

A STORY OF RUINED HOPES.

NOT long ago a quiet, unobtrusive farmer, who for the purposes of this present sketch will be called Michael Lawton, died in Garrett county, Maryland. Garrett county is the westernmost county of the State, and is a wild mountainous region, in which there are a number of exceedingly fertile valleys, called "glades," which are famous for the natural grass which grows on them and makes them superb pasture for cattle. The glades when broken by the plow make exceedingly fertile farms and they are rapidly being cultivated by people who do not wish to settle in the far west.

Lawton was laid at rest under a huge oak tree, on a little knoll on his farm.—He had selected his own burial ground, and in compliance with his wishes the small white marble slab at his head merely bears his initials, and the two dates—those of his birth and death. His neighbors knew but little of the manner of his life or his position in society before he came among them. He bought a small farm and came to live on it one full some ten or twelve years ago, and on it he died. He seemed to have enough ready money to satisfy his needs and to pay for his land, and occasionally, in conversation, he would say something which showed that he had been unusually well educated and had traveled extensively, both in this country and in foreign lands.

He never spoke of friends or relatives, and after some abortive attempts to discover his past history, the neighbors gave it up in disgust and accepted him for what he was.

When he died, a distant relative came into possession of the little farm and the few household articles he left behind, and then all trace of the career and almost all recollection of the existence of Michael Lawton passed away. The writer knew the man well, and once when on a fishing expedition with him, he related the pathetic and remarkable story of his life, part of which was published some years ago, and attracted a great deal of attention at the time. The outline of the story is vouched for, but the names of places and persons are changed for evident reasons.

Years ago a family, consisting of father, mother and two children, lived in a small town in Western Ohio. The father of the family, Mr. Lawton, was a lawyer and speculator, and had been a merchant. He had grown rich, very rich for those days, and was noted for his keen business sagacity and his honesty and kindly heart. His wife had been a delicate, pretty girl when he married her, and after her second child was born her health broke down and she became a confirmed invalid. The couple had two children, a boy named Michael, who was at the time referred to about eight years old, and Mabel who was then "baby" and was about five years old.

Mabel was a pretty child and her parents petted and dressed her in a style that made her the envy of all the mothers in the neighborhood.

One day Mabel went into her mother's room and told her she wanted to go and play with some other little girls who lived in the next street. Mrs. Lawton gave her consent, but told her to be sure to come to dinner. Mabel promised, kissed her mother gaily and ran out of the room—and out of the world, as far as the poor mother was concerned, for she never saw her again. Mabel did not come home to dinner, and at supper time Michael was sent after her.

He soon returned, with a pale, frightened face, and told his father that his sister had started for home about noon, and no one knew where she was. Search was made for her in every direction, but without avail. No trace of the lost one could be discovered. A month afterwards, the mother died heart-broken, and the father sold all his property and became a wanderer, with but one object in life—the finding of his lost one. Taking his son with him he traveled from State to State, visiting public institutions where children were cared for, and going through cities making inquiries which he thought might lead to the desired result. From the United States the search was extended to Europe, and finally in a Spanish city Mr. Lawton caught a local fever and died in a few days, leaving his son, then a boy of nineteen, all of his fortune. Mr. Lawton told his boy that he had no near relatives except a brother, who had gone to California in the first flush of the gold fever and had never been heard of afterward.

Michael Lawton came back to this country, entered a college in the east and graduated with honor. He studied law in the office of a famous New York lawyer, and after being admitted to the bar he went west and made his home in a new-settled State where he soon built up a good practice.

One winter Lawton went to New York to visit a college chum March-

mont who had married and gone into business. Marchmont had several young sisters and one afternoon Lawton was introduced to Miss Mabel Lether, a young lady who was their music teacher. She was exceedingly pretty and a lady in manner and mind, and Lawton fell violently in love with her, and before he left the city he asked her to marry him and she accepted him. They were married the following winter and went to Lawton's western home, where they lived for six years, during which time two children were born to them. Miss Lether told Lawton after their engagement that she was an orphan, that her parents had died when she was a child and she could not remember them at all. She had been named by a kind-hearted lady in eastern Ohio. She had taught school and made sufficient money to enter a school in the east, where she studied music, and after she had graduated she got a class of girls for pupils, and while thus engaged she met Lawton.

Lawton was sitting in the office one day, when an odd-looking elderly man came in and asked for "Mr. Lawton." An introduction took place, and after the usual preliminaries the stranger said he was a lawyer from San Francisco. He then asked Lawton if he would tell him his father's name and where he had been born. Although surprised at the questions, Lawton complied, and the stranger then explained his errand.

"You have heard your father speak, I suppose, of a brother who went to California a good many years ago, and who did not write home of his doings. Well, I am his representative, and I was his friend up to the hour he died. Years ago he went to—(mentioning the town where Lawton was born) and there he heard of the manner in which your little sister disappeared and of your father's departure. He tried to find him for a while, but did not succeed, and then he went home again. He made up his mind to find your sister, if it was possible. He employed several skillful detectives and spent a great deal of money in the search. A year ago he died, and in his will he directed that you should be his heir unless your sister was discovered. In that event she was to have half of his property. I saw your name in a paper some weeks ago, and on making inquiries I became convinced that you were the nephew of the man who was my friend and who entrusted me with the care of his affairs. And now,—here the speaker paused an instant—"now I have something still more strange to tell you. We have found a trace of your sister. She was stolen by a party of vagrants, for the clothes and trinkets she wore, and was taken to eastern Ohio. She was taken ill, and was left with a good-hearted lady who adopted her as her daughter. After her recovery she could not remember her name or where she had lived.

When this lady died Mabel taught school for several years and then went east to study music. After leaving school I think she went to New York, but I cannot say. We have no trace of her for six years. She was named after the lady who adopted her and was known as Mabel Lether."

"Known as what?" screamed Lawton. "Mabel Lether."

"Great God, now she has been my wife for six years!"

It was so indeed. Further examination showed beyond question that Mabel Lether and Mrs. Michael Lawton were one and the same person.

The agony of the two people can be imagined. In their eyes they had sinned beyond the hope of redemption.—They separated.

Mrs. Lawton is still living in a town in Massachusetts, where she has been for many years. The children are at school and Michael Lawton is in his grave. He gave up all his business, grew frightfully dissipated, and after spending nearly all the money he had reserved for himself, he wandered to the lovely little Maryland farm, where he strove to bury his past and where he lived a life of toil. The clover blossoms are as sweet about his grave and the wild flowers bloom as sweetly there as though he who sleeps in that quiet nook was at last at rest.

A LITTLE TRAVELLER.

CHILDREN furnish more than one half of the world's purest joys, their beautiful deeds breaking in upon us oftentimes as delightful surprises; and stupid would be if we failed to be roused from life's torpor by their presence, their needs, and their expression of them. As we stepped upon the platform of the cars on our way West in the middle of the night, we heard a man say, "Here is a little girl all alone. Will not somebody take care of her?" Somebody responded and we thought no more of it until next day when we had dropped our "sleeper," and entered one of the other cars we saw the sweetest little child-forms we ever looked upon, fast asleep, so soundly sleeping as not to even be heard in breathing.

Such a head of dark brown hair, lying all loose over shoulders, back and face, we never beheld; features as if the choice of an artist from a thousand beauties; her long, dark eyelashes lay across the openings into a world of beauty, and her form was in beautiful adaptation to the ideal of her face. We could hardly wait for her to wake, for we felt sure she was the lonely child of whom we had heard the night before, and were impatient for the history of this interesting but solitary voyager across the earth. After a while the conductor stood over her, as if drawn by her beauty and innocence. He seemed to be shrinking from waking her, as if she was an angel, whose repose it would have been irreverent to disturb. Said he, "Whose child is this?" No one could tell. He turned away and went on gathering up his tickets. When he had finished he came back, and she was awake. He stooped and said: "Whose little girl are you?"

"Mamma's," said she, looking up trustfully in his face.

"Where is your mamma? Show me who she is."

Said she gently, "Mamma is not on the cars, she is in heaven."

The gentlemanly conductor grew more intently anxious, and said:

"But you have a father aboard?"

"No, sir; my father is in heaven a long time ago. When I was a little baby he was in the army. Mamma used to tell me about him. She called him her poor soldier boy."

"And where did your papa and mamma live?"

"In Ireland, sir," speaking more gently, as if not sure it was best to tell him.

"Where did you come from, my little darling?"

"From the same place, sir."

"Not from Ireland?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who came with you?"

"Nobody, sir, but God. He kept me on the sea when it was awful stormy, and I was so sick that I thought I would die."

The conductor, in surprise, said, "You did not come all the way from Ireland by yourself?"

"Yes, sir; God was with me; my auntie prayed for me, and told God to take care of me on the fore-castle of the ship; and she kissed me and said, 'Precious pet, don't be afraid, for God has told me that he is going with you all the way;' and some people on the deck took me and made me sleep by them until I got to New York, and then they took me to the railroad station and a nice old gentleman, with a white beard, got my ticket. Here it is,"—opening a queer old-fashioned Irish carpet sack, and pulling out a woolen petticoat and putting her little hand into the pocket, took out a pocket book tied with a soiled piece of linen tape,— "here it is; he gave it to me, and told me not to be afraid, because the people would all be kind to a little stranger orphan girl. And he said when I wanted anything to ask the man with the hand on his hat. Are you the man?"

"Yes; what do you want, my little pet?"

"I want you to take care of me, if you please."

"I will, indeed. I had a little girl as large as you, but she died."

"She is in heaven, ain't she? She will see my papa and mamma; won't she?"

"He said, 'I hope so,' and turned away."

By this time a half-dozen men had gathered around the child, no women happening to be in the cars, else that woman's heart would have been broken. The men were all rough, good-hearted souls, and all seemed fidgety to do something for this strange, beautiful child. One turned up a tag which was fastened to a ribbon around her neck, and on it was written:

"Effe Mc—, of Ireland; aged seven years; is on her way to her aunt, Mrs. Mc—, Fort Kearney, United States of America. Kind friends, be good to this child. She was her mother's darling, who died the 11th day of December, 1878. This poor child is all that is left of the family, and her friends are sending her to her aunt's at Fort Kearney."

One rough-looking man asked her if she had anything to eat, to which she replied by showing him some little sweet cakes, and said, "Do you think these will be enough until I get to auntie's?" He replied, "Give me your reticule," and, opening it, commenced filling it out of his well-stored basket. Others brought in their supplies, until there was more than the child could well carry. An old gentleman, about eighty years of age, said he would take care of her as far as Kansas City; a black man said he had nothing to give her to eat, so he gave her a half-dollar. She became more and more a theme of interest for hundreds of miles, until we seemed to have forgotten the space, when the cry, "East St. Louis!" startled us, and revealed the fact that to some of us at least the journey had

ended. We parted from this dear child in tenderness and with prayers, for she was fast asleep, with her little Testament, which she could read, in her pale hand. All were the better for her presence; all regretted that she could not journey on with them along the way of life.

The Deacon's Wager.

A well known and rather old-fashioned deacon of this city, in conversation with the leader of the choir of his church, remarked that he was too much of the "devil's muscle" in our churches, and we are getting into the habit of singing frivolous and lively music. The leader asked him if he knew "Yankee Doodle." The deacon replied that he was brought up on that tune, and would know it anywhere.

"Well," replied the leader, "I will sing it in church for you soon, and will wager a big apple that you won't know it."

The leader watched his opportunity, and in due time the minister put out the hymn "When I can read my title clear." The piece was sung in measured time to the old air of "Yankee Doodle." At the close of the service the deacon was the first to approach the leader.

"Why, what was the tune you sang those words to?" eagerly asked the deacon; "it was the best I have heard in the church for some time."

The leader responded, "That was 'Yankee Doodle.' Didn't I tell you I was going to sing it, and you wouldn't know the difference?"

The deacon hummed the tune and found that he was caught, and the only difference between the two was the time and "long face" put on in singing it. The leader is looking for that "big apple," and the deacon is beginning to think that a religious tune can be made out of anything.

The Dodging Answer.

There is a "kind of man" from whom you can never get a direct answer or a decided opinion upon any subject. Spicer has in mind one of these, who always stands on guard at a question, and after a few parries thrusts out the question, "Well, now, what is your idea?" John Van Buren was a notable example of the non-committal class, and it is related that once he was a passenger upon one of the North River steamers, a bottle of wine was wagered at dinner that a direct answer could not be obtained from him to a common-place question. The party who had accepted the wager approached "Prince John," and politely apologizing for disturbing him, said: "Mr. Van Buren, we have made a wager on a very simple question. Will you tell me whether the sun rises in the east or west?"

The New York politician hesitated a moment, and then in bland tones replied: "Well, sir, I believe the general impression is—" "Thank you," said the baffled interlocutor. "Waiter, bring me a wine card and a pencil."

Long Courtship.

A couple, after a courtship of over fifteen years were recently married in Kentucky. The wedding was to have occurred in 1861, when the war broke out, but the conflict which dragged all classes of people into its whirlpool, claimed this lover as well. He took one side, her father took the other. The old man never forgave him. He swore that as long as he lived his daughter should never marry a rebel. He kept his word. One by one his three sons passed over the river and out of sight. His wife, broken hearted, followed her boys to the grave, and finally none of the once happy household was left but the patient girl and her stern old parent. The war gave back her lover uninjured, but the implacable father stood between. He refused his consent to the marriage, and she would not wed without it. And so the many years rolled away—an obstinate old man—two loyal lovers. A year ago he died and this long delayed marriage was consummated.

A Drummer's Operations.

A drummer gives the following itemized account of his season's travels:

Table with 2 columns: Item and Amount. Miles 3,064; Trunks 4; Shown goods 116; Sold 98; Been asked the news 5,001; Told 3,210; Lied about it 2,160; Didn't know 691; Been asked to drink 1,861; Drank 46; Changed politics 46; Daily expenses allowed by house 8 00; Actual average 6 00; Clean profit 2 00; Cash on hand 2 60; Been to church 1.

How to Get Sick.

Expose yourself day and night, eat too much without exercise; work too hard without rest; doctor all the time; take all the vile nostrums advertised; and then you will not know

How to Get Well.

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