

# THE RICHMOND

H. C. WALL, Editor and Proprietor.

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## A VIGIL.

BY EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

I walk the lane's dim hollow,—  
Past is the twilight hour,  
But stealthy shadows follow  
And Night withholds her power,  
For somewhere in the eastern sky  
The shrouded moon is high.

Dews from the wild rose drip unheard,—  
Their unforfeited scent  
With that of woods and grasses blent;  
No muffled flight of bird,  
No whispering voice, my footfall stops;  
No breeze amid the poplar-tops  
The smallest leaf has stirred.

Yet round me, here and there,  
A little fluttering wind  
Plays now,—tho' senses have divined  
A breath across my hair,—

A touch,—that on my forehead lies,  
And presses long  
These lips so mute of song,  
And now, with kisses cool, my half-shut eyes.

This night? Oh, what is here!  
What visionless aura clings  
So fitfully, so near,  
On this returning even-tide  
When Memory will not be denied  
Unfettered wings?

My arms reach out,—in vain,—  
They fold the air:  
And yet,—that wandering breath again!  
Too vague to make her phantom plain,  
Too tender for despair.

—March Century.

## The Two Aunts.

"H'm! H'm! Upon my word! Just what might have been expected! Selfish! Heartless! Cruel!"

Not all at once, as written down, but popping out at brief intervals, sharply and suddenly as pistol shots, the above ejaculations fell from the lips of Mrs. Carpenter Wainwright, as she sat beside an open grate fire, reading a letter. A lengthy letter, too, closely written upon four large pages of paper. After she folded it, she said more sharply than ever:

"Well, thank goodness her mother is no relation of mine!"

There fell a profound silence upon the room after this last remark. Evidently the news, whatever it was, about the woman who was no relation of hers, touched Mrs. Wainwright deeply. Her brow was clouded, and, as she mused, angry flashes sprang more than once into her large, dark eyes. Upon all sides of her were evidences of wealth, and her own dress, though a morning negligee, was costly and in exquisite taste. She was not young—past seventy—yet she carried her tall figure erectly still, and her eyes were brilliant as those of youth.

While she sat in profound thought there was a tap upon the door, followed by the entrance of a young girl, just touching eighteen, with a fair, sweet face, lighted by eyes as dark as Mrs. Wainwright's own.

"Aunt Cora," she said, brightly, "shall I read to you now?"

"The old lady looked into the sweet face with a keen glance, as if questioning herself somewhat about the girl—then she said, abruptly:

"I have had a letter from Mrs. Pope, this morning."

"With news from Mill Village?" the girl asked, a look of pleasure on her face.

"You are very fond of Mill Village?"

"No; I like the city much better. Still, there are some people in Mill Village I am fond of."

"Theoda West?"

The girl hesitated; then, lifting her bright eyes, she said, frankly:

"I love Aunt Mary, but I don't think that I am very fond of Theoda. She is very handsome, very accomplished, and too fond of me."

"Ah!"

"No."

"He is my husband's nephew. Not mine; but all my wealth came from my husband, and James Kent, knowing me to be a just woman, expects a handsome legacy when I die. Probably when he told Theoda he would be a rich man some day, he did not tell the name of the aunt who had the money to leave."

"I never saw him. He came to the seminary after I came here."

"Exactly! He displeased me! I do not keep people near me who displease me."

Again that cutting emphasis of tone. Estelle did not answer, and Mrs. Wainwright spoke again.

"I expect, therefore, that you will abandon this romantic scheme of returning to Mill Village. There are asylums where your aunt can be received."

"Not while I can work for her," Estelle said very firmly.

"Mrs. Pope writes that she will probably sell her cottage and live upon the price in some such place. A hospital, probably."

"Poor Aunt Mary. You will let me go to her?"

"I do not pretend to control your movements," was the reply, in a cold voice. "When I took you from a life of poverty and toil, to take your place here as my niece and heiress, I expected to have a loving, grateful companion. Since I have been mistaken, you can leave me whenever you desire it. Only I wish it understood that you choose between your Aunt Mary and myself, finally."

Estelle's eyes were full of tears, but she controlled her voice, by a strong effort, to say:

"I am not ungrateful, Aunt Cora, though I never considered myself your heiress. I thank you from my heart, and if you were poor and sick you would not find me ungrateful. But my duty seems so clear to me that I cannot hesitate. Even at the price of your displeasure, I must go. But," she added, timidly, "I hope you will forgive me."

"Oh, I shall not quarrel with you, child. You may go, certainly. Only do not flatter yourself with the idea that you can return here when you tire of your sentimental duties. There, go to your own room, and give me your decision at dinner. Not a word now."

So dismissed, Estelle went slowly to the room where every adornment spoke of her aunt's care for her. She was young and had endured poverty for many years, so it was not without some bitter tears for herself that she faced the situation. She fully appreciated the difference between Mrs. Wainwright's heiress, and a dressmaker toiling for the support of two women; between the petted child of this home of luxury, with servants to obey every wish, and the drudge of a little cottage with an almost helpless invalid to care for. Yet she never faltered.

And when Mrs. Wainwright saw the pale, resolute face at dinner, she knew that she must lose one who was very dear to her. Not for the first time, she regretted her own residence abroad for fourteen years, when she might have been winning Estelle's love, as this invalid aunt had done.

"I see," she said, when the silent, almost untraced meal was over, "you still cling to your idea of duty. Go then. Take with you whatever I have given you, for I want no reminders of your ungrateful desertion. I had rather spare myself the pain of any parting scene. John shall drive you to the depot in the morning, and this will pay your traveling expenses, and help you until you obtain work."

nant of life in the consumptive frame was surely to be shortened by the cruelty of her own child.

But by every loving device the self-sacrificing girl strove to keep the feeble flame of life still burning. She left it be known in the village that she was anxious to obtain work as a dressmaker, and soon found employment. Some curiosity was expressed at this sudden return from the "rich aunt" who had taken her away a year before, but Estelle only told the simple truth, that one aunt needed her, while the other did not.

Work, none too well paid, came to the little cottage, and the household duties were shared while Mrs. West could keep about. It was in November that Estelle came to her, and before February she was unable to leave her bed. The duties then of nursing and still keeping up with her engagements for dressmaking, pressed very hardly upon Estelle, but she never faltered. Day after day the invalid was tenderly comforted, and yet the busy click of the sewing-machine was heard far into the night.

There was kindness shown by the village people that helped in this labor of love. Some came to sit up at night, when the invalid required watching. Many a dainty dish, sent to tempt Mrs. West's appetite, proved a sufficient meal for both. One neighbor sent a cart-load of fire-wood, one a barrel of apples, and there was never wanting a kindly word of sympathy. So the dreary winter wore away, and to the surprise of all, Mrs. West lived through the bitter March weather. How tenderly she was guarded and nursed in that trying month none knew but herself; but as the warm spring days came she brightened visibly. Theoda wrote occasionally, seemingly glad that Estelle had come to take the post she had so heartily abandoned. In one of her letters she wrote:

"My husband bids me tell Estelle it is as well, perhaps, that she did not build any strong hope upon Mrs. Wainwright's capricious adoption of her, as he will certainly inherit his uncle's money."

Estelle made no comment upon the message, but in her heart wondered if the money could be ever put to any good use in hands so selfish as Theoda's or her husband's. It seemed a bad precedent for any noble action, this desertion of a dying parent.

Summer stole away, every day lessening the invalid's strength, and winter loomed up threateningly in the future. All of Mrs. Wainwright's gift was gone, and poorly paid, often interrupted sewing, was but a slender provision for cold and sickness. Yet the wasted face, growing paler every day, pleaded silently for many comforts; and Estelle, spurred by the sight, wrote to her Aunt Cora. It was one of many long letters, but the first that asked for aid. Estelle wrote:

"The doctor tells me Aunt Mary cannot live many weeks longer, and she requires almost incessant care, having frequent distressing spells of bleeding and suffocation. I find I cannot supply the comforts she needs; so I turn to you, not to beg, but to borrow. Will you lend me a hundred dollars, and I will faithfully work till it is paid, when Aunt Mary no longer needs my time?"

There was the usual curt reply to this letter, but the loan was sent with a brief intimation that the promised payment was expected.

Early in November the end came, gently and painlessly, the dying breath spent in a blessing for the faithful nurse.

Never once had Mrs. West suspected that her niece was forbidden to return to the luxurious home she had quitted.

## A TOUCHING SCENE.

A TOUCH OF NATURE WHICH MAKES THE WHOLE WORLD KIN.

The Self-Sacrifice of a Woman Which Changed Selfishness to Sympathy.

"There was a pathetic scene on a train on the Western Division of the Erie recently," said a conductor on that road. "A woman boarded the train at Olean. She carried in her arms a baby but a few weeks' old. It was very cross and peevish, and defied all of its nurse's efforts to keep it quiet. Its cries were at times so loud and piercing that the other passengers could not hide their annoyance, and after a while audible expressions of their feelings came from all parts of the car. The woman was patient under the double trial of the child's troublesomeness and the evident knowledge of the annoyance it was to her fellow-passengers. She talked soothingly to the child, placed it in all positions, and tried to so arrange its wrappings as to, in a measure, deaden the sound of its cries. Finally some one in the car, whose impatience had got the better of his sympathy, shouted out:

"If that child can't be kept quiet, I hope it will be removed from the car at the next station!"

"This unfeeling remark seemed to meet with general approval, and the poor woman's eyes filled with tears, and in attempting to speak her feelings overcame her, and she pressed the baby closer to her and sobbed violently. She soon recovered herself, and redoubled her efforts to keep the child quiet. For a short time she succeeded somewhat, but presently the cries of the baby were as loud and prolonged as ever. At last a man arose and said sharply:

"Madam, it would seem to me that the mother of an infant should know how to take at least half care of it."

"The train had now stopped at Salamanca. At the remark of the second speaker, the woman arose in her seat, and, facing the car full of passengers, said, in a voice trembling:

"I am not this poor little thing's mother. I never saw it before yesterday, and I believe it hasn't a living relative. Its father was killed on the railroad a week before it was born. Its mother, living in a distant place, hurried to the scene of her husband's death. The child was born among strangers, and day before yesterday the mother died, leaving her little one with no one to care for it. I lived in the house where the mother died, and volunteered to do what I could for the poor little thing, and to go with the dead woman's remains to her native place. Her body is in this train. I am sorry the child is so troublesome, but isn't it entitled to some little sympathy?"

"The effect of the woman's words may be imagined. There were few dry eyes in the car when she dropped, sobbing, into her seat. All selfishness was lost in sympathetic thoughts of the little wanderer, and a score of hands that a moment before were almost willing to raise in chastisement of the babe were now anxious to extend aid to it and its self-sacrificing guardian. It was a touch of nature that makes the whole world kin."

## Successful Song Carpentering.

"What is the latest popular ballad?" "Vaniti," replied the publisher. "Frank Howard, the author of 'I'll Await My Love' and 'Only a Pansy Blossom,' wrote it—that is, he wrote as much of it as he did of the others I have mentioned. He is a ballad singer. Thatcher, Primrose and West"—Estelle's, and his income from

## DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS SUNDAY.

A Connecticut Deacon Carting Hay While his Neighbors were at Church.

One of the best known residents of Stratford, Conn., who lives in the suburbs and is a conscientious Christian, arose Sunday morning with the impression that it was Saturday. He attended to his daily routine of farm work, and, excepting that breakfast was a little late, there were no indications that it was Sunday. After breakfast he yoked his cattle and at 8 o'clock started for the salt meadows, where he has several stacks of well-cured hay. He loaded his cart and, making for himself a comfortable seat in the soft hay, he started for home. His route was through the main street.

First the Episcopal church was passed. A few young men stood near the door, an unusual circumstance, he thought, but then there might be a noonday wedding. Then the Congregational church was reached, where more people and a few teams were seen. He had heard of no death for a day or two, but still there might be a funeral. Arriving at the Post Office he found the door locked. Postmaster Spall had probably gone to an early dinner and he would have to come down again at night, for he must have his weekly paper to read on Sunday afternoon. To keep his feet warm the farmer now walked by the side of his team until he came to the Methodist church. Here he heard singing, but drove along, wondering if he would have time to pitch off his load before dinner. The thought struck him that his good wife would like to know the news, so he stopped his oxen and retraced his steps until he met an acquaintance, of whom he inquired what was going on in the church.

"I believe the Presiding Elder is there to-day, and extra sessions are being held. But what in the world are you carting hay for on Sunday?" inquired the neighbor.

"Sunday! Great Scott! you don't mean to tell me that it is Sunday!" said the now astonished farmer; and he counted slowly the days for a week back, accounting for each day in his mind. "The Old Ferry, so it is. I'll not drive another foot."

He was as good as his word. Unhitching his oxen from the cart, he left it standing in the street and drove the innocent beasts to a neighboring barn, where he made arrangements for their keeping until the morrow. With a sad face the good deacon started afoot for home, and not a step did he take but he was thinking of the awful sin he had committed. Bright and early on Monday morning he went for his team, and since then he has spent most of his time trying to set himself right in the estimation of his townspeople.

## A Dakota Farm.

The Northwestern Miller says: S. A. Dalrymple of the Dalrymple Farm at Casselton, D. T., recently said: "We had this year 32,000 acres in wheat and 2,000 acres (enough to feed the stock) in oats. Nine successive crops have been raised off this land; this year our wheat averaged fifteen, and sixteen bushels to the acre. Next year we will begin to fallow, letting about 3,000 acres idle each season till it rests. We expect the following the yield will be to twenty-five bushels to the acre."

## IF THE LEGISLATURE.

"Mr. Speaker, I arise to place in nomination a man, sir, what we all know sir, to be a man what ain't got no sense. We all know that he is"

## THE HUMOROUS PAPERS.

WHAT WE FIND IN THEM THIS WEEK TO SMILE OVER.

A Safe Place—A Pretty Girl's Shot—Had Been Eating Onions—The Dear Children, Etc., Etc.

### A PRETTY GIRL'S SHOT.

As they were all coming out of the theatre together young Sypher accidentally trod on the dress of the prettiest girl just ahead.

"Oh, shoo!" involuntarily exclaimed the young girl as she suddenly brought up.

Young Sypher thought he saw a chance for a smash.

"You needn't shoo me," he simpered, smartly. "I'm no cow."

"No," the pretty girl returned, with a glance that pinned him to the side of the lobby, "perhaps not now, but you will be when you grow up."

Then she swept on, while young Sypher was so astounded that he actually forgot to light his oakum-stuffed cigarette when he got outside.—*Boston Journal.*

### EATING ONIONS.

"What makes you think they're engaged, Mrs. Quigley? Did her mother tell you?"

"No; she hasn't said a word to me about it."

"Then I suppose her father mentioned it to your husband?"

"Oh, dear, no."

"Well, I give it up, then. How did you find it out?"

"Why, I met them out walking the other afternoon, and stopped to chat with them a few minutes. They'd both been eating onions, and I tell you, Mrs. Duckley, a sign like that never fails. They'll be married before three months, or I don't know a mop from a mug-wump."—*Chicago Ledger.*

### IT WOULDN'T PAY.

Through the telephone: "Is that you, doctor?"

"Yes, who is it?"

"Mrs. Merony. Oh, doctor, what shall I do for baby? He has swallowed a dime."

"Well, you surely don't want to spend two dollars to get a dime, do you?" and the telephone ceased working.—*New-nan Independent.*

### THE RETORT COURTESY.

Woman's cruelty to woman has made thousands fall to speak to each other. Cicely had just dropped in to congratulate her friend on pleasant prospects directly after Lent.

"Oh, I am so glad for you, my dear, Augustus always was such charming company. Oh, he's real nice. He paid me marked attentions half a dozen years ago."

"Indeed! I believe I've heard him say something about your being a very dear friend of his mother."

The coffee cream froze in the little quaint pitcher on the table. So all the morning's conversation.—*Harford Post.*

### IF THE LEGISLATURE.

"Mr. Speaker, I arise to place in nomination a man, sir, what we all know sir, to be a man what ain't got no sense. We all know that he is"