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For The People's Journal.

WIDOW BARSTOW.

"Whew! This March wind is as keen and cutting as a two-edged sword, Doctor Phillips," said Deacon Goodman, buttoning tighter around him his warm overcoat, as they turned the angle of the street into a narrow lane leading to the dwelling of the Widow Barstow.

"Yes, yes, Deacon, cutting its want in the poor man's dwelling," said the Doctor, abstractedly. "To day many a poor soul may face this bleak wind and smile, it is so much milder than the harrowing despair want creates. You and I may look cheerful when we sit before the glowing grate, until our cheeks grow ruddy with outward and inward comfort. But it is my lot to visit many who are strangers to such comfort, who seldom feel the genial influence of a well-piled grate, or know an appeased appetite, and yet who seem to struggle on in the battle of life in true Christian meekness, with a view to the soul's true destiny. The widow's cottage, which we are about to visit, has, I fear, been a lonely place to its inmates through the winter. Poor widow Barstow! It has been hard work to keep body and soul together; yet you have a treasure in Charlie, which will some day make a mother's heart glad. A fine boy—so thoughtful and desirous."

"Why, Doctor, when did you learn that the widow Barstow was sick, and in such needy circumstances? Why did not you inform me, as you know that I delight in deeds of charity?" asked Deacon Goodman, interrupting the Doctor as he rattled away in his usual hurried manner.

"This day week, Deacon—why did I not tell you? He that would assist the poor must not ask another hand to give before his own is opened; and what charity could I expect from one who lives in comfort, within a stone's throw of suffering and want, and never finds it out? No, no, Deacon, we must not wait for another to find subjects upon which to bestow our charity. We must anticipate the wants of the needy, and we shall always find enough whose hearts even kindness, which costs one but little will inspire with new hope. That poverty which heralds itself to the world, is not always the most pressing. 'T is those who bear in silence, on whom timely favor often confers the most benefit."

"But, Doctor—"
Persons whose honest pride would revolt at the idea of asking alms, may, and should be relieved as by an unseen hand, the giver asking no other reward than the consciousness of having done but his duty; and"

"But, Doctor," said the Deacon, again, "you must be aware that widow Barstow is not a member of our Church. When there are so many poor brethren who require our first attention, is it to be wondered at that one should fail to find out all the want and suffering outside of the Church?"

"All men, Deacon, are brethren, whether in or out of the Church. To help his poor brother is the Churchman's duty. But true Christian sympathy looks beyond this—and by giving to the needy strangers to Christ, show that their religion reaches even them, in kindness and sympathy. 'By our fruits they shall know us.' That's it. No preaching brings so quick conviction as that which speaks by succoring one another in time of need."

By this time they had reached the little wicket gate in front of the widow's cottage. The latch was gone, and it was swinging to and fro upon its rusty hinges, creaking mournfully in the March wind. They walked into the yard, and along the pathway leading to the white-

washed door. A fleecy pile lay upon the door-step, unbroken—without a footprint to indicate that there were inmates within. The Doctor knocked. A feeble voice within bade him enter. Widow Barstow raised her head from the pillow to welcome them as they stepped into the wind entered, too, an unwelcome guest, and scattered the drifts that lay upon the threshold over the floor, covering the bed upon which the widow lay, to one corner of the room, with a flake-coverlet; then shaking the windows and rattling the cupboard, whisked up the chimney, driving a column of smoke and ashes out into the room.

The Doctor inquired how they were getting along, and if her cough was as troublesome as at his previous visit. A smile lit up her countenance, unusually beautiful, and expressive of a kind and genial heart and superior intellectual endowments—a smile of gratitude, such as well repays the benefactor for whatever kindness they may award their fellows in need.

"Very well, Doctor; for," as she expressed it, "it has been so much more comfortable here, since you came." Charlie says, and I suppose the poor boy knows; that mother's getting well; for she can read for him again, and assist him when he gets into trouble in solving some hard problem in Algebra. But take some seats. You look cold; it must be very cold to day."

Meantime, as the widow was speaking, the Deacon was taking a survey of the room and its inmates. Everything bespoke extreme indigence; yet all was arranged with much order and good taste. On a chair by the side of the bed sat a boy some twelve or thirteen years of age, holding a half-opened book in his hand, which he was evidently reading when they entered. His eyes, which were large and lustrous, were fixed upon the countenance of the Doctor, as if trying to read in its expression the true condition of his poor sick mother; for though, as his mother expressed it, he had said she was getting well, yet his anxious looks betrayed his fears that his opinion might be a false one after all. There was that about the boy that riveted the gaze of the Deacon for some minutes upon his features—so much intelligence and quiet resignation, and a kind of spiritual fervor pervading every lineament, rendering his countenance a study for the observer. From the boy his attention was directed to a small bookcase resting upon a shelf against the wall. The doors were open, and the books arranged in perfect order. He read the title upon the backs of several. First was a Bible, betokening by its well-worn covers, constant use. Then there was Shakespeare, Paradise Lost, Dick's Works, Captain Cook's Voyages, two or three Histories, and lastly of all, his eyes rested upon Don Quixote beside a volume of the Pilgrim's Progress.

With a sigh he turned his eyes away, for he considered it as almost sinful to look upon a book which his ideas of Christianity taught him should never find its way into a family circle; and how could the widow allow her boy to have access to such a book?

"This is my friend, Deacon Goodman," said the Doctor, introducing the Deacon to Mrs. Barstow. "As passing his door, I called in and informed him of your poor health, and he requested to accompany me. No doubt he will be happy to do all in his power to help you."

The Deacon nodded assent, and the widow looked up with a doubtful glance of recognition, and then seemed for a moment lost in thought. What were those thoughts? Perhaps she was thinking of the many times she had seen the self-same Deacon, riding to Church in his fine carriage, drawn by a span of noble bays, while she and Charlie went on foot—and how, when it rained, or was uncommonly muddy—when passing them, he seemed always to be looking the other way. This wandering of the mind was but momentary.

"The Deacon is welcome," said she, with a faint smile; "it has been so lonely here that kind faces are as cherishing as the sunshine to us. But your

timely assistance," said she, addressing the Doctor, "we hope will enable us to get along very well until I am so far recovered as to resume my duties." For kind intentions from our friends, however, we are ever thankful, as they shed upon the pathway of the poor a ray of hope, and give them the assurance that whatever may befall them, there are those who are ever ready to lessen the pangs of misfortune by kindness."

Deacon Goodman walked toward the bed, and seating himself in a chair with an air of seriousness, such as he usually assumed, when about to advise upon spiritual matters, which he was very fond of doing, with no doubt, a sincere desire for the benefit of the advised, said: "You are indeed looking poorly, Mrs. Barstow. I was not aware of your illness until informed by Doctor Phillips, as he has just told you. How have you been brought so low? I had missed you from our meeting for several weeks, but was not surprised, knowing that you did not belong to our Church—a circumstance which I have often very much regretted."

"My health has been declining all winter," said the widow, without apparently seeming to notice his last remark; "I have been obliged to work, with my needle early and late, in order to gain a scanty subsistence for my poor boy and myself. My constitution was never very robust, and constant toil, with very little out-of-door exercise, at length brought on a severe attack of pleurisy. But what pains me most, is not having been able to assist Charlie in his studies, in which I take much interest, as I look upon that child's mind as a special trust in my hands, an account of which I shall be called to make sooner or later; and as my duty has been performed, so shall be my reward in good or evil."

As the widow ceased speaking, the Deacon devoutly raised his eyes upward, and in a solemn voice replied, "Thus said the Lord, the God of the widow and the fatherless: 'Fear not I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will help thee; yea, I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee by the right hand of My Righteousness. We must put our whole trust in Him, for 'He sticketh closer than a brother; we should feel to humble ourselves under His mighty hand, and own that he is just in all he has put upon us; we should feel to glorify His name by submission to His will, and to fall in with the glorious design of His visitation, as well as to wait the issue, whatever the event may be. God kept the Children of Israel in the wilderness, and Elijah in the desert, even so will He keep us if we put our trust in Him."

"True, Deacon," replied Mrs. Barstow, "if we trust in God He will never forsake us. But what avails one's trust in Him when we forsake His immutable laws, which, when followed give us health and happiness, and when departed from, bring pain, sickness and its accompanying evils? God does not send sickness upon us. We bring it upon ourselves by disregarding His laws of health; and no prayers of ours can restore health without we obey those laws. I cannot look upon my sickness as a special dispensation of Providence; but as a penalty for disregarding the provision of Nature that to enjoy health we must take exercise in the fresh air and give the hours of night to rest and sleep. And by observing this requirement, in future, I look principally for recovery."

"Do you see nothing sinful in thus disregarding the wise provisions Nature has made for our health, with which you seem to be so well acquainted? Isn't it wrong in any one to knowingly bring sickness upon himself, and trouble to others?"

"All are bound by indissoluble ties to the society in which they live, especially the poor. There are certain requirements of nature which can not be put off. To appease hunger, and prolong life, for the poor, clinging to this existence as tenaciously as the rich, they are often forced to violate the laws of health which otherwise they would not. For instance, a poor woman like myself often has to labor through the day and much of the night, to earn by her needle a few shillings, at least barely sufficient to procure the plainest food and clothing, leaving her no time to pay attention to the laws of health. There is sin in disregarding the conditions of health; but in this case, the chief sinner, in its avaricious selfishness, to force the woman for a mere pittance, forcing the consideration of a sound system. If Society would more generally act as though the laborer is worthy of his hire, there would be much less necessity for acts of charity."

"Yes, yes; that's it, Deacon, those that live and grow rich at the expense of the health, and even the lives of the poor laborer would do much better if they would add to the laborer's wages what they give in charity, and thereby by enabling the poor to make timely provisions for their health, lessen the frequency of sickness and the necessity for charitable aid. As long as women are obliged to overtax their strength to earn barely enough to keep the soul in the body, we should, however, as a debt we owe them, not be too sparing of our material comfort. When one is suffering from hunger, to offer him spiritual consolation only, seem to him much like mockery. As the widow observes, God will never forsake us. We see the truth of this, in the long struggle which nature holds with disease. But God will not help those who do not help themselves. If we follow the ways of health pointed out to us by Him, then our trust avails much. But when we depart wholly from them, we cannot well expect relief, but from our own exertions in returning to, and observing the wise provisions of our natures. But, come, Deacon, we must not tire Mrs. Barstow."

The two prepared to retire, when the Deacon addressed Charlie, who had sat a silent listener by the bed side. "Well Charlie, what book have you there in your hand?"

"Loomis's 'Elements of Physiology,'" replied Charlie, "I was reading to mother when you came."

"Would you not find it more interesting to read some of the little books in the Sunday School Library, such as the History of Birds and Insects, and the like? You must come to our school on Sundays and bring home some of those interesting books. I fear your mother is not careful enough in selecting the books you read."

"Oh yes, sir," said Charlie confidently, "we have none but the very best of books, and I have read them all through."

The Deacon shook his head and said, "Then you have read Don Quixote, which I see on the shelves of your little library?"

"Yes, sir. It's enough to make one split with laughter."

"Wrong, very wrong, my little boy, no good can ever come of reading such books. There is always enough that is true, without spending one's time in reading fiction. I never allow my boys to have such books in the house, much more to read them, as they always fill boys' heads with nonsense and unfit them for the sober business of life."

"Allow me to dissent from your opinion in reference to the work you consider so objectionable. No man could have been a greater lover of truth than Cervantes, and perhaps no man had a greater desire to make men ashamed of their follies. To laugh them out of their absurd notions he has introduced the fictitious character of Don Quixote. And besides, its pages are stamped with much that is sound philosophy, which appeals directly to reason as indisputable fact. I cannot think that any one can read it without receiving much more benefit than harm."

"Well, well, I'll not dispute with you about it; you have the advantage of me here, as I have never read the book; but always heard it spoken of as a work of most absurd fiction, calculated to produce inordinate laughter, which I think it becomes a Christian."

"That it possesses this power to make us laugh at the follies and mistakes into which some foolish whim leads men, is a good reason for its being read; its innocent laughter is often more

effective in prompting a healthful circulation of the blood, than the most potent cathartics of the Doctor," said Charlie, glancing up playfully at the Doctor who had seated himself before the fire, to wait the issue of the conversation between the boy and the deacon.

"Yes! Charlie, you are right there. I have read 'Don Quixote,' and would not hesitate to prescribe its perusal to any patient who might be suffering under a fit of hypochondria. But you have better books that you prefer to this, have you not?"

"Yes, sir; Captain Cook's voyages are very interesting, and Pilgrim's Progress is beautiful, when mother explains it to me. Then I like Shakespeare; it's so natural—just as real men, if present, would act and speak—sometimes think he must have known just what men's hearts were made of, or he could not have laid them all open so that we can see all the good and evil in them."

"You read a great deal, I guess, and understand what you read. I perceive by your opinion of men and books."

"Yes, sir; but mother says I must study most of the time, for if one wishes to distinguish himself in any profession in life, he must first become a thorough scholar."

The Deacon turned, and addressed the widow, who had been a silent but not an uninterested listener, with— "I very much fear Mrs. Barstow, you are pursuing a course with this boy of yours, which a woman in your circumstances should never think of. Instead of taking so much pains to fill his head with book learning, which even now makes him ill, it seems, look forward to some of the honorable professions, which are so crowded now, that one half of the professional men in the country have to live by hook and crook—and a poor living it is they get at that, I assure you. If you would but take my advice, a situation in some mechanic's shop as an apprentice would be immediately looked up, where he could learn a good trade and be of some use to you."

"I have a desire to see Charlie an educated man," said Mrs. Barstow, "let his occupation or condition in life be what it may. It is not the profession that confers honor upon the man, but the man upon the profession. And it is the height of my desire to see what ever occupation in which my son shall engage benefited thereby. I have no wealth to confer upon him, but knowing that he possesses a mine of unsurpassing richness in the mind, it would be doing him great injustice if I should not do all in my power to develop its resources. Sometimes I think he displays a discernment and wisdom far beyond his years, but as he has been assisted by me in all his studies, and had the contents of the books he has read often explained as far as I lay in my power, I find it difficult to tell his conceptions of things from my own, they seem so much alike. How far success has attended my efforts to direct aright the cultivation of his mind, time alone can tell."

"It may do very well," said the Deacon, "but I hope you will consider well my advice, and in case you should conclude to try to find a place for him, I will gladly assist. I am a little surprised, however," he continued, after a moment's silence, "that, with all your teaching, you have not instilled your son's mind with the truths of that religion in which we all must put our trust."

"To teach my son the great truths of Christianity, as far as his mind becomes sufficiently developed to comprehend and appreciate them, has ever been my constant aim."

"Come, come, Deacon, we must be going," said the Doctor, "the widow is tired, and must not talk too much for a day or two, but keep quiet."

As they departed the Doctor slipped a few silver coins into Charlie's hand for his mother in case she might need some thing, and the Deacon kindly expressed a hope that she might speedily recover.

They walked up the lane and stood before the Deacon's house, before either spoke, when with a mutual good day, "sir," they parted, one making upon the folly of the poor widow, devoting so much time to the education of her son, who would be much better off in a shop, learning a trade, and earning his board and clothing; and the other, approving in his heart, that true mother-love that desired, and labored to make her son, though poor a man; for, though the heart of all earnest men that yearn for the human form, is

Continued.

Bravely Spoken.

The Harrisburg Union, as our readers know, is one of the hardest kind of hunker papers. It supports the State and National administration in all their worst measures. It scarce ever says a word in favor of manly independence, or of State reform. But even this most unscrupulous partisan organ cannot stand the corruptions of the public works, and in its issue of March 22, has a brave and unanswerable article in favor of the "Sale of the public works," from which we make the following extract. "Please read and circulate:

"The people have become convinced, by long and severe trials and experience, that state management is but another name for robbery, and that under any system of state control, likely to be invented, the commonwealth must be plunged deeper and deeper into debt. Any one who looks at the figures, as given by the state officers, themselves, must be convinced that so long as we retain the public works so long must we be tax-ridden and oppressed people. It is alleged that the office of Civil Commissioner is worth, for the term \$100,000, or more, depending upon the sagacity and depravity of the incumbent—and from the fact that so many seek for it to whom the mere honor and salary could be no temptation, we are inclined to believe that the allegation is correct. Such a sum, or any sum beyond the mere salary, can be made by no other than dishonest means—and if the board, the head of the whole machinery, is corrupt, what can we expect but corruption in all the subordinates? It is acknowledged, that on the Allegheny, by Passage in the term of a single year, we believe the commonwealth has been robbed of \$40,000—perhaps double of that amount would not reach the sum actually stolen; on the Columbia road, the Collector's office at Philadelphia has been guilty of peculation; these things are acknowledged—they are known to the canal board—and yet, although months have elapsed since the facts became public, and since the attention of the board has been drawn to them, nothing that we are aware of has been done to ferret out and punish the robbers. Thus has the system of state management ever worked, and thus will it ever work. It is corrupt in its head and in all its members, and there can be no rational hope entertained that it ever will be otherwise. This at least is the general impression, and this impression leads to a strong desire, on the part of the people, to dispose of state improvements. But the figures are, after all, the indices to direct the public mind to the course proper to be pursued in relation to the public works. Their actual cost has been \$32,542,207.77; the interest paid on the same has been \$35,157,790.13—the expense of conducting them has been nineteen and a half millions, and the entire revenue only \$25,342,020.47. The total cost of the state works to the present time, has been in round numbers, say \$90,000,000, and all we can show to meet this is a revenue of less than \$26,000,000. When we add that now appropriations are asked, amounting to over \$6,000,000, the public may judge for themselves, whether, under such management of affairs, as we have had, and as we are likely to have, the interests of the people would be best promoted by retaining or disposing of the public works. For our own part, having nothing but the public interest in view, we say sell them, and if you cannot sell them give them away—do any thing but keep them longer."

NEBRASKA TERRITORY FILLING UP.—The St. Louis Republican of the 14th instant has the following:—

"During the past three days a large number of persons have arrived in this city from various quarters, on their way to Nebraska Territory; as but few boats were in port from Missouri river, they have been compelled to wait for boats to get ready to start. So great is the rush for passage, that although there are several boats in port, their cabins are full even before they are advertised to leave. The Honduras, which arrived on Sunday, and was supposed to leave again on Thursday next, the regular day, had been induced to go out this evening, two days in advance of her time. The same boat, which starts for Council Bluffs this afternoon, will be full, if there is not full already. Those bound for the new territory are going there to look at the country with an eye to making it their future homes."