

THE SINGING-MASTER.

(Minneapolis Times.)

When Mr. Sykes and I entered the school-room on Tuesday afternoon we found the occupants ready and waiting for us. My daughters, Winnie and Mary, were playing a duet in a desultory way, and the governess was correcting an exercise at the table.

At the sound of the opening door she looked up, and, her eyes falling on Mr. Sykes' face, an altogether untranslatable expression crossed her own. If she had been the kind of woman who blushes, I think Miss Lorraine would have blushed then. As she was not, her small, pale face grew if anything a shade paler.

"Mr. Sykes—Miss Lorraine," I said, presenting him.

"It is some time since I have had the pleasure of meeting Miss—Lorraine," said the singing master, in his airy, well bred manner.

"I beg your pardon," answered the girl frigidly. "I think you must be mistaking me for some one else."

"You mean you have forgotten me," he rejoined.

"One can not forget a person one has never seen," said the governess.

"Certainly not," said the singing master, politely. "I am sure you must be right, and I only beg your pardon for my mistake."

He turned to me, where I stood regarding them in some bewilderment.

"The time is getting on," he said. "If your daughters are ready shall we begin the lesson?"

Whereupon I left the room.

Now it chanced that I have become possessed of some particulars regarding that lesson, though I was not a witness thereof. Therefore, to save myself from any imputation of eavesdropping, I wish to state that I heard all I know from Lord Hillingford, a recently acquired young friend of mine.

The singing master conducted the lesson gravely enough, albeit on lines which would have amazed Tosti or Conconi had either of these good gentlemen been present. When it was over he turned to the pupils with his polite little smile.

"Thank you," he said. "I need not detain you any longer, young ladies."

Whereat Winnie and Mary promptly took their departure.

The singing master slowly rearranged the scattered music, and, taking up his hat and gloves, was turning towards the door, when the governess suddenly lifted her eyes from the French grammar on the table.

"Why have you followed me here?" she exclaimed.

Mr. Sykes stood still half way between the piano and the door.

"I beg your pardon," he said suavely. "I think you must be mistaking me for somebody else."

The girl's eyes flashed.

"Yes," she said, "I think I once mistook you for a gentleman."

"O," said Mr. Sykes, "I see! You think, then, that I have lowered myself by the profession that I have adopted?" And he smiled.

His smile seemed to madden my wife's beautiful governess.

"How dare you come here pretending to be a singing master?" she said.

There were tears in the gray eyes; but the young man hardened his heart.

"I have just as much right to be a singing master as you have to be a governess," he retorted.

"I must earn my living," said the girl.

"You can earn it easier by marrying me," answered Mr. Sykes. "Your — relatives would be pleased, too, and that is always something."

"Yes," said Miss Lorraine passionately. "I know they would be pleased. But I won't marry you for your money."

"I don't want you to marry me for my money," said the singing master. "I want you to marry me for love."

"Love!" repeated Miss Lorraine in a faint voice, that was yet full of scorn.

There was a long silence.

Then Mr. Sykes laid his hat and gloves down on the table and came to her side.

"Look here, Dorothy," he said, "you couldn't marry me for my money now if you wanted to, for I've not got it. I've lost pretty well everything. I have—it doesn't much matter now. I came down here to see whether it was possible that you cared a bit for me, after all. I've enough to keep myself and you. Of course I was a fool; I might have known that if you wouldn't have me with the cash I couldn't expect you to take me without. Good-by—"

He turned towards the door again but Miss Lorraine called him back.

"Stop," she said. "—"

She rose to her feet and stood there looking at him with trembling lips.

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"I didn't want the money," she said. "But I—I do—want you."

I was surprised when the singing master called to see me the next morning.

"I've come," he said, "because I owe you an apology, Mr. North. I'm a fraud."

"I've merely been using you as a convenience," "Indeed!" said I. "You do me too much honor. May I inquire further particulars?"

"Yes," said he, and he bowed to me and handed me his card.

"Lord Hillingford!" I exclaimed; and I regret to say that I expressed my astonishment by the utterance of a word which would have shocked my wife. "Then why on earth—"

"The fact is," said the quondam singing master naively, "I merely came here to see your governess."

"O!" said I, "is she a fraud, too?"

"She's an angel," answered the young man, hotly.

"Your lordship doubtless came here to tell her so?" I suggested.

Lord Hillingford smiled.

"More or less," he replied.

There was a pause.

"I'm afraid," said I, "I have not yet quite grasped the situation. May I remind you that you promised just now to enlighten me?"

"Yes," said he, with what sounded rather like an effort. "I suppose I owe you that."

"He paused again, and for the first and last time I saw a shade of embarrassment cross his handsome face.

"The fact is, he began, "Miss Lorraine's name is not Lorraine at all; it's Dorothy Villiers."

"Ah!" I put in sotto voce; "then she is a fraud."

But he interrupted me angrily.

"You have no right to call her a fraud," he said. "She's treated you as squarely as anyone could. It's only me that she tried to cheat. She came here to avoid me."

"Yes?" I said, and looked at him questioningly. I was growing interested.

"You may know her father by name," he went on reluctantly. "He's a thorough-paced old scoundrel—drinks, and bets, and gets into no end of difficulties. I've helped him out of them sometimes, because I'm confoundedly well off, you know, and because—well, I'm in love with Dorothy. She only found out that I'd been paying his bills two months ago. There was an awful scene. She said her father should think of her self-respect if he had none of his own, and she said I had deceived her, and she would never forgive me. Old Villiers was drunk. He raved at her, and told her she could marry me and so be beholden to nobody. Of course she refused; she's as proud as Lucifer. She said she wouldn't marry any man for his money—she would rather work for her living. I told her I'd never leave her alone till she gave in, but she would listen to nothing. The next day, when I went to see her, she had gone away, and she left no address. Old Villiers told me she had said to him that she was going away to work, and that in future he was to let no one pay his bills but her. He knew no more what had become of her than I did."

"Yes?" I said, "and then—?"

"Well, I found her out, as you see, and I kept myself informed of what went on here. When I knew for certain that Mrs. North was going away, I came down here and played off my fraud on you. I think, on the whole" said his lordship, complacently. "I did that part of the business rather well."

I agreed that he had done it uncommonly well.

"As for Dorothy," he said, "I merely told her a bald, tundering lie. I said I was more or less a pauper, and she believed me, and—"

He laughed in sheer lightness of heart.

When he was gone I went to my wife's boudoir.

"Rose," I said, "that young man has turned out a fraud. He's no more a singing master than I am."

She looked intensely surprised for a moment and then said:

"My dear John, didn't I tell you so from the beginning?"

"His name isn't Sykes at all," I went on in a crestfallen voice.

"Of course not," said Rose, "then who and what is he?"

"He's Lord Hillingford," said I.

"What?" she exclaimed. "Jack, what do you mean? It isn't true!"

"It's as true as gospel," said I.

Now I verily believe that my dear wife venerates a title beyond all other earthly vanities—myself, of course, excepted. A light of great joy came into her face.

"O, Jack!" she exclaimed, "do you think it's possible that he—Do you think Winnie—"

"No," said I decisively. "I'm afraid not, my dear. It's the governess. She's so disgracefully pretty, you know."

"That girl!" exclaimed my wife.

"Will soon be Countess of Hillingford," said I.

Medical Science Advances.

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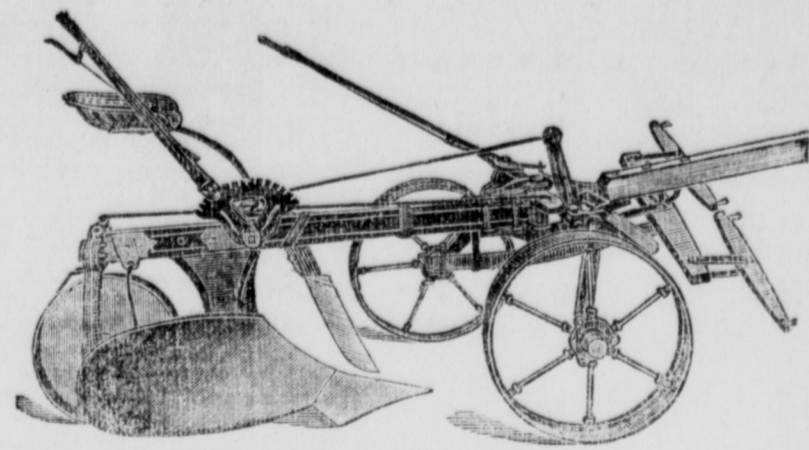
While the blood is the life of the system, carrying to every part its share of force and energy, it is also the means by which the waste matter, the result of decomposition of the tissues, is removed from the body. If disease has touched the kidneys, there is grave danger, and deadly oppression will settle upon the body and mind.

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Editing a newspaper is a nice business. If we publish jokes people say we are rattle-headed. If we don't we are an old fossil. If we publish original matter they say we don't give them selections enough. If we give them selections they say we are too lazy to write. If we remain in the office we ought to go out and hustle. If we go out, then we are not attending to our business. If we don't go to church we are heathens. If we do we are hypocrites. If we wear old clothes they laugh at us; if we wear good ones they say we have a "pull." Now what are we to do? Just as like as not some one will say that we stole this item from an exchange.

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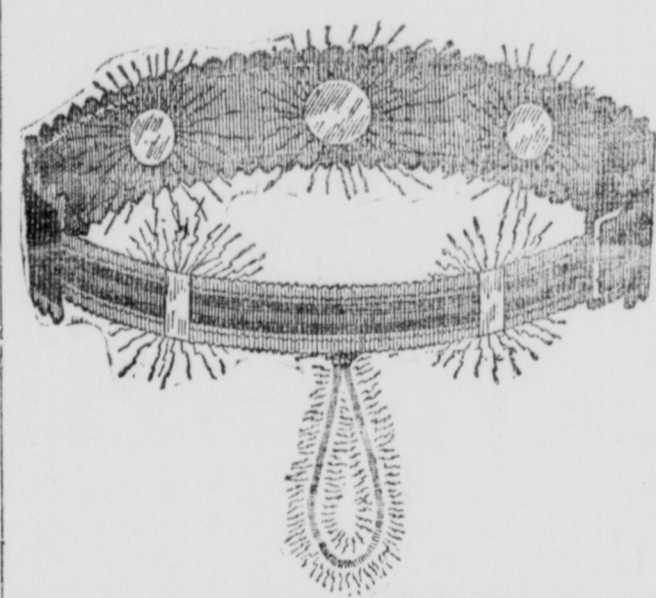
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