

Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY;—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

BY JOHN G. GIVEN.]

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Hearts and Homes.

Hearts and Homes, sweet words of pleasure,
Music breathing as they fall,
Making each the other's treasure,
Once divided losing all;
Homes, ye may be high or lowly,
Hearts alone can make you holy,
Do the dwelling e'er so small,
Having Love it boasteth all.
Hearts and homes, sweet words of pleasure,
Music breathing as ye fall,
Making each the other's treasure,
Once divided losing all.
Hearts and Homes, Hearts and Homes!

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE MARRIAGE CRUCIBLE.

A Thilling Tale of High and Low Life.

I was born in one of those little hamlets situated in the neighborhood of Montelmar 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 exercises 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 skillful 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 raillery that seemed to surprise and please them. I saw them look significantly at one another, and heard one of them say "this 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 away to the employment 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 those amiable qualities are shaded by one defect—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 by her father, as one by birth and circumstances much her 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 would 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 to do, and I will fulfil it in such 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-dressing, &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 confederate 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 got of the lovely girl, and for the first time in my life, my young and 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. The 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 imposter, 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 fall upon her delicate hands, employed in preparing the coarsest nourishment, I shrunk back with horror, or 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 to herself. So there was one baseness of which I was not guilty.

We were married. At the altar, a shivering ran through 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 Montelmar, my unfortunate bride believing that we were going to a far distant place. Several of the engravers were themselves our attendants, disguised and acting as courtiers to our magnificent equipage. The awful moment of exposure arrived; and 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 which set 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 out 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 eye 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 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 but 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 on 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 on 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 the 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 soothings but deceitful words! Within a day or two after the 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, the cause of my exultation and my fall. They wrote to me that my acquaintance had begun 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 credible 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, despoising my condition, had been urgent advisers of the step Aurora had taken. I now hastened to Lyons where the affair had 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 considered 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 courthouse 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 as 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 arisen 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 con-

fessed 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, and 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 into 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 widest speculations were those that 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 me in 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 became at length 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 convent parlor, 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 eyes were 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 had 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 Cure for Sparking.

Some months since, a joyous, courageous young woman, residing in this city, the daughter of highly respectable parents found herself somewhat intentionally detained at the house, one evening; and before she was aware of the fact, scarcely night had set in. The distance to her own home was but a few blocks, however, and as she expected a little gathering of ladies and gentlemen that evening at her father's, she determined upon returning homeward unattended; and bidding her friends good night she hurried along upon the walk, towards her residence, into which her family had quite recently removed, from another part of the city.

Upon turning the first corner, she was suddenly startled by the approach of a well-dressed young man, who accosted her with a "good evening," and offered his services to escort her home! Alarmed, for an instant she would have avoided the stranger; but as he advanced to her side, she ventured to turn towards him, and a glance satisfied her—she recognized the young gentleman, as a familiar acquaintance.—Disguising her voice, and replying in a timid tone, she accepted the proffered gallantry, determined at once to administer a lesson to her young friend, which he should not forget. The conversation which passed was brief, and the beau suspecting nothing as he was aware that the family had changed their quarters, tripped along at the young lady's side, apparently very well pleased with his companion. In a few minutes, they halted before a modest brick house, in a somewhat retired street, at the west end, and the lady relinquished her attendant's arm.

"Will you come in?" whispered the lady softly.

"Thank you," was the reply; and his fair companion opened the front door. Closing it carefully they found themselves in the entry in total darkness.

"Wait a moment," said the young woman, and be perfectly quiet. I will return instantly; and with these words she ascended the stairs which led to the parlors.

The first thought of the young man, as she retired, was to open the front door and move; for he suspected all was not as he at first anticipated. He turned to the door it was fast. He fumbled for the latch, or lock; or whatever secured it was not to be found; and an instant afterward, he heard footsteps approaching in the darkness. His heart thumped against his ribs, and he began to wish himself safely out of doors again; but he was quickly reassured by the encouraging whisper of the new made acquaintance, who approached him, apparently with great caution.

"Hush!" she said, "all is safe. Be quiet now, a moment—remove your boots from your feet—I will return in an instant."

Our hero was content; and drawing off his boots, he secured them together, and held them in his hand, to await the return of his lady friend, who again ascended the front stairs.

Entering the parlor a moment afterwards, the female rogue found some half a score of young lady friends with their bathers and beaux present to whom she quickly and briefly communicated the adventure.

"I have got him in the entry down stairs," she said. "Put out the lights, keep perfectly still, don't betray the slightest sound, and I will show you some sport in a moment."

The lights were removed, the party arranged themselves around the room—the bulk of the party knew the victim intimately—and again the lady descended the stairs, and approached her friend.

pect the existence of a huge rent in his stockings—but he was a bachelor, and this was but a trifle!

They entered the parlor. All was darkness and silence. The lady closed the door behind them, and led her companion into the centre of the room. Not a breath was heard, and little did the gentleman suspect that he was at that moment surrounded by a dozen of his acquaintances.

"Remain here one moment," said the girl, "I will get a light—"

The gallant raised the soft hand which had conducted him thus far towards—he knew not what!—and ventured to press upon it a kiss; but it was dexterously withdrawn, at the very "nick of time," and his lips came in contact with his own fingers!

"Wait a moment," added his innamorata, leaving him quickly—and, then, passing through a door at the farther extremity of the room, she disappeared. A minute had scarcely elapsed, but it seemed a month to the little party, who were nearly choking with suppressed merriment—it was an age to the victim. But gentle footsteps were heard again; he gazed anxiously towards the direction of the door it opened with a single movement, a blaze of light gushed into the parlor, and behind it he beheld the face of an old familiar acquaintance!

"Ladies and gentlemen," she said, "this is Mr. Smith!"

Such a "ha, ha!" as went up from that little coterie, at that moment, was seldom heard in the neighborhood before or since! Poor Smith stood for a moment, not exactly paralyzed—that would be a faint term of expression; he was frozen—actually statue-sized, in his tracks, and he hugged his boots to his side, coughed, sneezed, choked—then grinned a ghastly smile!

As soon as the proxym of laughter was over, the lady brought forward a chair, and placing it before the victim, said—

"Pray be seated Mr. Smith."

He turned upon his tormentor a look of comical recognition, and, like Falstaff, his wits coming quickly to his relief, he replied:

"Did you think, Cally, I didn't know you?"

Another roar followed this remark, and the company was very soon upon good terms.

This was his first and last effort at picking up an acquaintance; and it proved a cure for "sparking" with him. Within six months he made ample apology for his error, by making Miss Cally—Mrs. Smith—Flag of our Union.

Conjugation and Agreement.—In a lesson in parsing the sentence, "Man courting in capacity of bliss," &c., the word "courting," comes to a pert young miss of fourteen to parse. She commences hesitatingly, got along well enough until she was to tell what it agreed with. Here she stopped short. But the teacher said—

"Very well, what does courting agree with?"

Ellen blushed and held down her head. "Ellen, don't you know what it agrees with?"

"Ye—ye—yes, sir!"

"Well, Ellen, why don't you parse that word? What does it agree with?"

Blushing still more and stammering, Ellen says—

"It—a—agrees with all the girls sir!"

Editors.—A cotemporary very truly remarks that an editor's duties, even in a case comparatively unimportant, are enormous and unthankful. Those he praises "love him less than their dinner, and those he finds fault with hate him worse than the devil." If he steps out manfully, he can scarcely avoid treading now and then on somebody's toes, who will make a point of never forgetting it; while those on whom he may bestow commendation (even if nothing more substantial) during his journey, will quietly place it all to the account of their own merits.

I like to see young women peep through the windows, or the cracks of half open doors, to catch a glimpse of the young men, and when they come in their presence appear over modest—it is so admirable.

One of the Holes.—Out west there has long been known, on a certain hill side, a large hole, which is not an uncommon thing in that section of country. The bank is said to have recently caved off, and left the hole sticking out about ten feet.

An Insinuation.—Mister, I don't say that you stole my watch, but if I had heard any other watch tick like that which you carry in your pocket, I should have said that it ticked just like mine.