

THE WIDOW THORN.

SHE was just the neatest little woman in the world—always smiling, always fresh, plump, and deep in her forties—one of the kind who smooth their aprons down while they talk to you.—Then the little cigar shop at the corner she which kept, and where she rattled on about different brands of tobacco, and talked of the weather to her customers, and the kindness which any tale of sorrow told by vagrants called forth from her—the many times her fat little hands went into the drawer for change to be bestowed on some charitable plea—all went to make up the best tempered, the most motherly and the nicest little woman you would ever chance to meet.

So thought Dr. Ash, who lived next door, and who often went in for a little snuff, you know, but who invariably settled his wig more rakishly before popping into the shop. He used to say to her:

"My! you must be lonely here, Widow Thorn!"

"Oh! not at all, sir, thanking you!" she would reply.

"I wonder you never married a second time, Widow Thorn!"

"Well, it is a wonder, isn't it doctor? But you see, I'm such a queer old body that I guess not many could fancy me."

"Madam, there you must stop! I cannot hear the divine sex disparaged," returned the doctor. He was, as they say, of the old school.

She laughed.

"Can't a woman speak against herself?" she asked.

"No! She never speaks against herself unless she means to flatter herself by contradictory disparagement when some one is by."

"Sir, you are too plain."

"Widow Thorn, I was always called plain, and this wig's too big for me." Then she laughed at him; and what promised to be a quarrel ended in a merry "Good-by."

Then there was the baker at the corner. He was a widower, and he used to come in of an evening for a chat and a cheap cigar.

Said he: "This lonely state is miserable, isn't it?"

"Do you speak from experience?" asked she.

"Yes; my Maria's been dead fourteen years," said he.

"I shouldn't think it would take so long a time for you men to forget anything," she said.

"Ah, ma'am! Man is a wonderful being—the most wonderful of God's creatures."

"Except Woman," said she.

"You're right, widow! And that's the reason the Lord meant that every man should have a wife and every woman a husband, just to make them equal. So I think you and I must have new partners."

"Now, look here, Mr. Johns! You have had your partner, and I have had mine, and death has dissolved the partnership. Now we're both bankrupt, and we can't carry on a joint business; so we must go on pleasantly," she said, and laughingly bade him "Good-night!"—He had to laugh, too, because she seemed to expect him to do nothing else.

Then there was the old bachelor over the way who was learning the bassoon. He used to come to the window of summer evenings, when the widow was standing at her door for a breath of fresh air, and he would blow at "The Last Link is Broken!" till it was a wonder he did not rupture something and die. He did not smoke, nor drink, nor chew. But a brilliant idea struck him one day, and over he went.

"Do you keep paper collars, ma'am?" he asked tremblingly.

"Yes, sir," she answered, smoothing her apron down.

"Give me some," he said, vaguely.

"What size?"

"Oh! any size!—I don't care."

"Don't you know your number?"

"No, ma'am! But I don't care much."

"Lud!" she ejaculated. "Here, sir. Just you take your collar off, and let me measure it."

So he did, and she handed him another.

"That'll fit you, sir," she said.

Then he tried to put it on, and his hand trembled so that he broke one of the button-holes.

"Now it's done, sir," said she.

"I'm afraid I am," said he.

"Sir."

"I mean I—I'm afraid it is!"

Then he took up another, and, out of compassion, she said:

"Let me button it for you. All men are death on buttons and button-holes—I know my poor Thorn."

Then she fitted the collar, and the bachelor was ecstatic. As she handed him his change, she said:

"You're the gentleman that plays such sweet, dreary tunes on the horn, aren't you?"

"Yes, I play a little. But it's dreadful lonely playing all by myself."

"Isn't there any one with you?" she asked.

"No, I'm cursed—I'm a bachelor!"

"Deary me! that is bad! I'd ask you over here to play, sir—"

"Oh! he interrupted.

"But I'm afraid the doctor next door would come in and ask if anybody was hurt," she continued.

"Oh!" he said again, in quite a different tone, and immediately left. Five minutes after he was moaning out 'The Last Link is Broken,' as if that link had in its soundness held heaven and earth together. The doctor needed a lot of snuff; the baker was clearly smoking himself into the grave with his Maria; and the bachelor used so many paper collars that the little widow ordered as many boxes of his as she did of all the other sizes put together. But at last, one night, came the maid-servant from next door pounding up the Widow Thorn, telling her to come in, for the doctor was ill and didn't know anybody. Hastily throwing on her dress, in she went, and saw him lying there in a state of collapse, with his wig over one eye.

"Ginger and cayenne pepper and brandy!" ordered the little widow, while she held his head. Then, forcing the fiery dose down his throat, she held him tight, while he spluttered and gasped for breath.

"Whatever is the matter with him?" asked the frightened servant.

"Cucumbers!" remarked the widow—for she had seen the doctor march home that afternoon with two fine specimens of that proverbially cool vegetable in his hand. Then, the Doctor becoming better, she went home as cheerful as ever, and slept the dreamless sleep of the innocent and of the non-dyspeptic.

Early the next morning the baker called.

"I hear that Dr. Ash was sick last night, and that you went in?" said he—almost as though he had a right to ask.

"Yes," she answered. "The girl came for me, and I did the little I could. Poor old chap! It's a pity he never married. He might have had a wife and family around him, instead of a poor, ignorant servant-girl, who calls up the neighbors on trifling causes."

"Widow! that's what I always say. A lone man is the Devil's delight—if you'll excuse profanity. Everthing conspires to make his life unbearable. What ailed the doctor?"

"Oh, he'd eaten too freely of cucumbers."

"Widow Thorn, you know I'm as much alone as he is."

"Why—bless me, sir—what are you driving at?" asked she.

"Nothing!" he said, with a melancholy smile and left the shop.

Ten minutes after, she saw him go home with five overgrown cucumbers in his hands—she knew how many, for she pulled a box in the window aside to count them. She smoothed her apron down and shook her head. She expected as much—and more. Just at that moment in came the bachelor from over the way.

"Is anybody sick next door, ma'am?" he asked.

"Yes, sir! Dr. Ash was taken ill last night. Why?"

"I was playing 'We Met,' 'Twas in a Crowd,' late, feeling miserable, and I saw his servant come here, and saw you go in with her. What ailed him?"

"Now, sir, I cannot tell you. I am afraid I've been the cause of future agony to the baker at the corner by telling him; so if you'll excuse me, we'll say the doctor was imprudent."

"I'm afraid I'm that myself, ma'am," he said low-spiritedly; "and lately I've got to feeling a pain here." And he pointed in the region of his heart—that is, his left side, where nobody's heart is, you know!

"Oh! you play too vigorous, sir," she said. "I once knew a gentleman who played the fife lovely; but he died suddenly, sir, and the doctor who opened him told me he was clear as a whistle inside, sir—his own, identical words; 'clear as a whistle.' Everything had gone."

"But, I dare say, he was a married man?"

"Yes, indeed! A blessed wife, and twins."

"Ah! That's the reason. I'll never die that way, ma'am—for there's no one to mourn for me. I'll keep on blowing till, after awhile, you'll hear the echoes rolling in me, and I'll play the same tune twice at once, and one a bar behind the other."

"Oh! goodness gracious me!" she said; "you'd better see a doctor."

Then he shook his head sadly and went out.

She sat in the little shop for an hour or more, writing a long letter. She inked her fingers, said "bother!" to the pen for spluttering, folded the letter crookedly, refolded it straightly, directed the envelope, put a stamp on the left-hand

corner, went out, dropped it in the box, and came to Dr. Ash's door, knocked, inquired how he did, and came home again. Then I think she was busy for quite a time, as all such are.

Soon in popped the doctor, with a huge bouquet in his hand.

"You have saved my life, ma'am," said he.

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed; but she smiled in a pleasant way, too.

"Then he put the flowers beside her, pressed her hand, and went to see his patients.

The little widow hummed a tune, tapping her foot on the floor, late in the afternoon, when the bachelor from over the way rushed to her.

"I've done it, ma'am!" he said, shivering.

"Lord bless the man! What have you done?"

"I've been imprudent."

"How?"

"I've poured cold water down my spine till I'm almost paralyzed, and I want you to treat me as you did the doctor."

"You do? Then wait! I'll mix the dose for you."

And she did so. She brought it to him, made him take a gulp, and he sat down immediately on the floor, white and choking. There was quite the look of a heroine about the little widow then.

"Now go home," she said, kindly; "go to bed, and let me know how you feel." And casting a strange, bewildered look at her, he obeyed.

Now, after it was twilight the little woman closed the shop, went to her room, put on her neat, old-fashioned bonnet, and, going down-stairs, locked her house-door from the outside, and was on the pavement, when up came the servant from the baker's.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the little widow.

"Oh, mem! he's took so bad that he can't speak, and he's been calling for you all the time."

"Oh! I know what's the matter with him. Come inside, Jane, and I'll send him with something to cure him."

Then Jane went inside, and the little woman mixed a tumblerful of a certain compound.

"Five cucumbers!" she said—"and the doctor only had two! Consequently he'll need as much again and a half, and a little more pepper." (She had quite a head for reckoning, I assure you). She gave the glass to the girl, and went out again and locked the door.—"I hope it won't hurt him!" said the widow.

Next day the shop was not opened.—The doctor tried the door, and found it closed. The baker, rather shaken, came by and looked in in astonishment. The bachelor peered in from his widow and wondered. But for all that, the little shop was closed; and closed it remained all that day and night. The doctor was for breaking in the door, to see if she was inside, ill—or dead. The baker seconded the motion as night approached. But just then the bachelor came over.

"Maybe she's gone away to visit?" said he.

"Yes!—on some errand of mercy," chimed in the doctor. "She is a capital nurse, that I can testify to."

"So can I," said the baker, dubiously.

"She never nursed you," said the doctor.

"Neither did she you, sir," said the baker.

"Sir!" exclaimed the doctor, looking like thunder.

"Sir!" exclaimed the baker, looking as much like thunder as a baker can look.

"I would have you know, sir," said the doctor, "that I am superior to any insult which a dough-kneader may offer me!"

"And I to any foolishness on the part of a sawbones!"

"Now, look here!" said the bachelor. "I was sick and she gave me the same kind of medicine she gave the doctor."

"She sent me the same," said the baker.

"She came into my house, and held my head while I took it," said the doctor. He was triumphant.

"Then, after much haggling and quarreling, they looked at the house again; and agreeing that she would certainly return by to-morrow, they took their ways to their respective homes.

And behold! to-morrow the good little shop was opened, and the same array of goods met the gaze of the passers-by. The little woman was seen upstairs dusting the shutters. She nodded to the milkman and to the ice-man as usual; and at last the bachelor saw her, and over he went, and met the doctor stepping off his doorstep.

"Are you going in, sir?" asked the doctor.

"Yes!" said the bachelor.

"Do you snuff?"

"No, I go for collars."

"Then we'll go in together." And

together they went in. A tall, sunburned man was there—elderly, but big and brawny.

The doctor spoke up, though he was a little shaken.

"We—I—that is—we should like to see the Widow Thorn, sir."

"There ain't such a person," said the man, grinning. "She's gone—vamosed—pegged out!"

"He's drunk!" whispered the bachelor. "I saw her myself, before I came upstairs."

"What's that you observed?" asked the stranger.

"Sir, we want the Widow Thorn!" boldly exclaimed the doctor.

"And you may keep on wanting that old lady, gentlemen; but she won't come for wanting."

Then the pleasant voice of the little woman sounded from the next room:

"Now, Charley, do behave yourself." And there she was before them, neater-looking than ever.

"Oh! Widow, good morning!" said the doctor.

"No more widow than I am," said the strange man, laughing.

"Now, Charley, do behave," said the little woman; "and, gentlemen," turning to the doctor and the bachelor, "let me introduce Mr. Charley, my husband!"

"Your husband!" they both cried.

"Yes, gentlemen. We've been going to be married for years and years, but he vowed he'd never marry me till he'd been successful in the mines; and he has been now. We were married yesterday in Boston. I wrote him a long letter telling him I'd meet him there—and here we are! But we'll sell out this little place as soon as we find a customer."

Without a word the doctor grabbed the bachelor by the back of the neck, hauled him out, and tumbled over the baker, who was coming innocently into the shop; and the three were down on the pavement, where Mr. Charley picked them up. And when they were dusting themselves he stood for a minute in the doorway and sang out:

"And if you ask for the Widow Thorn, I'll tell you there ain't such a person!" and went in and closed the door.

The doctor went home and abused his servant; the baker was seen to take a tumbler which had held the medicine of two nights before, and which belonged to the little widow, and dash it to a thousand fragments in the backyard; and the bachelor all that day and evening sat at his third-story window and played "The Last Link is Broken" on the bassoon in polka time, with accelerated passages where the compass of the instrument gave out.

Thus may Innocence cast its halo around too-trusting Human Nature.

He Didn't Know the Score.

It was on the ball ground. He was a young man, and had a memorandum book in his hand. He was working away with a pencil, and presently a man leaned over and said:

"What's the score?"

"I don't know!" was the reply.

Then there was a few moments of silence, during which time the young man figured away until another man approached and asked:

"What inning is this?"

"Don't know," was the sullen reply.

"Oh, you don't," said the querter, sarcastically, "well, you needn't be putting on airs over it as if I were asking you the secrets of Free Masonry."

He had no more than recovered from the shock than another man walked over to him and inquired:

"Was that last a two or three-base hit?"

This made the young man mad and he replied not.

The inquirer passed, and he enjoyed five minutes' peace, when a ragged little gamin stepped up to him and yelled:

"Say, mister, how many runs ahead are the Jerseys?"

Then a man asked him which paper he represented, and while he was simpering with rage another fellow came up to him to make some inquiry, but before he could open his mouth to do so the man with the memorandum book cut him short by jumping up and screaming:

"I don't know the score; I don't know what inning it is; I don't know a curve pitcher from a history of Paraguay; I am not connected with any paper; now don't ask me any more questions. It's a pity a man can't sit down to compose a few verses for a lady's autograph album without being bored to death about a game of ball!"

Then he resumed his seat, red in the face, and was allowed to continue his verses in peace.

"Home's the place for boys," said a stern parent to his son, who was fond of going out at night. "That's just what I think when you drive me off to school every morning said the son.

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ASSIGNEE'S ACCOUNT.
 The following Assignees accounts have been filed in the Prothonotary's of Perry county, and will be presented to the Court for confirmation on WEDNESDAY, the 30th day of October, 1878:

1. The account of Dr. D. B. MILLIKEN, Assignee under deed of voluntary assignment for benefit of creditors of W. B. DIVEN, of the borough of Landsburg.

2. The account of E. B. WISE, Assignee under deed of voluntary assignment for benefit of creditors of JOHN C. LEONARD, of Newport borough.

D. MICKRY, Prothonotary, Prothonotary's Office, New Bloomfield, September 30, 1878.

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 All persons indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment and those having claims to present them duly authenticated for settlement to
 I. J. HOLLAND, Executor.
 July 18, 1878—6tpd.

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