

The Stage Driver's Wife.

Four bay horses dashed in fine style to the door of the Inn, pulling behind them the gorgeous red stage, which swayed and reeled and rocked in a fashion that made the more nervous passengers wince and shiver.

Hollister threw his reins to the stable boy, and went into the house. He was a bluff, big-fisted fellow—rather rough looking in his skin overcoat and broad-visored cap. Nobody ever doubted the kindness of heart under this unpolished exterior however.

Now, as he tramped through the big hall, on his way to the bar-room, he paused at the sight of a female figure in one dim corner, with her face dropped into both hands, and her whole attitude one of sorrow and despair. The figure was slender and young, clad in a well worn gray suit, and the hands on which the brown hair was bowed were white and delicate.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am. Are you in trouble? Can I be of service to you?"

Then the girl looked up, and Hollister recognized the daughter of a man who had been at the inn for some weeks—a man whom the driver had no hesitation in classing as an adventurer and a blackleg.

He had pitied the girl on that night when he had brought them out from the city; for she seemed a lady, with her quiet ways and her wistful eyes, and not at all fitted for a life of Bohemianism, such as it was evident her father was leading her.

She looked up, I say, and meeting the expression of honest kindness in Frank Hollister's clear gray eyes, she struggled a moment for self control and then burst into tears.

Frank squared his broad shoulders before her in order to screen her from the curious gaze of any who might pass through the hall, and waited in silence.

Presently the girl raised her head once more, looked at him with tear-stained eyes and said with quivering lips:

"I am in trouble, sir. Yours are the first friendly words I have heard to-day. My father," here a crimson flush dyed her fair brow—"my father has left me; where he has gone I do not know. I am absolutely alone among strangers, and our bill here is unpaid."

For one instant Frank looked at her doubtfully, and then with a sudden rush of self shame and chivalry, his hand went into his breast pocket and drew therefrom a big leather pocket-book.

The girl made a little, indignant gesture, and looked at him with wide-opened, haughty eyes.

"Sir! I scarcely expected an insult!" Whereupon Frank began a hurried and indignant repudiation of her insinuation. He insult a woman! He who had the dearest mother and the sweetest little sister in the world, away off there in the United States, praying for him!

"Praps I ain't so dainty in my choice of words as I might be, lady. I'm a rough fellow at best; but I'm dreadfully soft-hearted where a woman is concerned. If you choose to look on me as a friend and a straight man—one that never goes back on his word, you shan't be disappointed. Now, then, how can I serve you?"

The big pocket-book had disappeared, and the girl's face softened at his rough gallantry. She extended one little hand frankly.

"Forgive me, sir; I know that you are all that you seem. I cannot accept any pecuniary aid from you or any one. The landlord has offered me a situation as table girl. I shall accept it, and in that way can pay our indebtedness. Thanks for your kindness, I shall not forget it."

With a little flitting smile she slipped past him and went swiftly up the dark stairway, while the driver proceeded to the bar room, where the men were talking, laughing, smoking and drinking.

Here Hollister listened to a detailed account of the disappearance of Colonel Pressey, interspersed with various comments concerning him and his daughter Cora.

Pressey was stigmatized as a cheat, a villain and a sponge—anything and everything, they called him, but an honest man. There were some expressions of sympathy for the girl, but

it was easy to see she was not liked. Miss Pressey had held herself too far aloof from every one in the house to win the approval of this free and easy western community.

One loutish looking fellow, leaning against the bar rail, remarked, with a sneering grin:

"That gal's a mighty stuck up little critter—reckon she won't put on any more airs with me!" and he sent a stream of tobacco juice in a very skillful manner straight into the mouth of a spittoon which occupied the centre of the room.

Hollister, who had been a silent listener until now, crossed leisurely to this extraordinary marksman, and striking him a light blow upon the shoulder, said, evenly and distinctly:

"Look here, Jerry, you don't want to talk any more like that about Miss Pressey."

"Goin' to marry her, Frank?"

"I expect to," replied Frank, coolly, as he turned to select a cigar from the case.

There were no more insinuations against Cora Pressey in his hearing. The daughter of an unknown adventurer, no matter how thorough a lady she might seem, and the sweetheart of the jolly, keen-eyed, strong-armed, stage-driver, were two different persons, and when the lonely girl entered upon her new duties the next day, she was surprised at the kindness and consideration of all about her.

Frank did not try to weaken the impression which his words had made. He knew that it would be her surest protection; and he felt an intense desire to protect and to help her—she was so delicate and sorrowful, so absolutely alone, now that her unnatural parent had deserted her.

Two or three uneventful days went by Cora filling her new situation with satisfactory promptness. Every night, on the arrival of Hollister's stage, she was left to wait upon him in the dining room.

She felt an instinctive confidence in this big, bluff, sun-burned fellow. There was a bond of sympathy growing between them which she had no desire to break.

One day, twenty miles down his route, Frank heard a bit of news which worked him into a fever of impatience. Never had the whip curled so harshly over the flanks of his sturdy horses; never had he made better time than on that day, when it seemed to him but a snail's pace.

At last, however, the stage drew up before the inn whose roof sheltered the girl who, in a few short days, had grown inexpressibly dear to the driver.

He held a hurried consultation with the hostler, which resulted in the latter agreeing to drive the stage on to its destination for a certain sum of money.

Then Frank went into the long dining room, and seating himself at one of the small tables in a secluded corner, he waited for Cora Pressey.

He blushed to the roots of his curly, curling brown hair as he smiled at her. She noticed it, and wondered silently, thinking, meanwhile, that he was not half as bad-looking fellow with his broad brown, honest eyes, and firm lips.

"Miss Cora," he said, rather awkwardly, "I would like to have you ride with me this evening, if you will. I have something of importance to tell you," he added, hurriedly, growing redder than ever with embarrassment.

Cora looked at him wishfully. Was it something about her father? But she dared not put the thought into words—there were too many about. So she merely bowed her head in acceptance of his invitation, and went away.

Half an hour later she was tucked into a trim little cutter beside him, dashing along over the white moonlit road, and waiting anxiously for him to reveal the matter of importance at which he had hinted.

But Frank was curiously silent for a long while. It seemed to Cora that he would never speak. At last, with a sudden effort, he said:

"Miss Cora, you've known me only a few days, but you've seen enough of me to know that I'm a blunt spoken fellow, so I hope you won't be upset by what I'm going to say. I'm not much of a fine gentleman, but I haven't any very bad habits and make a fair living, and—and—will, I want a wife, little gal, and I love you. If

you'll have me, I'll do my prettiest to make you the happiest woman in the country."

Cora smiled up at him through tearful eyes, and this gave him courage to slip one arm over the back of the cutter and draw her closer to his side.

She murmured something about being almost a stranger to him; but, Frank, grown wonderfully bold, pressed with his lips the lids over the girl's dark eyes, and queried:

"Do you love any other man?"

"No," she answered, honestly enough; "I believe you are the best man I ever knew."

Whereupon Frank kissed her again upon the lips this time, and made a second proposition, to which at first she would not listen. But the will and the energy of her earnest-hearted wooer carried the day, and the result was a call upon a justice of peace; and when they re-entered the inn that night the girl was Cora Pressey no longer, but Cora Hollister, and Frank's face was radiant and triumphant.

In the dingy waiting-room an excited crowd was gathered.

Frank endeavored to hurry his wife past the doorway, but her quick glance had caught a glimpse of a familiar figure.

"Father!" she cried, and stepped into the room.

Yes, there he was, haggard and disheveled, with bloodshot eyes and unshaven face. He might have been fine-looking once. There was just the ghost of a debonair gentleman about him still despite his wretchedness. An officer guarded him on the other side.

"What has he done?" cried Cora with pallid lips.

Some one in the crowd answered brutally enough,

"Killed a brother gambler twenty miles back. They're taking him through the city."

Then the poor little bride went into a dead faint in her husband's arms, and he carried her up-stairs with his brown cheek against her white one.

All night he watched beside her while she went from one deathly swoon into another. At last in the gray morning she smiled sadly into her husband's eyes, and whispered:

"Do not be troubled. I will go away."

"Not if I can help it," answered Frank, with a grim set of his underlip.

Then all at once he put his face down on the pillow beside her and began to cry like a two-year-old baby.

With her slender hands she stroked the man's big curly head, and talked to him in a sweet, weary way that went straight to his warm heart.

"Dear friend," she said, "I know how unselfish you are, but I will not allow you to make such a sacrifice. You shall not share my shame."

"Look here little woman, I knew all about this affair yesterday morning; that's why I was in such a rush to get married. I knew they would bring Colonel Pressey through here, and I knew if I did not make sure of you then, that I never should get you. My little darlin' wife," he went on, kissing her hair, and eyes, and lips; "thank God nothing can separate us—nothing but death."

And looking into her husband's eyes Cora knew that here was her safe home and shelter for evermore.

My reader would set me down as an unsatisfactory story teller were I to omit the sequel.

Colonel Pressey committed suicide a month later in his prison cell.

Frank took his little wife away to his eastern home, where she lives a contented little matron, proud and happy in her husband's love, and the possession of a cooling, bright-faced baby.

A conversation between a married man and confirmed old bacheror.

"Do you know that it is a most lamentable thing that you are not married?"

"Why?"

"Because you are leading such a lonely, selfish life. Suppose some one should be obliged to break into your room some morning and find you dead."

"Well, it might hurt his feelings, but I'm sure it would not injure mine in the least."

Knights of Labor.

ANOTHER SECRET CIRCULAR FROM MR. POWDERLY.

CHICAGO, May 10.—The Daily News publishes the following this morning: The following secret circular has been received by the Knights of Labor of Chicago, and will be read in the various assemblies during the coming week:

NOBLE ORDER OF THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR OF AMERICA, PHILADELPHIA, May 3, 1886.—To the Order Everywhere—Greeting: The response to the secret circular issued on March 13 has been so generous, and the indorsement of the sentiments contained in it has been so unanimous, that I feel encouraged and strengthened in the work. Nearly 4000 assemblies have pledged themselves to act on the advice contained in the circular of March 13. I feel that it only requires the coming to the front of the real men of our Order to set us right before the world. We have been losing ground, so far as public opinion is concerned, for some time. One of the causes is that we have allowed things to be done under the name of the Knights of Labor for which the organization was in no way responsible. I ask of our members to keep a jealous eye upon the doings of the labor men who never labor, and when they charge anything to our Order in your locality set the seal of your condemnation upon it at once by denying it. If a paper criticises the Knights of Labor or its officers, do not boycott it; and if you have any such boycotts on, remove them. A journal not long since made some uncomplimentary allusion to the General Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, and at the next meeting of the nearest assembly a motion was passed to boycott the paper; not that alone, but every person who advertised in the columns of the paper. I wrote to the assembly that they remove the boycott, and it was done. We must bear in mind that the General Master Workman is only a man, and is not above criticism.

THE RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH. We demand for ourselves the right of free speech. We cannot consistently deny it to others. We must tolerate fair, open criticism. If a reply is necessary, make it in a gentlemanly dignified manner. If we are criticised or abused by a blackguard sheet, treat it as you would the blackguard himself—in silence. That our aims and objects are good is no reason why our members should be regarded as beings of superior build or material. We are no more the salt of the earth than the millions of unknown toilers who do the work of the world. In our dealings with laborers and capitalists we must deal justly and fairly by them. If we would have it equally done to us, we in turn must do equally to others. This is the aim of the Knights of Labor, and must not be lost sight of in the future.

THE ORDER USED AS A TAIL FOR DIFFERENT KITES.

Let me direct your attention to a few little abuses: I find that wherever a strike occurs appeals for aid are scattered broadcast among the assemblies. Do not pay one cent for such purposes in the future, unless the appeal comes from your own District Assembly, or from the General Assembly. If boycott notices are sent to you, burn them. I have in my possession 400 boycott notices which were sent to assemblies with a request that they be acted upon. Let me mention some of them: A member is editing a paper; he fears a rival and proceeds to get into an altercation with him, boycotts him, and then asks the Order to carry it out. A certain paper is influential in one or the other of the political parties; members of the opposing party conceive the idea of getting rid of the paper, and they invoke the aid of the Knights of Labor, first taking the precaution to have the paper in question say something uncomplimentary of the Knights of Labor. In fact, our Order has been used as a tail for a hundred different kites, and in future it must soar aloft free from all of them.

THE EVILS OF THE BOYCOTT. I hate the word boycott. I was boycotted ten years ago and could not get work at my trade for months. It is a bad practice; it has been handed to us by the capitalist. I have use

for it only when everything else fails.

Appeals for aid, circulars, petitions advertisements of every kind are scattered everywhere through the Order. I copy a letter which comes to me on the subject: "A large part of our time has been spent in reading boycott notices and appeals for aid, keeping us in until 12 o'clock. We were led to believe the Knights of Labor to be an educational institution; but this kind of education is not productive of good. We have no time for instruction. What do you advise us to do?"

I advise then to either burn or table these matters, and now ask of the Secretary of each assembly to do the same. If your Journal were not boycotted by our members, it could be made the medium of communication between the general officers and the Order, but the Journal is not read in one-quarter of the assemblies. Some assemblies send our documents in envelopes addressed to "Secretary of Anvelpsy No.—." In many places the Secretaries have been discharged because of this practice. No member has the right to address another in that way, and if it is ever practiced again the offender will be punished.

THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MUST BE SUSTAINED.

In future the General Executive Board must not be interfered with in the performance of its duty. If you have confidence in its members sustain them and obey them; if not, ask for their resignations. While the Board was endeavoring to settle the Southwestern trouble, assemblies in some places, with the best of intentions, no doubt, were passing and publishing resolutions condemning Jay Gould. These things did no good. On the contrary, they were injurious. In the settlement of troubles, it becomes the duty of the Executive Board to meet everybody and go everywhere. While its members are doing this they must not be hampered by the actions of those who do not know what their task is. Keep quiet; let your officers do their best, and if you cannot find a way, do not retard their progress.

Resolutions do not prevent land stealing, stock watering nor gambling in the necessities of life. If I had my mind made up to rob a bank at midnight a string of resolutions as long as the moral law protecting against my contemplated action would not influence me a particle; but if some interested party would take the trouble to study up the question, and would inform himself as to my right to rob the bank, and would stand guard at the door of the vault, I would not rob it at midnight if he did his duty. What we want from our members is not gush or windy resolutions about our rights. We know we have rights without passing resolutions. Men who think, study and act are required.

SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The General Assembly will meet in special session on the 25th of May in the city of Cleveland. From receipt of this letter you must not address any communication to me, nor need you expect an answer if you do. I have thousands of letters piled up around me, and they can never be read, much less answered, by one man. During and since my illness the mail delivered at my house has exceeded 40 letters a day. They come from everybody and everywhere. I must play the part of wheel-horse instead of a leader of a great movement, and our own members are responsible for it.

AN OVERWORKED LEADER.

I ask through the Journal that no one send letters to me. I am told by some to get help. If I had fifty assistants it would do no good, for I take my whole time to read one-half of the letters, and in the middle of my work I am waited on by some committee who generally misrepresent me after they leave me, for every member of the committee will tell a different story. From now until the General Assembly meets I will receive no committee, answer no letters. I must formulate a plan for the future and will not be interfered with. Let me repeat: I will receive no committees, answer no letters; nor will I go anywhere at the request of members of assemblies. This is imperative. I must have a chance to do something of benefit for the Order, and I cannot

do it if I am to sit for eighteen hours a day reading letters which have been answered and re-answered in the Journal and Constitution. What I will say to the General Assembly will be said to the entire Order, and you must give me time to prepare it.

BOOKS AND STUDY, NOT GUNS AND DYNAMITE.

We have had some trouble from drinking members and from men who talk about buying guns and dynamite. If the men who possess money to buy guns and dynamite would invest it in the purchase of some well-selected work on labor, they would put the money to good use. They will never need the guns or dynamite in this country. It is my opinion that the man who does not study the politics of the nation and the wants of the people would make but little use of a rifle.

THE AID OF THE BALLOT-BOX.

The man who cannot vote intelligently, and who will not watch the man he votes for after he is elected, cannot be depended on to use either gun or dynamite. If the head, the brain of man, cannot work out the problem now confronting us, his hand alone will never solve it. If I kill my enemy I silence him, it is true, but I do not convince him. I would make a convert rather than a corpse of my enemy.

THE CAPITALIST ON AN ENEMY.

Men who own capital are not our enemies. If that theory held good the workman of to-day would be the enemy of his fellow-toiler on the morrow, for after all it is how to acquire capital and how to use it properly that we are endeavoring to learn; no, the man of capital is not necessarily the enemy of the laborer; on the contrary, they must be brought closer together. I am well aware that some extremist will say I am advocating a weak plan, and will say that bloodshed and destruction of property alone will solve the problem. If a man speak such sentiments in an assembly, read for him the charge which the Master Workman repeats to the newly initiated who joins our "Army of Peace." If he repeats his nonsense put him out. "In the hands of men entirely great the pen is mightier than the sword." To that I add: In the hands of men entirely mouth the gun is harmless as his word.

THE CURSE OF RUM.

To our drinking members I extend the hand of kindness. I hate the use to which rum has been put, but it is my duty to reach down and lift up the man who has fallen a victim to the use of liquor. If there is such a man within the sound of the Secretary's voice when this is read I ask him to erect on the floor of his assembly, raise his hand to Heaven and repeat with me these words: "I am a Knight of Labor. I believe that every man should be free from the curse of slavery, whether the slavery appears in the shape of monopoly, usury or intemperance. The finest link in the chain of oppression is the one I forge when I drown manhood and reason to drink. No man can rob me of the brain my God has given me unless I am a party to the theft. If I drink to drown grief I bring grief to my wife, child and surrounding friends. I add not one iota to the sum of human happiness when I invite oblivion over the rim of a glass. If one moment's forgetfulness or inattention to duty while drunk brings defeat to the least of labor's plans, a lifetime of attention to duty alone can repair the loss. I promise never again to put myself in such a position."

If every member of the Knights of Labor would only pass a resolution to boycott strong drink, so far as he is concerned, for five years and would pledge his word to study the labor question from his different standpoints, we would then have an invincible host arrayed on the side of justice.

THE TRADE-UNIONS AND THE KNIGHTS.

We have, through some unfortunate misunderstanding, incurred the enmity of several trades-unions. While I can find no excuse for the unmanly attack upon us by some of those people at a time when we stood face to face with a most perplexing question, neither can I see any good reason why there should be any cause for a quarrel. We must have no clashing between the men of labor's army. If I am the cause of the trouble I stand ready at a moment's notice to make