

THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man.—Thomas Jefferson.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

From the Lady's Book.

OUR JESSIE; OR, THE EXCLUSIVES.

BY MISS EMMA C. EMBURY.

'Lizzy, who was that pretty girl I met on the stairs this morning?' said Frederick Charleton, as he threw himself into a well-cushioned chair beside his sister; she was some intimate friend, I presume, for she went into your apartment.

'I suppose it was Sarah Morton, as she is the only person I am in the habit of admitting to my dressing-room. Was she very pretty?'

'Beautiful.'

'With the utmost simplicity and neatness.'

'It must have been Sarah; she dresses with great taste. Did the lady you met wear a black velvet mantilla, with a white hat and willow feathers?'

'Pshaw! black velvet fiddlestick. Do you call that simplicity? No, the lovely creature I mean, wore a little straw bonnet and a black silk apron; her dark hair was parted smoothly upon her snowy forehead; she had soft blue eyes, and a mouth like an opening rose-bud; now, can you tell me who she is?'

'Oh,' exclaimed Lizzy, 'it must have been our Jessie.'

'And pray, who is our Jessie?' asked her brother.

'Only our seamstress, Fred; a pretty, little creature who looks scarcely sixteen.'

'By Jupiter! if that girl is a seamstress, Fortune never made a greater mistake—it can't be.'

'Well, we can soon decide the matter, Fred. Jessie is now at work in our little sewing room, and as I am going up to give her some directions you can accompany me.'

'Frederick Charleton obeyed his sister's suggestion, and sauntered into the room half hoping his sister was mistaken: But no, there sat the object of his admiration—there sat our Jessie, surrounded by pieces and patches, shaping and sewing with the utmost diligence, and scarcely raising her eyes from her work. Seating himself at a little distance, under pretence of waiting his sister's leisure, Frederick busied himself in studying the countenance of the unconscious girl.

'Her features are not perfectly regular,' thought he; 'but what soft eyes she has; what a lovely mouth, and how beautifully her fine forehead shines out between those locks of raven hair; her voice, too, is soft and low, an excellent thing in woman.'—'What a pity such a creature should be the slave of fashionable tyrants.'

'Tell me,' said he to his eldest sister, Mrs. De Grey, as he returned to the dining-room, 'tell me who is our Jessie?'

'Her story is soon told,' said Mrs. De Grey, laughing, 'and for your sake, my respectable brother, I am sorry she is not heroine of romance. Jessie Murray's father was a printer, who, meeting with a severe accidental injury, was confined to his bed for several years before his death, during which time his wife supported the family by her seamstress work and dress making. Murray was always a reading man, and

after he was disabled, he diverted his weary hours by books and the education of his children. I have been told that he studied Latin and Greek, in order that he might teach his son, and thus fit him, if possible for college, while he carefully instructed Jessie in all the branches he deemed essential to a good education. After her father's death, which occurred not long since, when Jessie was about eighteen years of age, she determined to fulfil his wishes respecting her younger brother, and secure for him a collegiate education. She therefore adopted her present employment, and as a neat seamstress and an excellent dress maker.—Her services are highly estimated and she works for a few customers who engage her, as we do, for several months together. Her brother entered college last fall, and she is at all the expense of his education.'

'What a noble minded girl she must be, to submit to a life of drudgery for such a purpose.'

'She is the more praiseworthy, Fred, because she could have obtained a situation as nursery-governess, which according to modern notions would have been far less degrading; but she refused it because it would prevent her from returning every night to her mother.'

'Is she always cheerful and good humored?'

'She has one of the most winning tempers I ever knew.'

'She must be a lovely creature.'

'Yes, it is a pity to see so much beauty and grace wasted in humble life.'

'But why need it be wasted, Julia?'

'Because she will, in all probability, marry some rough mechanic who will never perceive her grace, and scarcely appreciate her beauty.'

'Do you suppose, then, that personal beauty is not appreciated by the poor as well as the rich, Julia?'

'Yes; but only certain kinds of beauty; a healthy coarse red cheek, and a bold bright eye, are the charms most admired among the plebeians.'

'Julia, what are you talking about? Are Americans running mad? Here have I returned to my native country after an absence of only five years, and while my love for our republican institution has increased ten fold, I find my countrymen have become perfectly beside themselves apeing of foreign follies. Plebeians—fornicators! and, pray, who are the patricians of this most democratic community?'

'Why, Fred, there must be a difference between the upper and lower classes in all communities.'

'Yes, Julia, the difference between the good and the wicked, the honest and dishonest, the educated and the ignorant, the governor and the governed—'

'You forget the principal distinction, Frederick, the rich and the poor.'

'Aye, I thought so; that is the principal distinction in modern times, and of course the rich man is the patrician, though he may have raked his wealth from the kennel, and the poor man is a plebeian, though his ancestors should have been among the only American nobles—the signers of our Independence.'

'Oh, no, brother, you are quite wrong; a mechanic, though he be as rich as Croesus, cannot get into good society, but if he abandons his business before his children are grown up, they are received, and his grand children finally rank among our first classes.'

'Provided they retain the fortune for which their grand-father toiled, I suppose, Julia. Well, I am glad to have the matter so satisfactorily explained, especially as we are the children of a mechanic.'

'Heavens! Fred, how can you say so! Our father was an India merchant.'

'True, my high minded sister, but he began life in a cooper's shop down on the wharf, where he afterwards built his stately stores. Many a good barrel has he headed and hooped; and I remember, when a very little boy, how I loved to play in the shavings. But that is thirty years ago, Julia, and I suppose that you think other people have forgotten it.'

'I wish, Fred, you could forget it. It is not pleasant to have such things brought to light so late in the day. They cannot injure you nor me, but they may mar Lizzy's prospects.'

'True, Lizzy might not be allowed to marry a mechanic's grand-son if it were known that she was only a mechanic's daughter.'

Frederick Charleton with some eccentricity possessed many excellent qualities. His father had bestowed on him all the advantages of a liberal education, and after completing his studies he had spent several years in Europe. While abroad his father died, and his oldest sister married; so that on his return, he found the old mansion passed into other hands, and his favorite sister Lizzy, an inmate of Julia's stately mansion. His paternal inheritance insured him a competence, and resolved to marry as soon as he should meet with a woman capable of realizing his notions of domestic happiness.—It is not to be supposed that the rich and travelled Mr. Carleton, (whose three thousand dollars of yearly income was more than doubled by many-tongued rumor,) lacked opportunities of selecting a companion for life. But among the manoeuvring mammas, and displaying daughters, he had as yet seen no one who equalled his ideas of womanly loveliness. A true American in feeling he had lived long enough among foreign follies to despise them most heartily and especially did he abhor this attempt to establish an exclusive system in society.—'I am no agrarian,' he would often say, 'nor have I any utopian notions of perfect equality; I am therefore aware that there must always exist different classes in society, such as working men and men of wealth, men gifted with intellect, and others only one remove from idiocy, but let us never acknowledge that worst of all tyrannies, an oligarchy of mere wealth. A man of enlightened mind and virtuous principles is my equal, whatever be his occupation, and whether his hand be hardened by the blacksmith's hammer, or soiled by the ink of the learned professions, it is one which I can grasp with respect.'

His notions much displeased his fastidious sisters, and they took great pains to convince him of his folly. But it was in vain they tried to initiate him into the mysteries of modern fashion; he would neither conceal half his face beneath an overgrowth of moustaches and beard, nor would he imitate the long-eared asses of South America in the longitude of his superb raven locks. He even refused to carry the indispensable cane alleging that since such a sudden lameness had fallen upon the spindleshanked men of fashion it was the duty of those who could still boast some solidity of understanding to depend on themselves for support. The ladies pronounced him 'very handsome, but shockingly unfashionable; while the gentlemen, who found that his rent-roll was not likely to be diminished either at the billiard table or the race course, discussed his character as they picked their teeth on the steps of the Broadway hotels, and wondered how he contrived to spend his money.'

The simple story of Jessie Murray had deeply affected Carleton, and the remembrance did not tend to decrease his interest. How much of self mingles in the best feelings of humanity! Had Jessie been a freckled, red-haired, snub-nose girl, Fred, would probably have soon forgotten her sisterly devotion, but she was too pretty to vanish quickly from his mind. Some how or other, it happened almost every morning that he found it necessary to see his sister at an early hour when he was sure of finding them in a sewing room.—His presence became at length quite unheeded by Jessie as well as by his sisters, and while he amused himself in romping with his little nephew, or quizzing the changes of fashion which usually occupied his sisters' thoughts, he has constant opportunities of studying the character of 'our Jessie.' He noticed her quite good sense her fine taste, her cheerful manners, her unaffected humility, the patience with

which she bore the caprices of his sisters, and he repeated to himself again and again, 'What a pity she should be obliged to lead such a life.'

One winter evening, as he was hurrying to an appointment, he met Jessie, who, with her bonnet drawn over her face, and her cloak wrapped closely around her, was hastening in an opposite direction. To turn and join her was his first impulse.

'Where are you going at so late an hour, Miss Murray?' he asked.

'Home,' she replied still hurrying onward.

'At least allow me to accompany you,' said he.

'Oh, no, sir' said she, 'it is not necessary. I go home alone every evening.'

'But you are liable to insult, and should not venture out without a protector.'

'We poor girls, are obliged to be our own protectors Mr. Carleton,' said Jessie.

'When my mother is well, she usually comes to meet me, but in such cold weather I do not wish her to risk her health.'

'And your brother?'

'He is at New Haven college, sir. Mr. Carleton, let me beg you not to go out of your way for me.'

Fred only answered by drawing her arm through his, Jessie at first seemed alarmed, but, re-assured by his respectful manner, she consented to accept his escort and they soon reached her mother's door. The light of a cheerful fire gleamed through the half opened shutters, and as Fred looked in the room he could not avoid noticing the perfect neatness of its arrangement. But Jessie did not invite him to enter, and he unwillingly bade her good night, though he had a strong desire to take a seat beside that humble hearth.—

When next he met his sister he told them of his adventure, and asked why they did not send a servant with the little seamstress.

'Lord brother, what an idea!' exclaimed Lizzy. 'I am sure she can take care of herself.'

'Should you feel safe Lizzy, if you were sent out to walk a mile at eight o'clock on a winter's night?'

No, but I have always been accustomed to a protector. Such poor girls as Jessie early learn to take care of themselves, and do not feel the same fear which ladies do.'

'For shame!' exclaimed Frederick, 'do you suppose that poverty blunts every perception & destroys every delicate feeling Faith I believe the poor girls are more favored than the rich in such respects, for I don't know none of your fashionable friends Lizzy, who would shrink from taking my arm at modesty as 'our Jessie' did last night.'

'Did you really give Jessie your arm and escort her home?'

'I did, and when I saw the quiet, pleasant little parlor which she called home, I had a great mind to offer her my hand as well as my arm.'

'Frederick, are you losing your sense? If I did not know you were jesting, I should think you had been taking too much wine!'

'I never was in a sounder state of mind, my dear sisters, and yet I declare to you I have a great mind to make little Jessie your sister-in-law—that is, if she will accept me.'

'Come, come, Fred,' interposed Mrs. De Grey, 'you are carrying the force too far; Lizzy is ready to cry with vexation.'

'It is no farce, Julia; I am in earnest.'

'For heaven's sake do not be such a fool; a pretty business it would be to introduce one of my hirelings as my sister. No, no, Fred, that won't do.'

'You need not introduce her if you are ashamed of her. I dare say we should find society without your aid.'

'It would be ruinous to all Lizzy's prospects.'

'How so?'

'Why, do you suppose her rich admirer, Charles Tibbs, would marry the sister of

a man whose wife had once been a seamstress?'

Frederick laughed heartily as he replied, 'True, I had forgotten; Charles Tibbs is the grandson of old Tony Tibbs, who used to peddle essence about the streets, and of course is now in good society. Well I will not interfere with Lizzy's matrimonial speculations; so banish your fears.'

'Oh, I have no fears about it, for with all your eccentricities I am sure you would never do any thing so degrading.'

Notwithstanding her boasted confidence however, Mrs. De Grey really felt considerable anxiety about the matter, and she determined to send Jessie out of the way until her brother should have forgotten his transient fancy. Convinced that Jessie was utterly unconscious of Frederick's admiration, and unwilling to lose her services permanently; she thought of a plan which promised success, and she consulted Lizzy as to its possibility.

'Aunt Tabitha has sent to us to procure her a seamstress for a few weeks, suppose we induce Jessie to go; the poor thing needs country air and it will be just the place for her.'

'Why, Julia!' said Lizzy, with a smile 'because she needs country air, or because we need her absence?'

'Nay, Lizzy, it is no laughing matter.—I want to send her out of Fred's way before she has any suspicion of his folly.'

'But why send her to Aunt Tabitha?'

'Because Fred will never find her there; he is so terribly afraid of her sentimentalities that he never visits her, and by the time Jessie returns, he will have some new folly to engage his attention.'

The plan was matured; and Jessie, who really felt the need of change of air, or relaxation from her continual labors, consented to leave her mother for a few weeks.—

Accordingly, one bright spring morning a stage deposited Jessie at the gate of a neat old fashioned cottage, which stood on the outskirts of a village about forty miles from the great metropolis.

'Where is our Jessie?' asked Fred, when he had watched in vain for her daily return to the little sewing-room.

'Lord, brother, do you think I keep a record of her engagements? When she has finished our work she goes somewhere else, and that is all I know about it.'

The idea of that gentle creature being thus driven about from place to place, toiling day after day with her needle, and dimming her bright eyes over platts and gathers, was extremely painful to Fred Charleton. 'The more he thought of it the more uneasy he became.—'Why should I hesitate,' thought he, 'I have seen all the prettiest girls in Lizzy's set, and I like Jessie Murray better than any of them: Seamstress—indeed!—I wonder if Julia would like to hear that our own dear mother used to make six shillings a day by mending shoes, when she was first married to the honest cooper, our father? Yet I should hate to mar Lizzy's plans; I wish I had some one to advise me. Now I think of it, I will go and see Aunt Tabitha; the dear good romantic old soul whom I used to ridicule so much, will now be my best counsellor.' So, with his usual impetuosity, Fred started on a visit to Aunt Tabitha, leaving his sisters quite ignorant of his destination, and little dreaming of the unexpected pleasure that awaited him.

Dear old Aunt Tabitha! what a singular compound of good feelings and exaggerated sentiments. In early life she had been betrothed to one whose poverty was the only obstacle to their union. He had sailed for India, in the hope of bettering his fortunes, but he never returned, nor did any tidings of his fate ever reach his native land. The ship was missing—it had never reached its destined port, and the sea kept its own secret. Deeply tinged with the romance of warm-hearted youth, and greatly addicted to novel reading, Aunt Tabitha had always lived in the world of the imagination, and the mystery which overhung the fate of her lover seemed to strengthen the romantic fervor of her nature. For some years after