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FRIEND OF TEMPERANCE

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THE FRIEND OF TEMPERANCE

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Selected Nouvelle.

MARRYING A FAMILY.

(Concluded.)

'Why will you misconstrue what I say?' he demanded, hoarsely. 'But let us drop the subject. You have made me forget that this is the Sabbath. Come, dear Sarah, let us have peace for one day in the week. These trials and troubles seem so trivial, compared with the worth of the soul, that I am ashamed of myself. What folly to give way to petty causes of irritation, on such a glorious day as this!'

It was a beautiful winter morning; but the bright sunshine, and the clear, cold air, had no charms for Sarah. She continued to pout, in spite of all her husband could do; accordingly he left her, and went to church alone. On his return, his soul elevated and purified, and all the clouds cleared from his heart, he found her pouting still. Her mother had been with her, and carefully prepared her to be miserable during the remainder of the day.

From that time, Jonathan was never so ready to gratify all his young wife's wants. Living upon him, the sisters had become quite indolent, and it seemed always that whatever he purchased for Sarah was rather for them than for herself. He needed some different kind of encouragement to induce him to exhaust his income, and endanger his business.

The reign of anarchy now commenced in earnest. The family had no longer any difficulty in making Sarah believe that she was a neglected, injured, and cruelly-treated wife. There were no more quiet hours of happiness for her and Jonathan, even in the solitude of their chamber.

Mr. Allen had long since begun to spend a portion of his leisure time away from home. When spring opened, he scarcely ever passed an entire evening with the family. 'You'll kill me! I shall die if you neglect me so!' cried Sarah, passionately, one night when he came home late.

'I neglect you? I kill you?' repeated Jonathan, with a bitter smile. 'You never stay at home any more!' sobbed Sarah.

'The truth is, this don't seem like home to me, my dear. I don't live in my own house; I dwell in your mother's kingdom. Instead of home influence, we have a kind of despotic government, which don't suit me.'

'I never thought my husband would hate my mother!' burst forth Sarah Jane.

'Well, lay the whole fault upon me, if you please!' replied Jonathan, in a desperate tone. 'I can bear it! I am to blame, that we haven't a happy home! Why, I was driven out of the parlor long ago! Everytime Mr. Trimmer comes to see Eliza, I am expected to abandon the room to promote courting conveniences. Whenever the other girls have beaux, they demand the same opportunities. Because I was stupid enough not to suspect that Mr. Saltzer came to see Laura the other night, and sat in the parlor until nine o'clock, she feels bitter towards me to this day.'

'That is no reason why you should neglect me!' 'But you will not give me peace, even here, in our own chamber. You are always complaining and finding fault with me. Men will seek entertainment away from home, if their home is not made happy.'

For those cruel words Sarah thought she could never forgive her husband. She cried about them all night, and told all to her mother the next morning. 'Let me talk to him!' exclaimed the indignant Mrs. Rentwell.

Jonathan did not give her an opportunity very soon. He avoided the family as long as his conscience would permit him, then resolved to make one more effort to render his home endurable.

Since the affair of their subscriptions to aid the Sisterhood of Harmony, Mr. Leslie and Charles Price had refrained from visiting at Mr. Allen's house; but some time in April they agreed to come again, to gratify their wretched friend. Jonathan knew the girls would be pleased to see them, and had no scruples about engaging them for an evening.

Georgiana expressed great delight, when he brought home the news. Laura and Eliza had beaux, and received the intelligence with less enthusiasm.

'They will come any evening this week,' said Mr. Allen. 'Shall we say Tuesday?'

Laura looked dignified, and tossed her head. 'Mr. Saltzer comes Tuesday evenings,' cried Georgiana. 'Miss Sour-face thinks she must have the parlor.'

'Very well,' answered Jonathan, determined to be cheerful. 'Say Thursday evening.'

'Mr. Trimmer comes to see Eliza Thursday evenings,' whispered Sarah in his ear.

'Why, then, let it be Wednesday, since none of you attend the meetings of the Sisterhood any more.'

'Mr. Allen, I hope you will refrain from speaking disrespectfully of the Sisterhood,' observed Mrs. Rentwell. 'We have not yet given over our efforts to establish a Harmonic Circle; our friends have failed us, to be sure; but we have an object which encourages us to persevere. Henceforth, a few of the most active and influential members are to meet here, until we are again able to hire a hall.'

'If I may be so bold,' said Jonathan, astounded, 'may I humbly inquire when the meetings of the Sisterhood are to be held in my own house?'

'On Wednesday evenings,' replied the widow, 'until further notice.'

'Thank you!' rejoined Mr. Allen, his eyes burning very brightly, and his lips closing tightly upon his teeth. 'Why can't the gentlemen come Friday night?' asked Sarah.

'Because I happen to be engaged on Friday night.'

'If you cared much to have your friends come, I should think you would give up any ordinary engagement,' remarked Laura.

This was too much for Jonathan's patience. He burst forth into a hasty expression of his disgust at the servile submission which was expected of him. Sarah Jane went into hysterics, and Mrs. Rentwell came to the rescue.

'You are an ungrateful, unreasoning man!' she exclaimed, indignantly. 'Was it for this I gave you my dear child? Is this the way you repay us for all we have done for you? Is this our reward for trying to make your home comfortable? Are these the thanks—'

Mr. Allen stopped to hear no more, —he seized his hat. The house seemed to roar like a Babel behind him, as he turned down the street.

Jonathan did not return home until evening. He then went directly to his room, but Sarah was not there, and he sought her in the parlor.

The widow and her daughters were all present; nobody looked up, on his entrance; and Sarah, who was at work on a dress for Miss Laura, while Miss Laura played the piano, bent over her sewing, looking very red, and very sad.

'Sarah,' said Mr. Allen, mildly, 'I want to speak to you.'

Sarah did not look up. There was a pause, during which you could have heard a pin drop.

'Nobody will hinder your speaking,' remarked the widow.

'Sarah, will you come?'

Jonathan did not appear to have heard Mrs. Rentwell's remark, and he spoke kindly, but firmly.

Another pause. Sarah trembling, Laura humming a gay air at the piano. Georgiana giggling.

Jonathan went forward, and took his young wife's hand. She arose, bursting into tears, and followed him. 'I am ashamed of you!' muttered the widow.

'Poor Sarah sobbed aloud. 'Don't cry!' said Jonathan, soothingly, when they were alone. 'Come—cheer up! I want you to take a walk with me.'

'I don't want to!' replied Sarah, in a choked voice.

'Then go to please me.' And her husband put on her shawl and bonnet for her, without more words.

They went out. 'I am not fit to see any one,' murmured Sarah, drawing back when they had reached the door. Her face was red, and her eyes swollen.

'You'll do,' said Mr. Allen, tenderly drawing her veil over her face. 'But where are you going?'

'For a little walk, which I think will do you good.'

It was a pleasant night; and, after breathing the air of the streets a little while, Sarah became reconciled. Jonathan had not ceased to talk in the kindest and tenderest manner; at length, by some drollery of his, he startled a laugh out of the gloom of her heart. 'There!' said he, 'now I think you are prepared to make a call.'

'Who lives here?' timidly inquired his wife.

Jonathan laughed, and looked very mysterious. A domestic came to the door, and he inquired for Mrs. Jones.

'O, the gentleman who called to look at the rooms to-day,' exclaimed Mrs. Jones, recognizing Mr. Allen. 'Walk right up.'

'Sarah turned very pale, and followed Jonathan with a sinking heart. Mrs. Jones introduced them into a handsome suite of unfurnished rooms; when, receiving the intimation that they would like to confer about them privately, she retired, and left them alone together.

'Do you understand what it all means?' asked Jonathan, drawing a smile upon Sarah's sad mouth with his thumb and finger. 'Why don't you laugh? I thought it a good joke!'

'It is a very cruel one, I am sure!' exclaimed Sarah.

'Call it simply a serious one, my dear; and let us talk it over candidly. I find it impossible to live with the family any longer. I am coming here to live; that is, if you will come with me. Nay, don't speak,—you are going to say something nasty. I want you to think of this all night. See how you like the rooms; consider calmly what a miserable life we have been leading; and reflect how happy we might be together, if we were to live alone, in love and peace; then do just as you choose, only do not be influenced in the affair by your mother and sisters. It will make me very happy, if you will come with me. If you stay with them, I shall go to a hotel.'

Sarah trembled, and cried all the way home. She did not sleep any that night, but in the morning she was much calmer than Jonathan could have expected. In the kindest manner he asked what she had concluded to do. Of course she cried again, and wanted a great deal of coaxing, and a great deal of sympathy, before she would decide; but at length she murmured,

'I will go with you—'

Jonathan almost smothered her with kisses.

'But,' she articulated, disengaging her mouth, 'don't let our folks know anything about it until I am gone.—They would tear me to pieces before they would let me go!'

'I'll arrange that!' cried the delighted husband.

They talked over their plans; and, in accordance with them, Sarah hastily packed up her private property before going down to breakfast. At the table she had not, in reality, much appetite; and, arising before the rest of the family, she returned to her room, put on her things, and left the house. Jonathan still remained at table.

'I shall not be home at dinner,' said he, carelessly.

'Very well,' replied Mrs. Rentwell. 'Nor at supper.'

'Very well.'

'In fact, you need not look for me to-night at all.'

'Just as you please.'

'Nor to-morrow,' said Jonathan, with a slight tremor in his voice.

The widow was startled, but made no answer.

'And if,' he continued, 'anybody should come for the piano in the course of the day, let it go.'

'The piano! almost shrieked Miss Laura.

General consternation prevailed; in the midst of which Mr. Allen preserved his calmness admirably.

'And the furniture in my chamber, and the parlor-furniture, which I believe belongs to me,' he continued, 'I shall send for during the day. All the rest I leave to you, with my best wishes.'

'What do you mean, Mr. Allen?' inquired Mrs. Rentwell, in a suppressed voice, and with a very white face. 'I mean that I have concluded to move my lodgings.'

The widow tried to spread a piece of bread and butter with an appearance of indifference; but her fingers trembled, and the muscles of her hand were evidently very weak.

'What will the world say, to see you desert your wife in this way?' she asked, with an effort to speak calmly.

'O, Sarah is going with me,' coolly replied Mr. Allen.

'Going with you? Impossible!' exclaimed the widow, rising abruptly from the table, and rushing to Sarah's room.

Jonathan did not await her return, but hastened from the house, leaving the girls thunderstruck and speechless. It is needless to describe Mrs. Rentwell's excitement, on discovering that

Sarah was already gone. The house was a scene of confusion and dismay during the remainder of the morning. At ten o'clock a wagon came for the furniture. It was not until then that Mrs. Rentwell was able to learn what direction her daughter had probably taken. She inquired of the men where the furniture was going, and hurried, with anger in her heart, to Mrs. Jones' house.

But Sarah had not yet arrived, and she was not expected until evening.—The widow's purpose was foiled; Jonathan had sent his wife on a visit somewhere, with perfect success; and Mrs. Rentwell returned home in a state of great agitation.

In the evening, Mr. Allen arrived at their boarding-house with his wife.—The carpets were down, the piano and the seraphine were there, with the furniture, and comfort smiled upon them as they entered their rooms.

'Do you think you can be happy here?' asked Jonathan, fondly.

'O yes,—but I have been so naughty! How can you forgive me?'

Sarah wept sweet tears in her husband's arms. That was the happiest evening they had passed together in many, many weeks.

'We will have Price here, and Leslie, Wednesday evening, and invite the girls,' said Jonathan. 'How would you like that?'

'You are so kind and forgiving!' murmured Sarah. 'I should be pleased; but they don't deserve it, more than I do.'

'Never mind; they will be better in future. And your mother,—she can come and see you,—on one condition. If ever she throws out a suspicion, or a hint, injurious to me, don't listen to her. She will be careful not to do anything of the kind in my presence, I think. Only remember the past, dear Sarah.'

The next day was Sunday; and Jonathan and Sarah enjoyed it as the Sabbath should be enjoyed. On Wednesday they sent invitations to the Misses Rentwell, to call in the evening.

'Mr. Price and Mr. Leslie were to be present.'

Only Georgiana came. Sarah and her husband treated her very affectionately, and made her heartily ashamed of her conduct towards them while under the same roof. Like Sarah, Georgiana was naturally a good girl, and would have appeared so, aside from her mother's influence.—She had long tales to tell of the old lady's mortification at the divorce, as Jonathan called his separation from the family he had married, which were cut short by the arrival of Mr. Leslie and Mr. Price.

There was great rejoicing over the change which Jonathan had wrought in his domestic affairs. Charles said he had abdicated his turban, fled from the harem, and become a Christian; and Mr. Leslie inquired concerning the prosperity of the Sisterhood of Harmony, with direct reference to the money he had given to the cause.

The evening was a happy one for all. Charles went home with Georgiana; who was so well pleased, and told so glowing a story of the reception she had met with, that her sisters took an early occasion to visit Mr. and Mrs. Allen. Mrs. Rentwell was not long in following their example, and Sarah was now perfectly happy; for, if ever another attempt was made to estrange her from her husband, she was able to resist it, and to maintain his honor and her rights.

To this day, Jonathan Allen is quite happy in his domestic relations. He does not much regret his early experience, for he appreciates love and peace the better from the contrast; but he is earnest in his advice to all friends who contemplate matrimony that they should beware of—MARRYING A FAMILY.

SHARP AND PERSONAL.—Col. Ethan Allen had a high opinion of himself and his six brothers. He once observed that there never were seven such born of any woman. 'You are mistaken,' said a Scotch officer, Mary Magdalen was delivered of seven exactly like you.'

Some men are not forward to examine themselves because they rest in the good opinion of others. Alas, how vain is this! One may be gold and pearl in the eye of others, yet God may judge him reprobate silver; others may think him a saint, yet God may write him down in his black book.—WATSON.

The Baptist State Convention convened at Hillsboro on the 28th.

An Anxious Man.

A story is told of the Rev. Mr. D. of Georgia, which illustrates the danger of prolixity in the pulpit, as well as any where. He had a very slow delivery, and with the best intentions undertook to inflict his tediousness upon the unfortunate inmates of the lunatic asylum. At his last appointment he was preaching upon the absolute necessity of trusting in Christ. He was illustrating his subject by the case of a man condemned to be hung and reprieved under the gallows. He went on to describe the gathering of the crowd, the bringing out of the prisoner, his remarks under the gallows, the appearance of the executioner, the adjustment of the halter, the preparation to let fall the platform, and just then the appearance in the distance of the dust-covered courier, the jaded horse, the waving handkerchief, the commotion in the crowd. At this thrilling point, when every one was listening in breathless silence for the denouncement, the doctor became a little prolix. One of the lunatics could hold in no longer; he arose in the congregation and shouted, 'Hurry, doctor, for God's sake, hurry.—They'll hang the man before you get there.'

Good Spelling.

A pious but illiterate deacon, in a certain town in Massachusetts, gave a stage-driver a slip of paper, upon which, he said, were written the names of a couple of books, which he wished him to call for at the book store. The driver called at the store and handing the memorandum to a clerk, said: 'There is a couple of books which Deacon B— wished you to send him.' The clerk, after a careful examination of the paper, was unable to make 'head or tail' of it, and passed it to the book-keeper, who was supposed to know something of letters; but to him it was also 'Greek.' The proprietor was called, and he also gave up in despair; and it was finally concluded best to send the memorandum back to the deacon. It was supposed he must have sent the wrong paper.—As the coach arrived at the village inn, the driver saw the deacon standing on the steps.

'Well, driver,' said he, 'did you get my books to-day?'

'Books! No! and a good reason why! for there couldn't a man in Worcester read your old hen tracks.'

'Couldn't read 'ritin? Let me see the paper.'

The driver drew it from his pocket, and passed it to the deacon, who, taking out and carefully adjusting his glasses, held the memorandum at arm's length, and exclaimed, as he did so in a very satisfied tone:

'Why it's plain as the nose on your face. To S-a-m B-u-x—two psalm books!' I guess his clerks had better go to school a quarter.'

And here the deacon made some reflections upon the 'ignorance of the times,' and want of attention to books by the 'rising generation,' which would have been all very well if said by some one else.

INFLUENCE OF HAPPY CHILDHOOD.—The memory of early happiness is a treasure-house of sweet comforts and considerations. Its pure, simple, earnest joys become wells to draw from whenever we sit down in thirst and weariness by the dusty highway of life. Of this one good the world can never defraud us. The sunshine in those days reaches across our little stretch of life and mingles its rays with those that beam from the heaven of our hope.—The actual present of the adult life, and the materials which enter into it are made up, more than we generally suppose, of reminiscence. We ruminative like the kine. We lay up in the receptacles of memory abundance of undigested material, that we recall and appropriate to our refreshment; and nourishment; and this process of reminiscence—of living over again—grows upon us as we grow into years, till at last it becomes our all. Exhausted power has no resource but to dwell upon its old play and its old achievements. How sad he is who can never go back to his childhood without a shudder! Who can never recall a period when his life was filled with sweet and simple satisfaction!