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TAKING TOLL.

A country road o'er hill and plain;
A rustic bridge, in distance seen,
Spanning a stream whose silent flow
Divides broad fields and meadows green.

A still and cool September night,
Lit by a full-orbed harvest moon,
Whose silver radiance, soft and white,
O'er stream and bridge and hill is thrown.

Our carriage, drawn by sleepy steeds,
Slow down the hill and o'er the green,
Its course pursues, till near the bridge
We pause to view the peaceful scene.

To the sweet maiden by my side,
A lover fond and true I've proved,
But, till this hour, the prudent fair
Has given no sign that I am loved.

Ah, softly sighing, blushing warm,
She rests, a dear load, on my breast;
My arms enfold her slender form,
In close embrace, long, sweet and blest.

We near the bridge—our hearts beat high
With love's first, fondest, deepest bliss;
Just as we cross the sounding planks
Our lips unite in one fond kiss;

Our horses quickly turn the ridge,
Beyond our wheels more swiftly roll,
And as she glances toward the bridge,
My maiden whispers, "taking toll?"

"Darling," I cry, "a joy like this
Repays whole months of toil and pain,
And hope and fear." She, smiling, says:
"Then, love, let's cross the bridge again!"

Not Fond of Dress.

Many years ago, in a quiet town, where I often had occasion to visit, I met a quaint specimen of humanity in the form of an uncle's second wife. When I became old enough to notice her peculiarities, I was curious enough to question my mother on the subject. She wore plain dresses, a long, straight apron, and no collar. Her hair was drawn as plainly as possible. She had dark skin, coarse features, and I also thought her a very disagreeable person, for she was constantly scolding the children.

My curiosity was more than usually excited after one event in particular, for she had company, and I noticed that she used remarkably good language, which to me did not seem to correspond with her general appearance. When I arrived home I asked my mother what kind of a woman Aunt Anna was.

"Why?" said she.

"Why, she puzzles me so. She dresses so ridiculously, and yet she seems to know how to be a lady."

"Yes, she does," said my mother. "But I do not think that she takes the right course.

"Why, what is the matter with her?" said I.

"She has never told me her history. I have heard that she was once a teacher, and that she now has a chest of fine clothes put away which she never uses."

"Why, mother, then I know she has had some great trouble, and if I was not afraid of her, I would ask her to tell me her history."

"I hardly think she would tell you, for she is very reticent."

"To every one, mother, except Cousin Mary. She seems to like her better than anyone else; now don't you believe that if Mary and I should tease her that she would tell us about herself?"

"Perhaps she would. I think she likes you both. I have heard her say so," said mother.

"Sometime, then, when Mary and I are both there, I am going to get Mary to ask her. It will do no harm, will it mother?"

"No, I think not. When your uncle's wife died, he was left with four small children, and his father and mother were quite old. As he had the charge of them and the farm, he felt under the necessity of supplying her place as soon as possible. He visited some friends in a distant town, and while there engaged himself to a lady of superior education, it was said, and in six months from the time his wife died, he was married. Your grandmother did not like this at first; she thought her proud. But she seemed to treat her kindly, and she got over her dislike in a measure, yet she was never very well pleased with her. I have often been there and found her crying, and when I asked her the trouble, she only said 'Anna has such work with the children,' and she was so ignorant about housework, that things were in a constant broil all the time."

At the time our story commences aunt had been there several years, and had three children of her own. Most of uncle's children were away. Her children were saucy, unruly, and neglected, I thought.

The washing for the family was done generally by herself, but the clothes, when dry, were brought in and piled, without folding or ironing, and there lay until needed for use.

She scolded most of the time, except when the children were asleep; then she would seat herself by the fire-place with her pipe in her mouth, her elbows upon her knees, and in this position she appeared to be thinking.

I asked her one evening what made her take so much tea, and she said, "It is all the comfort I have."

I told her I should think that was poor comfort.

"Oh, well," she said, "if you knew you would not wonder."

Uncle, I noticed, had very little to say. I thought him the most unsocial man I ever met. Perhaps he was not naturally so, but I scarcely dared to speak to him.

The next time that I visited my grandparents, I found Cousin Mary there, and asked her if she ever heard Aunt Anna's history.

"No," she said, "but I have been ready this long time to ask her to tell me."

"Well, Mary, after she gets the children off to bed to-night, let's go in and ask her. I have noticed that she is more willing to talk at such times."

"Well, we will," said Mary.

Aunt had had an unusually hard day's work, and she was cross, but we determined to try her. We waited until all was still, then went and seated ourselves in the kitchen, determined to win her favor if possible, though our hearts beat in fear and doubt.

At last Mary ventured to say, "Aunt I believe you have had trouble some time in your life, haven't you?"

"Yes. Is that any of your business? That was not very encouraging to two impatient girls, we thought, but we didn't like to give up so, and I said, "Aunt, I am sorry you are so tired; I wanted you to tell us a story."

"A story! what do I care for stories. I want to rest."

"Well, will you tell us one to-morrow night if we will help you about your work, so that you will not be tired?" I said.

"Why yes, if I can find one that will suit you," said she.

"Well, you can, for we only want the story of your own life," said I.

"That is the hardest story of all to tell, but in hopes that it may do you girls some good, perhaps I may consent to do so. You will be the first ones who have ever heard me allude to it."

We went into the kitchen the next morning, and helped her bake, and took the clothes from the drawer and ironed them, and cleaned up things as much as we dared to, and I know she appreciated it, for I never saw her look so happy before, and she said "It does seem more home-like to see things neat and clean, but I always think there is no use. I get so discouraged; I never have a kind word, and no one seems to know whether I do well or ill. But perhaps, if I had some one around me who was cheerful, I might throw off a part of this feeling of loneliness."

Evening came. The children were asleep, uncle was in grandpa's room, as usual, and we all sat down by the fireplace, ready for the story.

"Come, Aunty, you have had all day to think how to begin, and we are all ready to listen," said I.

"Well, girls," she began, "I have no doubt but that you think it very strange that I dress as I do, and that I smoke; perhaps I have no excuse, but to my story.

"My parents were wealthy and aristocratic, and I was not brought up to work, but having an abundance of energy, I thought I should like teaching.

"There was a vacancy in a seminary a few miles distant.

"I applied for the situation, and obtained it. For several years I kept the position. While there I made the acquaintance of one of the professors, and in due time became very much attached to him.

"We were very happy, as those who are in perfect sympathy always are, growing more and more intimate as time passed.

"Two happy years went by, when he was called away to a distant city, to attend to his father's affairs, he being in poor health. He came to me and told me that we must part; that he must go home, perhaps not to return to the school.

"I was very sad. How could I live without him? He told me anew of his love, and that he should so arrange matters that he could, ere long, come for me, and I should be all his own.

"He promised to write often, and entreated me not to forget him in his loneliness; that my letters would be the only sunshine in his pathway.

"He left me, and I felt that all was blank; teaching had lost its charms with me, when he was not there. I received two loving letters from him, then they grew cooler, and finally ceased altogether. What did it mean?

"I knew that another man was trying hard to win my affections, but I paid little heed. He then told me that I was in love with another man, and that was the reason he could not win my regard, and I told him it was true. He then said it was little use for me to care for that person. I did not understand him, and was too angry to inquire his meaning.

"Yet I did not mistrust him at the time, though I did not like his persistence. I learned afterwards that he had written annonymous letters to my lover, telling him that I did not care for him, and was in the habit of receiving the attentions of other gentlemen.

"Had I known this at the time, I could have righted matters, but I was proud, very proud. I thought he had no right to doubt me, and I could not believe that he had any good reasons for treating me in such a manner, so I wrote to him telling him that if it was such a task for him to correspond with me, I would excuse him.

"Soon after I heard that he was married.

"My health failed, vacation came, and I went home. My parents thought my labors in school were too hard for me, and they insisted upon me leaving the seminary, which I did. I avoided society, and my parents sent me into the country for my health.

"A beautiful place among the hills was selected, where I spent the summer, but I was far from happy; and while there made a rash promise to myself—I was then thirty years old—that I would marry the first one who offered himself, and have something to take my attention.

"While there I met a widower in search of a wife. Widowers generally let their wants be known. I was recommended to him, and he visited me. I did not like nor dislike him, and when he asked me to marry him I said 'Yes.'

"I had three weeks to get ready. I hardly knew what I was doing, and was very unhappy. I had the impression on my mind that there was something wrong—that possibly the rumor in regard to Thomas was untrue.

"The time came; we were married in church. During the ceremony I looked about, and encountered the gaze of my old lover. He was as white as a sheet. I nearly fell. But I summoned my pride to my aid, and the deed was done.

"We started immediately for his home, and, oh! such a home! you see it now—'twas just like this—but I am used to it now.

"I learned after my marriage that Thomas was not married, but had heard that I was, and stopped writing. My new home and the knowledge of the mistake I had made were too much for me, and for weeks I was prostrated with fever, and could do nothing but cry.

Remember, girls, I had no experience in housekeeping. This kitchen was my home, where I must cook, eat, and sit, and I had four children to care for. Yes, I had found employment to be sure, enough to drown my trouble. Where should I begin?

"When I got well everything was in disorder. The children and husband had done the work. The oldest girl knew something about cooking—I must learn of her. She soon grew to be saucy to me because I did not do things as her mother did, and I became discouraged; I had gotten myself into a bad place and must make the best of it, learning to do all kinds of housework.

"I got some cloth and made me some clothes suitable for my surroundings. It was hard for me at first to lay away my fine clothes, but what use were they here?

"They thought me proud, they should think so no longer. I had no one to hear my complaints, so I plodded along. My health was no good, and after I had two children I learned to drink too much tea. My husband, though not unkind, was no company for me. So I love my teapot. The oldest girl grew so disagreeable her father sent her away.

"Yes, it is true I have a box of clothing packed away. To-morrow I will open it for you; it has not been opened for ten years.

"Now, girls, my advice to you is—don't marry without love! It has destroyed my life. Do not let your pride get the mastery over you. Be humble, and patiently await the result. Had I note been so rash, two lives would have been made happy."

My aunt dropped her head and said, "Good night, girls, that is all,"

Different Kings of Church Goers.

1. Regular members, standbys, who always may be depended on.

2. Shaky members, who act according to feeling rather than principle.

3. Families whose women are members, but whose men rarely attend, and care only for the social and respectable aspect of the church.

4. Families moral but not religious; regular attendants but not members.

5. New families, occasional attendants, whom it is desirable to interest and fasten.

6. Poor families whose willingness is greater than their ability.

7. Floaters.

—There are enough houses in Washington to accommodate 150,000 people, and only two thirds of that number to put in them.

—The plum crop in Onio this season promises to be quite large—probably not less in value than $100,000.

Master Bullfinch from Germany.

The German bullfinch is the most bewitching little pet in the world and more human, almost, than one imagines that a bird could be!— as may be inferred from the following, fascinating traits which are now delighting the owner of one of them in Boston. He is a stylish little fellow, with gray plumage, a red breast, black tips to his wings, and a black cap on his head, and he was brought up and trained by a white-haired old German. The young lady's father has white hair, and the bird is fonder of him than of any one. When he is pleased, or when any of his favorites come near him, he manifests it by puffing up all his feathers until he looks like a perfect ball, but when he is angry he shakes himself and scolds in a funny little "squawk" that is infinitely diverting. He is very fond of his young mistress, but less so than he is of his master, and he has one trick, that of making a bow and giving the little squawk for "good morning," that he will only do for him. The young lady's mother is an invalid, and spends much of her time humoring the whims of Master Bullfinch, whom she adores. The bird takes her admiration and devotion as the lordly sex is very apt to do—in apparent indifference and lofty superciliousness; but since the lady is away he misses his slave, and shows how bored he is by scolding all the time, this fact of her being so indispensable to him consoles her for the ungraciousness of her little tyrant, as it does so many of her sex for that of their greater ones, and makes her keep on spoiling him.

Bullfinches do not sing—they whistle; and this one of course, as an accomplished bullfinch should, whistles very prettily the tune that he was trained into. But sometimes he gets off the key and then his disgust at himself is immense. He squawks and shakes himself vigorously, and finally begins again very slowly to practice the wayward passage over and over again until he has got it right, when he starts of glibly from the beginning and whistles it clear through without fault.

The youthful mistress of this charming bird, who is a remarkably handsome and engaging brunette, has a young lady friend who often calls in to spend an hour or two with her. From the moment the bullfinch first saw this maiden he took a violent fancy to her and showed his preference for her over everybody but his whitehaired master in an unmistakeable manner. He will not whistle when she is in the the room, but looks at her fixedly, keeping himself ruffled in a ball all the time. When other people feed him with seeds he runs to the wires impaiently snatches the seed, and snaps at the person, but when she offers him one he advances as quietly as possible and takes it gently off her fingers, his irritability quite subdued. He manifests the same satisfaction every time she comes and the only explanation the family can give is that his original white haired owner must have had a daughter with yellow hair like that of the young lady and that in specially singling her out, along with his master, for his favorites, he is in reality remaining faithful to his earliest associations.

Affected Deafness.

A stranger dismounted at the door of the River Hotel, and gave his horse to the officious waiter. The barkeeper opened the register to take his name.

"You are right;" said he, "a single room would be more agreeable," and he walked into the supper room to which the crowd of boarders were passing. The barkeeper ran after him, screaming in his ear:

"What name did you say?"

"Thank you," said he, "I can find the way; don't give yourself any trouble."

On his return to the barroom a waiter took up his saddle bags and told the deaf stranger he would show him to his chamber.

"My friend, who will spend the evening with me, prefers pale cherry," said he. "You may send up a bottle and a few cigars."

"I did not," said the barkeeper, "exactly understand your name."

"I think a little ice would improve the wine," was the answer. "And now I think of it, you may put the bottle in a wine cooler."

His friend now joined him, and they walked to his room together. The deaf lodger patronized the house to the extent of another bottle before he slept. The waiter who brought it up ventured once more to inquire his name.

"Nothing more," said he, "except a slice of cold ham, a pickle and a little bread and cheese."

The next morning, after breakfast, when the stranger's horse was at the door he asked for his bill. He was told it was six dollars and three quarters.

"You are very kind," said he. "I had expected to pay you; but if this is your custom, to charge nothing for the first visit, you shall lose nothing by it—all my friends in Spongeville will certertainly give you at least one call when they come into the city. Good morning."

"I would thank you to pay your bill before you go," screamed the barkeeper.

"I am obliged to you," said the deaf gentleman. "I can put them on."

And he took up the saddle bags and departed. As he mounted the by-standers began to laugh immoderately at the awkward embarrassment which aflicted the barkeeper, who was in anguish and despair, while he bawled after the delinquent, who continued bowing and repeating the assurance that he would certainly remember the accommdations, civility and liberality of the house, and recommend it to all his friends who might pass through the city. The gentleman who so well affected deafness won the wager he had staked on the success of his scheme, and paid his bill the next time he visited the city.

A Brave Sheep.

Toby, the sheep, hated the whole canine race. One day when the captain and his pet were taking their usual walk on the promenade there came on shore the skipper of a Falmouth ship, accompanied by a very large formidable looking dog. And the dog truly resemsembled his master, as you observe dogs usually do. As soon as he saw Toby he commenced to set his dog upon him; but Toby had seen him coming and was quite *en garde;* so a long and fierce battle ensued in which Toby was slightly wounded and the dog's head was severely cut. Quite a multitude had assembled to witness the fight, and the ship's riggings were alive with sailors. At one time the brutal owner of the dog, seeing his pet getting worsted, attempted to assist him; but the crowd would have pitched him neck and crop into the river had he not desisted. At last both dog and sheep were exhausted, and drew off, as if by mutual consent. The dog seated himself close to the outer edge of the platform, which was about three feet higher than the river's bank, and Toby went, as he was wont to do and stood between his master's legs, resting his head fondly on the captain's clasped hands, but never took his eyes off the foe. Just then a dog on board one of the ships happened to bark and the Falmouth dog looked around. This was Toby's chance and he did not miss it or his enemy either. He was upon him like a bolt from a catapult. One furious blow knocked the dog off the platform, next moment Toby had leaped on top of him and was chasing the yelling animal toward his own ship. There is no doubt Toby would have crossed the plank and followed him on board, had not his feet slipped and precipitated him into the river. A few minutes afterward, when Toby, driping with wet, returned to the platform to look for his master, he was greeted with ringing cheers; and many was the piastre spent in treating our woolly friend to fruit. Toby was the hero of Galatz from that hour; but the Falmouth dog never ventured on shore again, and his master as seldom as possible.

Wouldn't Believe Him.

A curious anecdote was told some years ago about one of the chief officials of the London general post office who holds the highest rank among our writers of fiction. Passing from his room at the post office through an open door, he distinctly saw a letter sorter abstract a sovereign from a letter and put it into his pocket. The man was given into custody, committed to prison, and brought to trial. The only witness was the gentleman who saw the theft committed. At the close of the examination for the prosecution, the counsel for the prisoner thus addressed the witness:

"I believe sir, besides holding an appointment in the post office, you are a popular author?"

The reply was in the affirmative.

"Pray, sir, what may be the class of books you write?"

"Works of imagination."

"Works of imagination, fiction, lies?"

"Pray, sir, how long is it since you first began to gain your livelihood in part by such an occupation?"

"Nine years."

"Your mother, I believe, was also an author, and wrote similar books. May I ask how many years she gained a livelihood by doing so?"

"Twenty."

Then, turning to the jury, the counsel said:

"Gentlemen, I am sure no British jury will convict the prisoner upon the unsupported evidence of a person who comes here and tells you that he has for nine years gained a great part of his livelihood by telling lies and that his mother before him followed the same calling for twenty years."

Notwithstanding the judge's summing up, the petit jury acquitted the prisoner, neither of them probably having heard of the great novelist's name till he appeared in the witness box.

ITALIAN physicians give a solution of chloral in glycerine for diphtheria.