

THE DONATION PARTY.

BY HELEN FORREST GRAVES.

Are you all right, Matilda? said Mr. Perkins, casting a final, comprehensive glance around him, as he put one foot on the wagon-step and gathered up the reins into his left hand.

Y-yes, I believe so, answered his wife.

Is the big loaf of election cake in?

Yes.

And the stone jug of maple molasses? It's right here.

And the ten yards o' rag-carpet, and the pair o' brackets, and the cherry vase, packed in tissue-paper shavings?

Yes, I b'lieve we hain't forgotten nothin', assented Mrs. Perkins, craning her neck this way and that, to make assurance doubly sure.

Wal, then, that settles matters, said the farmer, briskly adjusting himself in his seat. Attention, company! Forward—much!

But as the clumsy old farm-wagon lumbered slowly on thorough daisied fields and meadows crimsoned with nodding grasses, he looked up in a quaint, one-sided manner at his wife's clouded face.

What on airth's the matter, Matilda? said he. I s'posed you was dead set on goin' to this 'ere 'Donation Party,' this arternoon.

I did set considerable store by it, said Mrs. Perkins, pumping a heavy sigh out of some unseen deeps in her internal economy; but somehow I feel sort of uneasy about leavin' Chatty in charge of things at home.

Asahel Perkins whistled.

Ain't she a woman growed up? said he.

Is 'pose so.

Get out! said the old farmer. One would suppose she was a baby.

But she ain't used to bein' left alone.

It's a good time to sort o' begin then ain't it? chuckled the old man.

I'm afeard she'll let the dried pachesass burn.

No great harm if she does.

And there's the calf to be fed, and the Shanghai chickens to be looked after, and the short cake to be baked and—

Well, I calculate Chatty's equal to the occasion, nodded Mr. Perkins. Anyhow, we shan't never know ef we don't take some of findin' out. Come, mother, don't fret. I do b'lieve, ef you was on the road to heaven, you'd want to turn back to see of the clothespins was all a layin' with their heads the right way, and the chickens had gone to roost all square an' even on the proper perch.

Asahel, you hadn't oughter speak light o' sacred things, reproachfully murmured Mrs. Perkins.

Well, mother, I won't acquiesced Mr. Perkins, ef you'll leave off thinkin' you know more than Providence does, eh?

So the old couple kept on toward the Catfield Parsonage, where there was, on that particular day, one of these great local upheavals commonly known as a Donation Party, and where four bushels of doughnuts, thirteen bed-quits, nine macrame tidies, and nineteen bouquets of impossible paper roses, had already arrived in bewildering succession.

I do hope, sighed the Rev. Eli Parsons, that Providence'll put it into the head of some one to send me a fall overcoat, for mine's clear in rags. Squire Pepper, now—he's fairly well off in this worlds goods—its just like him to think of such a thing.

While Mrs. Parsons, a withered little old woman, with clusters of false curls on each side of her face, and an immortal butterfly always hovering over the black lace borders of her cap, secretly hoped that Mrs. Goldwood, who had more money than she knew what to do with, might be spiritually moved to present her with a much needed black silk gown.

I know it ain't consistent to think too much of earthly adornments, sighed poor little Mrs. Parsons; but I never had a silk gown, and it does seem as if it would be comforting to own one before I died.

But our hopes are frequently doomed to be blighted.

Squire Pepper brought a damaged photograph album, from the unsaleable shelf in his store, and Mrs. Goldwood smilingly presented to her pastor's wife hideous basket of wax fruit, which had stood on her own back parlor table until she was tired of the sight of it.

Mrs. Parsons could have burst out crying.

The stuffy little parlor filled fast with the parishioners. The kitchen was well packed with solid matrons and brisk maidens, arranging the salt shoulders of bacon, the juicy hams, the cold roast fowls, and loaves of home-made cake; the pounds of coffee, in brown paper packages, the packages of white beans, and the glasses of currant jelly, which were one by one brought in.

The parlor tables groaned under book-markers, embroidered tidies, home knit laces, volumes of poems, and such eminently useful contributions.

Mrs. Parsons bustled to and fro, wondering how on earth, even with all the china and glass she had borrowed, she should manage to provide for such a concourse of guests.

Mr. Parsons smiled feebly at the well worn jokes of his people, and wondered how many of this particular type of

Donation Party it would take to send him to the poorhouse.

Didn't you bring your city niece? old Miss Tackaberry asked of Mrs. Perkins, who surrounded by a group of congenial friends, sat on the sofa in the parson's study, radiant as the full moon.

Well, no, not-to-day, Mrs. Perkins answered. We calculated, bein there was so many tramps and roughs a-provlin around the country since court-week, as we'd better leave some one to hum to keep house; and she didn't seem paticklery anxious to come.

Should hev thought she'd a wanted to get acquainted with the young folks, said Mrs. Tackaberry.

Mrs. Perkins smiled and smoothed down the flounces of her dress. She'll get acquainted before long, I guess, said she, calmly.

Not very young, I s'pose? said Miss Tackaberry.

About sixteen, answered Mrs. Perkins with suppressed triumph.

Well, I never! said Miss Tackaberry. She must find it awful dull here?

Not so very, returned Mrs. Perkins. Been here long?

A week.

Me and sister Typhosa will call to-morrow, said Miss Tackaberry. I was always one to believe in sociability.

But here Mrs. Parsons feebly announced that supper was ready, and in the blind rush that ensued, Mrs. Perkins and Miss Tackaberry got separated.

At the Donation Party everybody ate as much as they possibly could, and nearly everybody put something in his or her pockets for the children at home. Gallons of scalding tea and lukewarm coffee vanished; tons of indigestible cake disappeared as if by magic; monster dishes of sticky preserves were ever and anon renewed; relays of hot biscuits arrived every five minutes from the stove-ovens, and still the cry was more!

But the meal was, luckily for Mrs. Parsons's equanimity, drawing to a close when Joel Fullerton, a handsome, swarthy-browed young giant, popped his head in at the door and looked around.

Deacon Perkin's folks here? said he.

That's me, said Mr. Perkins, with his mouth full of biscuit and honey. Old horse ain't got loose, said he? I tied him close to the—

No, it ain't the horse, said Joel. Jest step out here. I want to speak to you a minute.

Mrs. Perkins uttered a shrill little shriek.

I knowed it, said she—I knowed it perfectly well. Somethin's happened. The new Alderney cow is lamed, or else the house is took on fire, and the insurance run out only yesterday.

Something's happened, said Joel, with an anxious look, though I don't rightly know how nor what. Mother she just came across lots to your house to get the receipt for making soft soap, and although she could see your niece a-setting by the fire, she couldn't make her hear, though she knocked fit to rattle the side of the old house down. And—don't be scared—she, sort of thinks Miss Chatty's in a fit or lurt or something, so she sent me down here on Speckle-back, while she stayed by the door to sort of keep guard.

Jerusalem! muttered Mr. Perkins, fumbling to untie the horse. Why didn't you kick in the door, or smash the window-panes, or something?

As for the door, I tried my level best, said Joel; but them timbers would stand an earthquake. And mother she would not let me break the window, for fear the flying glass should hurt your niece.

Git in, mother! said Perkins, hoarsely. Quick! There ain't no time to lose! I dunno what on airth I shall say to Brother Clayton, down in York, if anythin's happened to the gal that's all he's got in the world.

I knowed it!—I was sure on't! shrilly wailed poor Mrs. Perkins, rocking herself back and forth. She's been murdered by a slungshot by some of them miserable creeters as got loose from Diktown Jail. We never oughter a left her there alone!

Don't mother, don't! said Perkins, faintly, ducking his head as if her words were a shower of hailstones. P'raps—she's—asleep.

Not very likely, said Joel, trotting alongside of the wagon on Speckle-back, a stout four-year-old colt. Nobody could have slept much with mother hollering and rapping on the glass like mad and me a-kicking at the door so that the very clock tumbled off the shelf.

If you ketch hold of my arm that way, mother, said poor Perkins, despairingly, I can't drive a yard furder.

Even in that solitary and thinly peopled neighborhood a little group had already collected around the windows of Deacon Perkins's house, peering through the tangle of tall lilac bushes and dense-growing cinnamon roses to get a glimpse into the tiny-paned casements, and a line of curiously-minded people had followed from the Catfield parsonage, under the vague impression that something was wrong at Asa Perkins's place.

Just look for yourself, said Joel Fullerton.

I can't! muttered Perkins, passing his hand across his forehead, as if there was some unwonted pressure there. Get me a screw-driver, something, outen the back shed. I'll get in here, or I'll know the reason why!

Father! squeaked his wife; there ain't no need for no screw-driver. The buttery window's wide open, with nothin' but a few meshes of mosquito net—

over it. You can scramble in there as easy as not, and open the front door from inside.

The suggestion was instantly carried out, and in a moment, as it were, the crowd was inside the door, staring in a terrified way at the figure wrapped in shawls, which had fallen to one side in the old rocking-chair, with its face averted. No one had courage to step forward and solve the mystery. There was a second of appalling suspense, when suddenly the back door was flung open, and in rushed Chatty Clayton herself, with bright eyes, cheeks flushed like twin roses, and her apron full of brilliant blue asters and yellow-fringed golden rod.

What is the matter, Aunt Matilda? she cried. Back so soon? Why, I didn't expect you until after dark! I just ran down into the woods to get some flowers and red leaves to arrange on the walls; and the sun isn't fairly down yet. But what has happened? Why are all these people here?

Mrs. Perkins made a clutch at Chatty and hugged her, after a struggling fashion, to her heart.

She's alive! she shrieked. She ain't dead! Nor she ain't in a fit! I knowed it all along! I knowed nothing hadn't happened! Oh, Chatty, Chatty! I never was so glad o' nothin' in all my life before!

But, spoke up Mr. Perkins, glancing furtively toward the rocking-chair, who's that? Who's the dead woman, or the woman in a fit, or whatever she is?

Chatty broke into a merry tinkle of laughter.

It—it's only a dummy, Uncle Asahel, she confessed. I dressed up the bolster in Aunt Tilda's double gown and cap and spectacles and set it in the rocking-chair, so that if any one looked into the window, they shouldn't fancy the old place quite deserted. For the sunshine was so bright, and the woods looked so delightful, that I could not stay in!

But, oh—with a penitent clasping of her hands—I didn't—indeed I didn't mean to give you such a fright as this!

I don't mind the fright, my dear, so long as everything has turned out right at last, said Uncle Asahel, his whole face beaming into a universal smile. Neighbors, will you sit down and take a snack? looking hospitably around on the assemblage. We hain't much but soft gingerbread and dried-peach sass—

And that is burned, guiltily murmured Chatty.

But such as it is, you're kindly welcome to it, added the farmer.

But the neighbors decided to return to Catfield Parsonage, with the solitary exception of Joel Fullerton, who elected to remain and be lectured by Chatty on his officiousness.

And so you really believed that old spectacle thing to be—me? cried Chatty with infinite scorn.

You know I had never seen you, pleaded Joel.

And you went and spoiled Uncle Asahel's Donation Party, and set all the tongues in Catfield wagging, and made a scene all on account of—a bolster?

I'll never do so again, abjectly uttered Joel.

And therewith the young people burst into uncontrollable laughter.

Then Mr. and Mrs. Perkins, on the back porch, nodded their heads and said they guessed it was all right.—Saturday Night.

WHY HE YELLED.

Look at the Maine individual over there in the red flannel shirt which is not even on speaking terms with soap. You might not think from a casual observation that he had any peculiarities whatever, but the other day he came down with a terrible toothache,—an ache that reared, and kicked and bucked all within thirty seconds, till the world ceased to have any attraction for the man who was entertaining it. Well, he couldn't stand it any longer, and started post haste for a dentist in a neighboring town.

The proprietor of a hardware store in close proximity to this dentist was standing in the door of his store that afternoon, when he heard a most terrible and ear-splitting shriek proceeding from the office of the man of teeth. He had become accustomed to moans and subdued exclamations from that quarter, but never had he heard such howlings as now pierced the air. His curiosity was so thoroughly aroused that a little later in he walked in to the dentist's office and said: Who have ye been butchering over here?

Oh, replied the extractor of molars, that was old John Tarbox, from T— He had a tooth out.

Had a tooth out? replied the visitor, well I should think so, and it must have come mighty hard to fetch such a roar as that!

Oh, dear no, said the dentist; he didn't make that noise when I pulled the tooth. It was afterward.

Afterward?

Why, yes, was the reply. The tooth came easily enough. The time he fetched that cry of agony was when I charged him fifty cents for doing the job.—Lewiston Journal.

To cure warts take an Irish potato and cut a piece off the end and rub on the wart two or three times a day, cutting a slice from the potato each time used. Very often one potato is sufficient for the cure.

The water in which codfish has been soaked is very good for washing the zinc under the stove

SOCIAL ETIQUETTE. Manners and Customs Practiced in Polite Society.

Twelve o'clock is the usual hour selected for a day wedding, but this is a matter of individual choice. The Art Interchange suggests that the place and hour of the wedding must determine the kind of refreshments to be offered to the guests. If the wedding takes place in the house and in the middle of the day, a substantial luncheon must be provided. If the ceremony is held at the church, followed by a small reception at the house of the bride's family, would be naturally followed by a 5 o'clock tea, when tea and coffee, cakes, ices and fruit would be the refreshments. These may be arranged on the dining room table and guests allowed to help themselves, or they may be handed around.

Arms and Legs for Those who Need Them.

"I suppose," said the reporter, "that you meet with some queer incidents in the course of your business?"

"Yes, I remember a customer coming to me not long ago for his second artificial leg. He had worn the first for a number of years. He said that he was in much trouble of mind. He was going to get married, and had been courting his intended for a year and a half, and she did not know but that he was entirely sound. The question in his mind was whether to tell her before, or wait until after marriage. I advised him to inform her beforehand, as otherwise she might have legal ground to apply for an annulment of the marriage on the ground of deception. He told me afterward that he followed my advice, and the lady concluded that she loved him none the less on account of his misfortune. Another singular incident, but of a different character, was in connection with the collision of two steamers, one of which had just started from this port for Europe, and had to put back again on account of the damage. None of the passengers were injured by the accident, and a friend jokingly remarked in my presence that I would, no doubt, be greatly disappointed that there was no loss of limb, as I would therefore get no revenue from the occurrence. Strangely enough the day following a man from Ohio walked into my office and said that he wanted an artificial leg. He related that he had been a passenger on the steamer which had to put back on account of the collision, having started from his home in Ohio to pay a visit to Europe. When the vessel returned to port he concluded, on reflection, to give up his European trip and to expend the money he had received for the trip in providing himself with a new artificial leg in place of the one which he then wore. So it seems that the collision of those two steamers brought business after all."

"Who supply limbs for the soldiers?"

"The business is distributed among different manufacturers, nearly, if not all, in the large cities on the Atlantic coast. No Union soldier who lost a limb in the war need be without an artificial one. Northern manufacturers also supply a good many artificial limbs to confederate veterans, on the order of states of the South that have made provision for the maimed of the lost cause; but a great many of the Southern veterans are unprovided, for the reason that the appropriations for their relief are not sufficiently frequent and adequate."—N. Y. Sun.

An Incident of Chatsworth.

Mrs. Merriam Grant, one of the people wounded in the Chatsworth disaster, was in the rear car with her husband, says the Peoria Transcript. In this car was a party of six people. In order that they might sit together, Mr. and Mrs. Grant changed seats with a young man and his bride. Their courtesy saved their lives, for the young couple were both killed. Mrs. Grant thought this party were theatrical people or concert singers, they were so jolly and sang so well. They could sing, and they laughed and told stories and anticipated the pleasure of the trip until late at night. Then Mrs. Grant composed herself in her chair and covered her face with her handkerchief to go to sleep. Nearly everybody in the car was quiet but the jolly party of six. About this time the young bride was requested to sing "Sweet Hour of Prayer." Something in the desire to sleep and rest recalled the sweet old song. The young woman sang, and all listened while the train sped on.

As the little gleam of devilish fire appeared far down the track their voices swelled in:

Yet in my dreams I'd be nearer, my God, to Thee.

The speed of the train increased down the grade. Again the song swelled:

There let the way appear, steps unto heaven. The way was already in sight.

All that Thou sendest me, in mercy given. And then with but a moment of life left for each. Even when poor Ed McClintock's hand was giving its last desperate wrench to the throttle of his engine the singers sang to their God, who seemed not to be holding them in the hollow of his hand:

Angels to beckon me, Angels to beckon me.

Angels to beckon me, Angels to beckon me.

Place Meeting, Divisions, Numbers Night of Meeting, and name of Deputies.

- St. Stephen; Howard, 1; Friday; S. Webber; Milltown, St. Stephen; Wilberforce, 3; Monday. Market Building, St. John; Gurney, 5; Thursday; John P. Bell. Orange Hall Portland; Portland, 7; Monday; A. Y. Paterson. Market Building, St. John; Albion, 14; Wednesday; E. A. Everett. George St. Queens, 21; Saturday; H. J. DeWeber. Chatham; Northumberland, 37; Friday; G. Stothart. St. John; Mariners and Mechanics, 38; Tuesday; Walter Munford. Hillsboro, Albert Co.; Albert, 39; Wednesday; John H. Stevens. Sackville, West Co.; Sackville, 40; Tuesday; J. C. Harper. Richibucto, Kent Co.; Richibucto, 42; Wednesday; A. Haines. Newcastle; Newcastle, 45; Thursday; Jas. Falconer. Point de Bute, West Co. Westmorland, 50; Thursday; Jas. W. Colpitts. Hopewell Hill, Albert Co.; Golden Rule, 51; Tuesday; L. R. Moore. Penfield, Charlotte Co.; Safeguard, 58; Saturday; H. O. Traylor. Cambridge, Queens Co.; Johnston, 62; Saturday; George S. Wilson. Dalhousie; Dalhousie, 64; Monday; G. Haddow. Baie Verte; Baie Verte, 65; Wednesday; R. Goodwin. Dover, West Co.; Dover, 70; Saturday; Alfred E. Steeves. Carleton, St. John; Granite; Rock, 77; Tuesday; John C. Thomas.

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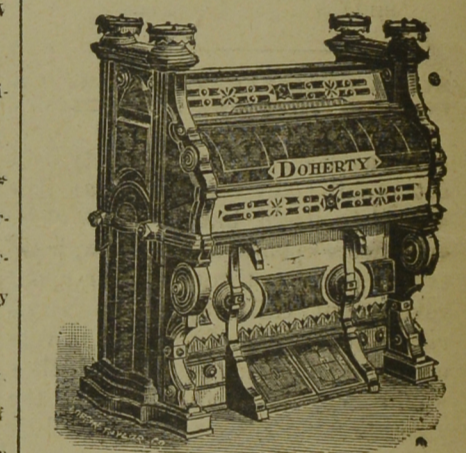
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