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THE LOTTERY TICKET.

JAMES LANNING was a mechanic, a young, honest man, whose highest ambition was to gain a comfortable home for himself and wife, and to be thought well of by his neighbors. He had built himself a house, and there still remained upon it a mortgage of \$500; but this sum he hoped to pay in a few years, if he only had his health. He had calculated exactly how long it would take him to clear off this incumbrance, and he went to work with his eyes open.

One evening James came home to his supper more thoughtful than usual. His young wife noticed his manner, and she inquired its cause.

"What is it, James?" she kindly asked. "Why, I never saw you look so sober before."

"Well, I'll tell you, Hannah," returned the young man, with a slight hesitation in his manner. "I have just been thinking that I would buy a lottery ticket."

Hannah Lanning did not answer immediately. She looked down and smoothed the silken hair of her babe, which was chirping like a little robin in her arms, and the shades of her handsome features showed that she was taking time to think.

"How much will it cost?" she asked, at length, looking half timidly up into her husband's face.

"Twenty dollars," returned James, trying to assume a confidence which he did not feel.

"And have you made up your mind to buy it?"

"Well, I think I shall. What do you think about it?"

"If you should ask my advice, I should say do not buy it."

"But why so?"

"For many reasons," returned his wife, in a trembling tone.

She would not offend her husband, and she shrank from giving him advice which he might not follow.

"In the first place," she said, "I think the whole science of lotteries is a bad one; and then you have no money to risk."

"But just look at the prizes," said James, drawing a "scheme" from his pocket. "Here is one prize of \$20,000, another of \$10,000, another \$5,000, and so on. Something tells me that if I buy a ticket I shall draw a large prize. And then just think, Hannah, how easily I could pay all up for my house, and perhaps have a good handsome sum left."

The young man spoke with much earnestness and assurance, but he saw that there was a cloud upon his wife's brow.

"It seems to me that the chance of drawing a prize is very doubtful," said Hannah, as she took the scheme. "Here are many thousand tickets to be sold."

The babe tried hard to snatch the paper, and Hannah laid it aside.

"I think I shall run the risk," resumed James, glancing once more over the paper, and resting with a nervous longing upon the figures which represented the higher prizes. "There's Barney; he drew about \$800 a year ago."

"Yes, I know it," said Hannah, with more warmth than she had before manifested, "and what has become of the money? You know he has squandered it all away. Ah, James, money is of no use unless we come honestly by it."

"Honestly?" repeated the young man. "Surely, there is nothing dishonest in drawing a prize in a lottery."

"I think there is," kindly, but emphatically, replied the wife. "All games of hazard, where money is at stake, are dishonest. Were you to draw a prize of \$20,000, you would rob a thousand men of \$20 each; or at least, you would take from them money for which you returned them no equivalent. Is it not gambling in every sense of the word?"

"Oh, no! You look upon the matter in too strong a light."

"Perhaps I do; but yet so it looks to me. What you may draw some one else must lose; and perhaps it may be some one who can afford the loss no better than you can. I wouldn't buy the ticket, James. Let us live on the products of our honest gains, and we shall be happier."

James Lanning was uneasy. He had no answer for his wife's arguments; at least, no answer that could spring from his moral convictions, and he let the matter drop. But the young man could not drop the siren from his heart. All the next day his head was full of "prizes," and while he was at his work he kept muttering to himself, "Twenty thousand dollars," "Ten thousand dollars," "Five thousand dollars," and so on.

When he went home the next night he was almost unhappy with the nervous anxiety into which he had thrown himself. The tempter had grasped him firmly, and whenever he thought of the lottery, he saw nothing but piles of gold and silver. In short, James Lanning had made up his mind that he would buy the ticket. He went to the little box where he had already \$120 laid up toward paying off the mortgage from his house. The lock clicked with a startling sound, and when he threw back the cover he hesitated. He looked at his wife, and he saw that she was sad.

"Oh, I'm sure I shall draw a prize!" he said, with a faint, fading smile. He took four half-eagles from the box, and put them in his pocket. His wife said nothing. She played with her baby to hide her sadness, for she did not wish to say more on the subject. She had seen that little pile of gold gradually accumulating, and both she and her husband had been happy in anticipating the day when the pretty cottage would be all their own. But when she saw those four pieces of gold taken away from the store, she felt a foreshadowing of evil. She might have spoken again against the movement, but she saw that her husband was sorely tender upon the subject, and she let the affair go to the hands of fate.

A week elapsed from the time that James bought his ticket to the drawing of the lottery, and during that time the young man had not a moment of real enjoyment. He was alternating between hope and fear, and therefore his mind was constantly on the stretch.

At length the day arrived. James went to the office, and found that the drawing had taken place, and that the list of prizes had been made out. He seized the list and turned away, so that those who stood around should not see his face. He read the list through, but he searched for his number in vain! It was not there. He had drawn a blank! He left the office an unhappy man. Those twenty dollars which he had lost had been the savings of two months of hard labor, and he felt their loss most keenly.

When he returned home that night he told his wife that he had lost. She found no fault with him. She only kissed him and told him that the lesson was a good one, even though it had been dearly bought.

But James Lanning was not satisfied. He brooded over his loss with a bitter spirit, and at length the thought came to him that he might yet draw a prize. He wished that he had not bought the first ticket, and if he could only get back his \$20 he would buy no more; but he would not rest under his loss. He was determined to make one more trial, and he did so. This time he purchased the ticket without his wife's knowledge. The result was the same as before. He drew a blank!

"Forty dollars!" was a sentence that dwelt fearfully upon the mechanic's lips.

"Oh, I must draw a prize!" he said to himself. "I must make up what I have lost. Let me once do that, and I'll buy no more tickets."

Another \$20 was taken from the little bank, another ticket was bought, an-

other blank was drawn. At the end of three months the little bank was empty, and James Lanning had the last ticket in his pocket. Ah, how earnestly he prayed that that last ticket might draw a prize! He had become pale and careworn, and his wife—poor, confiding soul—thought he only repined because he had lost \$20. When she would try and cheer him, he would laugh, and try to make the matter light.

"James," said his wife to him one day—it was the day before that on which the lottery was to be drawn in which he had the sixth ticket—"Mr. Rowse has been here to-day after the semi-annual interest. I told him that you would see him to-morrow."

"Yes, I will," said James, in a faint voice. "Yes, to-morrow I shall see him."

Young Lanning thought of the lottery and of the prize. This was his sixth trial, and he felt sure that he should draw.

The morrow came, and when James Lanning returned to his home at night he was penniless! All his golden visions had faded away, and he was left in darkness and misery.

"James, have you paid Mr. Rowse his interest yet?" asked Hannah.

The young man leaned his head upon his hands and groaned aloud.

"For heaven's sake, James, what has happened?" cried the startled wife, springing to the side of her husband, and twining her arm about his neck.

The young man looked up with a wild, haggard expression. His lips were bloodless, and his features were all stricken with a death-hue.

"What is it? Oh, what?" murmured the wife.

"Go look in our box—our little bank!" groaned the poor man.

Hannah hastened away, and when she returned, she bore an empty box in her hand.

"Robbed!" she gasped, and she sank tremblingly down beside her husband's side.

"Yes, Hannah," whispered the husband, "I have robbed you."

The stricken wife gazed upon her husband with a vacant look, for at first she did not comprehend; but she remembered his behavior for weeks back; she remembered how he had murmured in his sleep of lotteries and tickets, of blanks and prizes, and gradually the truth broke in upon her.

"I have done it all, Hannah," hoarsely whispered the condemned man, when he saw that his wife had guessed the truth. "All, all has gone for lottery tickets. The demon tempter lured me; he held up glittering gold in his hand, but he gave me none of it. Oh, do not chide me! You know not what I have suffered—what hours of agony I have passed—and you know how cold my heart is now. Oh, my wife, would to God I had listened to you!"

"Ah!" calmly whispered the faithful wife, as she drew her hand across her husband's heated brow. "Mourn not for what is lost. I will not chide you. It is hard thus for you to lose your scanty earnings, but there might be many worse calamities than that. Courage, James; we will soon forget it."

"And Mr. Rowse will foreclose the mortgage. You will be homeless," murmured young Lanning in broken accents.

"No; I will see that all is safe in that quarter," added Hannah.

At that moment the baby awoke, and the gentle mother was called to care for it. On the next day, at noon, Hannah Lanning gave her husband a receipt for \$15 from Mr. Rowse.

"Here," said she, "interest is paid. Now let us forget all that has passed, and commence again."

"But how—what has paid this?" asked James, gazing first upon the receipt and then upon his wife.

"Never mind."

"Ah, but I must mind. Tell me, Hannah."

"Well, I have sold my gold watch."

"Sold it?"

"But I can buy it back again. The man will not part with it, if I want it. But I don't want it, James, till we are able. Perhaps I shall never want it. You must not chide me, for never did I derive one iota of the pleasure from its possession that I now feel in the result of its disposal."

James Lanning clasped his wife to his bosom, and he murmured a prayer, and in that prayer there was a pledge.

Two years passed away, and during that time James Lanning lost not a single day from his work. He was as punctual as the sun, and the result was as sure.

It was late on Saturday evening

when he came home. After supper, he drew a paper from his pocket, and laid it upon the table.

"There, Hannah," said he, with a noble pride beamed in every feature, "there is my mortgage. I've paid it—every cent. This house is ours; it is our own house. I've bought it with dollars, every one of which has been honestly earned by the sweat of my brow. I am happy now."

Hannah Lanning saw that her husband had opened his arms, and she sat down upon his knee and laid her head upon his shoulder.

"Oh, blessed moment!" she murmured.

"Yes, it is a blessed moment," responded her husband. "Do you remember, Hannah, the hour of bitterness that we saw two years ago?"

The wife shuddered, but made no reply.

"Ah," continued the young man, "I have never forgotten that bitter lesson; and even now I tremble when I think how fatally I was deceived by the tempter that has lured so many thousands to destruction."

"But its horror is lost in this happy moment," said Hannah, looking up with a smile.

"Its terror may be lost," resumed James, "but its lesson must never be forgotten. Ah, the luring lottery ticket has a dark side—a side which few see until they feel it."

"Are not all its sides dark?" softly asked the wife. "If there is any bright ness about it, it is only the glare of the fatal ignis fatuus, which can only lead the wayward traveler into danger and disquiet."

"You are right, my dear wife. You were right at first. Ah," he continued, as he drew the faithful being more closely to his bosom, "if husbands would oftener obey the tender dictates of the loving wife, there would be far less misery in the world than there is now."—Waverley Magazine.

Are Americans Popular in England?

As a matter of fact, no English politician ever thinks of mentioning the United States in the speech without some complimentary adjective, and the British public, which has long ceased to be the most stolid public in Europe, and become instead, thanks to cheap reading, one of the most hysterical and sentimental, always cheers heartily any allusion to "our cousins beyond the sea," and agrees rapturously with the speaker that "blood is thicker than water." An American who tries to persuade himself that his country has a political foe in England had better stay in America if he wants to keep his faith whole. It would hardly survive a fortnight in England itself. Englishmen bear no grudges. They are as proud of Washington as Americans themselves; most of them are not even aware that there was such a thing as the War of 1812; while they quite cheerfully admit that all through the Civil War and the Alabama business they were in the wrong, and were rightly made to pay for it. In the visitors' room at the Reform Club on Pall Mall you will find over the mantelpiece a facsimile of the Declaration of Independence, and above it medallions of Washington, Lincoln and Grant. There is something rather fine in a people that can thus candidly publish and acknowledge two of the greatest blunders in their history. But the British have grown into a big habit of always exempting Americans from the ordinary divisions of nationality. Cecil Rhodes was far from being the only Englishman whose patriotism went beyond the empire, and included the race. The least imaginative Londoner feels himself and his country in a very special degree united to America. It is the nation of all others he would most like his own to be on friendly and even intimate terms with.—Sydney Brooks, in Harper's Weekly.

A Cat Doxology.

A gentleman who is heartily in sympathy with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his resolve not to tax cats, writes to tell us of a meeting held to protest against the proposal. At the conclusion of the proceedings those present joined in singing "Kittens Never Shall Be Slaves."—London News.

Ye Olden Mayor.

Mayors appear to have had their troubles two centuries ago. At Bielefeld, Germany, there is a tombstone with this inscription: "Here lies Johannes Burgrevier, who considered his election as burgomaster of this city the greatest misfortune of his life."

FURTHER INSTRUCTION.

He entered the department store
And asked that he be shown
The route to reach the clothing floor,
Then he would go alone.
The courteous floorwalker said:
"Three aisles across, then down
Four aisles, you then keep straight ahead—"
The man began to frown.

"You take the elevator then."
The floor man next observed;
"Get off the car at Number Ten."
(The man was quite unversed).
"Across four aisles, and then you turn
Six counters to your right;
Look to the left and you'll discern
A distant ruby light."

"Pass under that and then you're near
The clothing stock you wish—"
The man cried out: "I cannot hear!
You gabble like a fish.
I never heard such silly talk;
You're having sport with me.
Your jocular designs I'll balk—
I'll make complaint. You'll see!"

The courteous floorwalker bowed
And said: "Turn to the right,
Go down the aisle until the shroud
Department comes in sight;
From there just thirteen aisles you trace
Until you reach the points—
Beside them is a desk—the place
Where you may make complaints."
—W. D. Nesbit, in Life.



Trascible Old Gentleman (to cab driver)—"I say, cabby, we're not going to a funeral." Cabby (promptly)—"No, and we ain't going to no bloom'n' fire, either."—Illustrated Bits.

"I don't have to work for a living," said the shiftless individual. "Of course you don't," rejoined the busy man. "If you did it's a safe bet that you wouldn't be living."—Chicago Daily News.

"Is this a good climate?" "Yes," answered the mild and credulous man. "Everybody seems healthy just now. But I've noticed when the ball club is in town everybody working for me has sickness or funerals in the family."—Washington Star.

I wrote the girl a letter,
Oh, most un-lucky day!
Her lawyer has that letter;
It's marked "Exhibit A."
—Philadelphia Press.

Frog Hollow Citizen—"How is yer son doin' in th' city?" Bungtown Man—"Furst rate. He gits \$2 a day on the Steenth street line, and makes \$5 more a week as New York society correspondent of the Bungtown Bugle."—New York Weekly.

Hicks—"I understand the man who invented the fountain pen made a great fortune out of it?" Wicks (who has used one)—"Suppose he did? What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—Catholic Standard.

Ernie—"Yes, he plays the violin for her benefit every evening. He says that music is the food of love." Eva—"And does that impress her favorably?" Ernie—"No. She is afraid he will think it is the food of married life."—Chicago News.

Doctor—"I found the patient to be suffering from abrasion of the cuticle, tumefaction, ecchymosis, and extravasation in the integument and cellular tissue about the left orbit." Judge—"You mean he had a black eye?" Doctor—"Yes."—London Tit-Bits.

An actress who chummed with Clyde Fitch
Heard some terrible snoring, at which
She took off her hat
And found that a rat
Had fallen asleep at the switch!
—Milwaukee Sentinel.

"Here, young man," said the old lady, with fire in her eye, "I've brung back this thermometer ye sold me." "What's the matter with it?" demanded the clerk. "It ain't reliable. One time ye look at it it says one thing, and the next time it says another."—Philadelphia Ledger.

He—"After I am out of college, darling, I may have to wait a few months before I can make enough to support you." She—"It is so hard to wait." He (bravely)—"I know it. But, of course, you know the world doesn't know anything about me yet."—Brooklyn Life.

China and Manchuria.

A correspondent in the London Times says that the Chinese care nothing for the provinces of Manchuria. They form no part of the eighteen provinces which fill the Chinese conception of his native land, though they gave birth to the ruling dynasty. This indifference may be real and may account for the ease with which the Russians have overrun the country; yet Manchuria is worth fighting for.