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WHAT MATTER.

What matter, friend, though you and I

May sow, and others gather?

We build, and others occupy.

Each laboring for the other.

What though we toil from sun to sun,

And men forget to flatter

The noblest work our hands have done—

If God approve, what matter?

What matter though we sow in tears,

And crops fall on the reaping;

What though the fruit of patient years

Fast perishes in our keeping;

Upon our hoarded treasures, floods

Arise and tempests gather—

If faith beholds beyond the clouds

A clearer sky, what matter?

What matter though our castle fall,

And disappear while building;

Though strange handwiring on the wall

Fame out amid the hiding;

Though every idol of the heart

The hand of death may shatter;

Though horses decay and friends depart—

If heaven be ours, what matter?

Mr. Russet at Saratoga.

When the doctors recommended six weeks

at Saratoga to Reuben Russet, they possibly

didn't think of Pennie Joyce. Doctors

are apt to be men of one idea. Mr. Rus-

set's digestive apparatus was certainly out

of order, but little Miss Joyce's heart—that

was quite another thing.

Mr. Russet was a young theological student,

with pale brown hair, an intellectual

face, and a slight stoop in the shoulders.

Pennie Joyce was a farmer's rosy-cheeked

daughter, the eldest of a large family of

children, and one of those thrifty girls who

understand the whole theory and practice

of housekeeping from Alpha to Omega. To

become a minister's wife was a visible

promotion to her, and she exulted in it, in

her quiet way. But to be separated from

him for six whole weeks—that was a trial.

"The time will soon pass, my love,"

said Reuben, in the slightly patronizing

manner which he affected toward Pennie.

"Yes, I know it will dear," said Pennie,

valiantly trying to smile.

"And I shall write every day."

"That will be so good of you!" said Pen-

nie.

"And really, you know, Pennie, a man

whose mission is to reach the soul ought to

have a little knowledge of human nature."

"Yes, of course," assented the girl.

"And where can one obtain it so well as

at one of these great human hives where

the fashionable world congregates?"

"To be sure," said Pennie.

"I only wish you were going," he

added, affectionately.

"Of course that is out of the question,"

said she.

Farmer Joyce shook his head when he

heard the dictum of the medical man.

"Saratoga, indeed!" said he. "I don't

believe Saratoga is a bit better than our

spring down by the Maple grove. I'd want

to see Reuben Russet'd be well enough if he'd

go out and weed onions half an hour every

morning, and besides, I've heard there's a

lot of temptation at a place like Saratoga."

"I dare say," said Pennie, with mild

superiority, "for some people. But Reuben

is above that sort of thing."

"Humph!" said Farmer Joyce. "I ain't

so sure of that."

"Father how can you!" cried the indignat-

ed girl, bristling like a hen-cannary.

"Human nature is human nature, whether

its at Saratoga or any other place," stoutly

maintained the farmer.

Mr. Russet went to Saratoga and took

rooms at a fashionable boarding-house,

near the Hathorn spring. He walked up and

down the elm-shaded paths with two little

devotional books, of a morning, listened to

the band, and studied out telling sentences

for possible sermons in the afternoon, and

edged himself modestly into the glittering

ball-rooms of the monster hotels at night,

when the German was in full career.

"Merely to study my fellow-creatures!"

said Mr. Russet, as he adjusted his eye-

glasses.

"Such a delightful study!" said Miss

Gushington Gordon, who blazed with

jewels, and wore long-trained skirts, such

as Mr. Russet never had beheld at Rasp-

berry Vale.

Miss Gushington Gordon had the best

room at the house, the largest wardrobe,

and the most brilliant necklaces. Rumor

called her a great heiress, and Mr. Russet

found her very agreeable.

She had big, purple-blue eyes, hair of

the real Roman gold, a complexion which

was undeniably a work of art, and a soft,

languid voice, whose syllables dropped

from her lips like bubbles of silver.

"Life is such a vacuum!" said Miss Gus-

hington Gordon.

"My experience exactly?" said the young

theological student, who was fast losing

his head.

"At least," corrected the beauty, "I

have always found it so until now. But

your grand grasp of subjects, your read-

ing of the book of existence has somehow

awakened me to a new sense of things!"

Mr. Russet grew red to the very roots of

his hair, with a pleasurable tingling.

"I am but too proud," he stammered, "if

I have succeeded in unraveling any prob-

lem which—"

"Oh!" cried Miss Gushington Gordon,

"have I said too much? Pray, pray for-

give my impulsive! I am the creature

of emotion?"

She put out a little, sparkling hand with

beckoning frankness to the spectacled

student. Mr. Russet gave it a gentle pres-

sure, and forgot to drop it again.

"That was the first day that he omitted

to write to little Penelope Joyce, at the

farmhouse in Raspberry Vale.

"She won't be so foolish as to expect a

letter every mail," he said, a little im-

patiently.

At the end of six weeks he came home.

Pennie met him at the railroad, with her

dimpled lips put up for a kiss.

"I may as well tell you, at once, Pen-

nie—" he began.

But just then Deacon Oberne came up,

with that vise-like hand-grip of his, and

there was no chance to say more until they

parted at the cross-roads, by the mill.

"Perhaps it is just as well," said the

theological student, to himself, "I'll write to

her that I have changed my mind, and en-

gaged myself to Antoinette Gushington

Gordon. I ought to have written from

Saratoga, but one dreads to send such a

letter."

Mr. Russet felt as if he had behaved

very much like a scoundrel, now that he

was removed from the magnetic influence

of the heiress and her jewels.

"But of course," he pleaded before the

tribunal of his own conscience, "a man de-

voted to my profession should select the

sphere in which he can do the most good.

And with Antoinette's wealth and position,

I am morally certain of rapid advance in

the world.

But somehow, the letter would not get

itself written. To do a contemptible ac-

tion, is one thing, to confess it boldly to

one's fellow creatures, is another.

Two or three days passed, and still Reu-

ben Russet could not bring himself to tell

Pennie Joyce about the Saratoga heiress,

with the purple-blue eyes and the low,

silver-syllabled voice.

Pennie watched him, wistfully.

"He is changed," she admitted to her-

self, "but of course I could hardly expect

him always to be just the same. Only—

only—"

And the tears came into Pennie's eyes,

she scarcely knew why, and she blamed

herself for being "such a foolish little goose."

But one sultry summer evening, Mr.

Russet did force himself to write the letter

—a vague, mysterious sort of missive, con-

taining only one plain fact—that he was

engaged to Miss Gushington Gordon.

And, as he wrote it, he felt more and

more what a fatal mistake he had made in

giving up Pennie Joyce's true, womanly

heart for the artificial smiles of the Sara-

toga belle.

As he folded and sealed it, the land-

lady's little boy handed in the evening

mail—two papers and a letter.

A letter from the Ernest Valdez, whose

acquaintance he had made at Saratoga—

an idle, good-humored young fellow, with

no harm in him, and a deal of latent

good.

Mr. Valdez wrote:

"We are progressing much the same as

ever. We drink the waters, we criticize

the music, we watch for the incoming

trains. By the way, you surely haven't

forgotten that tall girl at your house, with

the curious many-colored eyes and the

magnificently-dyed hair? Miss Gushington

Gordon, you know? Well she has turned

out a humbug—an imposition—a stupen-

dous fraud. It seems she is only a lady's

maid, the whole time, and she has been