

CHAPEL HILL LITERARY GAZETTE.

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We sketch the world exactly as it goes.

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OUR STORY TELLER.

"Now fiction grows so great which young man,
Lays the glad scenes in his sweetest frame!"

"IT'S ONLY A TRIFLE."

A SKETCH FOR BEGINNERS IN
LIFE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

It was at the end of the year and John Hodge sat in his snug little sitting room with a very big face. John was a carpenter by trade and twenty years of age with a good wife and three small children. He lived in a thriving village, and received ten dollars a week for his work. He was a good workman, faithful, industrious, honest, and steady. He hired a small house for which he paid sixty dollars a year. He received his pay every Saturday evening.

He said John had a good wife. And so he had—one of the best wives in the country. She was not a beauty, but then she was pretty and intelligent; and her good looks were of that kind which grow brighter under the influence of love, as the wearer grows older. She was a valuable wife, and not a day passed but John had occasion to bless the hour that gave her to him for his companion.

The children were a boy and two girls, aged six, four and two, respectively—the boy being the oldest.

"I declare, Emma, this is hard," said John Hodge, in a tone of mental pain—"I suppose I should certainly lay up a hundred dollars this year; but I have been to-day and paid the last bill I owed, and now find myself the undisputed owner of three dollars and thirty-four cents."

"Is that all?" Emma asked this with a show of interest, but not with surprise. In fact, her manner would rather imply that she had expected this.

"Yes, that is all. Now can you tell me where our money has gone?"

Emma Hodge was a woman of sense—she knew very well that there was little profit in telling the errors of the past unless she could point them out plainly and separately. She did know where the money had gone, but she feared her husband would not believe her if she told him, for her own eyes had been opened only a few weeks. However she ventured to say—

"John, do you think we—(she said it out of pure willingness to bear a part of blame which she had not incurred)—don't you think we've paid more for some things we have bought than there was any need of?"

"How? When have I paid more than there was need of?" asked John in pure wonder.

"Well," replied Emma, "it seems to me that we have paid so a number of times."

"But what is one?"

"Well, there are the two glass lamps in the parlor. We paid six dollars for them when a pair for two dollars would have done just as well. Not one in a hundred of our visitors know the difference between set-glass and common pressed-glass."

"Yes, they do, Emma. If we are going to have lamps, let's have them. I hate to see a cheap thing stuck up in sight. I'd rather go without money than to be mean and stingy about my things."

Emma saw that John was troubled, and resolved not to argue the case with him then. He was not in a mood to be contradicted, and she would not touch his feelings; so she simply said, as she passed her arms about his neck and kissed him—

"We won't worry about the past, John; but we will try to do differently in the future. Now let's resolve to save something the coming year."

"We will," said John; and from that moment he looked happier.

The new year commenced and things moved on as usual. When the spring opened John wanted a new suit of clothes. He went to the tailor's and got samples of cloth, with a series of prices. There was a very good suit to be had for twenty dol-

lars; and another for thirty. He pitched upon the thirty dollar suit.

"But," argued Emma, "this suit for twenty dollars is just as good. When the cloth is made up you could never tell the difference; but the difference in price we should feel sensibly."

"Pooh, Emma! You talk like a crazy woman. I only have a new suit through-out once in two years, and while I am about it I might as well have a good one. What would folks think to see me saving money off from my back? Ten dollars is but a trifle when we consider how seldom I get such a suit."

"But John, you must remember what we wish to do. We wish to own a home of our own one of these days; and to reach that end we must be economical in all things. Ten dollars is just a week's pay."

"But the clothes, Emma—you would not have me go so poorly dressed, would you?"

"No, my husband. But see: In purchasing clothes we look first to our comfort; then to the fashion; and then to our means. Now this suit for twenty dollars will look well enough, and I know it will wear as well, if not better, than the other."

But John could not see. He was determined not to appear mean in dress, and he must have the thirty dollar suit.

On the following day Emma went to the tailor, with whom she had been acquainted from childhood, and asked if John had ordered his suit. She was informed that he had. Emma examined the different fabrics and finally found some cloth from which the garments could be made for twenty dollars, and the tailor assured her that they would wear better, and, in the end, be of far more value to John than the thirty dollar suit. The fine broad cloth would be good for nothing for him to wear at his business after it began to lose its first lustre.

It was not long, decided that the suit should be made from a material which the wife and the tailor had selected, and for twenty dollars, Emma promising to bear the responsibility; but John was to know nothing about it. He was to pay the thirty dollars as he had arranged. In due time John came home with his new suit, and when he put it on, he felt very much pleased with the effect. The pants were of fine strong doe-skin, and the coat and vest of handsome and durable material.

"They look better in the garments, made up—than they did before," said John. Only this cloth don't look quite so fine as it did in the piece; but it feels firmer. But it kind of raises the nap in making I suppose."

Of course Emma admired the suit very much, and her husband was happy when he found that she said nothing about the price. He wore the clothes to meeting on the following day, and when they were hung up on Sunday evening, he was very careful to have them turned inside out, and kept from the dust; because, as he said, "such clothes mustn't be abused."

On Monday Emma went to the tailor's and got the ten dollars which she had so surreptitiously saved.

Not long after this it became necessary to purchase a carpet for the parlor. Thus far they had had no carpet in that room, though they had long been planning to have one. They had been purchasing gradually. There were some expenses of the year before, which would not come in the present year, and a carpet and a sofa had been set down for the present season.

One Monday morning John and his wife went to look at some carpets. John was bent upon a three-ply. He knew no difference between Kidderminster and three-ply; or between two-ply and no-ply at all. But he knew that Brown, and Jenkins, and Peters, and Koppes, all had "three-ply," while Emma knew that Brown's three-ply was only two-ply; and that Peters' was a second hand affair which he bought at auction.

"Now for our use a good Kidderminster will answer every purpose," said Emma—"We can find one just as fine, and just as good, only it won't have so many thick-nesses. When the surface is worn thro' the carpet is done; and until that it is good enough. We shall not wear out the upper surface for many years. And then a two-ply carpet we can turn, one side looks just as well as the other. We can have a dark carpet, or a light one as we please. Come, it will be much cheaper to buy a Kidderminster."

But John could not do it. He would not be mean about a parlor carpet.

"It's only a trifle—twenty-five cents a yard—that's all."

"But we are to get twenty-five yards—

John; and that will make a difference of eight dollars and seventy-five cents."

"Well—and what is that, when we think how long we are to use the carpet. It is something which we shan't buy again for a good many years."

Emma urged—she spoke of the true independence and the false; and she alluded to the time when they hoped to have money enough to purchase a home of their own. O—John understood all that. He meant to save but he would not be mean. Eight or nine dollars was a mere trifle when we consider that it is for a carpet that must be in their parlor for years.

It so happened that the dealer was an own uncle to Emma, and she managed to whisper to him her plans. He had two carpets so nearly the same pattern that they could not be distinguished when a part, save that one was two ply and the other three ply. John bought and paid for the former—one dollar and twenty-five cents a yard; but the other one was sent home, and Emma put the eight dollars and three quarters in her bank.

John Hodge admired his carpet when his wife had made it put it down. He said, how much better it looked than "one of them cheap things would." Emma might have felt some compunctions had she not known that her husband was governed wholly by what other people had, rather than what he really needed. And then, again, he knew no difference between the various qualities of woolsen fabrics, being only anxious to have his friends think he had the best. When the carpet was down it became necessary to get the sofa. Emma felt that their parlor was rather bare. They had not seats for a small party; and as they must have more seats they might as well have "good ones—have them on a sofa."

Up to this time Emma had managed to save quite a sum of money. Since the first of April she had done the marketing. Until this John had always bought and sent home the provisions; and in this department, as in nearly all others, he never looked at "trifles." Seldom did he go into the market without repeating the old sentence—"Well—I'll have it; it's only a trifle." He thought it very mean to ask a butcher to cut a leg of lamb, when the whole only came to fifty cents; and he blushed scarlet at the very thought of refusing early fruit because it was high in price. If Jones got strawberries, of course he could get strawberries. And if his grocer had "had by a few quarts of fine fresh raspberries on purpose for him," he would as soon have picked his friend's pocket as to have refused them, because he could not afford it.

But Emma had no such feelings. She felt that she was trading with her husband's money, and she was determined to show him that she was worthy the trust. On the previous January they had reckoned up the grocer's and butcher's bills, and found that the average for the year had been exactly five dollars and forty-six cents a week; so this sum Emma claimed, and she had it handed to her each Saturday evening. From this she managed to save considerable, and yes John found no fault with the living. He never feared better. As he did none of the marketing he saw but little of the early, hot house fruit, and seared nothing about it. And in fact, he never had; but the traders knew his easy, timorous disposition, and they put upon him what they pleased. Let the grocer say—

"Ah—Hodge—you're just in time. Here are some splendid new blackberries. I kept 'em purpose for ye. Jones wanted 'em but I told him no—'Pd saved 'em for you. I'll send 'em right over."

Perhaps John would venture—"How high do they come?"

O, only twenty-five cents a quart. But look at the berries—the first of the season!"

And John was surely stuck for the berries, half green, perhaps, out of season—small measure—and just worth nothing at all to John Hodge.

But these things were not practiced upon Emma. She bought what she wanted; just as little as she wanted; and never what she did not want. She exerted herself in her cooking; and in their proper season she purchased as much fruit as was wholesome.

At length John and his wife went to look for a sofa. There was quite an extensive furniture store in the village, and there they found all sizes and patterns. After looking for an hour John settled down upon a sofa, the price of which was thirty-five dollars.

Mr. Barnes has a sofa of this very pattern, said the dealer, who was a particular friend of John's, and believe he will

sell it very cheap. He is going away, and has sold everything else."

"Pooh!" said John, "I don't want any second hand stuff in my house. Thunder! what an idea!"

"But how has he sold all but that?" asked Emma.

Because the family who have moved into his house bought all the rest. They had a sofa and chairs to match, so they did not want his."

Emma suggested to her husband that they should look at Barnes' sofa; but he would not listen to it. He had read about this second hand furniture; he said, and didn't want anything to do with it.

The sofa was selected, and John promised to pay for it within three months. He had not the money then. After this the husband went to his work, leaving his wife to go home. But she only went to the grocer's, and then returned to the furniture store.

We said before that this cabinet-maker was a particular friend of John's. John had worked for him considerable during the winter months, and he not only liked the young carpenter, but would have done much to help him. Emma had been acquainted with him ever since she could remember.

When the young wife entered the cabinet room a second time she found the dealer alone, and frankly told to him her plans. She wished to help John to save money, and in order to make him understand that it could be done, she must do it. She asked him if the sofa of which he had spoken was uninjured.

"Just as good as it was the day I sold it to him," returned the dealer who entered at once into the spirit of Emma's plan, and wished to help her. "But he has made up his mind to go to California, and go he will. He needs all the money he can raise, and will sell for almost anything before he would leave it unsold. Why not go over and look at it now? It's only a cross the next street."

Emma started and promised to meet him there in fifteen minutes. She went, and not only saw the sofa but found the owner there. She told him she had but little money, but that she wanted a sofa. He said he had paid only thirty-five dollars for it only a year before, and had used it but a very few times. He would sell it for twenty dollars. Emma hesitated. She said she had hoped that she could have it taken to the cabinet shop, a few scratches obliterated, have it brushed up, and carried to her house, all for that sum.

Mr. Barnes at once said that she should have it for that price.

"Pay Mr. Goodwin the twenty dollars when he delivers it, and I will look to him for my pay."

The sofa came in due season, and Emma paid for it, Mr. Goodwin promising that he would collect the thirty-five dollars from her husband and pass it over to her.

John was much pleased with his sofa. He said it looked darker, heavier and richer than he had thought when he bought it. His parlor was now complete, and he would have no more heavy bills for the rest of the year.

And so time moved on, and Emma was at her post. The traders had learned that she needed no help in purchasing. When she entered the store she knew what she came for, and just the quantity and quality she needed; and she bought just that, and no more. On the first of November the sofa was paid for, and Emma received the thirty-five dollars from the cabinet-maker.

One cold, clear, sharp morning John Hodge wished his sweet wife a "HAPPY NEW YEAR." Evening came, and the family were together in their snug parlor, where they had resolved to spend the candle-light hours.

"Well, John, how much have you laid up this year? I inquired the wife with a smile.

"O—don't say anything, Emma," returned the husband, uneasily. "It's no use; I can't lay up money with my family. Our children have to be clothed and fed, and a thousand-and-one little things that there is no help for."

But surely the children don't take much, John. You know all Lydia's dresses are made over from those which Emma has outgrown, and two thirds of Emma's dresses have been made over from mine; and you know our boy has helped to wear out some of your cast-off habiliments."

"I suppose so; but yet the money goes. There's been five dollars and forty-six cents a week for provisions to begin with."

"But you have lived well, John?"

"Yes, Emma. No man could live better."

"And yet I have had only what you spent the year before; and you must remember that our children eat more than they did a year ago."

"Yes—I suppose so. But you've managed to keep square, haven't you?"

"O, yes. But now tell me, John, how much you have saved."

"Well; I have the enormous sum of twenty-two dollars and ten cents."

"Have you so much?"

"There—don't poke fun at me. I tell you it's no use."

Well, wait a moment, and I'll show you my savings."

Emma left to her room, and when she returned she bore a little paste-board box in her hand, which she gave to her husband.

He took it, and having opened it, he counted out fourteen ten-dollar gold pieces, and one five-dollar piece! One hundred and forty-five dollars! He weighed the bright pieces in his hand, and then looked at his wife.

"Emma," he stammered, "what is this?"

"Trifles, John—only trifles."

"Eh! Trifles? But what do you mean? Where'd this come from? Whose is it?"

"It's yours and mine, John; and it is the amount I have got for trifles."

But John was bewildered. Emma had to struggle some to maintain her composure, for tears were filling her eyes in spite of her. This was a moment she had been looking forward to for a long while with strange emotions, and now that it had come, those emotions were all brought to a climax together. But finally she spoke, though her voice was tremulous, and her eyes bedimmed with tears.

John, I know you will pardon me. I own that I have presumed upon your failing; but I could not help it. I saw that your trifles were eating up our substance. A dollar is not much, but a dollar a week makes fifty two dollars a year. I knew that the traders took advantage of your fear of being thought mean, as you termed it, and that they were taking your money for things which we did not need. I have furnished you with all you needed, and I am sure we have had enough and to spare. You had paid the grocer and butcher an average of five dollars and forty-six cents a week. I have paid them a trifle less than three dollars and 40 cents a week thereby saving just one hundred and eleven dollars and twenty-five cents. Have I not done well?"

"But where does the rest of this come from?" asked John, eagerly, showing by his looks that he kept his emotions back until he knew all.

"You will not blame me, John, will you?"

"Blame you? How could I! But tell me all now."

"Well, first, your best suit of clothes cost only twenty dollars! That trifle of ten dollars I got the tailor to give me, while he gave you a suit of my own selection. But you know the clothes have pleased you."

John Hodge looked at his wife in blank surprise.

"Next, John, we have a very fine Kidderminster carpet on our parlor floor. So I got eight dollars and seventy-five cents for that three-ply. But my child, be perfectly satisfied."

John still looked bewildered and surprised.

"Next, John, I bought Mr. Barnes' sofa, for which I paid twenty dollars cash. So Mr. Goodwin handed me the money you gave him. But you know the sofa is a good one, and I saved a trifle in the purchase. Are you offended?"

In a moment more Emma was sitting on her husband's knee and his arms were about her neck. He did not blame her. He blessed her, and from that hour he knew that he possessed a treasure in his wife which he had never before appreciated. The gold was in his hand, and even after all was explained he could hardly realize that it was all his—saved from his year's pay.

And John Hodge had received a lesson which he was not to forget. The "nest-egg" thus procured was not left alone. He began to look upon "trifles" mere in their true character—as only parts of a great whole; and by a little practice he succeeded in putting on a bold face when he entered a store and if the trader urged that 'twas "only a trifle," John could calmly answer, "But it is a trifle which I do not need."

In four years from that day on which John learned his first lesson on trifles, he

had accumulated trifles sufficient to buy him a good house. And when he had become settled down in a home of his own, he went on laying up trifles still, in the hope that some day he might be able to work out a vast amount of good from so trifling a beginning.

The Indian Chief.

OR THE TEST OF A MOTHER'S CONFIDENCE.

One of the first settlers in Western New York was Judge W——, who established himself in Whitestown, about four miles from Utica. He brought his family from Utica. He brought his family with him among whom was a widowed daughter with an only child—a fine boy about four years old. You will recollect, the country around was unbroken forest, and this the domain of the savage tribes.

Judge W—— saw the necessity of keeping on good terms with the Indians, for, as he was nearly alone he was completely at their mercy. Accordingly he took every opportunity to assure them of his kindly feelings, and to secure their good will in return. Several of the chiefs came to see him and all appeared pacific. But there was one thing that troubled him, an aged chief of the Oneida tribe and one of great influence who resided at a distance of a dozen miles, had not yet been to see him, nor could he ascertain the views and feelings of the sachem in respect to his settlement in that region. At last he sent him a message, and the answer was that the chief would visit him on the morrow.

True to his appointment, the sachem came; Judge W—— received him with marks of respect, and introduced wife, his daughter and little boy. The interview that followed was interesting. Upon its result the judge was convinced his security might depend, and he was therefore exceedingly anxious to make a favorable impression upon the distinguished chief. He expressed his desire to settle in the country, to live in terms of amity and good fellowship with the Indians, and to be useful to them by introducing among them the arts of civilization.

The chief heard him out and said—Brother, you ask much, and you promise much. What pledge can you give of your faith? The white man's word may be good to the white man, yet it is when spoken to the Indian.

I have put my life in your hands, said the Judge; is not that an evidence of my good intentions? I have placed confidence in the Indian, and will not believe that they will abuse or betray the trust that is thus reposed.

So much is well, replied the chief; the Indian will repay confidence with confidence; if you will trust him he will trust you; let this boy go with me to my wigwam—I will bring him back in three days with my answer.

If an arrow had pierced her bosom, the mother could not have felt a deeper pang than went to her heart as the Indian made this proposal. She sprang forward, and running to the boy who stood at the side of the sachem, looking into his face with pleased wonder and admiration, she encircled him in her arms, and pressing him to her bosom, was about to fly from the room.

A gloomy and ominous frown came over the sachem's brow, but he did not speak.

But not so with Judge W——. He knew the success of their enterprise—of the lives of his family, depended on the decision of a moment.

Stay, stay, daughter, he said. Bring back the boy, I beseech you. He is no more dear to you than to me, I would not risk a hair of his head. But, my child, he must go with the chief. God will watch over him. He will be as safe in the sachem's wigwam as beneath our own roof.

The agonized mother hesitated for a moment; she then slowly returned, placed the boy on the knee of the chief, and kneeling at his feet, burst into a flood of tears. The gloom passed from the sachem's brow, but he said not a word. He arose and departed.

We shall not attempt to describe the agony of the mother for the ensuing days. She was agitated by contending hopes and fears. In the night she awoke from sleep seeming to hear the screams of her child calling on its mother for help. But the time wore slowly away and the third day came. How slowly did the hours pass; yet the sachem came not. There was a gloom over the whole household. The mother was pale and silent. Judge W—— paced the floor to and fro, going to the door every few moments, and looking thro' the opening in the forest towards the sachem's abode.

At last, as the rays of the setting sun were thrown upon the tree tops around, the eagle feathers of the chief were seen dancing above the bushes in the distance. He advanced rapidly, and the little boy at his side. He was gaily attired as a young chief, his feet being dressed in moccasins, a fine beaver skin was on his shoulders, and eagle feathers stuck in his hair. He was in excellent spirits and so proud was he of his honors that he seemed two inches taller than he was before. He was soon in his mother's arms and in that brief moment she seemed pass from death to life. It was a very happy meeting—too happy for us to describe.

The white man has conquered, said the sachem, hereafter let us be friends. You have trusted an Indian; will you repay you with confidence and friendship.

He was as good as his word, and Judge W—— lived for many years in peace with the Indian tribes, and succeeded in laying the foundation of a flourishing community.

Bayard Taylor with the Finnish Girls

Bayard Taylor has some novel adventures in his Northern European tour and meets with strange customs and anomalies in his last letter he tells us about stopping a couple of nights with a very friendly old Finnish lady; where he got a bed with sheets. The first night the mother and her son were so amazed to see him undress before retiring, that they were curiosity bound, and did not leave their stand-point in the room until he was snugly covered up. The revelation of what they had seen to other members of the family, produced a most wonderful audience the second night. On this occasion he writes:

Three buxom daughters of age ranging from sixteen to twenty-two appeared about the time for retiring and stationed themselves in a row near the door, where they watched us with silent curiosity. As we had shown no hesitation in the first case we determined to be equally courageous now, and commented remarking our garments with deliberation, allowing them to fully inspect them. The work thus proceeded in mutual silence until we were nearly ready for repose when by pulling off a stocking and displaying the muscular calf, suddenly alarmed the youngest, who darted to the door and rushed out. The second caught the panic and followed, and the oldest was obliged to do likewise, though with evident reluctance. The perfect composure of the girls, and the steadiness with which they watched us, showed that they were quite unconscious of having committed any impropriety.

Sarah Bostick, who was convicted of stealing from the store of Samuel Ritchie, was sentenced to pay \$36.78 as restitution money, to be whipped on the 22d inst., with twelve lashes and to be sold, for a period, not exceeding seven years.

One of the most remarkable facts in the life of a sailor has occurred in the life of Jethro Coffin, now a resident of Nantucket. During seventeen voyages in the whale fishery occupying thirty-nine years, Captain Coffin never witnessed a burial at sea, no death ever taking place on board of any ship to which he belonged.

Tom was asked what he thought of the effect of hot drinks on the system. Hot drinks air, said he, are decidedly bad. Tea and coffee, air are very hurtful, and hot punch when it is very hot indeed and taken often, in large quantities I suppose, slightly deleterious.

NEURALGIC HEADACHES. The application of towels wrung out in hot water, to the forehead and temples is represented to be an efficacious and speedy remedy for neuralgic headache.

Exercising.

Bob, Tom Jones has one of the greatest curiosities you ever saw.

Don't say so—what is it.

A tree that never sprouts and which becomes smaller the older it grows.

Well that is a curiosity. Where did he get it.

From California.

What is the name of it.

Axiostree. It once belonged to a California omnibus.

Scene closes by Bob throwing an inkstand at a half closed door.

Thrilling Narrative—A dog's tail under a cart wheel.

Ladies now dress in the breadth not the height of fashion.

Hon. A. P. Butler of S. C. died at his residence on the 12th inst.