

A DEBT CANCELLED.

ONLY a broken violin! There it lay in the mud, a worthless piece of wood, rudely snapped in twain, with a few loose fragments of string, soundless, voiceless; yet beside it, as reverently as though bending over a something human that had died—with a passionate burst of grief, as for some dearly-loved friend, knelt a little lad of some thirteen summers.

Out from the mud, with tender, caressing touch, he lifted up the shattered remnants, his tears falling the while thick and fast, his slight frame convulsed with the sobs which would not be repressed.

He made no outcry, but his face was white with the anguish of despair. He had lost his all—the friend to whom he poured out all his woes; the companion who, until now, never had failed him; his second, better, nobler self.

Not many paces distant on the sidewalk stood the perpetrator of the outrage, a sort of undefined remorse gnawing within his breast. For mere bravado he had wrenched from the hands of the little musician his instrument and broken it across his knee, throwing the pieces in the mud.

Realizing dimly that he had committed a coward's and a bully's act, he took from his pocket a small coin and tossed it toward the boy.

"Take that," he cried, "and stop your whimpering. You've no business to play your music in the public streets. You're a beggar and a nuisance!"

But in an instant, with flashing eyes and head thrown proudly back, the little street Arab had flung the money back.

"You think you can pay me thus!" he replied, in frenzied tones. "It is I who owe you a debt I yet will live to wipe out!"

They stood one instant looking steadily into each other's eyes—one the senior of the other by some three or four years, tall and powerful, clad in broadcloth and fine linen—one a little, shrinking lad; his ragged clothes bespattered with the mud of the streets.

At this moment, an open carriage rolled by, but the little girl seated within it had, with her quick eyes, discovered something amiss.

She had seen the disdainful return of the rejected coin; she had heard the boy's words; she had marked the traces of a passionate grief upon his face, and, with a hasty command to the coachman to stop, she called him to her.

"What are you about to do, Miss Selma?" questioned the lady with her, her governess.

"Nothing naughty, dear Miss Irwin," she replied. "This poor boy—see, his violin is broken. I am so sorry for him!"

The lad slowly had approached the carriage, in obedience to her command; but there was no light in his face, no eagerness in his step.

"How did this happen?" asked the little girl.

Carl looked up. Was this an angel who spoke to him? He had never seen any one half so lovely. Her hair floated about her shoulders in a shower of gold, and resting on it was a white hat, with a long white plume drooping far down behind; her eyes were like two purple pansies; on her cheek was the flush of the sunrise; her lips were red as the carnation, though they quivered with her unspoken sympathy.

The boy held up the broken pieces of his violin.

"It was my all!" he said. "I shall starve now, but I am glad of that, for I did not love it only that it brought me bread. I loved it because it talked to me, and with it I was never lonely. 'But can you not buy another?' 'I have no money, miss. I can never make enough, since this has gone. I had hoped some day to buy something better than this, but now the day will never come!'"

A shade of thoughtfulness crept over the sweet, fair face. In one little gloved hand she held a tiny purse, and within it there bright, glittering gold pieces shone. They were to purchase a coveted doll, her fond father's birthday gift.

She turned hastily to her governess. "Please, Miss Irwin, do you think papa would be displeased if I do not buy my doll? No, no—I know he would not!"

Then, waiting for no reply, she pressed the purse into the boy's hands.

"Go buy your violin," she said. "No, you must not return this as you returned the other money; but some day, when you are a great musician, you shall repay me. Who knows? you may play at my wedding."

And with a little, light laugh, as the carriage started forward, the child, with a wave of her hand, disappeared.

The boy stood motionless, wrapt in a sort of ecstasy. No doubt that a veritable angel had visited him, crossed his mind. Had he been dreaming? No; for within his hand lay the dainty little purse. Opening it almost with reverence, the shining pieces of gold met his gaze; but something else as well—a little piece

of pasteboard, and address. The lad lifted it to his lips.

"It is another debt I owe," he said softly to himself.

Ten years later, and on a bright starlit night in January, the New York Academy of Music was filled from pit to dome. The great violinist, Herr Carl Seiberg was to appear. He was very young, not twenty-three, the critics said, and yet he had reached the zenith of his fame. A great wave of applause greeted him as he came forward to the centre of the stage. He was tall but slight, with large, dreamy eyes, a mouth whose sensitiveness the blonde mustache could not wholly hide. With a soft, caressing motion, he drew the bow across the strings. An almost human voice of exquisite melody seemed to respond. The house held its breath to listen.

In one of the lower proscenium boxes sat a young girl of nineteen. She wore no hat, and in her golden hair there gleamed a diamond star. She was beautiful with a rare loveliness. There was no falser in all the crowded assemblage. Behind her, leaning on the back of her chair, was a young man whose gaze of rapt admiration never withdrew itself—a man of superb height and breadth of form and with eyes and hair dark as the night—eyes which glowed with feeling as they dwelt upon her face, for the hope nearest Fairfax Farley's heart was to win this woman for his wife.

She turned toward him as the music died, with a quick indrawing of her breath.

"Tell me," she whispered, "was it not perfect?"

"I did not hear it," he replied. "I was thinking but of you."

A vivid flush, almost of annoyance, rose to her brow; but that moment the young musician, recalled by the thundering plaudits of the people, reappeared. His gaze now wandered over the house, finally resting on that one exquisite face. He gave a sudden start. Of what, of whom, did she remind him? For a full moment their eyes met; then, with a sudden inspiration, he drew his bow.

What was he playing? It was cadence no man had ever heard before. It seemed to tell an unknown story, if but one could have interpreted it. It began in a storm of grief, of passionate anguish and despair, unreasoning, hopeless; then followed a lull, a rift in the clouds, a sudden gleam of sunshine, a heavy tolling of weary feet, often torn and bleeding, but with that rift of sunshine never quite hidden by the clouds overhead; no matter how dark or dense they gathered; then came a burst of triumph, a song of victory, a transport of passion, and then peace.

The last note seemed to have no ending. Its echoes lingered in a melodious hush, and rang in the peans of applause.

The girl in the box tore the violets from her breast, and threw them at Seiberg's feet. Flowers rained everywhere, but these only he stooped to gather. These he held so tightly that their crushed fragrance was wafted to his senses as he bowed his adieux.

The young musician was the lion of the hour. Fashionable ladies sought him out. Invitations to fetes, and receptions, and dinners, rained upon him. It was at one of these latter that he and Miss Laurence met.

"I have pressed your flowers," he said to her, in a low voice.

"My flowers?" she answered, with a blush.

Then she remembered the violets she so impulsively had thrown him.

"I had almost forgotten," she added. "What was it, Herr Seiberg, that you played? It has haunted me every day since."

"Some day," he replied, "I will tell you. Now you shall know only that you were its inspiration."

Were his words presumption? She could not answer; neither could she know the strange power which ever swayed her in this man's presence.

"You do not teach?" she said to him, one day.

"No," he answered. "But if you will be my pupil, it would be indeed a pleasure."

"And your terms?"

His face flushed.

"I need no gold," he responded. "It is only that some day you should hear my story."

"I see nothing of you, Selma," said Fairfax Farley, during this time. "Do you forget that I have some claims?"

"No, I forget nothing," she said.

But there was sadness rather than happiness in her tone.

"Are you not yet ready to give me your answer, dear?" the man continued.

"Why do you hold me in suspense? Why, darling, may I not have the sweet promise that I crave?"

Did she shudder? If so, it was but momentary, as the sweet young voice made answer.

"True," it said, "you have been very patient; but be so yet a little longer.

Let me but be sure of myself. It is only for this assurance, Fairfax, that I wait."

But underneath Fairfax Farley's courteous calm was a seething maelstrom, a burning jealousy.

Two weeks later, he waited outside Miss Laurence's home until Herr Seiberg stood on the steps, in the moonlight. He had been passing the evening with her. The two had dined at her table. An hour before, Mr. Farley had made his adieux.

"Herr Seiberg!"

It was his voice, addressing the young musician.

"Yes," he responded, his surprise showing in his tone.

"I have waited for you," continued Mr. Farley. "In order to ask of you a favor. It is a great favor, but money need be no object between us. I am willing to pay you any price, however fabulous; and although I know it is quite out of your line, I want very much that you should play one solo at my wedding."

In the moonlight, Herr Seiberg's face showed a strange pallor.

"At your wedding? You are to be married? May I inquire to whom?"

"Miss Laurence is my betrothed. Had you not heard?"

Both in question and answer rang a strained intensity; but the silence that followed had in its dumbness more force than either. Then Herr Seiberg spoke.

"To-morrow night at this hour, you shall have my decision," he said, and rapidly strode away.

Before noon, the day following, Miss Laurence received Herr Seiberg's card. Pencilled on it were these words:

"Pardon my intrusion, and grant me half-hour's interview in which to bid you farewell."

Farewell! There was a certain spasmodic fluttering of her heart as she dimly realized its purport.

What did this sudden departure portend? and why—why did it cause this faint sickness, which stole through every pulse and fibre of her being?

"Show Herr Seiberg up," she said to the servant; then, schooling herself to be calm, sat awaiting him.

On the threshold of the room he paused.

"You asked me once, Miss Laurence," he began, "the story my violin told on the night we met. I answered that some time you should know. Would it weary you to hear it now?"

She bowed assent, and motioned to a chair; but he still stood.

"I must go back many years," he said, "to the time when I was a little lad, foot-sore and friendless. Nay not friendless! I had one friend—a poor little piece of wood, with strings across it; but I forgot that it was wood. In my hours of loneliness and grief, and sadness, I would talk to it, and then by idly drawing my bow across its strings, it would answer me. Ah, no one would have believed it but myself, but it painted to me the future—it told me all that I might be—it whispered courage—it breathed hope. Well, one day, strolling through the streets, touching its chords, asking no alms—I never begged—a boy older than I, taller, stronger, a boy richly dressed, and with a gold chain hanging at his vest, stopped and mocked me. I walked on silently. He followed me, and, in an unprepared moment, snatched my violin, and snapping it across his knee, threw it in the filth and mud of the street."

"I was stunned. The magnitude of my loss overwhelmed me. The surging tide of my despair closed in about my soul. I saw neither earth nor sky—naught save the shattered, voiceless wood. Then he who had wrought the wanton, wicked act, threw me a coin. It roused me from my stupor. I caught and hurled it back. Not thus might he pay the debt I owed to him."

"In that moment a carriage passed. Seated within was a beautiful child—a little girl. She ordered the coachman to stop. She had seen something of what had happened. She inquired the cause of my distress. Then, with a tender pity in her eyes, and a voice like music, she put her purse into my hands and bade me use its contents as I would."

"Some day," she said, "when you are a great musician, you shall repay me. Who knows? you may play at my wedding!"

The girl's head was bowed now. Her bosom rose and fell. Two sparkling tears glimmered on the lashes which swept her cheek. Like a dream it all came back to her; like a vision, she saw the boyish face uplifted to hers through a mist of tears.

Herr Seiberg strode to her side. He put his hand within his coat and drew something forth. Instinctively she knew it to be the little purse.

"It has never left me," he said hoarsely. "I owe all that I am to you. The gulf between us is as wide now as then. I have never hoped to cross it. You are the heiress of a rich man. I, too, have wealth, but that cannot wipe out the past. Let me tell you though what I did. I took your money and bought

with it my violin. The man who sold it to me had a kindly face, and when I paid him for it I asked of him a favor.

"The money with which I purchase this was lent to me," I said. "I would like—oh, so very much!—to keep the same gold. Will you lay it aside for three months, when I may redeem it? I do not know that I can, but I will save every penny I earn, if you will but do this for me."

"The man smiled and consented."

"He marked the gold in my sight, and laid it away. Within the time I had regained possession of it. It is here, Miss Laurence. It seems a trifling sum now to both of us, but remember that it has made me all that I am. Yet its payment does not pay the debt. You said, perhaps I might play at your wedding. Command me, and I obey, even though I thus forewear my second debt to the boy who a second time, in manhood, causes me the deepest misery my life has known."

He paused, and held outstretched toward her the open purse. His face was like marble; his eyes shone with a wonderful fire.

"Of what are you speaking?" she said, gently. "Whom am I to marry?"

"Last night, he told me you were his betrothed."

"He? who?"

"Fairfax Farley!"

"It is not true. He has wished it so, but I did not know my own heart, and asked that he should wait. I know it now. I know that it can never be. Carl, you spoke of the gulf between us. Is it one that love will not bridge?"

The next night, Fairfax Farley and Herr Seiberg met.

"You have decided?" asked the former.

"It is impossible!" Carl replied; "but since you so kindly have asked me to play at your wedding, may I not ask you to dance at mine?"

"Ah, you are betrothed, than?"

"Yes."

"And to whom?"

"Miss Laurence," the young musician answered proudly.

Two little words—a name soon to be merged into another identity; but their moment-utterance had canceled his twofold debt.

Efficacy of Prayer.

A singular story is being told in New Orleans upon Pinchback, the shallow complexioned Senator, to the effect that he dropped \$1,700 playing poker one night in the house of a colored preacher. It seems that a couple of high toned Chicago monks went down there, and induced him to visit the house of the colored divine on a high and holy pretext, and after getting him up stairs proposed a game of penny ante. From penny ante it ran into five cent ante, then ten, then twenty-five, and finally it was agreed that the ceiling should be the limit. And all this time the worthy divine and his wife down stairs had no idea of what was going on. At last there were big hands out all around, and Pinchback had \$4,000 up, there being about \$8,000 in the pot when the colored preacher came to the foot of the stairs and asked the gentlemen to come down and attend family evening prayers. Of course there was no other way, so the pot was divided and the party went down, Pinchback reading a chapter and one of the Chicago monks leading in prayer. By the time services were over Pinchback had mastered his fever and withdrew from the game, as he had picked up the Chicago nigger's hand and saw that he would have lost his \$4,000 only for the efficacy of prayer.

A Man to Depend On.

Give us a man, young or old, high or low, on whom we know we can thoroughly depend—who will stand firm when others fall—the friend faithful and true, the adviser honest and fearless, the adversary just and chivalrous; in such an one there is a fragment of the Rock of Ages.

Our Fault.

There is dew in one flower and not in another, because one opens its cup and takes it in, while the other closes itself and the drop runs off. So God rains goodness and mercy as wide as the dew; and if we lack them, it is because we will not open our hearts to receive them.

"The Domestic Tyrant."

"The average man" quoth Mrs. Partington "is a weak and irritable domestic tyrant," and Mrs. P. is correct. Tyrannical to a fault the average man will enter the blissful Paradise of a happy home, scratch himself in fustian glee, and send the baby into convulsions, and for what? Why, because he has the Itching Pile, and is too mean to buy Swayne's Ointment, which is an infallible cure for the worst cases of that annoying complaint. 38

Lady Beautifiers.

Ladies, you cannot make fair skin and rosy cheeks, and sparkling eyes with all the cosmetics of France, or beautifiers of the world, while in poor health, and nothing will give you such rich blood, good health, strength and beauty as Hop Bitters. A trial is certain proof. 41-42

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ESTATE NOTICE.—Notice is hereby given, that letters of administration on the estate of Rev. S. S. Richmond late of Torone township, Perry County, Pa., deceased, have been granted to the undersigned. P. O. Address—Landsburg, Perry County, Pa. All persons indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment, and those having claims will present them duly authenticated for settlement to ALBERT E. RICHMOND, Administrator May 10, 1881.

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Estate of Samuel Miller, Deceased. LETTERS of Administration on the above estate having been granted to the undersigned, all persons indebted to said estate are requested to make payment, and those having claims to present the same without delay to W. A. LACE DEWITT, Administrator. Sept. 23, 1881. [Harrisburg, Pa.