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MR. MERTON'S LESSON.

"I CANNOT wait any longer. I must have my money, and if you cannot pay I must foreclose the mortgage and sell the place," said Mr. Merton.

"In that case," said Mr. Bishop, "it will of course be sold at a great sacrifice, and after all the struggles I have made, my family will again be homeless. It is very hard. I only wish you had to earn your money as I do mine; you might then know something of the hard life of a poor man.

If you could only in imagination put yourself in my place, I think you would have a little mercy on me."

"It is useless talking; I extended this one year, and I cannot do so any longer," replied Mr. Merton, as he turned to his desk and continued writing.

The poor man rose from his seat and walked sadly out of Mr. Merton's office; his last hope was gone. He had just recovered from a fit of illness, which had used up the means with which he had intended to make the last payment on his house. True, that gentleman had waited one year, when he had failed to meet the demand, owing to illness in the family, and he had felt very much obliged to him for doing so. This year he had been laid up for several months, during which he could earn nothing, and all his savings were then needed for the support of himself and family. Again he had failed, and now he would again be homeless, and have to begin the world anew. Had Heaven forsaken him and given him over to the tender mercies of the wicked?

After he had left the office, Mr. Merton could not drive away from his thoughts that remark to which the poor man in his grief had given utterance: "I wish you had to earn your money as I do mine."

In the midst of a row of figures, "Put yourself in my place" intruded.

Once after it had crossed his mind he laid down his pen, saying: "Well, I think I should find it rather hard. I have a mind to drop in there this afternoon and see how it fares with his family; that man has aroused my curiosity."

About five o'clock he put on a gray wig and some old, cast off clothes, walked to the residence of Mr. Bishop and knocked at the door. Mrs. Bishop, a pale, weary looking woman, opened it; the poor old man requested permission to enter and rest awhile, saying he was very tired with his long journey, for he had walked many miles that day.

Mrs. Bishop cordially invited him in, and gave him the best seat the room afforded. She then began to make preparations for tea. The old gentleman watched her attentively. He saw there was no elasticity in her step, no hope in her movements; and pity for her began to steal into his heart. When her husband entered, her features relaxed into a smile, and she forced a cheerfulness into her manner. The traveler noted it all; and he felt himself forced to admire this woman who could assume a cheerfulness she did not feel for her husband's sake. After the table was prepared, there was nothing upon it but bread, butter and tea. They invited the stranger to eat with them, saying: "We have not got much to offer you, but a cup of tea will refresh you after your long journey."

He accepted their hospitality, and as they discussed the frugal meal, he led them without seeming to do so, to talk of their own affairs.

"I bought this piece of land," said Mr. Bishop, "at a very low price, and instead of waiting as I ought to have done, until I had saved the money to build, I thought I would borrow two hundred dollars. The interest on the money would not be nearly so much as the rent I was paying, and I would be saving money by so doing. I did not think there would be any difficulty in paying back the borrowed money. But the first year my wife and one of my children were ill, and the expenses left me without the means to pay the debt. Mr. Merton agreed to wait another year, if I would pay the interest. I did that. This year I was for seven months unable to work at my trade and earn anything; and of course when pay day comes around and this is very soon, I shall again be unable to meet the demand."

"But," said the stranger, "will not Mr. Merton wait another year, if you make all circumstances known to him?"

"No, sir," replied Mr. Bishop, "I saw him this morning, and he said he must have the money, and should be obliged to foreclose the mortgage."

"He must be very hard-hearted," replied the traveler.

"Not necessarily so," said Mr. Bishop. "The fact is, these rich men know nothing of the struggles of the poor. There are men just like the rest of mankind, and I am sure if they but had the faintest idea of what the poor have to pass through, their hearts and their purses would open. You know it has passed into a proverb: "When a poor man needs assistance, he should apply to the poor." The reason is obvious. The poor only know the curse of poverty. They know how heavily it falls, crushing the spirit out of a man; and to use my favorite expression, they can at once put themselves in the unfortunate one's place and appreciate his difficulties, and are

therefore always ready to render assistance as far as they are able; and if Mr. Merton had the least idea of what I and my family had to pass through, I think he would be willing to wait several years for his money, rather than distress us."

With what emotion the stranger listened may be imagined. A new world was being opened to him. He was passing through an experience that had never been his before. Shortly after the conclusion of the meal, he rose to take his leave, thanking Mr. and Mrs. Bishop for their kind hospitality. They invited him to stay all night, telling him he was welcome to what they had.

He thanked them and said, "I will trespass on your kindness no longer. I think I can reach the next village before dark, and be so much further on my journey."

Mr. Merton did not sleep much that night. He lay awake thinking. He had received a new revelation. The poor had always been associated in his mind with stupidity and ignorance, and the first poor family he had visited he had found far in advance, in intelligent sympathy and real politeness, of the exquisites and fashionable butterfies of the day.

The next day a boy called at the cottage and left a package in a large blue envelope, addressed to Mr. Bishop.

Mrs. Bishop was very much alarmed when she took it; for large blue envelopes were associated in her mind with law and lawyers, and thought that it boded no good. She put it away until her husband came home from his work, when she handed it to him.

He opened it in silence, read its contents, and said frequently, "Thank Heaven!"

"What is it John?" inquired his anxious wife.

"Good news," replied John; "such news that I had never hoped for, or even dreamed of."

"What is it—what is it? Tell me quick—I want to hear if it is anything good."

"Mr. Merton has canceled the mortgage, released me from debt, both interest and principal, and says any time I need further assistance, if I will let him know I shall have it."

"I am so glad, it puts new life in me," said the now happy wife. "But what can have come over Mr. Merton?"

"I do not know. It seems strange after the way he talked to me yesterday morning. I will go right over to his office and tell him how happy he has made us."

He found Mr. Merton in his office and expressed his gratitude in glowing terms. "What could have induced you," he asked, "to show us so much kindness?"

"I followed your suggestion," replied Mr. Merton, "and put myself in your place. I expect it would surprise you very much to learn that the strange traveler to whom you showed so much kindness yesterday was myself."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Bishop, "can that be true? How did you disguise yourself so well?"

"I was not so much disguised after all, but you could not very readily associate Mr. Merton, the lawyer, with a poor way-faring man—ha! ha! ha!" laughed Mr. Merton.

"Well, it is a good joke," said Bishop; "good in more senses than one. It has terminated very pleasantly for me."

"I was surprised," said Mr. Merton, "at the broad and liberal views you expressed of men and their actions generally. I supposed I had greatly the advantage over you in means, education and culture; yet how cramped and narrow-minded have been my views beside yours! That wife of yours is an estimable woman, and that boy of yours will be an honor to any man. "I tell you, Bishop," said the lawyer, becoming animated, "you are rich—rich beyond what money can make you. You have treasures that gold will not buy. I tell you, you owe me no thanks. Somehow, I seem to have lived years since yesterday morning. I have got into a new world. What I learned at your house is worth more than you owe me, and I am your debtor yet. Hereafter, I shall take as my motto: "Put yourself in my place," and try to regulate my actions by it."

Ladies Should Read.

It is a great mistake in female education, to keep a young lady's time and attention devoted only to the fashionable literature of the day. If you would qualify her for conversation you must give her something to talk about, give her education in the actual world and its transpiring events. Urge her to read the newspaper, and become familiar with the present character and improvements of our race. History is of some importance; but the past world is dead; we have nothing to do with it. Our thoughts and our concerns should be for the present world; to know what it is and improve its condition. Let her have an intelligent opinion, and be able to sustain conversation according to the mental, moral and religious improvement of our times. Let the gilded annuals and poems on the centre-table be kept a part of the time covered with weekly and daily journals. Let the whole family, men, women and children, read newspapers.

Married Without Knowing It.

A Mr. Thomas Cooper, an Englishman, has published an account of his travels in Thibet, which he visited disguised as a Chinaman. Among his stories is the following:

He was just halting for breakfast, after leaving the Thibetan town of Bathang, when a group of young girls, gayly dressed, and decked out with garlands of flowers, came out of the grove and surrounded him, some of them holding his mule, while others assisted him to alight. He was then led into a grove, where he found a feast prepared, and after he had eaten, and smoked his pipe, the girls came up to him again, "pulling along in their midst a pretty girl of sixteen, who was attired in a silk dress, and adorned with garlands of flowers." He adds, "I had already noticed this girl sitting apart from the others during the meal, and I was very much astonished when she was reluctantly dragged up to me, and made to seat herself by my side; and astonishment was considerably heightened when the rest of the girls began to dance round us in a circle, singing and throwing their garments around me and companion." The meaning of this singular performance was, however, made clear to Mr. Cooper. He had been married without knowing it. At first he tried to escape the liability entailed upon him; but such an outcry was made by all the people around that he was forced to carry off his bride. He managed to get rid of her before very long, by transferring her to one of her relations, but even that was not treated as a dissolution of the marriage. On his way back he was joined by a Thibetan dame, about thirty years old, who said she had come to him with the consent of her husband, to supply her daughter's place. We can well imagine Mr. Cooper's surprise at meeting with this novel proposal on the part of his mother-in-law.

Courtship of Savages.

Among the aboriginal blacks of Australia, courtship as the precursor of marriage is unknown. When a young warrior is desirous of procuring a wife, he generally obtains one by giving in exchange for her a sister or some other female relative of his own, but, if there should happen to be no eligible damsel disengaged in the tribe to which he belongs, then he hovers around the encampment of some other blacks until he gets an opportunity of seizing one of their leubras, who, perhaps he has seen and admired at one of the feasts of the corrobories. His mode of paying his addresses is simple and efficacious. With a blow of a war club he stuns the object of his "affection," and as she recovers her senses, brings her home to his own gunyale in triumph. Another method with wife-stealers is to ascertain the camp-fire at which the girl whom he covets sleeps. When he gains the knowledge, he creeps close to the camp on some dark windy night, and, stretching out his spear, inserts its barbed point among her thick, flowing locks, turning it slowly around, some of her hair becomes entangled with it; then with a sudden jerk, she is aroused from her slumber, and as her eyes open she feels the point of another weapon pressing against her throat. She neither faints nor screams. She knows well that the slightest attempt at escape or alarm will cause her instant death; so, like a sensible woman, she makes a virtue of necessity, and raising silently she follows her captor to begin a life of toil from which she is not released till death.

Who are Your Aristocrats?

Twenty years ago, this one made candles, that one sold cheese and butter, that one butchered, a fourth thrived on a distillery, another was a contractor on canals, others were merchants and mechanics. They are acquainted with both ends of society, as their children will be after them—though it would not do to say so out loud for often you shall find that these toiling worms hatch butterflies—and they live about a year. Death brings a division of property, and it brings new financiers!—The old gent is discharged, the young gent takes his revenues, and begins to travel toward poverty which he reaches before death, or his children do, if he does not. So that, in fact, though there is a sort of moneyed race, it is not hereditary; it is accessible to all. The good seasons of cotton will send a generation of men up—a score of years will bring them all down, and send their children to labor. The father grubs and grows rich, the children trust, and spend the money. The children in turn inherit the price and go to shiftless poverty; next their children, reinvigorated by fresh plebeian blood, and by the smell of the clod, come up again. This society, like a tree, draws its sap from the earth, changes it into leaves, and spreads them abroad in great glory, sheds them off to fall back on the earth, again to mingle with the soil, and at length, to reappear in new dress and fresh garbure.

"Is it wrong for me to use rouge?" asked a homely preacher of her clergyman. "What do you use it for?" "To—make me handsome." Well, madam, I guess it will do no harm for you to use rouge, for you are homely enough even without it.

Old Timber.

Probably the oldest timber in the world which has been subjected to the use of man is that found in the ancient temples of Egypt in connection with the stone-work, which is known to be at least four thousand years old. This, the only wood used in the construction of the temple, is in the form of ties, holding the end of one stone to another to its upper surface. When two blocks were laid in place, an excavation about an inch deep was made in each block, into which a tie shaped like an hourglass was driven. It is therefore very difficult to force any stone from its position. The ties appear to have been of the tamarisk or shittim wood of which the ark was constructed, a sacred tree in ancient Egypt, and now very rarely found in the valley of the Nile. The dovetailed ties are just as sound now as on the day of their insertion. Although fuel is extremely scarce in the country, these bits of wood are not large enough to make it an object with the Arabs to heave off layer after layer of heavy stone to obtain them. Had they been of bronze, half of the old temples would have been destroyed years ago, so precious would they have been for various purposes.

German Genius.

It is less than seventy years since illuminating gas was introduced. Writing from London in 1807, Walter Scott sneeringly referred to the folly of a German who actually proposed lighting the streets of the city with coal-gas. It is to Germany that the world is now indebted for an invention which will probably supersede lamp-lighters, their torches and ladders, and also electric wires. Certain German engineers have constructed an apparatus which is quite simple, and can be fixed to all gas-jets. It acts solely by the increased pressure which is laid on from the gasometer at lighting time. When the gas is turned on at the main, all the burners fitted with the apparatus are at once lighted, and the diminution of pressure can be so regulated as either to lessen the amount of gas consumed or totally to extinguish the flame. By this means a whole city can be simultaneously lighted, and one man be enabled instantly to do the work which scores are now required to perform in a slow and laborious manner. In this, as in some other departments of practical science, the present generation has little more than crossed the threshold.

The Secret of their Power.

A gentleman one day earnestly requested Mr. Webster to speak in the Senate on an important subject. "I have no time," was the reply. I have no time to master the subject so as to do it justice. "But Mr. Webster," urged the applicant, "a few words from you would do much to awaken public attention to it." "If there be such weight in my words as you represent," rejoined the great statesman, "it is because I do not allow myself to speak on any subject till I have imbued my mind with it."

"Mon give me the credit for genius," said Alexander Hamilton; "all the genius I have lies just in this—when I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. I explain it in all its bearings. My mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the effort which I make the people please to call the fruit of genius. It is the first fruit of labor and thought."

The Population of China.

Abbe David, who has recently devoted some years to the exploration of Chinese territory and the study of the people, says that the estimate of statisticians that the total population of the Chinese Empire is but 100,000,000 souls is entirely incorrect. The error is due to the terrible ravages made in certain small political divisions, which have rebelled at times, and in which wholesale massacres have reduced the inhabitants to one-half and some cases one-fifth their former numerical strength. The province of Kiangsi is, however, the least populated, and the average of each canton, therein is 4,000 people. There are 4,845 cantons, making an approximate total of 17,380,000 inhabitants. Among the 18 provinces of the Empire, it is certain that several largely exceed Kiangsi in population; but taking the above given aggregate as a unit, there must be at least 300,000,000 individuals in the country.

It is a strange characteristic of Russian juries that they consider themselves unbound by any law, and, indeed, by any evidence, if directly their feelings are touched. Lately a private teacher was shown to have stolen to the amount of 100 roubles; the things were traced, and, in short, the man did not deny it. It appeared that he had been driven to it by sheer want, and the circumstances were certainly of a pitiful nature. The man was acquitted, and a purse made up for him by the jury and the public. Such verdicts occur so frequently. A fraudulent bankrupt, as an excuse for not keeping books in his business, as required by law, pleads that others do not, and he is acquitted. A man hires a piano and pledges it the next day, pleading that it was all the same to the owner whether it stood with him or in pawn, and he, again, is acquitted. It is the same in more serious cases.