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THE SOBER SECOND THOUGHT.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"I must have it, Charles," said the handsome little wife of Mr. Whitman. "So don't put on that sober face."

"Did I put on a sober face?" asked the husband, with an attempt to smile that was anything but a success.

"Yes, sober as a man on trial for life. Why, it's as long as the moral law. There, dear, clear it up, and look as if you had at least one friend in the world. What money lovers you men are!"

"How much will it cost?" inquired Mr. Whitman. There was another effort to look cheerful and acquiescent.

"About forty dollars," was answered, with just a little faltering in the lady's voice, for she knew the sum would seem extravagant.

"Forty dollars! Why, Ada, do you think I am made of money?" Mr. Whitman's countenance underwent a remarkable change of expression.

"I declare, Charles," said his wife, a little impatiently, "you look at me as if I were an object of fear instead of affection. I don't think this kind of you; I've only had three silk dresses since we were married. Amy Blight has had six or seven during the same period, and every one of hers cost more than mine. I know you think me extravagant, but I wish you had a wife like some women I could name. I rather think you'd find out the difference before long."

"There, there, pet, don't talk to me in that fashion. I'll bring you the money at dinner time, that is, if—"

"No ifs or buts, if you please. The sentence is complete without them. Thank you, dear! I'll go this afternoon and buy the silk. So don't fail to bring the money. I was in at Silkskin's yesterday, and saw one of the sweetest patterns I ever laid eyes on. Just suits my complexion. I shall be inconsolable if it's gone. You won't disappoint me?"

And Mrs. Whitman laid her soft hand on the arm of her husband, and smiled with sweet persuasion in his face.

"O, no. You shall have the money," said Mr. Whitman, turning off from his wife, as she thought, a little abruptly, and hurried from her presence.

"That's the way it is always," said Mrs. Whitman, her whole manner changing, as the sound of the closing street door came jarring upon her ears. "Just say money to Charles, and at once there is a cloud in the sky."

She sat down pouting and half angry. "Forty dollars for a new dress?" mentally ejaculated the husband of vain, pretty Mrs. Whitman, as she shut the door after him. "I promised to settle the coal bill to-day—thirty-three dollars—but don't know where the money is to come from. The coal is burnt up, and more must be ordered. O, dear! I'm discouraged. Every year I fall behindhand. This winter I did hope to get a little in advance, but if forty-dollar silks dresses are the order of the day, there is an end to that devoutly to be wished for circumstance. Debt—debt! How I always have shrunk from it; but steadily now it is closing its Briarian arms around me, and my conflicting chest labors in respiration. Oh, if I could untangle myself now, while I have the strength of early manhood, and while the bonds that hold me are weak. If Ada could only see as I see—if I could only make her understand my position. Alas, that is hopeless, I fear."

And Mr. Whitman hurried his steps, because his heart beat quicker and his thoughts were unduly excited.

Not long after Mr. Whitman left the house, the city postmaster delivered a letter to his address. His wife examined the writing on the envelope, which was in a bold, masculine hand, and said to herself:

"I wonder who this can be from?"

Something more than curiosity moved her. There intruded on her mind a feeling of disquiet as if the missive bore unpleasant news for her husband. The stamp showed it to be a city letter. A few times of late such letters came to his address, and she had noticed that he had read them hurriedly, thrust them without remark into his pocket, and became silent and sober faced.

Mrs. Whitman turned the letter over and over again in her hand, in a thoughtful way, and as she did so the image of her husband, sober faced and silent as he had become for most of the time of late, presented itself with unusual vividness, awakening sympathy in her heart.

"Poor Charles!" she said, as the feeling increased; "I am afraid something is going wrong with him."

Placing the letter on the mantel-piece, where he could see it when he came in, Mrs. Whitman entered upon some house-

hold duties, but a strange impression, as of a weight, lay upon her heart—a scene of impending evil, a vague, troubled disturbance of her usual inward self-satisfaction.

If the thought of Mrs. Whitman recurred, as was natural, to the elegant silk dress of which she was to become the owner on that day, she did not feel the proud satisfaction her vain heart experienced a little while before. Something of its beauty had faded.

"If I only knew what the letter contained," she said half an hour after it had come in, her mind still feeling the pressure which had come down upon it so strangely as it seems to be.

She went to the mantel-piece, took up the letter, and examined the superscription. It gave her no light. Steadily it crept growing on her that its contents were of a nature to trouble her husband.

"He's been a little mysterious of late," she said to herself. This idea affected her very unpleasantly. "He grows more silent and reserved," she added, as though under a feverish excitement. "More withdrawn, as it were, and less interested in what goes on around him. His coldness chills me at times, and his irritation hurts me."

She drew a long sigh. Then with an almost startling vividness came before her mind in contrast, her tender, loving, cheerful husband of three years before, and her quiet, silent, sober faced husband of to-day.

"Something has gone wrong with him," she said aloud, as the feeling grew stronger. "What can it be?"

The letter was in her hand. "This may give me light." And with careful fingers she opened the envelope, not breaking the paper, so that she could seal it again, if she desired to do so. There was a bill for sixty dollars, and a communication from the person sending the bill. He was a jeweler:

"If this is not settled at once," he wrote. "I shall put the account in suit. It has been standing over a year, and I am tired of getting excuses instead of money."

The bill was for a lady's watch, which Mrs. Whitman had almost compelled her husband to purchase.

"Not paid for! Is it possible?" exclaimed the little woman in blank astonishment, while the blood mounted to her forehead.

Then she sat down to think. Light began to come into her mind. As she sat thus thinking, a second letter for her husband came in from the penny postman. She opened it without hesitation. Another bill and another dunning letter.

"Not paid! Is it possible?" She repeated the ejaculation. It was a bill for twenty-five dollars for gaiters and slippers which had been standing for three or four months.

"This will never do," said she, awakening—'never—never.' And she thrust the two letters into her pocket in a resolute way. From that hour until the return of her husband at dinner time, Mrs. Whitman did an unusual amount of thinking for her little brain. She saw the moment he entered that the morning cloud had not passed from his brow.

"Here's the money for that new dress," he said, taking a small roll of bills from his vest pocket, and handing them to Ada as he came in. He did not kiss her, nor smile in the old bright way. But his voice was calm and cheerful. A kiss and a smile would have been more precious just then to the young wife than a hundred silk dresses. She took the money, saying—

"Thank you, dear; it's kind of you to regard my wishes."

Something in Ada's voice and manner caused Mr. Whitman to lift his eyes, with a look of inquiry, to her face. But she turned aside, so that she could not read its expression.

He was graver and more silent than usual, and ate with scarcely an appearance of appetite.

"Come home early, dear," said Mrs. Whitman, as she walked to the door with her husband, after dinner.

"Are you impatient to have me admire your new silk dress?" he replied with a faint attempt to smile.

"Yes. It will be something splendid," she answered.

He turned from her quickly and left the house. A few minutes she stood, with a thoughtful face, her mind withdrawn, her whole manner completely changed. Then she went to her room and commenced dressing to go out.

Two hours later and we find her in a jewelry store on Broadway.

"Can I say a word to you?" she addressed the proprietor of the store, who knew her very well.

"Certainly," he replied, and they moved

to the lower end of one of the long show cases.

Mrs. Whitman drew from her watch pocket a lady's watch and chain, and laying them on the show case, said, at the same time holding out the bill she had taken from the envelope addressed to her husband—

"I cannot afford to wear this watch. My husband's circumstances are too limited. I tell you so frankly. It should never have been purchased, but a too indulgent husband yielded to the importunities of a foolish young wife. I say this to take the blame from him. Now, sir, meet this in fairness to yourself. Take back the watch, and say how much I shall pay you besides."

The jeweller dropped his eyes to think. The case took him a little by surprise. He stood for nearly a minute, then took the bill and watch and said:

"Wait a moment," and went to a desk near by.

"Will that do?" He had come forward again, and now presented her with a receipted bill. His face wore a pleasant expression.

"How much shall I pay you?" asked Mrs. Whitman, drawing out her pocket book.

"Nothing. The watch is not defaced. You have done a kind act, sir," said Mrs. Whitman, with a trembling voice. "I hope you will not think unfavorably of my husband. It's no fault of his that it has not been paid. Good morning, sir."

Mrs. Whitman drew her veil over her face, and went, with a light step and light heart, from the store. The pleasure she had experienced on receiving her watch was not to be compared with that now felt in parting with it. From the jeweller's store she went to the boot-maker's, and paid the bill of twenty-five dollars; from thence to the milliner's and settled for the last new bonnet.

"I know you're dying to see my new dress," said Mrs. Whitman, gaily, as she drew her arms within that of her husband on his appearance that evening. Come over to our bed-room and let me show it. Come along! Don't hang back, Charles, as if you were afraid."

Charles Whitman went with his wife passively, looking more like a man on his way to receive sentence than in expectation of a pleasant sight. His thoughts were bitter.

"Shall my Ada become lost to me?" he said in his heart—"lost to me in a world of folly, fashion, and extravagance?"

"Sit down, Charles!" She led him to a large cushioned chair. The brightness of her countenance departed. She took something, in a hurried way, from a drawer, and catching up a footstool, placed it on the floor near him, and looked tenderly and lovingly into his face. Then she handed him the jeweller's bill.

"It is receipted you see," her voice fluttered a little.

"Ada! how is this? What does it mean?" He flushed and grew eager.

"I returned the watch, and Mr. R. receipted the bill. I would have paid for it but he said that it was unpaired, and asked nothing!"

"Oh, Ada!"

"And this is receipted, also; and this," handing the other bill she had paid. "And now my dear," she added quickly, "how do you like my new dress? Isn't it beautiful?"

We leave the explanation and scene that followed to the reader's imagination. If any fair lady, however, who, like Ada has been drawing too heavily on her husband's slender income for silks and jewels is at a loss to realize the scene let her try Ada's experiment. Our word for it, she will find a new and glad experience in life. Costly silks and jewels may be very pleasant things, but they are too dearly bought when they come at the price of a husband's embarrassment, mental quietude and alienation. Too often the gay young wife wears them as the sign of these unhappy conditions. Tranquil hearts and sunny homes are precious things; too precious by all means to be foolishly burdened and clouded by the weak vanity and love of show. Keep this in mind, ye fair ones, who have husbands in moderate circumstances. Do not let your pride and pleasure oppress them. Rich clothing, costly laces and gems, are poor substitutes for smiling peace, and hearts unshadowed by care. Take the lesson and live by it, rather than offer another illustration, in your own experience, of the folly we have been trying to expose and rebuke.

Some queer fellow who has tried 'em says: "There are two sorts of wine in Stuttgart; to drink one is like swallowing an angry cat; the other like pulling the animal back again by the tail."

THE LIGHT-HOUSE.

The scene was more beautiful far to my eye Than if they in its pride had arrayed it; The land breeze blew mild, and the azure, arched, sky Looked pure as the spirit that made it. The murmur rose soft as I silently gazed On the shadowy waves' playful motion. From the dim distant hill where the beacon fire blazed, Like a star in the midst of the ocean.

No longer the joy of the sailor boy's breast Yet when his head rests on the pillow, The seabird had flown to its wave-circled nest, And the fisherman sunk to his slumbers. One moment I gazed from the hill's gentle slope. All hushed was the billows' commotion, And I thought that the light-house looked lovely as hope. The star on life's tremulous ocean.

The time is long past and the scene is afar, Yet when my head rests on the pillow, Will memory sometimes raindrops the star That blazed on the breast of the billow. In life's closing hour, when the trembling soul flies, And death stills the heart's last emotion, O then may the Seraph of Mercy arise Like a star on eternity's ocean!

THE NATIONAL TROUBLES.

A PROJECTED UNION PARTY—LINCOLN TO BE THE LEADER.

The Washington correspondent of the New York Times puts forth the following suggestion:

WHICH SHALL BE THE UNION PARTY?—Intense interest is manifested on all sides here in reference to this issue. It seems evident that there is to be a division, and that it is impossible to harmonize the two wings of the Republican party of the late campaign. In a word, the question pending is one as to whether Mr. Lincoln shall become the head of the great "Union party" of the country, or whether a party upon that issue shall be permitted to grow up in hostility to his Administration.

If the President elect shall determine to initiate a policy antithetical to the Union men of the Border States, he will have at once a strong body of supporters in the South, and his party will be a national and not a sectional one, either in appearance or in spirit. In that event he will undoubtedly need to select two Cabinet advisers from Tennessee and North Carolina. If, on the other hand, the New Administration is to be established on party issues of the past, rather than upon the necessities of the future—if all measures of concession to the Union men of the Border States are to be denied, the Cabinet will necessarily be formed exclusively of men who persist in fighting over again the battle won in November last.

The three great heads of the Republican party are Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Seward, and Horace Greeley. That there are serious differences in that party no one is surprised to hear. Indications of those differences developed themselves immediately after Mr. Lincoln's election. But we were not prepared to find them so distinctly acknowledged in a Republican paper, as they are in the above extract from the New York Times. It seems that "it is impossible to harmonize the two wings of the Republican party." This quarrel then is at its last stage and "dissolution" seems imminent.

When Mr. Lincoln reached Washington, he put himself under the military guardianship of General Scott, but under the political and social guardianship of Mr. Seward, who is supposed by many to head the compromise wing of the Republican party. Seward seems to be not only his Premier, but his pilot and counselor.

But the ubiquitous Greeley, that terrible organ of war, when last heard from was in Washington, having just held a long interview, a close conference of three hours duration with Mr. Lincoln.

So it seems that between Seward, the supposed leader of the compromise wing, and Greeley, the known leader of the "no compromise, no concession" wing, poor Lincoln is buffeted about in the most cruel manner.

It seems in addition to other disagreements that Seward and Greeley are at daggers drawn in regard to Lincoln's shameful Hegira. Seward and General Scott advised it; Greeley altogether disapproves it. He says, as if forgetful of his own recent flight from his St. Louis engagement, that Mr. Lincoln ought not to have swerved from the plan first laid down—that he "ought to have come through by daylight if one hundred guns had been pointed at him." He furthermore says: "The alleged conspiracy was real, (he seems to doubt it.) Mr. Lincoln may see a hundred years, without finding another so good a chance to die."

It is to follow a man's example be an evidence of the exemplar's influence, then truly must Horace exert great influence over Lincoln, for in his avoidance of a dreaded Baltimore mob, he but imitated Greeley in his avoidance of a dreaded St. Louis mob.

But it appears, from the above extract, that in these days of strange occurrences, the strange question now before the Republican managers is, whether Mr. Lincoln is to become "the head of the great

Union party of the country, or whether a party upon that issue shall be permitted to grow up in hostility to his Administration."

This is the great question that now agitates the Republican party. Evidently the fight wears warm. Has it come to this, that the author of the "irrepressible conflict" is called upon by his party to "repress" it—that the champion of the Chicago platform is called upon to abandon it—that the advocate of the negro is called upon to desert him, and to "subordinate Republicanism to Union?" Can he make such a sacrifice? Can he give up the issue of his heart? Can he rise "to the height of this great argument?" and putting his "foot" (that monstrous foot!) upon the neck of abolitionism, exclaim in the language of Virginia's motto "sic semper tyrannis." If he can do this, then indeed despite his impure English, despite his vulgar jokes, despite his ignominious flight from Harrisburg on the underground railroad, he will honor both Abraham of the Bible and Lincoln of the revolution, whose dual representative he is—in name if in nothing else.

We frankly avow that we are not so credulous as to believe that Mr. Lincoln is capable either of any high act of patriotism, or of any masterly stroke of policy. He will pursue no magnanimous course of free choice. If he shall take the right course, it will be from necessity; because he will be driven and lashed into it.

We fear that having his mind filled with apprehensions of Southern conspirators, and feeling that he is tabooed by the South, he will conceive, if he has not already conceived, a bitter hatred for the whole South. Like those cowards, Greeley, Hickman, Sumner and Burlingame who have been put and kept in coventry by the South, he will be most likely to pant for revenge, and to adopt a war policy in order to secure it. Cowards are always cruel. Lincoln, like Macbeth, seems to be beset by fancied dangers, and like Macbeth, he may resort to the sword to rid himself of his enemies.

At last, this quarrel between the two wings is not a noble controversy as to principles. It is not a grand battle for the Union and the Constitution. It is a base and disgraceful fight over the spoils, between corrupt and grasping demagogues. This strife must soon be terminated by a victory on either the one or the other side. Their motives are alike mean and mercenary; yet, should the anti-Greeley wing prevail, we may yet have a new lease of the Union.—Pennsylvania.

AFFAIRS AT CHARLESTON.

The Hon. Jeff. Davis is reported to have arrived at Charleston, with the view to effect arrangements to guard against the possibility of an attack upon Fort Sumter at least until the character of Mr. Lincoln's inaugural shall be known. If its tone be pacific, there will be no attack on Fort Sumter. If otherwise, they say an attack will be immediately made, in which case Mr. Davis would take command of the army in person, and Gen. Twiggs take command at Charleston. Dispatches from Major Anderson report everything quiet. He was allowed to receive marketing and other necessities from Charleston, and had all the intercourse with the city he desired.

Washington's birthday was celebrated at Charleston with unusual enthusiasm. Major Anderson also fired a salute of thirty-four guns from Fort Sumter.

The collector of the port of Charleston gives official notice that all vessels from States not members of the Confederate States of America, except Texas, will from and after this date be regarded as foreign vessels, and as such, must enter, clear, pay fees, and comply with all the laws and regulations in force on the first of November last. All duties must be paid in gold and silver.

The Mercury of the 22d says: "The special dispatches of the Mercury, announcing that a stealthy reinforcement of Fort Sumter had been determined on, and that federal troops, in boats, might be expected at any moment that circumstances should happen to favor their attempt to reach the fort, were confirmed about nine o'clock last night by telegrams received by the Governor. Shortly afterwards dispatches came up from Fort Moultrie, stating that the Lieutenant in charge of the harbor watch had reported that he was informed by a pilot that the steamsip Daniel Webster had been seen by him off Cape Romain at noon. Notice was immediately given to the different posts. General Dunnington and Captain Hamilton proceeded immediately to Fort Moultrie. Major Stevens repaired to the Morris Island batteries. Everything was got into readiness for the expected visitors. Up to the hour at which we go to press (half-

past four o'clock) there has been nothing seen either of the Daniel Webster or her boats.

WHICH SHALL BE PRESERVED? The plain question now presented to the North is, shall the Republican party or the Union break? The New York Tribune says that the Republican platform must be lived up to or the Union is broken into fragments. The Democratic party and the conservative Republicans say that the Union must be preserved at all hazards, no matter what becomes of party organizations and party platforms. It is a simple question of value. Which is worth the most, the Union or the Republican party? We have managed to live happily and prosperously without a Republican party for many years, and can do so for many years to come; but can we live without the Union? When the reality of this issue is fully realized, we imagine there are very few men living in the State of Pennsylvania who would not rather see the Republican party sink into nothingness, than that the Union should be broken into fragments and the country converted into the theatre of a bloody fratricidal war.

"Compromise not only destroys the government and destroys the Union, it destroys the Republican party," says the Tribune. Well, if the Republican party is so inimical to the interests of the Southern States that it cannot survive a peaceful settlement of the troubles it has created and cherished, it ought to perish. Whenever a party gains the ascendancy in a country whose organic law was created by compromise, that cannot afford to perpetuate the existence of the nation in the same spirit of mutual accommodation, this fact affords sufficient evidence that it was constructed upon a wrong basis. There is nothing left for it but to do right or break. If it persists in wrong doing, it deserves annihilation.

If the Union is not to be preserved by compromise, because compromise would injure the Republican party, how can it be preserved? Force will not do it.—Successful war would not do it, for it would end in one side being the victor, and the other the vanquished—and this would prove destructive of a Union of equals.—Unsuccessful war would not do it; for it would establish the independence of a Southern Confederacy. Nothing can do it but compromise, mutual accommodation, renewed and perpetual amity.—Patriot & Union.

Fort Moultrie, which is intended to defend Norfolk, Va., is the largest in the country. The walls are more than a mile in circuit, very thick and high, surrounded by a boat which is from 40 to a 100 feet wide, with 8 feet of water, drawbridges and outer batteries. It mounts some 300 heavy guns, has mortars for throwing shells, furnaces for heating balls, &c. The walls enclose some twenty-five acres.—In the centre is the parade ground, and all around are the quarters of the troops.

"Mind your own business," is an old, somewhat homely maxim; but nevertheless one that contains a deal of useful instruction. Men who attend to their own affairs usually find themselves profitably employed, and in the end avoid much vexation that is inseparably connected with an officious, meddling nature.

HOW TO MEET SLANDER.—A black smith having been slandered, was advised to apply to the courts for redress. He replied, with true wisdom, "I shall never sue any body for slander. I can go into my shop and work out a better character in six months than I could get in a court-house in a year."

Some one blamed Dr. Marsh for changing his mind. "Well," said he, "that's the difference between a man and a jackass—the jackass can't change his mind, and a man can—it's a human privilege."

Merit is never so conspicuous as when it springs from obscurity, just as the moon never looks so lustrous as when it comes from a cloud.

If a man could be conscious of all that is said of him in his absence, he would probably become a very modest man, indeed!

Wife, (complainingly).—"I haven't more than a third of the bed." Husband, (triumphantly).—"That's all the law allows you."

It is a strange way of showing one humble reverence and love for the Creator to be perpetually condemning and reviling everything that he has created.