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VOL. IX.

COUDERSPORT, POTTER COUNTY, PA., MAY 29, 1856.

NO. 2.

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Attorney at Law,
Coudersport, Pa., will regularly attend the Courts in Potter county.

ARTHUR G. OLMSTED,
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June 3, 1848.

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THE FEAR OF BEING AN OLD MAID.
BY MRS. E. B. HALL.

When I was a little girl, I was a fat, merry, jolly dumpling, as happy as the day was long. Everybody pinched my red cheeks, and I waddled about with my doll in my plump arms, finding fun in everything, and fully believing that my doll was as sensible as myself; and perhaps she was, almost. But, though I had a natural antipathy to a spelling-book, and no fondness for spending a long summer's afternoon in poking a needle in and out of a bit of calico, though I considered patchwork all foolishness, and gussets as utter superfluities; though I was called a simpleton for asking my mother why she cut cloth up and then sewed it together again, still, I was fond of picking up ideas after my own fashion. When the wise people around me supposed I was thinking of nothing but my play, my two little ears were open to every word spoken in my hearing. And many were the words impressed on my memory, which the speaker forgot next moment. The talk, around me was my real education; as it is of all children, send them to what school you may.

When I was ten years old, I had one sister aged fifteen, and another seventeen; and, as usual with girls of that age, they had a set of cronies, some very like and some quite unlike them in character. One afternoon, as I was tending my doll Ophelia, who was sick in bed I heard a brisk discussion among these girls, which, I may almost say, decided my fate for life.

The first words that caught my attention came from an animated, romantic girl of sixteen, scolding because the heroine of a novel she had just read was left unmarried at the end of the story! "What surprise was expressed at this catastrophe! what indignation!

One of my sisters did not seem to sympathize with this burst of disapprobation, and then came the pithy question, "What would you be willing to die an old maid?" Mary said very quietly, "Yes," and sister Ellen added, "So would I!"

Then such looks of amazement and incredulity. "You can't mean what you say," cried one. "If I did not know you too well to think you a hypocrite,—," said another. "Why, it was meant that all women should be married!" exclaimed a third. "Then why are they not all married?" asked Mary, with her usual simplicity.

Eager and hot grew the controversy, and I lost not a word, while Ophelia lay flat on her back, her stiff "kid arms sticking out; and her croup quite forgotten. Then first did I take notice of that terrible combination of monosyllables, "Old Maid." In how many different tones of contempt, dread, and deprecation, did I hear it uttered by those juvenile voices! what anecdotes came forth about the cross old maids, and fidgety old maids, and ugly, and dressy, and learned, and pious, and flirting, and mischief-making old maids. Never did a bevy of regular fifty-year-old spinsters utter so

much scandal in one afternoon as was poured forth by these blooming young creatures. Two or three friends of my mother, whom I had always cherished in my innocent affections, because they talked so pleasantly and were so kind to me, now appeared like new personages. "Miss Z. was so ugly, she never could have had an offer!" Miss Y. dressed so shabbily, and wore green spectacles, to look literary." And "Miss X. was for ever talking about Sunday-school and society meetings," and so on.

You may be sure that the next time these ladies came to our house, I scanned very closely the face of Miss Z., a face that I had always loved before; but now I saw that it was exceedingly plain. I looked hard at Miss Y.'s drab-colored bonnet and shawl, perceived that they were old fashioned and ordinary, and that her green spectacles looked pedantic. Then Miss X. beside whom I had always squeezed in upon the sofa, and encouraged by her kindly smile and delighted with her conversation—how uninteresting she had become! They were *old maids!*

It must be observed that my sisters—right good, sensible, domestic girls they were—had no part in this bewilderment of my young ideas. They were in the minority; so I took it for granted they were in the wrong. Besides, what children are ever as much influenced by what is uttered in the familiar voices of their own family, as by words of comparative strangers!—Take care of what you say at a friend's house, with the young folks, catching up every random sentiment you drop. Many a judicious mother's morning exhortation has been blown to the moon by some light dinner-guest, who did not after all mean to give his real opinion, or whose opinion was not worth having.

And now, I assure you, my education went on rapidly. It is perfectly marvellous, in how many ways, and by what different sorts of people, a young girl is taught that it is a terrible thing to be an old maid. Fools never show their folly more than in their hackneyed jests upon this topic; but what shall we say of the wise folks who sin almost as often in the same way!—What shall we say of the refinement of him who is gentlemanly in thought and expression on all subjects but this?—of the humanity and chivalry of him who assails the defenseless!—of the justice of him who taxes a class with the faults of individuals, and wounds with that meanest of weapons—a sneer!—or of the Christianity of him who indirectly censures and ridicules one of the arrangements of Providence?

I learned my lesson thoroughly, for it came to me in some shape every week. I read it in every novel and newspaper, and heard it from every lip. The very men who spoke truth and sense on the subject, sometimes neutralized it by an idle jest in some moment of levity, and the jest drove out the truth from my heart. At eighteen I lived only for the ignoble purpose—I cannot bear to say—of getting married; but what could have been the ruling wish of one who had been taught by society to dread celibacy worse than death? I dare say I betrayed it everywhere. I dare say I was duly laughed at.

At last, quaking on the verge of six and twenty, I had an offer—a most absurd one. I was six years older than my lover, had ten times as much sense probably, except on one point: I knew that he was "rather wild," as the gentle phrase goes. In short, I neither loved nor respected him; but I was willing to marry him, because then I should be Mrs. Somebody, and should not be an old maid.

My parents said "No," positively. Of course I thought them unreasonable and cruel, and made myself very miserable. Still, it was something to have had an offer of any kind, and my lips were not hermetically sealed. I had several confidants who took care that all my acquaintances should know

the comfortable fact that I had refused Mr. S.

I went on with increasing uneasiness a few years longer, not seeking how to be useful or trying to find out for what good purpose I was made. Neither was I looking for a companion who could sympathize with my better aspirations and elevate my whole character, for I had no right views of marriage. I was simply gazing about in anxious suspense upon every unmarried man of my acquaintance, for one who would lift me out of that dismal Valley of Humiliation into which I felt myself descending. Had I met Apollyon himself there, with the question on his lips, I believe I should have said, "Yes."

At thirty-six I wore more pink ribbons than ever, was seen everywhere that a respectable women could go, wondered why girls went into company so young, found that I was growing sharp-faced and sharp-spoken, and was becoming old maidish in the worse sense of the word, because I was becoming an old maid against my will. I forgot that voluntary celibacy never affects the temper.

My sisters, be it remembered, were older than I. They too were single. But they had lived more domestic lives than I, had read fewer works of fiction had been cultivating their own natures and seeking to make everybody around them happy. And everybody revered them and loved to look upon their own pleasant countenances—I mean everybody worth pleasing—and they were very happy.

At last our good parents died, and left each of us a little independence. Within a year I was married.

I was married for my money. That was ten years ago, and they have been ten years of purgatory.

I have had bad luck as a wife, for my husband and I have scarcely one taste in common. He wishes to live in the country, which I hate. I like the thermometer at 75 deg. which he hates. He likes to have the children brought up at home instead of at school, which I hate. I like music, and want to go to concerts, which he hates. He likes roast pork, which I hate, and I like minced veal, which he hates. There is but one thing which we both like, and that is what we cannot both have, though we are always trying for it—the last word.

I have had bad luck as a mother; for two such huge, selfish, passionate, unmanageable boys never tormented a feeble woman since boys began. I wish I had called them both Cain. At this moment they have just quarreled over their marbles. Mortimer has torn off Orville's collar, and Orville has applied his colt-like heel to Mortimer's ribs; while the baby Zenobia, in my lap, who never sleeps more than a half an hour at a time, and cries all the time she is awake, has been roused by their diabolical screams in chorus.

I have had bad luck as a housekeeper, for I never kept even a chambermaid more than three weeks. And as to cooks, I look back bewildered on the long phantasmagoria of faces flitting stormily through my kitchen, as a mariner remembers a rapid succession of thunder bolts and hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico. My new chambermaid "bounced out of the room yesterday, flitting her dust and muttering, 'Real old maid 'after' all!'—just because I showed her a table on which I could write 'slut,' with my finger, in the dust.

I never see my plump, happy sisters, and then glance in the mirror at my own cadaverous, long, doleful visage, without wishing myself an old maid. I do it every day of my life.

Yet half of my sex marry, as I did;—not for love, but fear!—for fear of dying old maids.

They have their reward. And they whose idle tongues create this mischiefous fear, and thus make so much domestic misery, have their responsibility.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

INDICEMENTS FOR HIGH TREASON.

LAWRENCE, Kansas, May 9, 1856.

Affairs are becoming more exciting in this section every day. It seems as if the tools of the Administration are determined to leave no means untried of annoying and persecuting the Free-State people. An important movement to this end has just taken place, in the meeting of the Grand Jury of this District, which took place on Monday of this week. The proportion of Free State to those of Slave State citizens of this District is nine of the former to one of the latter, as copied from the poll-book; and of eighteen jurors summoned, fourteen were Pro-Slavery, and four Free-State men. The Jury was selected and summoned by Jones, who, in addition to being Sheriff of Douglas County, holds the office of Deputy United States Marshal for the Territory. The Jury having assembled, Judge Lecompte charged them nearly as follows. [I give only such portions as have a bearing on the Free-State movement, and can sustain this and all that follows in reference to the proceedings of that Jury by the most positive proof:]

"GENTLEMEN: You are assembled to consider whatever infringements of law may come under your notice, and bring in bills as your judgment dictates against those whom you may find to have been guilty of such infringement. Your attention will naturally be turned toward an unlawful, and before unheard-of, organization that has been formed in our midst, for the purpose of resisting the laws of the United States. The exciting state of affairs makes it important that you should deliberate calmly, and above all have respect to the oaths that you have taken, and without fear or favor of any party, or of men, whether high or low, to mete to all the justice which is their due. You will take into consideration the cases of men who are dubbed Governors, men who are dubbed Lieut-Governors, men who are dubbed Secretaries and Treasurers, and men who are dubbed all the various other *dubs* with which this Territory is filling (and there are such men) and will find bills in accordance with the following instruction. [I give below his exact words.] This Territory was organized by an act of Congress, so far as its authority is from the United States. It has a Legislature elected in pursuance of that organic act. This Legislature being an instrument of Congress, by which it governs the Territory, has passed laws—these laws, therefore, are of United States authority and making, (i. e. the United States makes laws by proxy, employing the borders of Missouri to make the laws, inasmuch as being away out West it is inconvenient for her to come herself. This is the meaning that I deduce from the Judge's opinion) and all that resist these laws resist the power and authority of the United States, and are, therefore guilty of high treason. Now, Gentlemen, if you find that any persons have resisted these laws, then must you, under your oaths, find bills against such persons for high treason. If you find that no such resistance has been made, but that combinations have been formed for the purpose of resisting them, and individuals of influence and notoriety have been aiding and abetting in such combinations, then must you still find bills for constructive treason, as the courts have decided that to constitute treason the law need not be struck, but only the intention be made evident."

The learned Judge then alluded to the shooting of Jones, and intimated that by taking a little pains the jury might find some more treason cases there. He also gave other new and entertaining explanations of the nature of treason, to all of which his little audience gave due attention and no doubt were highly pleased with his lecture. These points are, however, important. His main argument was upon the nature of high treason, and gentle hints as to who were undoubtedly guilty of it. Incredible as the above

may seem, it is, nevertheless, as exact as I can from memory make it, and I assure you it made a deep impression on my memory. But "the ball has not been told." The jury retired to their room and then commenced a running political discussion, prominent in which were vile denunciations of "Robinson, Keeder & Co.," and "the old Abolitionists" generally. After indulging in this harmless amusement for a time, the question was finally asked, "Shall we find bills for high treason against Charles Robinson, A. H. Reeder, W. Y. Roberts and G. W. Deitzler?" (Sec. of State *pro tem.*)

After discussing the matter for a time, it was finally concluded that subpoenas should be issued for the above named individuals—that they should be brought to Lecompton as witnesses, and then they would "pin them." This was done; but unfortunately their men would not obey the summons—on what grounds I have not learned. The jury then found bills against the individuals above named for high treason.

Thus the matter rested until last evening, when a Deputy United States Marshal came to Lawrence armed with a warrant commanding him to bring the body of A. H. Reeder before his honor Judge Lecompte, as being in contempt of Court, not having obeyed the previous summons. The Deputy Marshal walked into the room where the Commission were holding a session, while Gov. Reeder was questioning a witness, and commenced reading his warrant. His voice faltering somewhat, Gov. Reeder said "Go on, don't be afraid." The officer having finished, Gov. Reeder said he "claimed protection of that article in the Constitution that exempted members of the House of Representatives from arrest for such offenses," and asked the opinion of the Commission. What followed you have already been informed of.

What the next step will be the wisest cannot predict. I think—and I am not alone in my opinion—that affairs are assuming a far more serious aspect than Kansas has yet seen. Some are confidently expecting a general outbreak within two weeks. I should not be surprised, myself, to find these predictions verified. One thing is certain, and the conviction is deeply planted in every heart here, unless the right of suffrage, offree thinking, free speaking, and free writing is speedily settled upon the principles of equal justice, civil war is inevitable. Let men, securely encased in their eastern homes, smile as they may at this assertion, but put them in Kansas and let them remain here forty-eight hours as things are now, and they will endorse my opinion. The object of the Pro-Slavery party here is palpably evident to every mind: First, they wish to shut Gov. Reeder, and they will if they can; second, they either wish to break up the investigation of the Commission, or, by making these arrests, cause the Commission to report that we won't obey law. In either case they would accomplish their object. In the first they would delay a report until after the Presidential election, and, in the other, have that report in their favor. Whether they succeed in either is yet to be determined. The United States troops are "bobbin round" occasionally. A few days since they were used to escort Clark, murderer of Barber, over the prairies a few miles from here. Glorious services! The United States has become the escort of murderers—for flag protects assassins, but affords no protection to innocent peaceful men.

BOSTWICK.

EVERETT AND STORY.—When Edward Everett was entertained at a public dinner before leaving Boston, Judge Story gave as a sentiment, "Genius is sure to be rewarded where Ever et goes." Everett responded, "Law, equity and jurisprudence no efforts can raise them above one Story."