

The North Branch Democrat.

HARVEY SICKLER, Proprietor.

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

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Select Story.

From the Sixpenny Magazine.]

THE MISER'S STORY.

"By the grace of God I am what I am!" I was born in England. I remember nothing but poverty—stalking crime and absolute want. The houses where I lived were all in various stages of filth and decay. Whether the old bear-eyed old man who kicked and commanded me was my father, I never knew. Whether the old woman who sometimes fed and often beat me, was my mother, I cannot say. All that I know is that I had a miserable drag about life of it, going round after cold victuals—knocking smaller boys down to get the contents of their broken baskets and hunting for rags in the gutter.

I suppose I was a rather good looking boy; they call me good-looking now, for an old man. I know I was smart, comparing myself with children as I see them. Of course I was like the rest of my class. I could fight a little, and swear a little, steal a little, and eat a good deal—that is when I got the chance, which was seldom. I was ignorant—didn't know one letter from another, and didn't want to. What did I care about education—I, who never saw a book from one year's end to another? And love—gratitude—hope—I could of course understand neither. Nobody loved me, therefore I loved nobody. Nobody had ever made me grateful—had ever held out hope to me. Some strange impulse was given me one day. I waked up, sprang from my bundle of straw, and involuntarily the word came from my lips—"I'm going to do something to-day."

What that something was, I had not the remotest idea, but I put on my apologetic for clothes, and sallied out in my vagabond way, whistling, caring for nobody. It was about noon, and I had not yet tasted a mouthful of food. I was hungry, and skulked about grocery shops, hoping I could get an apple or something that would stay my appetite, till I felt in the humor for begging. Passing around the corner of a public street, I saw a genteel looking man standing at his horse's head, gazing about him, somewhat perplexed.

"Boy," he cried out, "won't you take care of my horse for half an hour?" "Yes sir," said I. I think it was the first time I had ever put on the "sir."

"There's a man!" he exclaimed, "I've got considerable fruit, and you must guard it well. Here's a couple of peaches for you; just stand here quietly—I guess nobody will disturb you."

He went away, and I stood for a while, till I was tired. Then, thinks I, I'll get a handful of the fruit and run. But for the first time I felt an instinct of shame at the suggestion. "He entrusted me—he saw I was a mean-looking fellow, too, but he trusted me, and I won't abuse his kindness."

Something like this reasoning ran in my head, and I squatted down on the curbstone, feeling the importance of an honorable trust, as I had never felt such a thing before. Presently some of my fellows came along and hailed me. I told them to go on. They peered about the cart, and saw the sunny face of the peaches. "Well, we'll have some of them," they said. "No, you won't," says I. "I'm put in charge here, and I won't see the first thing stole."

Well, I considered myself a rich man. I glared over my wealth; it became an idol to me. How to increase it was my first desire. I consulted competent men, and under their counsel I put my money out at interest—bought stocks and mortgages. I grew wealthier; business (my benefactor had stocked me a fancy store) prospered, and I was in a fair way, I thought, to marry Lucy Manning.

Sweet Lucy Manning! the most artless, winning maiden in all the world to me. I loved her deeply, dearly. She was blue-eyed, a burn-haired—her disposition was that of an angel, and I had pledged my vows to her.

One night I was invited to the house of a prosperous merchant, and there I met a Syrian in the person of his niece, a black-eyed girl, whose charms and whose fortune were equally splendid! She was an heiress in her own right—she was beautiful and accomplished. Heavens! what a voice was hers—pure, clear, sweet, ravishing—I was charmed and she was pleased with me. Alas! I met her too often. In her presence I forgot my gentle Lucy; she magnetized, thrilled me. It was a triumph to feel that so beautiful, gifted and wealthy a woman loved me—me, who had been brought up in the parlors of a city—who had known misery and corruption all the first years of my life.

Gradually I broke off my intimacy with Lucy. I received no token from her—she was too proud. But that cheek grew pale—that heavenly eye languid—and though I seldom met her, I knew in my heart that she was suffering and branded myself a villain.

At last she knew with certainty that I was to marry Miss Bellair. She sent me a letter, a touching letter, not one word of upbraiding, not one regret! Oh, what a noble soul I wounded! And she could calmly wish me joy, though the effort made her heart bleed. I knew it did.

I tried, however, to forget her, but I could not. Even at the time of my magnificent wedding, when my bride stood before me radiant in rich fabrics and glittering diamonds, the white tace of poor Lucy glided in between, and made my heart throbb guilty.

Oh, how rich I grew! Year after year added to my gold. My miserly disposition began to manifest itself soon after my marriage. I carried my gold first to banks, and then my own safes. I put constraint on my wife—for very generously she had made over her whole fortune to me—and began to grumble at expenses. I made our living so frugal that she remonstrated, and finally ran up large bills where and when she pleased. Against this I protested, and we had open quarrels more than once. My clothes grew shabby; I could not afford to buy new ones, although the interest of my investments was more than I could possibly spend for rational living.

I finally grew dissatisfied with everything but my money. I neglected my wife, and grew careless of her society. Several gentlemen came to my house, among them I thought, too often for my good name, and I ordered my wife to discontinue his company. She refused, and I looked her up in her room. How she managed to set herself free, I never knew; but in the evening when I returned, she was gone from the house. That caused me some uneasiness, not much, for I was soon absorbed in taking account of my gains. It was perhaps nine in the evening. I had just managed to take up a paper for a moment, to read out its business details when the door opened, and in came my wife, dressed bewitchingly, as if just from an evening concert, followed by that moustached celebrity.

"Good evening, my dear," she said, in the coolest way imaginable, and placed a chair for her friend.

"Stop!" I cried my jealousy aroused; "That man sits not down in this house."

"No matter," says I. "I meant them boys shouldn't steal a peach and they didn't neither."

"Well, you've got good pluck, my boy; here's a dollar for you—but don't swear."

My eyes stood out. "A whole dollar," says I. "Yes, do what you please with it, but I'd advise you to buy a pair of shoes."

"Thank you," says I, with a beating heart. "It pays to be good, don't it?" He smiled a curious smile, asked me several questions, and ended by taking me home with him in his wagon.

Home! I thought I was in heaven, although I had seldom heard of such a place. My heart beat heavily every time I dared to put my feet upon those rich carpets. The mirrors were something new to me. The next day there came a man to see me. I was washed clean, and had a good suit of clothes. Says he—

"Youngster, I'm going in where you live, and probably I shall make a bargain with your people. I want a boy—just such a bold, clever boy as you are, and if you behave yourself I promise you that you shall have as pleasant a home as you desire."

Well, that was good. I hardly dared to speak, to breathe, for fear of breaking the illusion. I never was so happy clear through as I was that day. They gave me some light tasks to do—I wish they were more important.

From that day I was treated as one of the household. The man was a widower and had no children, consequently I became to him as a son. He educated me handsomely, and when I was twenty-one he died, and left me seventeen thousand dollars.

Well, I considered myself a rich man. I glared over my wealth; it became an idol to me. How to increase it was my first desire. I consulted competent men, and under their counsel I put my money out at interest—bought stocks and mortgages. I grew wealthier; business (my benefactor had stocked me a fancy store) prospered, and I was in a fair way, I thought, to marry Lucy Manning.

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"THE RUMP."

Hon. John Van Buren, made a telling speech at Bridgeport, Conn., on the 7th inst., from which we make the following interesting extract:

They (The Radicals) insist upon it that there was a great want of dignity in the President on the 22d of February. It is barely possible they may have been spoiled by what has gone before (laughter), and that ordinary Democratic manners offend the fastidious tastes of those that are accustomed to the high aristocratic tone of his late lamented predecessor. But further, they charge him with imitating Cromwell, and they say that there are indications that he intends to treat this Congress as Cromwell treated the old Rump Parliament after the execution of Charles the First. Let us look for a single moment as we are upon the question of dignity, at what Cromwell did, and I will read you a little extract from Hume, as to the manner in which Cromwell dissolved that Parliament:

"And suddenly starting up, he loaded the Parliament with the vilest reproaches for their tyranny, oppression and robbery of the public. Then stamping with his foot, which was a signal for the soldiers to enter, 'for shame,' said he to the Parliament: 'get ye gone; give place to honest men, to those who will more faithfully discharge their trust. You are no longer a Parliament; I tell you, you are no longer a Parliament. The Lord has done with you; He has chosen other instruments for carrying on His work.' Sir Harry Vane exclaiming against this proceeding, he cried with a loud voice, 'Oh! Sir Harry Vane, Sir Harry Vane! the Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane!'

"I think the Sir Harry Vane of that day must be the Sumner of this.

"Taking hold of Martin by the cloak, 'Thou art an adulterer,' said he. To a third, 'Thou art a drunkard and a glutton,' and 'Thou art an extortioner, to a fourth. 'He commanded a soldier to seize the man. 'What shall we do with this bauble? here, take it away. It is you,' said he, addressing himself to the House, 'that have forced me to this. I have sought the Lord night and day that he would rather slay me than put me upon this work.'

Having commanded the soldiers to clear the hall, he himself went out the last, and ordering the door to be locked, departed to his lodgings in Whitehall.

In this furious manner, which so well denotes his genuine character, did Cromwell, without the least opportunity or even murmur, annihilate that famous assembly which had filled all England with the renown of its action and with astonishment at its crimes, and whose commencement was not more ardently desired by the people than was its final dissolution.

Now, it is flattery to call this Congress a Rump Congress. [Laughter.] It is a great deal more like a Parliament that succeeded and which was known as the Barebones Parliament, in which there were members wore all sorts of names, as described by a waiter of that day, who, says ('Brown's Travels in England; page 279):

"Cromwell," says Cleveland, 'hath beat up his drum clean through the Old Testament. You may learn the genealogy of our Saviour by the names of his regiments. The master-master has no other list than the first chapter of St. Matthew. The brothers of this praise God Barebones had for a name. If Christ had not died-for-you-you had been-d-d-Barebones; but the people, tired of this long name, retained only the last word, and commonly gave him the appellation of Damned Barebones.'

more? Why, while in this organized state mutilated and imperfect, a man gets up in the Senate and charges the President with whitewashing the South, and another man says that the President, I believe with Mr. Dixon of your own State, in which he simply gave his views with regard to the duties of Congress, "would have cost Charles the First his head in the days in which he lived."

Such a body as that, I say, is an illegal unconstitutional assemblage. It is in on point of law a mob, and in my judgment the mayor of Washington neglects his duty every day in not dispersing them as such. [Applause and laughter.] And that is the noble army of constitutional defenders, which the Republican Convention of this State indorses, and which the people are called upon to sanction and approve.

Artemus Ward, in the prospectus of his Irving Hall entertainment in New York, tempts the public to come and see him with the following inducements:

The festivities will be commenced by the pianist, a gentleman who used to board in the same street with Gottschalk. The man who kept the boarding house remembers it distinctly. The overture will consist of a medley of airs, including the touching new lullaby, "Dear Sister, is there any 'Ic' in the house?" "My Gentle Father have you any Fine Cut About You?" "Mother, is the battle o'er, and is it safe for Me to come home from Canada?" and, (by request of several families who haven't heard it) "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching"—While the enraptured ear drinks in this sweet music, [we pay our pianist nine dollars a week and "find him,"] the eye will be entranced by the magnificent green baize covering of the Panorama. This green baize cost 40 cents a yard at Stewart's store. It was bought in deference to the present popularity of "The wearing of the Green." We shall keep up with the times if we spend the last dollar our friends have got.

AN IRISH SERMON.—Mrs. Mulvaney ye must die, though ye're so hale and hearty; ye must die, that ye must. And you, Mr. Rafferty, must die too, although yer, so lean and lank that ye scarce make a shadow when the sun shines, ye must die, that ye must. And you, Mr. Inskillen, you must die, too, that ye must. And you, too, Teague McGinnis, for all you are so rosy-cheeked, and are forever making love to the girls at Donnybrook Fair, ye must die, yes, ye must all die. I must die, too although I am the pastor of the parish, and have the care of your souls, I must die, too and when I shall be coming up before Goodness, and Goodness is after saying to me—"Father Mulrice Lafferty, how is your parish off for drunkenness?" I shall say, "Och, mighty clane, yer honor."—And Goodness will say—"Father Mulrice Lafferty, how is yer parish off for thaving, and such like deadly sins?" "Och, mighty clane, yer honor." "Do you see it's a good character I shall be giving Goodness of ye, all; but when Goodness shall say to me, "Father Mulrice Lafferty, how have they paid you their Easter dues?"—what shall I say to that, ye blackguards?

BEAUTIFUL SENTIMENT.—I confess that increasing years bring with them an increasing respect for men who do not succeed in life, as those words are commonly used. Heaven is said to be a place for those who have not succeeded upon earth; and it is surely true that celestial graces do not thrive and bloom in the hot blaze of worldly prosperity. All success sometimes arise from a superabundance of qualities in themselves good—from a conscience too sensitive, a taste too fastidious, a self-forgetfulness too retiring. I will not go so far as to say, with a living poet, that "the world knows nothing of its greatest men," but there are forms of greatness, or at least excellence, which die and make no sign; there are martyrs that miss the palm but not the stake, heroes without the laurel, and conquerors without triumph.

There is danger in being too neat. An old lady in Holland scrubbed her sitting-room floor until she fell through it into the cellar.

BEN. BUTLER DISGORGING.—The New York Express states that Butler has paid Messrs. Smith & Bros., of New Orleans, \$80,000 in gold, which, they alleged, he abstracted from their vaults, together with interest, all costs and Sheriff's poundage, making an aggregate of over \$150,000.

No wonder it was said Ben. had a good receipt for sore eyes.

JOSH BILLING'S MAXIMS.—There is only one advantage that I see in going to the devil, and that is the road is easy, and you are sure to get there.

I am violently opposed to ardent spirits as a beverage, but for manufacturing purposes I think a little or it tastes good.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON has appointed Gen. F. P. BLAIR, Jr., collector of customs for the Port of New Orleans. It is supposed by some that his confirmation by the Senate is doubtful, he being a supporter of Johnson, and now declared to be a "cop-head" by the mongrelists.

The woman who rushed to a soldier's arms, has been sent to prison for having government property in her possession, by a legislative or otherwise. What