

UNCLE HENRY'S RETURN. OR NOT AT HOME.

An elderly man shabbily, attired was seen walking through one of the fashionable streets in a large city one cold December day. His coat was coarse gray and had evidently seen hard service, though still whole and neat. The traveler walked slowly along, as I have said, examining carefully as he passed, the names on the door plates. He finally paused before a dwelling of showy exterior, which if we may credit the testimony of the plate upon the door, was occupied by Alexander Beaumont.

"Alexander Beaumont?" Yes that's the house," murmured the traveler to himself, as he ascended the steps and rang the door bell?

His summons was answered by a servant who, after a moment's scrutiny, which was not apparently of a favorable character, said roughly.

"Well sir what do you want?"

"Is Mr. Beaumont at home?" asked the old man; without heeding the intentional rudeness.

"No, sir, he is not."

"Then perhaps I can see his wife?"

"I think it is very doubtful, but I will go and see."

The servant withdrew without asking the old man to enter, though the day was very cold, and his clothing seemed to be hardly sufficient to protect him from its inclemency.

Mrs. Beaumont was reclining on a fauteuil in a room handsomely furnished. The last new magazine was in her hand and her eyes were listlessly glancing over its pages. She was interrupted in her reading by the entrance of her servant.

"Well, what now, Betty?" she inquired.

"There is a man down stairs wants to see you ma'am."

"Man! a gentleman you mean?"

"No, ma'am," said Betty, stoutly, for she well understood what made up a gentleman in the conventional sense of the term; "it isn't a gentleman at all, for he's got an old gray coat and he has not got any gloves on."

"What can he want of me?"

"I don't know," he inquired after Mr. Beaumont first.

"You didn't bring him into the parlor did you?"

The girl shook her head.

"You did right, and you'd better tell him I'm not at home."

"Mrs. Beaumont is not at home," said Betty, reappearing at the door.

"I suppose she's engaged," said the old man; "I think she will see me when she learns who I am. Tell her I am her husband's uncle, and my name is Henry Beaumont."

"That old rag-tag mester's uncle," said Betty; wondering as she ascended the stairs.

"Good heavens!" said her mistress, "it ain't that old veteran who strolled off years ago nobody knows where. I did hope he never would come back again. And now I suppose he is as poor as a rat and wants help. Well, he won't get it if I can help it; but I suppose I must see him."

The lady descended, fully prepared to give the visitor a frigid reception.

"I am not mistaken," said the old man with feeling, "it's Alexander's wife."

"You are right, sir, I am the wife of Mr. Alexander Beaumont, and I suppose from your language you are—"

"His uncle Harry. Ah me! I have been gone so many years, and it does me good to return to my kindred."

The old man leaned upon his staff, and his features worked convulsively as thoughts of the past came over his mind. Mrs. Beaumont stood holding the door as if waiting for him to depart. She did not give him any invitation to enter.

such person. His name is Lowe, and he lives in Norton street. Is that all?"

"That is all."

The old man turned his steps towards the street indicated, with many forebodings lest his second visit might be as unwelcome as the first appeared to be.

"Betty," said Mrs. Beaumont, as she closed the door, "if that old fool comes again be sure and not forget to tell him I am not at home."

Norton street was not a fashionable street, nor was the two-story dwelling occupied by William Lowe either handsome or costly. It was marked, however, by an air of neatness, which indicated that its tenants were not regardless of outward appearance.

We will take the liberty of introducing you into a little sitting room, where Mrs. Lowe and her three children were even now seated. A plain serviceable carpet covered the floor, and the remainder of the furniture, though a kind which would hardly be selected for a drawing-room, had a comfortable home-like appearance, which simply satisfied the desire of those who derived their happiness from a higher and less mutable source than outside show. Mrs. Lowe was seated in a rocking chair, engaged in an employment that I am aware is tabooed in all fashionable society, I mean darning stockings.

Emma, a girl of ten, was brushing up the hearth, which the ashes from the grate, in which a blazing fire was burning, had somewhat disordered, while Mary, who was two years younger, was reading. Charley, a little boy of five, with a smiling face that could not help looking roguish, was stroking the old cat the wrong way, much to the disturbance of poor Tabby, who had quietly settled herself down to pleasant dreams upon the hearth-rug.

All at once a loud knock was heard at the door.

"Emma," said the mother, "you may go to the door and see who it is, and invite them in, for it is a cold day."

Emma immediately obeyed her mother's direction.

"Is Mrs. Lowe at home?" inquired Henry Beaumont—for it was he.

"Yes, sir," said Emma, "please walk in, and you may see her."

"She ushered the old man into the comfortable sitting-room."

Mrs. Lowe arose to receive him.

"I believe," he said, "I'm not mistaken in thinking that your name before marriage was Anna Beaumont?"

"You are right, sir, that was my name."

"And you have no recollection of an uncle that wandered away from home and friends, and from whom no tidings have come for many a long year?"

"Yes, sir, I remember him well—my uncle Henry, and I have many times wished I could hear something from him. Can you give me any information?"

"I can, for I am he."

"You my uncle?" said Mrs. Lowe, in surprise, "then you are indeed welcome. Emma, bring your uncle the arm chair and place it close to the fire; and, Mary, bring your father's slippers, for I am sure your dear uncle must long to get off those heavy boots. And now uncle, when you are rested, I must demand a recital of your adventure."

"But your brother Alexander," interrupted Mr. Beaumont, "let me first inquire about him. He lives in the city now, does he not?"

A light cloud came over Mrs. Lowe's face.

"Yes," she said, "he does live in the city, yet, strange as it may appear, I seldom or never see him. He has succeeded well and is wealthy; but ever since he married a wife with a small property and greater pride, he has kept aloof from us. I do not blame him so much as his wife, who is said to have great influence over him. I have called once, but she treated me so coldly that I have not felt disposed to renew my visit."

"I can easily believe it," was the reply, "for I too, have been repulsed."

"You repulsed? Did you give your name and inform her of your relation to her husband?"

"I did but she did not invite me to enter; and she was evidently impatient for me to be gone; I took the hint, and here, I am."

"At least, uncle," said Mrs. Lowe, smilingly, "you need not be afraid of any repulse here."

"Of that I am sure," said the old gentleman, looking affectionately into the face of his niece. "But you have not told of your husband. Let me know whether you have a good match," he added playfully.

"That depends upon what is meant by

the term. If it implies a rich husband, then I failed most certainly, for William's salary is only eight hundred dollars a year, and that is all that we have to depend upon. But for all this I care not, for a kind affectionate husband is of far more worth than a magnificent house and costly furniture."

"You are right," said her uncle warmly, "And I infer that your husband is of such a character."

After some other pleasant conversation, Uncle Henry accepted the earnest invitation of his niece to make her house his home after the lapse of a week or two.

"But you must call here every day and make yourself perfectly at home, even before you come here to stay," persisted his niece.

"Be assured of that."

"In accordance with his promise, Mr. Beaumont made his appearance next day at eleven o'clock, and was received as cordially as before. He had hardly been at the house a quarter of an hour when a loud rap was heard at the door. She beheld two men who had just driven up in a wagon."

"Where is the piano to be put?" they inquired.

"Piano! You have made a mistake; we have not purchased a piano."

"Isn't your name Lowe?"

"Yes."

"Then it is all right. Jim bear a hand for it is confounded heavy."

She turned around in amazement.

"You know," continued the uncle, "that I am going to come and live with you and I thought I would pay my board in advance, that is all. As you expressed a wish yesterday for a piano, I thought it would be as acceptable as any."

"You uncle! Why—excuse me—but I thought from—"

"You mean," said he smiling, "that you thought from any appearance that I could not afford it. And I confess," said he, casting a glance at himself in the glass that my dress is not in the extreme of the fashion, and in fact I was obliged to look sometime, when I called at the second hand clothing store the other day, before I could get these. However, as I have got all the service I wished out of them, I shall throw them aside to-morrow, and appear more respectably clad."

"What! are you wealthy, uncle?"

"Depend upon it, Anna, I didn't spend ten years in the East Indies for nothing," was the reply. "I had a mind, however, to put on the appearance of a poor man and so test the affection and disinterestedness of my relations. One of them, however, I found not at home; I am happy to find myself at home with the other."

Let us now return to the aristocratic Mrs. Beaumont, who a few evenings succeeding the events here recorded, was in the drawing room receiving calls.

"By the way," said a fashionable visitor, "I am to have your relatives—the Lowe's—for my next door neighbors."

"Next door neighbors!" exclaimed Mrs. Beaumont in amazement. "What do you mean?"

"Is it possible you have not heard of their good fortune? Mrs. Lowe's uncle has just returned from the East Indies with an immense fortune. He has taken a house in the same block with ours, and when they have moved into it, he will take up his residence with them. Meanwhile he is stopping at the R—House."

"What! Henry Beaumont?"

"The very same; but I thought you knew it."

When the visitor withdrew Mrs. Beaumont ordered a carriage, and immediately drove to the hotel where her husband's uncle was stopping. She sent up a card and requested an interview.

The servant soon returned with another card on which was traced the significant words:—"NOT AT HOME."

ANECDOTE OF SAM HOUSTON.—General B— had been financial agent to the Penitentiary for many years.—Warmly opposing General Houston's last election as Governor of Texas, and not wishing to lose his place, he in due time presented a petition, asking to be retained his long and faithful services being urged as a reason for granting the prayer of the petitioners.

"It appears from this petition, General," said Houston, "that you have been in the Penitentiary eight years."

"Yes sir."

"And you say you have performed faithfully every duty imposed upon you during that time?"

"Yes sir."

"Then, sir, I pardon you out."

A Remarkable Prisoner.

IN 1831-2 there lived in Monroe county, Mississippi a planter named Woolley. He was a half-breed—at least there was a good deal of Cherokee Indian in him. He owned about two hundred, slaves, and had all the worst habits of the old-time planter; drinking, gambling and horse-racing. These pursuits, alternated, formed his occupation, the plantation being managed by an overseer. He had the sole virtue of possessing an Indian veneration for the sacredness of his word. He would not execute a note for any purpose whatever, and held all men in supreme contempt who violated their pledged word. He had no compunction in killing a man in what he deemed a just quarrel; but his word was his bond.—This was his well-known character, and he could have got credit for thousands on his word, easier than other men could have got hundreds. At the time we speak of, he had killed several persons in gambling quarrels, and was looked upon as a man not to be crossed except at the risk of life.

One night while playing cards at Columbus, a quarrel arose about the game. His opponent was a well-known desperado, and he gave the lie to Woolley's statement. Bowies flashed out simultaneously—both were slightly wounded, when a lucky blow laid Woolley's opponent dead upon the floor. Next morning, Woolley was arrested—arrested because he did not care that it should be otherwise. Woolley had carried his killing so far that the judge felt bound to commit him in order to avoid the imputation of being affected either by the fear of his desperation or wealth. Accordingly to jail went Woolley. The jailor was a weak man—weak in courage and weak to resist the influence of a duceur. After bearing his confinement for a day or two, Woolley sent for the jailor.

"See here, Jim," said he, "you know me; you know I never break my word. Now I want to have a social game with the boys. You can just leave me the key, and when it gets time, I will come and lock myself in and it will be all right."

The argument was enforced by material considerations; and night after night, Woolley used to come out and enjoy his nocturnal liberty. The court sitting soon, he got the case put off, and giving bail in the sum of \$10,000 was released.

At the next term of the court, Woolley was put upon trial; the jury returned a verdict of guilty and the judge sentenced him to one year in the penitentiary at Jackson. The papers were duly made out, and the sheriff proposed to start with him for Jackson but Woolley demurred.

"You know, Sheriff," said he, "that the county is poor—can't afford the trip—and so I'll just let my boy Caesar drive me down to Jackson, and save all the expense. Got the papers?"

The Sheriff produced them, and, ere he was aware, Woolley seized them and put them in his pocket.

"All right," said he; "I shall be off to-morrow morning."

The Sheriff knew that he had a desperate man to deal with, but when he reflected that Woolley never broke his word, and had besides over \$100,000 worth of property he could not move, he made a virtue of necessity, and left things to take their turn.

True to his word, Woolley, left for Jackson, and in due time arrived. Putting up at the Mansion House, he sallied out, visited the gambling hells, with which that town then abounded, and the next morning drove up to the penitentiary.—Entering the ward room he inquired:

"Where shall I find the warden?"

"I am the man," said Col. Dickinson.

"Well, I've brought you a prisoner."

"Where is he?" inquired the warden.

"Here—I am the man," and Woolley handed over the Sheriff's mittimus.

The warden was amazed. Had he a lunatic to deal with, or had the man killed the Sheriff and then come to the prison to defy him? He could not tell; but he determined quickly to keep the man, since he had offered himself.

"Now," said Woolley, "let's go through this place and see how it looks," and so through they went. As they returned to the guard room, Woolley had talked so pleasantly that the warden felt reassured and said jocosely:

"Now, Mr. Woolley, what branch of the business do you like best?"

"To tell the truth, Colonel," said Woolley, "I never did a day's work in my life, and I don't think I'd like any of your cussed trades. I'll tell you how we can fix it—I'll clerk for you just for the name of the thing, and we'll live jolly together till the year's up."

The warden saw he had a character to deal with, and concluded that a man who would go into prison of his own accord, would not run away, so he acquiesced.—Woolley staid his year accordingly; nominal clerk or companion by day, and a gambler by night. He kept the ward room supplied with Havanas, and a sly nook in the office always contained the best of liquors. His year up he left unregretted but regretted, for at heart he was a good fellow and made the warden a jovial companion.

Such was justice in Mississippi forty years ago, but such an incident as this, could hardly have occurred elsewhere.

Selling the Loafers.

MANY years ago, before the advent of railroads in Eastern Maine, it was the custom of country clergymen, in addition to their pastoral duties, to take occasional missionary tours, preaching the gospel in destitute places. They usually traveled with their own teams, stopping wherever night overtook them, gathering such congregations as could hastily be called together, to whom they preached the gospel every evening. Among these occasional itinerants was a Baptist minister of decidedly original character, well acquainted with human nature, and fruitful expedients to accomplish his purpose. On one of his tours in the dead of winter he drove up to a country tavern, where refreshment for man and beast were kept about the middle of the day. The weather was intensely cold and a blazing fire was burning in the fire-place, but it was completely surrounded by a party of town loafers, who showed no disposition to make room for the half-frozen man, who had just entered. The minister stood a moment and looked around so as to take in the situation, then turning to the tavern-keeper said:

"Landlord, I want you to put my horse in the barn and give him half a peck of oysters in the shell."

"Oysters in the shell for a horse?" asked the astonished landlord.

"Yes, sir, oysters in the shell."

"But he won't eat them," said the landlord, still hesitating.

"You give them to him and see," replied the minister.

The landlord started to obey the strange order, and all the loafers in the room followed him to see the result of the experiment of feeding a horse on oysters in the shell. Meanwhile the minister quietly seated himself by the fire and began warming himself. After about five minutes the tavernkeeper returned, saying:

"Your horse won't eat the oysters, and I knew he wouldn't."

"Well, I will, then," quietly returned the clergyman, "bring them in here and roast them, and give my horse some oats."

Just at this time the point of the joke was apparent, but the minister kept his seat by the fire till he was warm when he made a hearty meal on the oysters and departed.

A gentleman in Vicksburg mentions to the Drawer the fact that Dr. D—, long connected with the Freedman's Bureau there, during a conversation with his friend J—, remarked:

"I say, J—, where's that jolly John Ogilvie we used to know, years ago?"

"The poor fellow is dead, Doc., killed at Chattanooga."

"Dead! you don't say so!—then of course no letter can reach him."

"I don't know," replied J—, "perhaps a dead letter might."—Harper's Magazine.

A Convenient loss of Memory.—A gentleman who was very zealous on the subject of horses, but not according to knowledge, bought a mare at auction and rode her home. "Well, Caesar," said he to his sable coachman, "what do you think of her? She cost me five hundred dollars."

"Dunno, master."

"Yes, but what do you think?"

"Well, massa, it makes me tink of what the preacher said yesterday—something about his money is soon parted. I disremember de fus part!"

At the time the money was being raised to build the present Parker House, in Boston, Judge Hoar subscribed ten thousand dollars, with the understanding that he was to name the house. When the money was all subscribed, the Judge was called on for his amount, and for the name. It was then found that he had determined to name the house after himself, and the stockholders therefore declined to receive his subscription, and paid him a handsome sum to relinquish his right to furnish the name.