

Charles Nelson had reached thirty-five, and at that age he found himself going downhill. He had once been one of the happiest of mortals, and no blessing was wanted to complete the sum of his happiness.

On the back street, where the great trees threw their green branches over the way, stood a small cottage, which had been the pride of its inmates.

Within, sat a woman in the early years of her life, and though she was still handsome to look upon, the bloom had gone from her cheeks, and brightness had faded from her eyes.

For more than two years, Mary Nelson earned all the money that had been used in the house. People hired her to wash, iron and sew for them, and besides the money paid, they gave her many articles of food and clothing.

Supper time came, and Charles Nelson came reeling home. He had worked the day before at helping to move a building, and thus had earned money enough to find himself in rum for several days.

Oh! how that man had changed within two years! Once their was not a finer looking man in the village. In frame he had been tall, stout, compact and perfectly formed, while his face bore the very beau-ideal of manly beauty.

The evening Mary Nelson ate no supper, for of all the food in the house there was not more than enough for her children but when her husband was gone she went and picked a few berries and thus kept her vital energies alive.

On the following morning Charles Nelson sought the bar-room as he rose but he was sick and faint, and the liquor could not revive him for it would not remain on his stomach.

The poor man had sense enough to know that if he could sleep he should feel better, and he had just feeling enough to wish to keep away from home; so he wandered off to a wood not far from the village, and sank down by a stone wall and was soon in a profound slumber.

'Come, Katie,' said one of these little girls to her companion, 'let's go away from here, because if any body

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was to see us with those girls, they'd think we played with 'em. Come! But the berries are so thick here, remonstrated the other.

'Never mind—we'll come out some time when these little, ragged, drunkard's girls are not here.'

'Don't cry, Nancy,' said the eldest throwing her arms around her sister's neck.

'Why do they blame us?' murmured Nancy, gazing up into her sister's face. 'Oh, we are not to blame. We are good, and kind, and loving, and we never hurt anybody. Oh, I wish somebody would love us; I should be so happy.'

'I know—I know, Nelly; but that ain't all. Why don't papa love us as he used to do? Don't you remember when he used to kiss us and make us so happy? Oh, how I wish he would be so good to us once more. He is not—'

'—sh, sissy! don't say any more. He may be good to us again; if he knew how we love him. I know he will. And then I believe God is good, and surely he will help us sometime, for mother prays to him every day.'

'Yes,' answered Nancy, 'I know she does and God must be our father sometime.'

'He is our father now, sissy! I know it, and he must be all we shall have by and-by, for don't you remember that mother told us that he might love us one of these days? She said a cold dagger was upon her heart and—'

As soon as the little ones were out of sight, Charles Nelson started to his feet. His hands were clenched, his eyes were fixed upon a vacant point with an eager gaze.

'My God! he gasped, 'what a villain I am! Look at me now! What a state I am in, and what I sacrificed to bring myself to it! And they love me yet and pray for me!'

'He said no more, but for a few moments he stood with his hands clenched, and his eyes were fixed. At length his gaze was turned upwards, and his clasped hands were raised above his head. A moment he remained so, and then his hands dropped by his side, and he started homeward.'

When he reached home he found his wife and children in tears, but he affected to notice it not. He drew a shilling from his pocket—it was his last—and handing it to his wife, he asked her if she would send and get him some porridge.

The wife was startled by the tone in which this was spoken, for it sounded as in days gone by.

'The porridge was made nice and nourishing, and Charles ate it all. He went to bed early, and early on the following day he was up. He asked his wife if she had milk and flour enough to make him another bowl of porridge.'

'Yes, Charles,' she said, 'we have not touched it.'

'Then if you are willing, I should like some more.'

asked his employer if he dared trust him with a dollar.

'Why, you have earned three,' returned Manly.

'And you will pay me three dollars a day?'

'If you are as faithful as you have been to-day, for you will save me money at that.'

The poor man could not speak his thanks in words, but his looks spoke them for him, and Manly understood them. He received his three dollars and on his way home he bought first a basket, then three loaves of bread, a pound of butter, some tea, sugar, and a piece of beefsteak, and he had just one dollar and seventy-five cents left.

It was sometime before he could compose himself to enter the house, but at length he went in, and set the basket upon the table.

'Come, Mary,' he said, 'I have brought something home for supper. Here, Nelly, you take the pail and run over to Mr. Brown's and get two quarts of milk.'

He handed the child a shilling as he spoke, and in a half-bewildered state she took the shilling and hurried away.

The wife started when she raised the cover of the basket, but she dared not speak. She moved about like one in a dream, and ever and anon she would cast a furtive glance at her husband.

Just as the clock struck nine, the well-known foot fall was heard, strong and steady. The door was opened and Charles entered. His wife cast a quick and keen glance into his face, and she almost uttered a cry of joy when she saw how he had changed for the better.

Everybody would bless him, as everybody is afflicted just now by mosquitoes. 'O'ard is the only man I know who is not. He says the mosquitoes don't trouble him. This can be accounted for. Mosquitoes are sanguinary, but temperate insects. They will drink blood, but they don't touch whiskey.'

Here is an English story of the times a bank incident, which must not be lost: In the midst of the late excitement, and at the moment when everybody thought all the banks were going to the dogs to gether, Jones rushed into the bank of which he was a stockholder, and thrust a certificate into the clerk's face he said in haste: 'Here please transfer half of that to James K. Smith.'

'The clerk looked at it and asked: 'Which half, Mr. Jones? 'I don't care which half,' replied Jones, puzzled at the inquiry. 'You had better go to the courts; I can't make the transfer without legal decision. If you really wish to transfer your other half to Mr. Smith we cannot do it here.'

'Jones was confounded. He knew the banks were all in a middle, but this was to deep for him. He took his certificate from the hands of the smiling clerk, and on looking at it he it was his marriage certificate! Being a printed form on fine paper, and put away among his private papers, it was the first thing Mr. Jones laid hands on when he went to the secretary for bank stock script. He went home, kissed his wife glad to find she hadn't been transferred to Mr. Smith, and taking the right papers this time hastened down town in time to get it all straight.

A New Hampshire bachelor, after several unsuccessful attempts to enter the Benedictine ranks, finally persuaded an old maid to marry him, the consideration being a fifteen dollar watch. The ceremony over, he urged an immediate return home. 'Home!' exclaimed the bride, who had been married in her father's house, 'home! this is my home and you had better go to you'n. I agreed to marry you for the watch, but I wouldn't live with you for the town clock!'

A gentleman was complaining to his father-in-law of his wife's temper. At last papa-in-law, becoming very tired of these endless gripings, and being a bit of a wag, replied: 'Well, my dear fellow, if I hear of her tormenting you again, I shall disincliner her.' The husband never again complained.

Victims Monday, while he lay behind the wall.

'Never before,' he said, 'did I fully realize how low I had fallen, but the scales dropped from my eyes then as though some one had struck them off with a sledge. My soul started up to a stand point from which all the temptations of the earth cannot move it. Your prayers are answered.'

Time passed on, and the cottage assumed the garb of pure white, and its whole windows and green blinds. The roses in the garden smiled, and in every way did the improvement work. Once again was Mary Nelson among the happiest of the happy, and her children choose their own associates now.

A Seasonable Article by Mark Twain. The mosquitoes have irritated me beyond endurance.

I haven't suffered so much as during the past few days, since I emigrated from New Jersey many years ago.

These insects manifest a peculiar affection for me. They serenade me in troupes, and present their bills with the promptness of a tax collector, and make you pay on the spot.

I couldn't locate all the spots they have visited on me—I am in a state of eruption all over.

I am constantly committing assault and battery on myself in the desperate effort of smothering the little wretches.

The amount of punishment I have dealt out to myself would have been sufficient to have secured me the championship of the light weights in the prize ring.

But you don't gain any credit with such antagonists; they always manage to get first blood, then leave you alone to come up to the seratch.

Do you know any remedy for mosquitoes? I have tried pennyroyal. The mosquitoes don't mind it. They say if you close up the windows and doors of your bedroom and then burn sulphur, it will kill every mosquito in the apartment—also, any other man.

If you rub yourself from head to foot with kerosene oil, they say mosquitoes won't bite you.

I haven't tried this—my landlady objected on account of the bed clothes.

The man who discovers an infallible protection from mosquitoes deserves to be decorated with the ribbon of the Legion of Honor.

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Which Hall. Here is an English story of the times a bank incident, which must not be lost: In the midst of the late excitement, and at the moment when everybody thought all the banks were going to the dogs to gether, Jones rushed into the bank of which he was a stockholder, and thrust a certificate into the clerk's face he said in haste: 'Here please transfer half of that to James K. Smith.'

THE SETTLING HEN.

'Timothy, that air yaller hen's a setting agin,' said Mrs. Hays to her son, one morning after breakfast.

'Well, let her set,' remarked Timothy, helping himself to a large piece of cheese; 'I reckon I can stand it as long as she can.'

'I do wish you would try and be a little more equanimous to cheese Timothy; I've cut the very last of my every day lot, and it's only the first of May. And now as soon as you've done eatin' go out and break up that hen. She's setting on an old ax and two bricks now.'

'I hope she'll hatch 'em,' returned Timothy.

'If she was set now, she'd hatch the fourth week in May. It's a bad sign; something ailers her arter it. Stop giggling, Helen Maria; by the time you get to be as old as yer ma, you'll see further than you do now. There was Jen. kins' folks; their gray top-not hatched the last of May, and Mrs. Jenkins, she had the confinement on the lungs, and would have died if they hadn't killed a lamb and wrapped her in the hide while it was warm. That was all that saved her.'

With such a startling proof of the truth of the omen before him, Timothy finished his breakfast in haste and departed for the barn, from which he soon returned, bearing the squalling biddy by the legs.

'What shall I do with her, mother? She'll get on again, and she's cross as bedlam—she skinned my hands, and would be the death of me if she could get loose.'

'I've heern it said that it was a good plan to throw 'em up in the air,' said Mrs. Hays. 'Aunt Peggy broke one of settin' only three times tryin. 'Sposen you try it?'

'Up she goes, head or tail!' cried Tim, as he tossed the volcano skyward.

'Land o'massy,' exclaimed Mrs. Hays 'she's coming down in the pan of bread that I set out on the great rock to rise! Tim, it's strange 'that you can't do nothing without overdoing it.'

'Down with the traitors, up with the stars,' saug out Tim, elevating biddy again with something less than a pint of batter hanging to her feet.

'Good gracious me, wuss and wuss,' cried Mrs. Hays, and Tim agreed with her, for the hen had come down on the well polished tile of Esquire Bennett, who happened to be passing, and the dignified old gentleman was the father of Cynthia Bennett, the young lady with whom Tim was seriously enamored.

The 'squire looked daggers, brushed off the dough with his handkerchief, and strode on in silence.

'Yes, but it's going up again,' said Tim, spitefully seizing the clucking biddy and tossing her at random in the air. Biddy thought it was best to manifest her individuality, and with a loud scream she darted against the parlor window, broke through, knocked down the canary cage, and landed plump in the sliken lap of Mrs. Gray, who was boarding at the farm house.

Mrs. Gray screamed with horror, and starting up, dislodged biddy, who flew at her reflection in the looking glass with an angry hiss. The glass was shattered and down came the hen, astonished beyond measure, against a vase of flowers, which upset, and in falling, knocked over the stand-dish and deluged with water a pair of drab colored velvet slippers, which Helen Maria was embroidering for her lover, Mr. James Henshaw.

found out what puzzled me to death nigh about a week. I've found out where that yellow pullet has gone to. Mrs. Hays, I ailers knowed you was a wicked, deceitful woman, but I didn't think you'd steal.'

'Steal? me steal? Who are you talking to, Mrs. Weaver?' said Mrs. Hays, on her dignity.

'I'm talking to you madam, that's who I'm talking to! You've stole my hen what I got over to Uncle Gillies, and paid for it in s'awengers. She's a real Dorkin. Give her to me, right here or I'll use force.'

'She's my hen, and you touch her, if you dare!'

'I'll show you what I dare!' yelled Mrs. Weaver, growing purple and seizing the ill-starred fowl by the tail she gave a wrench and the tail came out in her hand.

The sudden cessation of resistance upset Mrs. Weaver's balance, and she fell backward into the brook, spattering the mud, and astonishing the polliwogs in every direction. She was a spry woman, and soon on her feet again, ready to renew the assault.

'Give me my hen,' she cried, thrusting her fist into Mrs. Hays' face, 'you old hag and hyoperite you!' and she made a second dive at the bird.

The hen thought it proper to show her colors, and uttering an unearthly yell, she flew out of the covert, square into the face of Mrs. Weaver, which she raked down with her nails until it resembled the paces of a ledger, crossed and recrossed with red ink.

Mrs. Hays caught a stick of brush-wood from the fence—Mrs. Weaver did the same—and a regular duel would probably have been fought if the bank of the creek had not suddenly given way and precipitated both the indignant women into the water. They scrambled out on opposite sides, and the hen sat perched in an apple tree and cackled in triumph. The ladies shook themselves, and by consent went home. They have not spoken since. The hen disappeared and was not seen until three weeks afterwards, when she made her appearance with eleven nice yellow chickens. She found some other fowl's nest and had sat in spite of fate. But although not 'broken up' herself she had broken up two matches—for Cynthia Bennett was not at home the next time Timothy called, and Mr. Henshaw never forgave Helen for having such a temper.

PAT AND THE DEACON.—A few months ago, as Deacon Ingalls, of Swampscot, Rhode Island, was traveling through the western part of the State of New York, he fell in with an Irishman, who had lately arrived in this country, and was in search of a brother who had come before him, and settled in some of the diggings in that part of the country.

Pat was a strong man, a true Roman Catholic, and had never seen the interior of a Protestant church.

It was a pleasant Sunday morning that brother Ingalls met Pat, who inquired the road to the nearest church.

Ingalls was a pious man. He told Pat he was going to church, and invited his new made friend to keep him company thither, his destination being a small meeting house near by. There was a great revival there at the time, and one of the deacons, who was a very small man in stature, invited brother Ingalls to take a seat in his pew. He accepted the invitation, followed by Pat, who looked in vain for the altar, &c.

After he was seated he turned round to brother Ingalls, and in a whisper that could be heard all round, he inquired: 'Shure, and isn't this a heretic church?'

'Hush!' said Ingalls; 'you speak a word they will put you out.'

'Devil a word will I spake at all,' replied Pat.

The meeting was opened by prayer by the pastor.

Pat was eyeing him very closely, when an old gentleman, who was standing in the pew directly in front of Pat, shouted Amen!

'Hist, ye devil!' rejoined he with his loud whisper, which was heard by the minister; 'be decent, and don't make a blockhead of yourself!'

The parson grew more fervent in his devotions. Presently the deacon uttered an audible groan—Amen.

'Hist, ye blackguard; have ye no decency at all?' said Pat, at the same time giving him a punch in the ribs, which caused him to loose his equilibrium.

The minister stopped, and extending his hands in a suppliant manner, said: 'Brethern, we cannot be disturbed in this way. Will some one put that man out?'

'Yes, your reverence,' shouted Pat, 'I will!'

And suiting the action to the word, he collared the deacon, and to the utter horror of the pastor, brother Ingalls and the whole congregation, he dragged him up the aisle, and with a tremendous kick sent him into the vestibule of the church.

EDUCATION is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no elms destroy, no enemy alienate, no despotism enslave. At home a friend, abroad an introduction, in solitude a solace, in society an ornament. It chastens view, it guides virtue, it gives grace and government to genius. Without it what is man? A splendid slave, vacillating between the dignity of an intelligence derived from God, and the degradation of brutal passions.

The Wallingford (Conn.) committee of Protestants made a profit of \$2,200 this year upon their strawberry crop of 932 bushels. The crop averaged 160 bushels to the acre.