## Contrasting Two Homes.

TWO men on their way home, met at a street crossing, and then walked on together. They were neighbors and friends.

"This has been a very bad day," said Mr. Freeman, in a gloomy voice. And as they walked homeward they discouraged each other, and made darker the clouds that obscured their whole horizon.

"Good evening," was at last said hurriedly; and the two men passed into their homes.

Mr. Walcott entered the room where his wife and children were gathered, and without speaking to any one, seated himself in a chair, and leaning his head back, closed his eyes. His countenance wore a sad, weary, exhausted look. He had been seated thus for only a few minutes, when his wife, said in a fearful voice:

"More trouble again."

"What is the matter now?" asked Mr. Walcott, almost starting.

"John has been sent home from school."

"What?" Mr. Walcott partly rose from his chair.

"He has been suspended for bad conduct."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Mr. Walcott, "where is he?"

"Up in his room; I sent him there as soon as he came home. You'll have to do something with him. He'll be ruined if he goes on in this way. I'm out of all heart with him."

Mr Walcott, excited as much by the manner in which his wife conveyed unpleasant information as by the information itself, started up, under the blind impulse of the moment, and going to the room where John had been sent on coming home from school, punished the boy severely, and this without listening to the explanations which the poor child tried to make him hear.

"Father," said the boy, with forced calmness, after the cruel stripes had ceased; "I was not to blame, and if you will go with me to the teacher, I can prove myself innocent."

Mr. Walcott had never known his son to tell an untruth, and the words fell with a rebuke upon his heart.

"Very well, we will see about that," he answered with a forced sternness; and leaving the room he went down stairs, feeling much more uncomfortable, than when he went up. Again he seated himself in his large chair, and again leaned back his weary head and closed his heavy eyelids. Sadder was his face than before. As he sat thus, his eldest daughter, in her sixteenth year, came and stood by him. She held a paper in her hand.

"Father," he opened his eyes, "here's my quarter's bill. Can't I have the money to take to school with me in the morning?"

"I am afraid not," answered Mr. Walcott, half in dispair.

"Nearly all the girls will bring in their money, to-morrow, and it mortifies me to be behind the others." The daughter spoke fretfully. Mr. Walcott waved her aside with his hand, and she went off muttering and pouting.

"It is mortifying," said Mrs. Walcott, a little sharply; "and I don't wonder that Helen feels annoyed about it. The bill has to be paid, and I don't see why it may not be done as well first as last."

To this Mr. Walcott made no answer. The words but added another pressure to the heavy burden under which he was already staggering. After a silence of some moments, Mrs. Walcott said:

"The coals are all gone."

"Impossible!" Mr. Walcott raised his head and looked incredulous. "I laid in sixteen tons."

"I can't help it, if they were sixty tons instead of sixteen; they are all gone. The girls had hard work to-day to scrape up enough to keep the fire in."

"There's been a shameful waste somewhere," said Mr. Walcott, with strong emphasis, starting up and moving about the room with a very disturbed manner.

"So you always say, when anything runs out," answered Mrs. Walcott, rather tartly.

"The barrel of flour is gone also; but I suppose you have done your part with the rest in using it up."

Mr. Walcott returned to his chair, and again seated himself, leaned back his head and closed his eyes as at first. How sad, and weary and hopeless he felt! The burden of the day had seemed almost too heavy for him; but he had borne up bravely. To gather strength for renewed struggle with adverse circumstances, he had come home. Alas! that the process of exhaustion should still go on—that where only strength could be looked for on earth, no strength was given.

When the tea bell was rung, Mr. Walcott made no movement to obey the summons.

"Come to supper," said his wife coldly. But he did not stir.

"Are you not coming to supper?" she called to him, as she was leaving the room.

"I don't wish for anything this evening. My head aches very much," he answered.

"In the dumps again," muttered Mrs. Walcott to herself. "It's as much as one's life is worth to ask for money, or say anything is wanted." And she kept on her way to the dining room. When she returned, her husband was still sitting where she had left him.

"Shall I bring you a cup of tea?" she asked.

"No, I don't wish for anything."

"What's the matter, Mr. Walcott? What do you look so troubled about, as if you hadn't a friend in the world? What have I done to you?"

There was no answer, for there was not a shade of real sympathy in her voice that made the queries, but rather of quarrelous dissatisfaction. A few moments Mrs. Walcott stood behind her husband, but as he did not seem inclined to answer questions, she turned away from him, and resumed the enjoyment which had been interrupted by the ringing of the tea bell.

The whole evening passed without the occurrence of a single incident, that gave a healthful pulsation to the sick heart of Mr. Walcott. No thoughtful kindness was manifested by any member of the family; but on the contrary, a narrow regard for self, and a looking to him only that he might supply the means of self-gratification.

No wonder, from the pressure which was on him, that Mr Walcott felt utterly discouraged. He retired early, and sought to find that relief from mental disquietude in sleep which he had vainly hoped for in the bosom of his family. But the whole night passed in broken slumber and disturbing dreams. From the cheerless morning meal, at which he was reminded of the quarter's bill that must be paid, of the coals and flour that were out, and of the necessity of supplying Mrs. Walcott's empty purse, he went forth to meet the difficulties of another day, faint of heart, almost hopeless of success. A confident spirit, sustained by home affections would have carried him through; but unsupported as he was, the burden was too heavy for him, and he sank under it. The day that opened upon him so unpropitiously closed upon him a ruined man.

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Let us look in for a few moments upon Mr. Freeman, a friend and a neighbor of Mr. Walcott. He, also, has come home weary, dispirited and almost sick. The trials of the day had been unusually severe, and when he looked anxiously forward to scan the future, not even a gleam of light was seen along the black horizon.

As he stepped across the threshold of his dwelling, a pang shot through his heart, for the thought came: "How slight the present hold upon all these comforts." Not for himself, but for his wife and children was the pain.

"Father's come!" cried a glad little voice on the stairs, the moment his footfall sounded in the passage; then quick, pattering feet were heard—and then a tiny form was springing into his arms. Before reaching the sitting room above, Alice, the eldest danghter was by his side, her arm drawn fondly within his, and her loving eyes lifted to his face.

"Are you not late, dear?" It was the gentle voice of Mrs. Freeman.

Mr. Freeman could not trust himself to answer. He was too deeply troubled in spirit to assume at the moment a cheerful tone, and he had no wish to sadden the hearts that loved him, by letting the depression from which he was suffering, become too clearly apparent. But the eye of Mrs. Freeman saw quickly below the surface.

"Are you not well, Robert?" she inquired tenderly, as she drew his large arm chair toward the centre of the room.

"A little headache," he answered with a slight evasion.

Scarcely was Mr. Freeman seated, ere a pair of hands was busy with each foot, removing gaiters and shoes and supplying their place with a soft slipper. There was not one in the household who did not feel happier for his return, nor one who did not seek to render him some kind office.

It was impossible, under such a burst of heart-sunshine, for the spirit of Mr. Freeman long to remain shrouded. Almost imperceptibly to himself, gloomy thoughts gave place to more cheerful ones, and by the time tea was ready, he had half forgotten the fears which had so haunted him through the day.

But they could not be held back altogether, and their existence was marked during the evening by an unusual silence and abstraction of mind. This was observed by Mrs. Freeman, who, more than half suspecting the cause, kept back from her husband the knowledge of certain matters about which she intended to speak to him, for she feared they would add to his mental disquietude. During the evening she gleaned from something he said, the real cause of his changed aspect. At once her thoughts commenced running in a new channel. By a few leading remarks she drew her husband into conversation on the subject of home expenses and the propriety of restriction in various points. Many things were mutually pronounced superfluous and easily to be dispensed with, and before sleep fell soothingly on the heavy eyelids of Mr. Freeman, that night, an entire change in their style of living had been determined upon—a change that would reduce their expenses at least one half.

"I see a light ahead," were the hopeful words of Mr. Freeman, as he resigned himself to slumber.

With renewed strength of mind and a confident spirit he went forth the next day—a day that he had looked forward to with fear and trembling. And it was only through this renewed strength and confident spirit that he was able to overcome the difficulties that loomed up, mountain high, before him. Weak despondency would have ruined all. Home had proved his tower of strength—his walled city. Strengthened for the conflict, he had gone forth again into the world and conquered in the struggle.

"I see light ahead," gave place to "The morning dawneth!"

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### A GALVESTON ROMANCE.

THE Galveston *News* says: A few days ago the colored people of Galveston had a grand marine excursion to Houston to enjoy the sea breeze, stroll about the quays and inspect shipping generally. Among those who made all his arrangements to go was Sam Johnsing, but he did not go. On the other hand, there was Bill Thompsing, who did not expect to go at all, but who went nevertheless. How this came about is most amusing. Both parties moved in the highest colored circles. It seems Sam Johnsing had invited an ebony-hued dulcinea named "Lize" to go to the raid at Houston, and she had accepted the invitation. They were a little late in getting to the train, so Sam had no time to squander in getting tickets. There was a broad happy smile on his ebony features as he ran his hand in his pocket to procure his wallet. Then a look of perplexity came o'er the tablet of his thoughts, which deepened into misery as he sounded pocket after pocket with a violence that threatened to knock the flooring out of them.

"Hurry up if you want to secure tickets," said the ticket agent gruffly.

In his frenzy Sam turned his pockets inside out, looked into his hat and was about to take off his shoes and stockings when he saw Bill Johnsing leaning against a post. Bill was there merely to see the excursionists off. The rest of the excursionists on the train indulged in jeering remarks at the expense of Lize, whose lips stuck out like two sausages. She was got up regardless of expense, and looked like a rainbow in mourning. In two jumps Sam was along side of Bill.

"Foah de lor's sake, lemme two dollars; I'se lef my money in my udder pants."

"I hain't tuck out no license dis yeah to do a banking business."

"Bill, lemme de money, and I'll tell yer whar dar is a hen roost wid two slats loose in de coop an' a low fence."

"I'se not in de poultry business."

"Bill, jess see, de lady is dar waitin', an' de train gwine right off."

"Tell her de yaller fever's broke out in Houston."

This was kept up for a while, Sam ringing Bill's hands, and once in a while his head would revolve like an owl's on a pivot, to see if the train was still there.

Finally, Bill produced a wallet. Sam danced about as if on coals.

"Look heah, Sam; if I let you run roun' de corner and change dis five dollar bill, is yer gwine to make an assignment and put dis loan among the liabilities?"

Sam hoped he might be dropped right down into Halifax if he did.

"If I entrust all dis wealf into your hands, is I gwine to read in de papers dat yer is splurging about in Paris an' Lundun?"

A blue streak was seen to disappear around the corner. In a short time the blue streak hove in sight again. His head was bare and shiny with prespiration. High above his head he shook a counterfeit five-dollar bill. It is, of course, out of the question to reproduce the language he used, in a great religious daily like the *News*.

Standing in the open car of a rapidly receding train was a colored gentleman—Bill Thompsing—waving his handkerchief, while leaning on his manly shoulder was the apple barrel of Sam's expectations, throwing kisses to him until he looked to be no bigger than the picture of the pedestrian darkey that stood at the head of a runaway notice in a newspaper before the war.

Yesterday afternoon Sam was seen in a hardware store pricing axe-helves, with blood in his eye, and asking for one that was sure not to split.

Moral—"Put money in thy purse, good Roderigo; put money in thy purse."

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### A CLOSE SHAVE.

RASHNESS and carelessness cause many of the "accidents by flood and field." Men, in order to save a few minutes of time, or a walk of a mile, will take risks that would frighten the president of an accident insurance company.

An English gentleman, a civil engineer, once passed through a terrible experience while looking death in the face. The occasion of it was his rash carelessness in jumping from a railway car while in motion. His residence was near the line of the railroad, but the station was a mile or two further on. One night he was coming home in a train made up of one passenger car and forty or fifty freight cars. As he did not wish to walk from the station, he arranged that, on approaching his house, the train should be slowed, and he would get out the best he could. On arriving at the spot the speed of the train was slackened to five or six miles an hour. The gentleman opened the car door and looked out. It was so dark that he could not see the ground. He jumped and pitched upon a heap of ballast-stone. It yielded, and his foot slipped. He fell toward the moving train and tumbled into a hole eight inches deep and almost under the rail. His head just fitted into this hole—a tight fit it was, for a passing wheel tore off his hat—while his body laid away from the rail on the embankment. "Am I safe?" was his first thought. A car passed over without touching him, but rattling the loose rail joints so as to jar him terribly. Clank, clank, clank, and the wheels of the next car shook him again. As he began to feel safe the thought struck him: "What if there should be a loose coupling swinging from a car?" He listened painfully for the jangling of a swaying chain. The cars moved so slowly that it seemed as it the train would never be past. Then an almost irresistible desire to raise his head possessed him. He knew if he did that it would be sliced in two. But clenched teeth and fists, and a prayer of agony for strength to resist the desire, hardly kept his head down in that hole of safety. The desire became intense. It overmastered his reason and the fear of death. He started to raise his head and saw a red glare. It was the "tail-lamp"—the train had passed. His reason told him he was safe, but to his brain car after car continued to roll above him. He raised his head, wondering how he should feel when it was off, and fainted. When he came to himself he staggered home and went to bed. It was long before he left that bed, for brain fever set in.

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### Phil. Sheridan and the Planter.

DURING the pursuit of Lee's army from Petersburg to Appomattox, Gen. Phil Sheriden commanded the advance of Grant's army. At dawn, April 7th, all the rebels were on the north side of the Appomattox, with the Union troops close to their heels "Little Phil," ever at the front, stopped at a farmhouse near Prospect station, dismounted, tied his horse and started up the walk.

Upon the piazza sat a middle-aged typical Southron—with long, straight hair combed behind his ears and covering his neck—a swallow-tailed coat, buff waistcoat, nankeen pantaloons and morocco slippers. A gorgeous shirt frill adorned his bosom, and from the embrasure of his warlike collar he shot defiant glances. He bowed stiffly to the general who nodded carelessly, sat down on a step and pored over his maps. Soon he looked up and said:

"Have you seen any of Lee's troops about here to-day?"

"Sir," said the planter, "as I can truly say that none have been seen by me, I will say so; but, if I had seen any, I should feel it my duty to refuse to reply to your question. I cannot give you any information which might work to the disadvantage of General Lee."

The general, with a little whistle of surprise, puffed away at his cigar, and continued to study his map. In a few minutes he looked up again and asked:

"How far is it to Buffalo River?"

"Sir, I don't know."

"The devil you don't. How long have you lived here?"

"All my life."

"Very well, sir, it's time you did know. Captain, put this man in charge of a guard, and walk him down to Buffalo River to show it to him."

The Virginian of the old school enjoyed the pleasure of tramping through five miles of mud to look at the river with which he was perfectly familiar.

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