

Mrs. Worsham's Surprise.

THE FRONT door of a neat house, of moderate pretensions, just outside of an Indiana town, was hastily opened as night was coming on and a man was thrust violently into the street, or rather the road.

The man who was ejected was young, and might have been handsome had it not been for the dissipated appearance of his dress. At the moment he was evidently intoxicated.

The man who ejected him was an aged gentleman, whose face was red with honest indignation, which also showed itself in his voice and his language.

Albert Wakely was a lawyer of ability and promise when he married John Byrd's daughter Mary, although he had already contracted a fondness for drink.

This passion did not abate after his marriage, but grew upon him, and at the birth of his boy he had become no better than a loafer, sheltering himself with his wife in the house of his father-in-law, to whom his family looked for all the necessities of life.

John Byrd was not the man to patiently endure his son-in-law's worthlessness and ill-treatment of his wife, and at last, when Wakely came crawling into the house after a prolonged absence and debauch, he opened the door and expelled him forcibly.

"Go off!" he exclaimed with his voice full of anger. "Go off, Albert Wakely, and never darken my doors again! You have no longer a home here, and you shall never set your foot in my house after this."

Wakely murmured something about wanting to see his wife.

"She don't want to see you. Go off, I say! Nobody here cares what becomes of you."

The old man went back into the house and closed and locked the door, while the young man stumbled up the road, his eyes, and his faculties apparently dazed.

He thus wandered on, never looking up nor glancing to the right or the left, stupid and purposeless, until he reached the bank of a stream.

Ignoring the bridge, he would have waded into the water if he had not been seized and forcibly restrained by a man who had noticed his strange movements.

"What, Wakely, is this you? What are you doing? Where are you going?"

"I don't know," was the sleepy reply.

"Where am I?"

"You would now be in the water if I had not stopped you. Come, let me take you home."

At this word Wakely suddenly straightened himself up, raised his hat and pushed the hair from his eyes.

"Home!" he exclaimed. "I have no home."

In response to the wondering questions of the other, he related, more lucidly than might have been expected, the story of his expulsion from John Byrd's house.

"That's nothing," said his friend. "Come to town with me, and straighten up, and it will be all right in the morning."

"It will never be right, Mr. Henderson," replied Wakely. "This is the end of it. I have been driven out and I deserve it, and I will never set foot in John Byrd's house again. That is not all. I will never drink another drop of liquor as long as I live, so help me heaven."

"Don't be rash. It is a good thing to quit, but you will have to ease off, you know."

"Never! I will not touch another drop if I die for it. I mean to leave here and lead a new life under a new name."

"If you really mean that, Wakely, I can put you in the way to make a man of yourself. I am going to Colorado. Go with me and I will pay your way and help you to make your own start in life."

"If you will do that, Mr. Henderson, you will earn my lifelong gratitude."

When John Byrd re-entered his house he found his daughter Mary sobbing as if her heart would break.

"What have you done, father?" she asked.

"What have you done?"

"I have driven away that worthless vagabond!" he roughly replied, "and ordered him never to darken my doors again."

"You might have given him another chance. He is my husband, and he is the father of my child."

"He has had chance enough. He shall torture you no more. I will get a divorce for you."

"I want no divorce," sobbed Mary.

"You don't know what you want. You need a divorce and you shall have it. I have taken this matter into my own hands. Worsham is ready and anxious to marry you."

Wakely was summarily ejected from the house of his father-in-law.

At the mouth of a canon in southern Colorado, where the tortured torrent has passed through the cleft in the mountains and becomes a placid stream as it debouches on a broad and fertile valley, a single "prairie schooner" has stopped, and its driver, a rude, red-shirted fellow, is seen in conversation with an old man, who is evidently expostulating in vain.

"It's no use," said the driver at last. "I've gone as far as your money will justify, and farder, and here I mean to quit. If you mean to stop anywhere this is as good a place as you will find."

"If you want either work or help, General Chance is likely to give it to you."

"Does he own this valley?" asked the old man.

"He owns ever so many acres of land, the San Benito Mine and more horses, sheep and cattle than you kin count. But here comes one of his ranchmen, and I will turn you over to him."

The driver explained the circumstances of his "fright" to the ranchman, who requested the old man to accompany him to "the house," and the latter patiently complied with the request, leading by the hand a bright little boy.

They soon reached "the house," a low and straggling collection of buildings, and were ushered into the presence of its owner, a tall and fine-looking man, with his face covered by a heavy beard and his eyes shaded by a wide slouched hat, who was seated in a raw-hide chair reading a newspaper and smoking a long pipe. He listened in silence and with apparent indifference to the story the ranchman told him.

"What is your name?" he asked, addressing the old man.

"John Byrd, sir."

"Where are you from?"

"From Indiana."

"Ay! Any family with you?"

"My daughter, Mrs. Worsham, and her child."

"Widow, I suppose."

"Her husband is dead, sir," patiently replied Byrd, although he resented the tone of these inquiries.

"First husband, or second?"

"Mr. Worsham was her second husband. She had been married to a drunken, worthless vagabond whom I was compelled to drive away."

"Quite right. Mr. Byrd—exactly. What become of the vagabond?"

"I don't know."

"Died, I suppose. It is of no consequence what become of him. Then a divorce followed?"

"Yes, sir. I insisted upon a divorce against my daughter's wish, she married Mr. Worsham, a well-to-do man. But bad luck fastened upon us and never let go. Mr. Worsham died insolvent, and one reverse after another swept my little property and I was forced to come out here to begin life again. It is a hard task, sir, for an old man."

"I should say so. You ought to have remained among your friends. What boy is that?"

"My grandson," faintly replied Byrd, who was weary of this style of questioning.

"Son of the vagabond, or of Worsham?"

"Albert is the son of my daughter's first husband."

"I have taken a fancy to him. You want a home, and I will tell you what I will do. Give me that boy and I will give you a fine ranch, well stocked, with everything you need to make you comfortable. Is it a bargain?"

"Do you expect me to trade off my daughter's child?" indignantly demanded Byrd.

"I forgot about 'her. Of course she has an interest in him. Suppose you ask her. She ought to be willing to accept a comfortable home for life, when she knows that the boy will be provided for."

"I will bring her here if you wish."

"No; I don't want to see any women folks. Ask her and bring me word."

"I will ask her," replied the old man; "but I know what her answer will be."

John Byrd soon returned and informed Gen. Chance that Mrs. Worsham had refused to accept his offer, declaring she would rather die, than be parted from her boy.

"Very well," said the gentleman.—"That is all I have to say to you.—You may go."

John Byrd sadly left the house, and its owner signaled to the ranchman to remain.

"Mr. Whippis," said he, "I wish you would follow that old man. Take him and his family down to Hiller's ranch, which is vacant, and settle them there. Supply them with stock, provisions, and everything they need to make them comfortable, and let me know if money is needed."

So John Byrd and his little family, greatly to their surprise, were settled and made more than comfortable.

There was nothing to trouble them but the uncertainty of their tenure and a fear that another direction might be taken by the peculiar disposition of their benefactor, who would not allow Mrs. Worsham to come near his house, saying that he "didn't want to see any women folks."

He only endured her father but was very friendly to the boy, whom he presented with a fine pony and saddle. For his own part he seemed determined not to show his face at the Hiller ranch.

Providence, however, was disposed to set aside this determination.

As he was returning one day from a distant stock farm his horse shied and threw him near the Hiller ranch, dragging him some distance by the stirrup. He was carried into Mr. Byrd's house, where it was discovered that his head and face were so badly cut and bruised that it would be necessary to remove his hair and beard.

When this operation had been performed Mrs. Worsham came into the room for the purpose of helping to dress his wounds, and fairly shrieked as she saw him.

"Albert Wakely!" she exclaimed.—"Is it really you?"

"Yes, Mary, it is I," quietly replied Gen. Chance. "If you are going to do anything for me please do it without a fuss."

Mary Worsham took care of him; and he encouraged her attendance. When he was stronger he spoke to her more freely.

"Mary did you really object to a divorce and to your second marriage?"

"Yes, Albert I never loved any man but the father of my child, in spite of his great fault, and I objected to anything that could injure you. But you ought not to blame father. He meant to act for the best."

"I didn't blame him. It was for the best. It made a man of me, and I am as I ought to be, deeply grateful to him. Mary, that is a fine boy of ours."

Within a month there was a wedding on the San Benito estate which was made such an occasion of rejoicing as to be long remembered in that region. The contracting parties were Walter Chance as he was still determined to be known, and Mary, widow of Abraham Worsham.

Nursing the Wrong Man.

THE New York Times tells this story:—The drunkard in question, Mr. Alonzo B. Davis, has been in active exercise of his profession for nearly ten years and is universally acknowledged as the most energetic and accomplished drunkard in Potts county Ind. He has been in the constant habit of returning to his home, at about midnight, in an advanced state of intoxication for several years, and during the seventeen months preceding the 4th of January, 1880, he never lost a night by sobriety.—Mrs. Davis is a most estimable and amiable woman, and in spite of her husband's disgraceful condition, has steadily clung to him. Night after night has she set up for the degraded man in order to help him up stairs and take off his boots. With the self-respect of a true woman, she has never allowed him to treat her with violence, but has always knocked him down with a base-ball club whenever he showed symptoms of muscular brutality. A more tender, long-suffering and devoted wife a man never had, and yet Mr. Davis required her kindness by continuing to live when there were a river, a railroad, three buzz-saws, and any quantity of kerosene in the town, with the aid of which he might at any moment have had a fatal and beneficent accident.

On the night of the 4th of January, Mrs. Davis was as usual, sitting up in her bed-room, and waiting for her wretched husband. It was nearly 11 o'clock. The night was cold and the candle was almost burned out. In the corner stood the base-ball club, ready to be used in case of necessity, and on the mantelpiece the eight-day clock drowsily ticked away the waning hours. Tired Mrs. Davis herself grew drowsy, and when a loud ring at the front door-bell aroused her she found that she had fallen asleep and that the candle had gone out.

Without waiting to light another candle, the faithful wife felt her way down stairs, opened the door and admitted the drunkard. He was even more drunk than usual, for he could not articulate a single word. Mrs. Davis had immense difficulty in assisting him up stairs, for he insisted upon sitting down on every separate step and falling asleep. There were twenty-two steps in all, and it took three-quarters of an hour to get him up to the top of the stairs, down which he promptly fell again. Nothing however, can exhaust the patience of a good woman, and about 12:30 Mrs. Davis succeeded in bringing her charge into the bedroom and placed him on the sofa, where he instantly and permanently went to sleep.

In the circumstances, she resolved to let him lie there, and thus avoid the

trouble of lighting a candle. So she loosened his collar, drew off his boots, and placed a stick of wood under his head, and inserted a piece of soap in his mouth as a hint to him to stop snoring. Having thus made him comfortable for the night, she was about to prepare herself for bed, when the front door was opened with a latch-key, and a man sprang hastily up stairs and rushed into the room. Mrs. Davis being a woman of much presence of mind, screamed out "fire!" and hastily lit the candle, so that she could see how to begin operations with the club on the supposed burglar. To her unspeakable horror the new-comer was her husband in a state of complete sobriety. He had not been so hopelessly and aggressively sober in ten years and as he looked at the drunkard on the sofa, recognizing him as a certain dissolute neighbor, and then in sepulchral tones said, "Mary! is this my reward for signing the pledge?"—Mrs. Davis felt that her cup was full. In the darkness of the night, and trusting implicitly to the habitual drunkenness of her husband, she had innocently taken the wrong drunkard to her room, and betrayed her confidence by actually venturing to come home sober at the most inopportune moment possible.

The probability is that the poor woman will be sent home in disgrace to her mother. Mr. Davis assumes to regard himself in the light of a betrayed and wronged husband, and refuses to accept Mrs. Davis's explanation. She now feels that the crowning cruelty of his life was unexpected sobriety. That after all the years of his constant drunkenness, he should suddenly and without any warning come home sober, was indeed a refinement of cruelty of which only the most hardened of men could be guilty.

The Old-Fashioned Girl.

SHE flourished thirty or forty years ago. She was a little girl until she was 15. She used to help her mother to wash the dishes and keep the kitchen tidy, and she had an ambition to make pies so nicely that papa could tell the difference between them and mamma's; and yet she could fry griddle-cakes at 10 years of age, and darn her own stockings before she was 12, to say nothing of knitting them herself.

She had her hours of play, and enjoyed herself to the fullest extent. She had no very costly toys to be sure, but her rag doll and little bureau and chair that Uncle Tom made were just as valuable to her as the \$20 wax doll and elegant doll furniture the children have now-a-days.

She never says "I can't" or "I don't want to," to her mother, when asked to leave her play and run up stairs or down on an errand, because she had not been brought up in that way. Obedience was a cardinal virtue in the old-fashioned little girl.

She rose in the morning when she was called, and went out into the garden and saw the dew on the grass, and if she lived in the country she fed the chickens and hunted up the eggs for breakfast.

We do not suppose she had her hair in curl-papers, or crimping-pins, or had it "banged" over her forehead, and her flounces were no trouble to her.

She learned how to sew by making patch-work, and we dare say she could do an "over-and-over" seam as well as nine-tenths of the grown-up women now-a-days.

The old-fashioned girl did not grow into a young lady and talk about beaux before she was in her teens, and she did not read dime novels, and was not fancying a hero in every plowboy she met.

She learned the stolid accomplishments as she grew up. She was taught the art of cooking and housekeeping.—When she got a husband she knew how to cook him a dinner.

She was not learned in French verbs, or Latin declensions, and her near neighbors were spared the agony of hearing her pound out "The Maiden's Prayer" and "Silver Threads among the Gold" twenty times a day on the piano, but we make no doubt she made her family quite as comfortable as the modern young lady does hers.

It may be a vulgar assertion, and we suppose that we are not exactly up with the times, but we honestly believe, and our opinion is based upon considerable experience, and no small observation, that when it comes to keeping a family happy, a good cook and housekeeper is to be greatly preferred above an accomplished scholar. When both sets of qualities are found together, as they sometimes are, then is the household over which such a woman has control blessed.

Do you feel that any of your organs—your stomach, liver, bowels, or nervous system, falters in its work? If so, repair the damage with the most powerful, yet harmless, of invigorants. Remember that debility is the "Beginning of the End"—that the climax of all weakness is a universal paralysis of the system, and that such paralysis is the immediate precursor of Death.

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