

DE PROFUNDIS.

I bow my head to the judgment
That I chose—when I chose to offend—
For who can desire the beginning
And hope to escape the end?

I curse not Heaven that I suffer,
Nor plead for relief from the blow—
For God cannot change the harvest,
From the fruit of the seed that we sow.

But I breathe a prayer that haply
May reach to the edge of the throne—
That the just deserts of offending
May for the offence atone;

And, that after the anguish and torture
Of the self enkindled fire,
I may be refined forever,
From the dross of each base desire.

—The Transcript.

IN PURSUIT OF WEALTH.

An Experience of Mr. Alexander Mann
When Seeking His Fortune in North
Carolina.

[CONCLUDED.]

Mann decided that the next house must be considerably further on, for he heard his fellow-wayfarers stumbling along down the track for what seemed an interminable time. Then the sound ceased and a moment later he heard a man's voice saying,—

"Dogged if I see what he's gwine to do down here. Mighty little chance—"

The rest of the sentence was lost in the slamming of a door, and then silence reigned.

"I have not yet found out what the advantages of this place are," said our traveller meditatively, "but one of its disadvantages is very evident. Certainly I shall never be able to talk about my neighbors with any degree of comfort in a place where ordinary conversation can be heard a mile or so away."

Then sitting down upon a packing case which lay near the track, without at all realizing that in doing so he was taking liberties with the Pineville railroad station, Mann took a good long look at the house where he expected to pass the night. The moonlight was doing the best it could for this gaunt and shabby structure, but that was not much. Its tender radiance softened, but could not disguise so much ugliness. For there were three stories of it—cheap lumber, covered with whitewash instead of paint, and surmounted by tiles instead of chimney-pots—and the innocent landscape wildly waved its arms of pine and gritted its teeth of sand in anguish at having to bear such a monstrosity upon its bosom.

So, at least Mr. Mann was pleased to interpret the tossing of pine boughs in the breeze, and a gentle grating sound coming from all directions around him, which a less poetic fancy might have attributed to the scraping back and forth of the tips of dry wire grass upon the sand.

"Three stories," he muttered, picking up his bag and umbrella and preparing to scramble up through the deep sand to the front door of the hotel,—“three stories, I wonder if every room is full and they have all come down here to raise grapes and poultry and silkworms. If they have, I shall try mushrooms.”

No one answered his modest rap upon one of the double doors, through whose upper panels of glass he could see the dimly-lighted interior, and so he walked in and looked about.

The broad hall in which he found himself went through the middle of the house, and was entered from the rear by

a single door. The floor was covered with a carpet which did its best to tone down the irregularities of badly matched boards. The walls were not plastered, but sheathed, and on this backing of upright boards was pasted a wall-paper of amazing floral design, which on the shrinking and drawing apart of the boards, had split at intervals of about eight inches all up and down both sides of the hall. There was a marble-topped table in the centre, and on this an argand lamp, with its globe tipped rakishly on one side, and an extremely knowing appearance, which indicated that this being up late o' nights was no new thing in its experience.

No one stirred as he came down the hall, but the lamp tipped him a friendly flicker, very much like a wink, as if, in the absence of the landlord, it was undertaking to do the honors. Now, there was nothing in the world quite so disagreeable to Mr. Alexander Mann as being roused from sleep in the middle of the night, and as he was of a sympathetic disposition there was nothing he more disliked doing than rousing other people from their accustomed slumber. Accordingly he put down his luggage with great care, and looked about for some spot where he could stretch himself out and repose until morning without disturbing anybody.

There was a gaunt lounge on one side of the hall. On it Mann threw his light overcoat and was preparing to encamp for the night, when a drowsy voice from somewhere said,—

"What do you want?"

"Want to lie down," replied Mann.

"All right," said the voice, "catch!" and a pillow came flying out from one of the broad caverns that opened into the hall, just missed Mann's head, and landed in the middle of the lounge. He felt for it and found it warm.

"Well, now," he soliloquized, "this is genuine hospitality. Took it right out from under his own head and threw it at mine. I wonder if he'll send along the mattress and bedstead in the same way."

He sat down on the lounge and began to take off his shoes, meditating on the vicissitudes of the day, when he became aware of a spirited controversy in the room whence had come the flying pillow.

"Baxter, do get up!" said a woman's voice. "It isn't the lawyer at all, and you've made one of your everlasting blunders. It's a stranger, and you'd better go out and see who he is, and apologize for throwing that pillow."

Baxter's bass was then heard in grumbling protest,—

"Yes, it is Mr. Wilkinson, I know from the way he walked, and the way he sat down on that lounge. Couldn't any stranger sit down on it without its going all to pieces under him."

There was a loud crash in the hall, and the man's voice exclaimed,—

"Thunder! I guess that isn't Wilkinson, after all."

The man who wasn't Wilkinson gathered himself up from the collapsed lounge and found facing him a jovial looking giant, in flannel shirt and trousers. They gazed at each other solemnly for a moment and then burst into hearty laughter.

"Well, sir," said the giant, wiping his eyes and trying to smooth out his convulsed features, "you must think we are mighty warm hearted people down here,

from the way we welcome strangers,—shoot 'em with pillows,—oh, aw—haw—haw!—and then bury 'em under lounges,—oh,—aw—haw—haw! Great Stott! Gr-r-eat Scott!"

Nothing was vouchsafed in the way of explanation, and indeed nothing was necessary. Mann could easily perceive that this unceremonious reception had been intended for somebody besides himself. A good understanding was quickly established between him and Mr. Baxter Smith, who was, like himself, an adventurous pioneer from the North, and was in charge of the hotel only temporarily,—until certain other enterprises of his were in a more forward state, he declared with a somewhat mysterious air.

"Chickens or silkworms or grapes, or all three together, I'll warrant," was Mann's mental comment.

"But there will be time enough in the morning to talk business matters," said Baxter Smith briskly, "the thing to do now is to get you a bed. Just wait a jiffy and I'll fix you all right."

Thereupon he plunged through the wall-paper in the opposite direction to that from which he had first appeared, and presently returned with two youngsters, one under each arm, very pretty, but also very sleepy and somewhat cross. These he managed to dispose of to his own satisfaction, if not to theirs, for he came back smiling more radiantly than ever. Then taking the lamp, he conducted his guest to the just vacated bed.

"There," said he, "I guess you'll be comfortable here for to-night. To-morrow we'll fix you up a room somewhere else."

To Mr. Mann's protest against driving the children out of their bed he would not listen at all.

"Oh, they are all right. No need to worry about them. A mattress on the floor is no hardship to their young bones. Why, sir, if it wasn't for the pigs wandering about I could put 'em to sleep out-of-doors, on such a lovely night as this, upon a pile of pine straw under these old trees, and they would be all the better for it. I tell you what, this is a climate you can trust both day and night. I hope you will sleep well, Mr. Mann. Good night, sir."

Mann was a trifle squeamish, so that he did not immediately go to bed, after bidding his host good night. But drowsiness soon overcame his objections to settling down into the warm nest which awaited him. When his head touched the pillow he was fast asleep at once, and dreaming that the Pineville hotel was an enormous mushroom, which was his by right of discovery, and from the sale of which he was about to realize a snug fortune.

Susie. "Papa, what makes a man always give a woman a diamond engagement ring?"

Her father. "The woman."—*The Jewelers' Weekly*.

"I asked the tramp why he never took a bath."

"What did he say?"

"Said he was too proud to beg for soap."—*Chicago Record*.

Diggs. "Simpkins certainly has a wonderful memory."

Biggs. "Why do you think so?"

Diggs. "He never leaves his umbrella anywhere."—*Chicago News*.

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