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THE GOLDEN RULE AT MISERY FLAT.

'De, Lowizy, git down off that stool, and quit rummaging in that burey drawer.'

Lowizy, from her perch on the stool, only turned her shoe-back eyes toward the spot whereon lay the invalid whose faintly querulous tones arrested her attention, and answered:

'Pears like you're crosser'n usual, Mandy. I ain't a rummaging; I'm hunting for a piece of that stripped ticking to set a patch in Mike's overalls.'

'Well, do git down and shut that drawer,' persisted the sick woman; 'there ain't a speck of that there ticking left.'

'There is,' interrupted the girl, holding up a large scrap, 'and here it is, so, there. And what's more, here's a lot of new calico. Sakes! where 'did you raise so much?'

The woman's eyes brightened and her tones cheered perceptibly as she answered hurriedly:

'Well, shut the drawer and git away from there, and I'll give you one of them pieces for a new dress. You can take your choice, the laylock and green or the speckled pink. Do git down. Right there by that window, too, and most time for Mike to be a coming.'

At that moment Mike himself entered the door. His not ill-natured face clouded over as he observed Lowizy coolly replacing the prints in the drawer, and he stepped hastily forward as if to arrest her farther progress. A significant glance from his wife caused him to turn towards the cot instead of the bureau.

'Never mind it,' whispered his wife soothingly, 'she hain't spied out nothing. She's only poking after a bit of stuff to patch your overalls. If you flare up like she'll suspect something. I wish in my soul we'd never taken a hand in it.'

And Mandy buried her face in her pillow and began to cry.

'You'd better take your quinine, Mandy,' said Lowizy. 'You've been a gaping and a stretching all the morning, and now you're bawling. Your ager's coming on, sure. There's your dinner, Mike, on the fire. Lift it yourself, can't you? I want to dose Mandy and fix these yer overalls before I eat.'

Mike lifted his dinner and eat it in silence, while Mandy took her dose and Lowizy's nimble fingers plied the needle upon the torn overalls. When Mike had finished his repast she looked up from her work and said:

'I am going over to Bixlerville pretty soon to get Miss Naylor to cut out my new calico. You better not go over the sough. Mandy 'll need you round home. There's them late peas to brush. They're sprawlin' terrible. And there's that hanging shelf in the kitchen—why don't you tinker that up? And be sure you don't forget to bring the dugout over to the shore for me along about sundown. I'll be there, I reckon, long 'fore you will. Want me to call the doctor for Mandy?'

'Doctoring does small good,' answered Mike, gloomily. 'Misery Flat's no place for a man to live in. If a chap could ever get a hold of a claim over yonder on the hill—but there's no use a trying; fever and ager and hard luck for ever and ever 'll take the go out of any man.'

'Oh, you are blue to day, Mike,' laughed the girl. 'I dunno what's got you and Mandy here lately. After the cotton's baled and sold you'll chirp up. Misery Flat cotton beats the bill to nothing.'

'Yes,' said Mike, a bit more heartily; 'and it we just could get a cabin and a few acres on the hill where we could live, I'd work the Flat plantation, and ask no odds of any man. But there's no use.'

'A grumbling,' interrupted the girl cheerily. 'Bymoby you'll rattle out of this, and get your home tother side of the sough. That is, if you don't fume yourself into the ager again. There, there's your overalls. Now I'm going. Misery Flat is one of the many islands that dot the Mississippi river between Cario and New Orleans. River pilots know it by its proper number, its local name, Missouri Flat, being given to it by the small colony of humble folk from the State of Missouri who, in the hope of bettering their condition, had settled on the island which, like many others, was luxuriantly fertile, producing at small expenditure of labor abundant crops of the finest cotton, as well as grain and vegetables. As usual, where exuberance of vegetable life is found, there also is found malaria, and the unfortunate settlers on the Missouri Flat came in time to deem the name flung at their island in the ironical speech of passing boating no misnomer.'

Mike Flynn, a bright young man of

Irish parentage, with his young wife, a rosy, headful Missouri girl, had come with the small colony to the island full of the hopeful enthusiasm of youth, and had set about the work of cultivating the soil and building up an honest home with commendable zeal. Before they had been a twelvemonth on the island they found out that wealth could only be gained on Misery Flat at the expense of health. Over on the rolling lands of the main shore it was healthful. If only they could secure a home there! To accomplish this Mike toiled early and late, carefully hoarding every dollar of his earnings. But sickness and death—

—baby forms were laid away in the neighborhood graveyard on the hillside beyond the sough—had brought consequent expense and loss, and Mike's hoard increased but slowly. Mandy's health gave way at last, and then all things seemed to go wrong.

Mike, by nature, thrifty and saving, grew close, even covetous. It troubled Mandy to witness the growing change.

When they had first come to Misery Flat they had found but one plantation on the island. Its owner was eager to sell out his claim to Mike for a small sum of ready cash. With the plantation he turned over to the Flynns a child of about seven years of age, with but the excuse that she was 'nose o' their'n,' and as she had come to them 'thout being sent fer, so she moust stay thar 'thout none of his fotchin' away.'

Of the child's history he knew nothing. Only he 'allowed' she'd been lost off some steamboat. One had burned to the water's edge on the opposite shore only the night preceding the day on which the little creature had made her appearance at his cabin door. In his own phrase, 'he'd keep her along till this present, but he didn't allow as he'd any call to tote her round the kentry.'

Mike and Mandy, with true, warm-hearted hospitality, took the little waif into their home, and treated her, if not as their child, at least as their sister, teaching her to read and write and figure respectably, and to perform household duties quite creditably. She learned also to paddle a skiff and, what was far more difficult, to manage a dugout and to swim in the river. At fifteen Lowizy was, as Mike phrased it, a girl worth somebody's while to look after. And truly, somebody of late had seemed to be looking after the unknown in a way that was causing Mike no little concern.

Upon the night robe in which the little waif was clad at the time of her advent upon the island the planter's wife read the name which the child said was her own, Heloise Masson. It had been modified into Lowizy. Of the little one's simple recital they could make out only that she was on a big boat going to see papa, and that mamma rocked her to sleep in her lap, and when she woke up she was all stuck fast in some bushes, and wet and muddy and hungry; and that while she was looking all around to find mamma and sister she came upon the cabin and sought its friendly shelter.

After Lowizy's adoption into the Flynn family the little girl was always mentioned by Mike in his rare visits to Bixlerville by her real name, and Bixlerville good folk knew that Flynn's Lowizy who came now and again with her bright face and merry, shoe black eyes to fetch the doctor, or to do some errand for Misery Flat folks, was really and truly Heloise Masson, the lost child of some unknown persons.

One day, a few weeks previous to the opening of our story, Mike returned from a visit to Bixlerville with two letters, which, in Lowizy's absence he read to his wife. One was addressed to the postmaster at Bixlerville, and entreated him to ascertain, if possible, the whereabouts of a young girl, Heloise Masson by name, who was lost off the steamer —, in the 18—, and supposed to have been drowned, but of whose existence, and in Bixlerville neighborhood, recent circumstances had excited strong hopes. The postmaster, upon seeing Mike turned the letter over to him, with also one enclosed, addressed to Miss Heloise Masson. As he did so he said:

'It's your Lowizy, Mike. I have no doubt of it. Maybe there's money in it, if you manage it sharp. Nothing like looking out for number one, you know. More'n likely these Massons 'll pay you for her keep and so on. Leastways you're her guardian, and as such you've a right to see what's in that letter before she does. May be you can make a good thing out of it. Who knows?'

In an evil moment Mike yielded to the temptation. The letter to Heloise convinced him that the girl was indeed the one sought for by parents who had mourned her as dead through all these years. Just how to make money out of

his knowledge he did not quite clearly see.

'They'll take her away, that's sure, as soon as they find out she's here,' he said to his wife. 'An' how are we to get on without Lowizy?'

'What would you do, Mike? Keep the letter from her? Sure, you've no right; and it would be far from doing as you'd be done by.'

'Right!' echoed Mike, crossly, ignoring the milder part of Mandy's argument. 'Who's a better right than him that's fed and clothed her these seven years now! Who'll pay me for her keep?'

'Sure, she's paid as she's gone, Mike. Lowizy has been as much to us as we to her. You can't deny that. Don't do a mean think Mike dear. It isn't like you and it'll bring no luck, though you may think so.'

But Mike was blinded with lust of lucre. He hid the letters in the bureau drawer, and bade Mandy not mention them. He determined within himself to not go soon again to Bixlerville. He grew moody and irritable and, Mandy seeing the change, only became worse, and cried oftener on her weary pillow and not even Lowizy's bright wits could account for the change that had happened to the pair.

'O Mike, Mike, I can't stand it any longer,' sobbed the invalid upon the day that Lowizy, with her pink calico, had started to Bixlerville. 'It's killing me keeping the sinthsecret. It's stealing and lying, and cheating all at once, and there'll never be a light heart in me till the sin is off my conscience. You're not the lad you were since the day you brought the letters, and it'll come to no good. I was afraid she would blunder on to them letters this morning that I gave her the crosset and meaneast word ever I spoke to her, in my hurry to get her away from the drawer—and she just the mainstay of the family. It cuts me to the heart. Give it up Mike. Let us live and die on Misery Flat, if God will, but don't let us blacken our souls with a sin that is sure to cry out against us when we least expect it. Could you be happy in your home on the bluff, if you had it, knowing all the while you was keeping Lowizy out of home and schooling and mother-love and all? Ah Mike, have you clear forgot the motto you said should be ours when first we came to the plantation? You know you said then to the neighbor that we'd all live by the Golden Rule at Misery Flat, and then there'd never come hard feelings. Dear Mike, go and pray to the good God to take away the evil spirit that troubles you and give you strength to square your life as it used to be by the best o' all rules.'

She pushed him gently from her as she turned away her head and ceased from pleading. Mike without a word went out.

Lowizy, said Mike, about sundown, as the girl balanced herself in the waiting dugout, 'I want to tell you something. I've been a keeping 'f back for some time, but it is your right to know it. Likely as not you'll be mad that I haven't told you before; for it's good news for you, although it's bad enough for Mandy and me. There's a letter from your folks in the cabin. You'll have to answer it and then, of course, they'll come and get you and take you far enough from Misery Flat and make a lady of you. No doubt in a few years you'll be that fine you won't like to remember that the rough times and the and the plain folks on the island. But Mandy and I'll never forget you or cease to wish you well. And I want you just to promise me one thing before we touch the shore, and that is that you won't hold spite against us for keeping back your letter. T was wrong, and I'm sorry. I hated to think of parting with you, and—'

Here Mike's voice grew husky and he blushed with shame, but he went on, though with a great effort.

'I couldn't see how we'd ever get a home over yonder if we let go of you, and I was tempted Lowizy, to do a mean thing and try to get money out of your folks. Mandy wasn't to blame. She frowned upon it all the time. Just say you'll forgive Lowizy. Can't you?'

'Oh, hush up, you with great big silly,' laughed the girl, her eyes blazing with eager joy. 'I've seen 'em all! Father mother, and big sister and little brother that looks precisely like me. They're all over to Bixlerville tavern, pretty near crazy, every one of 'em, and all about me. Ain't it funny though? My but they're fine folks too. Just think of me belonging to them and going to live with them. But don't you mind,' she added hastily as she noticed the look on Mike's face. 'I'll go with them; I'll have to. But I ain't going to leave you and Mandy in no fix. You'll see. I told

them all about you and Mandy, and how you couldn't manage without us and they said what could they do for you and I just up and told them. 'Buy him a bit of land over here on the healthy shore,' I says, 'and then I'll be willing to leave them. Once get Mandy and Mike where they can live, and I'll risk them for getting along without any girl like me.' You just ought to have heard my folks laugh! They praised me up to the skies for being so loyal—what's that I wonder? And my father—how funny it does sound—my father promised fair and flat that he'd buy you land, and he's gone this minute to see Lawyer Dixson about it. Now, what do you say?'

Mike could not take in the overwhelming intelligence.

'How did you find them out, Lowizy he asked dazedly.

Oh Miss Naylor, she gave the merest look at my new pink calico and grabbed hold of my hand and said 'Lowizy, if I don't miss my guess you are in luck. There's folks fine ones, too over at the tavern hunting for a girl just your age and name. They say they've sent letters but never had any answer, and they're so shure the girl is somewhere in this region roundabout and they're just come themselves to search the whole country. They've got it all in the Bixlerville Post and Herald and it's plain to my mind you are the girl.' Sure enough, there they were. Miss Naylor marched me straight up to the tavern and sent word to the folks. They knew me in a minute by those marks on my foot that Mandy said came from a scald sometime when I was a baby. So they did, my mother said. And then I look just like my father and little brother. You'll see to-morrow when they all get here. My! but they hated to have me leave 'em, but I told 'em I must. Mandy couldn't get supper and you'd be at the dugout and and go I would. So here I am. Hurry up for there's lots to do, and they'll all be over here to see you to-morrow. We must get Mandy up and fix up the cabin a little slick. What in the name of sense are you crying about? You're going to get your home on the hill right off! Good times are coming to Misery Flat. Why don't you hooray?'

The morning came and with it the Massons, who clearly proved their right to Lowizy, and were able to explain the long sealed mystery. Mike was made happy by the deed of gift of the choicest bit on the hill shore, and Mandy was supplied with the means of procuring many a desirable comfort. Lowizy with her new-found friends, quitted the old life and old home at Misery Flat.

Mike and Mandy, too found a new home in the neat cabin on the hill, and found there that Misery Flat lacked pure air free of miasmatic vapor. There they could hope to live and toil and add to the world's products, blessed with health and vigor. Misery Flat plantation was not given up, but worked successfully, and as the years went by and Mike came to be known as the man who oftenest sent the first and finest bale of cotton to the market. Mandy would make answer to the congratulations of friends in words whose full meaning were only understood by Mike himself.

'Yes, it is prospered we have been, although we have seen dark days. Sure I never got a letter from Miss Masson, our Lowizy that was, and hear of her good life too, without thanking God with all that we squared our lives by the Golden Rule at Misery Flat.'

WORTH REMEMBERING.

It is the penny saved more than the penny earned that enriches; it is the sheet turned when the first threads break, that wears the longest; it is the damper closed when the cooking is done that stops the dollars dropping in the coal bin; it is the lamp or gas burned low, when not in use, that gives you pin-money for the month; it is the care in making the coffee that makes three spoonfuls go as far as a teacup ordinarily; it is the walking one or six blocks, instead of taking a cab or omnibus, that adds strength to your body and money to your purse; it is the careful mending of each week's wash that gives ease to your conscience and length of days to your garments; and last of all, it is the constant care exercised over every part of your household, and constant endeavor to improve and apply you' best powers to your work, that alone gives peace and prosperity to the family.

The United States Supreme Court has held a railroad company liable for injuries to a passenger riding on a free pass which specified that the company was not liable.

One candidate in Tennessee promises if elected to give one fourth of his official income to the public and private schools, while another pledges himself to give the entire proceeds to an orphan asylum.

Gleanings.

It is a bad religion that makes us hate the religion of other people.

An Irishman complained to his physician that he stuffed him so much with drugs that he was sick a long time after he got well.

The oldest Presbyterian church in America is at Jamaica, L. I. It was established in the year 1662.

Tom Evans says that with two presbyterians on the Supreme Court bench, the lawyers had better rub up on the shorter catechism and let poetry alone.

A Sunday School boy, of Maysville, Ky., was asked by the superintendent if his father was a Christian. "Yes, sir," he replied, "but he is not working at it much."

Horace Greeley said the saddest period in a young man's life is when he makes up his mind there is an easier way of getting money than earnestly earning it. That's what the matter.

A demoralized saloon-keeper while bewailing to a friend the sad state of his business looked toward a new spire creeping heavenward, with a wave of the hand said: "Them's the things that's ruinin' the country."

INFANTIAL.—New curate (who wishes to know all about his parishioners): "Then do I understand that your aunt is on your father's side, or your mother's?" Country lad: "Sometimes one and sometimes the other coptin' when feyther wacks 'em both, sir!"

An old Highland clergyman, who had received several calls to parishes, asked his servant where he should go. The servant said, "Go where there is most sin, sir." The preacher concluded that was good advice, and went where there was most money.

Messrs. Blackburn, Stenger and Reed have been appointed as the sub-committee of the Potter committee to visit Louisiana, and will leave after the adjournment of Congress. From present appearances the committee will not finish its labor for at least a month.

A boy at a city street crossing having begged something of a gentleman, the latter told him he would do something as he came back. "Your honor would be surprised if you knew the money I have lost by giving credit that way."

A little girl, when her father's table was honored with an esteemed guest, began talking very earnestly at the first pause in the conversation. Her father checked her very sharply, saying: "Why is it that you always talk so much?" "Tanne I've got somesin to say," was the innocent reply.

William Cullen Bryant never entertained a very high opinion of Henry Ward Beecher. Even when the latter was at the zenith of his fame and influence the poet regarded him as a man without positive religious convictions over fond of applause, and at heart thoroughly selfish. He once remarked to a friend visiting at Roslyn in the summer of 1868. Mr. Beecher would make a good actor; he is out of his place in the pulpit.

Religion is the tie that connects man with his Creator, and holds him to his throne. If that tie is sundered or broken he floats away a worthless atom in the universe, its proper attractions all gone, its destiny thwarted, and its whole future, nothing but darkness, desolation and death.—DANIEL WASSERMAN.

How to Save Office-Slaves.—"Yes," said Mr. Hayes to the delighted applicant for office, "I am a devout Sunday school man and a follower of the tea cup, so that I cannot myself in my individual capacity as a President tell you a lie. I will not promise you an office, but I will turn you over to one of the Cabinet who I have selected for this worldly purpose. Amen."—NEW YORK HERALD.

The editor of Vanity Fair (London) writes "I am daily assailed by my friends who, either on their own account or on account of somebody else, implore me in the name of friendship to 'keep' such and such a thing 'out of the paper.' Being of an amiable disposition, I am always inclined to indulge them; but really it must have a limit, for if it goes on I will either have to present my readers a handsome blank page, or else I must take the advice once given to an editor, to have no friends and live in a cellar."

A COMPLETE FAILURE.—A dozen men were sitting in a saloon recently, when a female voice was heard from an adjacent doorstep. Well, good morning Mrs. Black. If I had any thing on I'd go with you. There was a mad rush for the door, as eager expectant crowd with outstretched necks peering over each other's shoulders in the direction from whence the voice proceeded, and then a return to the vacant chairs, while one of the party asked "What good does it do for a woman to lie in that way anyhow?"

LUCK AND LABOR.

Labor is ever waiting for something to turn up; labor, with keen eyes and strong will, turn up something. Luck lies in bed and wishes the post would bring him news of a legacy; labor turns out at six o'clock, and with busy pen or ringing hammer lays the foundation of a competence. Luck whines, and labor whistles. Luck relies on chance; labor on character. Luck slips down to indolence; labor strides upward to independence.