

LITERATURE.

THE FORGED NOTE;
Or, the Scheming Mother's Mistake.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

(Concluded.)

At length Mr. Walpart arrived. He greeted young Albee kindly, and having consulted his watch he called upon one of his clerks, and giving him two letters, he bade him leave one of them at the Canal Bank, and the other two at the store of Folt & Babrook.

"Cheer up, James," said Mr. Walpart, shortly after his clerk had left, "if I am not greatly mistaken, all will yet come out right."

"Have you a clue, then, to the solution of the mystery?" asked James, as he started forward, and laid his hand nervously upon the merchant's arm, while his eyes danced wildly in a flood of hopeful light.

"I think I have; but we must wait for a time and I may then be enabled to give you a definite answer."

The merchant went about arranging some of his papers, and the youth took up a paper and began to read over the morning news. At the end of half an hour, the clerk returned, accompanied by Messrs. Folt and Babrook, and one of their salesmen, together with the teller of the Canal Bank.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Walpart, as soon as the morning's salutations had been passed, "I have requested your attendance here in order to ascertain if we cannot clear Mr. Albee from the charge that rests against him."

"Indeed, sir," said Mr. Folt, with real frankness, "no one will be so happy at such a result as myself; but yet I must say things look dark against him."

"Perhaps they do," returned Mr. Walpart—"nevertheless, we may be able to throw some light upon them. In the first place, gentlemen, the circumstance of his having money is clear. For eight long years he has been saving each quarter a portion of his salary, and even at the present moment I hold some two thousand dollars of his money. Now, sir," he continued, turning to the bank teller, "on what day did you pay five thousand dollars on the forged check?"

"On the fifteenth of last month."

"Have you examined the book-keeper's accounts for that day, as I requested?"

"Yes, sir."

"And what is the result?"

"I have examined the book-keeper's journal, and I fear that I have given in my evidence at Mr. Albee's examination with too much reliance upon my own memory," returned the teller; "for upon examination, I find that shortly after the bank was opened, I paid to the checks of Folt & Babrook eight thousand dollars; before the check of five thousand dollars was paid there are thirty-four entrances upon the journal, so that the latter, of course, must have been paid some three hours later than the former, and at that time, too, there was quite a crowd around my desk. The eight thousand I certainly paid Mr. Albee, but I have an impression now that the other sum was not delivered to him."

"Mr. Folt," said Mr. Walpart, to that gentleman, "is not that the morning on which yourself and Mr. Babrook went to Batavia?"

"It is," returned Mr. Folt, "and I drew out the eight thousand dollars to use in buying up flour."

"Now, Mr. Russell," continued Mr. Walpart, addressing the salesman who had accompanied Folt & Babrook, "did you remember Mr. Albee left the store that forenoon after his employers had gone?"

"Not until after two o'clock, sir," returned the young man, with a confident air, "for I remember that he sent his assistant clerk to deposit and pay two notes at the bank, because both our employers had gone, and there was considerable business going on."

"Now, gentlemen," said Mr. Walpart, rubbing his hands with considerable satisfaction, "you see how easy it is for men to be mistaken. The bank teller knew that he paid thirteen thousand dollars to the check of Folt & Babrook, and they knew that they only drew checks for

eight thousand. He also knew that he paid money to James Albee, and those two circumstances, both put together, look convincing; but you now see that when thoroughly sifted out they amount to nothing, for you see it is impossible that the young man could have drawn the money, even though he had forged the check, and that he did this of course there is no evidence, now that the other is uprooted."

A moment Mr. Folt stood in deep thought, with his hand upon his knit brow, with his elbow resting upon the desk. Then, while his countenance opened to a kind, frank look, he stepped quickly forward, and seizing the hand of his suspected clerk, he said:

"James, I know that you are not guilty of this crime; I have suspected you, for I had grounds; but what Mr. Walpart had brought, added to your exemplary life, gives back to you your untarnished honor."

In vain was it that the youth attempted to utter his joy in words. His heart beat too wildly, and the warm tears rolled in a blinding flood from his trembling eyes. He turned to Mr. Walpart, but even then, his words failed him, though the silent blessing that rested upon his grateful features was not to be mistaken.

"Mr. Townley," said Mr. Walpart, turning to the bank teller, as soon as Albee had taken his seat, "Are you engaged this evening?"

"No, sir."

"And you?" he continued to Folt and Babrook.

"No, sir," they both replied.

"Then I would deem it an especial favor if you would sup with me to-night at the A—House, and after that accompany me to my own dwelling, and if I am not mistaken you shall then have the whole of this matter cleared up."

The gentlemen agreed to this arrangement, and after Mr. Folt had obtained from James an assurance that he would call upon him during the day, they separated.

Never, perhaps, did Mrs. Walpart feel more scandalized than when her husband returned in the evening, in company with James Albee. Julia, from motives of delicacy, Mr. Walpart had requested to remain away from the sitting room till he sent for her. The lady was somewhat surprised, however, when she found that Messrs. Folt & Babrook accompanied him, and when she was introduced to Mr. Townley, whom she remembered as having been one of the witnesses at the examination of young Albee, she was, to use her own expression, "all struck with wonder."

Half an hour passed away, during which the gentlemen kept up a common-place conversation, occasionally passing some remark with Mrs. Walpart, who felt not a little flattered by the attention of such rich men as were the two flour merchants. At the end of that time one of the servants announced Mr. Albert Babbington. He was shown into the room, and though he entered with his usual air of self-sufficiency, yet when he became aware of the nature of the company present, a sudden pallor overspread his features, and his hand trembled as he received the greeting of the merchants.

"A very foine evening, Mistaw Walpart," said Babbington, as he took a seat, endeavoring the while to compose himself from the effects of the strange tremor that had seized him.

"Perhaps it is," returned Mr. Walpart, as he cast upon the puppy a look of ineffable contempt and then wheeling his chair about with a decided movement, he continued:

"Mr. Babbington, as business has called these gentlemen here, you will pardon me if I proceed at once to its transaction."

"Oh—aw—ah—certainly sir," returned the exquisite, striving to smile through his palpable fears.

"Then, sir," said the merchant, "I will do it in as few words as possible. On the fifteenth of last month a forged check, in the name of Folt & Babrook, was presented at the teller's desk of the Canal Bank and cashed. Do you know anything of the matter?"

"Me, sir," uttered Babbington, utterly confounded at the strangeness of the question, but nevertheless drawing himself up with extreme dignity, "really, Mister Walpart you are decidedly facetious. You will have to ask some one else that question."

"Then, Mr. Babbington, perhaps you will

explain to me where you obtained the four thousand dollars that you lost at the Jockey Club Room on the evening of the day to which I have alluded."

"Mrs. Walpart by this time came to a pretty clear understanding of what the business was as she witnessed the fearful effects of her husband's last question upon her fashionable friend she found it absolutely necessary to faint. The husband rang the bell for the servant, and as his wife was being conveyed out he gave directions for the sending up of some one who was waiting in the hall below.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Walpart, "there is no need that I should keep you longer in the dark. A few days since I received from an unknown source—but from some one who supposed that the villain was working himself into the good graces of my family—the information that Mr. Albert Babbington was a notorious gambler, and on the 15th of last month he had lost over four thousand dollars at one sitting. At once the idea of this forgery flashed upon me, and—"

"It's a lie! a base cowardly lie!" exclaimed the accused man, as he started from his seat.

"Never mind," quietly returned Mr. Walpart, "there are some who will help us." As he spoke, two policemen, followed by a rakeshly dressed youth, entered the room.

"That's the fellow who presented the check," uttered Mr. Townley, as his eyes rested upon the boy.

"So he has confessed," said Mr. Walpart, and then turning to the youth, he continued:

"Now tell us, sir, who gave you the check, and to whom you delivered the money."

"That man, sir!" he said, pointing to Mr. Albert Babbington.

"You can take him in charge and I will appear before the proper tribunal in the morning," said Mr. Walpart, addressing the policeman.

Babbington swore terribly, but it availed him nought, and in a few moments he was in safe custody, and on his way to the Tombs.

It took but few words for Mr. Walpart to explain how, after he had received the anonymous note, he went to the club room and sifted the matter out—how he found the youth who had presented the check, and how he had contrived to entrap the real scamp without exciting his suspicions. Both Mr. Folt and Babrook humbly begged the young clerk's pardon for the unjust suspicions they had held against him, and they urged him to return to their employ; but Mr. Walpart informed them that Mr. Albee was going into business with himself, and after renewed pledges of mutual friendship, Messrs. Folt and Babrook, and Mr. Townley took their leave, and as soon as they were gone the old merchant rang the bell for his daughter.

"There, Julia," said the happy father, as he took the fair girl's hand, "James stands nobly clear from every taint of dishonor, and while he and myself enter into partnership for business, you and he may make such arrangements for your own course as you see fit."

As the old man spoke he took the hand of the youth and placed it within that of his daughter, and after he had done so a fervent "God bless you," fell from his lips.

At that moment the world afforded no thoughts of sorrow for their hearts; but as they wept for joy upon each other's necks, all was bright as and unclouded Heaven about them.

Mr. Albert Babbington was duly convicted of the forgery, and he is even now laboring within the walls of the prison in expiation of his crime, while Mrs. Walpart has resolved henceforth to look deeper for the true man than upon the mere surface of fashionable life; and trust to her husband's good judgement for the future.

Ellen—"Oh, don't tease me to-day, George; I'm not at all well."

George (twelve years old—a man of the world)—"I tell you what it is, you are in love! Now, you take the advice of a fellow who has seen a good deal of that sort of thing, and don't give way to it!"

Men are queer people; not over one out of a dozen will do what is for his own good, unless he is forced to it.

A lady remarked to a printer the other day, that though he might print a kiss, he must never publish it.

A PATTERN HUSBAND.

BY FANNY FERN.

Mrs. Joseph Smith was the envy of all the wives in the neighborhood. Such a pattern husband as Smith was, to be sure! He never went across the room without hugging his wife first, and language would fail to describe their melancholy partings when he "tore himself away," to go down to the store. If the wind got round east after he had left, he always ran back to tell her to put on an extra petticoat; he cut up her food in homoeopathic infinitesimal bits, to assist her digestion, and if she wanted an ice-cream or a lobster-salad in the middle of the night, it was forthcoming. Did she have the headache, the blinds were closed, the bell was muffled, and he was the most miserable of Smiths till she was convalescent. He selected her shoe-strings and corset-lacings himself, and when her health was too delicate to admit of her accompanying him to church, he always promised to sit in the middle of the house, so that in case the galleries should fall he needn't be made any flatter than he was by nature.

The present Mrs. Smith was his fourth wife and as Joseph had been heard to say "that the more he loved his Eleanore, the more he loved Nancy, and the more he loved his Nancy, the more he loved his Julia and Mary," any one with half an eye, could see how peculiarly felicitous Mrs. Mary Smith's position must be!

There never was a sweet without a bitter; and so she found out, when Joseph announced to her that he "must leave the little heaven of her smiles, to go on a short 'business trip.'"—Mary went into the strongest kind of hysterics, and burnt feathers and sal-volatile couldn't bring her out of them, till he swore on the dictionary to telegraph to her every hour, and carry his life preserver and Russian Salve.

On arriving at the depot, a gentleman requested leave "to place a lady under his protection," who was travelling in the same direction.—Smith looked at her; she was young and pretty, and dressed in deep mourning. "A widow!" said Smith to himself. "Certainly, sir, with pleasure."

How they did get on! With opening and shutting the windows in the cars, pulling that travelling shawl round the pretty shoulders that wouldn't keep it up, and trying to quiet her nerves when the cars went through "the dark places," Smith didn't know any more than you whether they were travelling through France or Spain, and what's more, he didn't care!

Arriving at their place of destination much sooner than was necessary, (conductors and engineers have no bowels of mercy,) he escorted the widow to the house of her friend, taking the most disinterested care of the big and little band-boxes, and was strongly tempted to put an end to the life of the little poodle-dog she carried in her arms.

An hour after, he sat down in his lonely quarters at the hotel, and dutifully drew towards him a sheet of paper to write to his wife. It ran as follows:—

"MY DEAREST WIFE:—If you knew how utterly desolate I am without you. I can think of nothing else, and feel entirely unfitted for business. As for pleasure, that is out of the question, without you. I've been bored to death with the care of an empty-headed woman—(you know I couldn't refuse, my angel;) but I never will be hampered so again. I long for the day that will return me to your arms.

"Your loving husband, J. S.—"

Then drawing towards him a nice little embossed note-paper, he penned the following:—

"MY DEAR MADAM:—These blue eyes have never ceased to haunt me since we parted.—Thank you for your flattering acceptance of my invitation to ride. I will call for you at four, this afternoon. Till then, my heart is with you.

"Yours, ever, Joseph Smith."

Full two mortal hours Joseph spent at his "toilet," adorning his outer man. How those whiskers were curled and perfumed! What a fit those primrose gloves were! How immaculate was that shirt bosom! How excruciatingly those boots pinched! The very horses pricked up their ears and arched their necks proudly, as if they knew what a freight of loveliness they were to carry.

Arrived at the widow's, Joseph handed the reins to a servant and was settling his pet curl, preparatory to mounting the stairs, when a letter was rudely thrust into his hand, and he was