled face, bronzed by constant exposure to sun and wind—it would be extremely difficult to imagine the slightest degree of tender feeling within; in fact to imagine that a human soul lived under such an exterior.

But follow her home after a day's work is disposed of, and we shall find that self-sacrifice and devotion is sometimes found under the low roof of a hovel.

Before she enters the small apartment she calls home, she disappears into some dark corner, and divesting herself of the old tumperry, emerges fresh and clean.

"You are better to-day Benita. See, my darling, I have brought you something nice," she said, holding up a bunch of tempting purple grapes.

The person thus addressed was a girl seated in an easy chair, supported by pillows, evidently an invalid convalescent from long sickness, for the rose color on her cheeks and lips and dewy softness of her eyes, foretold returning health.

She was beautiful—remarkably so, and it was made still more apparent by her coarse surroundings.

"Always thinking and planning for me, dear grandma, and never for yourself," she said, looking gratefully at the old lady—shall we say?

"Yes, lady, for if according to the American idea, the elements of true womanhood, unselfishness and politeness, constitute a lady irrespective of condition, then the withered old rag-picker was one without doubt. She, however, would have disowned the title, being an Italian whose views differ materially from ours."

When young and comely, she married one of her own station in life, and together they toiled happily; but with the improvidence common to the race and soil, they failed to lay by for a rainy day. "Those dark and dreary days" came only too quickly, for shortly after the birth of a son, the young husband died, leaving his widow to battle with poverty, bequeathing to his boy a name only.

The little Antonio, in due process of time, became a man of fine presence, with regular, handsome features and large luminous eyes. These attractions gained for him much admiration, and at last a sweetheart, far above him in status, who being passionately in love, dissented all advice and interference, and consented to a secret marriage.

In company with Antonio's mother, the happy couple came to the New World, the El Dorado of the unfortunate, where they were blessed with a daughter, to whom was given her grandmother's name—Benita.

She was a lovely child, full of grace and sweetness, which every day developed into the formation of a fine disposition; and being sent to the public schools of New York, she could hardly fail to acquire a smattering at least, of knowledge.

At the time we introduce her, she was in her eighteenth year, her parents both dead, her grandmother being her sole support and protector.

Perhaps it might be thought strange that Benita did not obtain employment of some kind, and thus assist by a division of labor.

Alas, poor girl, she was unable to move any part of her body except her arms, for a fall received years before, had weakened her spine, leaving partial paralysis.

But thanks to a noble charity, and the skill of Doctor Knight she was rapidly recovering the use of her limbs by the aid of braces and straps, and he prophesied a speedy return to health and strength.

Grandmother thought no task too laborious, no labor disgraceful, that brought comfort to her darling, the only being she loved or in return loved her.

She tried all kinds of employment—washing, ironing and scrubbing; but the hard time coming on, families who had hitherto hired labor, now did it for themselves, until work failing, she was forced to accept the shelter of the 'rookery,' and was thankful to lean the profession of 'gleaning' from an experienced rag-picker.

So we find her after a day's toil ministering with an angel heart, and bringing delicacies to tempt the appetite of the sick girl.

"Do you ever think of yourself?" inquired Benita, in a low, musical voice, a voice from Italy; "when shall I be able, I will not say to repay but to show my love."

"Only get well, and I am satisfied," replied the companion; "but I've a surprise for you," she continued taking a paper from her pocket, and spreading it before her on the table. "The Family Story Paper, as I live," the girl exclaimed; "it's just what I wished for. Oh, grandma, you are indeed, a kind fairy."

"But a very old withered one, dear child; now you can amuse yourself to-morrow during my absence, by reading the love stories contained in it."

"That will be delightful, for the time does seem tedious; but I know that you bought it instead of your supper. I think you are waiting for your good things in another and better world."

"Benita, good luck, sooner or later, follows our family, and incredible as it may appear, I tell you we shall be rich yet."

"I hope so, blessed old comforter for your sake, I am rich now."

"What could she mean, lying there strapped unable to move?"

Shortly after the loving conversation, the aged woman started off as usual basket in hand, hoping, to fill it often, and moreover, wishing to find a stray silver spoon or two dropped by some careless housemaid which could be converted into cash and comfort for the invalid.

The clouds were lowering, and soon a light rain began to fall, but the seeker plodded on for many a weary mile, until at last returning weary and discouraged she sat down on a curbstone for a moment to tie her shoe.

As she did so something bright and sparkling caught her eye, lying half hidden in a mass of autumn leaves. Picking it up hastily, and looking cautiously around to see if there was any to snatch away the prize, she found it was a stone of great brilliancy.

Ignorant as she was she knew that it was of value, and quickly hastening home, after carefully drawing down the window curtain, she laid it in Benita's hand.

"A diamond as I live she exclaimed excitedly; see how it sparkles as the light strikes it—beautiful, beautiful, but where did you get it?"

The history of the stone was related many and various were the conjectures they formed in regard to it, how it came in the gutter, and why it had been overlooked.

"Left there on purpose for us," said the elder Benita. "God is good; I told you that we should be rich, and now see this gem."

"But it may be worthless after all nothing but a mere imitation," said her grandchild; "oh, it should be a real diamond, we could sell it for even so much money, and you could buy a nice warm dress and shawl."

"And you could have your story paper for a whole year darling."

"And read aloud for you in the evenings, grandma."

After much consultation, which reached far into the night, they resolved to visit a leading clergyman in Brooklyn, and ask his advice as to its value, and the best disposal of it.

Accordingly, the next day with many injunctions and instructions from her granddaughter, Benita, dressed as neatly as possible, sought an interview with the good minister, who was surprised at the appearance of his visitor.

"I am not much of a judge of diamonds," he said, "but I should say this is a very fine specimen. It certainly is no common gem. You may try at once to find its owner, my good woman."

"It is mine," said Benita simply, her ideas of ownership being limited.

He then explained to her the necessity and benefit of advertising, assuring her that if after a certain time no one appeared to claim the lost jewel, it would be fairly her own to sell it possible.

Giving a reluctant consent, she returned home, but not without that she cautiously concealed.

The clergyman made minute inquiries concerning her, fearing that she might have stolen it, and was convinced that her story was a true one.

In a few weeks, according to his directions she called upon him, and learned that there had been no response to repeated advertisements; and now said he, "I will see that you get its value," and at his request, she accompanied him to a celebrated jeweler's on Broadway.

There he ascertained that the precious stone was of the purest water, and that its value could be estimated by thousands; and being a match for one they possessed, it was accordingly purchased by the firm.

Farewell forever to rag-picking, a more comfortable home was sought and soon found, the invalid was given an impetus toward health and happiness, both were increased by added comforts, and it was not long before she gained the use of her limbs, and was able to help herself.

As for old grandmother, the good clergyman found her a rough diamond only needing a beautiful setting and polish.

She fairly sparkled and shone with excess of happiness all on account of her darling, and he told his wife, that in spite of surroundings he thought she was a lady.

Herman Ulrich never knew how or where he lost his ring. The superstitions of his family preying upon his mind, combined with poverty and ill health, caused brain fever of which he died, his wife following him soon after.

That diamond was the heirloom which brought luck to its next possessor.

## TOOMBS AND THE BOSTONIANS

(From the New York Star.)

\*\*\* On the 29th day of January 1856, Mr. Toombs, then U. S. Senator, delivered in the Tremont Temple his once famous speech on "slavery in the United States—its relation to the Federal Constitution, and its influence on the wellbeing of the Slave and Society."

The most impressive and startling passage in the vein of such an audience was his refutation of the nonsense that a slave has no compensation for labor, nor right that the white man is bound to respect. After speaking of the degraded condition of the free negro, in England; Hayti, Jamaica and the Northern States, he said: "The Southern States \* \* \* treat them differently."

They keep them in the subordinate condition in which they found them, protect them against themselves, and compel them to contribute to their own and the public interests and welfare. Under this system, we appeal to facts, open to all men, to prove that the African race has attained a higher degree of comfort and happiness than his race has ever before attained in any age or country. Our political system gives the slave great and valuable rights. His life is equally protected with that of his master; his person is secure from assault against all others excepting his master, and his master's power in this respect is placed under salutary legal restraints. He is entitled by law to a home, to ample food and clothing, and exempted from 'excessive' labor. When no longer capable of labor, in old age or disease, His legal charge upon his other capabilities of labor or not the same legal to the grave, these legal provisions, rights; and a large proportion of they enjoy the same legal rights as any of unskilled hired laborers in the world. We know that those rights are, in the main, faithfully secured to them. But I rely not on

our knowledge, but submit our institutions to the same tests by which we try those of all other countries. These are supplied by our public statistics. They show that our slaves are larger consumers of animal food than any population in Europe, and larger than any other population in the United States; and that their natural increase (by children) is equal to that of any other people. These are true and undisputable tests that their physical comforts are amply secured."

The speech was one that was never replied to, and hit the Abolitionists hard. Unfortunately, it was reason, not gush, like "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and it is easier to weep than to learn.

One Cultus Boston man thought he could make the orator betray himself, and took occasion to approach him in the midst of a great crowd at the Revere House, so as to have witness.

"You are Senator Toombs?" he said.

"I am," said the great Bob.

"I have no doubt that your eminent positions will compel you to give a true answer to a question, even if it should criminate your section?"

"Try me," said Bob, with a twinkle in his eyes.

"Sir," said the long-faced and long-haired philanthropist, "I am informed that in Georgia, your own State, they actually work negroes to the plow in the place of horses, and I rely upon you to substantiate or contradict it."

Toombs said—"I will answer you, Yankee fashion, by asking another question. Do you know what a likely negro boy or man costs?"

"Oh, yes," said Philo, "I am informed of your dreadful customs, and the price of human blood is \$900 to \$1,500."

"Will you take 1,000 as fair?" said Toombs.

"Yes, sir," said the man in search of his brother.

"Well," said Toombs, "a fair plow team is two mules with us. How many negro men would you think it would take to do the work of two good mules?"

The man pondered. He thought here was confusion. He said: "I should say about ten to a mule, or twenty to a team."

Toombs said: "A mule costs from \$100 to 150. A team, say \$300. Your negro team will cost just \$20,000. Don't you think that is rather high plowing?"

The man gave an angry jam of his hat over his ears, and went out ejaculating, "I might have known it was a lie!"

ADVERTISEMENTS.

NEW GOODS IN  
an old store.

Harden CO at  
BIG FALLS.

have opened a general stock of goods, such as the trade of the surrounding country demand. They intend to keep what their customers need, at exceedingly low prices. All kinds of barter taken in exchange for goods.

Octo 31 77 3m.

MAKE YOUR  
Wife Happy.

—00000—

help you to do this. Call and see

Hunters Old Store.

I have the WILSON SEWING MACHINE, with all the attachments. The BICKFORD KNITTING MACHINE and the

Robbins little washer.

If these three articles don't make a household happy then the husband must be bad, or the wife ill tempered. I will sell the above articles cheaper than they can be bought elsewhere. All you have to do is get a little cloth and thread, my machines will do the making, knitting and washing, so you may keep yourself well clad and clean.

Feb'y 12 1878.

R. S. HUNTER,  
Graham, N. C.