

Poet's Corner.

"THERE'S A LIVING OF SILVER TO EVERY CLOUD."

BY JONATHAN FREKE SLINGSBY.

"Did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night."—MILTON

One winter night dreary,
Dejected and weary,
I kept my lone vigil of sorrow and care:
My rustling, mistaking—
My heart full to breaking—
My soul seeking comfort and finding despair!

All wild and chilly
The wind whistled shrilly,
Drifting the clouds o'er a desolate sky
Low moaned the ocean
In ceaseless commotion,
Dashing the spray of its billows on high!

Tearfully gleaming,
The young moon was beaming,
Struggling by fits through each gathering cloud;
Far it light now shedding,
Dark shades now spreading,
Over the moonshine their vopry shroud!

"Ah! thus," thought I sighing,
"From birth to our dying,
Man's course is a struggle through trial and gloom;
Joy gives scarce a promise
That grief reads not from us,
O'er the light of our life looms the shade of the tomb!"

But soon to my wonder,
The cloud burst aunder,
And down through the fissure now streamed the moon's
light,
Soft fell its splendor,
So holy and tender,
A shower of sheen on the face of the night.

While all the cloud's margin
Was gleaming like argent
Though earthward still, sullen and dark was its shroud,
I knew that towards heaven
Its brightness was given—
A lining of spread over the cloud!

Then my soul rose in gladness,
And shook off its sadness,
I felt God can turn all his darkness to light—
To day what is sorrow
Make joy on the morrow—
Dry tears that are hiding his smile from our sight!

I looked up confessing
That trial is blessing
To him if each grief be spread out and avowed;
What from earth man sees glooming,
God above is illuming—
"There's a living of silver to every cloud."

THE YOUNG MERCHANT'S ORDEAL!

OR,
CONTENT VERSUS PLENTY.

BY SYLWANUS COBB, JR.

(Concluded.)

When Leeman returned to his home, he fancied that he had learned something. He had in fact, learned how Wm. Sharping made his money, and half of that night he lay awake and thought of it. The next morning he walked very slowly toward his store. He was still thinking of what he had learned the night before, and he was trying hard to silence the 'still small voice' that was whispering to his soul!

"It's only business" after all, he said to himself "I may as well make a living as other folks."

It was these words upon his lip that he entered his store. His clerk was there, and the place was all neat and clean. He had been in the store half an hour, and at the end of that time the clerk asked him if he was unwell.

Unwell! What put that into your head, Henry?

"O—I thought you looked flushed—feverish—I did not know but that you might have caught cold."

"No no; I am well"

Arthur Leeman turned away and wondered if he had been showing all his feelings. Somehow the store did not seem so cheerful to him as usual. The neatly arranged shelves and boxes and the choice goods did not look so inviting as their wont.

During the first part of the day he sold some common articles, such as calicoes, lawn thread, but it did not occur to him that even here he might have overreached a simple customer. He did not think of getting twelve and a half cents for some of his sixpenny prints. Sharping did it, but Leeman was not yet initiated.

At length an opportunity was offered for Arthur to try his newly discovered plan of business. Towards night a middle-aged gentleman entered the store and expressed a wish to purchase some cloth for a pair of pants. He was a stranger, having but a few days before moved into the village.

"I should like a piece that is good—all wool—thick and firm," he said as Arthur led the way to the cloth counter.

The gentleman looked over the goods, and at length hit upon a piece of dark mixed doe-skin. It felt firm and thick, and was, in truth, a handsome piece.

"How is that?" asked Arthur.

"I think it will suit me. It seems to be firm and good. Not quite so soft as clear wool generally is."

"It is excellent cloth—a few days wear will soften it," said the young merchant trying to appear candid.

"What is it a yard?"

Now the cloth cost Arthur just thirty-seven and a-half cents per yard, and intended to have sold it for forty-two, and have placed his private mark upon it accordingly. It was just half cotton.

"One dollar?" said he; and the words as he spoke them struck startlingly upon his own ear.

"You may cut off three yards," said the man; and Arthur hid his face as he did the work.

After the cloth was done up the gentleman paid for it—three dollars—it was nearly two dollars more than it cost—a profit of almost two hundred per cent!

Arthur Leeman had always made it a practice to be sociable with his customers, but he could not be so now. He dared not trust himself to speak—he dared not meet the eye of the man with whom he had just traded.

It was a five dollar bill that the man tendered in payment and as he passed it over he remarked:

"I suppose that is the lowest you will take?"

"It is the lowest I ought to take," returned Arthur, trying to hide his tremulousness.

"Very well," said the stranger. "I always wish to pay fair living prices to every one with whom I deal—always trusting," he added, with a smile, "that I shall be treated honestly in return."

He took his change and left the store. Arthur took down his blotter and thought to enter the sale he had just made; but he hesitated. Those pages were all fair and honest. He dared not place there the first dishonest act he had ever done! O, how he wished that his customer had not come—he wished to recall the thing he had done. But 'twas too late now. He had tried the experiment.

"Why—what's the matter, Arthur?" asked Mrs. Leeman, as her husband drew back from the supper that evening. You look unhappy.

"And I am unhappy, Sarah," faintly returned Arthur; for he had determined to tell his wife of his bitter experience.

"What is it?" anxiously uttered the half frightened wife, moving to her husband's side, and placing her arms around his neck.

"Sit down, sit down, Sarah, and I will tell you."

The woman sat down, but still kept her arm about her husband's neck.

"Sarah," he said, with a painful effort, I have done that to-day which I never did before in my life. I have been dishonest! I have lied and cheated!"

Lied! You—my husband—cheated! O, no, no, Arthur!"

"Yes—a man came into my store—he was a stranger—a new comer in town. He trusted to my honesty, and—I lied to him and cheated him! O, Sarah, I wish I had not done it."

"But you did not do it—you could not."

"Listen to me my wife. I thought I would try to make money as fast as William Sharping does. Last evening I was in his store and discovered his secret; if I disclose it to you you will not tell of it."

Sarah promised, and then Arthur related to her all that had passed. He told her of Sharping's mode of dealing and described his own experiment that afternoon.

"I have been dishonest and unhappy," he said in conclusion. "I do not feel the same man that I did before, for there is one man in the world towards whom I have done wrong and I shall not dare to look him in the face."

For some time Sarah Leeman was silent. At length she raised her lips to her husband's face and kissed him.

"Forgive me," she whispered, "for it was I who done this wrong. O, forgive me, Arthur. I was envious. O, I would rather live in the meanest rags of penury and want, than to live on the wages of my husband's dishonesty! I shall never be envious again. I will never think of bantering away sweet content for the desire of my neighbor's plenty. It was I who wronged you. Forgive me."

It was a scene of forgiveness that followed, and that night both husband and wife prayed that they might never heed the voice of the tempter again.

On the next morning the first person who came into the store after Arthur had arrived was the man whom the cloth had been sold the day before. The young merchant felt a sudden trembling coming to his limbs, and the worst fears sprang to his mind. He feared that his wickedness had been detected, and he should not have it in his power to make a free restitution. But he was mistaken. The gentleman had only come for stuff for lining to the pants he was going to have made. Arthur's

heart leaped again, for now he should have the opportunity he had hoped for.

"Ah, sir, he said, after the articles just called for had been rolled up. 'I fear there was a slight mistake made yesterday, and I am glad you have called for I wish it rectified.'"

"I was not aware of any," returned the stranger wondering.

"Step this way, sir," Arthur led the way to the counter where the sale of the day before had been made, and lying his hand upon the piece of cloth from which he had cut the three yards, he continued:

"You took a pattern from this piece of cloth."

"Yes, sir"

"And paid me one dollar per yard for it."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, sir—I was very nervous—very uncomfortable at the time, and I made a sad mistake—I should have asked you but forty-two cents per yard for it. It is part cotton. You may return it and take another piece, or I will pay you back the difference—just as you please."

The gentleman chose to keep the cloth and Arthur paid him back one dollar and seventy-four cts. He was very thankful for the restitution thus made and he remained a long while and chatted with the merchant, often making a remark upon the charm which he always experienced when doing business with one in whose honor he could confide. He proved afterwards to be not only a good customer but a valuable friend to the young merchant.

That night Arthur Leeman was happy, his sweet wife was never happier in her life, for she had learned the real value of the blessings she possessed and gained once more the treasure she had well nigh thrown from her—the sweetest treasure of life—CONTENT.

Time sped on. Arthur Leeman remained strict in his integrity. One by one the customers of William Sharping dropped into his store.

They had learned the real character of the dishonest merchant, and they fled from his counter. In course of time Sharping was deeply in debt—his house was up for sale. Arthur Leeman bought it, and when he paid for it he had the sweet, holy satisfaction of knowing that every dollar of the purchase money had been honestly earned by fair and virtuous dealing.

A Hypothetical Case.

Some years ago, an awkward chap in Western New York, who obtained his livelihood by forgery, in a blacksmith's shop, hired a horse one day to carry a load of wrought nails to the next town, a few miles distant. Through his own awkwardness, and that of the horse, and by the united exertions of the two, a very pretty catastrophe was brought about. While descending a steep hill, the smith gave his animal a few extra cuts, thinking to accelerate his speed in a place where gravitation seconded the motions of the whip, but the steed stumbled, floundered into the ditch, and kicked the—bucket. The blacksmith upon turning the body over, discovered that the anatomical harmony of the beast's neck was destroyed, that the beast's spine was dislocated beyond the bone-setter's art, and that in fact, the "hoss" was dead. With a rueful countenance he repaired to the owner of the nag, and asked him what was to be done? The reply was, "you must pay for the horse." The blacksmith demurred, and went to consult a lawyer.

The lawyer happened to be away from home, but his wife, who was prone to mischievous fun, thought she saw in the client food for a little sport, and, inviting him to enter the house, remarked that she sometimes gave legal advice in her husband's absence, and requested him to state his case.

"Very well," said the blacksmith, seating himself leisurely, "I'll suppose a case."

"If you please—that will do as well as to state your own," said the handsome attorney.

"Well! yer see it's jest like this. S'posin you was an old hoss—an? I should drive yer—drive yer to mill. And s'posin I should cut yer up the leastest mite on the flank, and you should fair up and kick up, and break the breechin, and finally yer should fall inter the ditch, and break yer cussed neck—who'd pay for ye? Would I?" asked the excited Vulcan in a voice of thunder. "No! I'd be hammered into horse shoe nails, and driven into the devil's cloven foot afore I'd pay the first red cent."

By this time the volunteer Councillor had retreated to the door of the apartment, and after informing her client with a courtesy that his was a plain case, and he need not fear an action for damages, she disappeared, resolving never again to give advice to her husband's customers.

TRICKS OF TAILORS.—The Home Journal, in a pleasant homily upon the ways of tailors, shows up some of the tricks of trade:—

"Tailors must live—at least they think so, and we have no objection. Yet they are very great tyrants, and have ingenious ways for torturing their victims. One way is this: They invent a fashion which is strikingly peculiar, and get into vogue, by various arts best known to themselves; for example very short overcoats with long waists, which look well on men like Count Rossi, whose figure is faultless. The next movement, after everybody is overcoated for the winter, is to bring out a garment which differs as much as possible from the one in fashion—that is an overcoat with skirts to the heels and waist under the armpits. They go half a dozen of men of high fashion who look well in anything, to parade this new invention in Broadway, and make the short-coated majority appear out of date. The manoeuvre succeeds; all the bandies are driven to the extravagance of ordering a superfluous coat; the tailors smile, and the dandies bleed, or their fathers do. Some time ago our tailor-tyrants put us all into long waistcoats and consequently into continuations that just lapped over the hips. Suddenly the waistcoats were abbreviated four inches. What was the cause? Why of course the continuations fail to connect, and he who would not exhibit to mankind a broad belt of white around his waist, was compelled to discard all his store of well saved unnameables. And in vain shall the oldest customer protest and order garments of the last fashion. Consider my reputation, sir, says the tailor, with an air of offended majesty."

CISTERN.—Look well to your cistern. To any one who has examined the contents of a cistern, it is evident that the water and dirt at the bottom often have a long stench in them, while the water in the upper part of it is comparatively sweet and pure. This is owing to the animal matter that settles to the bottom forming a mass of putrid carrion. In all rain, river, and sea water, there are immense numbers of animals so small as to be invisible to the naked eye. Infuse a little pepper into it, to give it activity to them, and then examine it with a microscope, and it will be alive with animals. They are called infusoria. They are short lived, and from their immense numbers, often form one-fourth of the rich mud at the mouths of our rivers. So with the mud in many of our cisterns. It is caused principally, by the deposit of this animal matter, and undergoes decomposition, putridity and produces stench, the same as any other animal matter. Unless it is cleaned out at least once a year, the water becomes the essence of carrion. To say nothing of the unpleasant smell, its use, undoubtedly, is often, the cause of sickness and death.—Ohio Farmer.

THREE CHEERS.—One Sunday recently, during the high mass at twelve, in the village of Glentarriff, Ireland, three ladies of the Protestant faith were obliged to take shelter from those heavy summer showers which so frequently occur in the south of Ireland. The officiating priest, knowing who they were, wishing to appear respectful to them, stooped down to his attendant, who was on his knees, and whispered to him, "Three chairs for the Protestant ladies." The clerk, who was rather an ignorant man, stood up and shouted out to the congregation, "Three cheers for the Protestant ladies!" which the congregation immediately took up, and gave three hearty cheers, while the clergyman actually stood cumbfounded.

Some time since a Yankee entered a store to sell some brooms. The storekeeper said he would take the brooms, if he would take half his pay in money, and the rest in goods. The Yankee complied, and after receiving his money, told the storekeeper that he would take for his pay in goods half the brooms!

"How are you, count?" said a noted wag to a spruce-looking specimen of the genus snob, yesterday. "Sir!" exclaimed the indignant swell, "why do you call me count?" "Why, I saw you counting oysters in New York, last week, and I supposed you were of royal blood," returned the wag.

A gentleman having frequently reproved his servant, an Irish girl, for boiling eggs too hard, requested her in future to boil them only three minutes and a half by the clock. "Sure, sir," replied the girl, "how shall I do that for your honor knows the clock is always a quarter of an hour too fast!"

The following we consider the most judicious method of praying yet discovered: An old deacon was repeating a favorite petition, which he piously qualified thus—Lord, give us neither riches nor poverty—especially the latter.