

# The Huntingdon Journal.

"LIBERTY AND UNION, NOW AND FOREVER, ONE AND INSEPARABLE."

WM. BREWSTER, EDITOR & PROPRIETOR.

HUNTINGDON, PA., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1858.

VOL. XXIII. NO. 4.

## TERMS OF THE JOURNAL.

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his soul would have delighted in. Her white hat with its lace and ribbons, and her rich travelling dress harmonized with the rare English creamness of her complexion, and altogether, she looked to the loving eyes that now rested on her, so bright and sparkling and happy, that they forgot everything but her beauty.

'Grandma's been saying bad things about me,' said the bride, with a pretty pout that any young husband would have thought worth a dozen kisses. 'Now, Alden, don't let her frighten you one bit, for I'm going to be just the most loving, obedient little wife in the world, and never do a thing you say I mustn't as long as I live.'

'I shan't say 'mustn't' very often darling,' answered the young husband, stroking the curls that fell out of the little hat. 'But come, Elsie, we shan't be in time for the cars. Say good bye to you, grandmother, quick.'

'I'll be a good girl, indeed I will,' whispered the trembling lips, as they drew up to the grandmother's, and the smiling face was dim with tears.

'God bless you, Elsie, my child.'

And the husband hurried her away.

Elsie Raymond's future must tell the story of the past. Both her parents lay under the spring grass before she had learned to know them, and so she went to her grandmother's heart and home. There only sunshine lay over her life. The tender, indulgent grandmother forgot there must come an hour when the clouds would rise, and the great life storms descend upon the flower that grew up in such beauty at her hearthstone.

Elsie had one of those fine, rich, impulsive natures, that especially require judicious training. This she had never received from her grandmother, and the under current of self will and pride in her early girlhood, only revealed themselves in her impatience of mild reproof and contradiction.

But usually she was so loving, so gentle, so transparent—and, as I said, her future must tell her past.

Two years had gone swiftly, happily by, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond sat at their breakfast table that morning. The room with its appliances of taste and luxury, was one of those rare home gems that only an artist can appreciate.

'Alden,' says Mrs. Raymond, as she passed the second cup of coffee, 'won't you put down that paper and listen to me a moment. You know that party you promised me almost a year ago. Well, I've decided to have it next week. It's just the season for it now, and we'll make a grand effort to have it pass off well.'

If Mrs. Raymond had at that moment looked narrowly at her husband's face, she would have seen it grow pale at the mention of the party.

'I'm sorry, Elsie,' he commenced, moving restlessly on his chair.

'Now, don't,' interrupted the little wife quickly, 'don't, Alden, say one word against the party, for I've set my heart on having it. I told the Campbells, and the Wildmans about it, more than two weeks ago, so I should die with shame to postpone it.'

You shouldn't have mentioned it to them without consulting me first.' Mr. Raymond's tones were cold and severe for the first time, but his wife would have forgiven them had she guessed the anguish that lay at his heart.

As it was, her face flushed with anger. 'Really,' she answered, 'I was not, until this morning, aware I was responsible to you, Mr. Raymond, for the subjects I might choose to select for conversation with my acquaintances. Once for all, what is the reason you refuse me this party?'

'I do not refuse it, Elsie, I only ask you to delay it.'

'And I must and will have it next week or never. I cannot see why you wish me to postpone it, unless it be because you know the delay will greatly annoy me.'

The young man's face flushed with the pain her words occasioned him. 'Elsie,' and his voice was quicker and sterner than before, 'you cannot move me by these accusations, because you know as well as I do there is no truth in them. I have some heavy payments to meet this week, and that alone was the reason of my requesting you to defer the matter. All I have to say is you will be quite likely to accomplish your wishes by presenting them in a less dictatorial manner.'

It was very unfortunate for Mr. Raymond that he added to his explanation that last remark, for now he assigned a motive for the delay, his wife had begun to soften toward him, but that last speech hardened it again.

'I don't believe a word of what you're saying, Alden Raymond,' she answered, pushing back her chair, and bursting into a flood of passionate tears. 'If the money had made any difference, you'd have told me ofore this day; and it's only because you want to mortify me now before the world, that you are stinging this morning.—I wish that I was back again in my old home with grandma, and near old Daisy, who would never have spoken to the harsh cruel words you have just done. I wish I was back there again, and that I had never left it for, and that I had never seen you Alden Raymond!'

And springing from her seat, the lady burst out of the room, and her husband made no effort to detain her. He only leaned his head on his hand, and groaned deeply. It was the last drop in his cup of bitterness.

An hour after the young merchant was walking up and down his counting-room with restless step and haggard face.

There had come a sudden revolution in the mercantile world, and his house was one of the first to feel it. 'There is no chance to sail clear of this, as I see,' murmured the young man, as he struck his forehead. 'A few weeks, and we shall all sink, I shall be a ruined man, and Elsie—' his face worked fearfully a moment and then he resumed, 'there is no way to raise the money, unless—' he stared anxiously all about him, 'as though he feared the terrible secret which lay behind that 'unless' might have revealed itself, though it had never crossed his lips and for the first time in his life his face wore a look of cowardice and guilt.

'Yes, I could get it so,' he said, leaning his head on hands; and if our affairs should happen to take a favorable turn, I could repay the note before any body was wiser; if not, and his voice grew hoarse, 'the river or a pistol shot would settle it all.'

'Elsie's little property's all swallowed up too. God knows I meant to secure it to her, but there was help for it, and were she to know this she'd hate me worse than ever, and may be I can win back one of the old love smiles to her sweet lips if—' he did not finish the sentence.

'Elsie, you, you can give out the invitations for your party next week. There is the money which will defray the expenses, and Mr. Raymond placed a note for a thousand dollars in the lap of his wife.'

It was dinner time, and Elsie had all the morning to reflect on her conduct at breakfast, and bitterly had the young wife reproached herself for the unkind words she had spoken. But her will was unsubdued still, and when the footsteps of her husband rang through the hall, the old pride came back to her heart, the morning curl to her rosy lip and she thought to herself 'Alden, shall speak first.'

And he did; and that generous deed overcame at once all the pride and self-will of the really loving wife.

She sprung up quickly, and wound her white arms around her husband's neck while the thers of remorse and tenderness swept down her face. 'Oh, Alden,' she said 'forgive me for the cruel words I said to you this morning. I have been sorry for them. I do love you better than all the world beside, and I would not leave you for a thousand grandmothers. Say just once to me, 'Elsie, I forgive you,' and I will be so happy.'

He drew her head to his bosom, and he rained down kisses on her sweet brow, as he said, 'Elsie, once and for forever I forgive you, but I have been very weak, and I have suffered much this morning. Let me lay my head in your lap, and see if I shall feel better while you talk to me.'

And Elsie sat there a long time, running her little dimpled fingers through the thick brown curls of her husband and laying her cool lip every few moments to his fevered forehead chatting to him in sweet humming-bird style, of her party, and what a delightful affair it would be, dreaming little of the darkness, and sin, and shame that was dawning closer and closer to their threshold.

It was late in the morning after the party. It had been, as the young wife had predicted, 'a brilliant affair.'

And now she walked through the elegant confusion of her parlors, and thought what glances of admiration had followed her during the evening, and how proud Alden would be when he recounted to him the compliments which the guests had bestowed upon their beautiful hostess and how she had inadvertently heard Mayor Hamlin, who was pronounced the rare artistic judge in the city, call her 'the rare blossom of the festival.' But these pleasant dreamings experienced a rude interruption.

Two rough looking men entered the parlor, and inquired inquiringly if Mr. Raymond was in.

'No,' answered the wife, surprised and startled. 'He went to the store this morning.'

One of them replied, with a significant look around the room, that he was not there; they had just come from his store.

'I have not seen him since,' was Mrs. Raymond's laconic rejoinder; and after conferring together a moment, the two men left the room.

The lady sank down upon a sofa, and covered her face with her hands. They were policemen; she could not disguise from herself that fact, and a vague terrible fear took possession of her soul.

A few moments later, and her husband stood before her, wild, pale, haggard.

'Elsie,' he asked hurriedly, 'has there been two policemen here after me?'

'Yes, and I told them you were at the store. Oh, Alden—she could not finish the sentence, for he rushed from her, out into the hall, and up the stairs like a madman.

Elsie's heart died within her, and it was only by grasping the cushions of the sofa, she prevented herself from sinking to the floor. She feared—she knew not what; but the next moment the woman's heart of Elsie Raymond awoke within her. Alden, her husband, was snoring, it might be he was in disgrace and shame, and who should stand by him, and where should he find comfort and strength, but in her?

She sprung up, and though her limbs shook like a reed beneath her, and her face would not be whiter than it lay under the coffin plates, she went straight to his room.

The door was not locked, and she opened it without knocking. What a scene for the blue eyes of Elsie Raymond! Her husband stood in the centre of the room, with a pistol pointed at his heart. One moment more, and she had been too late.

With one loud shriek, she rushed to his side, with one blow of her small white hand, she struck the heavy pistol to the floor, and a wild, sad cry springing from her lips, 'Saved, saved, Alden,' she wound her arms about him.

The desperate man put her away.—'Saved,' he cried, hoarsely, 'saved to ruin, degradation, and worse than death. Leave me, Elsie, and let me do the deed now.'

But she came back to him, for she would not be put away. 'No, no,' she answered, and her pale face shone almost like an angel's with its beautiful wife tenderness. 'did you think, Alden, your Elsie would leave you now, when your arms have sheltered her so long? Did you think she'd not follow you through suffering and shame true and loving to the end?'

'But not to prison, Elsie, not to prison!' His head dropped as he said it.

'Yes,' she answered, drawing closer, and the light of her soul was shining in her eyes, 'to prison, to the gallows, to death, Alden!'

And then he took her in his arms, and while his heart was wrung with deeper agony for her than for himself, he told her all.

And Elsie learned, for the first time, of the threatened collapse in her husband's business, and of the utter impossibility of his meeting the expenses of their party without—he whispered the words—'he had forged a note for two thousand dollars!'

He had hoped to pay it, and so elude discovery, but matters grew worse, and he could not raise the money.

'And it was for me you did it, Alden; because I spoke those cruel words! Oh, God, help me! I am to blame, not you!' cried the heart-broken wife.

But before her husband could answer her, she had sprung