Beaver & Gephart

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LED BY A CHILD.

'The house is secured to us. The dear old Firs, where we were born and bred, is ours. Ain't you glad, Hilda?' cried Rachel Dehart, as she came into her sister's room and threw off her bonnet and shawl.

Hilda, a drawing pencil in her slim, white fingers, lifted her cool, perfect face.

'As I can't dress myself in worm eaten shingles, dine off of old doors, or warm myself with creaking shutters, I am not particularly enthusiastic,' she syllabled, icily.

'Oh, well!' responded Rachel, somewhat absently.

She busied herself about the wide, low room, spread up the bed, dusted a shelf, watered a pot of geraniums, and at last came and sat down on a low seat at Hilda's feet.

'I don't suppose you will like it, Hilda,' clasping her hands across her sister's knees; 'but I know it's so hard for you, the poverty and deprivations——'

'But what?' interrupted Hilda, briefly.

'We have the house, and I have already made arrangements for a boarding school.'

'What!' in astonishment.

'I have engaged to take five little girls to board and teach.'

Hilda sank back in her chair, her ivory brow contracted, her royal purple eyes dark and angry.

'Children to board and teach here?'

'I will tell you, Hilda. I met Mrs. Oliver in the city, and she has lost her governess—the one she has had so long—and she spoke of her wish to send the children into the country for the summer, and asked me where would be a good place. They are too young to go the round of the watering-places with her—she is very gay and fashionable, you know, and the best of mothers, perhaps- but she seemed to wish to provide well for the girls, and wanted them taken care of and taught. To tell the truth, I had thought of this before, and I—I offered to take them. Mrs. Oliver was delighted.

''If you really mean to keep a school,' said she, 'I will give you a note to Mrs. Eastman. She is obliged to go to Europe, and does not know what to do with Lilias Arnold. Her mother is dead and her father is down South, you know.'

'It almost made me dizzy, but I took the note and went up into that palatial place; and Mrs Eastman said that if Mrs. Oliver would trust me with her girls, I might have her niece—at least, till her father came home.'

'Do you mean Lionel Arnold?' exclaimed Hilda.

'I don't know. I believe so. I think it very likely,' stammered Rachel, delighted to see the frown chased from Hilda's brow by a look of pleasure.

The latter smiled, blushed, and bent over her drawing.

'You know we must do something,' Rachel went on; 'and if you would teach what music and drawing is needed, I would do all the rest.'

'Perhaps I will,' replied Hilda, evidently absorbed in her own thoughts.

'You needn't be troubled any more than that, dear, and I dare say we shall get along beautifully. I am very fond of children, you know.'

Hilda took no heed. She had gone to the mirror, and stood arranging the dark curls about her ivory forehead; then she waltzed lightly from the room.

'She didn't take it very hard, and I am so glad!' sighed Rachel, still on the low seat, her chin in her hands and her elbows on her knees.

Why the matter had been so difficult to explain to the younger sister was a conundrum to be solved only by those who had known these girls all their life, and knew that Hilda was a petted, beautiful tyrant, while plain, sweet Rachel had ever been her slave.

During the last year they had become orphans. Their father had died insolvent, and only the efforts of the kindly lawyer who had settled the estate secured to them the old house and beautiful garden where they had always lived.

Rachel had thought her heart would break if she lost that. But Hilda had secretly determined that, if secured, the Firs should be sold, while she embraced a gayer life.

But matters had turned out so differently. Here was the daughter of Lionel Arnold coming under their roof!

Very well she remembered that splendid blonde face and elegant figure, though she had only danced with him once at Mrs. Oliver's in palmier days.

He was the most distinguished man she had ever met, and the wealthiest.

How delightful he was! And now to meet him as—as—well, as the pretty young friend and teacher of his only daughter. (Hilda resolved to become popular at once with Lilias Arnold.) Why, it would simply be one chance in a thousand!

So to Rachel's great relief and surprise, she entered somewhat into the latter's plans and arrangements for making the spacious old house pay for its privileges of wide, sunlighted rooms and broad-pathed garden—the loveliest of play-grounds.

But Hilda did not fatigue herself. It was one of that young lady's principles to always keep herself fresh and comfortable.

But Rachel could not spare herself, and the prospect looked fatiguing enough. To establish a schoolroom and rearrange the chambers was a task, but to dress, feed, train and educate five children, from four to twelve years old, was an elaboration of industries which, once undertaken, she knew would admit of no rest.

She could afford but one girl, Nannie, a simple-minded but honest and strong creature, who had occasionally worked in the family; but all the responsibility and much of the toil was hers. But Rachel was practical, cheerful and hopeful, and could not afford to be discouraged.

The children came, and Hilda immediately singled out Lillas Arnold and showed her partiality.

She certainly was a beautiful child, of great sensibility, about eight years old, and Rachel's heart warmed to the sweet, frank face; but her attentions and kindness were more universally bestowed, and the most winning attentions showed the young strangers. Rachel must make happy all hearts near her.

* * * * *

With the exception of his sister, Mrs. Eastman, Lionel Arnold was the last of his family, and one would be tempted to exclaim, 'Ultimus regnum!'—the last of the kings—at first sight of him.

Of a singularly sweet and healthy nature, wealth and culture had added their favors, and the man could not help being what he was—a very superior one.

The loss of his wife—the love of his early youth—had added to his character the chastening touch of sorrow, and women universally, young and old, fell in love with Lionel Arnold—to their honor be it spoken; for if they loved him, he loved them with a general reverance and respect that went far to making this world purer and better.

Yet he was not a marrying man. His sister asserted that she did not believe Lionel would ever marry again, and he did not himself believe so.

But he returned from his Southern wanderings a little world-weary that spring. He was anxious to meet his little girl, whom he had parted from the previous autumn.

She was a very companionable girl, and he was very fond of her. Lilias, too, had a passion for her father. She literally worshipped him.

But, tenderly as Lionel Arnold thought of this child and her love, his heart felt lonely when he arrived in the city. His sister was not there to welcome him, and many changes had occurred which made the old place deserted.

He immediately sought Lilias. As the carriage rolled out to the old mansion, he recalled what his sister had written:

'Since I must go, I am glad to be spared all uneasiness regarding the disposition of Lilias. I have placed her with a very lovely young lady who has a select school just out of town. I have every confidence in her. She will take care of Lilias in the best sense of the word until you return. Miss Dehart is reduced in circumstances. Formerly you may have met her at Mrs. Oliver's, as Mr. Oliver was her father's administrator and an intimate friend of the family.'

Mr. Arnold did remember Hilda. The ivory perfection of her face had given him study for an idle hour.

He had scarcely given the girl credit for the ability she now showed. Was she really so intelligent and amiably? He thought he should like to meet her again.

And when Hilda brought Lilias into the parlor, he gave a start of delight She wore white: she looked like a princess. He thought of Clara Vere de Vere—

'Oh, your sweet eyes,
Your love replies!'

He was charmed—as what man, with his heart in the right place, would not be—to find so lovely a spirit in close contact with his beloved daughter.

Furthermore, he was grateful to find Lilias in such perfect health and happy spirits She was fast becoming a dainty little lady. He was proud of her, delighted with her. He could not but express his feelings to Miss Dehart.

'I am so glad you are pleased, Mr. Arnold. But I could not help taking special pains with Lilias—she is very near my heart.'

An ambiguous speech, which held Mr. Arnold's attention.

Hilda continued to hold Mr. Arnold's attention. His sister was absent, and home-like Firs were open to him.

Of course, he discovered that there was another Miss Dehart; but, though he was pleased with Rachel's mild countenance, he did not think much about her except as the relative of Hilda, and possibly his prospective sister-in-law. Yes, he had already begun to think of this possibility. Hilda, with her beauty and wiles, was ever before him. Was she not all a woman could be? Would he ever again meet so rare and sweet a character? Was it not wisdom to secure so lovely a companion, so sweetly wise an instructress, for his beloved Lilias?

The child did not remember her mother. She had died while she was an infant. Would she take kindly to the thought of a step-mother? He resolved to try her.

He had been walking in the garden of the Firs with her and Hilda. Finally, the latter was called indoors.

Arnold sat down upon a rustic bench, and took his little girl upon his lap.

'Lilias,' he said, 'papa is thinking of building a house and having a home for you. How would you like to go away from here?'

'I would go, papa, with you—I mean I would be willing, if I could take with me somebody that I love.

'Why do you love this somebody?' he asked, with a smile, quite willing to have Hilda's virtues recited by the little lips.

'Because when aunty left me here I expected to be so lonesome! But she was so good! She took me in her arms and let me cry upon her shoulder. She held me upon her lap all the evening, and did not tell me once that I was too big a girl to be a baby. At night she undressed me herself, and told me stories until I went to sleep. In the morning she brought me some lovely flowers and a cunning white kitty to cuddle. You know how I love kitties papa! And then she took me into the garden and showed me a little bed of crocuses and tulips that I might have all to myself. All day she kept me with her, and I did get over the homesickness—the dreadful lump in my throat, you know—though I had thought I never should.'

'My poor little girl!'

'I am never lonely now; she lets me tell her everything. Why, papa, it's just as if I had a mother!'

'Yes, dear,' said Arnold, much affected.

'Oh, papa, I wished you loved her, she is so good, so loving! And she can do everything. When Nannie is sick, she goes in the kitchen and makes the nice white bread. She cures my sore throat so quick! She shows me how to mend my dress, I tear in the rose-thorns, so nice you would never find the stitches. Such stories as she knows! and songs—children's pretty songs. When I study she makes it all easy for me—it sounds so plain when she tells how it is—you know I have learned fast, don't you, papa? And ah, she comforts all my troubles!' added the child, with a great sigh, thinking of her former struggles in arithmetic, and the proud Mrs. Eastman's impatience with her childish faults.

'Lilias,' said Arnold, gently putting the child off his lap, after a pause, 'papa must go now. But after I am gone you may go quietly to—her'—he faltered a little—'and say to her that I love her as dearly as you do, and ask her if she will come into the garden for an hour this evening.'

* * * * *

He was waiting, thoughtfully, under one of the graceful willows of the garden, when he lifted his eyes and saw Lilias leading Rachel toward him.

He was shocked. Not but that the womanly face and round figure were pleasing enough, but he had anticipated all Hilda's beauty and grace, and Rachel's grave simplicity for the moment chilled his ardor. But be it to his credit said that no time was lost in taking both Rachel's little cold, trembling hands.

'Mr. Arnold,' she said, 'there is some mistake; but Lilias would lead me here. My sister—'

'I expected to see Hilda—yes,' said Arnold, truthfully; 'but tell me, Lilias, is this the dear friend you have found? Are these the kind hands that have guided and helped you? Is this the face that seems to you as a mother's?'

'Yes, papa! yes, yes!' cried Lilias, both her arms about Rachel. 'Oh, love her!'

'I more than love her!' said Arnold. 'Rachel, I cannot tell you how beautiful you are to me; but will you let me try.'

Hilda, staring in astonishment from her chamber-window, saw Mr. Arnold put one of Rachel's hands upon his arm and walk slowly away with her under the firs, the child Lilias caressing her other hand.

They did not come back until the moon had set, and then a diamond engagement ring sparkled on Rachel's hand.

It is true that Hilda lost no time in expressing her astonishment and displeasure, but her sister was too happy, for once, to care for her cruel sarcasm and scorn.

In the autumn the marriage between Lionel Arnold and Rachel Dehart took place. It was an exceptionally happy one, as both deserved it to be.

Lilias is unspeakably dear, because, they declare, they were led to it by the hand of the child.

Feminine Opium Smokers.

Just as a Cleveland (Ohio) reporter entered the room where the poor unfortunates that are addicted to it "hit the pipe," one of the ladies was saying that she would hit the pipe first and show the others how it was done The chub faced Chinaman with the sleepy eyes then lay down on one side of the tray which occupied the center of the bunk, and the lady reclined on the other side. She was very handsome, her and elegant apparel was entirely out of place in the dirty room, while her shapely head reclined on the black dirty pillow, which she would have undoubtedly scorned to touch outside of an opium joint. Her beautiful eyes, sparkling with expectation, closely watched the manipulation of the Celestial as he prepared the pipe for her use. He took a steel rod, the size of a knitting-needle, and dug down the small bottle, bringing up on the end a piece of a piece of opium about the size of a pea, which he proceeded to cook over the small blaze of the lamp. When the opium sizzled and fried in the blaze he would insert it into the small hole in the bottom of the bowl, would fry what was left again, and repeat the operation until the bowl was filled. Then he put the filthy mouthpiece to the mouth of the lady, who eagerly opened her ruby lips and closed them again over the amber, closed her beautiful eyes and sucked the smoke from the deadly drug with the most apparent relish, while the Chinamen with half closed eyes, held the bowl over the flame and watched that it was kept going until the load was exhausted. One pipe was not sufficient for the lady, and the Celestial gave a grunt of approval when she ordered him to fill it, for, as was afterwards learned, John gets twenty-five cents for each pipeful, which it takes about a minute and a half to consume. After the lady had finished her second pipe she arose from the filthy bunk to give place to another, remarking: 'Now, I'll sleep well when I get home,' The one who tried it next was a fine-looking, richly-dressed lady, and as she doffed her elegant sealskin cloak displayed several hundred dollars worth of diamonds. The was evidently a novice at 'hitting the pipe,' as her companion, who had tried it first, had to instruct her how to do it.

'I hate to lie down in that dirty place,' she said.

'Oh, you wont mind that when you get get used to it. The smoke will make you feel so nice that you won't think of where you are.'

Thus persuaded the lady crawled into the bunk and lay down watching with curious eyes the manoeuvres of the pig tail as he fixed the opium. When all was ready she took the stem between her lips and began puffing, but the Chinaman was not satisfied, as he gave several grunts of disapproval and evidently considered that she had much to learn before she would become an artist at smoking. She could not go more than one pipe and said she felt dizzy when she put on her cloak. The other lady was about to smoke, when the second one said she was too sick to wait; so they paid John and left

Proud of His Patch.

A poor boy was attending school one day with a large patch on one knee of his trowsers. One of his schoolmates made fun of him for this, and called him "Old Patch." "Why don't you fight him?" cried one of the boys; "I'd give it to him if he called me so." "Oh," said the boy, "you don't suppose I'm ashamed of my patch, do you? For my part I'm thankful for a good mother to keep me out of rags. I'm proud of my patch for her sake." This was noble. That boy had the courage that would make him successful in the struggles of life. We must have courage in our struggles if we hope to come out right.

Nothing Unusual.

'Just tell him what sort of a day you had yesterday, auntie. That's a sample of them all,' said the city niece, visiting at the farmhouse. Doctor Jackson had been called, for Aunt Marinda had at last been compelled to own herself fairly 'beat out.' 'She makes such a to-do about my house-work,' said Aunt Miranda, 'an' I'm sure it aint more'n common. Well, yesterday after I got up'—

'What time was that?' interrupted Kate.

'Oh, I believe 't was quarter o' four. I helped do the milkin', an' strained the milk, an' skimmed yesterday's, an' spelled Ephriam with the churnin'. Then I got breakfast.'

'For which, by that time, she had no appetite,' said Kate.

'Why, that wasn't nothing uncommon,' said Aunt Miranda, mildly. 'I never feel like eating in the morning.'

'Go on,' said the doctor.

'I fed the pigs—Kate washed the dishes—and then I had the butter to take out and salt, and—oh, I forgot, there was some startched things left over from Tuesday, and I ironed 'em.'

'Mention the pies, aunt,' said the merciless Kate, 'those unholy pies.'

'Why, yes, I did make five or six pies an' a sheet o' cake, but that wa'n't nothing to tire anybody. Then I got dinner.'

'Did you eat any?' asked the doctor.

'Oh, yes, I b'lieve I did take a mite o' fried fish, thought it didn't taste real good. As soon as we could get the dishes out o' the way, I had to cut out Ephriam's new overalls. He's dretfully in need of 'em. An' after they was done, I thought I'd ketch that settin' hen that's been cluckin' round so long. So I did.'

'And then Uncle Ephraim,' suggested Kate.

'Oh, yes; a shower was comin' up, and Ephriam asked if I wouldn't rake after the load, an' I did, then 'twas time to get supper an' milk'—

'And feed the pigs and the hens,' said Kate, 'and do something or other to the butter, and set bread rising, and then this poor lady allowed herself to go to bed, and, I dare say, was to otired to sleep.'

What the doctor said need not be minutely stated. He was a sensible man, and spoke his mind, and told her she was wearing herself out by overwork, but Aunt Miranda replied:

'Why, 'tain't nowadays possible for me to set down an' fold my hands. I don't see what you're both so upset about in what I done yesterday. It ain't no more'n I do every day, an' why I should be so beat out I can't see!'

She could not see that it was steady overwork that beat her out.—*Youth's Companion.*

No Time For the Mind.

A certain village in western Pennsylvania has been known for many generations as the purgatory of bad housekeepers. To be a model housekeeper is one ambition of its women. Although many of them are wealthy, very few have servants.

'What I do myself is well done,' is their favorite maxim. Their houses are immaculately neat, their rooms are daily aired, swept, dusted and then closed up, while the family live in the kitchen. The cupboards are full of lucent jellies and jams; a new recipe creates a stir of excitement in the community only equalled by a new stitch in fancy work.

'It was years before we would give in to sewing machines,' said a matron of the village, 'and even now we make all underclothing by hand.'

A new comer to the town, a woman of rare brilliancy and sweetness of nature, was ostracised because her linen sheets were not hemstitched and she brought her canned goods.

These women have no time for reading, travel or social enjoyment; they are forced to remain silent while their husbands or children discuss any matter of general interest. Well cooked viands and neat houses undoubtedly are good things, but they are not worth the sacrifice of a woman's whole thoughts, life and being. Where the treasure is there will the heat be also and if a woman makes a fetich of her table linen or the temporary box in which she lives, her mind and affections soon will be measured by them.—[Youth's Companion.

When Baby was sick, we gave her Castoria,
When she was a Child, she cried for Castoria,
When she became Miss, she clung to Castoria,
When she had Children, she gave them Castoria,

Butler and Yellow Fever.

General George A. Sheridan relates this story, which he picked up in New Orleans. A delegation of citizens of that place visited President Lincoln to beg him to remove General Butler from command there. The President listened while they presented their grievances and then said; 'Well gentlemen, much as you dislike Gen. Butler, at least he has done one good thing for you, for by his wise sanitary regulations he has kept the yellow fever out. One of the delegates, a creole, skipped before the President and replied excitedly: 'Pardon, mistah President pardon; it was not Butler vat keep ze faivaire ayay from ze city; it was God. He still have a leetle mercy for our poor people. He do not send Ben Butler and ze yellow fevaire ze same seasonno sare.' The President laughed heartily but all the same General Butler was kept in command.