

The Lancaster Intelligencer

"THAT COUNTRY IS THE MOST PROGRESSIVE WHERE LABOR COMMANDS THE GREATEST REWARD."—BUCHANAN.

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THE BEST OF HUSBANDS.

O, I have a husband as good as any boy; No woman could wish for a better than he; Sometimes, indeed, he may chance to be wrong, But his love for me is unconquered strong; He has one little fault that makes me fret, He has always less money, by far, than debt; Moreover, he walks up, now and then, But, excepting that, he's the best of men!

THE CLERK'S MARRIAGE.

"You are a brave young man, or a foolish one." "Why do you say that?" "To think of marriage?" "What had bravery or folly to do in the case?" "The young lady is poor." "I do not wed her for money?" "There would be some hope for you if she were the possessor of some twenty or thirty thousand dollars. But being as poor as yourself, the folly of this purpose stands out in bold relief. Look before you leap, my friend, there's trouble for you on the other side."

Adrian, my young friend, there is debt, embarrassment, disappointment and miserable life before you. Pause and retrace your steps before it is too late. If you love Rosa, spare her from this impending fate. Leave her in her pleasant home, or grace that of a man better able than you are to provide her with the external blessings of life. You cannot marry on a thousand dollars a year, and it is folly to think of it.

"We could get board for ten dollars a week said Adrian." "That would scarcely help the business at all. At best, it would only make a difference in the amount of your indebtedness at the close of each year. It is folly for you to think of it, my young friend. You cannot afford to marry."

"It has a dark look, but there is no holding up now," replied Adrian, in a gloomy way. We have mutually pledged each other, and the day of our marriage has been appointed."

"I am sorry for you," said the friend, a bachelor of forty, who, on an income of fifteen hundred dollars a year, could see no possible chance for a happy marriage in the city of New York, and preferred celibacy to the embarrassments which he saw hundreds of friends encounter in their attempts to live in style out of all proportion to their resources. "I am sorry for you," he repeated; "but if you will bend your neck to the yoke, you must not complain of the burden you will find yourself compelled to bear."

Strange as it may appear, the young clerk, Henry Adrian, had never before looked this matter of income, expenditure, and style of living, far in the front. The actual aspect of the case, when clearly seen, threw his mind into a state of troubled bewilderment. He went over and over again the calculations suggested by Mr. Blair, a book keeper in the establishment where he was employed, cutting off a little from one proposed expenditure and another, but not chance able to get the cost of living down to the range of his salary, except when the style was so far below that in which his wife must move, that he turned half sick from its contemplation. The more steadily he looked at the truth, the more heavily came the pressure of its stony weight upon his heart; to go forward was little less than madness, and yet how could he hold back now?

"Rosa sat alone, reading, in one of her uncle's parlors, waiting for her lover. He was later than usual, so late that the book began to lose its interest, and at last lay closed upon her lap; while a shade fell over her expectant face. A single glance at Rosa's countenance revealed the fact that she was a girl of some character. There was no soft voluptuous languor about her, but an earnestness of position as she sat; and a firmness of tone in all her features that indicated an active mind and self-reliance. An hour later than usual Adrian came.

"Are you sick, Henry?" asked Rosa as she took his hand, and fixed her eyes on his sober face. "Not, sick, but troubled in mind," he replied without evasion. "Why are you troubled, Henry?" And Rosa drew an arm tenderly around her lover. "Sit down, and I will tell you. The trouble concerns us both, Rosa."

The young girl's face grew pale. They sat down close together, holding each other's hands. But in Adrian's countenance there was a resolute expression, such as we see on the countenance of a man who had settled a question of difficult solution. "The day fixed for our marriage is only two weeks distant," he said. "The tone in which he spoke chilled the heart of Rosa. She did not answer but kept her gaze upon his face.

"Rosa we must reconsider this matter. We have acted without forethought." Her face became paler, her lips fell apart, her eyes had a frightened expression. "I love you, Rosa, tenderly, truly. My heart is not turning from you. I would rather rather than retard, the day of our marriage. But there are considerations beyond that day, which have presented themselves, and demand sober consideration. In a word, Rosa, I cannot afford to marry. My income will not justify the step."

no special value, an ingrain carpet on the floor, and plain white curtains, looped back with blue ribbons, made up the complete inventory, for there was a piano against the wall, the dark case and plain style of which showed it to be no recent purchase. The instrument had been Rosa's as the observant visitor correctly inferred.

After a pleasant talk of some minutes Rosa left the room, and not long after returned, bearing a tray on which were tea, toast, butter, biscuit, cold tongue and sweetmeats. There was a beautiful glow on her face as she entered, but nothing of shame or hurt pride. With her own fair hands she arranged the table, and then took her place at the head to serve her husband and his friend. The heart of Mr. Blair glowed and stirred with a new impulse as he looked into the pure, sweet, happy face of the young wife, as she poured out the tea and served the meal which she had prepared.

After supper Rosa removed the things, and was absent nearly half an hour. She returned through her chamber, which adjoined their little parlor, breakfast and sitting room, all in one, with just the slightest change in her attire, and looking as fresh, happy and beautiful as if entertaining a drawing room full of company. The evening passed in reading and pleasant conversation.

As Mr. Blair was about retiring, Adrian said: "Do you think, now, that we were fools to marry?" "The hour of the meeting came round, and Parson Surely met his people at the church. They were all there—some anxious, the remainder curious.

"Now, my friends," said the pastor rising upon the platform. "I have come to hear your request. What is it?" "We want rain," bluntly spoke Farmer Sharp, "and you know you promised to give it to us."

"Very well," repeated half a dozen voices. "I will give it to you." "So we shall see," added the lady. The hour of the meeting came round, and Parson Surely met his people at the church. They were all there—some anxious, the remainder curious.

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too, that the farmers here will be wanting rain very often when there is none for them. You will be disgraced." "I will teach them a lesson," returned the pastor.

"Ay, but you cannot be as good as your word; and when you have taught it to them, they will turn you off." "We shall see," was Mr. Surely's reply, and he took up a book and commenced reading.

"Time flew on, and the hot days of mid-summer were at hand. For three weeks it had not rained, and the young corn was beginning to curl up beneath the effects of the drought. In this extremity the people bethought themselves of the promise of their pastor, and hastened to him.

"Come," said Sharp, whose hilly farm was suffering severely, "we want rain. You remember your promise?" "Certainly," returned Mr. Surely. "If you will call for a meeting of the members of the parish, I will be with them this evening."

"With this the applicants were perfectly satisfied, and forthwith they hastened to call the flock together." "Now, you will see the hour of your disgrace," said Mrs. Surely, after the visitors had gone. "Oh, I am sorry you ever undertook to deceive them so."

"I did not deceive them." "Yes you surely did." "We shall see." "So we shall see," added the lady. The hour of the meeting came round, and Parson Surely met his people at the church. They were all there—some anxious, the remainder curious.

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vised, they entreated and they helped him; but all in vain, and so one after another gave him up in despair, declaring with a sigh, that as for poor Ruckwart, there was no use in trying to help him—he was past being helped.

He had one friend, however, whose heart was in the right place, and who was not only a good man, but a very clear-sighted one. This friend thought he would not give Herr Ruckwart up altogether, without making one more attempt to save him. So one day he led the conversation, as if accidentally, to the subject of sparrows, relating many anecdotes of these birds, and observing how greatly they had multiplied of late, and how very cunning and voracious they had become.

Herr Ruckwart shook his head gravely, in answer to this observation, and said—"They are indeed most destructive creatures. For my part, I have not the slightest doubt that it is mainly owing to their depredations that my harvest has of late years been so unproductive."

To this conjecture his old friend made no rejoinder; but after a moment's pause, he continued the conversation by another interrogatory—"Neighbor, have you ever seen a white sparrow?" "No," replied Ruckwart; "the sparrows which alight in my fields are all the common grey sort."

"That is very probable, too," rejoined his friend. "The habits of the white sparrow are peculiar to itself. Only one comes into the world every year, and being so different from his fellows, other sparrows take a dislike for it, and peck at it when it appears among them. For this reason it seeks its food early in the morning, before the rest of the feathered tribe are astir, and then goes back to its nest, where it remains for the rest of the day."

"That is very strange," exclaimed Ruckwart. "I must truly try and get a sight at that sparrow—and if possible I will catch it, too."

On the morning following this conversation, the farmer rose with the sun, and sallied forth into the field. He walked around his farm, searched his farmyard in every quarter, examining the roof of his garters, and the trees of his orchards, to see whether he could discover any traces of the wonderful white sparrow! But the white sparrow, to the great disappointment of the farmer, would not show itself, or stir from its imaginary nest.

What vexed the farmer still more, however, was that although the sun stood high in the heavens by the time he had concluded his round, not one of the farm laborers were astir. They, too, seemed resolved not to stir from their beds. Meanwhile, the cattle were bellowing in their stalls with hunger, and not a soul was near to feed them.

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