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The Uses of Duff.

Everybody in the town of Warren shook their heads when you talked of the Seafords.

Warren was a little village on the side of a Pennsylvania mountain, peopled with the hardest, thriftiest sharp-tempered folks that ever drew their living from that unwilling limestone soil.

The Seafords never would get on. "They were hard-working, clever, pious folks enough; but they would never get on."

To "get on" was the end of life in Warren.

The truth was that the Seafords spent their money (and much that they could not spare) in helping everybody that needed help. The house was open to all their poor relations; half a dozen needy families came regularly for their supply of meat and vegetables; and even the stables were a hospital for the blind cats and lame dogs of the neighborhood; for old Isaac Seaford had taught his boys his own theory and practice.

Sometimes even his hospitable soul felt that they carried both to an extreme, as for instance, when Andrew, the youngest boy, brought home Duff, a deaf old negro, who had followed the business of town pauper for years, and had not found it profitable.

"What can we do with this poor creature, Andy?" cried his father, who was smoking a pipe with "Squire Morrow" on the porch, as Andy presented him triumphantly.

"Feed him, sir. Duff has been 'everybody's business' long enough; now I'll make him mine. Night starved, Duff, eh?" clapping the old man on the back, and shouting in his ear.

"Ya, ya, Mass' Andy," chuckled Duff.

"I'll make him a bed in the barn, or garret, or somewhere, sir, and it will only cost another potato in the pot," said Anna, cheerfully.

"That pot's not too full, now," muttered his father. "But 'He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.'"

"Oh, that's your idea of finance, eh?" said the Squire with a grin. "Now I put my money in bank stocks. It yields, at least six per cent; I doubt if your dividend comes in as regularly."

He shuffled off presently to report the last symptom of illness in the Seafords, who were expected to "get on" worse than ever, after that.

However, a blessing seemed to come upon the hospitable roof, with the poor, the blind, and orphans that it contained.

The Seafords were never able to dress fashionable; they did not buy new furniture when the rage for decoration fell upon the village. But there was always enough to eat, and cheerfulness in the over-full house, and when the boys went out, one by one, into the world, to seek their fortunes, a friendly hand was ready to lead them to pleasant places.

The Warren Bank, in the meanwhile had broken, and Squire Morrow lost all his savings, and was more discontented and soured than ever.

Poor Duff proved a dead weight on the Seaford household. He was a hearty, strong fellow, with no ailment but deafness. He did nothing but eat, sleep and lie in the sun.

Mrs. Seaford, by a series of eloquent dumb signs, would set before him the necessity of bringing up chips or a pail of water; but Duff would point pathetically to his ears, and stretch himself to dose on the cellar door, with the face of a martyr.

"That bread thrown on the waters is a tolerably moultly crust, Andy," his father used to say, jokingly.

"If you turn him off he'll starve!" Andy would answer. "Duff is a grateful old soul. He would do anything for me."

"Yes, I've seen him put your worms on the hook after you had dug for them."

In August, his father sent Andy up by the train to Millville on business.

Hating the car Andrew sat down by a man wrapped in a cloak, who had this day on the back

of the seat before him. Andy perceived that an unpleasant odor, mixed with that of whisky, came from the man. He was either drunk or asleep, for he soon dropped to one side and leaned against him heavily, and Andy, with his habitual good nature, could not bear to put him off.

The train at last rolled up to the station at Millville, and stopped. The passengers hurried out. The man made a feeble effort to rise, but sank back. Andy gave him his arm and helped him out.

"You're very kind," he said. "Now, most folks shy clear of me," turning a fiercely red face on the lad.

"What is it? What ails you?" "Small pox. But—"

But Andy was off like an arrow. He would have walked up to a cannon's mouth with less terror than he had touched that man.

He remained in Millville for about ten days. At the end of that time he began to sicken.

"You have taken a heavy cold, Andy. Queer freak this time of the year," people said, meeting him on the street. But he knew it was no cold.

"It is time I was going," thought poor Andy. "I'll not give this plague to anybody else, please God."

But where should he go? In Millville he could not stay, if he would. He would have been turned on to the street out of any hotel. There was no hospital.

He hired a horse. "I'll not go in the train to scatter it, nor can I stop in any house between here and home."

"Home?" "Why, where shall I go?" cried the poor boy aloud, stopping his horse in the middle of the road. If he went to old Dr. Scott he could probably find shelter for him somewhere, but he as certainly would tell his parents of his whereabouts.

"And mother shall not know—not if I die without seeing her!" said Andy, with a sob.

There was a ruined old house about three miles from Warren, quite out of sight of any road. Andy discovered it one day when napping with Duff. He would go there. He dismounted and turned his horse loose. It galloped homeward. Then he climbed the hill to the thick woods in which was the lonely house.

Andy intended to see the doctor, but after entering the house he became too faint, and for two days and nights he lay too ill to have energy to revive. Then he awoke from his half stupor, his senses coming slowly back to him. He was on a heap of straw. The broken roof let in the sunlight, and the shattered windows let in the fresh, damp wind. But it grew dark to the boy's eyes.

"This is death," he muttered. "He must die like a dog here, when they were all happy at home! Even yet, if he could creep to the roadside, so we passer-by—"

"No, I'll not carry the plague to them," said Andy, stoutly, and then cried out like a baby, "O, mother, mother!"

Old Duff had a habit, when he was not asleep, or too lazy, of occasionally prowling about the woods and lonely places in the vicinity of the village. It so happened that on this day, he was passing the old house in which Andy lay, and hearing a movement there and a voice, he first looked cautiously into the window, and notwithstanding the lad's wretched face, knew him by his voice and clothes.

"D'Lord by good to de child. Hyah an ole Duff!"

The old black face was close to his own. Andy threw up his arms with a cry of delight; then he hesitated.

"It's the small-pox, Duff."

Duff read what he said, as usual, by the emotion of his lips.

"Yah, small-pox. Un drefful bad, too," with a grave face.

"Aren't you afraid?"

"Orful afraid, Mass' Andy."

"Go away then," turning his face down.

"No, sah. If de Lord chucks old Duff under ground, it's kase he's got no better use for him. Ah! no much account, now. Now, less what's to be done. Duff was a fustrate nuss onct on a time."

Duff was a first rate nurse still. In an hour he brought back a bed, food, medicines, and a doctor who would keep his counsel. He mended the roof, the windows, by the help of the doctor got a cooking stove, made a fire, cooked, sat up all night, crowded as much work into every day as had sufficed him for years before.

"That is a most faithful, hard-working negro," said the doctor, one day, when weeks had passed, and Andy was sitting up for the first time. "If it had not been for me you would have died."

"I know it. When can we go home? When will it be safe, doctor?"

"In two more weeks. What does your mother think of your absence?"

rebrily alarmed, but now that he is gone they think that we have run away—to see the world."

Two weeks later the doctor's carriage stopped at the door of the old farm-house. Mrs. Seaford caught sight of Andy's wan, changed face, and came out trembling. She had actually grown gray and old in the last two months.

The doctor and Duff carried the boy up and put him in her arms. "Oh, my boy, my boy," she cried. "Why did you leave me so?"

"I was fighting death, mother," he said, trying to laugh. "But in was Duff that beat him, after all. He saved me for you. The bread cast upon the waters did come back to us."

AN ENGINEER'S ADVENTURE.

A letter from Honesdale, Pa., says: Aleck Forbes and Charley Hulsizer, of Port Jervis, are two well-known Erie railway engineers. They have lately returned from a two weeks' hunt in the wilderness of Canada, 150 miles north of St. Thomas.

"Last year Charley and I went to the same woods," Aleck said. "Then I got tired by a wild bear, and I thought that was worse than going down a bank at the rate of forty miles an hour. You see, some old fellow out there turned some hogs in the woods three or four years ago, and they went wild. I started one of 'em one day, and thought I'd have a little fun with him. I sent a bullet after him. He changed his course and made plump for me. I skinned up a beech tree, I thought the blamed animal'd go away when he found I was out of his reach. But he wasn't that kind of a hog. It was colder than Greenland, and about two o'clock in the afternoon, Charley and the rest of the party were scattered about in the woods, out of hearing. The bear—for he was a bear, and a big one at that—waited around that tree, sitting out froth as if he had chewed a barrel of shaving soap, and showing up a pair of tusks like a young rhinoceros. He tried to gnaw the tree down, and worked away for an hour with his teeth. I thought certain he intended to keep right on till he brought me down. But by and by he gave that plan up. The tree wasn't more than eight inches through, and I think the hog made a mistake in quitting, for there ain't any doubt but that he'd fetched it by early bed time. But he stopped gnawing."

"Then he went off tea or a dozen feet and sat down on his haunches. He grunted and frothed for at least ten minutes. Then a new idea seemed to strike him. He jumped back to the foot of the tree and commenced to shovel the dirt away from it with his snout, as if he had a contract to build a cellar. I saw what he was at in a minute. He was going to dig the tree up by the roots. 'Blame the hog!' I said. 'If one of the boys don't come along pretty soon I might as well have been born a beech-nut, for he's bound to have a meal on me if it's in the book.' Then I yelled, 'Shoey, there, shoey!' But that hog'd been too long in the woods to 'sbov wain a cent. Then I whistled for an imaginary dog, and called, 'Hy'er, Towser! Hy'er, Hy'er! Hy'er!' I remembered when I was a boy, and the hogs got in the garden, they always made for a hole in the fence when you whistled for the dog. But this old fellow only frothed the more, and snorted the louder and worked the faster."

"I was lame near frozen by the time it grew dark. The sun went down and the moon came up, and still that hog dug away at the root of that tree. I could see that he had a hole around it big enough to bury an ox in, and I hope to fly if I didn't think the tree began to totter. It got colder and colder, and the bear kept right on rooting. I began to wonder who they'd put on my engine in my place, and whether the hog would leave my bones so the boys might find 'em and take 'em home to my folks. Once, about eight o'clock, I thought I'd shin down the tree and try a race with the bear, as I might as well be killed in trying to get away as to die like a sheep in a pen. So I began to let myself quietly down. I had my hands on the lower branches with my legs hanging down the trunk, when the hog smelt a rat. He gave a snort that made the very tree shake and raised up on his hind feet to meet me half way. I was back to within two feet of the top of the tree in less time than it would take a red squirrel to jump a rail fence."

"It's no use," I said. "Unless some of the boys come along inside of an hour, I'm a goner." About ten minutes after that the hog suddenly stopped digging. He seemed to listen for a minute; then, with a hsting of most unearthly snorts, he started on a dead run off toward Wolf swamp."

"What's up," I said. "In less than five seconds I knew what was up. Out of the brush to the right came, tearing and growling, one of the biggest bears I ever saw. He

never topped sbut let himself out the best he knew how after the bear. Pork is one of the choicest delicacies in the provender of a bear. The hog had considerable start of the bear, but at the rate the bear was going, I saw him by the light of the moon disappear over the brow of the ridge, I think he must have come up with the hog and had his coveted lunch. I didn't wait for any news from the seat of war, but got out of that tree about as lively as I had got into it, picked up my gun and made for camp. I got in about twelve o'clock. The boys had been out looking for me, and had given me up for lost. They felt good when I showed up."

Killed by his Performing Bear.

Felix Bernicki, who appeared in this borough and the various towns and cities in this State some time ago with a black bear which he exhibited on the street, performed with him once too often. Recently Bernicki appeared at Weldon, North Carolina, and there gave exhibitions. His receipts were larger than usual and in consequence he visited the sample room and became heavily drunken. In this condition he grew reckless, of course, and told the bystanders he would show them something they had never seen before. He removed Bruin's muzzle and in a moment his pet was bugging him and had his teeth in his throat. The crowd thought it was a part of the performance and only realized the truth when it was too late. Presently Bernicki fell, the blood streaming from his throat from which Bruin had chewed a large piece, and in a few moments was dead. The struggle of the man with the bloody monster is said to have been terrible. The bear was shot and Bernicki was buried in the town cemetery.

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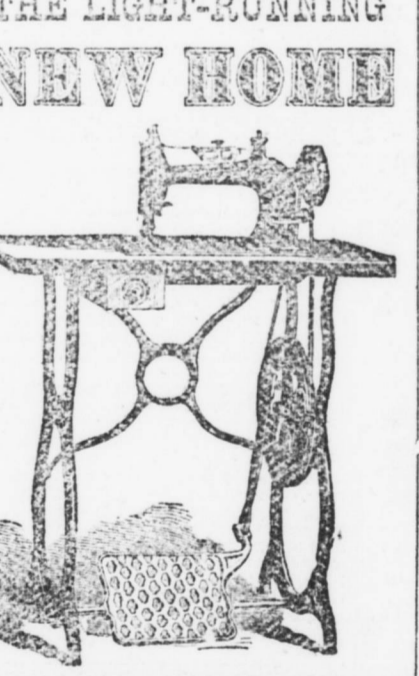
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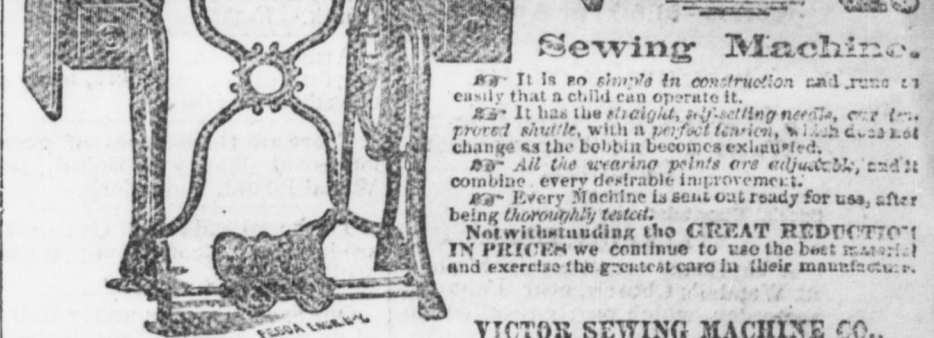
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