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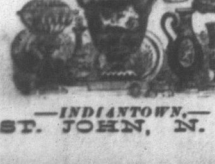

—INDIANTOWN,—

ST. JOHN, N. B

A Mother's Lament.

BY LILLIAN A. TOURTILLOTTE.

A group of roses in my garden grew,
With dawn-pink petals; and their sweet perfume
Gladdered my heart it pleasant, sunny days,
Or nights of shadowy gloom.

But one among my blossoms fairer seemed,
And statelier far. Her perfect petals, white,
Inhale! the fragrance that her sisters give,
And grew, each day, more bright.

Thus every flower that in the garden bloomed
Turned to this favored one, with hallowed love;
And thus she grew, and raised her heart of gold
To greet the sun above.

Her sisters were content, and proud, tha she
Should be of all most regal, stately, rare;
And tried to shield her from the stormy blast,
Or cruel, chilling air.

In other gardens I could see the flowers
Laid low beneath the wind, that, sweeping past,
Tore bud and blossom from their parent stem,
To whirl them on the blast.

But mine still grew and blossomed, and the storms
Only enhanced, for me, their fragrance sweet,—
Till one more deadly swept, and threw my own
Pale queen-rose at my feet.

My heart stood still. Her sisters all bowed down
Their heads in grief. The bright sun hid his face,
While all the flowers wept for beauty lost,
And for departed grace.

Again her sisters raised each grief-bowed head,
And made once more my garden sweet and fair.
Yet still I mourn, nor will be comforted—
My queen-rose is not there!

Proving the Promises.

BY LILLIAN GREY.

"There's only a half a-dollar left now, Dan'l!"

"Dear heart! Well, I've been expectin' to hear that for some days. Half-a-dollar; It ain't much of a fortin', is it? But the Lord's rich; we must hold to that."

"Yes; an' lots of folks is rich too, but that don't help us any. I re'ly don't know what we're goin' to do!"

"Jest this, Eunice; 'Trust in the Lord an' do good, an' verily thou shall be fed.' That's plain enough."

"You're always got some Scripture ready, Dan'l an' I don't want to say nothin' agin it, but do be practical enough for once to help me plan. I want to git things enough with that fifty cents to keep us alive a few days longer, anyway. Now what shall I buy?"

"Well, now, let's see. What do we most need?"

"D'ar knows, there's so many thing! We ain't got nothin' in the house but a little t'a, an' sugar, an' oatmeal; we'll, there's salt, an' spice, an' a few such things that ain't very sustainin' food; an' we'er out of kerseen, you know; we had to set in the dark last night, an' night afore."

The old man sat silent a few moments, it was a dark outlook surely—old, lame, and poverty-stricken.

"Well, wife, I'm dreadful sorry you're brought to such a strait, but you must jest buy 'cordin' to your means; git some of the cheapest things an' the most nourishin'; an' mebbe by the time they're gone we'll hear from Silas."

"We've been s-sayin' that for three months, father."

"Yes, I know, but I ain't gin up hope o' hearin' yet; an' he knows the money he sent must be gone by this time."

"Well, we ain't never told him that what he sends is all our livin'; he don't dream of tha; an' poor boy, he's more'n likely to be dead out in that wild west country, there such dreadful things happenin' out there all the time."

"No, no, wife! I can't give in to that. Like as not he's on his way home, an' wants to surprise us."

"Well, he'll have to come 'fore another week goes by, or we'll be starved to death, an' then he'll be the one tha's surprised. I've clean lost my courage, Dan'l!"

"Now don't dearie! Mebbe there's a letter in the office this very minnit, an' you ask soon as ever you git to the store. Too bad you've got to go out in the cold, an' the wind blows too; better tie my comforter round your neck. Wish you could ketch a ride goin' or comin'."

But there were no sleighs going to the "Corners," and the old lady plodded on over the long half mile, while her husband watched her as far as he could see her.

There was no letter in the office to verify his hopeful prediction, and with a heavy heart the disappointed mother turned to make her humble purchases. A quart of beans, one pound of rice, and two of cornmeal, a half-pound of butter, and two candles comprised the list, and there were a few cents left. It is just possible that some of the packages overweighed, but if they did, that was the storekeeper's own affair.

Uncle Dan'l, as he was called by every one, had never run in debt in his life, and had no thought of doing it now in the hour of his extremity; honest and proud he had been, and would be to the last.

"Poor Hear! you're nigh beat out, ain't ye?" he said to his wife on her return. "Set right down by the stove; we got a blessed good fire anyway. An' there wasn't no letter? Hum! Well, I guess there will be one next week, or else the boy'll come himself."

So the old man talked hopefully to his wife, who, intent on her cooking and Saturday cleaning, grew more cheerful; and when they sat down to their late dinner of bean porridge, with dessert of boiled rice, they grew quite merry over it, like two children as they were.

"I re'ly b'lieve, wife, I can git down to the meetin' to day; it wonderful how much better my lameness is."

"Well, father, do just as you feel about it, but it would be a dreadful pity to overdo agin."

"Yes, that's so; but it's been a power of Sundays since I went, an' I guess I can stand it. We'll start early, an' mebbe we'll git a lif part of the way. I do miss the meetin's beyond all tell'n', an' I guess the Lord'll help me to enjoyin' of 'em agin. I've been kinder prayin' along in my mind about it."

When they were ready to start he said: "Don't forgit the collection money, Eunice."

Good land alive, Dan'l! Are you clean crazy that you want to give away your very last cent?"

"I dunno as I'm crazy, but I thought you said there was eleven cents left, an' I guess we can afford to give a penny apiece out o' that. I'd be ashamed enough to go to the Lord's house, an' not put somthin' in the basket; an' so would you when you think on it."

"I ain't begrudged it when we've had it to give, but does 'pear to me this ain't no time fo' givin';" but with a calmness born of despair, she went to the bureau-drawer and took two cents from the limp little pocket book, and handed one to her husband.

"There! I don't know as it makes any difference how the last of it goes. It ain't enough to have any words over, an' I don't want to get my mind all riled up jest as I'm goin' to meetin', but it does seem to me that a man that's been honest an' hard-workin' all his life, an' always doin' an' givin' beyond his means, an' hangin' onto the promises as you have, ought to have some good come to him 'fore ever he's dead; but instead of that, it's loss after loss, an' trial after trial."

"Now, wife don't git down-sperited; there's good ahead on us yet—some on it a comin' right now, for Deacon Bailey's drivin' down the hill an' beckonin' for us to come an' ride. He's a thoughtful creeter, bless him!"

The next morning Mrs. Bailey said to her husband: "Somehow, I feel worried about Uncle Daniel and his wife. I noticed yesterday how old and worn they looked—haggard, in fact. You don't suppose they're in any want, do you?"

"Really, I haven't given the matter a thought; but he's had a bad spell of lameness, you know."

"Yes, but she looks worse than he does, if anything."

"Well, their son sends them money; he's doing quite well out West now, so Uncle Daniel told me some time ago, and they hope he will come home before long."

"But Aunt Eunice said yesterday they hadn't heard from him in so long that they were getting worried."

"That's too bad; but the old folks are not without funds anyhow, for I took up the collection yesterday, and they both put in money."

"Oh, then of course they're not in need. I am so glad, for I was getting quite troubled about them."

But at the dinner-table Mrs. Bailey said: "I haven't got over my worry about Uncle Daniel's folks yet; they've been on my mind all the morning, and I think he's just the kind of a man to give his very last cent to the Lord, and enjoy doing it; and I do believe they're in need of some of the comforts of life. I wish I knew just what!"

"Now, what a women you are to jump to conclusion," laughed her husband; "but if what you fancy is true, how are we going to set the matter right? I don't believe Uncle Daniel could accept charity very gracefully; he's the most sensitive man I know."

"Yes; but he might be grateful for help if the giver was unknown; we must think out some plan."

"Give 'em a surprise party," suggested Harry. "I saw her over at the store Saturday, buying some beans, an' she got two candles. Think of it! She said they wasn't so dangerous as oil, but she paid for what she got, anyway."

"I might put a barrel of provisions on their doorstep after dark," said the Deacon. "I remember they had a few vegetables planted in the yard, but of course it was no supply for the winter; so, wife, if you think best we'll make up a barrel full out of our cellar."

"And do put in some butter!" said Harry, who was an extravagant lover of that article. "Aunt Eunice bought the littlest pat of it you ever see—not more'n I want to one meal. It's awful to have to skimp on butter!"

But when the things "that could go just as well as not" were brought forth, it was found needful to use two barrels; for apples and potatoes were abundant in the Deacon's cellar, and the owner was generous.

"But how will the old folks ever get them in the house?" said he as he carried them up the cellar stairs.

"Suppose I happen down there a little after?" said Harry, who had entered whole-hearted into the packing. "Make up some errand for me, can'ya?"

"I might send some of my fruit cake and a mince pie," said his mother. Aunt Eunice would take that as just a neighborly kindness, I presume."

"All right; you're a famous planner! Won't it be fun to see the old people's wonder? Pity it's past Christmas; then they might think Santa Claus had come sure enough. However, I'll tell them that he got belated."

The old couple sat in the firelight that evening talking over their affairs, Uncle Daniel being as usual the hopeful one, although he was suffering much pain in consequence of going into the adjoining woods to gather underbrush, having the privilege of using all he cared to collect, and the amount laid in early in the season was nearly exhausted.

"Havin' that firewood so handy is a wonderful blessin'," said the old man; "an' the Squire likes to have it got out of the woods, too. He's a clever man, is the Squire."

"But it nigh kills you to gather it, father; special when you're so lame; but we've got enough on hand now to last as long as other things do, an' then—well, that'll be the end of our housekeeping far as I can see!"

"If the worst comes to the worst," said Uncle Daniel finally, "I must see Squire Lee, an' see if he can 'low us a leetle more on the old house. It does 'pear to me as if it might be worth a trifle more'n five mortgage now on, bein' there's no back interest. 'Pears as if I couldn't bear we should go out of it—not till our heavenly mansion is got ready for us; we must be sure an' be prepared for that move, wife; an' these light afflictions—"

"Hark, Dan'l! Ain't there somebody a comin' in the gate?"

"I don't hear nothin' but the wind. As I was s-sayin'—'pears as if I did hear a kind of a sound, Eunice."

"The dear land! What would a body think to find us without a single light in the house?" But before she could rise from her chair, there came a knock on the door.

"Mercy me, I can't open it till I git a light!"

But her hand trembled, and match after match flared up, sputtered, and went out, before one performed its mission; and when she at last opened the door, there were words of apology on her lips for the delay, but when she saw two barrels only standing before her, she was dumb with surprise.

"Why, whatever's the matter, Eunice? Who's there?"

"Nobody—that is, something; jest come here a minnit, can't ye?"

Uncle Daniel hobbled to the door, and after the first shock of wonder was over, looked out to the road for some sign of the bringer, but all was deserted and silent, save for a merry whistle which seemed to be drawing nearer.

"Toler'ble heavy load for the ravens to bring, wasn't it?" said he, as he attempted to move one of the barrels.

"Somebody *is* a-coming now, Dan'l; it's Harry Bailey."

"Yes, he's me sure enough; but hey! What's the matter here? You ain't moving, I hope?"

"Why, no; but—well, the fact is, we don't re'ly know the meanin' on't ourselves. These ere barrels has come here all of a sudden, an' we don't know why, nor how."

"Well, ain't that jolly? Why, Uncle Daniel, they must be valentines—one for each of you, with somebody's love; you know it's Valentine's Day. Just let me roll them in for you out of the cold; and, Aunt Eunice, here's one of mother's famous mince pies; she made *such* a lot of 'em to-day. But my! her little present isn't nowhere compared with all this!" for Uncle Daniel had the barrels uncovered, and was gazing at the contents in speechless wonder, while the candle shook in his hand. Harry turned to go, and Aunt Eunice got her wits together sufficiently to thank him for the pie and for his assistance, and then closing the door, attempted with her shaking hands to help unpack the barrels. There were vegetables of all kinds, apples, a roll of butter, generous pieces of corned pork and beef, and a sack of flour.

"I hope you ain't been a complainin' to nobody, Eunice!"

"Indeed I ain't! You knew better'n that, Dan'l!"

"Yes, yes, so I did! Then the Lord's pervided for us, sartin."

"Well, ain't that what you've always been a-sayin'—that He *would* pervide; an' now that He's gone an' done it, you're jest as wonder-struck as you can be. Them ain't no store things neither; they've come from some farmer that has been wrought upon in his mind to do it," and poor Aunt Eunice sat down and cried.

"Don't, don't, dearie!" said her husband. "Now don't go to feelin' like that. Why, I'm so happy an' thankful I don't know what to do."

"So be I; but there, I couldn't help cryin', I was so overcome. Do you s'pose Silas had anything to do with it?"

"No, it don't seem so to me; it ain't noways likely as we'll ever know where them things come from or who brought 'em; so we'll have to give thanks straight to the Lord, an' they won't go amiss. I tell you, wife, His promises is sure!"

"An' I hope an' pray He'll forgive me for bein' so slow to believe 'em," said she penitently; "but things di look so des'pert dark ahead, an' no light comin' from nowheres."

"That's jest the time to prove the promises true, dearie."

Aunt Eunice dried her eyes, and, pleased as any child, proceeded to look the articles all over again."

"I tell you what, Dan'l, we'll have a regular old-fashioned biled dinner to-morrow. Won't that be good?"

"Indeed it will, an' it'll be a Thanksgivin' dinner, too."

And then, regardless of dyspepsia and disturbed sleep, the old couple ate a generous lunch of mince pie, fruit cake and apples, and sat and talked half the night.

The next day was very stormy, but Deacon Bailey had an errand to the "Corners," and stopped on the way home.

"Here's a letter that has just come, Uncle Daniel. I brought it right along, thinking you might not get over to day."

"Oh, I'm powerful glad you did. It's from Silas, the dear boy! Do set down, Deacon, while we read it."

The letter contained a money order and many loving messages; but, best of all, the assurance that he was coming home in the spring to stay, having saved enough to buy a nice farm.

"I'm glad to hear that," said the caller. "Can I be of any help to you in the mean time? Jack can bring a load of wood."

"Thank you, thank you kindly, Deacon! We've enough at present; we're amazin' comfortable, an' now we've heard from Silas we're happy. Surely goodness an' mercy follers us!"

They had the "biled dinner," and it was truly eaten with thanksgiving, and gratitude to the unknown giver, for in the guilelessness of their child-like hearts they never suspected that the barrels came from the Deacon's.—*Zion's Herald.*

LOVE.—Love makes drudgery delightful. Love outruns law and leaves it far behind. Not to be able and permitted to serve is a penalty. The question is not, "What must I do?" but "What may I do?" To give pleasure is its joy. To grieve its object is to grieve itself. Love is the secret spring of the believer's life, and this makes him often pass in the world for an enthusiast. It stops at nothing. Mountains of difficulty are no more to it than plains. It clasps the cross and kisses it. Love strengthened Mary, when the soldiers quaked with fear. Love kept hovering round the sepulchre when all the disciples were scattered to their own homes. Love has a joy of its own, which a stranger cannot understand. It is fed by the unseen Spirit of God, while reposing on an unseen Saviour. To lose life for him is to gain it. To suffer martyrdom for Jesus, is to see him standing at the right hand of God, waiting to welcome his servant to glory.—*Selected.*

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The Prayer of Faith.

My neighbor, whom I will call John Smith, believes in the faith-cure. His firm conviction is that the prayer of faith will restore the sick to health in all cases. I was talking with him the other day, and he quoted, of course, that familiar passage, James 5: 14, 15. He said: "Now, if we were not so unbelieving—if we could just claim that promise, and go and pray whenever anybody is sick—we could not only save many valuable lives and a great deal of suffering, but shut up all the drug stores and drive all the doctors to seek some other way of making a living."

"It certainly does seem so," I replied, "if your interpretation is correct. But all depends upon what we understand by the prayer of faith."

"Of course it does; but there can be no difference of opinion there. The prayer of faith is that offered by those who take God at his word, who go to him and claim the restoration of the sick to health because he has promised such restoration to those who ask it."

"That sounds quite plausible; but let us look a little farther. We must use reason and common sense in interpreting the Scriptures. Our Saviour said, 'Ask and ye shall receive.' Did he mean that whatever anybody asked for he would be sure to get? If a taper asked him, very earnestly and importunately, for money to buy rum, would it be sent to him? We all believe that there are necessary conditions and limitations in these promises. If there were not, God would cease to govern the world. He would become a mere paderer to men's lusts. And as those lusts would conflict, we should soon have a fearful scene of chaos and confusion. All turns upon what we mean by faith. Faith is trusting in somebody. Faith in God is what gives efficacy to prayer. But when we trust in God, what do we mean by it? Do we mean that he is simply great and good—that he is able to do anything for us that we ask him to, and that he loves us so that he will do it when we ask, just as a fond, indulgent mother will give her petted and spoiled child whatever it cries for? Of course not. We confide in God's wisdom as fully as in his power and love. We have faith in him not merely because he has all power, but because he knows all things—he sees the end from the beginning, he can tell what is best for us and for the world; and because he is too just and too holy to do what is not the very best thing to be done under all circumstances. Now, let us apply this to the case of the sick man whom you propose to restore to health by prayer. Why is he sick? God could have kept him in health if he had chosen to, notwithstanding his own imprudence. But that man has violated some law of nature and he must suffer the penalty; or he needs sickness as a spiritual discipline to wean him from worldliness, to remind him that he is mortal and ought to prepare for death. Now, in prostrating that man on that bed of weakness and pain, is God wise or unwise?"

"He is wise, of course; I do not deny that sickness has its uses."

"Very well. Then tell me just how much sickness is useful? That man has been in bed two days. The fever will not have run its course for a week. But you go there this afternoon with a few who understand the Apostle James just as you do, and you kneel down in that man's chamber and pray to God to raise him up. What do you mean by that prayer? Why, if you expect an immediate answer, you mean that though the Lord was wise in sending that sickness it is neither right nor wise nor good in him to let it continue any longer. You propose to limit the dispensation just when you choose to. You set up, therefore, your wisdom in opposition to that of God. You say, 'Lord, we come to thee in faith. We believe in thy power and in thy love; but we believe in ourselves as well as in thee. We believe that we know better than you do just when this disease should be rebuked and this man restored to health.' Is that prayer animated by faith in God? No, for it ignores that condition of all true prayer stated by our Saviour in Gethsemane, 'Nevertheless not my will but thine be done.' If there is anything that God specially abhors it is trusting in ourselves instead of trusting in him. And the more insidious this trust the more dangerous it is. You faith-cure men seem to have great faith in God when you go to him and ask him to restore a sick man to health. But you ask in such a way as to show that you want to take the control of the case out of his hands into your own. True faith is first of all reverent. It bows in adoration before God and cries in deep humility, 'I know nothing. I am nothing. I come utterly weak and ignorant, and cast myself at thy feet. O hear me in thy great mercy, and grant that which I ask, but only if it seemeth good in thy sight.' I believe in praying for the sick, and that God often gives special answers to such prayers. But I do not believe that he ever intended to put the absolute control of sickness in the hands of any finite being. My idea of prayer is that it is going to God always, for all things, as a child goes to a father. It is an expression of our confidence in him. We tell him of our wants and desires not because he is ignorant of them, but because he loves to have us to come to him and tell him that we trust him, that we know he cares for us, and will make all things work together for our good. Prayer should be specific, for little things as well as for great ones, because thereby our faith is developed. It is thus we learn to walk by faith and not by sight. But the spirit of dictation in prayer eliminates from it faith in God's wisdom, and allows it with a base and ignoble faith in ourselves."—*Of ddah Oldschool, in Interior.*

—The *Illustrated Christian Weekly* tells of a committee, sent by a prominent church to hear a preacher with the idea of calling him as pastor, that telegraphed: 'Won't do; has red hair.'

—A fond mother called the other day upon President Patton, of Princeton, and a bed anxiously if her son would be well taken care of at college. Said Dr. Patton: 'Madam, we guarantee satisfaction, or return the boy.'—*Exchange.*

—Grocer: 'You say that your wife, Uncle Rastus, supports the family by taking in washing?' Uncle Rastus: 'Yes, sah.' Grocer: 'Well, don't you feel a little bit ashamed at times?' Uncle Rastus: 'Shamed? No, sah; dere's nothin' degrad'n' 'bout takin' in washin'. Ise proud ob de ole 'oman.'—*New York Sun.*

—Wife: 'John, you have a very annoying habit of saying 'what's that?' whenever you are spoken to. Can't you break yourself of it?' Husband (reading):—'E—what's that?'—*Epoch.*

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