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George Vetter, J. P. Toledo, O., says: "I used three pads with Sciatica and Kidney trouble, and in three weeks my pain has been entirely and permanently cured." During all this time I used nothing else, and paid out large sums of money.

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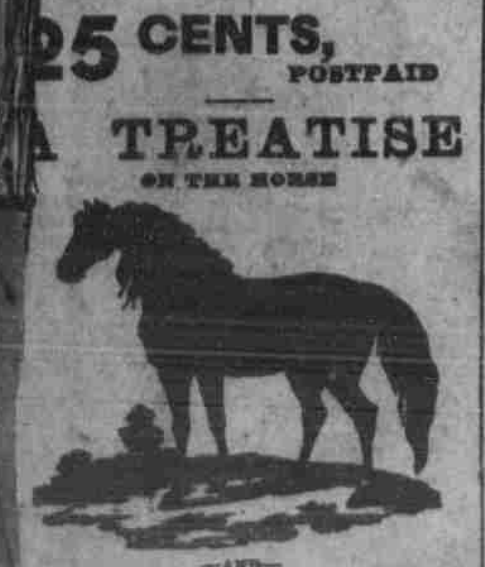
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The Farmers' Banner

Upheld by hands made brown with toil,
And hearts both true and tried,
Oh, patient tillers of the soil
(The nation's heart and pride),
Send out high hills and valleys wide
The gladness of your right,
Thus farmers in their humble homes
Have majesty and might.

Then monarchs proud shall honor,
And blessings on you shed,
For to the humble farmer
They look for daily bread;
Yet need ye not to covet
The prince's power and wealth,
For crowns contain no jewels
Compared to peace and health.

Your wealth consists of meadows green
And fields of waving grain;
Your homes made neat by labor sweet,
Prove you've not lived in vain.

Then hail to the farmers' banner,
From war and bloodstain free!
May peace, good-will and charity
Its motto ever be.

A QUEER VALENTINE.

"Plushkin, plushkin, pelican gee,
We think no birds so stuffy as we;
Plushkin, plushkin, pelican gee,
We think so—no thought so still."

Gertrude Winthrop looked rather bewildered as these sounds issued from the door which the servant opened for her.

"They're rum ones," whispered the girl.

Two children were hopping about the room as they sang the strange gibberish given above. One was a keen, snallow-faced boy of nine; the other a pretty, fair-haired girl of seven. The boy had a hat on with a bunch of dilapidated cock's feathers in it. The girl wore a long ostrich plume, and various scraps of red flannel pinned here and there on her dress.

"Oh, halloo we're pelicans," cried the boy in a hoarse voice; "that's the pelican chorus."

"You're precious pickles, that's what you are," said Jane. "If ever I see such imbs of the—"

She hesitated out of respect for the stranger.

Gertrude surveyed her charges, and they in turn bestowed on her an unfinishing stare.

"What are your names?" she asked, softly; "I am going to be with you, and teach you, you know."

"Golly!" said the boy, "wouldn't it be larks if you never found out—then you couldn't call us, you know. And if you didn't call us we wouldn't have to come."

"But I can easily find out," said Gertrude, with a laugh; "so you had better be gentlemanly and answer my question."

"My name's Roderick, but they call me Rod. Her name's Nina, but I call her Nunny, 'cos she's a numskull—all girls are numskulls."

"This is your room, ma'am," exclaimed Jane, opening a door and going in. When Gertrude stood at her side she turned the key.

"See! you kin do this when you want to be alone; and you'll bless the minutes you get from that pair."

"I'm goin' to leave to-morrow—'as I give warnin' regular—my life is wore out with them two young imp—savin' your presence—which you'll find 'em out, soon enough; and I wouldn't prejudice you agin 'em beforehand; and that cantankerous old cat, either, down below—oh, they're a sweet lot—"

"Hush!" said Gertrude. "I cannot listen to such—"

"Well, I'll say a good word for Master Eric," said Jane, turning to go; "he knows how to treat a poor girl. He's a gentleman—more the pity he's to be thrown away on that fiberty gibbet. Miss Francis, as is no better nor a—"

"There, there!" cried Gertrude, as the children were pummeling at the door, "you may go now—thank you."

There were two or three scratched-up desks and some torn books, also a globe over which strange maps had been smeared with ink and red paint.

"Well, Roderick," she said, turning to her little subjects, who had most unctious faces, "what do you study?"

"Oh! when I feel like study, I like Roman history best. I'm goin' to be a heathen and worship Jupiter. I built an altar to him the other day; got one of Francis Dorrner's white boxes, and painted Jupiter Aye Imperator on it, and made a pile of sticks and matches, and poured coals over it for incense, and golly! how it burned! That was a sacrifice, you see; and Francis says she'll sacrifice me the next time I meddle with her things. I said to her: 'Francis, you've got no feeling for Roman history.'"

"I am a heathen, too," cried Nina.

"You ain't; you're a Christian," cried Rod, as if he were hurling at her most opprobrious epithet.

"I won't be a Christian all alone!" cried Nina, with a roar.

"Hullo! What's the bumpus? What's the row?" cried a good-natured voice, and a very handsome young man entered rather hurriedly, and stopped short at the sight of Gertrude.

"They want to be heathens," said Gertrude, with an embarrassed smile.

"Well, I venture to say it would be hard to find two greater young heathens in our enlightened country. Excuse me for bursting in so unceremoniously. I wanted to quench these youngsters' noise. My mother—"

"Oh, I forgot," answered Gertrude, nervously; "she especially spoke of her dislike to noise. In a little time I shall learn—"

Eric was forgetting everything—even the two young savages who were warming up on him—in looking at the wonderful beauty of this young girl's face. Surely, if Mrs. Chumleigh had seen that face in anything but the half darkness in which she delighted, she would never have brought Gertrude Winthrop into her house.

"Well, Eric, what are you about?" cried a merry voice. "Going to wallopp Rod? I'll go in for that, as he used up a good bottle of my Frangipani in his last incantation."

And a little dark, brilliant-looking creature, in black gaiter and amber, flattered in, and stared rather superciliously at Gertrude. She reminded her heroine somehow, of some brilliant South American insect, there was so much flash and color about her.

Her only real beauty was in her eyes, which were large, intensely black and shining. But, at present, a little malicious; for Francis Dorrner took in at a glance Gertrude's beauty, and she was not yet secure of Eric Chumleigh's heart.

She nodded carelessly.

"The governess, I suppose? Come, Eric, the count is downstairs, and wants to consult you about something—whether tomatoes will grow in Saxony, I believe. He has learned to dote on them, and wishes a garden of them around his castle."

Eric took leave with a polite bow, and Rod, who had been silent for the space of five minutes, said:

"I hate Francis Dorrner. She's a snake!"

Gertrude kept the irrepressible one quiet till their tea time with her inventions. She had some talent in that line, and felt glad and relieved to find that she held a most potent weapon to be used in her new kingdom.

Rod had really an active mind, and she won him by her praise; Nina followed his example; and when he found he could gain the pleasure of hearing a story by diligence, he began to apply himself.

Eric said the children were growing so lovable he quite enjoyed looking in on them once in a while; to which Rod replied: "What makes you look at Miss Gertrude all the time, then?"

Gertrude blushed, and began to feel uncomfortable about the visits.

Sometimes Gertrude was requested to come down in the evening to play, and then she saw Bertha and her betrothed. The elder sister was too busy just now to look into the schoolroom. Her intended, Von Arnheim, who was an officer in the Prussian army, was a rather stolid-looking German, with scant blonde hair, good natured blue eyes and a beaming smile. Bertha was tall, but had fine dark eyes and dazzling white teeth.

Sometimes Francis bestowed her company and confidence on Gertrude; as others she assumed haughty and distant airs. She delighted in out-toilettes, wore the most wonderful combinations, glowed and glittered like some rare tropical bird. So the months went on, that winter, and the wedding day drew near.

"How do I look?" exclaimed Francis one night as she opened the schoolroom door. "Good? I hoped the imps were in bed. Heavens and earth how I hate children! I pity you, Miss Winthrop! suppose you dream of an escape some day—some fairy prince will open your prison with a golden key!"

"No; I expect nothing," answered Gertrude. "I am trying to cultivate the spirit which Tennyson cultivates: 'Not to desire or admire is better by far Than to walk all day like the sultans of old in a garden of spice.'"

"Go away, Francis Dorrner," cried Rod, from the next room. "You keep me awake with your chatter. You're worse than a nightmare."

"Oh, you angel! are you awake?" cried the girl. "Then good-bye. Miss Winthrop. Comfort is at an end. You'll have the house to yourselves to-morrow; we're off on an excursion, all of us. The snow is just right, so hard and white—bah! what a poor fire you have." And she disappeared.

"She has everything," thought Gertrude, "beauty and fortune" (she had heard fabulous accounts of Francis's estates in Otago); "and she will win Eric at last—who can doubt it?"

Still Gertrude, remembering certain words and looks, did doubt it in her heart. The next morning, when the party whirled away and she saw Eric tucked in the sables about Francis, and heard the cheery sound of their voices, the old schoolroom looked very cold and bare; and she took to her dog-eared history very absently.

Enter Betsy with a note and a bouquet—cream white camellias, blue heliotrope and crimson bouvardia.

"Sure! they was both left the either, but they're not after belon'g' together, as the poet-by brought the letter."

Gertrude dropped the history and gazed over the flowers in delight. She had never owned a bouquet of flowers before, and then she saw whose kind heart had remembered her when all the others were absorbed in their own pleasure. It seemed as if they would make the whole day fragrant. She had almost forgotten the note.

There was only one person in the world to write to her, so she opened the note leisurely as those do who have little to hope or fear. But as she read she started anxiously. Betsy had not left the room.

"Oh, I must go," she said, decidedly. "I shall have to give the children a holiday; I shall have to leave them in your care. My aunt is very sick and alone. I will return this evening if I can arrange things. You will explain to Mrs. Chumleigh if I am not here."

"Sure and I will that," said the girl good-naturedly, "and a holiday will do the young wons good."

"Golly, a holiday!" cried Rod, in great ecstasy. "Oh, I've got a famous plan!"

"No mischief!" said Gertrude, anxiously; "I shall think of you."

"Oh, we'll be quiet; you'll be so pleased!" exclaimed the boy, with a docility that would have alarmed Gertrude if she could have stopped to think about it.

As it was, she hurried her preparations only remembering to take the flowers with her, as she thought they might cheer the sick room, to say nothing of her own reluctance to lose sight of them.

Her ride in the cars lasted only half an hour, and she found herself before the little brown cottage which was the only home she remembered, as she had been left an orphan to the sun's care in her earliest childhood. Poor and plain as everything appeared a thrill came over her at sight of it, and she hurried with real anxiety into the house, whose door stood open.

Aunt Rachel was in bed, and a neighbor's girl had come in to wait on her. The old woman had a sweet, patient face, and her eyes lighted up as she saw the young girl in whom all her love and earthly hopes were centered.

"I feared I had done wrong to send for you," she said, "but there was a little business to settle. Do you know, my love, the age of miracles is not over?"

Gertrude smiled and held her aunt's wasted hand very fondly.

"I've told you that the house—all I have—might be taken away from me any time. What do you think of my having a couple of thousand sent me yesterday—enough to pay off the mortgage, and leave me five hundred dollars?"

"I should say you dreamed it, auntie."

"Look in the top bureau drawer, and you will see the check. I think the surprise and joy of it has been too much for me. To think Jamie has remembered me now that his fortune is made in India! My godson, you know."

Gertrude had the check in her hands, and viewed it with delight.

"You see, my love, the action to foreclose the mortgage has just commenced, and I could not rest a moment till this business was arranged. You can do it for me, and Bess here will keep me company."

Gertrude was quite relieved to find that it was anxiety more than illness which had prostrated her aunt; and she at once set about performing her task, which she did by calling on an old friend—a lawyer—to aid her. She had the satisfaction of leaving the old lady calm and comfortable in the evening.

She found it quite dark when she reached the house, and felt a symptom of relief that the family were not yet returned. The children, to her surprise, were in bed, a state of affairs which she did not doubt had been accomplished by bribery.

But the silence and rest were nevertheless sweet, and she sat down to the hemming of some interminable ruffles with which Mrs. Chumleigh kindly kept her employed. After a time shutting of doors, laughter and gleaming lights woke up the quiet house, but no one disturbed her.

The next morning Francis swooped in just as lessons began.

"Do you know look serene," she said. "Do you know there's an earthquake downstairs?"

"Oh, what a fibber you are, Francis Dorrner!" cried Rod, indignantly. "If there was an earthquake it would have us all up."

"Well, look out! Bad boys get a-walloped the first thing," said Francis.

"This, however, is a financial one. They've lost ten thousand dollars in coupons."

"Lost?" questioned Gertrude.

"Yes; just fancy—Bertha's dowry! It's been stolen, and what's worse, Von Arnheim won't be married without it. He is desolate, but him; it's the law of Vaterland."

Francis was just as careless, as insouciant and smiling, as she talked of this loss, as if it had been a pleasant bit of gossip.

Gertrude, with her ready sympathy, was on the point of asking several questions, when she noticed the open-eyed children.

"Oh, I forgot. I was to ask you to step down into the library," exclaimed Francis; and then, after popping a sugar plum into the children's faces, she danced away.

Gertrude went down with a feeling that she was to be called to account for her absence the day before, but quite satisfied any right minded person. So she met Mrs. Chumleigh with a face so serene that the aforesaid lady was somewhat staggered in the belief to which she had rapidly come within the last hour.

"I hear—and must say I am exceedingly annoyed to hear—Miss Winthrop," the lady began, with extreme acidity, "that you absented yourself the whole of yesterday from your duties without leave. Was this a premeditated plan?"

Certainly not, Gertrude began, impulsively; and then as rapidly as possible explained the affair.

"Do you know what has happened here?" asked the lady.

"About the coupons?" asked Gertrude.

"Yes; it's a robbery, you know."

"I scarcely understood. I am sorry—it is a great loss," said the girl.

"It was taken by some one in the house," Mrs. Chumleigh went on, excitedly. "My desk was opened, the coupons taken and the desk relocked, the key put in the usual place," and she fixed a penetrating glance on Gertrude's face as she spoke, and added, after a second's silence: "It was taken yesterday after we left the house."

Even then Gertrude listened with a polite sympathy, without feeling any direct reference to herself in the case.

"My servants I know thoroughly," Mrs. Chumleigh went on. "Even Betsy, the last comer, has lived with me before, and I cannot suspect them, only of course they must all be searched. You must feel, Mrs. Winthrop, that circumstances are somewhat against you—you leave the house in such an accountable manner—"

Gertrude's face flushed.

"Blame on you, Mrs. Chumleigh. You insult me—because I am poor, because I have no one—"

Eric opened the door with a mad burst at this moment, and caught the sound of these last words.

"No one?" he cried. "You have me! I have heard these insane suspicions. Mother, you are mad! I stake my life upon this young lady's honor. Why do you not suspect me?"

Mrs. Chumleigh faltered and turned pale.

"My son, what have you to do with this young person—"

"I have this to do with her," he cried, impetuously. "I wish to make her my wife, if she can care enough for me."

"My God!" exclaimed Mrs. Chumleigh, falling back in a half faint.

"Nice time for your declaration," cried Francis Dorrner, who had heard these words, and now hurried in with restoratives, her own face ashen pale, but still with a malicious gleam in the eyes; "at all events you won't be able to get a recommendation for your wife from her last place!"

"Nice time for your declaration," cried Francis Dorrner, who had heard these words, and now hurried in with restoratives, her own face ashen pale, but still with a malicious gleam in the eyes; "at all events you won't be able to get a recommendation for your wife from her last place!"

"By this time Von Arnheim had come in, and Bertha. To Gertrude the room seemed full of staring, talking people. She stood among them like a queen, tall, erect, with undaunted eye, but a fierce pain at her heart.

Mrs. Chumleigh opened her eyes to say, tragically:

"Search her things!" and then sank away again.

Von Arnheim, with true politeness, said:

"It will not be well to suspicion someone's mit not no grounds to stand on," which was very lucid, but not much calculated to console Gertrude on the whole. Bertha sat crying in one corner—husband and fortune and coronet all to disappear like the baseless fabric of a vision. Oh, it was too much!

Von Arnheim, who was really not mercenary, strove to comfort her.

Gertrude walked up to the nursery unchallenged, and sat down in the empty room. The children had been spirited away somewhere—the whole house was in commotion.

Eric's words, so strangely sweet, seemed somehow to span this sudden storm like a rainbow—but never, never would she listen to him while there was a shadow on her good name.

It was not hard to search the meager contents of Gertrude's trunk; but everything was tumbled out in a summary way, pockets examined, even linings ripped, and she heard some one say, "Search her things!" and then sank away again.

What's the use, she went out yesterday," with a feeling of desperate exasperation.

She laid back her clothes, all of them, and there was nothing now to do but to go. She strapped her trunk herself, and did not wait for leave-taking. Only she had a kindly feeling for the imps, after all, and looked about for them as she went downstairs.

She left also a note for Mrs. Chumleigh, merely giving her address. Then with such a feeling of desolation as had never yet wrung her young heart, she started out.

The children were not about; but when she reached the corner Rod dashed out at her. His face was smeared and tear-stained.

"They say you're goin' away," he cried out, "and I wasn't to see you again; but I've cheated 'em bully. I want to give you this valentine. To-day's the fourteenth, you see, and I like you better than any other girl I know. I fixed it yesterday—painted it all myself—there's two hearts on a meat skewer and an altar and a bride—all right, you'll see."

"Thank you, Rod," cried Gertrude, with a sob in her throat as she stooped to give the boy a kiss. "I do not expect any other valentine."

And she smiled through the tears that dimmed her eyes as she looked at the huge envelope with its official-looking seal, to which Rod had confided his treasure.

A moment after a quick step came behind her. Then some one took the little traveling bag out of her hand, and, looking up, she saw a friendly handsome face looking down at her reproachfully.

"Going without one word for me?" cried Eric.

And from that moment half her burden seemed lifted. She found herself actually smiling as she reached her aunt's door.

"That is that billet-doux you are carrying so carefully!" exclaimed Eric, as he caught sight of the huge envelope.

"My valentine," answered Gertrude. Then a moment after she added: "Rod's work."

They stood in the little parlor, then, by the window, as the young girl turned over the epistle, and finally opened it with a half-hysterical laugh. Such a villainous-looking couple as Rod had executed; but he had gilded a ring on the bride's finger which obliterated her hand, and had also a cable of the same buried metal on her neck.

"By Jove! what's this?" exclaimed Eric, seizing the paper; "do you see what the rascal has tied on with blue ribbon for a fancy cover—my mother's coupons, by all that's jolly!"

Gertrude stared in speechless surprise.

The child had nicked a whole sheet of coupons and used them as a cover for his chef d'oeuvre.

The neat little squares and numbers had evidently taken his fancy. The e were only a part, to be sure, but he could probably give an account of the rest.

Of course he had no idea that the beautiful paper he had found in his mother's desk was so valuable.

Gertrude gazed at it a moment, and then joined in the laugh.

She looked up to see Aunt Rachel in the doorway regarding them with mild wonder.

"My first valentine!" she exclaimed, in some embarrassment.

But Eric told the story for her, and added his own conclusion. He was his own master, free to choose where he would; and in the happiness that followed Gertrude forgot the misery of the day when she had received her queer valentine.

End of the Courtship.

Though Harry knows the time is late,
And dreads her angry sire,
He hates to leave his charming fate,
Or rather—leave the fire.

"What happy, sweet, I spend,"
He sighs, "alone with thee."
"It's all," she says, "you ever spend—
'Good evening!' says he."
—H. C. Dodge.

HUMOROUS.

Goes against the grain—The reaping machine.—*Farco's Straws.*

Out of every 100 inhabitants in the United States, sixteen live in cities.

The man who has gathered a big ice crop wants to keep it shady.—*Phoosyme.*

He sighed for the wings of a dove, but had no idea that the legs were much better eating.

We would rather hire a mule than own one, on the principle, "Of two evils choose the less."—*Boston Post.*

The Rochester papers have a good deal to say about "elevated tracks." Cats prowling over the roofs, we suppose.—*Syracuse Herald.*

"When I die," said a married man, "I want to go where there is no snow to shovel." His wife said that she presumed he would.

Ohio papers are discussing why quail freeze to death. It is simply because they can't afford to pay \$7 a ton for coal.—*Philadelphia Chronicle.*

Those who believe that the world owes them a living don't stop to consider how many bad debts the old globe has to shoulder.—*Saturday Night.*

A middle-sized boy, writing a composition on "Extremes," remarked that "we should endeavor to avoid extremes, especially those of wasps and bees."

"What happy hours, sweet, I spend,"
He sighs, "alone with thee."
"It's all," she says, "you ever spend—
'Good evening!' says he."
—Detroit Free Press.

A party of 150 Chicago lawyers, gamblers, board of trade men and shoulder litters, went out to Crystal lake to witness a fight between a couple of roosters. No disgrace, however, is attached to the roosters.—*Milwaukee Sun.*

A question of identity: "Did the prisoner at the bar strike you?" "Eye think so," replied the man with the decorated optic. "Eye see," smiled the justice; "eye-dentify established; three dollars and trimmings."—*Keokuk Gate City.*

A youngster, while warming his hands at the fire, was remonstrated with by his father, who said: "Go away from the fire—the weather is not cold." "I ain't heating the weather. I'm warming my hands," the little fellow demurely replied.

"In the hour of danger woman thinks jest of herself," said Madame Stael. True! When the thunder roars and the vivid lightning flashes, and the big drops come down, the woman who is caught out in the storm devotes her agony to the thought that her hat and dress will be ruined.

An editor may write himself "we" in his editorials, and feel therefore doubly proud and doubly strong; but when he gets home to dinner an hour or so late, and forgets to bring something home to make that dinner, he doesn't feel any larger than one-fourth of one person.—*Kentucky State Journal.*

A prudent and far-seeing mother married her two daughters some years ago to a plumber and an iceman, and now, no matter whether there is a mild winter or a severe one, she has a box at the charity ball, and spends the next summer at Newport or goes to Europe, with some one or the other of her sons-in-law.—*New York Ohio.*

A tramp was being escorted down Galveston avenue by one of the most stylish policemen on the force. "I hate to walk along arm-in-arm with a policeman," said the tramp. "You ought to be used to it by this time," replied the policeman. "I can't get used to hearing people on the streets say, 'Just look at that vagabond! when I know they must mean one of us.'"
—Galveston News.

"George Peabody," says a New York paper, "was never married, and for a singular reason." "Then it goes on at some length to give the reason, because the girl married another man. And we have read that article a dozen times and have pondered over it deeply, and hanged if we can see yet why that should be called 'a singular reason.' We think it was a very sensible matter of fact both.—*Burdett.*

They both went sailing down the walk,
Arrayed in faultless gear,
Both engaged in pleasant talk,
Each smiled at each endeavoring,
He said: "My love, this blissome day,
This bracing, glorious weather,
This charming walk—Whoo! stop 'er—say
They both went down together."

They picked them up, small boys ki-yi-ed,
When she resumed with flipperly;
"Dear George, I think it is not denied,
These charming walks are slipperly."

Too Cold for the Fish.

A remarkable circumstance in connection with the recent cold snap was the effect on the fish along the coast, large schools being driven in shore and in shallow water. Strange as it may seem, it is asserted that the fish, particularly bass and trout, were observed to throw themselves bodily out of the water on land. An old negro caught thirty-one very fine large bass in this way at Raccoon Key, near Warsaw. On Saint Catherine's a net thrown in the water was almost instantly filled by fine large fish, and fishermen found some difficulty in hauling the nets in. Others were observed to kill them in the water with cars. This novel occurrence was witnessed generally all along the islands to the southward and in the rivers near the coast.—*Savannah (Ga.) News.*