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INGRATITUDE REVENGED.

You have got a very neat little spot here, remarked Farmer Hayes to his friend, Mr. Johnson.

The two old men were sitting upon wooden seats which were placed on either side of the rustic porch that formed a kind of arbor entrance to the front door of the dwelling.

The speaker was a spare little man, with dark hair, sprinkled with gray. He wore a swallow tail coat, adorned with brass buttons; corduroy breeches, fastened at the knee; thick, blue worsted stockings encased his legs, and a pair of low shoes covered his feet. His visage had a placid expression, as he glanced first at the well kept garden, with its rows of potatoes and the vegetables; then out to the little paddock adjoining, where two cows were grazing; the next over the wide undulating meadow land beyond, his eyes resting finally on the far distant hills. He put the end of his long clay pipe between his lips, and watched the wreaths of smoke slowly ascending from it.

Mr. Johnson was a noble looking man; his snowy beard gave him a patriarchal appearance. His countenance lacked that acute, intellectual expression which is so often stamped upon the visage of a middle aged town man. His eyes were thoughtful, but gentle; his whole bearing spoke of innate goodness. The few wrinkles, which had gathered on the white, placid brow, had been gradually traced there by Time's relentless fingers, and not suddenly cut by a sharp sorrow. He smoked silently for a few moments, and then replied to his friend's remark,—

You're right; this is a neat little spot. But I'll tell you what I've been a thinking on, Hayes. You know my Jennie's a goin' to be married to Robert Meadows. She's my only child, so of course she'll have all my belongings when I'm gone; but I've been a thinking, that, soon after she's settled, I'll have a deed of gift drawn up, and turn everything over to her; then there'll be no proving the will, and all that fuss; and the lawyers won't have a pickin' out of my bit of property. I shall live here and be master just the same. What do you say to that, my friend?

The old man put a hand on each knee, and gazed into the others face, with an expression which said, Don't you think it's a very brilliant idea?

His friend took the pipe out of his mouth, and shook his head dubiously; then replaced it between his lips, and gazed fixedly before him for an instant ere he answered; then he said, slowly and emphatically,—

"I don't like it."

He shook the ashes from his pipe, and began leisurely to fill it again with tobacco.

I never seed a play but once, he began, in slow, measured tones, and that was many years ago, when I was a young man. I was in the city, and my friends got me to go to the theatre to see a grand piece that had been made up by a great man hundreds of years ago. Well, I went, and the sight of the lights, the gay dresses, and the flash folks, I

shall never forget. But it was the play that struck me.

There was a good old king who had three daughters, and he thought that he would divide the kingdom amongst them. They were very pleased; the eldest went down on her knees, and swore how she loved him more than anybody else, and said as how he was the kindest, noblest, and best father that ever lived—or words somewhat like them. The next said about the same, only a great deal more; but I thought both on 'em looked too big and wide awake to stick to their word. The third daughter said very little; but I thought she was the nicest looking of all the lot. The king was huffed because she would not own she loved him. So he divided the kingdom between his two eldest daughters.

I thought he was a silly old fellow to put the reins into them spirited looking creatures' hands. But he did it and he rued it. They treated him very well at first, but after a time they began to alter, and let him know that he wasn't master. Well one night they turned him out of the castle, when there was such a dreadful storm that it was not fit to turn a dog out; and he who had once been a king had to roam about as a beggar. The poor man went nearly crazed. I almost forget how it ended, but I think they was all killed at last.

And what has this to do with what I was saying? inquired Mr. Johnson, testily. I was talking about deeds of gifts, and not plays.

The other began to smoke—puff—puff. After a few minutes the full meaning of his friend's words dawned slowly upon his mind.

Well, I was a thinking as how, when Jane got possession of the house, she might, maybe, after a bit, turn you out as the king's daughters turned him out. Keep the reins in your own hands man—you can draw them tight, or let them loose, when you please; but don't give them up till you die. That's my advice.

There was a little flash of anger in the other's eyes, as he replied,—

You don't know my Jennie; she's the loveliest, best and truest girl that ever lived. She would never wrong her father.

In the mean time Jennie and her lover were in the orchard, at the back of the house, slowly walking up and down the path among the trees.

The moon was brightening in the purpling sky, and the evening star glimmered faintly.

When two more days have passed you will be my wife!

The young man looked down lovingly into the shy, dark eyes raised to his, and clasped the hand that rested on his arm.

I am so glad, Robert, that I shall not have to leave my home, she said, after a pause; for I was born here, and here my mother died. It was very kind of father to propose that we should live with him. Now you can keep all the money in the bank that you have been saving so long to buy furniture with, and if we are careful we shall soon add some more to it.

Your father is very good, Jennie; we must be kind to him.

The wedding-day arrived. Mr. Johnson was placed in the seat of honor; he moved among the guests, with a kind word and a cheery greeting for all. Jennie was a blooming, bonnie bride, and seemed proud of her stalwart husband.

Jennie was installed as housekeeper in her father's home. After a time, Mr. Johnson presented his daughter with the deed of gift, and the young mistress of the farm, with the understanding that Mr. Johnson was to reside with them.

All went well for a time, then gradually there came a change over the serene atmosphere of the dwelling, and the old man became conscious that he was no longer treated with courtesy, nor his wishes respected.

Would you mind sleeping in the back bedroom for a few weeks? we have a visitor coming, said Jennie, one morning, about six months after the wedding.

The old man started in great surprise.

Why can't the visitor go into the back room? he asked.

Oh, it's such a poky place! I don't mean that exactly! she exclaimed, checking herself in confusion. The room is very clean, and there is really a beautiful view from the window, and a good feather bed. But Miss Martin is very particular; she has such a grand-home that we cannot put her anywhere.

Mr. Johnson leisurely crossed his legs, put his newspaper on the table, took his spectacles off, rubbed them, and put them in the case, and then slowly rejoined,—

If there is such a fine view from the

window, your visitor may enjoy it, and she can sleep on the feather bed. I've slept in the front room five and forty years, and I ain't going to be turned out now. If Miss Martin ain't satisfied with the accommodation, she may stay away.

Stay away indeed! fired Jennie. It's just like you, father. I call you very selfish. And she left the room hastily, shutting the door with a bang.

The old man took up the newspaper, but the words ran into one another, for large tears gathered in his bright, gray eyes, and his lips quivered painfully.

Miss Martin came, and informed Jennie that her father was the most aristocratic looking gentleman she had ever seen; but during her stay Mr. Johnson was subjected to many slights, as Jennie and her husband were ashamed of some of his old fashioned ways.

One evening Mr. Johnson returned from the village, where he had spent the day with a friend. He walked leisurely up the garden path, but suddenly paused and uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

A fine hawthorne tree, which had stood near the house, and had been full of pink blossoms in the spring lay upon the ground. On examining it, he discovered that it had been cut off near the roots. He turned hastily to enter the house by the front door, when he observed that the monthly rose tree, which had twined the porch, and been full of bloom all summer, lay across the garden path, cut into a number of pieces, and an attempt had been made to dig it up by the roots.

Robert! Robert! cried Mr. Johnson. What's the matter? queried a voice from an inner room.

Who's been cutting them down? cried the old man, excitedly, entering the apartment, and waving his hand toward the garden.

I have, answered Mr. Meadows, complacently.

Why did you do it?

Because I chose to.

There, don't quarrel, said Jennie. It's all my fault, father. The hawthorne tree was close to the parlour window, and make the room dark—so I asked Robert to cut it down. The rose tree is not much good; we are going to have a finer one put in its place.

That hawthorne tree your mother set with her own hands, and the rose tree I planted on the day you were born. Your mother loved them both, and Heaven forgive you for what you have done!

He turned away, ascended the stairs entered his own room, and closed the door.

If Farmer Turner calls just send round for me, will you, Jennie? asked Mr. Meadows, one morning at breakfast. He's coming to look at old Bettie.

Yes, I'll send, replied his wife.

What's the matter with the cow? inquired Mr. Johnson.

Oh, nothing, replied the young man. I'm going to sell her.

Sell her? repeated the other.

Yes; she's old, and don't give much milk. I'm going to buy a young one in her place. Jennie's been complaining of the butter for a long time; it don't come up to our neighbours.

But I won't have her sold! cried the old man, angrily.

You have nothing to do with her; she is mine, and I shall do as I like, rejoined the other, haughtily, as he rose to leave the room.

Mr. Johnson turned to the window without uttering another word.

A few hours later he saw Farmer Turner's man driving old Bettie out of the yard.

Ah, it's the one she used to milk, he soliloquized.

Tears gathered thickly in his eyes as he watched his late wife's favorite cow driven by a stranger.

Here's a letter from my sister Jane, remarked Mr. Johnson, one afternoon, to his daughter. Poor thing! her husband has been dead only two months. The bailiffs have sold her furniture; she is destitute and is staying with a neighbour for a few days, and then she don't know where to go. Poor Jane! missed the old man, as his thoughts reverted to the past. She was a pretty girl when she was young, and many a handsome fellow came after her. But she took no heed to any except Tom Jones, who became her husband. Then she had such a pretty blue-eyed child, with soft, golden hair. She lived to be six year old and then died. I thought Jane would have broke her heart. Then her song went up to be a fine young man, and was going to be married in a week. But one

morning he tried to stop a horse and wagon that was running away, when the horse threw him down, the wheel went over his head and he was killed on the spot. And now her husband's gone, and she's left all alone. Poor Jane!

Hasn't she any money to live upon? inquired Jennie.

No; and I've been thinking we'd better have her here. She can't starve.

Have her here! repeated his daughter, in astonishment. What can you be thinking about, father? There's plenty of us to keep already.

She broke her cotton with a jerk, and threaded her needle impatiently.

Were going to have company this afternoon, resumed Jennie, after a pause, in a conciliatory tone; and as they are very fine people, I think you had better have your pipe in the kitchen, father. You would not enjoy yourself with us.

Very well, my dear, he answered quietly. He put his slippered feet on the fender, and gazed into the blazing fire. I've been a thinking, my dear, he resumed, after a pause, that there's a little error in that deed of gift.

An error! repeated Jennie, as she dropped her work and looked up with a scared face.

Yes, I'm sure there's an error. It wouldn't be pleasant for you if the property was to be thrown into Chancery, after I am gone, would it?

O father!

Well, leten the deed down to me. I'll look it over and set all right.

Jennie hastened up-stairs, and soon returned with the precious paper.

The old man took it in his hand, smoothed out the creases gently, read it over, and said,—

An, it is all one great mistake!

With a quick movement he threw the document into the blazing fire, and pressed it down with the poker.

Jennie screamed, and, darting forward attempted to rescue the deed from the devouring flames; but her father held up his hand sternly, and said in a tone of authority,—

Stand back.

At this instant Mr. Meadows entered.

What's the matter, Jennie? he enquired. Father, what have you been doing to her?

The young man confronted Mr. Johnson, who stood with the uplifted poker in his hand.

I am master of this house! cried the old man; and I'll allow no one to dictate to me!

We'll soon see about that! exclaimed the other sneeringly. If you're going to put on such fine airs, I'll have you turned out.

Oh, Robert! Robert! cried his wife; the deed—the deed!

An hysterical fit of weeping checked her utterance.

What do you mean? queried her husband, with a white face, and a touch of fear in his tone.

Father! burst it!

Father is master of his own house, and will have you turned out if you don't behave yourself! returned the old man.

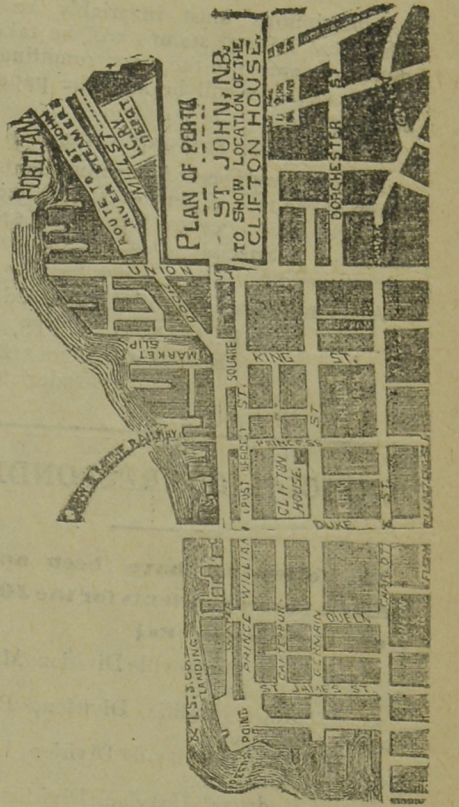
Angry words passed. Robert declared that he would go to law; he would not be done out of his rights; the house was his and Jennie's.

Prove it, gently retorted his father-in-law. You may have your company this afternoon, Jennie, he continued, after a pause, but it will be your last party in my house. I shall send for farmer Hayes and we shall enjoy our pipes to-day this evening, in the best parlour, as we did before you were married. As for you, Robert, you haven't provided a home for Jennie.

present; but you'll have to do so now. There's a cottage to let in the village, which I think will suit you. A month from to-day I shall expect you to be clear from my house; and you needn't think I shall do any more for you. What I mean to give you—if I give you anything at all—you'll have to wait for until I'm done. No more cutting down my favourite trees—or selling my old cows—or making me sit in the kitchen when I've got fine company. I'll send for my sister Jane, and she'll have a home with me as long as she lives.

When the sister, came to live at the house and passed away at the advanced age of eighty-six. Mr. Johnson lived ten years after her, retaining all his faculties to the last, and died in his ninety-ninth year.

Jennie and her husband had to work very hard in order to bring up their large family respectably. Robert's hair was silvery white, and Jennie's thickly streaked with gray, and their sons and daughters were men and women, when the formerly ungrateful couple were again allowed to take possession of the old farmhouse.



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