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A HOLIDAY TRAGEDY.

All my life I had been—well, not exactly a woman hater, but a firm believer that man is the lord of creation, and that woman is not an absolute necessity. For many years it was my proud boast that I was able to dispense with feminine aid and yet lead a very enjoyable life, as, with clockwork regularity, I went from my bachelor lodgings to business each morning, returning in the afternoon and spending the evening at the club or some place of amusement. The idea of having a lady companion in my rambles never entered my head.

True, my landlady (good old soul) prepared my meals and cleaned my rooms, but that was because I had not time to do it myself, and a man servant was beyond my means. But in all else I dispensed with woman's aid. Boot cleaning, sewing buttons on, lighting the fire, etc., were all done with my own hands—say at a pinch I have even washed a pocket handkerchief.

I desired to stand forth as a living example of the original Adam and a proof of the superfluity of the modern Eve. But my misguided companions refused to profit by my teachings or to follow my example. One by one they fell under influences, one by one they married, and then—I cut them dead. Ah, me! Those free Bohemian days were happy ones, as year after year I pursued my adopted course, in spite of the continual falling off of my comrades. Then came a time when my circle of acquaintances had decreased so considerably that I began to feel lonely. Bachelor chums were more difficult to find than ever. To loneliness succeeded melancholy, and I grew miserable and pessimistic.

One friend, to whom I laid bare my woes, said: "You keep to yourself too much. What you ought to do is to lodge with some family where there are two or three grown up daughters. They would wake you up a bit."

This to me, the hitherto ideal advocate of an Eveless Adam! And yet, after the advice had been tendered, several times, I began to think that such a change might be beneficial. Such a course need not involve the rendering up of my teacots, but, as woman still formed a part of the world, she might at least contribute to my amusement. So, after very serious consideration, I decided to seek some fresh apartments, with light society thrown in.

Now my trouble commenced, I could not make the direct inquiry, "Have you any grown up daughters?" So I generally viewed the rooms, listening to the landlady's verbiage, settled the rent and then casually asked, "Have you any children?" and the reply would be "Yes, four, five, or six," as the case might be; "the eldest is 10 years old and the youngest two months. But they are as good as gold, and never make a bit of noise."

The numberless interviews I made and the desultory conversations I listened to were all to no purpose. No one appeared to possess grown up daughters—the eldest was always 10. Just when I was about to abandon my search, fortune—or was it fate? led me to Myrtle Villa, paradise Gardens, Upper Dulwich. The door was opened by a vision of loveliness, faultlessly dressed, and with bright blue eyes and golden hair. "Newly married," thought I; well, here at least the eldest will be 10! She invited me in, and then disappeared; a middle aged lady entered directly after, we proceeded to discuss terms. Then came the inevitable inquiry as to children.

"I have two grown up daughters, the younger of whom opened the door for you."

At last! Need I say that within a week I was installed in Myrtle Villa? The landlady, a widow, was a genial homely woman, and the youngest daughter, Annie, aged 25, I have already described, but the other daughter, Julia, did not impress me favourably. She was neither good looking nor pleasing, and, without being exactly bad tempered, always insisted upon having her own way.

I now seemed to be in a new world. My boots wore a brilliant lustre every morning without my aid, and my slippers were laid ready for me in the evening, and as for lending me a needle and cotton—the idea!—if I would only leave them outside they would be only too happy.

I no longer needed to seek relaxation at the club after the labors of the day. Julia played the piano well, her only accomplishment, while Annie sang divinely, and thus the evenings passed all too quickly. Male acquaintances they did not seem to possess—yet, stay, there was one—a Mr. Malcolm, whose name I frequently heard mentioned, but as his calls were always made in the daytime, I never saw him. I had rapidly passed into that condition of mind which raised a feeling of jealousy on his account, so one day I questioned my landlady on the subject.

"Oh, he's a very old friend of ours. Once we thought he would have proposed to Julia, but nothing came of it."

What a relief. Only Julia! So time went pleasantly on, and then—how can I confess it? my lifelong creed thrown to the winds, my proud ambition humbled in the dust, and I became a living slave to the sex I so long despised and ignored. My only thought now was how, and in what words, I should beseech my darling Annie to become my wife. Time after time, I was on the point of speaking, but Julia always turned up at the critical moment.

One evening Julia announced that a week thence she had an engagement to play at a concert. Then burst upon me a brilliant inspiration. I purchased two small tickets for the Lyceum for that same evening, and saying I had them given to me, I persuaded Annie to promise to accompany me. This time Julia would not be able to intrude, and I should know my fate. In two months' time I should be taking my summer holiday, which would fit it just nicely for the honey-moon.

On the eventful day I hastened homeward with a queer fluttering in my heart and a flower spray for Annie in my hat. Julia opened the door and hardly permitted me to enter before she informed me that Annie had been out in the hot sun and been obliged to go to bed with a very bad sick headache. My fluttering heart gave one huge bound and then seemed to stand still. However, to disguise my feelings, I said:

"I am sorry; and you have to play at the concert?"

"No," she replied, "the concert has been postponed."

"Then may I beg the pleasure of your company? I did not ask you before because of the concert engagement."

"Thanks. I shall enjoy it immensely." What a miserable failure that evening proved to be! I do not even know what the play was called. I was thinking all the time of my poor, sick darling, and not of the acting or the woman who sat at my side, wearing the flower spray that was meant for Annie.

The words were still unspoken when my holidays arrived, and leaving myself away from the two sisters, who stood at the gate and waved their handkerchiefs as long as I remained in sight, it was with no feelings of joyful anticipation that I betook myself to Hastings for rest and recreation.

Rest! Where could I find it? Not on the parade or pier amidst hundreds of couples pronouncing as I had pictured Annie and myself doing; not on the beach where the Rihopian musicians were eternally playing "Annie Laurie," "Sweet Annie Rooney," and "Annie, Dear, I'm called away." For a week I wandered aimlessly hither and thither. Then I could stand it no longer. So I wrote a long letter commencing "Darling," and pouring out the impassioned heart-ache love that comes but once in a woman's lifetime. I thought and beseeched her to take pity on me or my lifeless body, and surge on the billows that beat relentlessly upon the rocks at Beachy Head.

When I had finished I happened to catch sight of a photograph which I had purchased the previous day representing one of the yachts preparing to start on her morning trip, with my own figure in prominent position in the bow.

"Ah!" thought I, "I'll send that to Julia."

the other boarders would remark that, the sea air did not seem to agree with me, while under the mask of assumed indifference there raged within me the fiercest volcano that ever burned in the heart of man.

At last the reply came, and bounding up to the privacy of my room, with trembling fingers I tore open the envelope which hid from me—life or death?

"Dearest, I am yours forever. I can not say your proposal was unexpected, for I have felt that you could mean nothing less, ever since that evening when you so openly expressed your preference for me by taking me to the theatre—"

What! Whew! Where!!! I looked at the signature—"Julia." Oh, Heavens! I saw it all. I had placed them in the wrong envelopes, and sent the letter to Julia and the photograph to Annie! How I raged and fumed and tore my hair, until at last in sheer exhaustion, I sank into a chair and endeavoured to finish reading the letter.

"Annie thanks you very much for the photo, and she desires me to tell you that yesterday Mr. Malcolm proposed to her and was accepted. We will have the two weddings on the same day. Won't that be nice, dear?"

Nice? This was the last straw. Nice, indeed, for me to be married to a woman I did not care for, and at the same time to see the one I loved given to another man! I cannot remember what I did for the next hour or two beyond cursing my foolishness and swearing I wouldn't marry Julia. Then when I became calmer, I saw an action for breach of promise looming. I thought of all my hard earned savings of years being swept away by a sympathetic jury to heal Julia's broken heart. There was no escape for me. She had my letter, which simply commenced "Darling," and as no name was mentioned in it from beginning to end, was it possible that any body of intelligent men could be brought to believe that I intended it for Annie, when I addressed the envelope to Julia? No, no. I must go through with it—I would marry Julia. Yes, and I would teach her that man is the lord of creation, and that woman is but a helpmate, and not an equal, and so in my married life triumphantly assert those principles which I had held so long.

Julia married me at the same time and place as Annie married Mr. Malcolm. I now spend my evenings endeavouring to solve a difficult problem, and that is, why do they call women the weaker sex?—Tid-Bits.

WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION COLUMN.

All Communications to this Column Should be Addressed to Mrs. J. Stevenson, Secretary W. C. T. U. Richibucto.

Women's Christian Temperance Union Richibucto, will meet every fortnight at the residence of Miss Ostle. Meetings on Thursday at 3 p. m. Mothers' meetings will be held every fortnight on alternate Wednesdays, at the same place and hour. Mothers are requested to attend.

Though discouragement may attend our efforts, let us preserve, let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.—Gal. VI, 9.

Rev. J. M. Thompson's Lectures.

The concluding lecture of the series was delivered Wednesday evening, the 22nd ult., to an attentive audience who by repeated tokens of applause manifested their appreciation for the able and eloquent sentiments which the lecturer presented in enforcing the claims of Temperance.

The meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev. S. W. Sprague, The Rev. lecturer gave a brief recapitulation of the argument of his last address, affirming that in view of the incontrovertible facts, teaching the prevalence and misery of intemperance, is highly culpable.

Let me (he continued) seriously propose the question, "Is the drunkard worth saving?" Is there anything about him, or his relations, or interests, really such an object as him in the abstract, degraded, filthy, and unclean, and whose only use is to be a curse to his family, and a burden to his neighbors, that may be considered as a sufficient reason for his preservation?

He next referred to the mental and moral helplessness of the drunkard. His ruling vice holds him with an iron grasp, so that he needs our aid.

He next referred to the mental and moral helplessness of the drunkard. His ruling vice holds him with an iron grasp, so that he needs our aid.

The next enquiry is, who are to save the drunkard? Every one is interested in his salvation, since but few are able to say that neither relative nor friend has been a victim to drunkenness. And if there be an exception here or there, we are all human, and we are all liable. If it be then the duty of all, what may be done? One says, "the Church of God is the instrument," but he would not hesitate to say that among the thousands who have been reclaimed within the past thirty years that very few have become so through the direct instrumentality of the Church. They have chiefly nearly all been recovered by means of the Temperance Institutions. He was deeply sensible of the power of vital religion to purify the heart and regulate the life, but from its necessarily exclusive character, it did not reach the drunkard. He is far from its pall, and unfitted to enter.

We tee-totalers combine to alleviate the misery produced by intemperance, just as men combine to build railroads, to promote education or any other instrument of moral and mutual good.

For his part, he was a strong moral suasion man. He was not what people sometimes called an ultra—a fanatic. He was a firm believer in the power of moral suasion.

In endeavouring to save the drunkard, there is but one effective mode: i. e. to separate him altogether from the instruments of his ruin. Total-abstainers advocate two ways; one is to take the drunkard from his cup; the other, to take the cup from the drunkard. Some go in for the first, and some will go to him and say,—out of this you beast, you are a disgrace to society.—Not so, moral suasions. Moral suasion speaks thus: "I pity thee, but there is hope for thee." It brings to bear upon the heart and soul in his lucid moments, and its warnings and entreaties are seldom unsuccessful.

The lecturer next appealed to moderate drinkers, showing the evil of their example and the danger to which they are exposed.—They say, we drink but little, and shall not exceed. So said this drunkard.

He had no doubt that sometimes alcoholic stimulants were beneficial, just as mercury or opium is, but not otherwise. He could prove by undeniable testimony, that total-abstinence was better for the human system, than never so moderate an indulgence in alcoholic drinks. Where has the tee-totalism not been tested? On the plains of India.—At defence of Kars. In the frozen North with Arctic navigators to drink it is to die. It has been tested in the workshops of Britain, and on her rich pastures, and her productive fields. The tee-totaller, it has been proved will out-work you, he will out-run you, he will out-reap you, he will out-plough you.

But the moderate drinker will still say You take your water—I take my wine—You prefer the one while I prefer the other. I reply thus: Whosoever, to gratify a spirit of pride and luxury, practices any indulgence, not absolutely necessary, is responsible for the effects of a similar indulgence by his fellow-men, influenced by his example which may result in the destruction of soul and body.

He next pointed out the subjects upon which moral suasion is to be exercised.—Upon the young. Upon the men engaged in the traffic. His? It seldom reaches the latter; and the only resource is to apply legislation. And we would legislate on the ground that we have the right to engage in any calling which is detrimental to the public good. The liquor is so. He differed, he thought, from very many Temperance advocates as to the mode of bringing to pass the Prohibitory Law. He would entirely eliminate the political element. He would appeal to the people, if possible, and thus when no general measure is going on, what might be feared from any prejudicial excitement. In his estimate he would recognize no political party—the religious distinction. It was purely a matter of civil order—of public good.

He, in conclusion, expressed his firm hope in the success of the enterprise, and urged upon it renewed effort and perseverence until the victory is complete. He would conclude that the resuming of the "tee-total" means of impressing the public mind on behalf of Temperance will be successful, and we can but wish that such calm, temperate, and persuasive addresses, which we have in abundance transferred (though imperfectly) may help on a cause which certainly has a vast, very great and very beneficial effect on the drinking customs of society.

Weakness is the symptom, impoverishment the cause, Hood's Sarsaparilla the cure. It makes the weak strong.

Pitcher's Castoria.



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