

FICTION

Timothy Shay Arthur

The Last Penny and Other Stories

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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FICTION

THE
LAST PENNY,
AND
OTHER STORIES.

By
T. S. ARTHUR.

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THE LAST PENNY.

THOMAS CLAIRE, a son of St. Crispin, was a clever sort of a man; though not very well off in the world. He was industrious, but, as his abilities were small, his reward was proportioned thereto. His skill went but little beyond half-soles, heel-taps, and patches. Those who, willing to encourage Thomas, ventured to order from him a new pair of boots or shoes, never repeated the order. That would have been carrying their good wishes for his prosperity rather too far.

As intimated, the income of Thomas Claire was not large. Industrious though he was, the amount earned proved so small that his frugal wife always found it insufficient for an adequate supply of the wants of the family, which consisted of her husband, herself, and three children. It cannot be denied, however, that if Thomas had cared less about his pipe and mug of ale, the supply of bread would have been more liberal. But he had to work hard, and must have some little self-indulgence. At least, so he very unwisely argued. This self-indulgence cost from two to three shillings every week, a sum that would have purchased many comforts for the needy family.

The oldest of Claire's children, a girl ten years of age, had been sickly from her birth. She was a gentle, loving child, the favourite of all in the house, and more especially of her father. Little Lizzy would come up into the garret where Claire worked, and sit with him sometimes for hours, talking in a strain that caused him to wonder; and sometimes, when she did not feel as well as usual, lying upon the floor and fixing upon him her large bright eyes for almost as long a period. Lizzy was never so contented as when she was with her father; and he never worked so cheerfully, as when she was near him.

Gradually, as month after month went by, Lizzy wasted away with some disease, for which the doctor could find no remedy. Her cheeks became paler and paler, her eyes larger and brighter, and such a weakness fell upon her slender limbs that they could with difficulty sustain her weight. She was no longer able to clamber up the steep stairs into the garret, or loft, where her father worked; yet she was there as often as before. Claire had made for her a little bed, raised a short space from the floor, and here she lay, talking to him or looking at him, as of old. He rarely went up or down the garret-stairs without having Lizzy in his arms. Usually her head was lying upon his shoulder.

And thus the time went on, Claire, for all the love he felt for his sick child--for all the regard he entertained for his family--indulging his beer and tobacco as usual, and thus consuming, weekly, a portion of their little income that would have brought to his children many a comfort. No one but himself had any luxuries. Not even for Lizzy's weak appetite were dainties procured. It was as much as the mother could do, out of the weekly pittance she received, to get enough coarse food for the table, and cover the nakedness of her family.

To supply the pipe and mug of Claire, from two to three shillings a week were required. This sum he usually retained out of his earnings, and gave the balance, whether large or small, to his frugal wife. No matter what his income happened to be, the amount necessary to obtain these articles was rigidly deducted, and as certainly expended. Without his beer, Claire really imagined that he would not have strength sufficient to go through with his weekly toil--how his wife managed to get along without even her regular cup of good tea, it had never occurred to him to ask--and not to have had a pipe to smoke in the evening, or after each meal, would have been a deprivation beyond his ability to endure. So, the two or three shillings went regularly in the old way. When the six-pences and pennies congregated in goodly numbers in the shoemaker's pocket, his visits to the ale-house were often repeated, and his extra pipe smoked more frequently. But, as his allowance for the week diminished, and it required some searching in the capacious pockets, where they hid themselves away, to find the straggling coins, Claire found it necessary to put some check upon his appetite. And so it went on, week after week and month after month. The beer was drunk, and the pipe smoked as usual, while the whole family bent under the weight of poverty that was laid upon them.

Weaker and weaker grew little Lizzy. From the coarse food that was daily set before her, her weak stomach turned, and she hardly took sufficient nourishment to keep life in her attenuated frame.

"Poor child!" said the mother one morning, "she cannot live if she doesn't eat. But coarse bread and potatoes and buttermilk go against her weak stomach. Ah me! If we only had a little that the rich waste."

"There is a curse in poverty!" replied Claire, with a bitterness that was unusual to him, as he turned his eyes upon his child, who had pushed away the food that had been placed before her, and was looking at it with an expression of disappointment on her wan face. "A curse in poverty!" he repeated. "Why should my child die for want of nourishing food, while the children of the rich have every luxury?"

In the mind of Claire, there was usually a dead calm. He plodded on, from day to day, eating his potatoes and

buttermilk, or whatever came before him, and working steadily through the hours allotted to labour, his hopes or fears in life rarely exciting him to an expression of discontent. But he loved Lizzy better than any earthly thing, and to see her turn with loathing from her coarse food, the best he was able to procure for her, aroused his sluggish nature into rebellion against his lot. But he saw no remedy.

"Can't we get something a little better for Lizzy?" said he, as he pushed his plate aside, his appetite for once gone before his meal was half eaten.

"Not unless you can earn more," replied the wife. "Cut and carve, and manage as I will, it's as much as I can do to get common food."

Claire pushed himself back from the table, and without saying a word more, went up to his shop in the garret, and sat down to work. There was a troubled and despondent feeling about his heart. He did not light his pipe as usual, for he had smoked up the last of his tobacco on the evening before. But he had a penny left, and with that, as soon as he had finished mending a pair of boots and taken them home, he meant to get a new supply of the fragrant weed. The boots had only half an hour's work on them. But a few stitches had been taken by the cobbler, when he heard the feeble voice of Lizzy calling to him from the bottom of the stairs. That voice never came unregarded to his ears. He laid aside his work, and went down for his patient child, and as he took her light form in his arms, and bore her up into his little workshop, he felt that he pressed against his heart the dearest thing to him in life. And with this feeling, came the bitter certainty that soon she would pass away and be no more seen. Thomas Claire did not often indulge in external manifestations of feeling; but now, as he held Lizzy in his arms, he bent down his face and kissed her cheek tenderly. A light, like a gleam of sunshine, fell suddenly upon the pale countenance of the child, while a faint, but loving smile played about her lips. Her father kissed her again, and then laid her upon the little bed that was always ready for her, and once more resumed his work.

Claire's mind had been awakened from its usual leaden quiet. The wants of his failing child aroused it into disturbed activity. Thought beat, for a while, like a caged bird, against the bars of necessity, and then fluttered back into panting imbecility.

At last the boots were done, and with his thoughts now more occupied with the supply of tobacco he was to obtain than with any thing else, Claire started to take them home. As he walked along he passed a fruit-shop, and the thought of Lizzy came into his mind.

"If we could afford her some of these nice things!" he said to himself. "They would be food and medicine both, to the dear child. But," he added, with a sigh, "we are poor!--we are poor! Such dainties are not for the children of poverty."

He passed along, until he came to the ale-house where he intended to get his pennyworth of tobacco. For the first time a thought of self-denial entered his mind, as he stood by the door, with his hand in his pocket, feeling for his solitary copper.

"This would buy Lizzy an orange," he said to himself. "But then," was quickly added, "I would have no tobacco to-day, nor to-morrow, for I won't be paid for these boots before Saturday, when Barton gets his wages."

Then came a long, hesitating pause. There was before the mind of Claire the image of the faint and feeble child with the refreshing orange to her lips; and there was also the image of himself encheered for two long days by his pipe. But could he for a moment hesitate, if he really loved that sick child? is asked. Yes, he could hesitate, and yet love the little sufferer; for to one of his order of mind and habits of acting and feeling, a self-indulgence like that of the pipe, or a regular draught of beer, becomes so much like second nature, that it is as it were a part of the very life; and to give it up, costs more than a light effort.

The penny was between his fingers, and he took a single step toward the ale-house door; but so vividly came back the image of little Lizzy, that he stopped suddenly. The conflict, even though the spending of a single penny was concerned, now became severe: love for the child plead earnestly, and as earnestly plead the old habit that seemed as if it would take no denial.

It was his last penny that was between the cobbler's fingers. Had there been two pennies in his pocket, all difficulty would have immediately vanished. Having thought of the orange, he would have bought it with one of them, and supplied his pipe with the other. But, as affairs now stood, he must utterly deny himself, or else deny his child.

For minutes the question was debated.

"I will see as I come back," said Claire at last, starting on his errand, and thus, for the time, making a sort of a compromise. As he walked along, the argument still went on in his mind. The more his thoughts acted in this new channel, the more light came into the cobbler's mind, at all times rather dark and dull. Certain discriminations, never before thought of, were made; and certain convictions forced themselves upon him.

"What is a pipe of tobacco to a healthy man, compared with an orange to a sick child!" uttered half-aloud, marked at last the final conclusion of his mind; and as this was said, the penny which was still in his fingers was thrust determinedly into his pocket.

As he returned home, Claire bought the orange, and in the act experienced a new pleasure. By a kind of necessity he had worked on, daily, for his family, upon which was expended nearly all of his earnings; and the whole matter came so much as a thing of course, that it was no subject of conscious thought, and produced no emotion of delight or pain. But, the giving up of his tobacco for the sake of his little Lizzy was an act of self-denial entirely out of the ordinary course, and it brought with it its own sweet reward.

When Claire got back to his home, Lizzy was lying at the bottom of the stairs, waiting for his return. He lifted her, as usual, in his arms, and carried her up to his shop. After placing her upon the rude couch he had prepared for her, he sat down upon his bench, and as he looked upon the white, shrunken face of his dear child, and met the fixed, sad gaze of her large earnest eyes, a more than usual tenderness came over his feelings. Then, without a word, he took the orange from his pocket, and gave it into her hand.

Instantly there came over Lizzie's face a deep flush of surprise and pleasure. A smile trembled around her wan lips, and an unusual light glittered in her eyes. Eagerly she placed the fruit to her mouth and drank its refreshing juice, while every part of her body seemed quivering with a sense of delight.

"Is it good, dear?" at length asked the father, who sat looking on with a new feeling at his heart.

The child did not answer in words; but words could not have expressed her sense of pleasure so eloquently as the smile that lit up and made beautiful every feature of her face.

While the orange was yet at the lips of Lizzy, Mrs. Claire came up into the shop for some purpose.

"An orange!" she exclaimed with surprise. "Where did that come from?"

"Oh, mamma? it is *so* good!" said the child, taking from her lips the portion that yet remained, and looking at it with a happy face.

"Where in the world did that come from, Thomas?" asked the mother.

"I bought it with my last penny," replied Claire. "I thought it would taste good to her."

"But you had no tobacco."

"I'll do without that until to-morrow," replied Claire.

"It was kind in you to deny yourself for Lizzy's sake."

This was said in an approving voice, and added another pleasurable emotion to those he was already feeling. The mother sat down, and, for a few moments, enjoyed the sight of her sick child, as with unabated eagerness she continued to extract the refreshing juice from the fruit. When she went down-stairs, and resumed her household duties, her heart beat more lightly in her bosom than it had beaten for a long time.

Not once through that whole day did Thomas Claire feel the want of his pipe; for the thought of the orange kept his mind in so pleased a state, that a mere sensual desire like that for a whiff of tobacco had no power over him.

Thinking of the orange, of course, brought other thoughts; and before the day closed, Claire had made a calculation of how much his beer and tobacco money would amount to in a year. The sum astonished him. He paid rent for the little house in which he lived, two pounds sterling a year, which he always thought a large sum. But his beer and tobacco cost nearly seven pounds! He went over and over the calculation a dozen times, in doubt of the first estimate, but it always came out the same. Then he began to go over in his mind the many comforts seven pounds per annum would give to his family; and particularly how many little luxuries might be procured for Lizzy, whose delicate appetite turned from the coarse food that was daily set before her.

But to give up the beer and tobacco in toto, when it was thought of seriously, appeared impossible. How could he live without them?

On that evening the customer whose boots he had taken home in the morning, called in, unexpectedly, and paid for them. Claire retained a sixpence of the money and gave the balance to his wife. With this sixpence in his pocket he went out for a mug of beer, and some tobacco to replenish his pipe. He stayed some time--longer than he usually took for such an errand.

When he came back he had three oranges in his pocket; and in his hands were two fresh buns, and a cup of sweet new milk. No beer had passed his lips, and his pipe was yet unsupplied. He had passed through another long conflict

with his old appetites; but love for his child came off, as before, the conqueror.

Lizzy, who drooped about all day, lying down most of her time, never went to sleep early. She was awake, as usual, when her father returned. With scarcely less eagerness than she had eaten the orange in the morning, did she now drink the nourishing milk and eat the sweet buns, while her father sat looking at her, his heart throbbing with inexpressible delight.

From that day the pipe and the mug were thrown aside. It cost a prolonged struggle. But the man conquered the mere animal. And Claire found himself no worse off in health. He could work as many hours, and with as little fatigue; in fact, he found himself brighter in the morning, and ready to go to his work earlier, by which he was able to increase, at least a shilling or two, his weekly income. Added to the comfort of his family, eight or ten pounds a year produced a great change. But the greatest change was in little Lizzy. For a few weeks, every penny saved from the beer and tobacco the father regularly expended for his sick child: and it soon became apparent that it was nourishing food, more than medicine, that Lizzy needed. She revived wonderfully; and no long time passed before she could sit up for hours. Her little tongue, too, became free once more, and many an hour of labour did her voice again beguile. And the blessing of better food came also in time to the other children, and to all.

"So much to come from the right spending of a single penny," Claire said to himself, as he sat and reflected one day. "Who could have believed it!"

And as it was with the poor cobbler, so it will be with all of us. There are little matters of self-denial, which, if we had but the true benevolence, justice, and resolution to practise, would be the beginning of more important acts of a like nature, that, when performed, would bless not only our families, but others, and be returned upon us in a reward of delight incomparably beyond any thing that selfish and sensual indulgences have it in their power to bring.

HOW TO ATTAIN TRUE GREATNESS.

MY voice shall yet be heard in those halls!" said a young man, whom we will call James Abercrombie, to his friend Harvey Nelson, as the two walked slowly, arm in arm, through the beautiful grounds of the Capitol at Washington.

"Your ambition rises," Nelson replied, with a smile. "A seat in our State Legislature was, at one time, your highest aim."

"Yes. But as we ascend the mountain, our prospect becomes enlarged. Why should I limit my hopes to any halfway position, when I have only to resolve that I will reach the highest point? I feel, Harvey, that I have within me the power to do any thing that I choose. And I am resolved that the world shall know me as one of its great men."



A TALK ABOUT THE FUTURE.

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"Some, if they were to hear you speak thus, James, might smile at what they would consider a weak and vain assumption. But I know that you have a mind capable of accomplishing great things; that you have only to use the means, and take an elevated position as the natural result. Still I must say, that I do not like the spirit in which you speak of these things."

"Why not?"

"You seem to desire an elevated station more for the glory of filling it, than for the enlarged sphere of usefulness that it must necessarily open to you."

"I do not think, Harvey," his friend replied, "that I am influenced by the mere glory of greatness to press forward. There is something too unsubstantial in that. Look at the advantages that must result to me if I attain a high place."

"In either case, I cannot fully approve your motive."

"Then, from what motive would you have me act, Harvey? I am sure that I know of none other sufficiently strong to urge me into activity. Both of these have their influence; and, in combination, form the impulse that gives life to my resolutions."

"There is a much higher, and purer, and more powerful motive, James. A motive to which I have just alluded."

"What is that?"

"The end of being useful to our fellow-men."

"You may act from that motive, if you can, Harvey, but I shall not attempt the vain task. It is too high and pure for me."

"Do not say so. We may attain high motives of action, as well as attain, by great intellectual efforts, high positions in the world."

"How so?"

"It is a moral law, that any peculiar tendency or quality of the mind grows stronger by indulgence. The converse of the proposition is, of course, true also. You feel, then, that your motives of action are selfish--that they regard your own elevation and honour as first, and good to your neighbour as only secondary. Now, by opposing instead of indulging this propensity to make all things minister to self, it must grow weaker, as a natural consequence. Is not that clear?"

"Why, yes, I believe it is; or at least, the inference is a logical one, though I must confess that I do not see it as an unquestionable truth."

"That is because your natural feelings are altogether opposed to it."

"Perhaps so--for undoubtedly they are. I cannot see any thing so very desirable in the motive of which you speak, that I should seek to act from it. There is something tame in the idea of striving only to do good to others."

"It really pains me to hear you say so," the friend replied in a serious tone. "But now that we are on this subject, you must pardon me if I attempt to make you see in a rational light the truth that it is a much nobler effort to do good to others, than to seek only our own glory."

"Well, go on."

"You have, doubtless, heard the term 'God-like' used, as indicating a high degree of excellence in some individual, who has stood prominently before the eyes of his fellow-men?"

"Often."

"And to your mind it is no doubt clear, that the nearer we can approach the character of the Divine Being, the higher will be the position that we attain?"

"Certainly."

"And that the purest motives from which we can act, are an approach toward those from which we see Him acting."

"Certainly."

"Now, so far as we can judge of His motives of action, as exhibited in His Word and in His Works, do we see a desire manifested to promote His own glory, or to do good to His creatures, and make them happy?"

"Well, I cannot say, at this moment, for I have not thought upon the subject."

"Suppose, then, we think of it now. It is certainly worth a little serious attention. And first, let us refer to His Word, in which we shall certainly find a transcript of his character. In that, we perceive a constant reference to his nature as being, in one of its principal constituents, *love*. Not love of himself, but love going out in the desire to benefit His creatures. And His wisdom, which infinitely transcends that of man, is ever active in devising means whereby to render those creatures happy. And not only is His love ever burning with the desire to do good to His creatures, and His wisdom ever devising the best means for this end, but His divine love and His divine wisdom unite in divine activity, producing all that is required to give true happiness to all. In all parts of His Word we discover evidences of the strongest character, which go to prove that such is the nature and activity of the Lord. There could have been no seeking of His own glory, when he assumed a material body, and an infirm human principle, in which were direful hereditary evils, that he might redeem man from the corruptions of his own fallen nature, and from the influence and power of hell. Little glory was ascribed to him by the wicked men who persecuted him, and condemned him, and finally put him to death. But he sought not His own glory. In his works, how clearly displayed is His divine benevolence! I need only direct your thoughts to nature. I need only refer you to the fact that the Lord causes the sun to shine upon

the evil and the good, and the rain to fall alike upon the just and the unjust. Even upon those who oppose His laws, and despise and hate his precepts, does He pour down streams of perpetual blessings. How unlike man--selfish, vain man--ever seeking his own glory."

"You draw a strong picture, Harvey," the friend said.

"But is it not a true one?"

"Perhaps so."

"Very well. Now if we are seeking to be truly great, let us imitate Him who made us and all the glorious things by which we are surrounded. He that would be chief among you, said the Lord to his disciples, let him be your servant. Even He washed his disciples' feet."

"Yes, but Harvey, I do not profess to be governed by religious principle. I only account myself a moral man."

"But there cannot be any true morality without religion."

"That is a new doctrine."

"I think not. It seems to me to be as old as the Divine Word of God. To be truly moral is to regard others as well as ourselves in all our actions. And this we can never do apart from the potency and life of a religious principle."

"But what do you mean by a religious principle?"

"I mean a principle of pure love to the Lord, united with an unselfish love to our neighbour, flowing out in a desire to do him good."

"But no man can have these. It is impossible for any one to feel the unselfish love of which you speak."

"Of course it is, naturally--for man is born into hereditary evils. But if he truly desires to rise out of these evils into a higher and better state, the Lord will be active in his efforts--and in just so far as he truly shuns evils as sins against him, looking to him all the while for assistance, will he remove those evils from their central position in his mind, and then the opposite good of those evils will flow in to take their place, (for spiritually, as well as naturally, there can be no vacuum,) and he will be a new man. Then, and only then, can he begin to lead truly a moral life. Before, he may be externally moral from mere external restraints; now, he becomes moral from an internal principle. Do you apprehend the difference?"

"Yes, I believe that I do. But I must confess that I cannot see how I am ever to act from the motives you propose. If I wait for them, I shall stand still and do nothing."

"Still, you can make the effort. Every thing must have a beginning. Only let the germ be planted in your mind, and, like the seed that seems so small and insignificant, it will soon exhibit signs of life, and presently shoot up, and put forth its green leaves, and, if fostered, give a permanent strength that will be superior to the power of every tempest of evil principles that may rage against it."

"Your reasonings and analogies are very beautiful, and no doubt true, but I cannot *feel* their force," James Abercrombie said, with something in his tone and manner so like a distaste for the whole subject, that his friend felt unwilling to press it further upon his attention.

The two young men here introduced had just graduated at one of our first literary institutions, and were about selecting professions. But in doing so, their acknowledged motives were, as may be gathered from what has gone before, very different. The one avowed a determination to be what he called a great man, that he might have the glory of greatness. The other tried to cherish a higher and better motive of action. Abercrombie was not long in deciding upon a profession. His choice was law. And the reason of his choice was, not that he might be useful to his fellow-men, but because in the profession of law he could come in contact with the great mass of the people in a way to make just such an impression upon them as he wished. In the practice of law, too, he could bring out his powers of oratory, and cultivate a habit of public speaking. It would, in fact, be a school in which to prepare himself for a broader sphere of action in the legislative halls of his country; for, at no point below a seat in the national legislature, did his ambition rest.

"You have made your choice, I presume, before this," he said to his friend Harvey, in allusion to this subject.

"Indeed, I have not," was the reply. "And I never felt so much at a loss how to make a decision in my life."

"Well, I should think that you might decide very readily. I found no difficulty."

"Then you have settled that matter?"

"Oh, certainly; the law is to be my sphere of action--or rather, my stepping-stone to a higher place."

"I cannot so easily decide the matter!"

"Why not? If you study law, you will rise, inevitably. And in this profession, there is a much broader field of action for a man of talent, than there is in any other profession."

"Perhaps you are right. But the difficult question with me is--'Can I be as useful in it?'"

"Nonsense, Harvey! Do put away these foolish notions. If you don't, they will be the ruin of you."

"I hope not. But if they do, I shall be ruined in a good cause."

"I am really afraid, Harvey," Abercrombie said in a serious tone, "that you affect these ultra sentiments, or are self-deceived. It is my opinion that no man can act from such motives as you declare to be yours."

"I did not know that I had declared myself governed by such motives. To say that, I know, would be saying too much, for I am painfully conscious of the existence and activity of motives very opposite. But what I mean to say is, that I am so clearly convinced that the motives of which I speak are the true ones, that I will not permit myself to come wholly under the influence of such as are opposite. And that is why I find a difficulty in choosing a profession. If I would permit myself to think only of rising in the world, for the sake of the world's estimation, I should not hesitate long. But I am afraid of confirming what I feel to be evil. And therefore it is that I am resolved to compel myself to choose from purer ends."

"Then you are no longer a free agent."

"Why not?"

"Because, in that kind of compulsion, you cease to act from freedom."

"Is it right, James, for us to compel ourselves to do right when we are inclined to do wrong? Certainly there is more freedom in being able to resist evil, than in being bound by it hand and foot, so as to be its passive slave."

"You are a strange reasoner, Harvey."

"If my conclusions are not rational, controvert them."

"And have to talk for ever?"

"No doubt you would, James, to drive me from positions that are to me as true as that the sun shines in heaven."

"Exactly; and therefore it is useless to argue with you. But, to drop that point of the subject, to what profession do you most incline?"

"To law."

"Then why not choose it?"

"Perhaps I shall. But I wish first to define with myself my own position. I must understand truly upon what ground I stand, or I will not move forward one inch."

"Well, you must define your own position for yourself, for I don't see that I can help you much." And there the subject was dropped.

It was some time before the debate in Harvey's mind was decided. His predilections were all in favour of the law--but in thinking of it, ambition and purely selfish views would arise in his mind, and cause him to hesitate, for he did not wish to act from them. At last he decided to become a law student, with the acknowledgment to himself that he had low and selfish motives in his mind, but with the determination to oppose them and put them away whenever they should arise into activity. Under this settled principle of action, he entered upon the study of the profession he had chosen.

Thus, with two opposite leading motives did the young men commence life. Let us see the result of these motives upon their characters and success after the lapse of ten years. Let us see which is farthest on the road to true greatness. Both, in an ardent and untiring devotion to the duties of their profession, had already risen to a degree of eminence, as lawyers, rarely attained under double the number of years of patient toil. But there was a difference in the estimation in which both were held by those who could discriminate. And this was apparent in the character of the cases referred to them. A doubtful case, involving serious considerations, was almost certain to be placed in the hands of Abercrombie, for his acuteness and tact, and determination to succeed at all hazards, if possible, made him a very desirable advocate under these circumstances. Indeed, he often said that he would rather have a bad cause to plead than a good one, for

there was some "honour" in success where every thing was against the case. On the contrary, in the community where Harvey had settled, but few thought of submitting to him a case that had not equity upon its side; and in such a case, he was never known to fail. He did not seek to bewilder the minds of a jury or of the court by sophistry, or to confuse a witness by paltry tricks; but his course was straightforward and manly, evolving the truth at every step with a clearness that made it apparent to all.

"It's all your fault," said an unsuccessful client to him one day in an angry tone.

"No, sir, it was the fault of your cause. It was a bad one."

"But I should have gained it, if you had mystified that stupid witness, as you could easily enough have done."

"Perhaps I might; but I did not choose to do that."

"It was your duty, sir, as an advocate, to use every possible means to gain the cause of your client."

"Not dishonest means, remember. Bring me a good cause, and I will do you justice. But when you place me in a position where success can only be had in the violation of another's rights, I will always regard justice first. Right and honour have the first claims upon me--my client the next."

"It's the last cause you will ever have of mine, then," replied the angry client.

"And most certainly the last I want, if you have no higher claims than those you presented in the present instance."

About the same time that this incident occurred, an individual, indicted for a large robbery, sent for Lawyer Abercrombie. That individual came to the prisoner's cell, and held a preliminary interview with him.

"And the first thing to be done, if I take charge of your case," said the lawyer, "is for you to make a clean confession to me of every thing. You know that the law protects you in this. It is necessary that I may know exactly the ground upon which we stand, that I may keep the prosecution at fault."

The prisoner, in answer to this, made promptly a full confession of his guilt, and stated where a large portion of the property he had taken was concealed.

"And now," said he, after his confession, "do you think that you can clear me?"

"Oh yes, easily enough, if I have sufficient inducement to devote myself to the case."

"Will five thousand dollars secure your best efforts?"

"Yes."

"Very well. The day after I am cleared, I will place that sum in your hands."

"You shall be cleared," was the positive answer. And he was cleared. Justice was subverted--property to a large value lost--and an accomplished villain turned loose upon the community, by the venal tact and eloquence of a skilful lawyer.

In these two instances we have an exhibition of the characters of the two individuals, ripening for maturity. Both possessing fine talents, both were eminent, both successful,--but the one was a curse, and the other a blessing to society. And all this, because their ends of life were different.

Time passed on, and Abercrombie, as the mere tool of a political party, elected by trick and management, under circumstances humiliating to a man of feeling and principle, became a representative in the State legislature. But he was a representative, and this soothing opiate to his ambition quieted every unpleasant emotion. Conscious, in the state of political feeling, that there was little or no possible chance of maintaining even his present elevation, much less of rising higher, unless he became pliant in the hands of those who had elected him, he suffered all ideas of the general good to recede from his mind, and gave himself up wholly to furthering the schemes and interested views of his own party. By this means, he was enabled to maintain his position. But what a sacrifice for an honourable, high-minded man! A few years in the State legislature, where he was an active member, prepared him for going up higher. He was, accordingly, nominated for Congress, and elected, but by the same means that had accomplished all of his previous elections. And he went there under the mistaken idea that he was becoming a great man, when it was not with any particular reference to his fitness for becoming a representative of one section of the country for the good of the whole that he was sent there, but as a fit tool for the performance of selfish party ends. Thus he became the exponent in Congress of the same principles that he had laid down for his own government, viz. such as were thoroughly selfish and interested.

In the course of time, it so happened that, as eminent lawyers, the two individuals we have introduced were again thrown together as inhabitants of the same city, and became practitioners at the same bar. At first, Abercrombie did not

fear Harvey; but he soon learned that, as an opponent, not even he could gain over him, unless his cause were just. For some years Abercrombie went regularly to Congress, usually elected over the opposing candidate by a large majority--for his party far outnumbered the other. At length the time seemed to have arrived for him to take another step. The senatorial term for the district in which he lived was about to expire, and there was to be an election for a United States senator. For this vacancy he was nominated as a candidate by his party, and as that was the strongest party, he looked confidently for an election. The opposing interest cast about them for some time, and at last fixed upon Harvey, who, after mature deliberation, accepted the nomination.

It is needless here to recapitulate the principles which governed these two individuals; they have already been fully stated. At the time that they became rivals for a high station, each had confirmed in himself the views of life expressed many years before, and was acting them out fully. One was thoroughly selfish--the other strove to regard, in all that he did, the good of others.

A few months before the day of election, a woman dressed in deep mourning came into the office of Mr. Harvey. She stated that she was a widow with a large family--that her husband had been dead about a year, and that the executor of her husband's estate, formerly his partner in business, was about to deprive her of all the property that had been left to her for the maintenance of her family and the education of her children, under the plea that there were, in reality, no assets, after the settlement of the estate.

"Well, madam, what do you wish done?" asked Mr. Harvey, a good deal interested in the woman's case.

"I want justice, sir, and no more. If there are really no assets, then I want nothing. But if there is, as I am confident that there must be a handsome property really due me, then I wish my rights maintained. Will you undertake my case?"

"Certainly I will, madam; and if there is justice on your side, I will see that justice is done."

Accordingly, suit was brought against the executor, who at once employed Abercrombie, with the promise of a large fee, if he gained the cause for him.

By some means, the facts of the case, or at least that such a case was to come up, became known through the medium of the newspapers, and also that the two rival candidates were to be opposed to each other. Much interest was excited, and when the trial came on, the court-room was crowded. The case occupied the attention of the court for three days, during which time Abercrombie made some of the most brilliant speeches that had ever fallen from his lips. He managed his case, too, with a tact, spirit, and sagacity, unusual even for him, as keen a lawyer as he was. To all this, Harvey opposed a steady, clear, and rational mode of presenting the claims of the individual he represented, so that conviction attended him at every step. It was in vain that Abercrombie would tear into tatters the lucid arguments, full of calm and truthful positions, that he presented--he would gather them all up again, and present them in new and still more convincing forms. At every step of the trial, it was plainly evident to all, opponents and friends, that Abercrombie cared solely for success in his cause, and nothing for justice; and as the sympathies of nearly all were in favour of the widow, his manner of conducting the case was exceedingly offensive to nearly every one. On the contrary, in Harvey, all could see a deep and conscientious regard for justice. He never took any undue advantage of his opponent, and resorted to no tricks and feints to blind and confuse him, but steadily presented the justice of the side he argued, in bold and strong relief, against the evident, wicked injustice of the defendant.

At last the trial came to a close, and the whole case was submitted to the jury, who decided that the widow's cause was just. This righteous decision was received by a universal burst of applause. Abercrombie was deeply chagrined at the result, and this feeling was apparent to all--so apparent, that nearly every one, friends and enemies, were indignant. In an electioneering handbill, which came out in two or three days afterward, was this appeal:--

"Why do we send a man to the Senate-chamber of the United States? To legislate from generous and enlarged principles, or to be a narrow, selfish seeker of his own glory? Do we want the generous philanthropist there--the man who loves justice for its own sake--the man of strong natural powers, rendered stronger and clearer by honest principles?--or the narrow-minded timeserver--the man who would sacrifice any thing, even the liberties of his country, for a selfish end--the legal oppressor of the widow and the fatherless? Need these questions be answered from honest, high-souled voters? No! let every man answer for himself, when he goes to assert the rights of a freeman."

This, and similar appeals, added to the general disapprobation already felt, completed the work. Harvey was elected to fill the vacant seat in the Senate for the ensuing six years, by a majority of double the votes polled for Abercrombie.

From that time, the latter took his position as a third-rate man. Indeed, he never afterward reached even to the House of Representatives at Washington, while Harvey still retains his place in the Senate-chamber, one of the most esteemed and valuable members of that distinguished body.

No man, we would remark, in closing this sketch, can ever be a truly great man, who is not a good man. The mere selfishness of ambition defeats its own ends; while the generous impulse to do good to others, gives to every man a power and an influence that must be felt and appreciated.

THE FAIR COURIER.

A STORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

FORT MOTTE, Fort Granby, Fort Watson, the fort at Orangeburg, and every other post in South Carolina, except Charleston and Ninety-Six, had yielded successively to the American arms, under the command of Greene, Sumter, Marion, and Lee; and now General Greene turned all his energies to the reduction of Ninety-Six, giving orders at the same time, for General Sumter to remain in the country south and west of the Congaree, so as to cut off all communication between Lord Rawdon, who was at Charleston awaiting reinforcements from England, and Colonel Cruger, who was in command at Ninety-Six.

Day after day the siege of Ninety-Six went on, the Americans slowly approaching the fort by a series of works constructed under the superintendence of Kosciusko, and Cruger still holding out in expectations of reinforcements from Charleston, although not a single word of intelligence from Lord Rawdon had reached him since the investment of the post which he held with so much bravery and perseverance.

On the 3d of June, the long-expected reinforcement from England reached Lord Rawdon, and on the 7th he started for the relief of Colonel Cruger with a portion of three Irish regiments, and was joined soon after by the South Carolina royalists, swelling his force to two thousand men. But all his efforts to transmit intelligence of his approach to the beleaguered garrison at Ninety-Six proved unavailing. His messengers were intercepted by Sumter and Marion, who held possession of the intermediate region.

On the 11th of June, General Greene received intelligence from General Sumter of the approach of Rawdon. Directing Sumter to keep in front of the enemy, he reinforced him with all his cavalry under Lieutenant-Colonel Washington, and urged him to use every means in his power to delay the advancing British army, until he should be able to complete the investment of the fort at Ninety-Six, and compel it to surrender. Then with renewed diligence he pressed the siege, hoping to obtain a capitulation before Colonel Cruger should receive news of the approaching succour, and thus break up, with the exception of Charleston, the last rallying point of the enemy in South Carolina. But the commander of the fort was ever on the alert to make good his defences and to annoy and retard the besiegers in every possible way; and, though ignorant of the near approach of aid, he would listen to no overtures for a capitulation.

One evening, while affairs retained this aspect, a countryman rode along the American lines, conversing familiarly with the officers and soldiers on duty. No particular notice was taken of this, as, from the beginning of the siege, the friends of our cause were permitted to enter the camp and go wherever their curiosity happened to lead them. The individual here mentioned moved along, seemingly much interested with all he saw and heard, until he arrived at the great road leading directly to the town, in which quarter were only some batteries thrown up for the protection of the guards. Pausing here for a few moments, he glanced cautiously around him, and then, suddenly putting spurs to his horse, he dashed at full speed into the town. Seeing this, the guard and sentinels opened their fire upon him, but he escaped unhurt, holding up a letter as soon as he was out of danger. The garrison, which had observed this movement, understood its meaning, and the gates were instantly thrown open to receive the messenger, who proved to be from Lord Rawdon, and brought the welcome intelligence of his near approach.

Hoping still to reduce the fort before the arrival of Lord Rawdon, General Greene urged on the work of investment, and by every means in his power sought to weaken the garrison, so as to make victory certain when all was ready for the final assault. But before he had accomplished his task, a messenger from Sumter arrived with the unwelcome intelligence that Rawdon had succeeded in passing him and was pushing on rapidly for Ninety-Six. The crisis had now come. Greene must either hazard an assault upon the fort ere his works were in complete readiness, risk a battle with Rawdon, or retire over the Saluda, and thus give confidence and strength to the Tories and royalist army. His first determination was to meet the relieving army under Rawdon, but every thing depending on his not giving the enemy, at this particular crisis of affairs in the South, a victory, and seeing that his force was much inferior to that of the British, he resolved to make an attack upon the fort, and, if not successful in reducing it, to retire with his army toward North Carolina before Rawdon came up.

The 18th of June, 1781, was the day chosen for this assault. But made, as it was, with the besiegers' works incomplete, though the men fought with desperate courage, the fort was successfully defended, and General Greene ordered his troops to retire, after they had suffered the loss of one hundred and eighty-five killed and wounded.

Nothing was now left but retreat. For some twenty-six days the besieging army had been at work before the fort, and in three days more all their arrangements would have been completed and the post have fallen into their hands. It was

therefore deeply mortifying and dispiriting to be forced to retire, just as success was about crowning their efforts. But far-seeing, prudent, and looking more to future results than present triumphs, General Greene, on the 19th, commenced retreating toward the Saluda, which river he passed in safety, and moved forward with all possible despatch for the Enoree. Before his rear-guard had left the south side of this river, the van of Lord Rawdon's army appeared in pursuit. But the British commander hesitated to make an attack upon Greene's cavalry, which was under the command of Lee and Colonel Washington, and was a brave, well-disciplined, and superior troop, and so permitted them to pass the Enoree unmolested. While Lord Rawdon paused at this point, undetermined which course to pursue, General Greene moved on toward the Broad River, where he halted and made his encampment.

Such was the aspect of affairs at the time our story begins--a story of woman's self-devotion and heroism. Near the place where General Greene had halted with his weary and disheartened troops, stood the unpretending residence of a country farmer in moderate circumstances. His name was Geiger. He was a true friend of the American cause, and, but for ill health, that rendered him unable to endure the fatigues of the camp, would have been under arms in defence of his country. The deep interest felt in the cause of liberty by Geiger, made him ever on the alert for information touching the progress of affairs in his State, and the freedom with which he expressed his opinions created him hosts of enemies among the evil-minded tories with whom he was surrounded. Geiger had an only daughter, eighteen years of age, who was imbued with her father's spirit.

"If I were only a man!" she would often say, when intelligence came of British or tory outrages, or when news was brought of some reverse to the American arms. "If I were only a man! that I could fight for my country."

On the third day of General Greene's encampment near the residence of Geiger, a neighbour dropped in.

"What news?" asked the farmer.

"Lord Rawdon has determined to abandon the fort at Ninety-Six."

"Are you certain?"

"Yes. General Greene received the information this morning. Rawdon has despatched intelligence to Colonel Stuart to advance with his regiment from Charleston to Friday's Ferry on the Congaree, where he will join him immediately. He leaves Cruger at Ninety-Six, who is to move, as soon as possible, with his bloody tory recruits and their property, and take a route that will put the Edisto between him and our forces. Moving down the southern bank of this river to Orangeburg, he will thence make a junction with Rawdon at Friday's Ferry."

"Then they will divide their force?" said Geiger eagerly.

"Yes."

"And giving Greene an advantage by which he will not be slow to profit. Cruger will not be a day on the march before our general will make his acquaintance."

"No," replied the neighbour. "If I heard aright, it is General Greene's intention to pursue Rawdon, and strike a more decisive blow."

"Why did he not encounter him at the Saluda, when the opportunity offered?"

"General Sumter was not with him."

"Nor is he now."

"And, I fear, will not join him, as he so much desires."

"For what reason?" inquired Geiger.

"He finds no one willing to become bearer of despatches. The country between this and Sumter's station on the Wateree, is full of the enemies of our cause--blood-thirsty tories, elated by the defeat of our arms at Ninety-Six--who will to a certainty murder any man who undertakes the journey. I would not go on the mission for my weight in gold."

"And can no man be found to risk his life for his country, even on so perilous a service?" said the farmer in a tone of surprise, not unmingled with mortification.

"None. The effort to reach Sumter would be fruitless. The bravest man will hesitate to throw his life away."

"God protects those who devote themselves to the good of their country," said Geiger. "If I could bear the fatigue of the journey, I would not shrink from the service an instant."

"You would commit an act of folly."

"No--of true devotion to my country," replied the farmer warmly. "But," he added in a saddened voice, "what boots it that I am willing for the task. These feeble limbs refuse to bear me on the journey."

Emily Geiger, the daughter, heard all this with feelings of intense interest; and as she had often said before, so she said now, in the silence of her spirit: "Oh that I were a man!" But she was simply a young and tender girl, and her patriotic heart could only throb with noble feelings, while her hands were not able to strike a blow for her country.

"If I were only a man!" murmured the young girl again and again, as she mused on what she had heard, long after the neighbour had departed.

In the mean time, General Greene, who had heard through messengers from Colonel Lee of the proposed abandonment of Ninety-six, and the division of the British and tory forces, was making preparations to retrace his steps, and strike, if possible, a decisive blow against Lord Rawdon. In order to make certain of victory, it was necessary to inform Sumter of his designs, and effect a junction with him before attacking the enemy. But, thus far, no one offered to perform the dangerous service.

On the morning of the day upon which the army was to commence retracing its steps, General Greene sat in his tent lost in deep thought. Since taking command of the southern army, he had been struggling at every disadvantage with a powerful enemy, whose disciplined troops were daily strengthened by citizens of the country, lost to every feeling of true patriotism; and now, having weakened that enemy, he felt eager to strike a blow that would destroy him. But, with the force that he could command, it was yet a doubtful question whether an engagement would result in victory to the American arms. If he could effect a junction with Sumter before Lord Rawdon reached Friday's Ferry on the Congaree, he had great hopes of success. But the great difficulty was to get a messenger to Sumter, who was distant between one and two hundred miles. While the general was pondering these things, an officer entered and said--

"A young country girl is before the tent, and wishes to speak with you."

"Tell her to come in," replied the general.

The officer withdrew, and in a few moments reappeared in company with a young girl, dressed in a closely fitting habit, carrying a small whip in her hand. She curtsied respectfully as she entered.

The general arose as the maiden stepped inside of his tent, and returned her salutation.

"General Greene?" inquired the fair stranger.

The officer bowed.

"I have been told," said the visitor, the colour deepening in her face, "that you are in want of a bearer of despatches to General Sumter."

"I am," replied the general. "But I find no one courageous enough to undertake the perilous mission."

"Send me," said the maiden. And she drew her slight form upward proudly.

"Send you!" exclaimed the general, taken by surprise. "You? Oh no, child! I could not do that. It is a journey from which brave men hold back."

"I am not a brave man. I am only a woman. But I will go."

"Touched by such an unlooked-for incident, General Greene, after pausing for some moments, said--

"Will you go on this journey alone?"

"Give me a fleet horse, and I will bear your message safely."

"Alone?"

"Alone."



GENERAL GREENE AND MISS GEIGER.

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"What is your name?" inquired the officer, after another thoughtful pause.

"Emily Geiger."

"Is your father living?"

"Yes."

"Have you his consent?"

"He knows nothing of my intention. But he loves his country, and, but for ill health, would be now bearing arms against their enemies. His heart is with the good cause, though his arm is powerless. His head must approve the act, though his heart might fail him were I to ask his consent. But it is not for you, general, to hesitate. Heaven has sent you a messenger, and you dare not refuse to accept the proffered service when so much is at stake."

"Noble girl!" said the general, with emotion, "you shall go. And may God speed you and protect you on your journey."

"He will!" murmured the intrepid girl, in a low voice.

"Order a swift, but well-trained and gentle horse to be saddled immediately," said Greene to the officer who had conducted the maiden into his presence.

The officer retired, and Emily seated herself while the general wrote a hasty despatch for Sumter. This, after it was completed, he read over to her twice, in order that, if compelled to destroy it, she might yet deliver the message verbally, and then asked her to repeat to him its contents. She did so accurately. He then gave her minute directions with regard to the journey, with instructions how to act in case she was intercepted by the soldiers of Lord Rawdon, to all of which she listened with deep attention.

"And now, my good girl," said the general, with an emotion that he could not conceal, as he handed her the despatch, "I commit to your care this important message. Every thing depends on its safe delivery. Here is money for your expenses on the journey," and he reached her a purse. But Emily drew back, saying--

"I have money in my pocket. Keep what you have. You will need it, and more, for your country."

At this point, the officer re-entered the tent, and announced that the horse was ready.

"And so am I," said Emily, as she stepped out into the open air. Already a whisper of what was going on in the general's quarters had passed through the camp, and many officers and men had gathered before his tent to see the noble-minded girl as she came forth to start upon her dangerous journey.

There was no sign of fear about the fair young maiden, as she placed her foot in the hand of an officer and sprang upon the saddle. Her face was calm, her eyes slightly elevated, and her lips gently compressed with resolution. General Greene stood near her. He extended his hand as soon as she had firmly seated herself and grasped the reins of the noble animal upon which she was mounted.

"*God speed you on your journey, and may heaven and your country reward you,*" said he, as he held her hand tightly. Then, as if impelled by a sudden emotion, he pressed the fair hand to his lips, and turning away sought the seclusion of his tent, deeply moved by so unexpected and touching an instance of heroism in one who was little more than a child. As he did so, the officer, who had until now held the horse by the bridle, released his grasp, and Emily, touching her rein, spoke to the animal upon which she was mounted. Obeying the word instantly he sprang away, bearing the fair young courier from the camp, and moved rapidly in a south-westerly direction. Officers and men gazed after her, but no wild shout of admiration went up to the skies. On some minds pressed, painfully, thoughts of the peril that lay in the path of the brave girl; others, rebuked by her noble self-devotion, retired to their tents and refrained from communion with their fellows on the subject that engrossed every thought; while others lost all present enthusiasm in their anxiety for the success of the mission.

About five miles from the encampment of General Greene, lived one of the most active and bitter tories in all South Carolina. His name was Loire. He was ever on the alert for information, and had risked much in his efforts to give intelligence to the enemy. Two of his sons were under arms at Ninety-Six, on the British side, and he had himself served against his country at Camden. Since the encampment of General Greene in his neighbourhood, Loire had been daily in communication with spies who were kept hovering in his vicinity, in order to pick up information that might be of importance to the British.

Some four hours after Emily Geiger had started on her journey, one of Loire's spies reached the house of his employer.

"What news?" asked the tory, who saw, by the man's countenance, that he had something of importance to communicate.

"The rebel Greene has found a messenger to carry his despatch to Sumter."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes; and she has been on her journey some four or five hours."

"She?"

"Yes. That girl of Geiger's went to the camp this morning and volunteered for the service."

"The ----!" But we will not stain our pages with a record of the profane and brutal words that fell from the lips of the tory.

"She has the swiftest horse in the camp," said the man, "and unless instant pursuit is given, she will soon be out of our reach."

With a bitter oath, Loire swore that she should never reach the camp of Sumter.

"Take Vulcan," said he in a quick, energetic voice, "and kill him but what you overtake the huzzy, between this and Morgan's Range."

"She has nearly five hours' start," replied the man.

"But you must make two miles to her one."

"Even then she will be most likely ahead of the Range ere I can reach there."

"Very well. In that case you must start Bill Mink after her, with a fresh horse. I will give you a letter, which you will place in his hands should you fail to overtake the girl."

With these instructions, the man started in pursuit. He was mounted on a large, strong horse, who bore his rider as lightly as if he had been a child.

In the mean time, Emily, who had received minute information in regard to her journey, and who was, moreover, no stranger to the way, having been twice to Camden, struck boldly into the dense forest through which she was to pass, and moved along a bridle track at as swift a pace as the animal she rode could bear without too great fatigue. The importance of the work upon which she had entered, and the enthusiasm with which it inspired her, kept her heart above the influence of fear. No event of moment happened to her during the first day of her journey. In passing a small settlement known as Morgan's Range, which she did at about four o'clock in the afternoon, she took the precaution to sweep around it in a wide circle, as some of the most active and evil-minded Tories in the state resided in that neighbourhood. Successful in making this circuit, she resumed the road upon which her course lay, still urging forward her faithful animal, which, though much fatigued by the rapidity of his journey, obeyed the word of his rider, as if he comprehended the importance of the message she bore.

Gradually, now, the day declined, and, as the deep shadows mingled more and more with each other, a feeling of loneliness, not before experienced, came over the mind of Emily, and her eyes were cast about more warily, as if she feared the approach of danger. The house at which she had proposed to spend the night was still ten miles, if not more, in advance, and as the shades of evening began to gather around, the hope of reaching this resting-place was abandoned; for there being no moon, there was danger of her losing her way in the darkness. This conviction was so strong, that Emily turned her horse's head in the direction of the first farmyard that came in view after the sun had fallen below the horizon. As she rode up to the door, she was met by a man, who, accosting her kindly, asked where she was from and how far she was going.

"I hoped to reach Elwood's to-night," replied Emily. "How far away is it?"

"Over ten miles--and the road is bad and lonely," said the man, whose wife had by this time joined him. "You had better get down and stay with us 'till morning."

"If you will give me that privilege," returned the maiden, "I shall feel greatly obliged."

The man promptly offered his hand to assist Emily to dismount, and while he led her tired horse away, his wife invited her to enter the house.

"Have you come far?" inquired the woman, as she untied Emily's bonnet strings, looking very earnestly in her face as she spoke.

Emily knew not whether she were among the friends or the enemies of the American cause, and her answer was, therefore, brief and evasive.

"Your horse looked very tired. You must have ridden him a long distance.

"I rode fast," said Emily. "But still, I have not been able to reach the place for which I started this morning."

"It's hardly safe for a young girl like you to take such a long journey alone, in these troublesome times."

"I'm not afraid. No one will harm me," said Emily, forcing a smile.

"I'm not so certain of that, child. It's only a day or two since Greene passed here in full retreat, and no doubt, there are many straggling vagabonds from his army roaming around, whom it would not be safe for one like you to meet."

As the woman said this, a chill went over the frame of the young girl, for, in the tone of her voice and expression of her face, she read an unfriendliness to the cause that was so dear to her heart. She did not venture a reply.

"Might I ask your name?" said the woman, breaking in upon the anxious thoughts that were beginning to pass through her mind.

Emily reflected hurriedly, before replying, and then answered, "Gieger."

The quick conclusion to which she came was, that, in all probability, the woman did not know any thing about her father as favouring the Whig cause; but, even if she did, a suspicion of the errand upon which she was going was not likely to cross either her own mind or that of her husband.

"Not John Geiger's daughter!" exclaimed the woman.

Emily forced an indifferent smile and replied--

"Yes."

"I've heard of him often enough as a bitter enemy to the royalists. Is it possible you have ridden all the way from home to-day?"

Before Emily replied, the husband of the woman came in.

"Would you think it," said the latter, "this is John's Geiger's daughter, of whom we have so often heard."

"Indeed! Well, if she were the daughter of my bitterest enemy, she should have food and shelter to-night. No wonder your horse is tired," he added, addressing Emily, "if you have ridden from home to-day. And, no doubt, you are yourself hungry as well as tired; so wife, if it is all ready, suppose we have supper."

The movement to the supper-table gave Emily time for reflection and self-possession. No more pointed questions were asked her during the meal; and after it was completed, she said to the woman that she felt much fatigued, and, if she would permit her to do so, would retire for the night.

The young girl's reflections were by no means pleasant when alone. She thought seriously of the position in which she was placed. Her father was known as an active whig; and she was in the house of a tory, who might suspect her errand and prevent its consummation. After retiring to bed, she mused for a long time as to the course to be taken, in case efforts were made to detain her, when, overweary nature, claiming its due repose, locked all her senses in sleep.

Nearly two hours after Emily had gone to her chamber, and just as the man and woman who had given her a shelter for the night, were about retiring, the sound of a horse's feet were heard rapidly approaching the house. On going to the door, a young man rode up and called out in a familiar way--

"Hallo, Preston! Have you seen anything of a stray young girl in these parts?"

"Bill Mink!" returned the farmer. "What in the world brings you here at this time of night?"

"On a fool's errand, it may be. I received a letter from Loire, about an hour ago, stating that Geiger's daughter had volunteered to carry important despatches to General Sumter; that she had been on the journey some hours; and that I must overhaul her at the risk of every thing."

"It isn't possible!" said the wife of the man called Preston.

"It is, though; and it strikes me that she must be a confounded clever girl."

"It strikes me so, too," returned Preston. "But I rather think your errand will be that of a fool, if you go any farther tonight."

"Have you seen any thing of the jade?" asked Mink in a decided tone.

"Well, perhaps I have," returned Preston, lowering his voice.

"Aha!" ejaculated Mink, throwing himself from his horse. "So I have got on the right track. She is here?"

"I did not say so."

"No matter. It is all the same," and, hitching his horse to the fence, the young man entered the house with the familiarity of an old acquaintance.

The sound of the horse's feet, as Mink came dashing up to the house, awakened Emily. The room she occupied being on the ground-floor, and the window raised to admit the cool air, she heard every word that passed. It may well be supposed that her heart sank in her bosom. For a long time after the new-comer entered, she heard the murmur of voices. Then some one went out, and the horse was led away to the stable. It was clear that the individual in search of her had concluded to pass the night there, and secure her in the morning.

The intrepid girl now bent all her thoughts on the possibility of making an escape. An hour she lay, with her heart almost fluttering in her bosom, listening intently to every sound that was made by those who were around her. At length all became still. Preston and his wife, as well as the new-comer, had retired to rest, and the heavy slumber into which both the men had fallen was made soon apparent by their heavy breathing.

Noiselessly leaving her bed, Emily put on her clothes in haste, and pushed aside the curtain that had been drawn before the window. Through the distant treetops she saw the newly-risen moon shining feebly. As she stood, leaning out of the window, listening eagerly, and debating the question whether she should venture forth in the silent midnight, a large house-dog, who was on the watch while his master slept, came up, and laying his great head upon the window-sill, looked into her face. Emily patted him, and the dog wagged his tail, seeming much pleased with the notice.

No longer hesitating, the girl sprang lightly from the window, and, accompanied by the dog, moved noiselessly in the direction of the stable. Here she was for some time at a loss to determine which of the half-dozen horses it contained had borne her thus far on her journey; and it was equally hard to find, in the dark, the bridle and saddle for which she sought. But all these difficulties were at length surmounted, and she led forth the obedient animal. Making as wide a

circuit from the house as possible, Emily succeeded in gaining the road without awakening any one. Up to this time, the dog had kept closely by her side; but, when she mounted the horse and moved away, he stood looking at her until she passed out of sight, and then returned to his post at the farmhouse.



ESCAPE FROM THE HOUSE OF PRESTON, THE TORY. Page 88.

The danger she had left behind made Emily almost insensible to the loneliness of her situation; and the joy she felt at her escape scarcely left room for fear in her heart. Day had hardly begun to break, when she reached the house of an old friend of her father's, where she had intended to pass the night. To him she confided the nature of her journey, and told of the narrow escape she had made. A hasty meal was provided for her, and, ere the sun passed above the horizon, mounted on a strong and fresh horse, she was sweeping away on her journey. A letter from this friend to a staunch whig, residing twenty miles distant, procured her another horse.

More than two-thirds of the distance she had to go was safely passed over ere the sun went down again, and she was riding along, with some doubt as to where she would rest for the night, when three men, dressed in the British uniform, came suddenly in view, directly ahead of her. To turn and go back would be of no avail. So she rode on, endeavouring to keep a brave heart. On coming up to her, the soldiers reined up their horses, and addressed her with rude familiarity. She made no reply, but endeavoured to pass on, when one of them laid hold of her bridle. Escape being hopeless, Emily answered the questions asked of her in such a way as she deemed prudent. Not satisfied with the account she gave of herself, they told her that Lord Rawdon was encamped about a mile distant, and that she must go before him, as it was plain she was a rebel, and most probably a spy.

On being brought into the presence of the British officer, Emily was interrogated closely as to where she had come from, whither she was going, and the nature of her errand. She would not utter a direct falsehood, and her answers, being evasive, only created stronger suspicions against her in the mind of Lord Rawdon.

"We'll find a way to the truth!" he at length exclaimed impatiently, after trying in vain to get some satisfactory statement from the firm-hearted girl, who did not once lose her presence of mind during the trying interview. "Take her over to my quarters at the farm-house, and see that she don't escape you."

The officer to whom this command was given removed Emily, under a guard, to a house near at hand, and locked her in one of the rooms. The moment she was alone, she took from her pocket a pair of scissors, and hurriedly ripping open a part of her dress, took therefrom a small piece of paper, folded and sealed. This was the despatch she was bearing to

General Sumter. To crumple it in her hand and throw it from the window was her first impulse; but her ear caught the sound of a sentinel's tread, and that idea was abandoned. Hurriedly glancing around in the dim twilight, she sought in vain for some mode of hiding the despatch, which, if found upon her, betrayed every thing. That her person would be searched, she had good reason to believe; and, in all probability, every part of the room would be searched also. To hesitate long would be to make discovery sure. Every moment she expected some one to enter. While she stood irresolute, a thought glanced through her mind, and acting upon it instantly, she tore off a part of the despatch, and thrusting it into her mouth, chewed and swallowed it. Another and another piece disappeared in the same way; but, ere the whole was destroyed, the door opened, and a woman entered. Turning her back quickly, Emily crowded all that remained of the paper in her mouth, and covering her face tightly with her hands, held them there, as if weeping, until the last particle of the tell-tale despatch had disappeared. Then turning to the woman who had addressed her repeatedly, she said in a calm voice--

"By what authority am I detained and shut up a prisoner in this room?"

"By the authority of Lord Rawdon," replied the woman in a severe tone.

"He might find work more befitting the position of his noble lordship, I should think," returned Emily, with ill-concealed contempt, "than making prisoners of young girls, who, while travelling the highway, happen to be so unfortunate as to fall in with his scouts."

"You'd better keep your saucy tongue still, or it may get its owner into a worse trouble," replied the woman promptly. "You are suspected of being the bearer of a message from the rebel General Greene, and my business is to find the despatch, if any exist upon your person."

"You must think the general poorly off for men," replied Emily.

"No matter what we think, Miss Pert. You are suspected, as I said; and, I should infer from your manner, not without good cause. Are you willing that I should search your person for evidence to confirm our suspicion?"

"Certainly; though I should be better pleased to see one of my sex engaged in a more honourable employment."

"Be silent," exclaimed the woman angrily, as she stamped her foot upon the floor. She then commenced searching the young girl's person, during which operation Emily could not resist the temptation she felt to let a cutting word fall now and then from her ready tongue; which was hardly prudent for one in her situation.

The search, of course, elicited nothing that could fix upon her the suspicion of being a messenger from the rebel army.

"Are you satisfied?" inquired Emily, as she re-arranged her dress after the ordeal had been passed. She spoke with the contempt she felt. The woman made no reply; but went out in silence, taking with her the light she had brought into the room, and leaving Emily alone and in darkness. For nearly half an hour, the latter sat awaiting her return; but during that period no one approached her room, nor was there any movement about the house that she could interpret as having a reference to herself. At last the heavy tread of a man was heard ascending the stairs; a key was applied to the door of her room, and a soldier appeared. Just behind him stood a female with a light in her hand.

"Lord Rawdon wishes to see you," said the soldier.

Emily followed him in silence. In a large room below, seated at the table with several officers, was Lord Rawdon. Emily was brought before him. After asking her a variety of questions, all of which the wary girl managed to answer so as not to violate the truth, and yet allay suspicion, he said to her--"As the night has fallen, you will not, of course, thinking of proceeding on your journey?"

Emily reflected for some time before answering. She then said--

"If your lordship do not object, I would like to go back a short distance. I have friends living on the road, not far from your camp."

"How far?" inquired Lord Rawdon.

"About six miles from here."

"Very well, you shall go back; and I will send an escort for your protection."

Emily had made up her mind to return a few miles on the way she had come, and then, taking a wide sweep around the camp, protected from observation by the darkness, resume her journey, and endeavour to reach the place where she expected to find General Sumter by the middle of the next day. She had gained fresh courage with every new difficulty that presented itself, and now she resolved to accomplish her errand at all hazard. What she most dreaded was the pursuit of the man Mink, from whom she had escaped, and who, she doubted not, was now at no great distance from

the camp. To decline the escort, she felt, might renew suspicion, while it would not prevent Lord Rawdon from sending men to accompany her. So she thanked him for the offer, and asked to be permitted to go without further delay. This was granted, and in an hour afterward Emily found herself safely in the house of a friend of her father and the good cause of the country. She had passed this house late in the afternoon, but was so eager to go forward and gain a certain point in her journey that night, that she did not stop. Fortunately, her escort had left her before she met any of the family, or the surprise expressed on her appearance might have created some new doubts in the mind of the sergeant that accompanied the guard.

About half an hour after her arrival, and while she was urging the necessity of departing immediately and endeavouring to pass the British army, a member of the family came home, and stated that he had a few moments before passed Mink on the road, riding at full speed toward Rawdon's encampment.

"Then I must go instantly!" said the courageous maiden, starting to her feet. "If I remain here, all hope of reaching General Sumter with General Greene's message is at an end; for in less than an hour an order will come back for my re-arrest, and I will be detained in the British camp. Let me go, and I will trust to Heaven and my good cause for safety."

To retain the brave girl, under all the circumstances, was to incur too great a responsibility. After a hurried consultation, it was decided to let her proceed under cover of the darkness, but not alone. A fresh horse was provided, and soon after the news that Mink the tory had passed on toward the camp of Lord Rawdon was received, Emily, accompanied by a trusty guide and protector, was galloping swiftly in a direction opposite to that in which lay the British camp. A few miles brought her to a road that struck off toward the point on the Wateree which she was desirous to reach, in a more southerly direction, and which would take her at a wide angle from the point she most wished to avoid. Of this road she had not herself known; but her guide, being familiar with the country, was able to conduct her by the shorter and safer route.

All night the girl and her companion rode on, at a pace as rapid as the nature of the road and the darkness rendered safe, and at daylight they were far away from the neighbourhood of the enemy's camp. As the sun came up from the east, the guide of Emily, according to instructions, after minutely describing to her the course she was to take, left her to pursue the remainder of her journey alone. Without stopping to refresh either herself or her tired horse, the young heroine pressed forward, though the heat grew more and more intense every hour, as the sun swept up toward the zenith. Faint, weary, and almost sick with fatigue, hunger, and excitement, she was urging on the jaded animal she rode, when, about three o'clock in the afternoon, in emerging from a dense wood, she came suddenly on a file of soldiers whose uniform she knew too well to leave a doubt of their being friends.

"Where will I find General Sumter?" was her first, eager inquiry.

"He is encamped a mile from here."

"Take me to him quickly," she said. "I have a message from General Greene!"

The excitement by which Emily had been sustained in her long and perilous journey now subsided, and ere she reached the presence of the American general, she was so weak that she had to be supported on the horse she rode. When brought into the presence of Sumter, she rallied, and, sustained by a newly-awakening enthusiasm, delivered her verbal message to the astonished officer, who, acting in accordance with the intelligence received, was on the march within an hour, to reach the point of junction with General Greene, which that commander had indicated in his despatch.

Two weeks elapsed before Emily got safely back to her father, who was informed an hour or two after her departure of what she had done. Of his anxiety during her absence we need not speak; nor of the love and pride that almost stifled him as he clasped her to his heart on her return.

Of the subsequent history of Emily Geiger we know little or nothing. She was married to a South Carolina planter, some years after the British troops were expelled from the country she loved with so heroic an affection, and more than a quarter of a century has elapsed since she went down in peace to the grave. Doubtless, her memory is green in the hearts of her descendants, if any survive; and green will it be, for ages, we trust, in the hearts of all who know what it is to feel the emotions of genuine patriotism.

THE APRIL FOOL.

NOTHING is so much enjoyed, by some men, as a practical joke; and the greater the annoyance they can occasion, the greater their delight. Of this class was Mr. Thomas Bunting, who resided in a village a few miles out of New York. Bunting kept a store for the sale of almost every article known in domestic and agricultural life, from a number ten needle up to a hoe-handle; and from a mintstick up to a bag of coffee. Consequently, he was pretty well acquainted with all the town's people, who were, likewise, pretty well acquainted with him.

As Bunting was constantly playing off his pranks upon one and another, he only kept himself free from enemies by his good temper and ability to soothe the parties he sometimes irritated beyond the point of endurance.

The First of April was never permitted to come and go without being well improved by the joke-loving Thomas. If a customer sent for a pint of brandy on that day, he would be very apt to get four gills of vinegar; or, if for a pound of sugar, half a pound of New Orleans mixed with an equal weight of silver sand. That was a smart child who could come into his store on the occasion, and leave it without being the victim of some trick. So, from morning till night of the First day of April, the face of Mr. Thomas Bunting was one broad grin. Full of invention as to the ways and means of playing off tricks upon others, our merry friend was wide awake to any attempt at retaliation; and it generally happened that most of those who sought to catch him, got the laugh turned upon themselves.

Two years ago, as the First of April approached, Bunting began to think of the sport awaiting him, and to cast his eyes over the town to see who was the most fitting subject for a good jest.

"I must make a fool of somebody," said he to himself; "a first-rate fool. I am tired of mere child's play in this business. Who shall it be? There's Doctor Grimes. Suppose I send him to see the young widow Gray? He'd like to make her a visit exceedingly, I know. But the widow knows me of old, and will be sure to suspect my agency. I guess that won't do. Grimes is a good subject; and I've got a sort of spite against him. I must use him, somehow. The widow Gray would be first-rate; but I'm a little afraid to bring her in. The doctor's as poor as Job's turkey, and would be off to visit her on the run. Let me see? What shall I do? I've got it! I'll send him to York on a fool's errand!"

And Bunting snapped his finger and thumb in childish delight.

Doctor Grimes, to whom our joker referred, had been in the village only about a year, and, in that time, had succeeded in making but a small practice. Not that he was wanting in ability; but he lacked address. In person, he was rather awkward; and, in manners, far from prepossessing. Moreover, he was poor, and not able, in consequence, to make a very good appearance.

We would not like to say that, in selecting Doctor Grimes as the subject of his best joke for the First of April, Bunting acted on the principle of a certain worthy, who said of another--

"Kick him; he has no friends!"

But we rather incline to the opinion that some such feeling was in the heart of the joker.

The First of April came. Doctor Grimes, after eating his breakfast, sat down in his office to await expected morning calls for consultation, or to request his attendance on some suffering invalid. But no such calls were made. The doctor sighed, under the pressure of disappointment, as he glanced at the timepiece on the mantel, the hands of which pointed to the figure ten.

"A poor prospect here," he murmured despondingly. "Ah, if there were none in the world to care for but myself, I would be content on bread and water while making my way into the confidence of the people. But others are suffering while I wait for practice. What hinders my progress? I understand my profession. In not a single instance yet have I failed to give relief, when called to the bed of sickness. Ah me! I feel wretched."

Just then, the letter-carrier of the village came in and handed him two letters. The first one he opened was from a dearly loved, widowed sister, who wrote to know if he could possibly help her in her poverty and distress.

"I would not trouble you, my dear, kind brother," she wrote, "knowing as I do how poor your own prospects are, and how patiently you are trying to wait for practice, did not want press on me and my babes so closely. If you can spare me a little--ever so little--brother, it will come as a blessing; for my extremity is great. Forgive me for thus troubling you. Necessity often prompts to acts, from the thought of which, in brighter moments, we turn with a feeling of pain."

For many minutes after reading this letter, Doctor Grimes sat with his eyes upon the floor.

"My poor Mary!" he said at length, "how much you have suffered; and yet more drops of bitterness are given to your cup! Oh that it was in my power to relieve you! But my hands are stricken down with paralysis. What can I do? Thus far, I have gone in debt instead of clearing my expenses."

He took out his pocket-book and searched it over.

"Nothing--nothing," he murmured as he refolded it. "Ah, what curse is there like the curse of poverty?"

He then referred to the other letter, the receipt of which he had almost forgotten. Breaking the seal, he read, with surprise, its contents, which were as follows:--

"To DOCTOR GRIMES.--Dear Sir: Please call, as early as possible, at Messrs. L---- & P----'s, No. -- Wall Street, New York; where you will hear of something to your advantage."

"What can this mean?" exclaimed the doctor, as he hurriedly perused the letter again. "Can it be possible that a relative of my father, in England, has died, and left us property? Yes; it must be so. Several members of his family there are in good circumstances. Oh, if it should be thus, how timely has relief come! For your sake, my dear sister, more than for my own, will I be thankful! But how am I to go to New York? I have not a dollar in my pocket, and will receive nothing for a week or two."

The only resource was in borrowing; and to this the doctor resorted with considerable reluctance. From a gentleman who had always shown an interest in him, he obtained five dollars. Within an hour after the receipt of the letter, he was on his way to the city. The more he pondered the matter, the more likely did it seem to him that his first conclusion was the true one. There was an uncle of his father's, a miser, reputed to be very rich, from whom, some years before, the family had received letters; and it seemed not at all improbable that his death had occurred, and that he and his sister had been remembered in the will. This idea so fully possessed his mind by the time he arrived in the city, that he was already beginning to make, in imagination, sundry dispositions of the property soon to come into his hands.

"Can I see one of the gentlemen belonging to the firm?" asked the doctor, on entering the store of Messrs. L---- & P----.

"Here is Mr. L----," said the individual he had addressed, referring him to a middle-aged, thoughtful-looking man, with something prepossessing in his face.

The doctor bowed to Mr. L----, and then said--

"My name is Dr. Grimes."

Mr. L---- bowed in return, remarking, as he did so--

"Will you walk in?"

The doctor was rather disappointed at the manner of his reception, and experienced a slight depression of spirits as he followed the merchant back into one of the counting-rooms attached to the store.

"Will you take a chair, sir?" said the merchant.

Both the gentlemen sat down. About L---- there was an air of expectancy, which the doctor did not fail to remark.

"My name is Doctor Grimes," said he, repeating his first introduction.

"I am happy to see you, doctor," returned L----, bowing again.

"I received a letter from your house, this morning," said the victim, for such he really was, "desiring me to call, as you had some communication to make that would be to my advantage."

"There's some mistake," replied the merchant. "No letter of the kind has emanated from us."

"Are you certain?" asked the disappointed man, in a voice greatly changed; and he drew forth the letter he had received.

L---- looked at the communication, and shook his head.

"There is no truth in this, sir. I regret to say that you have, most probably, been made the victim of an idle and reprehensible jest. To-day, you are aware, is the First of April."

"Can it be possible!" exclaimed the doctor, clasping his hands together, while his face became pale and overcast with

disappointment. "Who could have been so unkind, so cruel!"

"And is the disappointment very great?" said the merchant, touched with the manner of his visitor, which showed more pain than mortification at the cheat practised upon him.

With an effort at self-command, Doctor Grimes regained, to some extent, his lost composure, and rising, remarked, as he partly turned himself away--

"Forgive this intrusion, sir. I ought to have been more on my guard."

But an interest having been awakened in the mind of Mr. L---, he would not suffer his visitor to retire until he held some conversation with him. In this conversation he learned, through delicately asked questions, even more of his real condition in life than the latter meant to communicate; and he still further learned that the mother of Doctor Grimes had been one of his early friends.

"Will you be willing to take the place of Resident Physician at the ---- Hospital?" finally asked Mr. L.

"To one like me," replied Dr. Grimes, "that place would be exceedingly desirable. But I do not suppose I could get it."

"Why not?"

"I am a stranger here."

"Can you bring testimonials as to professional ability?" asked Mr. L---.

"I can. Testimonials of the very highest character."

"Bring them to me, doctor, at the earliest possible moment. I do not, in the least, doubt that my influence will secure you the place. I believe you have no family?"

"None."

"That may be an objection. A furnished dwelling is provided for the physician; and, I believe, one with a family is preferred."

"I have a widowed sister, who would be glad to join me; and whom I would be glad to place in so comfortable a position."

"That will do just as well, doctor. Bring over your testimonials as soon as possible. Not so much of an April fool, after all, I begin to think. Unless I am very greatly mistaken, you *have* heard something to your advantage."

All came out to the satisfaction of both Doctor Grimes and the kind-hearted Mr. L---. In less than a month, the former was in comfortable quarters at ---- Hospital, and in the receipt of twelve hundred dollars per annum. This was exclusive of rent for his sister's family--now his own--and table expenses. Moreover, for certain duties required of her in the hospital, his sister received three hundred dollars additional.

So it turned out that Dr. Grimes, so far from being made an April fool, was benefited by the wonderfully "smart" trick of Mr. Bunting. But of the particular result of his extra work, the village-jester remained ignorant. Being on the lookout, he was "tickled to death" when he saw the doctor start off post haste for New York; and he looked out for his return, anticipating rare pleasure at seeing his "face as long as his arm." But this particular pleasure was not obtained, for he didn't see the doctor afterward.

"What's become of Dr. Grimes?" he asked of one and another, after a few days had passed, and he did not see that individual on the street as before.

But none of whom he made inquiry happened to know any thing of the doctor's movements. It was plain to Bunting that, he had driven the said doctor out of the village; and this circumstance quite flattered his vanity, and made him feel of more consequence than before. In a little while, he told his secret to one and another, and it was pretty generally believed that Doctor Grimes had gone away under a sense of mortification at the storekeeper's practical joke.

"Look out for next year," said one and another. "If Doctor Grimes isn't even with you then, it'll be a wonder."

"It will take a brighter genius than he is to fool me," Bunting would usually reply to these words of caution.

The First of April came round again. Thomas Bunting was wide awake. He expected to hear from the doctor, who, he was certain, would never forgive him. Sure enough, with the day, came a letter from New York.

"You don't fool me!" said Bunting, as he glanced at the postmark. He had heard that the doctor was in, or somewhere near, the city.

"Ha! ha!" he laughed, as he read--

"If Mr. Thomas Bunting will call on Messrs. Wilde & Lyon, Pearl Street, New York, he may hear of something to his advantage."

"Ha! ha! That's capital! The doctor is a wag. Ha! ha!"

Of course, Bunting was too wide awake for this trap. Catch him trudging to New York on a fool's errand!

"Does he think I haven't cut my eye-teeth?" he said to himself exultingly, as he read over the letter. "Doctor Grimes don't know this child--he don't."

And yet, the idea that something might be lost by not heeding the letter, came stealing in upon him, and checking in a small degree the delight he felt at being too smart for the doctor. But this thought was instantly pushed aside. Of course, Bunting was not so "green," to use one of his favourite words, as to go on a fool's errand to New York.

Five or six months afterward, Bunting, while in the city on business, happened to meet Doctor Grimes.

"How are you, doctor?" said he, grasping the hand of the physician, and smiling with one of the smiles peculiar to his face when he felt that he had played off a capital joke on somebody.

"I'm well, Mr. Bunting. And how are you?" replied the doctor.

"First-rate--first-rate!" and Bunting rubbed his hands. Then he added, with almost irrepressible glee--

"You wasn't sharp enough, last April, doctor."

"Why so?" inquired Doctor Grimes.

"You didn't succeed in getting me to the city on a fool's errand."

"I don't understand you, Mr. Bunting," said the doctor seriously.

"Wilde & Lyon, Pearl Street--something to my advantage. Ha?"

The doctor looked puzzled.

"You needn't play the innocent, doctor. Its no use. I sent you on a fool's errand to New York; and it was but natural that you should seek to pay me back in my own coin. But I was too wide awake for you entirely. It takes a sharp man to catch me."

"You're certainly too wide awake for me now," said Doctor Grimes. "Will you please be serious and explain yourself."

"Last April a year, you received a letter from New York, to the effect that if you would call at a certain place in Wall Street, you would hear something to your advantage?"

"I did," replied the doctor.

"Well."

"I called, accordingly, and received information which has proved greatly to my advantage."

"What?" Bunting looked surprised.

"The gentleman upon whom I called was a leading director in ---- Hospital, and in search of a Resident Physician for that establishment. I now fill that post."

"Is it possible?" Bunting could not conceal his surprise, in which something like disappointment was blended. "And you did not write a similar letter to me last April?" he added.

"I am above such trifling," replied the doctor, in a tone that marked his real feelings on that subject. "A man who could thus wantonly injure and insult another for mere sport, must have something bad about him. I should not like to trust such a one."

"Good morning, doctor," said Bunting. The two gentlemen bowed formally and parted.

If the doctor did not send the letter, from whom could it have come? This was the question that Bunting asked himself immediately. But no satisfactory answer came. He was puzzled and uncomfortable. Moreover, the result of the doctor's errand to New York--which had proved any thing but a fool's errand--was something that he could not understand.

"I wonder if I hadn't better call on Wilde & Lyon?" said he to himself, at length. "Perhaps the letter was no trick, after all."

Bunting held a long argument, mentally, on the subject, in which all the pros and cons were fully discussed. Finally, he decided to call at the place referred to in his letter, and did so immediately on reaching this decision. Still, fearing that the letter might have been a hoax, he made some few purchases of articles for his store, and then gave his name.

"Thomas Bunting!" said the person with whom he was dealing. "Do you reside in the city?"

Bunting mentioned his place of residence.

"Did you never receive a letter from this house, desiring to see you?"

"I did," replied Bunting; "but as it was dated on the first of April, I took it for the jest of some merry friend."

"Very far from it, I can assure you," answered the man. "An old gentleman arrived here from England about that time, who said that a brother and sister had come to this country many years ago, and that he was in search of them or their children. His name was Bunting. At his request, we made several advertisements for his relatives. Some one mentioned that a gentleman named Thomas Bunting resided in the town where you live; and we immediately dropped him a note. But, as no answer came, it was presumed the information was incorrect."

"Where is he now?" asked Bunting.

"He is dead."

"What! Dead?"

"Yes. A letter came, some weeks after we wrote to you, from St. Louis, which proved to be from his sister, and to that place he immediately proceeded. Soon after arriving there, he died. He left, in money, about ten thousand dollars, all of which passed, by a will executed before he left this city--for in his mind there was a presentiment of death--to his new-found relative."

"He was my uncle!" said Bunting.

"Then, by not attending to our letter, you are the loser of at least one-half of the property he left."

Bunting went home in a very sober mood of mind. His aunt and himself were not on good terms. In fact, she was a widow and poor, and he had not treated her with the kindness she had a right to expect. There was no likelihood, therefore, of her making him a partner in her good fortune.

Bunting was the real April Fool, after all, sharp-witted and wide awake as he had thought himself. His chagrin and disappointment were great; so great, that it took all the spirit out of him for a long time; and it is not presumed that he will attempt an "April Fool" trick in the present year, of even the smallest pretensions.

A WAY TO BE HAPPY.

I have fire-proof perennial enjoyments, called employments.

RICHTER.

ALWAYS busy and always singing at your work; you are the happiest man I know." This was said by the customer of an industrious hatter named Parker, as he entered his shop.



MR. PARKER AND HIS RICH CUSTOMER.

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"I should not call the world a *very* happy one, were I the happiest man it contains," replied the hatter, pausing in his work and turning his contented-looking face toward the individual who had addressed him. "I think I should gain something by an exchange with you."

"Why do you think so?"

"You have enough to live upon, and are not compelled to work early and late, as I am."

"I am not so very sure that you would be the gainer. One thing is certain, I never sing at my work."

"Your work? What work have you to do?"

"Oh, I'm always busy."

"Doing what?"

"Nothing; and I believe it is much harder work than making hats."

"I would be very willing to try my hand at that kind of work, if I could afford it. There would be no danger of my getting tired or complaining that I had too much to do."

"You may think so; but a few weeks' experience would be enough to drive you back to your shop, glad to find something for your hands to do and your mind to rest upon."

"If you have such a high opinion of labour, Mr. Steele, why don't you go to work?"

"I have no motive for doing so."

"Is not the desire for happiness a motive of sufficient power? You think working will make any one happy."

"I am not so sure that it will make any one happy, but I believe that all who are engaged in regular employments are much more contented than are those who have nothing to do. But no one can be regularly employed who has not some motive for exertion. A mere desire for happiness is not the right motive; for, notwithstanding a man, when reasoning on the subject, may be able to see that, unless he is employed in doing something useful to his fellows, he cannot be even contented, yet when he follows out the impulses of his nature, if not compelled to work, he will seek for relief from the uneasiness he feels in almost any thing else: especially is he inclined to run into excitements, instead of turning to the quiet and more satisfying pursuits of ordinary life."

"If I believed as you do, I would go into business at once," said the hatter. "You have the means, and might conduct any business you chose to commence, with ease and comfort."

"I have often thought of doing so; but I have lived an idle life so long that I am afraid I should soon get tired of business."

"No doubt you would, and if you will take my advice, you will let well enough alone. Enjoy your good fortune and be thankful for it. As for me, I hope to see the day when I can retire from business and live easy the remainder of my life."

This was, in fact, the hatter's highest wish, and he was working industriously with that end in view. He had already saved enough money to buy a couple of very good houses, the rent from which was five hundred dollars per annum. As soon as he could accumulate sufficient to give him a clear income of two thousand dollars, his intention was to quit business and live like a "gentleman" all the rest of his days. He was in a very fair way of accomplishing all he desired in a few years, and he did accomplish it.

Up to the time of his retiring from business, which he did at the age of forty-three, Parker has passed through his share of trial and affliction. One of his children did not do well, and one, his favourite boy, had died. These events weighed down his spirit for a time, but no very long period elapsed before he was again singing at his work--not, it is true, quite so gayly as before, but still with an expression of contentment. He had, likewise, his share of those minor crosses in life which fret the spirit, but the impression they made was soon effaced.

In the final act of giving up, he felt a much greater reluctance than he had supposed would be the case, and very unexpectedly began to ask himself what he should do all the day, after he had no longer a shop in which to employ himself. The feeling was but momentary, however. It was forced back by the idea of living at his ease; of being able to come and go just as it suited his fancy; to have no care of business, nor any of its perplexities and anxieties. This thought was delightful.

"If I were you, I would go into the country and employ myself on a little farm," said a friend to the hatter. "You will find it dull work in town, with nothing on your hands to do."

The hatter shook his head. "No, no," said he, "I have no taste for farming; it is too much trouble. I am tired of work, and want a little rest during the remainder of my life."

Freedom from labour was the golden idea in his mind, and nothing else could find an entrance. For a few days after he had fully and finally got clear from all business, and was, to use his own words, a free man, he drank of liberty almost to intoxication. Sometimes he would sit at his window, looking out upon the hurrying crowd, and marking with pity the care written upon each face; and sometimes he would walk forth to breathe the free air and see every thing to be seen that could delight the eye.

Much as the hatter gloried in this freedom and boasted of his enjoyments, after the first day or two he began to grow weary long before evening closed in, and then he could not sit and quietly enjoy the newspaper, as before, for he had already gone over them two or three times, even to the advertising pages. Sometimes, for relief, he would walk out again, after tea, and sometimes lounge awhile on the sofa, and then go to bed an hour earlier than he had been in the habit of doing. In the morning he had no motive for rising with the sun; no effort was therefore made to overcome the heaviness felt on awaking; and he did not rise until the ringing of the breakfast-bell.

The "laziness" of her husband, as Mrs. Parker did not hesitate so call it, annoyed his good wife. She did not find things

any easier--she could not retire from business. In fact, the new order of things made her a great deal more trouble. One-half of her time, as she alleged, Mr. Parker was under her feet and making her just double work. He had grown vastly particular, too, about his clothes, and very often grumbled about the way his food come on the table, what she had never before known him to do. The latter's good lady was not very choice of her words, and, when she chose to speak out, generally did so with remarkable plainness of speech. The scheme of retiring from business in the very prime of life she never approved, but as her good man had set his heart on it for years, she did not say much in opposition. Her remark to a neighbour showed her passive state of mind: "He has earned his money honestly, and if he thinks he can enjoy it better in this way, I suppose it is nobody's business."

This was just the ground she stood upon. It was a kind of neutral ground, but she was not the woman to suffer its invasion. Just so long as her husband came and went without complaint or interference with her, all would be suffered to go on smoothly enough; but if he trespassed upon her old established rights and privileges, he would hear it.

"I never saw a meal cooked so badly as this," said Mr. Parker, knitting his brow one rainy day, at the dinner-table.

He had been confined to the house since morning, and had tried in vain to find some means of passing his time pleasantly.

The colour flew instantly to his wife's face. "Perhaps, if you had a better appetite, you would see no fault in the cooking," she said rather tartly.

"Perhaps not," he replied. "A good appetite helps bad cooking wonderfully."

There was nothing in this to soothe his wife's temper. She retorted instantly--

"And honest employment alone will give a good appetite. I wonder how you could expect to relish your food after lounging about doing nothing all the morning! I'll be bound that if you had been in your shop ironing hats or waiting on your customers since breakfast-time, there would have been no complaint about the dinner."

Mr. Parker was taken all aback. This was speaking out plainly "with a vengeance." Since his retirement from business, his self-estimation had arisen very high, compared with what it had previously been; he was, of course, more easily offended. To leave the dinner-table was the first impulse of offended dignity.

So broad a rupture as this had not occurred between the husband and wife since the day of their marriage--not that causes equally potent had not existed, for Mrs. Parker, when any thing excited her, was not over-choice of her words, and had frequently said more cutting things; but then her husband was not so easily disturbed--he had not so high an opinion of himself.

It was still raining heavily, but rain could no longer keep the latter at home. He went forth and walked aimlessly the streets for an hour, thinking bitter things against his wife all the while. But this was very unhappy work, and he was glad to seek relief from it by calling in upon a brother craftsman, whose shop happened to be in his way. The latter was singing at his work as he had used to sing--he never sang at his work now.

"This is a very dull day," was the natural remark of Mr. Parker, after first salutations were over.

"Why, yes, it is a little dull," replied the tradesman, speaking in a tone that said, "But it didn't occur to me before."

"How is business now?" asked Mr. Parker.

"Very brisk; I am so busy that, rain or shine, it never seems dull to me."

"You haven't as many customers in."

"No; but then I get a little ahead in my work, and that is something gained. Rain or shine, friend Parker, it's all the same to me."

"That is, certainly, a very comfortable state of mind to be in. I find a rainy day hard to get through."

"I don't think I would, if I were in your place," said the old acquaintance. "If I could do no better, I would lie down and sleep away the time."

"And remain awake half the night in return for it. No; that won't do. To lie half-asleep and half-awake for three or four hours makes one feel miserable."

The latter thought this a very strange admission. He did not believe that, if he could afford to live without work, he would find even rainy days hang heavy upon his hands.

"Why don't you read?"

"I do read all the newspapers--that is, two or three that I take," replied Parker; "but there is not enough in them for a whole day."

"There are plenty of books."

"Books! I never read books; I can't get interested in them. They are too long; it would take me a week to get through even a moderate-sized book. I would rather go back to the shop again. I understand making a hat, but as to books, I never did fancy them much."

Parker lounged for a couple of hours in the shop of his friend, and then turned his face homeward, feeling very uncomfortable.

The dark day was sinking into darker night when he entered his house. There was no light in the passage nor any in the parlour. As he groped his way in, he struck against a chair that was out of place, and hurt himself. The momentary pain caused the fretfulness he felt, on finding all dark within, to rise into anger. He went back to the kitchen, grumbling sadly, and there gave the cook a sound rating for not having lit the lamps earlier. Mrs. Parker heard all, but said nothing. The cook brought a lamp into the parlour and placed it upon the table with an indignant air; she then flirted off up-stairs, and complained to Mrs. Parker that she had never been treated so badly in her life by any person, and notified her that she should leave the moment her week was up; that, anyhow, she had nothing to do with the lamps--lighting them was the chambermaid's work.

It so happened that Mrs. Parker had sent the chambermaid out, and this the cook knew very well; but cook was in a bad humour about something, and didn't choose to do any thing not in the original contract. She was a good domestic, and had lived with Mrs. Parker for some years. She had her humours, as every one has, but these had always been borne with by her mistress. Too many fretting incidents had just occurred, however, and Mrs. Parker's mind was not so evenly balanced as usual. Nancy's words and manner provoked her too far, and she replied, "Very well; go in welcome."

Here was a state of affairs tending in no degree to increase the happiness of the retired tradesman. His wife met him at the supper-table with knit brows and tightly compressed lips. Not a word passed during the meal.

After supper, Mr. Parker looked around him for some means of passing the time. The newspapers were read through; it still rained heavily without; he could not ask his wife to play a game at backgammon.

"Oh dear!" he sighed, reclining back upon the sofa, and there he lay for half an hour, feeling as he had never felt in his life. At nine o'clock he went to bed, and remained awake for half the night.

Much to his satisfaction, when he opened his eyes on the next morning, the sun was shining into his window brightly. He would not be confined to the house so closely for another day.

A few weeks sufficed to exhaust all of Mr. Parker's time-killing resources. The newspapers, he complained, did not contain any thing of interest now. Having retired on his money, and set up for something of a gentleman, he, after a little while, gave up visiting at the shops of his old fellow-tradesmen. He did not like to be seen on terms of intimacy with working people! Street-walking did very well at first, but he tired of that; it was going over and over the same ground. He would have ridden out and seen the country, but he had never been twice on horseback in his life, and felt rather afraid of his neck. In fact, nothing was left to him, but to lounge about the house the greater portion of his time, and grumble at every thing; this only made matters worse, for Mrs. Parker would not submit to grumbling without a few words back that cut like razors.

From a contented man, Mr. Parker became, at the end of six months, a burden to himself. Little things that did not in the least disturb him before, now fretted him beyond measure. He had lost the quiet, even temper of mind that made life so pleasant.

A year after he had given up business he met Mr. Steele for the first time since his retirement from the shop.

"Well, my old friend," said that gentleman to him familiarly, "how is it with you now? I understand you have retired from business."

"Oh yes; a year since."

"So long? I only heard of it a few weeks ago. I have been absent from the city. Well, do you find doing nothing any easier than manufacturing good hats and serving the community like an honest man, as you did for years? What is *your* experience worth?"

"I don't know that it is worth any thing, except to myself; and it is doubtful whether it isn't too late for even me to profit by it."

"How so, my friend? Isn't living on your money so pleasant a way of getting through the world as you had supposed it

to be?"

"I presume there cannot be a pleasanter way; but we are so constituted that we are never happy in any position."

"Perhaps not positively happy, but we may be content."

"I doubt it."

"You were once contented."

"I beg you pardon; if I had been, I would have remained in business."

"And been a much more contented man than you are now."

"I am not sure of that."

"I am, then. Why, Parker, when I met you last you had a cheerful air about you. Whenever I came into your shop, I found you singing as cheerfully as a bird. But now you do not even smile; your brows have fallen half an inch lower than they were then. In fact, the whole expression of your face has changed. I will lay a wager that you have grown captious, fretful, and disposed to take trouble on interest. Every thing about you declares this. A year has changed you for the worse, and me for the better."

"How you for the better, Mr. Steele!"

"I have gone into business."

"I hope no misfortune has overtaken you?"

"I have lost more than half my property, but I trust this will not prove in the end a misfortune."

"Really, Mr. Steele, I am pained to hear that reverses have driven you to the necessity of going into business."

"While I am more than half inclined to say that I am glad of it. I led for years a useless life, most of the time a burden to myself. I was a drone in the social hive; I added nothing to the common stock; I was of no use to any one. But now my labours not only benefit myself, but the community at large. My mind is interested all the day; I no longer feel listlessness; the time never hangs heavy upon my hands. I have, as a German writer has said, 'fire-proof perennial enjoyments, called employments.'"

"You speak warmly, Mr. Steele."

"It is because I feel warmly on this subject. Long before a large failure in the city deprived me of at least half of my fortune, I saw clearly enough that there was but one way to find happiness in this life, and that was to engage diligently in some useful employment, from right ends. I shut my eyes to this conviction over and over again, and acted in accordance with it only when necessity compelled me to do so. I should have found much more pleasure in the pursuit of business, had I acted from the higher motive of use to my fellows, which was presented so clearly to my mind, than I do now, having entered its walks from something like compulsion."

"And you really think yourself happier than you were before, Mr. Steele?"

"I *know* it, friend Parker."

"And you think I would be happier than I am now, if I were to open my shop again?"

"I do--much happier. Don't you think the same?"

"I hardly know what to think. The way I live now is not very satisfactory. I cannot find enough to keep my mind employed."

"And never will, except in some useful business, depend upon it. So take my advice, and re-open your shop before you are compelled to do it."

"Why do you think I will be compelled to do it?"

"Because, it is very strongly impressed upon my mind that the laws of Divine Providence are so arranged that every man's ability to serve the general good is brought into activity in some way or other, no matter how selfish he may be, nor how much he may seek to withdraw himself from the common uses of society. Misfortunes are some of the means by which many persons are compelled to become usefully employed. Poverty is another means."

"Then you think if I do not go into business again, I am in danger of losing my property?"

"I should think you were; but I may be mistaken. Man can never foresee what will be the operations of Providence. If you should ever recommence business, however, it ought not to be from this fear. You should act from a higher and better motive. You should reflect that it is every man's duty to engage in some business or calling by which the whole community will be benefited, and, for this reason, and this alone, resolve that while you have the ability, you will be a working bee, and not a drone in the hive. It is not only wrong, but a disgrace for any man to be idle when there is so much to do."

Mr. Parker was surprised to hear his old customer talk in this way: but surprise was not his only feeling--he was deeply impressed with the truth of what he had said.

"I believe, after all, that you are right, and I am wrong. Certainly, there is no disguising the fact that my life has become a real burden to me, and that business would be far preferable to a state of idleness."

This admission seemed made with some reluctance. It was the first time he had confessed, even to himself, that he had committed an error in giving up his shop. The effect of what Mr. Steele had said was a resolution, after debating the pros and cons for nearly a month, to recommence business; but before this could take place, the kind of business must be determined. Since Mr. Parker had ceased to be a hatter and set up for a gentleman of fortune, his ideas of his own importance had considerably increased. To come back into his old position, therefore, could not be thought of. His wife argued for the shop, but he would not listen to her arguments. His final determination was to become a grocer, and a grocer he became. No doubt he thought it more worthy of his dignity to sell rice, sugar, soap, candles, etc., than hats. Why one should be more honourable or dignified than the other we do not understand. Perhaps there is a difference, but we must leave others to define it--we cannot.

A grocer Mr. Parker became instead of a hatter. Of the former business he was entirely ignorant; of the latter he was perfect master. But he would be a grocer--a merchant. He commenced in the retail line, with the determination, after he got pretty well acquainted with the business, to become a wholesale dealer. That idea pleased his fancy. For two years he kept a retail grocery-store, and then sold out, glad to get rid of it. The loss was about one-third of all he was worth. To make things worse, there was a great depression in trade, and real estate fell almost one-half in value. In consequence of this, Mr. Parker's income from rents, after being forced to sacrifice a very handsome piece of property to make up the deficit that was called for in winding up his grocery business, did not give him sufficient to meet his current family expenses.

There was now no alternative left. The retired hatter was glad to open a shop once more, and look out for some of his old customers. Mr. Steele saw his announcement, that he had resumed business at his old stand and asked for a share of public patronage. About two weeks after the shop was re-opened, that gentleman called in and ordered a hat. As he came to the door and was about reaching his hand out to open it, he heard the hatter's voice singing an old familiar air. A smile was on the face of Mr. Steele as he entered.

"All right again," he said, coming up to the counter and offering his hand. "Singing at your work, as of old! This is better than playing the gentleman, or even keeping a grocery-store."

"Oh, yes, a thousand times better," the hatter replied warmly. "I am now in my right place."

"Performing your true use to the community, and happier in doing so."

"I shall be happier, I am sure. I am happier already. My hat-blocks and irons, and indeed, every thing around me, look like familiar friends, and give me a smiling welcome. When health fails or age prevents my working any longer, I will give up my shop, but not a day sooner. I am cured of retiring from business."

THE END.

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