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THE MINISTER'S OLD COAT.

Ministers' sons are very apt to turn out badly, said I to the gentleman who sat next to me in the car. We had met in the train, bound for Chicago, and had struck up an acquaintance.

He stopped me with his hand on my arm and with an earnest look which I shall never forget.

I paused at once in what I was saying, and it seemed for a moment almost as if the rushing train had stopped to listen, too.

'Let me tell you a story,' he said. 'I know it is a common belief that ministers' sons are wild, but this is because people talk about the bad ones, while those who turn out well are taken as a matter of course. I gathered statistics about them once, and found that out of a thousand sons of ministers, there were very few who did not grow up useful and industrious men.'

'But what is your story?' I asked, settling back in my seat.

'Well, said he, it begins with a class supper in Boston, a dozen years ago. A number of old college friends had gathered in the evening for their annual reunion. Among them was the rich merchant, J. E. Williston—perhaps you have heard of him—and a poor pastor of a country church in Elmbank village, out in Western Massachusetts, whose name was Blake. A good many of the class had died, and the dozen or so elderly men who were left felt more tender than ever toward each other, as they thought of the bright old days at Harvard, and how soon no one would be left on earth who shared in that happy time.

The dishes came and went, the lights glowed brightly, and at last the friends grew quite gay. But the tender feeling I have spoken of would come uppermost, now and then; and in one of these rousing moments Williston's eye was attracted by something glistening about the coat which his friend Blake, who sat next to him, had on.

He looked closer, and saw that the black cloth of which the coat was made had been worn so thin and smooth that it was very shiny.

'Well, Blake,' said he suddenly, taking hold of his friend's arm cordially (which he somehow hadn't thought of doing before), 'how has the world gone with you lately?'

Blake had a naturally sad and thoughtful face; but he looked around quickly, with a warm smile.

'No need to ask,' he said, laughingly. 'You can read the whole story on my back.' This old coat is a sort of balance sheet, which shows my financial condition to a T.'

Then he spoke more seriously, adding, 'It is a pretty hard life, Williston, that of a country person. I don't complain of my lot, though sometimes I'm distressed for my family. The fact is, this coat I've got on is hardly fit for a man of my profession to appear in; but I'm going to send my boy Sam to Harvard this year, and must pinch here and there to do it. I really ought to be thankful, though, that I can get such advantages for him by a few little sacrifices of personal appearance and convenience.

'Don't you give a thought to your coat, old fellow?' returned Williston. 'Nobody who knows you will ever imagine that the heart inside of it is threadbare, however the garment may look.'

Blake was pleased with this kindly expression, and both men, after that exchange of confidence, felt happier. But among the various incidents of the evening, this one almost passed out of the minister's mind by the next day, when he started for Elmbank.

Speedy as his return was, however, something meant for him had got to his destination before him. It was a letter. Taking it up, he broke open the envelope and found inside a few words from Williston, with a check for \$500 to defray the first year's college expenses of his old classmate's son.

You are a stranger to me, sir,' said my traveling companion, at this point, 'but I think you will appreciate the feeling with which poor Mr. Blake stood in his bare and dingy study in the old farm parsonage, holding that letter in his hand and lifting his faithful eyes in thankfulness to God.'

'Yes,' I replied. Williston did just the right thing, too. And how was it? Did the son show that he deserved the help?'

My acquaintance looked away from me at the rich country through which we were passing. Then he said:

'Sam Blake was a good-natured, obedient fellow enough, and was greatly pleased to have the expense of his first college year taken off his father's shoulders; but his sense of duty didn't go very far. The Rev. Mr. Blake bought a new coat, and Sam entered Harvard that fall; and here matters stopped for a while.

'A freshman has a great deal to learn, as you know; but I think the chief thing Sam learned that term, was the great difference there is between Harvard and a little village like Elmbank, and the great difficulty of working and playing at the same time.

'Here he had society meetings to attend, and rooms of his own, with a chum, where a good deal of smoking was done by himself and his friends. And then there was baseball, into which it appeared indispensable for the honor of the class that he should enter actively, on account of his strong legs, wonderful wind and ground batting.

'He could not refuse to go to the theater occasionally with his richer companions. Sam took a natural interest in the society of young ladies, too, and had to give up some time to its cultivation. He also thought a moderate amount of practice in the gymnasium was desirable, to prevent his health breaking down under the confinement of study. So, on the whole, the actual work that he did in the college course was not very extensive.

'This didn't seem to have any bad effect till well along in the winter, when the habit of shirking work had grown so strong, without his noticing it, that he fell easily into reading novels when he ought to have been in the recitation room. Gymnasium, theater, billiards, smoking—and I am afraid I must say a little drinking—frattered away his time.

'One horribly snowy, sleety morning when he had got up too late for prayers, the postman brought him a note from the faculty—an admonition.'

He dropped the pipe he was just lighting, and bolted off to recitation. And that 'faded' immediately, and that discouraged him.

'He soon began to make light of the warning, and did himself no credit in his studies. Though he managed to squeeze through the examination at the end of the freshman year, he came out far down toward the foot of his class.

'He wasn't quite contented with himself, and thought he would try to do better the next year. But during the journey home, he recovered his usual spirits.

'When he walked up the village towards the parsonage farm, he was thinking that—since he was a sophomore now—he would buy the nicest and biggest-headed cane in Cambridge when he should go back there. And what do you suppose was the first sight that met him at home?'

'It was his father out in the field, digging for new potatoes, his coat off and his spectacled face perspiring.'

'The sight struck shame into the boy, he vaulted the fence, and running up with hardly a pause for his greeting cried:

'Oh, father, let me do that! I don't like to see you at such work.'

'Mr. Blake stopped and looked earnestly and rather sadly at him.

'Well Sam, that's about as good a 'How-do-you-do?' as you could have offered me. There's something right about you after all.'

'It hadn't occurred to Sam that there was any doubt on that point before. He blushed as he asked:

'Where's the hired man?'

'I've discharged him. I can't afford one at present, my son,' was the answer.

'Sam was rather puzzled and began to reflect.

'They went into the house, and there, when the minister reappeared after making his toilet, his son noticed that he wore the old, shabby, shiny coat.

'At this he was more than ever astonished.

'The supper, also, notwithstanding that it was the first night of the prodigal's return, was very meagre. Not a single luxury was on the table, and Sam noticed that his father and mother took

no sugar nor butter. His own appetite began to fail at seeing this, and his perception was sharpened accordingly. He was now aware that his father looked very thin, as well as sad. Suddenly he laid down his knife, and exclaimed to his sister Kitty:

'Sis, what does all this mean?—this going without the hired man, and starving ourselves?'

'His sister looked at him, then glanced at Mr. Blake and her mother, and made no answer.

'I thought,' said Sam politely, that Williston's money was going to make it easy for you, father; and here the pinching is going on five times worse than ever.'

'I don't own my friend Williston's money, said the minister quietly.

'Of course not. But the five hundred dol— Sam stopped abruptly on an entreating gesture from his sister.

'The subject was not resumed. But before he went to bed, Sam obtained an interview with his sister alone. He felt secretly that he was responsible for the depression and trouble which seemed to fill the household, but that only made him speak more impetuously.

'Now, sis,' he began 'can I get two words of sense out of you?'

'Not until you ask politely,' she replied.

'Well then, please tell me what the mystery is?'

'It oughtn't to be a mystery to you, Sam, that you haven't done well at college. Papa is terribly disappointed.

'I don't see why he should commit suicide, if he is,' retorted Sam. It hasn't cost him much this year.'

'Oh yes, you have. Do you know he actually sold the new coat?'

'Why? Sam frowned.

'Because he has been trying every way to save money since he began to get reports of how you were wasting your time.

'What for?' asked Sam, though he began to suspect.

'Well, he—how should I know?—Don't you see? He's ashamed to have had that money from his old class mate, and he's nearly saved enough, and he is going to pay it all back. There, I was to keep it secret, and now I've told you! And his sister burst into tears. You've nearly broken his heart, Sam—poor papa!'

The next day Mr. Blake's son went off directly after breakfast, and was not seen again until afternoon.

'Coming back, he overtook his father returning from the postoffice.

'I know all about it, he exclaimed, in his excitement. 'Katy told me last night. I wish though you'd held on to the new coat awhile.'

'Why,' asked Mr. Blake, impertrably.

'Because said Sam, I'm going to pay my own way now. I've been off to-day and hired out for the season to Farmer Hodgeburton. You won't send that money to Williston, will you, father?'

'You are too late, was the minister's answer. I've just mailed the letter to him.'

In fact next day the kind merchant's eyes were dimmed as he read these words:

'DEAR WILLISTON: My boy—it almost breaks my heart to say so—has not proved worthy of your generosity. I have decided to return the sum which you sent me for him last year, and you will find a draft enclosed for that amount.

BLAKE.'

Here I interrupted the narrator.

'Doesn't this story prove what I said at the beginning?' I asked.

'No for that isn't the end of it. Sam went down to Boston in the autumn with a few dollars of earnings in his pocket. He had decided to give up college, and so applied to Mr. Williston for a clerkship.

'He told him: 'I proved myself unworthy, as my father said. Now give me a chance to show myself worthy.'

'Williston gave him a position, and he worked there two years. Then an opportunity offered to go West and take a partnership in—what do you think? The clothing business! Sam jumped at it; and you may believe he sent his father, next Christmas, the finest coat that concern could produce.

'I am a well-to-do man now, sir,' continued my acquaintance, suddenly speaking in the first person, 'and when we get to Chicago, if you will come to my establishment, I will show you my father, the minister's old shiny coat, which I preserve because it was the beginning of my fortune and made a man of me.'

'Then,' I exclaimed, taking him by the hand, 'it is yourself you have been talking about all this time! You are—'

'Sam,' concluded my new friend, nodding and smiling.—George D. Lathrop in *Youth's Companion*.

Nothing overcomes passion more than silence.

A Significant Incident.

In one of the battles of the late war, young Doctor D., then a volunteer captain in the Union Army, led his men up to a hand-to-hand fight with a Confederate regiment.

'Never,' said the captain, 'had killed a man before. It was a mass of men, I fought—saw it, the whole South—not the individual.'

'When I found myself, slanting away at a stout blue-eyed fellow, who might be some woman's husband, and some child's father, I confess my courage gave way. I actually shut my eyes as I backed desperately at him with my sword. His arm fell helplessly, and he dropped from his horse.'

'An hour later, I saw him in the surgeon's tent. The arm had been amputated and lay upon the floor. As the man was carried away I saw on one of the fingers a ring carved out of cannon coal. It looked to me like a child's work and I drew it off and followed the wounded soldier, determining to restore it. But in the confusion of the battle I lost sight of him.

The sequel to this story is as follows: In the summer of 1878, when the yellow fever was raging in the South, Dr. D. was one of the Northern physicians who answered the call for aid.

He went to Memphis and labored for weeks among the sick and dying. Among the patients brought to the hospital was a Colonel C., a man with but one arm.

Something familiar in the man's honest face troubled the doctor. He gave his constant care to him, both nursed and prescribed for him, and finally saw him recover. The two men became warmly attached.

One evening when the Colonel was to leave his bed, they took supper together. Dr. D. suddenly drew from his pocket a black ring and laid it on the table.

'Why, this is mine!' exclaimed the Colonel. 'My boy Dick cut that for me thirteen years ago.'

'Then it was I who cut off your arm, said D.'

The man arose and faced each other silently a moment, and then their hands met in a hearty clasp. The strife was over, and the true men were brothers again.

About Going West.

The class of men who can go West, or to a new country, and succeed, are those who are strong to labor, and who have pluck and energy, and who possess enough means to give them a good start.

But, having determined to go, what is the next step? Personally inspect the localities to which your thoughts are turned. Do not invest a dollar on the recommendation of others. Better spend all needful time and money in thoroughly acquainting yourself with the advantages and disadvantages of the country. Then you will not be disappointed.

The most essential thing needed by the emigrant is "pluck." Go determined to win. Do not be frightened by a single disastrous season. Thousands turned their backs to Kansas and Nebraska, after a grasshopper year, who to day heartily wish themselves back there. Remember there are bad years and hard places for farmers everywhere, and 'having put your hand to the plow do not look back.' Why should a young man settle down in a worn-out farm for a life-long struggle with debt that will make him sordid and old before his time simply because he happened to be born there? A popular writer has compared such a one to a hen sitting on an eggless nest.

A MARRIAGE IN THE WOODS.—In Alexander county (Miller's township) one day last week, a marriage took place under rather singular circumstances. Mr. Pink Lackey and Bettie Miller were the contracting parties, and T. A. Hudson, Esq., performed the ceremony. The bride, the groom, the magistrate and friends met at a certain point in the woods at a given hour, and on the side of the road, beneath the branches of the trees, the squire pronounced the bans. It is alleged that these surroundings were not chosen for the nuptials without cause—the cause being, according to report, that the groom is a moonshiner, and was lying out from the raiders, none of whom were among the invited guests. Though no banquet hall was thrown open to the loving couple, this sylvan wedding was not celebrated in Alexander county. A quantity of Alexander county "block" had been providently brought to the spot, and some of the members of the bridal train put back of the fluid until they could probably not have told a moonshiner from a rickler across the public road.—Stateville Landmark.

A clergyman recently left Liverpool in a large ocean steamer, and beginning to feel uncomfortable after leaving the mouth of the river, sought the Captain to learn if there was any danger. The Captain, in response, led the clergyman to the forecastle and told him to listen to what was going on. The clergyman was shocked to hear the sailors swearing vigorously and expressed his horror to the Captain. The Captain merely remarked: 'Do you think these men would swear in such a manner if there was any real danger?' whereupon the parson seemed satisfied and retired. A day or two after, during a severe storm, the Captain saw the clergyman proceeding with difficulty to the fore-castle, and on his return overheard him exclaim: 'Thank heaven they're not swearing yet!'

Gleanings.

Worrying will wear the richest life to threads.

We are apt to consider an act wrong because it is unpleasant to us.

When you bury an old animosity, never mind putting up a tombstone.

Charles O'Connor, in spite of his years, is still a great walker. He attributes the extraordinary preservation of his physical and mental powers to this habit of out-door exercise.

A woman with a red petticoat was mistaken for a danger signal by the engineer of a railroad train—but hold, perhaps he wasn't mistaken after all—New Haven Register. No, it might have been his wife.—Oil City Derrick.

The Supreme Court of Ohio has decided that it is illegal to dun a debtor on a postal card, as such is liable to injure the credit or reputation of the debtor elsewhere.

A teacher defamed conscience as "something within you that tells you when you have done wrong." "I had it once," spoke up a young tow-head of six summers, "but they had to send for the doctor."

The consciousness that you are right will make you happy even when all the world thinks you are wrong, and the consciousness that you are wrong will make you miserable even when all the world thinks you are right.

The poet Tennyson is worth \$1,000,000, and we don't see what use there was in his writing "Cohe not when I am Dead." They'll be on hand, every one of them, when the will is opened.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Between acts in the Boston theatre a man startled the audience with a sneeze so loud and vigorous that the house seemed to shake. There was great applause and cries of "Encore!" but he simply bowed his thanks.

The ruin of most persons dates from some idle hour. I remember a satirical poem, in which the devil is represented as fishing for men, and fitting his baits to the taste and business of his prey; but the idler, he said, gave him no trouble, as he bit the naked hook.

In a little family discussion the other day, the invalid remarked, somewhat tartly: "When I marry again—" "I suppose you will marry a fool," interrupted the husband. "Beg your pardon," said she, "I shall do nothing of the kind. I prefer a change." The lord and master smiled.

The ambition of our best young men is to get a coat just long enough to cover up the rear suspender buttons of their pantaloons, and an overcoat just short enough to miss being tangled with the protruding nails of their boot heels. In the man of modesty we suggest a general average.

Husbands are ten cents apiece in the Ohio market judging by the damages awarded a woman who sued the family doctor for the death of the old man. If husbands are worth only ten cents, while a dentist has to pay \$5,000, damages for breaking a woman's jaw, whether are we drifting? Bring along your old empire.

A clergyman recently said that many a man while apparently singing with all his might the lines

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small,
I've diligently engaged with one hand in his pocket scraping the edge of a three cent piece to make sure that it was not a dime.

Queen Victoria, in opening Parliament in the late years, takes on the appearance of robes of state but not the robes themselves. She wears her ordinary widow's dress and the royal robes are outspread upon the throne. After she seats herself it is the office of the Princesses Beatrice to pull the corners of the robes over the skirt of her mother's gown.

Mr. Charles Reade is not only a distinguished writer, but a business man of great energy and industry. He was himself the publisher of his "Never too Late to Mend," managing the whole matter of printing and issuing, and personally every week superintending the accounts. Had the printers failed he was quite capable of taking off his coat and setting up his work with his own manly hands.

One sometimes receives consolation from a source wholly unexpected. Two men were in a boat and trying to cross the rapids. The traveller was timid in presence of the turbulent waters, and, clinging to both sides of the little corkie shell, said to the boatman in trembling tones, "Aren't people sometimes lost here? It seems to be very dangerous."

The sturdy ferryman gave an extra tug at the oars, and then replied cheerily, "Lor' bless you, sir, I never knew a man to be lost here, though I've been on this river off and on for nigh forty year. Why, only last month my brother John was drowned right on this very spot that we are going over now, but he wasn't lost for we found his body two days afterward in the creek below here."

PERSONS GOING.

G. D. Cobb, Esq., admr. of Israel Cable, dec'd. Heirs at law of Cynthia Young, M. H. Job, Elizabeth Linnens, Ab'l Hobbs, Samuel Hobbs, Lewis Hobbs, Susan Barton, Robert A. Cassey, Emanuel Ingle, Susan Hughes, Anthony Ingle & wife Laura, Elizabeth Lamb, heirs of Frank Thomas, heirs of Masheta Job, Lizzie & John Goran Ingle, heirs of Vincent Ingle, Lewis Cable, Polly Job, Hannah Whitwell, Alexander Cable, Isabella Cable, Emily Gant, Michael Holt, Daniel Cable, Perrella Tickle, Susanah Stone, Edna Law, Valentine Cobb, Elizabeth Cobb, Sarah Cobb, James & Philip Isabella, Robertson, Mellina Andrews, William Wyrick, Newton Wyrick, Israel Cable, Elizabeth Cable, Jane Cable, Wilkins Cable, Catherine Cable, Sarah Cable, Milton S. Cable, William Cable and Et Cable.

This is a special proceeding to all land for assets by G. D. Cobb, admr. of Israel Cable, and it appearing to the satisfaction of the court that the heirs of Cynthia Young, names and sexes unknown, Elizabeth Linnens, Abel Hobbs Sam'l. Hobbs and Elizabeth Lamb, heirs of Frank Thomas, names and sexes unknown, heirs of Masheta Job, Lizzie and John Goran Ingle, heirs of Vincent Ingle, Daniel Cable, Susanah Stone, Newton Wyrick and William Cable, are all necessary parties to said proceeding, and are non residents of this State, it is therefore ordered: That publication be made for them in THE ALAMANCE GLEANER, a newspaper published weekly, in the town of Graham, for six successive weeks in lieu of personal service of summons, and that if they fail to appear and answer or demur within twenty-one days, a decree pro confesso will be entered as to them.

Done at office in Graham, N. C., this 20th day of March, 1880.

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1880

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