

Beaver & Gephart

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The Millheim Journal

R. A. BUMILLER, Editor.

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Fortune's Frowns and Smiles.

Mrs. Briggs had made a mistake. She owned as much, herself. And a mistake must be very patent, indeed, before Mrs. Briggs would own to it. For she was one of those high-nosed, domineering females who pretend to an almost superhuman foresight, and believe that they can read character as if it were an open book.

"I never was so disappointed in a girl in my life," said Mrs. Briggs. "I thought she had some grit about her. But, there! I might as well have an old dish-rag in my kitchen as Meta Milton!" Meta herself, if the truth were to be told, was equally disillusionized. She had fancied that life in the country was all roses, new-mown hay and nightingales; and when it came to getting up before daybreak, churning by the half-hour in a blue-mold smelling cellar, scrubbing kitchen floors and baking hot-cakes for a tableful of shirt-sleeved farm hands, she was completely taken aback.

There were no lanes wherein to linger at dusk (Mr. Briggs was a great deal too careful of his land to let any part of it run to waste), no picturesque old well-sweeps or ivy-clad ruins; Cabbages grew in rows; onion patches flung their perfume on the air, and directly in front of the main door there was a field of monster tobacco leaves.

"And of you've got any time to spare," said Mrs. Briggs, "you'd better lay it out in pickin' them plaguy big worms off the terbacker, instead o' cuttin' round the country arter wild-flowers!" Meta had been a shop-girl in a Bridgport store before she came to her Cousin Briggs. Her health had failed; the doctor had advised country air, new milk and change of scene. Mrs. Briggs, on being written to, had unwillingly consented that Meta should spend the summer there.

"She must be a poor creature, indeed, if she can't earn her board and a little more into the bargain," said Mrs. Briggs, who was one of those griping, grinding taskmistresses who think of trade and profit alone. But Meta had not passed triumphantly through the ordeal. Perhaps she had not fully regained her strength. Perhaps she had become discouraged by the endless treadmill of work which Mrs. Briggs provided for her.

She was a pale, pretty girl, with fair hair, large, sorrowful blue eyes, and a color that came and went with flickering brilliancy. "And it's my opinion," said Mrs. Briggs, who was in the habit of flying around the house with her head tied up in a cotton pocket-handkerchief, "that she spends a deal too much time a-trin' up and prinkin' before the glass—white lace at her neck every day and a ribbon bow and white aprons of an afternoon. Checked gingham is good enough for me, and it ought to be for her."

At the end of the first month, Mrs. Briggs told Meta, with engaging frankness, that she had not proved equal to the emergency. "I guess we don't want you here no more," said Mrs. Briggs. "You ain't got no more strength than a rabbit, and, anyway, there ain't no calculation about you. You may do very well as a store-girl, but you won't never earn your bread at general housework."

Meta sighed. "But what am I to do?" said she. "Where am I to go?" "That's your affair," said Mrs. Briggs. And then she went to take her bread out of the oven. John Perkins, the nephew of the old deacon who lived in the brick house on the hill, and had more money than the best arithmetician in Yellow Plains could count, came the next day to drive Meta and her poor little trunk to the stage-station.

John had seen Meta at church. He had stood beside her more than once at singing school; and one night, when the cattle were obstreperous, he had come to the rescue, and helped Meta drive them home. So, when Farmer Briggs sent over word that his horse was lame, and asked for the loan of Deacon Perkins' roan cob to carry Meta Milton to the station, John himself had volunteered to act as charioter. "Going away, hey?" said John, when they had ridde: a short distance in silence. "Yes," said Meta, sadly, "I am going away."

And he chewed a straw in silence for some time before he asked, with some abruptness: "And where are you bound for?" "I don't know," said Meta. "I can't go back to the store because my place is filled up; and it's very hard to get work anywhere at this time of the year. The doctor said I ought to stay a year at least in the country; but Mrs. Briggs has got another girl and—"

Here John Perkins suddenly arrested the course of the roan-cob, and began turning him scientifically around. "Dear dear!" said Meta, "have we got into the wrong road?" "No," said John Perkins. "Not as I know of. But if the doctor said you ought to stay a year, then a year you stay."

"But where?" said Meta. "With us!" said John Perkins. "I've took a notion to you, Meta. The first time I ever set eyes on you, I said to myself, 'Here's the gal for me!' And if you'll marry me, Meta, I'll do my best to take care of you and be a good husband to you."

"Marry you!" repeated Meta, and she looked timidly into John Perkins' honest gray eyes, and then she added: "Yes, Mr. Perkins, I will!" "Shall we go right to the parson's?" said John. "I—suppose so," said Meta. "It's the best way," said John. "If I begin a job, I generally like to go on with it."

So they were married. Meta went back to Mr. Briggs' house, until her young husband could break the news to his uncle. Mrs. Briggs received the bride with some faint semblance of welcome. "John Perkins is a likely fellow," said she, "and the deacon is the richest man in Yellow Plains. I will allow, Meta, that you haven't done badly for yourself. If you'd told me what you was calculatin' for—"

"But I was not calculating," said Meta, indignantly. "I never thought of such a thing, until John asked me to be his wife." "That'll do to tell," said Mrs. Briggs with a dry chuckle. Meanwhile, John went bravely to his uncle.

"Uncle," said he, "I guess you'll have to spare me a bigger room arter this. Deacon Perkins, a dried-up, withered old man, with a strong likeness to the chimpanzee tribe, looked up from his account-book with a snarl, which revealed a set of ragged, yellow teeth. "A bigger room?" said he. "What for?"

"There's at least a dozen rooms in the house you don't use," said John, "and they'd be all the better for being occupied; and besides"—as if this was a mere incidental fact—"I've been getting married!" The deacon dropped his spectacle case, and as John picked it up and handed it back to him, he added: "To Meta Milton?"

The deacon's little eyes glittered like very small gas-lamps, seen through a November fog. "You've married her, have you?" said he. "Yes, sir," said John. "Well then," said the deacon, "you can take her somewhere else and support her, for I'll never see nor speak to either one of you again as long as I live!" "Do you really mean it, uncle?" said John. "Am I in the habit of joking?" said Mr. Perkins, with an ugly grin, that made him more chimpanzee-like than ever. "If you're so very independent, you can go and hang out your flag of freedom at your leisure!"

This was rather hard on John, who had always been taught to regard himself as his uncle's adopted child. But he was too proud to sue for a rich man's favor. "Just as you please, sir," said he. "But won't you let me bring Meta to see you?" "No, I won't!" said the deacon. "Oh, John, I have ruined you!" said Meta, when he came back to tell the tale.

"Ruined me, puss?" said he cheerfully. "Not a bit of it! You've been the making of me. It ain't good for nobody to hang on the coat-skirts of a rich man. I'm more independent now than I have been for ten years. If Mrs. Briggs will let us stay here for a few days—"

"I couldn't, possibly!" said Mrs. Briggs, freezing visibly. "If your good pious uncle discountenances you, it ain't for me to set myself up ag'in his judgement." "Very well," said John; "Farmer Drake wants a hand to help clear up the maple hills this winter—I'll engage with him. My Meta shall have a good home somewhere!"

When Mrs. Briggs heard that John Perkins had rented the little one-story cabin by the railroad, and furnished it for his bride, she shook her head forebodingly. "If Meta can put up with a hole like that, she ain't no proper pride," said she.

But Meta was as happy as a lark. It was a humble home, but it was her own. And John came home to it every night, with a face as cheerful as the dawn. "I wish it was a palace, puss, for your sake," said he. "I couldn't be happier, John, if it was," Meta brightly answered.

"And you don't mind your Cousin Briggs passing you in the street, with out speaking to you?" "Not in the least, if you don't mind Deacon Perkins returning your letters unopened." "He is an ill-tempered old crab," said John, with a hearty laugh. "And she," merrily retorted Meta, "is a venomous old gossip."

While the public opinion of Yellow Plains unanimously condemned Mr. and Mrs. Perkins to the poor-house in the course of a brief time. "He hasn't a cent of capital," said one neighbor. "And she ain't no management and never had," said another. "Buys baker's bread, and makes her pie-crust with butter instead o' drippin'," said Mrs. Briggs. "Did any one ever hear of such shiftlessness? I, for one, wash my hands of them."

Until, one day, Deacon Perkins died sittin' in his chair, with his spectacles on his nose. "We'll go to the funeral, Meta," said John to his wife. "Of course he has left all his money to the Gatawooshee Indian Mission, as he always said he would. But he was my uncle, after all."

"Very well," said Meta. "We'll go." All the neighborhood was there, of course. The richest man in Yellow Plains did not depart this life every day. But every one looked coldly upon the young couple as they entered, and Mrs. Briggs studiously evaded them. When the burial ceremonies were over, Mr. Briggs sidled up to the lawyer, a fat man, with a shining bald head and a white moustache. "It's about the mortgage, Squire Coyte," said he. "That one that Deacon Perkins had on our farm. I do hope the Gatawooshee Indians won't be particular about takin' it up jest yet, because times is hard, and I ain't no ways prepared. The interest is a little behind to be sure, but—"

"What have the Gatawooshee Indians got to do with it?" said the squire, crisply. "Why, they're the heirs, folks tell me," said Mr. Briggs, uneasily twirling his thumbs. "Not at all," said Mr. Coyte. "The Gatawooshee Indian will was destroyed long ago; and Mr. Perkins never made another. The heir to all the property is the next of kin, his nephew, John Perkins."

Public opinion changed as quickly as only public opinion can do, when this piece of news became bruited abroad. Every body discovered all of a sudden that they had always sympathized with the dear young couple—that John Perkins was a noble fellow, and his wife Meta one of the salt of the earth.

And Mrs. Briggs came humbly to the redbrick mansion on the hill to see Meta, and beg her to intercede with her husband in their behalf. "About the mortgage," said she, "that Deacon Perkins had on our farm. It's over-due, and Briggs hasn't been as regular with the interest as I could have wished; but I do hope, Meta, he won't be hard with us!"

It was a bitter pill for Mrs. Briggs to swallow, but Meta did not exalt over her fallen foe. "Of course he will not be hard with you, Cousin Briggs," said she, kindly. "Are we not relations? And now you must sit down and have a cup of tea with us, and John will send the box-wagon down for your husband to come and spend the evening."

The tears came into Mrs. Briggs' eyes. "I do feel sort o' faint," said she. "I never slept none last night, thinkin' what would become of us if the old home was took away. But I'm all right now, Meta, thanks to you!"

And she said, when she got home to her friends: "If ever coals of fire was heaped on a human head, Meta Perkins heaped 'em on mine this day." "She's a good gal," said Farmer Briggs—"a good gal!"

The love and affection that exists between brothers frequently begins to exist when they are mere children. "Will Tommy always be younger than I am?" asked a little Texas boy of his mother. "Yes, sonny." "That's bully. I'll always be able to lick him and take his things away from him as long as he lives."—Siftings.

Preacher Davies and King George. When president of Princetown college, Samuel Davies visited England for the purpose of obtaining donations for the institution, the king (George II) had a curiosity to hear a preacher from the wilds of America. He accordingly attended, and was so much struck with his commanding eloquence that he expressed his astonishment loud enough to be heard half way over the house, in such terms as these: "He's a wonderful man! Why, he beats my bishop!" etc. Davies observing that the king was attracting more attention than himself, paused, and, looking his majesty in the face, gave him, in an emphatic tone, the following beautiful rebuke: "When the lion roareth, let the beasts of the forest tremble; and when the Lord speaketh, let the kings of the earth keep silent." The king instantly shrank back in his seat, like a school-boy who had been rapped on the head by his master, and remained quiet during the remainder of the sermon. The next day the monarch sent for him, and gave him fifty guineas for the institution over which he presided, observing at the same time to his courtiers: "He is an honest man—an honest man."

HOW GREELY WAS FOUND.

The story of the relief expedition sent out by the United States in search of Lieutenant Greely and his party, ice-immersed in the Arctic regions, is full of interest. Particularly pathetic is this account of how a search party from the relief vessels came across the seven survivors. At last the boat arrived at the site of the wreck-cache, and the shore was eagerly scanned, but nothing could be seen. Rounding the next point, the cutter opened out the cove beyond. There on the top of a little ridge, fifty or sixty yards above the ice-foot, was plainly outlined the figure of a man. Instantly the coxswain caught up the boat hook and waved his flag. The man on the ridge had seen them, for he stopped, picked up the signal flag from the rock, and waved it in reply. Then he was seen coming slowly and cautiously down the steep rocky slope. Twice he fell down before he reached the foot. As he approached, still walking feebly and with difficulty, Colwell hailed him from the bow of the boat: "Who all are there left?"

"Seven left." As the cutter struck the ice, Colwell jumped off and went up to him. He was a ghastly sight. His cheeks were hollow, his eyes wild, his hair and beard long and matted. His army blouse, covering several thicknesses of shirts and jackets, was ragged and dirty. He wore a little fur cap and rough moccasins of untanned leather tied around the legs. As he spoke, his utterance was thick and mumbling, and in his agitation his jaws worked in convulsive twitches. As the two met, the man, with a sudden impulse, took off his glove and shook Colwell's hand.

"Where are they?" asked Colwell briefly. "In the tent," said the man, pointing over his shoulder, "over the hill—the tent is down." "Is Mr. Greely alive?" "Yes, Greely's alive." "Any other officers?" "No." Then he repeated absently, "The tent is down." "Who are you?" "Long."

Before this colloquy was over, Lowe and Norman had started up the hill. Hastily filling his pockets with bread, and taking the two cans of pemmican, Colwell told the coxswain to take Long into the cutter, and started after the others with Ash. Reaching the crest of the ridge, and looking southward, they saw spread out before them a desolate expanse of rocky ground, sloping gradually from a ridge on the east to the ice-covered shore, which at the west made in and formed a cove. Back of the level space was a range of hills rising up 800 feet, with a precipitous face, broken in two by a gorge, through which the wind was blowing furiously. On a little elevation directly in front was the tent. Hurrying across the interlying hollow, Colwell came up with Lowe and Norman, just as they were greeting a soldierly looking man who had just come out from the tent.

As Colwell approached, Norman was saying to the man: "There's the lieutenant." And he added to Colwell: "This is Sergeant Brainard." Brainard immediately drew himself up to the position of a soldier, and was about to salute, when Colwell took his hand. At this moment there was a confused murmur within the tent, and a voice said: "Who's there?"

Norman answered: "It is Norman—Norman who was in the Proteus." This was followed by cries of "Oh, it's Norman!" and a sound like a feeble cheer. Meanwhile one of the relief party, who in his agitation and excitement was crying like a child, was down on his hands and knees trying to roll away the stones that held down the flapping tent cloth. The tent was a 'tepkik' or wigwam tent, with a fly attached. The fly with its posts and ridge-pole had been wrecked by the gale which had been blowing for thirty-six hours, and the pole of the tepkik was toppling over, and only kept in place by the guy ropes. There was no entrance except under the flap opening, which was held down by stones. Colwell called for a knife, cut a slit in the tent cover and looked in.

It was a sight of horror. On one side, close to the opening, with his head toward the outside, lay what was apparently a dead man. His jaw had dropped, his eyes were open, but fixed and glassy, his limbs were motionless. On the opposite side was a poor fellow, alive to be sure, but without hands or feet, and with a spoon tied to the stump of his right arm. Two others, seated on the ground in the middle, had just got down a rubber bottle that hung on the tent pole, and were pouring from it into a tin can. Directly opposite, on his hands and knees, was a dark man with a long matted beard, in a dirty and tattered dressing gown with a little red skull cap on his head, and brilliant,

Grant and the Kentucky Ladies.

The Kentucky women are as enthusiastic about horses as the men. They unhesitatingly place the horses before themselves as the great attractions of the state. I remember hearing a conversation between General Grant and a Kentucky girl at the St. Louis Merchants' Exchange in 1875, when President Grant was visiting the St. Louis fair. A number of ladies were introduced to the President, whereupon he spoke in very high terms of St. Louis, the fair, &c. "You are mistaken, Mr. President—we are not from St. Louis," laughingly said one of the girls, "we are from Kentucky, a very fine state, you know, which possesses three things all men of taste must appreciate." Smilingly, the President asked her what they were. She answered: "We have the fastest horses, the prettiest women and the finest whiskey in the world." The President replied: "Your horses are certainly justly renowned; I have some on my farm near here; yourself and party prove the correctness of your second observation, but whiskey is one of the things that require age, and your men consume it so fast that it rarely has a fair chance to become good." The girls thought that if General Grant could not make a long speech he was apt at repartee.

They tell a story of Congressman Finerty's experience at a small town in the south of Illinois, where he had been invited to speak "for the cause." When the audience was assembled, the Congressman was to be introduced by a prominent resident, a gentleman in an archaic tail coat, who had but imperfectly caught the name of the orator and was a little deaf. "Ladies and gentlemen," said the chairman, hoarsely, "I will now have the honor of introducing to you, and you will have the pleasure of listening to the talented Irish orator whose name is so familiar to the Irishmen of the West—Misther Einnegan!"

Here the chairman felt a pull at his capacious coat-tail, and heard an awful voice whisper, "Finerty! Not Finnegun—Finerty!" "Eh? What's that? Oh, yes! Ye see, I forgot! Ladies and gentlemen I made a mistake. The talented young orator who is about to address us, and with whose name we are all familiar is Misther Flaherty!"

Once again the warning pull at his coat-tail, and a voice like a cyclone, struggling to keep itself under control, hissed, "Finerty! Finerty!" The chairman turned as many colors as a school of dying dolphins, while great drops of perspiration bedewed his forehead. "Ladies and gentlemen, ye will now have the pleasure of listening to the brilliant young orator, whose name is a household word among us—Misther Fitzjarrid!"

And he sat down, leaving the brilliant young orator to address an audience to which he had been introduced by almost every name but his own.

She Had Found Him. A pretty young mamma, with a little girl by her side nearly as pretty as herself, was being entertained by a male stranger, who had struck up an acquaintance through the usual and always convenient mediumship of the little girl. The stranger did all the talking. He was one of those men who think they know everything, but only rarely get a good chance to tell it. The lady answered only in monosyllables. The little girl listened patiently and demurely for a time, and then began toidget around in her seat. Finally, as the stranger stopped for breath, she said: "Mamma, you've found one, ain't you?"

"What, my dear?" "Why, don't you remember what you told papa when he said you'd be lonesome on the cars? You said you'd find some bore to talk you to sleep."

Mamma looked out of the window and the stranger suddenly thought he had better go into the smoking car to find his friend.

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