

The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,
Editor and Proprietor.

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A CONDENSED SERMON.

BY MRS. C. C. FIELD.

THE poor you have to-day,
Close to your very doors;
Search out their need without delay;
Give from your hoarded stores;
Nor deem that with the setting sun
Your work of charity is done.

Forgive your enemies;
Let not your heart be set
On still remembering injuries;
Forgive and then forget;
And know for once how sweet is life,
Lifted above ignoble strife.

Then if you can be free
From lust of power and gain,
From pride, self-love, and vanity,
And all their luring train,
You'll surely have that peace of mind
So you may seek in vain to find.

Easy enough to do?
Simple as one could ask?
Easy to do as preach say you?
Try then the simple task;
And let me know next Sunday morn
How many souls anew are born.

MRS. CHESTER'S DIAMONDS.

"WELL, my dear," said Mrs. Chester, rubbing her plump, white, little hands until the rings that encircled them sparkled like dew-drops in the morning sunshine, "we've got a splendid day for our journey, haven't we? It's almost like Indian summer."

Clara Champfort, Mrs. Hyde Chester's "companion," was sitting by the window, thoughtfully watching the yellow sunshine creep across the pavement. She was a tall, pale girl, with heavy black hair, deep hazel eyes, and complexion colorless as the outlines of a Greek statue—a girl full of odd, peculiar character, concerning whom the servants talked mysteriously; and whom the old Scotch housekeeper hesitated not to pronounce "uncanny." But Mrs. Hyde Chester liked her, and Mrs. Hyde Chester's will was law in her own household.

"I wish you would not go to-day, Mrs. Chester," said Mrs. Champfort, abruptly. "Not go to-day! Why, bless my heart alive, child, what do you mean?"

"I had a dream last night—oh, such a troubled dream, with blood in it and the shine of daggers, and a man's face, dark and square, with overhanging brows and a cast in one eye! And the darkness seemed closing, closing round you and me, and, somehow, the diamonds were sparkling through it all!"

"But, my dear, what nonsense all this is," said Mrs. Hyde Chester, laughing. "Because you had a bad dream last night is no reason we should postpone our journey."

"It is a reason, Mrs. Chester. Now, Clara," laughed the pretty, good-humored lady, "you are really getting too absurd for anything."

"Mrs. Chester, I never dreamed such a dream as that but once before, and then—"

"Then what happened?"

Clara Champfort's voice fell to a whisper. "It was the night before my poor father was summoned out to visit a sick patient. The night was dark and stormy. The horse, missing his road, wandered too near the edge of the old stone-quarry in Wanstone woods, and both were dashed in pieces."

Mrs. Chester's cheek turned a little pale; but she clung resolutely to her own theory. "My dear Clara, it was the merest chance."

"But, Mrs. Chester, you will at least let me persuade you to send the jewels by some safe hand?"

"Nonsense, Clara, why should I? They will be a great deal safer with me, and I want to give them to Geraldine myself the evening before she is married. There's

another good reason for not postponing our journey: I want the evening for a good chat with my favorite niece, instead of arriving just at the last moment before the ceremony."

Clara looked wistful and unconvinced, but she said no more; and Mrs. Hyde Chester sat down to the breakfast table, whence the odor of broiled ham arose in a most appetizing manner.

Mrs. Hyde Chester's niece, Miss Geraldine Raymond, was to be married the next day but one; and Mrs. Hyde Chester had set her warm, impulsive heart on being present at the ceremony; and, moreover, on presenting the bride with a very beautiful set of diamonds, which, with their antique case of dark green morocco, lined with sandal wood and scented satin, had descended from generation to generation in the Chester family, until the present inheritrix of the name, having no daughter of her own, had resolved to give it to her favorite niece. Nor were all the unfavorable omens pertaining to Clara Champfort's dream sufficiently discouraging to prevent her from carrying her determination into instant execution.

"I never was superstitious," said Mrs. Chester, laughing; "and I don't mean to begin now. Are the trunks and things all ready, my dear?"

"Yes, ma'am, they are all ready." "Then, I suppose, we may as well order the carriage. I can't bear to be behind hand at a railroad station. Look! you see I carry the diamonds in my own morocco traveling bag, so they cannot possibly be stolen. Does that content you?"

"Only half, Mrs. Chester," said Clara, smiling a very faint, indistinct kind of a shadowy smile.

Mrs. Hyde Chester, a bustling kind of a person was not satisfied until they were at the station, had purchased their tickets, and safely bestowed themselves in the train.—Clara Champfort was leaning against the window, idly watching the hurrying throngs as they perpetually came and went, when suddenly she withdrew her face, with a low cry.

"Mercy upon us, child!" exclaimed Mrs. Hyde Chester; "what's the matter?"

"The face—the very face I saw in my dream!" Clara cried, her own face blanched like that of a dead person. "Oh, Mrs. Chester, it is not too late for us to turn back yet!"

"Do you mean—"

"I mean that he passed the window just now—with the dark, square face, and the beetling brows, and the cast in one eye. Oh! Mrs. Chester, our Fate is following us in his shape!"

"Clara," said Mrs. Chester, as nearly angry as she could ever be, "I never saw such ridiculous superstition in my life. Do keep your signs and omens to yourself; you fairly make my blood run cold."

"But the diamonds," muttered Clara, as if speaking to herself; "their glitter was interwoven though it all. It must be—yes, it must be that he watched you when you got them from the bank—that he is on your track!"

"Clara, hush! I tell you I will not have it!"

And Mrs. Hyde Chester's fair, plump face actually looked, for the instant, almost pale. Clara turned toward her with an eager, wistful glance.

"We go as far as Terriswode by train. Then Terriswode is twelve miles from Daingerfield, from where we take a private conveyance."

"What kind of a road is it?"

"Very wild and picturesque."

"And lonely?"

"Yes," Mrs. Chester admitted, almost unwillingly, "it is a little lonely."

"Do we pass over it by daylight?"

"Mostly, if the train is in time."

"It will not be in time to-day," said Clara, quietly.

"Clara, how can you tell?"

"I don't know but I am quite sure of it."

"I wouldn't have my head so full of Old World notions as you for its weight in gold, Clara Champfort," said the elder lady, trying to repress a little shudder, which, in spite of herself, would thrill through her frame.

But Miss Champfort, strange to say, was right. The train, due at Terriswode at five did not arrive until some minutes after six, owing to the delay consequent upon repairs on the line.

"I knew it," said Clara quietly, while Mrs. Hyde Chester stared at her, almost beginning to believe that the old housekeeper was right, and Clara Champfort was "uncanny."

There were several rusty equipages wait-

ing at the out-of-the-way little railroad station to carry passengers in various directions; and Mrs. Hyde Chester engaged the most civilized looking of them all to carry herself and her young companion to Daingerfield.

"There," whispered Clara, as she took her seat beside Mrs. Chester, "did you see that man glide past on the platform? I told you he was following us!"

Mrs. Chester stretched her plump neck but she could only see the back of the passer's head.

"After all," said she, argumentively, "a railroad station is free to all."

Clara did not answer, but leaned back in the vehicle.

Mrs. Hyde Chester chatted merrily, as they rolled along over the uneven county roads; but Clara answered but little—she was in no mood for conversation.

The November night, chill and starless, had closed quite dark over the glen of the autumnal copses, as they began to ascend the long, wooded hill that lay between Terriswode and Daingerfield. Both ladies, wearied with their long journey, were quite silent. Mrs. Hyde Chester had fallen into a doze, when she was suddenly roused by the vehicle coming to a full stop.

"Dear me," said Mrs. Chester, sitting upright, "what can be the matter?"

"I'm sorry ma'am," said Jehu, his face appearing, as it were, in a black foam, at the window of the equipage, "but we've broken down."

"Broken down?" "Yes'm; it's—the axle-tree broke clean in halves."

"But can you not mend it?"

"Not unless I had the tools, ma'am, and there ain't a shop this side of Terriswode."

"But what are we to do? We can't stay here all night. We must walk the rest of the way to Daingerfield."

"It's six miles, ma'am, and a mortal bad road."

"But what else can we do?" "You might stay at Toby Wooden's, just beyond—don't you see the light twinklin'?"

"Is it a public house?" "Well, no, ma'am, not exactly, but they does take folks in when they get 'em. And I could ride one of the horses back to Terriswode and get another trap, and you will be at Daingerfield in good time in the morning."

"Oh, dear," said Mrs. Chester, despairingly, "I wish now that I had followed your advice, Clara. I shall not reach Daingerfield to-night after all."

Toby Wooden's proved to be a ruinous old farm-house built on the hillside in the woods, and distinguished mainly by its high-peaked roof and dilapidated porch.

"Well, I s'pose I can take ye in," said Mrs. Wooden's puzzled rejoinder to their petition for a night's shelter. "There's the upstairs chamber—Simeon can take the seed corn out. We've got two men here a'ready, and—"

"Two men?" interposed Clara, eagerly. "What sort of men?"

"One of 'em's Dan Gilbert, the peddler; and t'other's a likely fellow, enough. I don't know what he is, but he squints very bad with one eye."

Mrs. Hyde Chester could feel Clara's grasp tighten on her arm, with a sort of nervous energy.

"I knew it—I knew it!" she whispered, eagerly. "Oh, Mrs. Chester, do not let us come here—do not let us tempt our fate. We had better sit in the carriage all night."

"In the carriage, indeed! What nonsense!" cried Mrs. Chester. "Show us up stairs at once, Mrs. Wooden, please. I am nearly jolted to death in that horrid concern."

The apartment from which a tall, lean-jointed youth was at that moment removing a general chaos of 'seed-ears' of corn, was by no means inviting. A dropsical feather-bed, piled up on a high bedstead, and a three-legged washstand, together with one or two cane-bottomed chairs, completed the furniture of the room—a mournful contrast to Mrs. Hyde Chester's elegant suite of apartments at home.

But she was very tired, and, withal, determined to be pleased, if only only out of contradiction to Clara Champfort.

Clara, full of vague fears, kept the light burning as long as the slender 'dip' of tallow would last, and then, by the stormy moonlight, watched the luckless door in an agony of apprehension.

Nor was her apprehension entirely groundless; for just as the gray dawn of the coming day was blending with the darkness that is always most dense at that hour, the latch was softly lifted, and a figure glided in—the figure of a man.

Clara lay watching, with her breast throbbing wildly—and at the same instant Mrs. Hyde Chester, startled by the creaking of a loose board in the floor of the room, awakened.

Her first impulse was to utter a piercing scream; but Clara's hand was over her mouth in an instant—Clara's firm grasp was holding her down.

The figure glided directly toward the leather reticule which Mrs. Hyde Chester had taken the precaution to conceal beneath the hangings of the window, opened it noiselessly by means of a bunch of skeleton keys which he produced from his pocket, and abstracted something after a moment's noiseless search, with which he withdrew, as silently as a ghost.

Not until his last footstep died away on the stairs, did Clara take her guardian hand from Mrs. Chester's mouth.

"Clara, why did you stop me? Why did you not let me give the alarm?" cried Mrs. Chester, springing from her bed in dismay and consternation.

"Did you wish to be murdered in your bed?"

"Murdered? What mean you?" Mrs. Hyde Chester's blood ran cold.

"He carried a long knife. I saw it shine in the starlight once. Hush!"

Clara was gazing intently from the window. "Come here, Mrs. Chester."

Mrs. Hyde Chester crept tremblingly to her companion's side.

"Look!"

And Clara pointed out a dark figure stealing across the meadow, in the indistinct light, toward the woods that lay beyond.

"He is gone," she said, with strange calmness, "and we are safe—thank heaven we are safe!"

"But my diamonds!" Mrs. Chester had hurried toward the open traveling bag which lay upon the floor beneath the dressing table, and her painful surmises proved correct—the morocco case was gone.

She uttered a low exclamation of despair. "Clara, Clara, how can you stand there so calm?"

"Because I have reason to be calm.—Compose yourself, Mrs. Chester. The diamonds are safe under my pillow. I foresaw this—I read it all, in the dim foreshadowings of my dream—and, when you were asleep, I unpacked the jewels from their case, and secured them. Let the thief go on his way. The green morocco case, though in itself a precious treasure to the antiquary, will hardly recompense him for his waste of time and maneuvers."

Mrs. Hyde Chester clasped Clara to her heart, with a burst of tears, which proved an inexpressible relief to her overcharged feelings.

When daylight once more reddened over the hills, Mrs. Chester and Miss Champfort renewed their journey, and had the gratification of presenting the precious *parure* of diamonds to Miss Geraldine Raymond two hours before the ceremony which transferred the blooming maiden into a demure little wife.

"But if it hadn't been for Clara, dear, you wouldn't have had them, safe and sound," said Mrs. Hyde Chester. "Mind, I don't believe in dreams, but certainly that was the most unaccountable coincidence in the world!"

A Incident at the Battle of New Orleans.

A KENTUCKIAN at the battle of New Orleans, who disdained the restraint of a soldier's life, when his name is upon the muster roll, preferred "going it alone"—fighting on his own hook.—While the battle was raging fiercest and the shot flying thick as hail, carrying death wherever they fell, "Kentucky" might have been seen stationed under a tall maple loading and firing his rifle, as perfectly unconcerned as though he was "pinkin'" for deer. Every time he brought his rifle to his shoulder, a red coat bit the dust. At last he happened to attract the attention of "Old Illickory," who supposed he had become separated from his company, and rode up to him to bring him behind the redoubt, as he was in a position that exposed his person to the fire of the enemy.

"Hallo, my man, what regiment do you belong to?" said the general.

"Regiment—" answered Kentucky.

"Hold on, yonder's another of 'em!" and bringing his shooting iron to his shoulder, he ran his eye along the barrel—a flash, another man came tumbling to the ground.

"Whose company do you belong to?" again inquired the general.

"Company the d—!" was the reply of

Kentucky, as he busied himself loading. "See that 'ar feller with the gold fixens on his coat and hoss? Just watch me perforate him!"

The general gazed in the direction indicated by his rifle, and observed a British general riding up and down the advancing line Kentucky pulled trigger, and the gallant Briton followed his companions that his Kentucky foe had laid low in death that day. "Hurrah for old Kentucky!" shouted the free fighter, as his victim came tumbling from his horse; then turning to the general, he continued, "I'm fightin' on my own hook, stranger!" as he proceeded to load.

THE QUAKER AND THE EARL.

IN THE days when Preston was considered "fashionable," ere the requirements of trade had swallowed up nearly every vestige of green park and spacious gardens formerly connected with many town residences, there was in Stonegate, several neat villas, surrounded by shady trees and luxuriant orchards. One of these was occupied by a rather eccentric Quaker, named John Danson. The house which John occupied was owned by the Earl of Derby, of sporting notoriety. In their early days the embryo earl and the Quaker boy had been schoolfellows at the Preston Grammar School, which was then in Stonegate. The Quaker had been for some time very tardy in paying up his rent, and Mr. Baines, the Earl's agent, had on sundry occasions threatened him with a descent of the "Philistines," in the shape of bailiffs. One morning he started off on foot to Knowsley, and gaining admission to the park, walked up to the hall door, and rang. On the footman answering the bell, John put the simple question, "Is Edward in?"

"Edward!" exclaimed the astonished lackey; "what Edward do you mean?"

"Edward Stanley. He lives here, does he not? Is he in? I want to see him," replied the Quaker.

"Go away, you impertinent fellow!" was the indignant rejoinder, and the footman slammed the door in the Quaker's face.

But John was not to be discouraged by this ungracious reception; he had come to see the Earl, and did see him. The lackey eventually took in his name, and John was immediately ushered into the presence of the noble Earl, whom he saluted with—"Well, Edward, how art thou getting on?"

"Very well, thank you, John," replied his lordship extending his hand and warmly shaking that of his visitor.

"It's a long time since thou and I went to Preston Grammar School together," added the blunt Quaker.

"It is, indeed, John, a very long time," replied his lordship. "I am very glad to see you. How are you getting along? And what has brought you over here to Knowsley?"

"I am sorry to say," responded John, "that I have been getting on very badly lately. I cannot raise brass to pay my rent, and that man of thine at Preston—Baines—he's a vast saucy fellow—says if I don't pay up before next Thursday he'll send th' bums. So, I've come to ask thee to give me a bit longer time."

"Well, John," said his lordship, "I suppose you've been rather unfortunate lately; so I'll forgive you the rent altogether.—And," added his lordship, "I'll tell you what I'll do further. You may live in the house rent free as long as you live."—John's protestations of gratitude for this act of generosity were unbounded. He took his departure from Knowsley with a much lighter heart than when approaching it. Some time after John's visit to Knowsley, during one of the race weeks, Lord Derby, when proceeding to the Cock Pit, to join in his favorite sport, met John in Stonegate, when, after a friendly salute, the latter said: "I see, Edward, thou hasn't given up thy silly sinful practices yet?"

"No, John," replied the earl, "I have not. But if all my tenants paid their rents as you do, I should very soon have to give up altogether," and with this rebuke his lordship walked on.

A young lady hesitating for a word in describing the character of a rejected suitor, said: "He is not a tyrant, not exactly domineering, but—" "Dogmatic," suggested her friend. "No, he has not dignity enough for that. I think *pupmatic* would convey my meaning admirably."

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