

THE CLAYTON BUD.

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A TEST.

BY CARINE. I have pled for days together, For one word of hope from thee; Can it be that after all, dear, You can never care for me?

AN ODD STORY OF THE JUSTICE ROOM.

CHAPTER I.

No doubt there were some in the time of the Queen of Sheba who carpied at the wisdom of Solomon: and so there were people in the city in the days that immediately followed the American war who had something to say against the firm of Parkman, Babb and Parkman, of 17 Change Alley. They could not deny that it was an old established concern for Parkmans' had been trading between London and Calcutta in almost the early days of John Company Bahadur. And they could not say that it was not prosperous, for its name stood high in its own branch of business, and it had never been known to go in for rash speculations or risky profits.

Crisp, a small, slender, dark complexioned man, looked up peevishly as the chief entered, but seeing who it was would have gone down from his stool. "Sit still," the merchant said, laying his hand lightly on the other's shoulder to stay him. "I am only waiting for the carriage. It is more pleasant here than in the outer office. You are not going about your usual business to-day, I think, Crisp, eh?" The clerk's face flushed. "No Mr. James," he said, "I am not." "What, haven't you made up with her yet?" The young man shook his head, and then broke out suddenly, with: "And what is more, sir, my temper has been so bad ever since Critchlow found out this deficiency, that I should be afraid of making matters worse. I don't wonder she could stand it; it is no good my trying to make it up with her till I have cleared that up. Then I shall be myself again, and can look her in the face. As I told you, sir, I shall come back at four, and go thro' the books quietly by myself. I shall never forget your kindness, sir, never! But that Critchlow is so trying!—there's not a clerk in the office does not know now that there is something the matter with my accounts." Crisp spoke with deep feeling, and it was evident that the other believed him. "Don't think too much of it!" he said, kindly. "If it cannot be explained, I shall still trust you. It is but a small amount. Try to hit upon the blot." "Try!" cried the head clerk; "I've tried again and again." He passed his hands through his hair until it stood on end, and with his bright, black eyes gave him a very wild look. "Well, do your best," the merchant answered, drawing on his gloves. "You know my poor father had every confidence in you—as he had in your father—and I have the same, Crisp." And then he went, the young man looking after him with grateful, almost worshipping, eyes. There were few men in his position, and at his age so invariably kind and considerate to their inferiors as was Jane Parkman. Old Parkman had been the same; and father and son enjoyed a rare popularity in the office. It was whispered, but probably there was no truth in the malicious rumor, that they never quarrelled, save with one another. Crisp sat for some minutes pondering, and if his face was any index to his thoughts, upon some unpleasant subject. Then he rose and taking his hat went into the outer office. There were still two or three clerks there, detained by some small matters, and talking to them in a sharp, rasping voice was a stout, black whiskered, short-faced man. "Not found it out yet?" he said to Crisp, in a sneering tone. He was Critchlow, the cashier. "No," retorted the head clerk, "nor likely to while there is so much noise in the office!" "Well, if I were you, I'd stay and find it out, if I stayed until to-morrow. But it is fine to be you. I've got to stay until four or thereabouts, error or no error. "I think," said Crisp, wrath-

fully, seeing the clerks upon the broad grin, "that I should make it hot for you if I stayed long with you anywhere!" And without waiting to hear the cashier's retort, or the burst of laughter which his own excited answer evoked from the youngsters, he passed out and ran down the stairs and through the quiet alley into the street. CHAPTER II. It was half past four when Crisp, after treading divers of the city ways, in which the crowds were now rapidly lessening, turned again into Change Alley. A look of depression—a haggard, care-worn look—was upon the young man's face as he crossed it, his head bent down. Suddenly a sweet, glad cry—oh! so out of place there—struck upon his ear, and he looked round with a start, to meet the next instant two little gloved hands thrust, into his two brown eyes swimming with tears looking into his black ones. "Oh, Ernest!" the girl cried—she was young and pretty, but dressed very plainly in black, and until this moment had worn her veil down—"aren't you glad to see me?" "Glad, my darling!" he cried, all the care gone out of his face. "yes, very glad. You know I am glad." "And do you love me as much as ever," she pleaded with her eyes fixed so very anxiously on his. "Yes," he said simply. Nor did she doubt him now, though during the fortnight of estrangement following that wretched petty quarrel she had fancied all sorts of dreadful things. "More and more every day, dearest. It was all my fault, Ethel. I had been worried and vexed by business, and visited it upon you." The girl looked up at him with clinging eyes, as if it had been a privilege he had granted her. Then she said, but not reproachfully: "I have been here half an hour. I expected you before." "Did you?" he answered. "It was so good of you to be here, generous of you, like yourself. But you must come in for a minute with me, Ethel. The house is quite empty. The caretaker, I know, has leave to be away this afternoon, and Critchlow, the cashier, will have left by now." "I don't think I ought," she said, smiling. "Nonsense!" he replied, gaily. "I must put my books away now and come back after tea. And see, if you are thinking of the properties, there's a policeman watching us with the most undulating interest." He opened the door with his key and she came shyly in. Once inside, however, and the door shut upon the inquisitive policeman—well, it is no matter to us how Crisp welcomed her. But this satisfactorily performed, they went upstairs, his arm around her waist—a strange sight in that dusty place—their steps echoing in the dusty house. At the top of the stairs the door into the large clerks room was ajar. Crisp pushed it open and led her in. "And this is where you do your work?" she asked, devouring with wide open eyes the long bare room, with its four windows, its row of desks and

stools along one side, and the glass box in the far corner. "No," he answered, laughing. "I am supposed to be cut above this, darling. Only I am obliged to be very careful not to throw stones." He led her up the room, and unlocking the door of his glass house, took her in. How delightful it was to help her up on his high stool and hold her there—for, of course, being unaccustomed to it she might have become giddy. And see her fit her little boots to the rail of the desk, and unlock the latter and come at once face to face with her own photograph! And then to see her blush, all pleasure in this proof of his fidelity. It was all so delightful that he wondered why though they had met in Change Alley on Saturday afternoon before, he had never brought her to see his office. "And where do these doors lead to? Don't, Ernest; please leave my hair alone. How do you know, sir, that there is no one there?" He stopped at once—whatever he was doing—and a dark shadow fell across his face. "That is Critchlow's room," he said. "And, by Jove, he's left his key in it! There's a nice piece of carelessness!" But there was no elation in his voice. It seems as if a shadow has fallen on them both, from the moment her eyes were drawn to the door. It was now just in front of them—the door leading to the partner's rooms stood there—but in the corner on the left. "I'll take the key and convict him at any rate of this," the young man said and crossed the floor to the door. The girl followed him, a strange sudden feeling of the emptiness of the house upon her. How hollow Ernest's footsteps rang. The sun had gone behind a cloud, and the room seemed dreary, dusty, and cold too, for she shivered. Crisp, after trying the cashier's door and finding it locked, slipped the key out and put it into his pocket. Then he locked his own door and pocketed the key also. It was strange perhaps that he took no farewell kiss in the hall, but opened the outer door hastily, and seemed to breathe more freely when they were out of the alley and in the peopled street. They took so long a walk, Ethel telling her lover of her latest troubles at Maitree House, a young ladies' seminary where she was tolerated as teacher of English, and Ernest confiding the dreadful matter of the error in his accounts, that when they parted he gave up all thought of returning to his books. "But you must not be late another day, sir," were her last words. He thought nothing of them then, but afterwards when he was alone they puzzled him. There had been no appointment made for that afternoon, no promise given, no time fixed. So how could he have been late. It was odd. What did she mean by saying he was late. (TO BE CONTINUED.) Mat. T. Almond, Elberton, Ga. says: Dr. Clark's Blood and Liver Pills have done me more good than all the medicine I ever took before for the liver.

Washington Letter.

(From our Regular Correspondent)

Washington, D. C., May 29.

This is a favorite season for a visit to Mount Vernon. The quaint old homestead is even lovelier now than in mid-summer. The association of ladies who manage the Washington estate have been in annual session there for more than a week, and the steamer which plys the Potomac daily between this city and the tomb of Washington, has been crowded with pilgrims. It was in 1853 that Col. John Washington saw that Mount Vernon would have to go by the auctioneer's hammer if something could not be done to save it, and here comes in the romance of Mount Vernon. A woman who had been a confirmed invalid from girlhood, raised a fund of \$200,000 and embodied a plan which gave the home and tomb of George Washington to the Nation. This was Miss Cunningham, of South Carolina. She had visited the spot in her childhood, and when compelled to give up all of life except that which could be enjoyed in a sick room, the project of buying Mount Vernon inspired her. From her sick bed she aroused an enthusiasm, especially among Southern women, which resulted in a splendid success. Edward Everett caught her enthusiasm, and his lecture on Washington, delivered in different cities, brought money to the Mount Vernon fund. She interested Madame Le Vert, and Mrs. Cora Mawatt Ritchie, and in 1860 her work had been accomplished: the house, the tomb, the farm of Washington, including two hundred acres of land, belonged to a national association. The Legislature of Virginia granted a charter to the association in perpetuity, and no disposition of the property can be made without the consent of the Legislature. None of the Washington family were afterwards interred at Mount Vernon. The key of the vault was thrown in the Potomac river. Within the brick vault there are two marble tombs, those of George and Martha Washington. One looks at them through open iron work, and "hots off" is the rule at the grave. Around these marble tombs is a wooden flooring, which if stepped upon starts an electric alarm at the house. During the bloodiest days of the war, Mount Vernon was treated as neutral ground, and soldiers of both armies met under the trees that overhang the tomb. The different states each have charge of a room, so far as the rooms in the old mansion hold out in number. The lady managers are called regents, and the regent of each state has been instrumental in having its room restored and refurnished as nearly as possible in the style that prevailed at Mount Vernon during Gen. Washington's lifetime. Many of his original articles of furniture have been gathered up and placed there again in the various rooms. Hanging in the entrance hall is the key of the Bastille sent to Washington by La Fayette, and over the door of the dining room is Washington's field-glass, said to have been hung on its peg by his own hand and never since removed. The

curious marble hearth and mantel in the dining room were sent from France. On the way, the ship bearing the gift was captured by pirates. When they found the marble was intended for Washington, they landed it on the American shore. In a little drawing room is the harpischord almost as large as a modern piano, which Washington gave to Nellie Curtis as a wedding present. The attic room which Martha Washington occupied after Gen. Washington's death, because it commanded a view of his tomb, is in almost the identical condition in which she left it. Only one boat is allowed to land sight-seers at Mount Vernon. The round trip fee of a dollar foot up handsomely at the end of a year. In the past year 18,000 persons have visited the place. The green houses are also a source of revenue, a few flowers being a favorite relic of the spot. There is some complaint that the managers of Mount Vernon make too much money, and that they do not spend their revenues wisely. However that may be, it costs considerable to keep the estate up in its present condition. During the coming year extensive repairs will have to be made on the roof and foundations of the house, the tomb is to be drained and a new wharf made, involving in all an outlay of about \$6,000. The regents say that they do not mind making criticisms for the fact that the place was never before so attractive, never so much visited. A New Industry. The manufacture of pine oil promises soon to become an important Southern product. It can be manufactured of such material as is going to waste by the thousands all over the pine region of the South. The process (patented) of extracting the oil from the wood is very simple and cheap. The retort is a tank made of boiler iron one-fourth of an inch thick, and its dimensions are four and a half by nine feet. This is mounted on a furnace built of brick, and to it is connected a coil of copper pipe, the same as the ordinary still worm, which is inclosed in a condensing tank. The retort holds one cord of wood, and at one end of it there is a door. The wood is placed in the retort and the door closed and sealed up air-tight. A fire is then started in the furnace and kept burning at normal heat for 24 hours, when the work of running off the charge is finished. It requires only a common laborer to perform this work and one man can manage two retorts with ease. Any kind of good yellow or pitch pine—buds of timber, stumps from the fields, knots, etc.—will answer. The average yield of one cord of wood is as follows: 80 gallons of pine oil, 50 bushels best charcoal, 150 gallons pyroligneous acid, and a large amount inflammable gas. The charcoal produced is of excellent quality and is serviceable as an article of fuel. The oil is valuable for diverse purposes. As a preserver of wood it is unsurpassed; it is a good paint oil, or may be used as a lubricator for rough machinery, such as saw-mills, etc., and is valuable for many domestic purposes. It is also an excellent varnish for the masts and spars of vessels.