

Select Tale.

THE STORY OF
AN ENGAGED YOUNG PERSON.

It seemed a very long journey that we poor parliamentary passengers were taking, in this early November weather, all the way from London to Liverpool. The stoppages were frequent enough, but of such short duration that we had scarcely time to get ourselves warmed at the crowded grate before the inexorable bell rang for us to start again, and off we went with a shriek into the blinding fog. It was positively too dark to read with any comfort, even if one was so indifferent to the biting air as to lend one of his hands to hold the book up: we put both of them in our pockets instead, or more usually sat upon them, to keep them warm. It was only when the guard came from time to time to look at our tickets, and trod upon our feet, that we began to feel that we had them, so dead were they with cold.

"Sir," observed a comical-looking looking tailor to this official, "your seats are too narrow to be sat upon after my cross-legged fashion, so please be careful; for although my toes are frozen, they will not bear much."

This produced a laugh, and then arose a little talk, principally about how miserable we were, and then, as poor people use, we began to tell what our business was upon at Liverpool; whereupon it seemed that half the carriageful at least were emigrants. Each had his say; and every tale, however roughly told, had more or less of interest, because it was real and human, so that we quite forgot our weariness and cold for a little time. Then, since this had answered so well, the sprightly tailor proposed that one of the party should tell us a regular story, of his own life if he chose, but not only of his present circumstances, but of what led to them—which was an idea we all received quite rapturously, expecting the tailor himself to begin. But he said no; we must draw lots for that. So producing some long slips of measuring paper, he wrote a word on one, and shook them altogether in a hat, around. There was a great deal of giggling among the ladies, and a great deal of secret trepidation among the men, but for a long time nobody pulled on the fatal lot; at last a burst of laughter from those about one of the corner-seats announced that the victim had been selected, and that among the ladies.

She was certainly the plainest of all the female passengers. Her nose turned up, and her mouth had scarcely any turn at all: her hair was so worn that the rims of her eyes: and her eyes themselves were far from being good ones; but there was a certain piquancy and sprightliness about her, too, as though she had been a French lady's-maid rather than an English one. She looked as if she could put her hand and well rounded arm to anything, and had been very good-tempered and obliging throughout the journey. It was understood—it had been expressed, indeed, already rather triumphantly by the young lady herself—that she was an engaged young person, going out to Australia to be married; and there was a somebody waiting upon the other hemisphere with outstretched hands, yearning to receive her as his bride. She would be a capital wife for a settler without doubt, although perhaps in England we should have called her rather a settler for a wife. She seemed to know very well, indeed; what we were all likely to think about this matter; but she didn't care.

If I had been better looking—she began her story with this—I might never have got a husband, or at least not the money to marry him upon, which is the same thing. The unsuitableness of my face to what I may be allowed to call a very tolerable figure, has been literally the means of bestowing happiness, I hope upon Joseph, and of putting £400 into my own pocket. And this was how it all came about; my late mistress, who was very kind to me, and had intended, poor thing—for she told me so—to leave me comfortably provided for, took me over with her seven years ago, to Paris. She was a widow lady, fond of a gay life and brilliant amusements; and that place suited her so well, that she made it her home, and I but little loath, remained there too. Joseph and I had kept company together before that time, but he was not so foolish as to wish me to give up my expectations for the sake of a hurried marriage; he said that he would wait patiently, dear fellow, although the great salt sea was to roll between us, and there could be no chance of his getting a letter more than once a day. He was a mason's assistant in London, and very hardly worked, it seemed, for he himself was not able to reply nearly so often: however, of course I was not a bird, that I could be in two places at once, so I made the best of it, and was as a con-

dential lady's maid, under such circumstances, could hope to be.

One evening I had been preparing my mistress, who was a very splendid dresser, for the opera; my only fellow-servant was on leave of absence for some days; and except the porter in the courtyard, there was nobody, when the carriage had driven off that night, in the whole house save myself; therefore, having nothing better—or at least nicer—to do, and being in my mistress's bedroom amongst her beautiful robes and ornaments, it was hardly to be expected that I should resist such an opportunity of trying them on. The room, besides being charmingly hung with mirrors, had a delicious full-length swinging-glass, and before this I amused myself for a good while. I beheld how Mademoiselle Elizabeth Martin—that is my present name, but dear Joseph's is Andrews—how she looked in bareges, in silks, in muslins, for the morning; and how lace and satin, and low sleeves, with pearls, became her for evening wear; finally, equipping myself in a particularly pleasant glaze silk walking dress, with a bonnet and falling veil fit for a bride, I could not help twisting round a little, to see as much of myself as possible, and contrasting the effect at the same time with that of madame—who was beautiful enough, but indifferently proportioned—I involuntarily remarked aloud: "Well, we may be plain in the face, but we are certainly unexceptionable, behind." It was an absurd thing to say even to one's self, and I remember blushing like a beet, as though it were not quite out of the question that I could be overheard. There were several jewel-drawers—this ruby upon my middle finger, a ring belonging to my mistress's late husband, was on one of them—but I had no time for more than to set off a handsome necklace or two, and to very much regret that my ears had not been punched for the accommodation of an especial pair of diamond earrings, before I heard wheels in the courtyard, and my mistress came home. Everything had been put away very carefully, and I undressed her and saw to bed as usual. She was more than commonly kind and gentle in her manner that night, as I have since thought at least; and when she wished her *bon soir*, she added: "I am sure we both shall be tired to-morrow, Bessie; so call me an hour later, and take an extra sleep yourself." I was never to hear my good mistress speak any more.

Did I dream that night that she had left me all her wardrobe, and that I was married in the glaze silk? Did I, even in my sleep, build schemes of what I would do with the money that my dead mistress might enrich me with? No; as I hope for heaven and to meet dear Joseph, with all my woman's vanity, I had my woman's heart too beating true and warm, and I thought no shadow of evil. I told them so in court, where all looked black against me, and they believed me even there. But in that morning, late, when the sun was shining full upon the window, and the noise of the people going about their daily work was full and clear, I saw a frightful sight, a ghastly horror, that the day but served to make more hideous and unnatural—my mistress murdered in her bed! No answer when I knocked; again no answer. The curtains at the bedside were close drawn, but through the open shutters a fiery flood of light fell red upon the carpet and the curtains—ay, and on the corner of the snow-white counterpane, red also. It was blood! I thought there had been a rain of blood; upon the handles of the drawers, upon the toilet-cover, on the dressing-case, upon the towels, in the basin—everything where the murderer's hands had been after their deadly work; and in the bed—I dared not look in the bed; but in that great swing-glass, where I had decked myself but a few hours ago, I saw it all, and every mirror in the room was picturing the same sight—there lay the corpse, the murdered woman with her gaping throat. . . . They thought at first that I was murdered too, laying so stiff and cold in that death chamber. I answered nothing to their questions, neither in the house nor in the prison. I knew nothing, nor could I have told them had I known, until Joseph came. It seemed to me then quite natural that he should be with me—nothing praiseworthy, nothing. (This dear little engaged young person's eyes began to get redder about the rims at this reminiscence, and her story to assume an incoherent as well as a choky character.) I did not understand how much I owed him: how, not having heard from me for some time, and reading in the paper that an English lady's-maid had been taken up in Paris for a murder in the Rue St. Honore, but that she refused to speak, and even had perhaps in reality lost her senses, he started off at once, giving up his employ, and borrowing and begging what he could, and knowing no word of French but the name of that one street, he hurried to me; so that my mind came back again, and I

could tell them what I knew. All he did he said was less than he ought to have done, because he had believed ill to me of old (which I am sure, dear Joseph never had, nor thought of doing.) He stood by me in court—in the prisoners' place along with me he stood and shared my shame. I told about the jewels, and of my trying them on; how everything was safe, and the doors locked, and the chamber-window too high to be climbed up to, though a man might have let himself down from it into the yard. And then I learned for the first time that all the afternoon and night the murderer had hid hidden under my Mistress's bed; that he must have been there all that time—think of it!—that I was trying on that dresses and the ornaments; that there was murder waiting in that chamber all the while; it made me shudder even then, amidst that crowded court, with Joseph by me. They thought it very strange, they said, that since there was so much time before him between my mistress's departure and return, that he had not murdered me instead. He had carried off all the jewels—those in the drawers as well as those which my poor mistress had worn that very evening; but from the moment he had dropped into the courtyard, the police could find no trace of him.

A mere suspicion fell upon the brother of the gate porter; but it was so vague that he was not put upon his trial. A great sum was offered in reward for the apprehension of the murderer, making up, with what was offered by my late mistress's family, nearly £400. She died with a will, poor lady, and they were not disposed to give me anything beyond the wages due to me. After my acquittal, a collection for mine and Joseph's benefit was made by some good people; but the money only sufficed to bring us back to England. Joseph had to work out a heavy debt, incurred upon my account, and I went into service again at once, resolving to do my best to help him. At the end of two years, poor fellow, except that he had discharged his obligation, he was but little better off than at their beginning; and despairing of ever getting a living for us both in the old country, he sailed twelve months ago for Sidney. Whichever of us first got rich, it was arranged, should cross the seas after the other, it seemed that we might each stop where we were, engaged young persons, till we died.

I was a nursery-maid in my new place, and was taking the youngest child across Hyde Park one afternoon, when I was followed by an impertinent man; I had my "ugly" on, for the sun was hot so that my face might have been like Venus, for all he knew to the contrary, and then, I detected myself I was not disagreeable looking. At all events, I attracted the wretch, who kept close behind me. He was an abominable person with a foreign appearance—which I had reason enough for disliking—and eyes that looked different ways, but neither of them nice ways, so that I was glad enough to get in sight of the policemen about the marble arch. He saw that there was no time to be lost, if he meant to get a good look at me at all, so he passed me on a sudden very quickly, turned round, and looked up into my face. I gave him a very tolerable stare, too, because I knew it would disappoint him, after his great expectations; and it did so; and not only that, for it made him give a sort of villainous grin, which I hope I may never see again, and he broke out, as if he could not help it for the life of him, with "Well, we may be plain in the face, but we are unexceptionable behind." I cried out "Murder" and "Police" as loud as I could, and the man was steered at once. No human being except the one who had been under the bed, her murderer, could have known those words, which I had spoken alone, before Madame's toilet-glass. He denied everything of course, and said it was an unjust detention; but in little more than half an hour, a telegraphic message from the Paris authorities set his mind at ease in this respect, and demanded his presence in that city. He was the elder brother of the gate-porter, whom I had never before seen; and what I had to tell, in addition to the previous suspicions against him, procured his conviction. He was sent to the galleys for life. This ruby ring which he wore upon his little finger, I identified as having been in the jewel-drawers that very night. It was bestowed upon me after the trial, by the heir-at-law, and I obtained besides the £400 reward. If I had been pretty, you see, there would not have been any occasion for me to have remarked upon it that evening, and I might have remained, my whole life, an engaged young person.

The last serious objection which we have heard made to the coining of gold dollars is that of a stingy old fellow, who maintains that in consequence of their diminutive size, they may be dropped by mistake, occasionally, into the contribution box. He will never be guilty of such an error, at any rate.

Miscellaneous.

A GENTLE HINT.—Rev. Jonathan French, of South Andover, was to be supplied with wood by his parishioners, according to the terms of his settlement. Winter was coming on, but no wood had been furnished. Mr. French waited until the Governor's proclamation for Thanksgiving came, when after reading it to his people, he said with great apparent simplicity: "My brethren, you perceive that his Excellency has appointed next Thursday as a day of Thanksgiving, and, according to custom, it is my intention to prepare two discourses for that occasion—provided I can write them without a fire." The hint took, and on the next day all his winter's wood was in his wood-yard.

SLEEP.—The unwisest of all economies is time saved from necessary sleep, for it begets a nervous irritability, which masters the body, and destroys the mind. When a man becomes sleepless, the intellect is in danger. A restored lunatic, of superior mental endowments, said:—"The first symptom of insanity, in my own case, was a want of sleep; and from the time I began to sleep soundly my recovery was sure."

Let this be a warning to all who are acquiring an education. Every young person at school should have eight hours for sleep out of every twenty-four; for, as the brain is highly stimulated all the time in the prosecution of study, it will break down, just as any other part of the frame, unless it have time for full recuperation. Better, a thousand times, to give another year to the completion of specified studies, than, by curtailing sleep, to endeavor to get through that much sooner, at the risk of madness.—*Hall's Journal of Health.*

WOMEN'S RIGHTS.—The Hon. Mr. Cameron has brought in a bill which provides that a woman married without a marriage contract or settlement, shall enjoy her personal property free from her husband's debts or control as freely as if unmarried; that such property shall not be liable to seizure for the husband's debts, but may be taken in execution in satisfaction of damages arising out of her torts. Her real estate also is no longer liable to execution on judgment against her husband, by reason of his tendency by courtesy. The wife's separate property is to be liable for her separate contracts whether before or after marriage. The wife is to be allowed to devise or bequeath her separate property, provided the husband's rights as tenant by courtesy shall not be affected. The wife's property, when she dies intestate, to be distributed between her husband, children and relatives, in the same way as the husband's when he dies intestate is now devisable between the wife, children and relatives.

NO ENTHUSIAST.—The energy of the manner of the late Rowland Hill, and the power of his voice, are said to have been at times overwhelming. While once preaching at Wotton-under-Edge, his country residence, he was carried away by the impetuous rush of his feelings, and, raising himself to his full height, exclaimed, "Beware, I am in earnest; men call me an enthusiast, but I am not; mine are words of truth and soberness. When I first came into this part of the country, I was walking on yonder hill; I saw a gravel-pit fall in and bury three human beings alive. I lifted up my voice for help so loud that I was heard to the town below, a distance of a mile. Help came and rescued two of the poor sufferers. No one called me an enthusiast then—and when I see eternal destruction ready to fall upon poor sinners, and about to entomb them irrevocably in an eternal mass of woe, and call on them to escape by repenting and fleeing to Christ, shall I be called an enthusiast? No, sinner, I am not an enthusiast in so doing."

CURING BACON WITHOUT SMOKE.

"Oh, the trouble folks have taken,

To smoke and spoil their bacon.

To smoke the best bacon, fat your hogs early and fat them well. By fattening early you make a great saving in food, and well fattened pork. Then kill as early as the weather will allow, and salt as soon as the animal heat is gone, with a plenty of the purest salt, and about half an ounce of saltpetre to one hundred pounds of pork.

As soon as the meat is salted to your taste, which will generally be in about five weeks, take it out, and if any of it has been covered with brine, let it drain a little. Then take black pepper, finely ground, and dust on the hock end as much as will stick, then hang it up in a good, clean, dry airy place. If all this is done as it should be, (it ought to be done now,) you will have no further trouble with it, for by dry time in spring, your bacon is so well cured on the outside, that flies or bugs will not disturb it.

Curing bacon is like the Irishman's mode of making punch. He said:—"Put in the sugar, then fill it up with whiskey, and every drop of water you put in after that, spoils the punch." Just so with curing bacon; after following the directions given above, every "drop" of smoke you put about it, spoils the bacon.—*Portage Democrat.*

REMEDY FOR SORES ON HORSES AND CATTLE.—Lime and lard, says the correspondent of the *Maine Farmer*, "are the best application to old, bad sores, of any kind, that I know, especially if the bone is