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THE COUNTRY DOLLAR.

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THE MARRIAGE CRUCIBLE.

A Thrilling Tale of High and Low Life.

[Those of our readers who have ever been acted, or have read, that beautiful modern drama of Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, "The Lady of Lyons," need look no farther than the following sketch for its foundation.]

I was born in one of those little hamlets situated in the neighborhood of Montelmart, in the south of France. My father had made many a fruitless effort to raise himself above indigence. His last resource in his old age arose from the exercise of a talent which he had acquired in his youth, that of bellows mending. This, too, was the humble profession which I was destined to follow. Being endowed by nature with quick and lively faculties, both of mind and body, I soon grew skilful in my trade, and having an ambitious spirit, set off for Lyons, to prosecute my calling there. I was so far successful, that I became a great favorite with the chamber-maids, who were my chief employers, and whom my good looks and youth interested in my favor.

One evening, however, as I was returning home after my day's round, I was accosted by four well dressed young men, who threw out a few pleasantries on my profession, which I answered in a style of good-humored railery that seemed to surprise and please them. I saw them look significantly at one another, and heard one of them say, "This is our man." The words alarmed me, but my fears were speedily dispelled. "Rouperon" said one, you shall sup with us. We have a scheme which may do you good. If you do not agree to it we shall not harm you, but only ask you to keep our secret. Do not be afraid, but come with us." Seeing all of them to be gentlemen in appearance, I did not hesitate to accept the offer. They conducted me through a number of cross streets, and at last entered a handsome house, in an apartment of which we found six other young men, who appeared to have been waiting impatiently for my conductors. A few explanatory words passed respecting me, and soon afterwards we sat down to supper. Being young, thoughtless and light-hearted, I gave way to the enjoyment of the hour, and vented a succession of pleasantries which seemed highly to please my chance companions. But they all grew silent and thoughtful ere long, and finally one of them addressed me thus: "The ten persons whom you see before you, are all engravers and citizens of Lyons. We are all in good circumstances, and make a very handsome living by our occupation. We are all attached to one another, and formed a happy society, till love stepped in to disturb us. In the street of St. Dominic there lives a picture merchant, a man of respectable station, but otherwise an ordinary personage. He has, however, a daughter, a creature possessed of every accomplishment, and endowed with every grace, but all whose amiable qualities are shaded by one defect—pride, insupportable pride. As an example of the way in which this feeling has led her to treat others, I will own that I myself paid my addresses to her, and was approved of by her father, as one by birth and circumstances much their superior. But what was the answer which the insolent girl gave to my suit? 'Do you think, sir, that a young woman like me, was born for nothing better than to be the wife of an engraver?'

"Her great charms and her pride have been equally felt by us all," continued the speaker, "and we hold that she has cast a slur on us and our profession. We, therefore, have resolved to show this disdainful girl that she has not indeed been born to the honor of being the wife of an engraver. Now, will you (addressing me) venture to become the husband of a charming woman, who, to attain perfection, wants only to have pride mortified and her vanity punished?" "Yes," answered I, spurred on by the excitement of the moment; "I comprehend what you would have me do, and I will fulfil it in such a manner that you shall have no reason to blush for your pupil."

The three months that followed this strange scene were wholly occupied with preparations for the part I was to perform. Preserving the strictest possible secrecy, my confederates did their best to transform me from a plain bellows mender into a fine gentleman. Bathing, hair-dresses, &c., brought my person to a fitting degree of refinement, while every day or two one of the engravers devoted himself to the task of teaching me music, drawing and other accomplishments; and nature had furnished me with a disposition to study, and a memory so retentive that my friends were astonished at the progress of their disciple. Thoughtless of all else, I felt the deepest delight in acquiring these new rudiments of education. But the time came when I was to be made sensible, for the first time, of the true nature of the task I had entered upon. The confederates at length thought me perfect, and in the character of the rich Marquis of Rouperon, proprietor of large estates in Dauphiny, I was installed in the first hotel in Lyons.—It was under this title that I presented myself to the picture dealer in St. Dominic street. I made a few purchases from him, and seemed anxious to purchase more.—After a little intercourse of this kind, he sent me word one morning, that he had received a superb collection of engravings from Rome, and begged me to call and see them. I did so, and was not received by him, but by Aurora. This was the first sight I had got of that lovely girl, and for the first time in my life, my young & palpitating heart felt the power of beauty. A new world unfolded itself before my eyes; I soon forgot my borrowed part; one sentiment absorbed my soul, one idea enchained my faculties. The fair Aurora perceived her triumph, and seemed to listen with complacency to the incoherent expressions of passion which escaped my lips. That interview fixed my destiny forever! The intoxication of enjoying her presence hurried me on, blind to everything else. For several months I saw her every day and enjoyed a state of happiness only damped by the self-accusing torments of solitary hours, and by the necessity I was under of regularly meeting my employers, who furnished me with money, jewels, and everything I could require.—At length Aurora's father gave a little fete in the country, of which I was evidently the hero. A moment occurred, in which, thoughtless of all but my love, I threw myself a suitor at her feet. She heard me with modest dignity, while a tear of joy, which dimmed for a moment her fine eyes, convinced me that pride was not the only emotion which agitated her heart, yes, I discovered that I was beloved!

I was an impostor, but heaven is my witness I deceived her not without remorse. In her presence I remembered nothing but herself; but in the stillness of solitude, sophistry and passion disappeared, leaving a dreadful perspective before me. When I associated the idea of Aurora with the miserable fate which was soon to fall upon her delicate hands, employed in preparing the coarsest nourishment, I started up covered with a cold perspiration. But self love would come to my aid, and I thought if she truly loved me she yet might be happy. I would devote my life, I swore, to the task of strewing flowers along her path. But all my hopes, all my fears cannot be told. Suffice it to say, that her father believed me when I represented my estates as being in Dauphiny, a distant province. I would not allow a farthing of Aurora's portion to be settled otherwise than on herself. So there was one baseness of which I was not guilty.

We were married. At the altar, a shivering ran through all my veins, a general trepidation seized my whole frame, and I should infallibly have sunk to the earth in a flood of tears had not some one come to my rescue. The silly crowd around mistook the last cry of expiring virtue for an excess of sensibility.

A fortnight after the marriage, as had been arranged by my employers, at whose mercy I was, we started for Montelmart, my unfortunate bride believing that we were going to a far different place. Several of the engravers were themselves our attendants, disguised and acting as courtiers to our magnificent equipage. The awful moment of exposure had arrived, & when it did come, it proved more terrible than ever I had anticipated. The engravers made the carriage be drawn up before a mean and miserable cottage, at the door of which sat my humble but venerable father. Now came the awful disclosure. The poor, deceived, and surprised Aurora was handed out. The engravers came up; they pulled off their disguises; and he whom Aurora had so pointedly refused, exclaimed to her, "No, madam, no, you have not been born or brought up for an engraver, such a lot would have done too much honor to you. A bellows mender is worthy of you, and such is he whom you have made your husband!" Trembling and boiling with rage, I would have replied, but the engravers entered the coach, and like the shifting of a scene in the theatre, all our grandeur disappeared with them!

Poor Aurora scarcely heard what had been said. The truth had flashed upon her and she sank back in a swoon. Recollect that I had now acquired a considerable share of sensibility and delicacy from my late life. At that cruel moment I trembled alike at the thought of losing the woman I adored, and of seeing her restored to life. I lavished on her the most tender cares, yet almost wished that those cares might prove unavailing. She recovered at length her senses, but the moment her frenzied eyes met mine, "Monster!" she exclaimed, and was again insensible. I profited by her condition to remove her from the sight of those who had gathered around, and to place her on an humble straw couch. Here I remained beside her till she opened her eyes; mine shrunk from her glance. The first use she made of her speech was to interrupt the broken exclamations of love, shame, and remorse which fell from my lips, and to beg to be left alone for a time. The niece of the curate of the parish, however, who chanced to be by, remained beside her, and the poor young victim of my villainy, for she was eighteen, seemed glad of her attentions.

How shall I describe the horrible night which I then passed? It was not on my own account that I suffered or feared.—She alone was in my thoughts. I dreaded above all, for my love was still predominant, to see that heart alienated whose tenderness was necessary to my existence, to read coldness on that eye upon whose look my peace depended. But could it be otherwise? Had I not basely, vilely darkened all the prospects of her life, and overwhelmed her with intolerable shame and anguish? That night was a punishment which would almost have wiped out any lesser sin. Frequently, it may be believed, I sent to know how Aurora was.—She was calm, they told me; and indeed, to my surprise she entered in the morning the room where I was. She was pale, but collected. I fell before her on the ground and spoke not. "You have deceived me," said she, "it is on your future conduct that my forgiveness must depend. Do not take advantage of the power you have usurped. The niece of the curate has offered me an asylum. There I will remain till this matter can be thought of calmly."

Alas! these were soothing but deceitful words! Within a day or two after this event, the interval of which I spent in forming wild hopes for the future, I received at once two letters. The first was from the engravers, who caused my exultation and my fall. They wrote to me that my acquaintance had begot in them a friendship for me; that they had each originally subscribed a certain sum for the execution of their plot; and that they would supply me with money and everything necessary for entering into some business, and ensuring the creditable support of myself and Aurora. The other letter was from Aurora—"Some remains of pity," she said, "which I feel for you, notwithstanding your conduct, induce me to inform you that I am in Lyons. It is my intention to enter a convent, which will rid me of your presence; but you will do well to hold yourself in readiness to appear before every tribunal in France, till I have found one which will do me justice, and break the chain in which you have bound your victim."

This letter threw me into despair. I hurried to the curate's, but could hear nothing of Aurora's retreat, although I became assured that the curate and his niece, despising my condition, had been urgent advisers of the step Aurora had taken. I now hastened to Lyons where the affair now created a great sensation. I lived unknown, however, and obscure, and saw only the engravers, who, notwithstanding the base plot which they had through me effected, were men of not ungenerous dispositions. As they had driven me out of my former means of livelihood, I consided myself at liberty to accept a sum which they offered me to enter into trade with. They told me how to dispose of it at once, and I laid it out in a way which speedily and without trouble to me, augmented it greatly. Meanwhile, the father of Aurora had made every preparation for annulling the marriage. This could only be done by publicly detailing the treachery which had been practised. Never, perhaps, was a court-house more crowded than that of Lyons on the day on which the case was heard. Aurora herself appeared, and riveted the eyes of all present, not to speak of my own. Unknown and unseen, I shrunk into a corner like a guilty thing. The counsel for Aurora stated the case, and plead the victim's cause with so much eloquence as to draw tears from many eyes. No counsel arose for me, and Aurora, who merely sought a divorce without desiring to inflict that punishment she might easily have brought down on the offenders, would have at once gained the suit, had not one arison for me. It was one of the engravers, the one who had been refused, as mentioned, by Aurora. He made a brief pleading for me, he praised my character, he showed and confessed how I had been tempted, and how I fell. At last he concluded by addressing Aurora. "Yes, madam," said he, "the laws may declare that you are *not* his wife, but you *have* been the wife of his bosom! The contract may be annulled, and no stain may rest upon you. But a stain may be cast upon another.—Can you, will you throw the blot of illegitimacy upon one even more innocent than yourself?" The appeal was understood and was not made in vain. The trembling Aurora exclaimed, "No, no!" and the tears fell fast as she spoke.

The marriage was not annulled—was no longer sought to be annulled. But while the contract (which I had signed with my own name, believed by them to be the family name of the Marquis de Rouperon) was declared valid, it was also determined that Aurora should remain unmolested by the adventurer who had so far deceived her. Every legal precaution was taken that I should have no control over her or her affairs. After this event I did not remain long in Lyons, where I heard my name everywhere branded with infamy. Master, by the means I have related, of a considerable sum, I went to Paris, where I assumed a foreign name. I entered business, and, more to drown remembrance than from any other cause, pursued it with an ardor which few have evinced in the like circumstances. The wildest speculations were those which attracted me most, and fortune favored me in a most remarkable way. I became the head of a flourishing commercial house, and ere five years had passed away, had amassed considerable wealth. At times, however, the remembrance of my wife threw me into fits of anguish and despair. I dared not think, nevertheless, of attempting to go near her, until it chanced that I had it in my power materially to serve a banker in Lyons, who pressed me much to pay him a visit. After much uneasiness and anxiety, I resolved to accept the invitation.—Once more I entered Lyons, and on this occasion with an equipage which was not borrowed, though as handsome as my former one. My friend, the banker, on being questioned, told me that Aurora still lived in the convent, and was admired for her propriety of conduct, and for her unremitting attention to her child, her boy; but he told me her father had just died, leaving her almost dependent upon the charity of the abbess. This recital excited in me the most lively emotions. I took an opportunity afterwards of visiting one of the engravers, who scarcely knew me, changed as I was, but who received me warmly. I requested him to assemble the creditors of the father of Aurora, and to pay his debts, giving him funds for that purpose. I told him to purchase some pieces of furniture which I knew to be highly prized by Aurora.

Every hour of my stay in Lyons strengthened my desire to see my wife, and at least to fold my boy in my arms. The feeling at length became irresistible, and I revealed myself to the banker, beseeching him to find some way of taking me to the convent. His astonishment to find in me the much-spoken of bellows-mender, was beyond description. Happily, however, he was acquainted with the abbess, and assured me that it was easy at least to obtain a sight of my wife. Ere an hour passed away my friend had taken me there. I was introduced as a Parisian merchant, and beheld, with emotions unspeakable, my wife seated in the parlor of the convent, with a lovely child asleep upon her knee, in conversation with her venerable friend. Aurora, now twenty-three years of age, seemed to me more lovely than ever. I had purposely wrapped myself closely up, and she knew me not, though I perceived an involuntary start when she first saw me, as if my presence reminded her of some once familiar object. I could not speak; my friend maintained all the conversation. But the boy awoke. He saw strangers present, and descended from his mother's knee. Looking at myself and my friend for a moment, he came forward to me. Oh! what were my feelings when I found myself covered with the sweet caresses, the innocent kisses of my child!—An emotion which I had no power to subdue, made me rise hastily, and throw myself with my child in my arms at the feet of my pale and trembling wife. "Aurora! Aurora!" I exclaimed in broken accents, "your child claims from you a father!—Oh, pardon!" The child clasped her knees and seemed to plead with me. Aurora seemed ready to faint. Her lips quivered and her eye was fixed as if in stupor upon me; a flow of tears came to her relief, and she answered my appeal by throwing herself into my arms. "I know not," she sobbed, "whether you again deceive me, but your child pleads too powerfully! Aurora is yours"

This event closes my history. I found Aurora much improved by adversity, and have tasted a degree of happiness with her such as no penitence for the past could ever make me deserving of. One only incident in my history after my reconciliation with Aurora seems to be worthy of attention. I took my son and her with me to Paris, but at the same time, seeing it to be my wife's wish, bought a small country house for her near Lyons. Sometimes we spent a few weeks there, and on one occasion she invited me to go down with her to be present at a fete for which she had made preparations. Who were our guests? The ten engravers, who were the original cause of all that passed! It was indeed a day of pride to me, when I heard Aurora thank them for the happiness which, under the agency of a wonder-working Providence, they had been the means of conferring on her.

A German professor had collected a valuable cabinet of curiosities, which he highly prized. One morning a friend came to tell him a very unpleasant circumstance—that he had seen a man get up a ladder into a window of the professor's house.—"Into which window?" cried the philosopher. "I am sorry to say," replied his friend, "It was your *daughter's!*" "Oh man," said the other, "you almost frightened me; I thought it had been into my cabinet."

THE LAND AND ITS INHABITANTS.—The land, or earth, in any country or neighborhood, with everything in or on the same, or pertaining thereto, belongs at all times to the living inhabitants of the said country or neighborhood in an equal manner. For there is no living but on land and its productions: consequently, what we cannot live without, we have the same property in as in our lives.

Thomas Spence.

Scaring a Crowd.

Standing at a post office in one of our Southern states, I was introduced to a very respectable looking and intelligent Methodist clergyman, with whom I entered into conversation.

He proved a cheerful man, and the discourse fell upon the eccentricities of preachers. I owe the groundwork of the following anecdote of the celebrated Lorenzo Dow to this recontre.

Dow was very exact in the appointments he made, and sometimes arranged them along way ahead. He once preached near one of the small towns of upper Georgia, and told his congregation "on that one day year he would preach to them again!"

The next season, on a Saturday afternoon preceding the Sabbath of the appointed time, the old man was jogging along the main road in the direction of his congregation.

He noticed before him a stout little negro boy, of peculiar active step and manner, who carried in his hand a small tin horn, such as are used to call the people to their meals.

The custom among many in the south is to allow married men to go to their wive's houses, and children to visit their parents, on Sundays, and as negroes are musically inclined, they carry a fife, or a horn, or a banjo, to give notice of their approach, and to beguile the way. In other cases they whistle or shout. A healthy cheerful negro of honest intention, uses generally some means of association, even if he is obliged to talk to himself!

Dow according to his usual manner, entered into conversation with the boy, and found that he was about to visit the congregation he had appointed to meet.

It the truth must be told, Lorenzo had an idea that the character of his flock was of a reckless, frolicsome, kind, careless people, upon whom it was necessary to make a very decided impression, or his time would be thrown away among them.

"What is your name, my lad?" asked Dow;

"Gabriel, sir," said the boy, lifting a new straw hat, and showing his ivory, while he actively stepped along to keep pace with the preacher's horse.

"Can you blow upon that horn!"

"Oh yes, master I can do a little."

"Well let me hear you?"

So the negro inflated his velvet cheeks, and made the woods resound.

"Do you know a large tall pine tree near the stand at Sharon?" said Dow.

"Yes, that I does, very well, master."

Lorenzo then put his hand in his pocket, and pulling out a silver dollar, showed it to the boy, and told him if he would climb up into the pine tree before the people met at the meeting and keep quiet there until the preacher called out his name, and then blow loudly on his horn, as he had just done, he would give him the silver dollar, if he did not tell any body about it.

The negro expressed himself highly delighted at such an offer, and promised punctuality, with secresy.

On the Sabbath a large meeting assembled at Sharon to hear the famous Lorenzo Dow. Serious old men, wild boys and their sweethearts, almost all on horse back sometimes by twos and threes, besides negroes from a great distance, on foot, being readily captivated by the naturally eccentric, for they love anything that has a laugh attatched to it, and they knew that Lorenzo was good for a joke even if it did hit hard.

Dow selected a rather brimstone text, and made the application as strong as possible, but he forced his way slowly among the merciful, healthful honest hearted people who were hard to frighten. He enumerated the enormity of the vices he thought to prevail, but they were so used to them that the words slid over them like water over a ducks back.

At length he boldly described, in the plainest kind of language, the appearance and character of "the last great day." and what would be their condition when that day came! "Suppose," exclaimed the preacher suddenly, and then paused—"that this were the day?" He saw that some of the woman became a little fidgetty and nudged the fellows into silence and attention. "Suppose," repeated he elevating his voice, "that Gabriel should blow his trumpet?"

At this moment the little negro showed he was "a trump," and from the top of the lofty pine, a loud an clamorous blast overwhelmed the audience. The women shrieked, the men rose in great surprise, the horses, tied around the camp, neighed, reared and kicked, while the terrified negroes changed their complexion to a dull purple color. Never was surprise, alarm and astonishment more promptly exhibited.

Lorenzo Dow looked with grave but pleased attention upon the successful result of his experiment, until the first clamor had subsided, and some began to estimate the character of the artificial angel, and about to apply a little hickory after the pine? But this suggestion was arrested by the loud and solemn tones of the preacher, who looking very firmly into the faces of his disturbed audience, he leaned over them to continue his discourse impressively remarked—

"And now, if a little negro boy, with a tin horn, on the top of a pine bush, can make you feel *so*, how will you feel when the day does come?"—*N. Y. Spirit of the Times.*

A Local Romance.

The following account of "one of the Thachers," is from the Yarmouth Register:

Tradition has preserved a singular anecdote of John Thacher, a son of one of the earliest settlers of this town. He was married in 1661, to Miss Rebecca Winslow, of Duxbury, in Plymouth county, if we mistake not. On his way home with his new bride, he stopped for the night at a house of a friend, a Col. Gorham, of Barnstable, one of the most prominent citizens of the town. Merriment and gayety prevailed, and during the evening a female infant about three weeks old was introduced, and the night of her birth being mentioned, Mr. Thacher observed, 'that is the very night on which we were married,' and taking the child in his arms, he presented it to his bride, and jokingly said, 'Here, my dear, is a little lady that was born on the same night that we were married. I wish you would kiss her, for I intend to have her for my second wife.'—'I will, my dear, with great pleasure,' replied she, 'but I hope it will be very long before your intention is fulfilled in that respect.'

Mr. Thacher and his wife lived happily together for about twenty years, and faithfully fulfilled the scriptural injunction to multiply and replenish the earth.—Mrs. T. left a large family of children, among whom was a son named Peter.

After Mr. Thacher had mourned a reasonable length of time he began to think of getting another partner. None of the maidens, young or old, seemed to please him like Lydia Gorham, the little lady of the preceeding part of the story, now grown up, if we may believe tradition, to a fair comly girl, 'full of gushing life,' as the poets say. But there was one impediment in the way. His eldest son, Peter, had shown a predilection for the girl, and the old man was at a loss to decide whether she favored the suit of the sire or the son. The one road a black horse in his visits, and the other a white. There were a kind of tacit agreement between the two that one should not interfere with the other in their visits; so when the father found a white horse tied in front of Col. Gorham's unlike the good Samaritan he crossed over on the other side; and the son, when the black horse was there, returened the favor.

Thus things went on till the patience of the old gentleman was well nigh exhausted, and he resolved on a desperate step to decide the matter. Taking his son on one side, he said to him:—

"Peter, are you or are you not going to marry Lydia Gorham?"

Peter replied that he had not yet made up his mind.

"Well," said the old gentleman, "I will make you an offer, if you will give her up and court her no more, I will give you thirteen pounds in money and the pair of black steers. What do you say to that?"

The young man hesitated but a moment.

"Tis a bargain," said he.

And it is due the parties to say that it was observed by them all with good faith. Whether Lydia knew the bargaining that her charms had occasioned, tradition saye-eth not: but she subsequently became Mr. Thacher's wife, bore him ten children, from whom many members of the numerous and highly respectable family of the Thacher's have sprung. Our venerable townsman, Mr. Peter Thacher, is the great grand-son of Peter, noticed above.

Serfs in Russia.

There are 48,000,000 serfs in Russia, of which 20,000,000 belong to the crown, and 26,500,000 to the nobles.

These serfs are bought and sold with the land. Some of them are mechanics, but the greater part, are farmers. Each serf has as much land as he can cultivate, the use of which he pays for in money or in kind. These rents are very reasonable, and many of the serfs become very rich, for their property is sacredly protected.—There is no country in the world where a man can rise so rapidly as in Russia. A lecturer mentioned the case of a man, who has risen from a condition of serfdom to be the owner of 100,000 serfs. In Peter the Great's day, the higher offices in the army were open to the serfs.

The dress of the serfs, for the most most part, is very rude. They live in a cabin, fifteen or twenty feet square, containing one room, in the centre of which is a table, and around the sides is a bench, which, being turned over at night, forms their bed. This cabin is kept intensely hot by a stove, but the injurious effect of so great heat is counteracted by the smoke which is produced by shutting off the flue when the wood is charred.

The most pleasing sight to God is mankind struggling to be free;—the most grateful sense to man is that of freedom.

Uxbridge Spirit of Freedom.

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