

AMOS DYKE'S FORTUNE.

THE time of our little tale shall be some sixty years ago, before express trains tore along at the rate of fifty miles an hour, before chimney-pot hats were in fashion, and when there were many quaint old ways and customs in dress and manners which have now faded quite away.

And the hero of our tale shall be Amos Dyke, the son of the Hollington carrier. Old Peter Dyke, the Hollington carrier, lived in a little side place off the main street of the town, and commenced life with only a few shillings in his pocket. By honest industry he had accumulated enough to establish a good business, and at last he became the Hollington carrier.

Old Peter died, leaving a son about ten years of age, and enough for him to start well in life, and something more. But as he was so young it was necessary that he should have some one to look after him and his property; and who so fit as the miller, Crust, to undertake the task? Crust was nothing loath; he promised to befriend the boy, and do the best he could for him; and as Crust was an honest man, everything promised fair for Amos.

Old Peter Dyke's business was sold at his death, according to his express wish; and according to arrangements made between the miller and the old man, the proceeds were all invested in the mill—a flourishing concern—and one out of which all the neighbors said a fortune must sooner or later be made.

The prospects of Amos Dyke, then, were about as bright as those of any young man in his rank of life all the country round.

The miller did not neglect his young charge's education. He gave him the very best the neighborhood afforded, and acted honorably by him in every way.

Thus grew up Amos Dyke to manhood; and side with him grew Mary Crust. And often, if the truth were known, the worthy miller looked with satisfaction upon them, as they sat one on each side of his table, and thought that perhaps some day, when he was gone, Amos and Mary would be in their places at the head and foot of the table, and perhaps the mill be more flourishing than ever.

There was one drawback to this agreeable prospect. Amos Dyke was rather of a dreamy nature—he was often absent as though his thoughts were far away; and he had to own that many a time when he should have been attending to what he was at, he was building castles in the air instead.

Time passed on, as it will always keep doing, and Amos was now twenty and Mary was eighteen—and in another year, on New Year's-day, Amos would be of age and would come in for his share of the mill. He hoped also to come in for his share of Mary.

But alas! alas! there was a heavy cloud looming over the Hollington mill. The worthy miller entered into a large—too large a contract to supply flour at a given price for several months; he thought he knew what he was about; and if others had been as true to him, as he was in his dealings, all would have been well; but the contract proved his ruin. One dreadful morning the post brought him the announcement that he was a bankrupt—he, and Amos, and Mary—all of them were undone.

Honest John Crust could have borne his own losses well enough, if he had no one else to think of but himself. Time was, when he had only bread and cheese; and on bread and cheese he could live again; but there were others to think of too. Ah! the "others"—these are what makes life's trials and losses often so hard to bear. To see them want—to see them pinched; this soon doubles trial and loss.

And the weight of it proved too much for honest John; the trouble struck him with a deadly chill, and he did not survive it long.

Amos tended the miller along with Mary, during his short illness; and as the time drew near when it was plain that the good man could not last long, he gave them both his last directions.

"Amos," said the dying man, "if this trouble had not come you would sooner or later have had all the Hollington mill—your own share and mine too; for Mary is all I have in the world, and she would have been yours, and with her whatever I had; but now it is all gone. But whatever has gone our good name has not; and, believe me, a good name is worth money. 'Tis worth respect and honor and trust, which are better than money; but these often bring money too. 'Tis an awful thing when parents leave their children a bad name; my poor schoolfellow Bence Porter used to say that 'it took him seven years to wipe off his father's name from him'—ay—seven years' hard work, had he, as an honest man, before any one for miles round would trust him with a shilling, though he was as honest as the sun. And now, Amos, give up day-dreaming. Perhaps you thought you could afford it when you knew you had a tidy fortune coming to you, and while you had no responsibility or care, for I was the head of everything. Well, you were wrong there; no man can day-dream without coming to loss; but if you could not afford it then, how much less now. Believe me, Amos, folks don't dream themselves into anything. Be up and doing, and with

God's blessing all may yet be well. Keep from wishing, wishing, and be doing, doing, and with industry, honesty, and thrift, and the blessing of your God, you will do well."

This was the last talk the miller had with Amos about worldly things, though he said much to him about the happier and better land—for the good man had that above which no losses or bankruptcies could take away.

Mary Crust had to do what she could for her own living, for now the mill and all belonging to it was to be sold; but she had her brave father's heart and courage, and was quite prepared for whatever duty pointed out as the right course. Friends found her a situation as companion to a lady who lived in London. It seemed to be in every way what was desirable; and though Amos would have kept her in Hollington if he could, Mary was determined. She remained Amos of all her father had said to him about day-dreaming—that honest work was what lay before them; and that if they both stuck to it, honest work would sooner or later bring them together as man and wife. "How soon that will be," said Mary Crust, "depends most likely, Amos upon yourself."

So the miller's daughter went off to her situation, and Amos remained at Hollington.

Amos Dyke was not quite without resources. The creditors of the Hollington miller when they met, had as their chairman a worthy "Friend," named Helps, who at the end of the meeting, addressed his brother creditors on behalf of Amos.

"There is one matter," said Mr. Joshua Helps, "which I wish to bring before the meeting before we part: it is the case of the young man Dyke. I think we ought to show pity for that young man; he is now beggared through no fault of his own; and I would propose a subscription on his behalf. If there be any who will follow me, I will give £10 to begin with."

The proposition of the worthy Quaker was successful. £100 was raised for Amos in the room.

"Look thee here, friend," said the Quaker; "here are the materials for an ample fortune. Fortunes have been made out of a penny piece; how much more can they be made out of £100. Now stir thyself, and this money aright, and thou wilt do well."

Amos took the money with much gratitude, and, in truth, intended to do no end of things with it; but day after day slipped by, and while he was intending to do a great deal, he really did nothing.

And every day he found it harder and harder to begin. He had no immediate necessity, for this money supplied him with all he required; and always thinking that this thing and that thing were not good enough, he allowed month after month to pass.

One grand chance Amos let slip. The Hollington carrier, who had succeeded his father, offered to give him a share of the business if he would put £50 in it, and undertake to drive one of the teams himself; but Amos was above taking to the road, and so that chance passed by.

"Now," said Amos, as he sat dreamily by the roadside one day, as the Guilford and London coach drove by, with a team of four splendid grays, "if I could get a share in a turn-out like that I shouldn't mind driving it."

On came the coach; and there is no knowing how long Amos Dyke might have sat there had not an elderly gentleman shouted to him, as he passed, and cried, "Ah, friend Amos Dyke, is that thee? what art thou doing there? Here coachman! Hallo, coachman! wait one moment; we'll take up this young man for a mile or two, and I'll pay for him. Now then, friend Amos, squeeze in here by me; now tell me how thou art getting on, and what kind of business thou hast put that £100 in, which allows thee to be sitting doing nothing by the road-side at this hour of the day. My experience of a £100 is, that it requires a deal of looking after; but perhaps thou hast found some new way of making money work while thou dost play."

A few words, and indeed poor Amos looks revealed to the shrewd Quaker exactly how the matter lay. It was no part of the worthy man's intention to shame Amos before other people, so he said no more until they arrived at the next stage. Then, while horses were being changed, Mr. Joshua Helps said, "Thou hast nothing to do, so thou shalt come on to London with me; I will take care of thee, and bring thee back all safe to-morrow."

Amos felt a thrill of delight at the proposition, and, in the fulness of his joy, told the Quaker of the special attraction he had there; indeed, in his simplicity, he even went so far as to confess that he used frequently to go and sit on that seat, where he had found him, to look at the coach that had borne away the one he loved; and that he had a dreamy kind of pleasure in thinking that it was going to the place where she was.

"And will the coach's going bring thee any nearer?" said Mr. Joshua; "what good will that do thee?" Mr. Joshua did not say this because he did not believe in love—not he. He had loved Sarah Short himself, and never ceased until he made her Sarah Helps; but he did not believe in dreamy love but in working love. He used

to say, "Orpah kissed Naomi, but Ruth clave unto her."

All that day Mr. Joshua Helps took Amos Dyke about with him, continually directing his attention to one person, and one thing and another, in this fashion—"Dost thou see that horse, Amos—how it pulls? Dost thou see what haste that man is making with that parcel? Dost thou perceive how everybody is going somewhere, and doing something?" And indeed the young man need have had no greater example of energy than Mr. Joshua himself, who pulling out his watch often from time to time, was evidently intent on getting through no end of work before evening.

When evening came, Amos asked if he could go out and try to get a sight of Mary as he was so fortunate as to be near where she was.

"And how wilt thou go to her, and with what sort of a tale?" said the Quaker; "how wilt thou answer her questions when she asks thee what thou art doing, and how much nearer marriage thou art? I should be ashamed," said he, "to have asked to see my Sarah under circumstances like these; and indeed I am doubtful if she on her part, would have seen me. Now take my advice, young man," said Mr. Joshua; "remain here quietly with me this evening, and let us talk over matters, and to-morrow thou shalt return with me; and I tell thee it will be worth a ten-pound note to thee, and more, if thou dost not go to see that young woman. I am not going to tell thee how it will be worth so much money, but I do tell thee that it is so, and if thou takest my word thou wilt find it so too."

That evening the good Quaker kept Amos at his lodgings, and talked with him over his affairs, and over his faults, which were surely among the most important of those affairs.

"Now, I will start thee," said the good man, "only on one condition, and that is, that thou wilt promise never to go to see thy Mary until thou canst give her a good account of thyself and thy concerns—or at any rate, of thy industry and efforts—one such as thy conscience can approve of."

These seemed rather hard lines for poor Amos. Still he agreed to them, for his £100 was slipping fast away.

On the following day, good Joshua Helps went to the Hollington carrier, the successor of Amos' father, and then and there made an agreement with him that the young man should have the place originally offered to him. Mr. Joshua himself advanced what was necessary, on the condition that it was repaid to him in due season.

Very many struggles had Amos with himself as he, for the first time, put on his carrier's clothes and prepared to start with the team; but he overcame them all: honor, gratitude the hope of getting Mary Crust, and of shortening the dreadful time during which he could not see her, all spurred him on to do the thing which was right.

Two long years had passed away, and now Amos had fairly and honestly set himself to work. The long road journeys, the "all weathers," which he had to meet, the old carrier's exactness and everything—to a farthing in money, to a minute in time—all helped to make him a business man.

At last the happy day came near. The old carrier sent for Amos one morning, and told him that he was beginning to feel too old to go the London stage any more; that he was about to give the journey up to him.

And now when Amos began seriously to reflect on the past, and see where he stood at the present, he felt that he had earned the right to see Mary, and could give her by word of mouth a good account of himself; but first he felt he ought to consult his friend Mr. Joshua Helps.

"And now," said Mr. Joshua, "canst thou pay me back what I have advanced for thee, for whilst thou art in debt there is nothing thou canst call thine own?"

"Ay, here it is," said Amos, pulling out a great leather purse, and counting the money out in guineas on the table; "I brought it, for I felt I could not answer Mary, if she asked me if I owed anything."

"Then go and see thy Mary," said the Quaker; "and when thou comest back, come and tell me how she is, and how much she has saved."

Folks may wonder what the Quaker wanted to know about Mary's savings for; but he had a reason of his own. He meant Amos now to marry Mary, and he went to help them too; but he would not put his money where it would not be safe—into idle, dreamy, spendthrift hands.

So Mr. Joshua bought up the business of the Hollington carrier, and also the stage which dashed past dreamy Amos with the four gallant grays; and he made one fine business of them all.

Amos Dyke now changed the wagon for the coach, and drove the grays many a time himself. He never drank, and never dreamed—at least by day. He worked like an honest man; and at last, by God's blessing commenced a new year, himself the proprietor of the whole concern. One thought often came into the mind of Amos and his wife, and that was, how delightful it would be to purchase the old mill. As time wore on this also was accomplished, and Amos Dyke and his wife had the pleasure of seeing two of their own sons prospering in it.

A Yankee's Chances.

A YANKEE old bachelor was once bantered on the subject of matrimony by a young girl, who told him she didn't believe he ever found a woman who'd have him.

"Yes, I did," replied he, "I had three chances to get married, and they all 'busted,' so I never tried a fourth."

"Pray how was that?" inquired the young lady.

"Why, you see, I courted Deacon Hawkin's darter Deborah—Deb, they used to call her—and so one night we made it up between us to get married. Well, while we were going to the parson's, I accidentally slouched my foot into a mud puddle and spattered mud all over Deb's new gown; it was made out'n one of her grandmother's chintz petticoats, and she was so proud of the rig that she got mad as hops. Wa'al when we got to the parson's the ceremony began and he asked Deb if she would take me for her lawful wedded husband. 'No!' says she; 'I've taken a mislikin' to him since I left home!'"

"The parson laughed and so did his wife and darter, who had come in to see the ceremony, and I felt streaked as thunder, while Deb went off in a sniff."

"Wa'al it was all up, of course, for the time being; but I was determined to have some satisfaction for such mean treatment, so I began to shine up to her again; I gin her a new string of beads, a few kisses and some other notions until finally we made it all up, and we went to the parson's a second time. We was stood out, the middle of the room and he ax'd me if I would take Deborah for my lawful wedded wife?" "No!" said I, "I've taken a mislikin' to her since I was here last!"

"This was a stunner for poor Deb, who turned white as a sheet, and the parson's wife ran for her smelmin' salts."

I began to relent a little when I saw how she took it; but it proved only to be a mad fit after all; for, in a few minutes more she skittered away for home, lively as a cricket.

"It was some weeks before I could bring round the gal agin to let me spark her, and it proved rather an expensive job, too, for I had to buy her a span new caliker gown which cost hard on four dollars. That fetched her and made a sure thing of it. So we went a third time to the parson's expecting to be tied so fast that all natur' could't separate us. We ax'd him to begin the ceremony, as everything was all rite now."

"I shant do any such thing!" said he, "for I've taken a dislikin' to both of you since you were here last."

"Thereupon Deb burst out a crying, and the parson's wife she burst out a laughing, and the parson burst out scolding; and I burst out the front door and put for home. Next day, hearing that Deb had licked the parson and pulled out nearly all his wife's hair I concluded that my chances with such a fillibuster would be rather squally, so I let her slide."

A Laughable Adventure.

Belshazzar Smith had a very bad and very dangerous habit of walking in his sleep. His family feared that, during some of one his somnambulist saunterings, he would charge out of the window and kill himself; so they persuaded him to sleep with his little brother William, and tie one end of a rope around his body, and the other end around the waist of little William. The very first night after this arrangement was made, Belshazzar dreamed that a burglar was pursuing him with a dagger. So he crept over to William's side of the bed, stepped over William's slumbering form, jumped out on the floor, and slid under the bed. He stayed there awhile, fast asleep; and then, his nightmare having changed, he emerged upon the other side of the bed, and got under the covers in his old place. The rope, it will be observed, was beneath the bed, and it was taut, too. Early in the morning, Belshazzar, about half awake, scrouged over against William. To his surprise, the movement jerked William clear out of bed. Belshazzar leaped out to ascertain the cause of the phenomenon, and at the same time his brother disappeared under the bed. Belshazzar, hardly yet awake, was scared, and he dived beneath the bedstead; as he did so, he heard William skirmishing across the blankets, above his head. Once more he rushed out, just in time to perceive William glide over the other side. Belshazzar just then became sufficiently conscious to feel the rope pulling him. He comprehended the situation at once, and disengaged himself.

Perhaps William was not mad! but it is certain that he positively objected to Belshazzar as a bedfellow, while that worthy sleep walker, now anchors himself to an anvil.

A man in New Hampshire wrote to an editor to know how he would break an ox? This was the reply he received: If only one ox, a good way would be to hoist him up by means of a log chain attached to his tail to the top of a pole forty feet from the ground. Then hoist him by a rope, tied about his horns, to another pole. Then descend on to his back a five ton pile driver, and if that don't break him, let him start a country newspaper and trust people for subscription. One of the two ways will do it sure!

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