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THE KENT NEWS.

Frustra laborat, quiomnibus, placere studet;—"He labors vainly, who endeavors to please every one."

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POETRY.

WASHING DAY.

BY O. W. HOLMES.

It chanced to be our washing day,
And all our things were drying;
The storm came roaring thro' the lines,
And set them all a flying:
I saw the shirts and petticoats
Go riding off like witches;
I lost—ah! bitterly I wept—
I lost my Sunday breeches!

I saw them straddling through the air,
Alas! too late to win them;
I saw them chase the clouds, as if
The devil had been in them.
They were my darlings and my pride,
My boyhood's only riches;
"Farewell! Farewell!" I faintly cried,
"My breeches! O, my breeches!"

That night I saw them in my dreams;
How changed from what I knew them;
The dew had steeped their faded threads,
The wind had whistled though them!
I saw the wide and ghastly rents
Where demon claws had torn them;
A hole was in their hinder parts,
As if an imp had worn them!

I have many happy years,
And tailors kind and clever;
But these young pantaloons have gone,
Forever and forever!
And not till fate has cut the last
Of all my earthly stitches,
This aching heart shall cease to mourn
My loyed, my long lost breeches!

POPULAR TALES

THE SWINDLER
OR
GAINS NEVER THRIVE.

BY J. AUSTIN SPERRY.

A clear, bright February day, after a light fall of snow! Any one who has visited the 'Great Emporium' during Christmas time, may imagine the brilliant scene which Broadway presents on such occasions. Thousands of sleighs, of every form, size, and variety are dashing hither and thither, in such thick confusion as to make it a matter of inexplicable astonishment how they find room to pass each other without coming into collision.—Here and there a great omnibus sleigh, piled up with human freight, glides along like an overloaded steamboat out of its element, while glittering establishments of fairy-like lightness and beauty are glancing by them and around them, like gladsome birds upon the wing. The spray, thrown up from the heels of the foaming coursers, is cut and gleaming, and sparkling in the light atmosphere, resembles a shower of burning diamonds; while the "jingle, jingle," of the bells floats upon the ear so merrily and cherily that your heart leaps with joy at the sound. You almost fancy that the bright suns were all golden bell-wires, and that Winter with his white fingers was ringing them for the very fun. Then, too, the happy faces that peep out from the rich furs,—the glimpses of beauty, glances of bright eyes that beam on you as they flit by, radiant as sunshine, and as instant as the meteor-flash. Oh, there is in old Gotham in sleigh riding.

It was the day and the scene. In a light little shell that glided along gaily, were seated a lady and gentleman, almost buried in costly furs. The face was one of rare loveliness; and the gentleman, as he listened to her animated words, seemed to be so much absorbed in the contemplation of her charms, that he neglected the reins, and left his steed to jog along through the throng at his discretion. While the lady chattered in a lively strain, her glance was roving over the crowd that moved on the side-walk. Suddenly laying her hand on the gentleman's arm, she exclaimed—

"By George! what a sweet face that girl has!"

The object of this remark was a girl apparently about seventeen, rather uncommonly clad for the season, with a thin, shawl over her shoulders, and her ringlets straying playfully from beneath a melancholly apology for a bonnet. Her features were pale and thoughtful, but of sweet expression, and her large intellectual blue eye beamed with touching softness. The gentleman looked in the direction indicated by his fair companion, but gave no sooner rested upon the girl than a shade of displeasure or pain crossed his brow, and giving the reins a nervous jerk, his mettlesome steed bounded fleetly onward, bearing the sleigh quickly out of sight of the poor girl who had so interested his companion.

"Why George!" exclaimed the lady, "what do you mean? It was very disobliging in you to start off at this rate, when you know I wanted to observe that girl!"

The gentleman stammered out an apology, laying the blame upon the impatience of his horse. The excuse, however, was too lame to convince the lady, She was piqued at having her humor thus unreasonable thwarted, and pouted during the rest of the ride. When she at length alighted at the door of her father's residence, in Bleecker street, she thanked her lover (for such the gentleman was) with cool civility for the sleigh-ride, and entered the house in a pet, leaving him to drive off, anathemazing the incident which had thus dampened the morning's pleasure.—He had another source of unpleasant feelings, too than the lady's frown. The sight of the poor girl on Broadway—whom he very well knew—had given rise to reflections of a disagreeable nature, which will be explained in the sequel.

To return to the young lady. When she entered her comfortable parlor, she found a young man standing at the window, who turned to her and said—

"Well, sis another lovers' quarrel on the carpet—eh?"

"Why do you talk so silly, John?" returned the sister.

"It's plain that it is so," continued the brother, "for I saw Renwick, as he drove off, looking as black as a thunder-cloud, and your own face is as flushed as if you had been scolding for an hour."

"Pshaw!" ejaculated the young lady.—Then after a moment's silence, she added—"well, if you will pry into my affairs, you must know that I am beginning to dislike George Renwick, and I don't believe I shall ever marry him after all."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed her brother "the old song—it will be kiss and make up, in less than six hours, again."

"Very well,—you'll see," she returned, as she withdrew to disrobe herself of her riding apparel.

Emily and John Williams were the only children of a wealthy New York merchant. They had been reared indulgently and received an excellent education.—John was a fine young fellow of twenty-two—had chosen the profession of medicine, and was preparing to graduate at the spring commencement. Emily was somewhat of a spoiled beauty, just entering her nineteenth year. Indulgence had rendered her a little self-willed, and adulation had made her little vain and capricious; but she was, notwithstanding, a girl of fine feelings, amiable disposition, and good sense. With a voluptuous figure, raven hair, and piercing dark eyes, classic features, finely cut mouth, and teeth of pearly whiteness, she had reigned the belle of two seasons, and then plighted her hand to George Renwick, a merchant of high standing and reputed wealth.

Renwick was about thirty years of age—a man of acknowledged talent and enterprize, with a handsome face, and manly form. His manners were bland and insinuating; his bearing graceful and easy, and his address fluent and polished.—Whether pure affectionate or more interested motives induced him to urge his suit to Emily, we need not say here—suffice it, that with warm feelings and a trusting nature, she was easily won. The match was sanctioned by the parents, and the day fixed for the marriage was only two months distant from the period at which our story opens.

When Mary re-entered the parlor, she approached her brother, who was reading by the fire, and in a voice musically coaxing, said—

"Come, brother mine, put up your book—I have carved out an adventure for you."

John raised his eyes enquiringly, and she proceeded—

"I saw a girl in Broadway, to-day, with one of the sweetest faces you can imagine; but she looked so poor, and sad, and cold that my heart bled for her. But what is more, her features seemed familiar to me. I am almost sure, John, I have met that girl somewhere in good society."

"Suppose you have," interrupted John, "what then?"

"Why, likely it is some old acquaintance of ours, reduced to want—and if so, what better purpose can I devote this to"—drawing from her bosom a purse well filled with silver, and placing it in her brother's hand—"and what better use can you make of your time this afternoon, than being my missionary?"

"But how the duce am I to find your poor girl with the sweet face?" enquired the brother.

"Oh, I am pretty certain she sews at Madame G's, for I saw her in that neighborhood."

"An adventure, verily!" exclaimed John with a laugh; "to think of sending me running after poor sewing girls with pretty faces! A pretty dangerous adventure that, I should say!"

"In sober earnest, John; I want you to find out this girl, and offer her relief from me, if she should be in need of it."

"In sober earnest, then, my silly sister, suppose I should find her—do you think that even a poor sewing girl of any sensibility of modesty would take money from a man who is a perfect stranger. Why I couldn't have the impudence to offer it—for my motive would certainly be misconstrued."

Emily was thoughtful for a few moments, and then replied—

"But you can find out who she is, and what are her circumstances, brother; you can find out her residence, and you have wit enough to find some excuse for visiting her parents, if she has any."

"You are a queer girl," said John, drawing her to him, and fondly kissing her fair cheek; "but after all, this strange whim of yours may afford something of an adventure—so I'll humor you, for once."

For once! He might have said for the thousandth time, for he was always humoring her strange whims, as he called them. There was not a more affectionate brother in the city of New York. He was fonder and prouder of his beautiful sister than of anything else in the world, and would have done ten times as much to gratify even her caprice. Accordingly, after dinner, he received from Emily an accurate description of the girl's dress and appearance, and posted off on her benevolent mission. Stationing himself on the steps of the ——— hotel, opposite Madame G.'s, he waited the remainder of the afternoon, watching all who went in or out of the fashionable milliner's. At length, a little after six o'clock, one after another of the sewing girls, as he judged, came out and departed; and finally, one whose dress corresponded to the description of his sister had given him. It was too dark for him to judge whether her features were as pretty as Emily had represented them, and this was some little disappointment to his raised curiosity. He followed her, however, at a little distance, until he saw her enter her home, and then returned to report to his sister.

"You have not half fulfilled my mission, John; you have neither discovered who she is, nor what are her circumstances!" exclaimed Emily, after listening to his facetious account of having dogged her home.

"I intend to, though," returned John, "I have a plan in my mind now. Have you any sewing to do?"

"Yes; I've a dress I shall want made in a day or two."

"The very thing!" said the brother; "I can go enquire if she ever goes out to sew and if she does, I can engage to come make your dress."

"Capital!" exclaimed Emily, clapping her small white hands. "Let us go to tea now, and then away with you."

While young Williams is at tea, we will precede him to the house of the sewing-girl.

In a small room, the furniture of which was old and plain, and rather scanty at that, three persons were seated at a fugally spread tea-table. One was the poor sewing girl another was her mother, a woman of no great age, but wan and feeble; from care and anxiety; the third was a young man, with a high forehead, and a face in which deep thought and resoluteness of purpose were plainly expressed. His features were too prominent and angular to strike one at first sight as being handsome, but every line of them was indicative of energy and force of character. When engaged in conversation, however, his countenance lighted up with animation and assumed a more engaging expression; his glance was penetrating, and his well modulated voice thrillingly deep and earnest.

The meal had progressed a few minutes in silence, when the young man, who had been attentively regarding the girl's downcast face remarked——

"You are beginning to look badly, Kate; your work is too confining—it will seriously injure your health."

"Oh no, cousin," replied the girl, in tones, the tremulousness of which contradicted her words; "I do not feel that my health is at all affected by it." Then, as if anxious to change the conversation, she turned to her mother, and said—"I saw George Renwick to-day, sleighing on Broadway, with a lady, in great style."

"Did he see you, my child?" enquired the mother.

"Yes," returned the girl, "and appeared very much confused, for he colored, turned his head away, and put his horse to full speed, as if anxious to get out of sight as quick as possible."

"I have heard you mention this Renwick frequently;" said the youth; "who is he?"

"Is it possible, Robert, that we have never told you about George Renwick?"

"Quite possible, aunt."

"Well, he is the villain who swindled us out of our property!"

"How?" exclaimed the young man; "what property? I thought uncle Brainard died insolvent."

"No, indeed. The circumstances are these: When George Renwick came to this city he was a poor boy, and your uncle took him into the store, as clerk. He gradually crept into Mr. Brainard's confidence, until he took him in as a kind of partner, and allowed him to manage the business almost entirely in his own way. Well, your uncle died suddenly in an apoplectic fit: the business was settled up in a very mysterious way, and Renwick gave us two thousand dollars, which he said was all that was left of Mr. Brainard's interest in the concern, after his debts were paid."

"And did you quietly submit?" Asked the young man.

"That I did not," replied the old lady; "thirty thousand dollars of my own money had been embarked in the business, beside the large capital which Mr. Brainard possessed. I brought suit, but Mr. Brainard's private papers could not be found, and the books of the firm had all been in Renwick's keeping. There was one clerk whose evidence might have helped us, but Renwick bought him over. So we lost the suit. The lawyers fees eat up the best portion of the two thousand dollars, and with what was left I bought some furniture, and went to keeping boarding house. You came to the city soon after that, and came to board with me. You have seen all our misfortunes since then and shared them too—God bless your kind heart, Robert."

When the old lady ceased speaking, the tears were trinkling down her wan cheeks—but the young man had not noticed her last words. He had ceased eating, and fallen into a deep reverie. After sitting there for some moments, he arose with nervous haste, and left the room without speaking.

After the young man had retired, the mother and daughter cleared the table, and sat themselves down to sewing. They had not long engaged when the mother observed that an unusual pallor had overspread the girl's face.

"What is the matter, Catharine?" she enquired in alarm.

She had barely uttered the words, before the girl fell faintingly from her seat.—The mother, frightened and breathless, sprang to her assistance, raised her in her arms, and sprinkling some water in her face, soon revived her. Then placing her upon an old sofa which stood in one corner of the room, the mother approached a door which opened upon a narrow flight of stairs and called to her nephew. But if Robert was in his room, he was so much absorbed in study that he did not hear her feeble voice; and concluding he had gone out, she put on her bonnet, disregarding the remonstrances of her daughter, to go for a physician. At the door, the old lady encountered John Williams, who was just hesitating whether to enter.

"Good man," said Mrs. Brainard, "can you tell me where the nearest Doctor's is?"

"This is fortunate for my purpose," thought John, and replied—"*I* am something of a physician myself, ma'am can I be of any service to you?"

"O yes! my child is sick—come in!" returned the widow in an agitated voice, and John followed her into the apartment. Catharine was by this time reseated at her sewing, and insisted that she felt quite well again. John saw at a glance that she was exhausted by her close application to her needle, and want of air and exercise. He prescribe some stimulating medicine, and then commenced a conversation upon the subject which had brought him to the house.

"Do you not go out to sew sometimes?" asked he.

She answered him in the affirmative. He then asked her if she felt able to undertake some light work.

She replied that she was just out of employment of Madame G.'s and would be glad to get any thing to do.

"Can you call upon my sister, to-morrow morning?" asked John.

"Yes, sir;" she replied; "where shall I call, and at what hour?"

"At No—, Bleecker street, any time during the forenoon."

"The name?"

"Williams."

"What! Emily Williams?"

"Yes;" said the young gentleman; "you know her then?"

"We used to be schoolmates," replied Catharine, "but she doubtless does not remember me."

"Will you faver me with your name?"

"Catharine Brainard."

"Well, I shall tell my sister you will call in the morning, Miss Brainard."

"Yes sir."

John now took leave, and hurried home to communicate the result of his visit to his sister.

At twelve o'clock that night, the widow and her daughter had long been retired, but the nephew, unconscious of the lapse of hours, sat in his room, poring over a number of old letters, bills and manuscripts which covered his table.—The eager attention which he bestowed upon each paper, the unusual sparkle of his eye, and the smile that played upon his mouth, denoted that his task was one of no ordinary interest. Before we explain the nature of it however, we must introduce the youth more fully to the reader.

Robert Jordan was an orphan. His parents had resided in the village, some miles from New York, and at their death had left him a little property, the income of which was two hundred and fifty dollars per annum. With this small sum he came to New York, to pursue the study of law. He found his aunt keeping boarding house and went of course, to board with her.—The old lady knew but little of the management of a boarding-house, and consequently was unable to get along at it.—The greater portion of her furniture was seized for debt, and she was compelled with what was left to take rooms in an old house near North River. Robert stuck by her through all her misfortunes and with the little sum he was able to give her, and the scanty earnings of Catharine's needle, she was enable barely to live.—Robert had just a few weeks prior to the date of our story, been admitted to the Bar, and was daily expecting to make an arrangement to get into business with some old practioner, which would enable him to better the condition of his aunt and cousin. What the old lady had told him at the tea-table, that evening, of Renwick's connexion with his uncle, had made a forcible impression upon his mind. There was an old-fashioned secretary in his room and in examining it he had discovered a secret drawer, filled with papers. A suspicion flashed upon his mind that these papers might throw some light upon his uncle's business. He retired immediately to his room, and upon examining the papers his suspicions were confirmed. They were private papers relating to Mr. Brainard's affairs, and contained evidence that at the time of his death he had possessed a large amount of property, out of which it was plain Renwick must have swindled the widow.

Nearly the whole night was Robert closely engaged, making himself acquainted with the contents of the papers, and when at length he threw himself upon his couch, his breast was throbbing with hope and his head acheing with excitement.

When Robert arose late in the morning, he found that his cousin was gone to keep her appointment with Emily Williams.—He communicated to his aunt the discovery of the papers, and his hopes, and begged her to place the whole affair in his hands, as her attorney. The old lady nearly beside herself with joy, gladly consented. Her next thought was to send for Catharine, and communicate to her the agreeable tidings. This Robert opposed, and advised his aunt to keep the affair perfectly secret. He stated that the recovery of the property would be both difficult and uncertain, and that it might be dangerous to excite in Catharine's breast hopes, the disappointment of which would be too great a shock for her feeble health to bear. The old lady saw the justice of the remark, and, however, loth, acquiesced in Robert's wishes. The latter immediately went to work with alacrity to put matters *en train* for bringing suit against *the swindler*.

Catharine, in the meantime, had met with a reception from Emily Williams as gratifying as unexpected. The latter, as soon as she had heard the name of Catharine Brainard, remembered her old school mate, and with her natural kindness of heart, strove to make her forget, for one day at least, her poverty and her sorrows. She made her lay aside her sewing at five o'clock, and insisted upon her spending the evening with her in the parlor. Here, with her brother, she strove to amuse and render the poor girl cheerful, and succeeded so well, that Catharine felt happier than she had for many months. She did not feel embarrassed, or out of place, in the splendid parlors of the wealthy merchant, for she had been reared in just such splendor, and was scarce behind Emily Williams herself in education or accomplishments. She had that morning arrayed herself in her best apparel, which, plain as it was, displayed her delicate and graceful form to advantage; and the pleasurable excitement she felt, had brought a faint tinge of color to her cheek, which added much to the beauty of her sweet face.—Her manners, too, were as easy and natural, although unassuming, as if she had never moved in any other sphere; and John Williams, in discovering that she was "deuced intelligent, and perfectly lovely," almost entirely forgot the fact of her being a sewing girl.

Early in the evening Renwick came in. His surprise at finding Catharine Brainard Emily's guest was manifest enough in his looks to the former, although it escaped the observation of the latter. He was embarrassed and confused, and after sitting a few moments in uncomfortable constraint, pleaded an urgent engagement and left.

Catharine had left word at home for her cousin to call for her at eight o'clock.—Accordingly at eight o'clock Robert was ushered in, surprised to find Catharine enjoying herself in the parlor, instead of toiling at her needle. He was introduced to Emily and her brother, but the latter had met him before, and knew him to be a talented student of law, although his acquaintance with him was but slight.

Emily seemed to have unusual flow of spirits upon this occasion. As her brother expressed it, she was "as merry and playful as a kitten."

She laughed and chatted with Robert Jordon; played and sang for him; until he caught the spirit of her vivacity and became as much at home and familiar as if he had been among old acquaintances.

To finish the amusement of the evening she set her brother to playing the piano, and waltzed with Catharine until she was giddy.

It had been a long, long time since the cousins had passed an evening of so much delight, and so fleetly did the time pass that they were both astonished to hear the clock strike eleven, when they scarce thought it nine. When they took leave, Emily accompanied Catharine to the door, and bidding her good night with a kiss, slipped a purse into her hand, and glided back into the room, before the grateful girl had time either to refuse the gift, or utter her thanks.

As soon as they were out of the house, Catharine burst into tears. John understood her emotion and did not attempt to check it. By the time they had walked a square or two, however, she became composed, and commenced a conversation with her cousin upon the incidents of the day, in the course of which she remarked—

"Emily is a sweet girl, cousin."

"So I have been thinking," he returned, sadly.

"What a pity she is going to marry Renwick!"

"What?" exclaimed Robert abruptly.

"She is to be married to Renwick, in April."

"By all that is good! she *shall not!*"—ejaculated the young man in an agitated tone.

"Why cousin, are you demented?—what are you saying?" asked Catharine, astonished at his emotion.

"I'm foolish," groaned the cousin recovering himself; "but it shocked me to hear of so fine a girl being sacrificed to a villain. But are you sure you have been correctly informed?"

"I had it from her own lips," said Catharine; "she has engaged me to commence, next week, making up some of the wedding garments."

Robert made no further remark, but walked the rest of the way in thoughtful silence. When they arrived at their humble home they found Mrs. Brainard uneasy on account of their long absence.—They gave the old lady an account of what had transpired, and Catharine upon examining her purse found it to contain five dollars instead of the five shillings for which she had bargained to do the day's sewing.

It was with different feelings the little party sought their pillows, this night from those which had oppressed their hearts for many nights previous. A brighter day was dawning!

A few days after the incident above related, George Renwick was sitting alone in his counting-room, when his lawyer entered, with an ominous elongation of countenance, and after a brief salutation said—

"I have got wind of an affair, Mr. Renwick, that will give us some trouble."

"What is that?" asked Renwick, calmly puffing his cigar.

"The widow Brainard is in the field again."

Renwick slightly changed color, but affecting unconcerned, calmly returned—

"Well if she is fool enough to revive the old suit, she will get her fingers burned again. A few dollars transferred from my pocket to yours, in the way of fees, will be the amount of the trouble, I suppose—eh? squire; isn't that the state of the case?"

"I rather fear the business is more serious, this times," returned the attorney.

"Well, let it come. So that you keep it off till after the first of April, I'm content to bear the brunt."

"Unfortunately, it is not altogether a civil suit, and can't be put off. That young devil of Jordan, her nephew, is making a criminal case of it, and the issue must come on in the March term."

"Criminal case!—March term!—what do you mean?" demanded Renwick, with perceptible agitation.

"I mean," answered the lawyer, bluntly, "that young Jordan, as willy as a fox and as keen as a bloodhound, is moving heaven and earth, to indict you for swindling, forgery, and perjury."

Renwick set his teeth hard together, and seems scarce able to breathe for a moment—then with passionate energy opened his desk, and taking out a roll of bank bills amounting to five hundred dollars, he placed them in the hands of the attorney, exclaiming between his clenched teeth—

"There, sir! crush the scoundrel—*crush him!* and I will be your debtor for double that sum!"

"That will be no easy matter," returned the lawyer, as he coolly fobbed the fee. "His shrewdness and energy are amazing. It beats the devil, sir, how he has managed to bring about this business, so quietly and effectively. I'll do my best, however, depend upon that." And the lawyer abruptly withdrew, leaving Renwick with a fearful foreboding of impending ruin at his heart. The fear that his villany would be unmasked, his wealth torn from him, and his marriage with Emily Williams prevented, filled him with almost insupportable agony. He had all along been preyed upon by a guilty conscience. The wan, half starved faces of the wife and child of benefactor whom he had robbed and beggared, had long haunted him with startling terror, driving rest from his pillow and peace from his breast—but this last dread of being convicted of forgery, and perhaps doomed to a felon's term in the state's prison, was distracting.

He assumed as much fortitude as he could under the circumstances, and taking an early opportunity to see his betrothed, urged an immediate marriage—offering as an excuse for his impatience, that business would compel him to go to Europe early in the spring, and he wished to take her with him. But Emily, whose feelings towards him had lately undergone a considerable change, frankly informed him that she feared her affections were not firmly enough fixed upon him to justify her in consenting to an early union under any circumstances. He implored and entreated with all the eloquence of which he was capable. She was firm in her determination, and his passion finally getting the better of his discretion, he reproached her with baseness, and left her forever.

So much did Renwick fear to stand the trial that was approaching, that he gathered up that ready money was at his command—amounting to twenty or thirty thousand dollars—and secretly absconded.

The affair created considerable noise in the business world. Robert Jordan had so clearly made out his aunt's claim to the property in Renwick's possession, that he succeeded in recovering for her what was left of it—about fifty thousand dollars—and Catharine was at once restored to her proper