

The North Branch Democrat.

HARVEY SICKLER, Proprietor.

"TO SPEAK HIS THOUGHTS IS EVERY FREEMAN'S RIGHT."—Thomas Jefferson.

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ALL WORK WARRANTED, TO GIVE SATISFACTION. Office over Tutton's Law Office, near the Post Office. Dec. 11, 1861.

TO NERVOUS SUFFERERS OF BOTH SEXES.

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Select Story.

THANKSGIVING DAY,

OR, THE Eastward and the Westward Home.

BY MARY EVLE DALLAS.

The eastward and the westward homes, so they called them at those two houses, standing with a stone's throw of each other—Twin houses just alike, with even the same syringas and lilac bushes in the garden, and the same number of inches of green grass plot exactly in the midst thereof—prim but comfortable houses, perfection in the eyes of their Quaker builder, who planned them for two sons who never lived to marry and occupy them. So it chanced that they were let to strangers—through the little concealing gate between the gardens still remained as it would had brothers opened and passed through it every day, and somehow suggested intimacy and neighborly calls—and the two grape vines which festooned the porches and stretched long arms from their respective trellises and mingled into one great arbor of dusky green and purple bloom.

It was just after the last grape had been plucked, and the brown branches had begun to show through the fast falling-leaves—a bright Thanksgiving eve bathed in all the royal splendor of an Indian Summer—that a young lady, richly dressed in silk, with a scarlet scarf about her shoulders, paced up and down the broad porch of the western house, watching the sunset. She was very young and very lovely, with a kind of oriental beauty which was well set off by the bright hues and glistening fabric which she wore—an oriental looking creature all together, like the wife of some Caliph or Sultan in the Arabian Nights, with languishing black eyes and a form of undulating grace—an idle, dainty from whose hands no one could have expected any housewifely duty, one who would have been perfection in a Turkish harem could she have been transplanted there.

As she paced slowly, softly, hooded in her scarlet scarf, a brisk little body, blue-eyed and fair haired, with a child by the hand and a basket on her arm, entered the eastward house and nodded at her.

"What are you going to do Thanksgiving Day?" she called across to the girl; and the latter blushed suddenly a vivid crimson, mounting to her forehead, a strange sort of cry escaped her also, smothered before it reached the speaker's ear. But in a moment the agitation was put down with a strong hand and the answer was sent back across the paling fence.

"What am I going to do? Dear knows I never do much of anything, you know." "I shall be busy enough," said the little woman. "Such a dinner as I have to cook, and such a tea to get afterwards. Papa and Mama Marie will spend Thanksgiving Day with us, and Mr. Marle has sent home such quantities of things. I've been baking all day. Happy you? You know nothing of all this. Come and take tea, will you, and play for us to-morrow evening? Mama adores music. There, that's the stage, and there is Mr. Marle."

A handsome man of forty, straight as an arrow and with a glorious beard like black floss silk, gray eyes under black lashes, and such a smile, revealing teeth like pearls, as it flashed upon one. Little Mrs. Marle was only a pretty yankee housewife. Her spouse was a sultan to match that black eyed sultana on the porch. He kissed his wife and bowed across the gate.

"I have been making Ida promise to spend to-morrow evening with us," said Mrs. Marle. "I want mamma to hear that new song. I'm afraid she is too idle to leave her fireside for such a slight temptation as tea with us; add your persuasions—though they'll not have as much weight as though you were a widow." And laughing, Mrs. Marle went into the house followed by the trotting child.

Mr. Marle advanced to the gate, and stood there waiting for the sultana. She did not move. He opened it passed in, and stood beside her.

"My persuasions have some weight with you, have they not?" he said. And there was meaning in his voice and in his eye—the girl's bosom heaved.

"You have not repented?" "Oh, my God! I would I had strength to repent, but have not."

"You never shall," he said, "never while I live. Oh my darling, how beautiful you are!"

"Hush!" she whispered. "Hush! some one will hear you—go, go." "To-morrow I shall not fear listeners," he said; "you remember the hour?" "Could I forget it?" "And the place?"

This time she made no answer; but with a stealthy motion of her fingers, indicated the approach of some one from the house, just in time to send Mr. Marle back a step or two, as a good looking young farmer came out upon the porch smoking his cigar.

"Pleasant evening, Mr. Marle." "Lovely. The brightest of the Indian summer."

winter, after all." "Do you?" said Mr. Marle; "for my part I like nothing cold."

And the sultana's face flushed again, as though there were a double meaning to his words.

"Will you come in and take a cup of tea with us?"

"Thank you, no. Mrs. Marle expects me, Mr. Malcomb."

He bowed, and left the garden by the little gate and the young man put his arm about the waist of the young girl and drew her into the house.

"I'm as hungry as a hunter," he said. "You shant put tea off any longer, Sis—Old Dinah is in a terrible state of mind about it already."

Sis shrugged her shoulders, but she went in, and presided at her brother's table, eating nothing but a few spoonful of quivering jelly herself—a fact which her brother commented on as he regaled himself on the more substantial viands.

"Never marry a farmer, sis; you'd frighten him to death. A crown prince would suit you best, if they would but export one to yankee land in search of a wife. My better half shall relish pork and beans, sis."

"Shall she it was said with a soft sneer habitual to the beauty, but the next moment the mood changed, and for the first time in all her life Ida Malcomb flung her arms about her brother's neck.

"Promise me that you will marry John," she said. "I should like to think that you had some one to love, some one to be what I have never been in this house and never shall be. Marry some good girl John, and be happy."

"Why, what is the matter, Ida?" cried John agitated. "You are not ill, are you?"

"Oh! oh, no!" "Are you going to be married? What has happened? I declare I'm frightened."

Ida laughed at that, and left his clasping arm and sitting down at the piano played a furious galopade, which occupied her eyes and fingers to the exclusion of everything else; and John lighting another cigar, sat near her, wondering at this new phase of his handsome sister's character.

In the westward house, meanwhile, Mr. and Mrs. Marle sat as an affectionate couple should, surrounded by their children. And at eight the little ones said their prayers and were sent to bed, and at ten Mrs. Marle read a chapter from the Bible, and left her spouse, who had business letters to write, alone in the small sitting-room.

Then, with her innocent girl's face bent upon her hands, Mrs. Marle knelt beside her bed and prayed for her children, for her parents, for herself, but most of all for her beloved husband, and then weary with her household toil, laid down to slumber.

But Mr. Marle had no thoughts of sleep, neither had Ida Malcomb. In her chamber the sultana was wide awake, and wrapped in hood and furs, pacing the floor with her watch upon the palm of one small hand, waiting until its hands should point to midnight.

Then, when the two cobweb hands lay upon each other, pointing upward, she fastened it in her belt, and opened the door. All was dark upon the stairs and in passages.

John Malcomb's room sent not a ray of light through the old glass fan at its door top.

He slept, and the sister paused and pressed her lips upon the panels, and then went on down the stairs and out in the moonlight.—She did not go by the front door, but through a little portal at the back of the house into a paved yard where the watch dog lay. He knew her and did not bark, and in a moment she was through the tuft of bushes and out in the road, past a clump of trees, down into a little hollow, across it to the edge of a small wood, and there stood handsome Mr. Marle, in a traveling cloak who clasped her to his heart with passionate words and still more passionate glances.

And then releasing her, he said: "We will find a coach at C—. They might trace us had it come nearer; can you walk so far?"

And she who in her blind infatuation would have gone with him to the world's end, only answered by giving him her little hand trembling and burning as with fever. They are gone. Their forms faded into instinct blots upon the landscape. They left behind them the woodland, the valley, the clump of autumn bushes and twin houses, which rose white and ghastly in the moonlit distance behind them forever.

There was no going back for them, now that there hands had rested on the plow-share.

Thanksgiving morning dawned, and in the westward house Mrs. Marle arose like a bright child from her sweet sleep; and in the eastward house John Malcomb came down rosy from his bath of ice-cold water and whistling merrily. But in a little while a frantic woman clutched a blotted letter in her hand, and tore her hair in such despairing grief as insulted love drives into a woman's soul, and a strong man, bowed with woe, stood before her, crying,—"Where's he taken my sister? Tell me that I may kill him."

The tempest paused at last, and their sorrow was quiet for a while. It was such a blow to both—such a sudden thing. The

wife had a jealous thought—the brother never dreamed of harm. Incoherent gasps and cries, questions which neither waited for nor expected answer changed for more quiet interchange of words, and Mrs. Marle held a letter toward John Malcomb.

He took it and read it. It was hastily written, blotted and scrawled, and these were the words it contained,

"You will think me a wretch, Martha.—So I am, perhaps, I do not blame you. In all things you have done your duty but passionate love was not yours to give. I crave it, and it is offered to me. You will not suffer; and to women of your nature children are sufficient. Adieu."

"When I have loved him so dearly!" sobbed the little woman—"so very dearly!" "She could never love him so—never—never!"

And, for the only time in all his life, John Malcomb uttered an oath as he ground the miserable letter beneath his heel. It frightened the poor woman. She shrank and paled, and forgave the brother, in pity for his shame and woe. Then, as her eye fell on some housewifely preparation for the morning made the night before she burst into tears.

"We shall neither of us keep Thanksgiving again," she said; and John Malcomb answered:

"There can never be Thanksgiving for me again on earth."

Those were weary months which followed, while the injured knowing that the eastward house was empty, felt that John Malcomb wandered over the earth searching for that sinful pair, and, though to forgive such a wrong was beyond a woman's power, she prayed that he who had abandoned her might never meet that stern avenger of his sister's sullied honor.

Perhaps her prayers were answered. In a year John Malcomb came back to the eastward house, having found no trace of those he searched for. He came back on Thanksgiving eve, but in neither house was that festival kept save by tears and sighs, and the children at Martha Marle's knee wondered why she was so sad that day, and why no turkey roasted before the fire and no golden pennies were drawn from the long oven.

By and by the lonely old man in the eastward house found comfort in seeking the presence of the lonely woman in the westward house. And she welcomed him, forgetting that he was his sister's brother in her Christian weakness. John Malcomb grew at last to be the best-beloved playmate of the children, he teaching the boys to swim and the girls to ride, and doing many a noble act for their fair mother—digging the garden, planting the corn and vegetables, plucking the fruit, rescuing the brindle cow from the pond, and bringing her books and papers from the city. For he went thither often always with one purpose at his heart, and by neither of them was Thanksgiving Day ever kept. And as five years glided by, and there were no tidings of those who had forbidden Thanksgiving to two human hearts.—Five years! On the sixth, three nights before the anniversary came around again, John Malcomb awoke from a strange dream, which seemed, as he recalled it, like a vision. His sister, her fair face and ebony hair dabbled with blood, had stood at his bedside and called to him for aid, and he had arisen and loved her. She moved before him, and the scene changed to the busy streets of New York, and he was conscious that no eyes save the shadowy form save his own. When before the gray walls of Trinity Church, she pointed toward it, and at the lifting of her finger John Malcomb's eye peered through the church, and saw behind it a den of filth and wretchedness, a crazy dwelling, seemingly to weak to sustain the load of human misery which dwelt within its walls. He had never seen the place before with his waking eyes, but he marked it well in his sleep, and said, in answer to a movement of the spirit's arm, "I will come."

He awoke uttering these words, to find the gray dawn streaming into his room.

That morning John Malcomb came to New York. He told no one of his vision, not even Martha Marle, but went with a belief in it which puzzled him.

"I'm growing childish, that I put faith in signs and omens," he said.

Yet, nevertheless, he went—ay, not to New York only, but to old Trinity, and behind it.

There rose a row of wretched buildings and one of them John Malcomb recognized. It was the house he had dreamed of the night before. There was a ragamuffin crowd at the door, staring at some thing within. John Malcomb went closer.

"What has happened?" he asked. "Only a murder!" said one of the assemblage.

"A murder?" "Yes. A man murdered his woman here last night."

John Malcomb staggered as though a blow had been struck him.

"His wife?" he asked. "Well," said a rough-faced fellow. "I dunno as she was exactly his wife. I take it—twas his fancy gal."

"What was his name?" "I dunno. They've got him safe locked up, anyhow, and she's up stairs waiting for the inquest."

"Let me pass," said John Malcomb. "Yes, let the gent pass—he's a newspaper reporter," said an officious individual close at hand. And John Malcomb entered the passage and mounted the stairs.

The policeman stood guard over the body but John Malcomb whispered something in his ear which made him admit him readily, and standing on the threshold, gazing into the room with terrified eyes, John Malcomb saw woman's form lying face upwards in a pool of blood—a woman with coal black hair and oriental features, the wreck of the sultana who paced the porch of the eastward house on Thanksgiving eve six years before. John Malcomb knew his sister's face, and fell fainting on the floor.

"Sick at the sight of blood! Some folks are," said the policeman, as John opened his eyes. "Queer case, this. The gal must have been a pretty one once. And he looked like a gentleman; but this is what they've come to," and he pointed to the crazy room.

"What was his name?" said John faintly. "The murderer? Oh, Marle, or something of the sort. That is, it was. He is dead too. They'd agreed on dying, him and the gal, and he shot her: so he said, any way."

"Then they are both dead." "As door nails," said the official. Then—under the prevalent impress that John was a reporter, he added: "Now, that'll make an interest' bit for the paper, won't it?" "I'd like to go at it myself if I was a writer—what I ain't."

That Thanksgiving Day the door of Martha Marle's dwelling opened slowly after dusk, and, haggard and pale, John Malcomb entered, and sat down by the fire. For a while he sat in silence, but at last he arose, and bending over the pale woman, laid his hand upon her arm. "Martha Marle," he said, "it is all over. They are both dead—Don't ask me how. I know it. I have stood beside my sister's grave. God pardon them! Their sin was very terrible."

And she, woman-like, thinking of small things even in the midst of grief, sobbed— "Ah, I spoke truth, did I not, John Malcomb, when I said we two should never keep Thanksgiving Day again?"

Never? Aye, so she thought. But time rolled on, and still the eastern and western houses were inhabited as of yore, and the gate was never fastened, and through it John Malcomb took his way, gladder to come, and more welcome when he came to Martha's fireside every day until at last, in the flush of golden Indian summer, he bent over Martha Marle, one day, and said:

"We have been miserable long enough—you and I. Let us keep Thanksgiving, this year, and together." And she did not say no.

And so, though neighbors talked and wondered, and wouldn't have thought it, the tenant of the eastward house went through the little gate one day a bride, and, crossing the threshold of the westward house, made the life of its master from that hour one long Thanksgiving.

Miscellaneous.

A story has been going the rounds recently, to the effect that George D. Prentice had become a common drunkard, had no connection with the Louisville Journal and that his friends had purchased him a country home, placing the title in his wife's hands. In a letter to the Detroit Tribune, in which the canon originated, Prentice says:

"Your correspondent says that my friends have purchased a place for me in the country. I have never owned a place that I did not buy and pay for. He says that I have transferred my interest in the Louisville Journal to another. I have never made a transfer of it in my life. He says that the Journal has passed from my control editorially and financially I am chief proprietor and senior editor of the Journal, and I exercise whatever control I choose in both capacities."

The celebrated Dean Swift, in preaching an assize sermon, was severe upon lawyers for pleading against the conscience.—After dinner, a young lawyer said some severe things against the clergy, and added that he did not doubt, were the devil to die, a person might be found to preach a funeral sermon. "Yes," said Swift, "I would, and give the devil his due, as I did his children this morning."

Presentations are getting common. The captain of a canal boat out West has just been presented with service—of five years in the Penitentiary in consideration of the distinguished ability with which he plundered a passenger, and then kicked him overboard.

A sporting paper says the authorities a Washington think Gen. McClellan's report is rather too long for publication. The Boston Post says it will prove most too loud a report should it be touched off.

Or claimed.—The Republicans who have won the election of the decency, all the respectability, and all the intelligence, have added another claim—the claim to do all the stealing.

The Tax on Paper.

The resolution recently offered in the House of Representatives by Hon. Wm. H. Miller, proposing a removal of the tax on printing paper, is eminently worthy of the favor of Congress and the people. The present price of paper in this country at this time is really and grievously oppressive, upon publishers especially. The newspaper press—which the public depend on for current information, is feeling the advance in the cost of paper very painfully. Some journals have actually gone out of existence under it, and many more have been compelled to raise the price per copy to the readers. Thus the present tax on foreign paper tends to keep up and continually advance the cost to consumers of American paper. If the duty were abolished, foreign paper would come in, and could be sold here at much less rates than are now charged for the domestic article, and, of course, the latter would necessarily be reduced in price. The tax is not needed as a protection to our paper manufacture, nor is it of much importance as a source of national revenue. Let it be, therefore, repealed. It is doing no appreciable good, but a great deal of positive harm. It is a tax, indeed, on intelligence, and such imposts should never be favored by Government which is professedly based on popular enlightenment.—Sunday Mercury.

The Cost.

John Brough, Governor elect of Ohio, in his speech at Lancaster before the election, as reported in the Cincinnati Commercial, said: "Slavery must be put down, rooted out—if every wife has to be made a widow, and every child to be made fatherless." "Every wife" here means the wife of every poor man, not John Brough's wife, nor Horace Greeley's wife, nor Henry Ward Beecher's wife, nor Owen Lovejoy's wife, nor the wife of any shoddy patriot, but the wife of every man who cannot raise three hundred dollars or who has not money enough to buy a substitute.

THE DIFFERENCE.—One of our exchanges gives an incident showing the difference between white men and niggers, in Abolition estimation: At a recent meeting in the Methodist church a collection was taken up for the runaway negroes by an agent of the "Freedmen's Society," amounting to twenty-one dollars and a half. A few evenings after, a collection for the benefit of soldiers' families and destitute white people, was taken up in the same church, and we are told the magnificent sum of six dollars was raised." Thus it goes—twenty odd dollars for the negroes and the enormous sum of six dollars for the white man!

When Gen. Morgan was on his recent visit to Richmond, he went into the "Libby," and there he met Gen. Neal Dow. Being introduced to the Yankee, the rebel General said, smilingly, General Dow, I am very happy to see you here: or, rather, I should say, since you are here, I am happy to see you looking so well. Dow's natural astuteness and Yankee ingenuity came to his aid, and he quickly replied, without apparent embarrassment, General Morgan, I congratulate you on your escape; I cannot say that I am glad you did escape, but since you did, I am pleased to see you here. (Pretty good this' on both sides!)

A Western "local" gives this cheap receipt for getting up a sleigh ride on short notice: "Sit in the hall in your night clothes, with both doors open so that you can get a good draft—your feet in a pail of ice water—drop the front door key down your back—hold an icicle in one hand and ring the tea bell with the other." He says "you can't tell the difference with your eye shut, and it is a great deal cheaper."

The wife of one of the city fathers of New Bedford recently presented her husband with three children at a birth. The delighted father took his little daughter, four years of age, to see her new relations. She looked at the diminutive little beings a few moments, when turning to father, she inquired, "Pa, which one are you going to keep?"

Of all the agonies in life, that which for a time annihilate reason, and leaves our whole organization one lacerated, mangled heart—the conviction that we have been decided where we placed all our trust of love.

Old Line Whigs who find the leaders of their party destroying their country for the nigger, might reflect with profit upon the above.

GREENBACKS are printed at the rate of five millions a day, with the signatures and numbers all engraved, so that no signing nor numbering is required by anybody. They are simply packed up in bundles, as they fall from the printing press, as so many shingles would be bound and sent off to market.

BULLY FOR HIM!—General Grant is reported to have said: "I aspire only to one political office. When this war is over, I mean to run for Mayor of Galena, (his place of residence,) and, if elected, I intend to have the sidewalk fixed between my house and the depot."