

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

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## EASY WARREN.

BY WILLIAM T. COGGSHALL.

RAYMOND WARREN was a nice man—everybody's clever fellow, as I heard a public man once remark, 'a very extensive office,' with numerous duties, never discharged.—Raymond used to sit in the chimney corner late, very late on a winter's night, because he was too shiftless to get ready for bed.—But after a while the fire burned low—the glow on the embers faded, and it grew cold in the chimney corner; then Raymond became chilly, and he would sneak to rest, where his wife perhaps had been for several hours, endeavouring to recover from the severe fatigue of a day's work, into which had been crowded the greater portion of her husband's legitimate duties. Raymond owned a large farm, left him by his father. It was good land, but the fences were not in repair, and everybody's cattle roamed through the fields, and Raymond's crops were not sufficient to yield the family a decent support. The farm had once been well stocked, but for want of proper attention the cattle became poor—the sheep were never folded, even in the most rigorous weather, and many of them died.—The wool was never properly sheared and washed, and when taken to market it would not fetch the market price. Had it not been for Raymond's wife, who was a business woman, the family must often have suffered for the common necessities of life.

Raymond's chores were rarely attended to by himself, but was a neighbour sick, no man was more willing to work in his place. He was relied upon as the man who would always neglect his own interests, to look after those of somebody else. He would never set himself at his own farm-work, but he was considered an excellent hand, when, to oblige a neighbour, he took a job in his field.

It was a bleak morning in mid-winter—Raymond Warren's wife was in the barn-yard foddering the cattle—Raymond was in bed. The light of a brisk fire which his wife had built, shone directly in his face. It awakened him—the room was warm, and Raymond was persuaded by its inviting appearance to arise. He sat down by the fire-place in his shirt sleeves, and waited for his wife to get him some breakfast. As he warmed his feet he felt that he had reason to congratulate himself on his happy situation, and he said to himself—

'Tain't every man's got such a wife as I have. Here she's made a good fire, and I'll bet the chores are all done.'

The chores were done, and Raymond had scarcely finished his soliloquy, when the useful wife hastened to the fire-place to warm her hands, which had become thoroughly chilled by the cold handle of the pitchfork, with which she had been throwing hay and straw to the cattle.

It might be supposed that these occurrences took place early in the morning—not so. It was ten o'clock when Raymond Warren left his bed. His wife had been sewing for two hours, before she prepared her breakfast; then she urged Raymond for an hour longer, to get up. He made fair promises but left them all unfulfilled. She waited until it was nine o'clock, and then knowing her husband's easy habits, and ashamed to have the cattle unfed at that hour of the day, she determined to attend to their wants herself.

Raymond's first salutation to her as she stood by the fire, was,

'I wish I had some tea, Sally—but never mind, you've put the things away—a little warm water, with a little milk and sugar in it, will do just as well, and while you're about it, you may get me a little piece of bread; but just as you please; no matter about it, anyhow. 'Taint every man's got such a woman for a wife.'

She might have answered,

'It is not every woman that has such a husband.'

But she knew such remarks would only make bitter feelings, and though fatigued with the violent exercise she had taken, she went cheerfully and prepared her easy, good natured husband a cup of tea and a slice of toast, and then asked him if he would cut some wood.

'To be sure I will' was his response.

His breakfast over, he took up his axe, mounted his wood pile and cut half a dozen sticks, when along came a neighbour, who wanted Raymond to accompany him to a saw mill, about two miles distant, and assist in loading upon a sled some boards which had been sawed for him—of course Raymond went, and his wife was compelled to cut wood enough to keep the house warm until the following day.

Mrs Warren was in appearance a feeble woman, but she had endured hardship which would have destroyed the constitution of one much more robust. Day after day her strength failed her, yet she made no complaint. Raymond saw that she grew pale, and was often disturbed with fears in regard to her, but he was too easy to mention the subject, and the useful wife became more and more feeble, until she was seized with a violent cough. Raymond was one day thoughtful enough to speak to the village doctor as he passed their house with his ponderous medicine portmanteau on his arm, and the benevolent gentleman, who had some knowledge

of Raymond's peculiar feelings, left the woman an innocent tincture, and forbade exposure to the cold atmosphere under any circumstances, and also declared that her complaint was of a character very much aggravated by severe exercise.

For a few days Raymond remembered the doctor's counsel, and as he had respect for the physician, he obeyed him as nearly as his constitutional feelings permitted, but soon the wife was again obliged to chop wood, and feed cattle, and taking a severe cold, she faded as would fade the summer rose in a frigid clime.

When Raymond Warren's house was desolate and his fireside cheerless, he saw what had been his great error during the two years of his married life, and he mourned his wife deeply, it must be said in his favor, both as helpmate and as a companion.

He rented his farm, and managed to live 'easily' for one year; but he was a domestic man—he was not satisfied with a childless widow's solitary lot, and he began to look about him for a second helpmate and companion.

In a few months he took to his home a woman whom he confidently hoped would fill the place of his first wife. Sadly was Raymond disappointed. A few weeks elapsed, and he fell into his old habits, with complete abandon.

Leaving his own work in a neglected state, he worked diligently one day to assist a neighbor in getting wood to his house, and he returned to his home, late at night, hungry and fatigued, expecting that his wife would have ready for his refreshment an inviting supper. In this hope he had refused to take supper with the neighbor whom he had assisted.

Poor fellow! the kitchen where was to have been his excellent supper, attended by a smiling wife, was cold and unoccupied. No frugal board was there, and Mrs Warren was in bed.

Raymond was much astonished but was too good natured to complain, and silently ventured to explore the cupboard for a crust on which to satisfy the gnawings of his appetite. Not a crumb was there. It was evident his wife had designed that he should go supperless to bed; and supperless to bed, he did go, grieving seriously at his bad lot.

He had never before been so badly treated, and he thought it indeed distressing, but yet his disappointment was not sad enough to revolutionise his constitutional good nature, and without a single murmur he fell sound asleep.

Raymond Warren did not hear chattering salute the morning, as it dawned after the night of his grievous disappointment. It was spring time, and the birds sang under his window, but he heard them not; yet he heard his wife, who had risen before the sun, call him—

'Mr Warren, here I've been for an hour in the cold. The wood's all burnt. It's time I had some cut. If you want any breakfast you had better get up.'

Was Raymond dreaming? Was this a voice of reproach that came to him in his sleep, with recollections of the wife who had gone before him to the spirit land? Not so—it was the voice from the wife that dwelt with him in this sphere of existence, that came to remind him of duties not discharged, upon the performance of which depended the satisfaction of those desires which had intruded visions of feasts upon his hours of rest. All this he felt, still he did not offer to leave his couch.

'Raymond Warren,' again said the voice, 'you left me yesterday without wood, to help a neighbor to get wood for his wife, and you went to bed last night without your supper. You'll not get a bite to eat till you bring me wood to cook it.'

'There's plenty of chips, said Raymond in palliation, rising up on his elbow as he spoke.

'Get up then, and bring them into the house,' said the resolute wife. 'I didn't know you when I was married, but I know you now. I know what killed your first wife. You want to make a slave of me. I'll attend to my duties; but if you don't do your chores the cattle may starve, and you'll never get a bite to eat in this house unless you take it uncooked if you don't cut wood yourself or get some person else to do it for you.'

Raymond started bolt upright, and it was not many minutes before he was at the wood-pile. Diligently did he work until he had cut an armful, which, like a dutiful husband for the first time in his life, he carried into the kitchen.

His wife made no allusion to what had passed between them, and Raymond, altho' burning with curiosity to know where she had learned what she had revealed to him, dared not commence conversation in relation to it. The train of ill it might revive was fearful to the easy man's mind.

His breakfast over, forgetful of its lesson, careless Raymond wandered away from home, his necessary morning labors in his barn yard unattended to, and his wood pile unvisited. He returned home at noon, strong in the faith that he should sit down to a good dinner, because he was one of those men who think that a wife should always give her husband a good dinner, whether she has anything to cook or not.

Mrs Warren had enough to cook, but no thing to cook it with; however, much to Raymond's satisfaction, when he entered his home he found the table spread, and he knew he would soon be invited to take a seat near it.

When the invitation came, he hastened to his accustomed seat, lifted the cover from a dish that he supposed contained meat; and truly there was meat, but just as it came from the butcher's.

Raymond was not a cannibal; he looked at his wife enquiringly; she appeared to be waiting patiently to be served. He lifted the cover of another dish; there were potatoes just as they had been dug from the earth. All the dishes that usually contained victuals were covered. Raymond grew suspicious, and he lifted the covers hastily.

There was bread as it had come from the tray; there were turnips that had never been under the influence of fire; there were apples handsomely sliced for sauce, and there were numerous other edibles, but none of them could Raymond eat.

He turned for consolation to a cup of tea his wife had deposited near his plate. There were tea leaves floating in the cup, but the tea looked remarkably pale; nevertheless, Raymond, by force of habit, blew it vigorously to prepare it for his palate. But when he put it to his lips he found that he had wasted his breath; for it was as cold as when it came from the spring.

Raymond was not a hasty man. He pushed back his chair deliberately, and thought aloud—

In the name of heaven what does this mean?

Mrs Warren, whose countenance during this scene had worn a sober aspect, now smiled pleasantly and answered his exclamation.

'The victuals were all on the stove the usual time.'

'It's strange they were not cooked,' said Raymond.

'Not at all,' replied Mrs Warren, as coolly as possible; 'there was no wood to cook them with.'

In an instant Easy Warren then saw what a moral there was in his novel dinner, and with a keen appetite he went to work on the wood pile. He took his dinner and supper together that day, and he remembered that Mrs Warren said:

'Now, Raymond remember this, whenever you leave me without wood, you must eat victuals that have been cooked on a cold stove.'

Many women would have stormed and scolded, but Mrs Warren knew there was a better way to correct her easy husband's carelessness, or shiftlessness, as the reader pleases.

One day there was no flour in the house, and Raymond was about to go with some neighbors to a town meeting, when his wife hid his best coat, and reminded him of the empty flour barrel. Another day his corn was to be gathered, when a neighbor desired him to assist him with his horses and wagon. It was a neighbor who often received favors but seldom rendered them; yet Easy Warren could not refuse him. But when he went to hitch his horses before his wagon, he found that one of the wheels was missing. Of course the neighbor was disappointed. In the afternoon when Raymond expressed a wish to draw his corn, his wife told him where he could find the hidden wagon-wheel.

Thus was Easy Warren's household managed, until he began to realize practically what the great error of his former life had been.

People said—'Warren's farm looks much better than it did some years ago.' Mrs Warren never interfered with Raymond's business except when he neglected it, and then she never found fault or scolded, but took occasion to show his neglect to him in a manner which impressed him with his injustice to his own interests.

Raymond's cattle were well cared for, and were in good order. When his fences were down, if he did not replace them, his wife employed a neighbor to make the necessary repairs. His wife took the papers and read; she knew the state of the market, and to oblige her, Raymond had his grain in market when the price was highest. Some people said:

'Easy Warren is a hen-pecked husband.'

But he knew better; and he often boasted that his wife was more of a 'business man' than he was.

They had lived together peaceably some years, when, one day Raymond was in a good humour thinking over his prosperous condition, and he told his wife: 'I'm a woman's-rights man of the true grit. They may say you wear the breeches if they chose;—I am satisfied to have you do the thinking for our firm. And, now I see what a fool I have been. I must make up for my early shiftlessness.'

He did make up for his early shiftlessness; and under his judicious wife's training, he became Industrious, instead of Easy, Warren.

Mrs Warren had the correct idea of woman's rights, and woman's wrongs. We commend her management to those who have 'easy' husbands. Especially do we commend it to those unfortunate women who have earned for themselves the opprobrious title of scolds.

## THE CITY OF THE DEAD.

WHEN Sir Walter Scott in his last days, visited Pompeii, in company with Sir William Gell, the expression which passed his lips ever and anon was—'The City of the Dead!' That was the only exclamation he uttered, and a pregnant one it was.

'Tis the golden summer time, and a wanderer from the land which the proud Pompeians themselves deemed barbarian, visits the

City of the Tomb. He approaches it from Sorrento's glorious bay, and fruits and flowers bedeck the pathway he treads. The green laurel twines above the lovely violets springing in clusters from its roots, and the vine creeps over rock and rivulet, and clings to the graceful poplars, which point their tops to heaven. He strides onward, sad and thoughtful, for he thinks of the joyous groups of youths and maidens who danced and sung amid these beautiful scenes nearly two thousand years ago. The flowers bloom as sweetly now as they did then—Italy's glorious sky is as splendid—Italy's balmy atmosphere as delicious—Italy's sun as golden; but where are they, the refined, voluptuous children of the classic soil? And where is their city—the gay, the wealthy, the luxurious Pompeii?

The stranger's brain is busy, and he pauses awhile to recall to mind all that he has read of the people who once flourished here—the proud, the intellectual, the exquisitely gifted, yet alas! also, the cruel, epicurean, godless race of Campanians—and of their boasted city, replete with objects of beauty and splendour, of gorgeous pomp, of artistic triumphs, of all that could delight the eye and administer to sensual gratification, of all that could confirm the enervate dwellers in their avowed devotion to bacchanal joys, of all that could tempt them to unrestrainedly and insatiably indulge in the daily practical development of their one ruling idea—'Let us eat and drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.' And then he wanders with amazement and awe through the excavated streets of Pompeii—disinterred after a sleep of seventeen hundred years, the streets once rife with music and with song, with sacrificial processions, with festal gatherings, with choral dances, with joyous crowds: the streets proudly trod with mailed warriors, by white robed priests, by lovely virgins, by classic poets, by stern senators, by young nobles clad in Tyrian purple; the streets thronged with glittering chariots and prancing steeds, and wains reeling with the vineyard's spoil; the streets redolent with the fragrance of flowers, vibrating with laughter and exclamations, echoing with thousands of glad voices. With what do they echo now? With nought but the falling footstep of the solitary stranger from afar!

Years before the catastrophe occurred, earthquakes shook the land, and on the very eve dread omens warned the city of its fate—but warned in vain. Gigantic figures hovered in the air, as Dion Cassius relates, and mysterious voices came from the mountains, besides renewed shocks of earthquake. But the Pompeians were intoxicated with lusts of the flesh—deaf to their impending destruction—and to the last dread day they indulged in their wonted pomps and vanities. Pliny yet pursued his philosophical researches, and Sallust, the witty epicure, stinted not his accustomed orgies.

Brightly rose the last morn of the fated city. The soft glories of autumn were spread on every side, and the sun shone unclouded for the last time on the temples and the towers of Pompeii.

The people were crowding the theatre at the moment when the air was suddenly darkened, and the awful Mount of Vesuvius, that for ages had been at rest, vomited forth dense clouds of ashes and stones, and torrents of boiling water, and streams of liquid lava, (especially on the side of Herculaneum) and volcanic lightnings that melted even bronze statues, so fearful was their potency.

What imagination can adequately conceive the appalling scenes of that tremendous hour? It was a minor Day of Judgment—a second destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the guilty cities of the plain.

Priests of Isis! of what avail were your sacrifices, your incantations, your juggleries, in that hour? Epicureans and sophists, did your memory of past banquets, and your self-deluding philosophy yield one grain of comfort or of hope? Poets, orators, senators! had ye nerve to utter one word of encouragement or consolation to the screaming wretches around ye? Princely merchants! did your wealth procure ye consolation and aid? Beautiful maidens! did your lovers remember ye then? Matrons! did ye forget the babes of your bosom in the presence of horrors unutterable?

Who shall answer? Nigh eighteen centuries have impressed their seals of silence on your lips, and that will never be removed till the time when 'heaven and earth shall pass away.'

The stranger ponders long over the ideas these reflections germinate, and sadly does he resume his pilgrimage amid the trumpet-tongued ruins around. He sees every object as undecayed as it was ere the kneaded ashes of Vesuvius hermetically enclosed it in a tomb of long ages.

Here is a graceful public edifice, half built. The workmen were surprised at their labors, and the last stroke of the chisel may yet be seen on the unfinished columns, as fresh as if struck only yesterday. Lo! over the doorways of the houses the word of welcome is carved. Enter, for the portal is wide, and there is none to share the banquet with thee. See, the dog is wrought in rich mosaic at the threshold. Pass through the columned vestibule, with its tasselled pavement, undimmed in blue—gaze on the household Lares, yet at their posts—pass on into the chambers on either hand, and behold the bronze couches the vivid frescoes, the paintings, the iron-bound coffers, the flower vases, the fountains, the delicate boxes to enclose perfumes; enter the marble dining-room with its roof of telted ivory and gold, and see