

Poetry.

THE HISTORY OF A LIFE.

BY BARRY CORNWALL (PROCTER).

Day dawned:—Within a curtained room,
Filled to faintness with perfume,
A lady lay at point of doom.

Day closed:—A child had seen the light;
But for the lady, fair and bright,
She rested in undreaming night.

Spring rose:—The Lady's grave was green;
And near it oftentimes was seen
A gentle Boy, with thoughtful mien.

Years fled:—He wore a manly face,
And struggled in the world's rough race,
And won, at last, a lofty place.

And then—he died! Behold, before ye,
Humanity's poor sum and story:
Life,—Death,—and all that is of Glory.

Select Tale.

A FAMILY JAR.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

Once in a while there may be a "household war" where the fault is all on one side, but this is not generally the case. If all the wars of this description could be thoroughly sifted down, it would be found that the whole trouble had resulted from some slight trouble to begin with, though this might not always be the case. It is amusing, as well as mortifying, to observe how sympathy can sway the public mind in regard to such matters, and how ready people are to denounce this one, or that one, according as mere sympathy or prejudice may dictate.

Among my early friends, was Ned Cruden. He was a steady, industrious, noble-hearted fellow, and one of the most faithful and true friends. Among our schoolmates was a girl named Abby Bicknell. She was a kind playmate, a warm-hearted companion, and a good-natured, loving, accommodating friend. When she grew up she became Ned Cruden's wife, and the newly married couple moved away.

Some years passed, and we that had been schoolmates in youth had become separated, and amid new scenes and new associations the friends of earlier years were gradually passing from memory, when, one spring, business called me to the village of L., in Vermont. I had been there some days, and was entering a store one afternoon, when I met a man coming out whose countenance was familiar. He passed on without noticing me, and I went into the store. For some time my mind was busy trying to recall the face I had just seen, but ere I could solve the question, my attention was called to a conversation which was going on among a number of men who sat on some boxes and barrels in one corner of the store.

"I know anybody wouldn't suspect such a thing to look at him," said a dried up man who was smoking a pipe; "but it's a fact. I had it from his next door neighbour. He actually kicked his wife out of the house only three days ago."

"O, they live drefful unhappy," chimed in a gawky looking fellow who reminded me of an old cider barrel. "Ned beats her the worst kind.—One day when I was there to work—ye see we'd just gone in to dinner—I seed Ned take her by the nap of the neck and chuck her into the little bed room. By mitey he was savage, now, you'd better believe."

"Well, I guess his wife aint one of the best women as ever was," remarked the third speaker.

"Ge-whittaker! I reckon she aint," remarked a youthful smoker. "My eyes! shouldn't I like to have the handling of that woman 'bout a month!"

"And what would ye do?" asked the first speaker, rather dubiously.

"Do? Why I'd trim her down. I'd larn her manners."

"I reckon she'd larn you manners, or else take the hair out of yer head," observed another.

"Why, I tell you she's a perfect Satan—a real she devil—when she gets going."

I stood and listened to the conversation and ere long I made out that they were talking of Ned Cruden, and I knew it must have been Ned whom I met in the doorway. I was assured from what I heard that Ned and his wife lived unhappily together, and it surprised me not a little. If Ned Cruden and Abby Bicknell made an unhappy match, then what sort of people must be required to make a happy one. I thought to myself. I knew that Ned was a praiseworthy, independent fellow, but then, what possible quality should Abby have that should come in contact with this? I could think of nothing. In short, I began to discredit the truth of what I had heard.

On the next day I found where Ned lived, and

called upon him. I found him in his barn, and he was glad to see me; and after a while his joy increased beyond all thought of care and trouble.

"And how is Abby?" I asked, after we had conversed on various topics.

His countenance fell in a moment, but I saw he was struggling to hide his feelings from me.

"O, she is so-so," he at last replied. "She'll be glad to see you."

In a little while we went into the house, and when I saw Abby I was at first struck with the wondrous change that had been made upon her countenance. She was older, to be sure, but then, she looked twenty years older than when I last saw her before. It required but a single glance for me to see that there was something wrong somewhere. At length, however, after Abby had got warmed up, she was as kind and genial as of old, and her eyes sparkled with the same old fire.

It was now in the forenoon, and they would not listen to my going away that day. Abby assured me that they had room for true friends, and declared I should not escape her so easily as to come and go the same day. I had no particular business to call me away, and as soon as I was assured that I should have a pleasant visit I agreed to stop. The afternoon I spent with Ned along the trout brook, and the evening we spent at home.

When I went to bed I made up my mind that Ned and his wife were two good souls, and that they ought to live happily together. And yet I knew that they did not. Awake to every look and motion, I had seen enough to assure me that they were miserable at times. I could translate every look, and knew what it meant. I knew all the while how Ned's thoughts were running, while he was silently wishing that his wife would always be as good as she was then. And I could read Abby's every thought while she was wishing that her home might ever be pleasant.

There was only one disagreeable thing in the house to me, and that was the strong smell of tobacco smoke that pervaded every part of it. Even my chamber smelt so strong of it that I was forced to sit awhile at the open window before retiring.

On the following morning, after breakfast, I resolved to ask him the question that lay upon my mind with fearful weight. I had the best of motives, for I believed that I could help him. Moreover, we used to be most intimate, and I knew he would not take offence; so I broached the matter.

"Ned, you will excuse me, but I must ask you a few questions."

He looked at me uneasily, as though he knew what was coming.

"I heard some strange stories in one of the stores day before yesterday, and I want to know the truth of them. I know you will pardon me, for I assure you I have only a generous motive in asking."

Thereupon I went on and told him what I had heard. Ned looked like one stricken.

"And has it come to this?" he uttered, clasping his hands.

"To what?" I asked, fearing he was offended because I had spoken of it.

"To be talked of publicly thus," he answered.

"It has, Ned," I said as kindly as I could, at the same time taking his hand. "And now you must tell me all. You and Abby were once my best friends, and when you were married I felt sure you would be as happy as could be. Now, what does this mean?"

"Alas, we are not happy," he groaned. "I have put her out of the house once, and once I shut her up. But O, if you could only hear her tongue! My God, how I have suffered!"

"But surely, Ned, there must be some cause for this. I know that Abby is not malignant by nature. Now tell me all. Tell me what caused your first quarrel."

"Why, I'll tell you; the first difficulty we ever had was about my pipe. She was't going to let me smoke in the house. Of course I wouldn't be snubbed in that fashion. Then shortly after that I had some men to work for me, and after dinner we laid our pipes on the kitchen shelf, and when we came to look for them after supper, they were gone. I saw some of the broken pieces in the fireplace, and I knew Abby had broken 'em up. That was the first real event in our catalogue of troubles, for after the men were gone we had some talk I can assure you."

The whole truth flashed upon me now.

"Who were these men that worked for you that day?" I asked.

He named them, and I recognized three of them as men whom I had seen in the store.

"I see it all, Ned."

"And don't you think she is to blame?"

"Why—you'll pardon me, I know—but I think you gave the first deep cause of trouble. I know Abby's taste, and I know that tobacco smoke is disgusting to her. Why, Ned, as sure as I am alive, I could not live in a house which smelled so

strong of tobacco smoke as yours does. Even last night I had to open my window and sit by it half an hour to get a little sweet air. I have been blamed by my friends several times, because I would not allow them to smoke in my house. The smoke of a pipe is sure sickness to my wife, and I will not allow it. Now think of it. Think of your wife—with a delicate frame, a more sensitive organization than yours—coming into her kitchen and finding four great dirty men puffing out clouds of nasty, filthy smoke, each whiff of which is enough to sicken her and make her head ache. And more, too: she knows that you are aware of her wishes, for she has told them to you a hundred times.—When you are gone she sees the pipe lying upon the shelf. With an aching head and sickening soul she looks at them, and knows that she must pass through the ordeal again and again. She is not herself; she is but a passion and disgust wrought up by tobacco-smoke; and she takes the filthy abomination and breaks it at once. Now, tell me truly, Ned, isn't this all the result of your pipe?"

He looked down upon the floor but made no answer.

"I know it is," I resumed, "and I know that if you would drop that, you would restore peace."

"Stop, stop," he cried. "I can't give up my pipe just to suit a woman's whim. I won't be tied down that way."

"Then why not smoke out of doors?"

"Suppose it rains? And then what shall I do in winter?"

"Why, if you must smoke in winter, let your tobacco smoke go where you make all your other smoke go. Stick your head into the fire-place and smoke up the chimney."

Ned fairly smiled.

"I'm in earnest," I added, "for I can assure you your pipe smoke is offensive to your wife, as the smoke of burning wood is to you. But I ask you candidly—how can you expect Abby to be happy when she is continually annoyed by a nuisance which is absolutely sickening to her, and that too, when it could be all remedied simply by your taking your pipe out of doors, or into the wood house? And certainly you cannot expect a person to be pleasant when they are continually unhappy. Now mark me, Ned, I don't mean to say that you are alone in the wrong; but I ask you, do you love Abby well enough to forego a little comfort or evil habit for her real good?"

Ned hesitated. He twice made up his mouth to speak before he made it out.

"Is a pipe offensive to your wife?"

"Not only offensive but it is absolutely injurious. She cannot be in a room where an old pipe is being smoked five minutes without a headache. I used to smoke, but I at length became so disgusted with the stench which pervaded my house, and moreover, I found that my wife was so opposed to it, that I gave it up. Her mere fussing about the smoke would never have moved me, had I not been assured that she was really annoyed by it. And surely, I thought, if my wife must stay in the house nearly all the time, and if her place of duty must be there confined, I will not to gratify a mere whim, make her suffer. I used after that, to smoke out of doors, but it was not always convenient, and I gradually gave it up."

Just at this moment one of the neighbors came in, and our conversation stopped.

I remained to dinner, and promised to call on them again before I left town.

I did so at the expiration of a week. I then walked out to Ned's place, and got there just after dinner, and I found him out on the chopping block smoking.

"Ha, Ned," I uttered, "have you moved your pipe?"

"Don't say a word," he replied, while a dewy moisture gathered in his eyes. "I haven't smoked in the house since."

"And Abby?" I said.

"I told her that very night that if she'd never speak a cross word to me again, I would never allow another pipe to be smoked in our house."

"And what did she say?"

"She looked me in the face a moment—I smiled—and then she burst out a crying. She hung around my neck—told me she'd done wrong—begged me to forgive her—and—and—we had a regular scene. By the powers, she's improved already."

"I should think she improved at once," said I.

"O, I mean in health and looks. She has't had a headache since."

When I went in I found Abby singing as merrily as a lark. When she saw me she dropped her towel and started towards me. She did not speak one word touching the joyful turn affairs had taken beneath her roof. But I knew what that quick warm grasp meant, and I could read the language of that glistening tear.

I went away shortly after that, and in three

years from that time I visited L.—again. My first call this time was upon Ned Cruden, and again I found him in his barn. Never moved a friend to greet me more quickly.

"Ah," I said, as I took his hand, "then you have given up the pipe altogether."

"Who told you?" he asked.

"You did," I replied.

"Me?—I told you?"

"Yes, with your breath. It doesn't smell as it did before."

"What?—and was it so bad?" Ned asked.

"To tell the truth, Ned, it was; for if there is anything that can make a repulsive mouth, it is an old tobacco pipe."

"Then Abby told the truth. But I've done with it now. Haven't touched a pipe for two years."

"And don't you feel better?"

"Don't I. I'd like to see the man that could hire me to go at it again."

We went up to the house, and the first look told the story. The room was clean and sweet, the wall white, and the hearth was free from the filth of tobacco spit. And Abby—ah, she was Abby once more—Abby of old—happy and joyous, and true as steel.

And as I sat and gazed upon the happy couple I pondered upon that strange element in human nature which will make misery and discord more and more, rather than bow one degree to simple reason. But the good dame's merry voice soon dispelled my deep thought, and I was contented to know in that home, at least, the demon of discord had been exorcised by a very little spirit of reason.

Miscellaneous.

ELECTION DAY IN SAINT JOHN.

Monday dawned gloriously; the sun shone in unclouded splendor. No clouds were seen to darken the face of the horizon. Even before the hour at which the polls were opened were the friends of Mr. Tilley at their posts. They had evidently slept upon their arms and were ready for the battle.

In an hour after the polls were opened he led Mr. Lawrence a hundred. In two hours his majority was doubled, and throughout the entire day he never ceased to lead his opponent less than two hundred votes; and when the polls closed he stood in the proud position of 244 votes ahead of Mr. Lawrence. The enthusiasm was immense; boys yelled with delight; and old men almost wept with joy. At half past four crowds numbering thousands assembled in front of Judge Ritchie's building. Cheer after cheer reverberated through the air, re-echoing in the distance like the thunder tones of freedom. Tilley was soon there from Carleton, and was received with the greatest enthusiasm. His friends felt proud that they had snatched him from the grasp of his enemies. He thanked them in eloquent terms for the support they had given him. In a moment a carriage and four horses were at hand; the gorgeous standard of the empire waved in majestic splendor over the carriage. Mr. Tilley and the members of the government took seats beneath the glorious old banner that "for a thousand years has braved the battle and the breeze." Two bands of music preceded the government carriage. In a moment a triumphal procession was formed. Over seventy five carriages made up the vast train, and paraded the principal streets amidst the wildest enthusiasm. At right as by common consent the people assembled at Judge Ritchie's Long Room. No Bills had been posted calling them together; still they were there—the young and the old, all classes and conditions of men, met to celebrate the great victory, and do honor to the candidate of the people. From two to three thousand at least were there—we scarcely ever saw so enthusiastic a mass. Delight sat enthroned on the visages of all. The cheering was unequalled—the people rejoiced at the greatness of their own work. The members of the government took seats upon the platform. Hon. Mr. Smith was the first speaker. The mass greeted him in a manner that must have told him that the government of which he is a member is popular in the city of St. John. He was followed by the Hon. Mr. Johnson, whose reception was told most plainly that the people did not believe the stories that had been circulated against him by the opposition. Mr. Gilbert, of Westmorland, in following Mr. Johnson, was received with enthusiasm; and in appropriate terms he dwelt upon the triumph that had been achieved. Then came the man of the people—the Hon. Mr. Tilley. The enthusiasm of the crowd passed all bounds. The cheers of the mass followed in rapid succession, reverberating through the corridors of the magnificent hall, breaking upon the walls in a thousand victorious melodies. Mr. Tilley thanked them for their support, dwelt upon the benefits of Responsible government