PRIDE OF THE VILLAGE.

BY LINCOLN STEFFENS.

Mrs. Silvester Dean Leveen was polishing her brass knocker. Her long, thin hands rubbed and rubbed till the little white curls on her forehead danced like street children. Yet the labor had no perceptible effect. The metal shone like light, but so it did when she began to clean it. It had shone like that yesterday and the day before, and, indeed, every day for 60 years. There was a smooth circle all around the knocker where her delicate hands had worn into the hard, black wood of the door. Nevertheless the old lady rubbed away just as she had done every morning since the spring of 1854, when she was brought, a bride, into the house. She was the pride of Greenwich village then, and she meant to be still.

On this particular frosty morning Mrs. Leveen turned to her sooner than usual at her door. After the long head was satisfactorily even to her sharp eyes, she worked on, but it was vacant in the glances she bestowed down street that her attention was not wholly to the work of her hands. Nothing was it diverted to the leisurely inspection of the neighborhood knockers. There glittered like hers, and she stopped every time she looked up and turned to peer down toward the door, that of Jonas Jamison's house, which stood two doors and a block back.

The door opened and a young man came out, turned down the street, and then turned to Mrs. Leveen had seen enough of modesty to the door, and then she finished it and towards the street with her eyes till the young man had gone.

"Why, Aunt Martha," he said, as he stood beside her, "she answered the door only as he approached her, gap in the door for a moment. I wish to know who she is."

Mrs. Leveen had dreaded for weeks the question. He knew from her face that she had, on waiting his send-off, and avoiding her sight. Now that she had caught him, as he followed the old lady into the dim, little sitting-room, the dignified figure of humiliation in the presence of his soul there was the origin of finality.

"Sit down, Percy," she said, in the voice of decision he feared. She indicated, and he seated herself by her old rocker.

"Percy, dear," she began, "is this true that I hear you meant to marry this girl?"

"Yes, Aunt Martha. I was going to tell you, but knowing as you were ugly knowing that you would not like it, I have put it on—I was afraid to come to you about it."

He stuck his cap between his knees.

"I am sorry, Percy, you felt that way. It is my intention always to be kind and sympathetic. You should have been quite sure I would have heard your story through with understanding. Now, tell me everything. She is the daughter, I am told, of a German in Hudson street."

"That's right, aunt. Her father has the biggest corner grocery over there, and he has made his pile—I mean has made money since he's been there."

"How long has he been here?"

"Going on 25 years. He's almost an old Ninth-warder now. He's some in politics, and his family is right in it."

"Percy! I never knew them."

"I know, but you wouldn't. It ain't my fault. I wanted to have them all come to mother's so as you could be introduced to them."

The old lady looked as though she would answer this, but she did not. She was silent for a moment before she proceeded.

"Is her father is a grocer?"

"Yes, I'd. Mr. Jamison, who you like well enough."

"Mr. Jamison is a gentleman, my dear. The misfortunes of his family can never alter that. The Jamisons are of the oldest Greenwich families on both sides. He is a grocer by necessity. This person of whom we are speaking is one by choice."

"Well, Aunt Martha, it's as good as being a truckman, and better."

"Mrs. Leveen's voice rose.

"You might have been a judge, like your father, or a senator, like your grandfather. I wanted you to enter political life."

"Politics is pretty low down these days," Percy remarked. "It ain't what it was. Besides, I tried to get an office from Mike McNamara, but he said I wouldn't do in any where the pay was so much as the fracking—jobs. And I guess that's about so."

The last sentence was cheerfully spoken. Mrs. Leveen looked at her nephew's ruddy cheeks and sighed.

"I do wish, Percy," she said, gently, "that you could have found some one in Greenwich. That part of Hudson street where these people live is way beyond the outskirts of the old village, out where the big fields were till the immigrants began to settle in droves."

"Well, what's the difference, Aunt Martha? It's all one now. There ain't no Greenwich any more. It's all just New York city, so what's the use of pretending."

The impatience in the young man's tone amazed this aunt almost as much as the sentiment he uttered. Never before had he failed to show her respect. On the contrary, the humbleness of his demeanor had been a grievance to her; it did not become one of her blood to manifest the same love before her that an ordinary Ninth warder did.

The old lady stiffened in her chair, the lines about her mouth stiffened and her eyes glistened like her knocker as she answered—

"Percy Dean! You forget to whom you are speaking. You forget yourself, sir, and your good breeding is evidently suffering from the associations you permit yourself."

Percy was frightened. The last time he had been rebuked in this temper by his aunt was when he was a boy. He meant no offense.

"I beg your pardon, Aunt Martha," he hurriedly murmured.

Mrs. Leveen took her knitting from the table and worked busily at it till she was quite calm. She looked up after every few thrusts of her needle, indignantly at first, then coldly, and finally the habitual expression of kindness returned to her face.

"I dare say you are in a hurry to go to your work, and I shall not keep you much longer. You may tell me something about this young—this girl. How old is she?"

"She's going on 19, Aunt Martha."

"Is she cultivated, educated? Come, Percy, tell me all about her."

"She went through the grammar school, I think, but she had to work after that? So she can't play the piano or sing, but she is a nice girl and can tend the house and cook, now that her mother is dead."

"That's right; she ought to be able to manage her husband's household. But tell me more about her. Is her voice soft, are her manners gentle, is she modest? Describe her to me, my dear. Is she pretty?"

Percy was encouraged by the few words of approval he had won.

"Aunt, she's a beauty, that's—"

"What do you say, aunt, what?"

"I mean she's a beauty. She's got blue eyes and blond hair and the nicest, biggest, reddest cheeks. She ain't what you would call quiet; she's more lively-like. You ought to hear her laugh when we're down on the docks nights with the rest of the crowd. I'll bet you could hear her across the river in Hoboken. And jolly? If she gets a thing as is too fresh she can jolly him along to beat the band. But she's on the level, too. She does the square thing by her old man every clip. The housework has to be done before she's in for the game. And she slaves for her little sisters and brothers—just slaves for them, and yet she does it as willing. But then she's good to everybody; always ready to help out with work when neighbors are behind or sick or have company, and she sticks up for horses and cats and all like that. You wouldn't believe she was that way, though, to see her at a ball or dancing on excursion boats up the river. She's a good looker and a good dresser, and when she's out in full rig—well, say, she's a sight. The other fellows don't do nothing when we're out—"

Percy stopped short. Mrs. Leveen had risen suddenly, and she stood erect before him, tall and white and proud.

"Why, Aunt Martha!" he exclaimed.

"That's enough, Percy. Thank you. I see I have been wrong, all wrong, in this matter from the first. You shall have your own way, for it is right. I consent."

"Oh, Aunt Martha!" he cried, springing up and seizing her hand to kiss. "I am so glad. But I knew you would after hearing about her. And say, aunt, you ought to see her once. You couldn't help but like her and admire her. Everybody in the ward does. Why, do you know what they call her the men down at the Grapevine? The way you looked then made me think of it. They call her the Pride of Greenwich Village."—N. Y. Post.

EXPENSIVE BRASS BANDS.

Over Ten Thousand Dollars Paid for a Jeweled Cornet.

The writer was recently accorded the privilege of a peep into the museum attached to the factory of one of the largest firms of brass instrument makers in London. Here are to be seen types, facsimiles and models of every kind of musical instrument that the mind of man has ever devised, invented or produced.

In one corner is a duplicate of what is believed to be the most costly presentation cornet ever produced. It was made to the order of the late czar of Russia and is of sterling silver, richly graven with curious devices among which the arms of the imperial house of Romanoff figure conspicuously. The whole of the ornamentation is of beaten gold filigree work, and the "bell" of the instrument is thickly incrusted with rubies and emeralds. Its net value is a trifle over 2,000 guineas.

A melancholy looking instrument attaches to a battered and blood stained bugle which was picked up on the field of Isandhlwana. In addition to the dark patches, which were once splashes of red blood, sundry fragments of woolly hair were adhering to the bell of the instrument when first found, a pretty conclusive indication that the gallant owner had used it in a last desperate effort to beat off his relentless foes. It may be that some ebony skinned Zulu still wanders about with an indentation in his skull which would be difficult to convince that "music hath charms."

Near to this interesting relic is a facsimile of a set of drums which were made for the new Indian cavalry horse. The peculiarity lies in the fact that the cases are of aluminium, a precaution rendered necessary by the number of white ants that infest that country. The other instruments are of brass silver plated, and the whole band costs £359.

The drums, of course, a comparatively modest turnout, for the real gorgeousness in brass instruments it is necessary to inspect some of the recent sets of instruments turned out for eastern potentates. The hands of even the smartest of our black cavalry corps are absolutely not in the same category as regards elegance of appearance is concerned with the private bands of some of our India tributary princes, although probably the latter would have to give the former several points if it came to a musical contest between them.

The private band of the rajah of Cutch, for instance, cost originally £800, and most of the instruments are renewed every four or five years. The tiger skin used by the rajah's big drummer, which was sent over here to be prepared and mounted, was taken from an animal killed by his highness and measured over 7 feet in length. It is lined throughout with heavy cordes of crimson silk, and the brute's eyes are represented by a pair of big yellow diamonds.

Another very fine band was made three years ago to the order of the late shah of Persia. All of the instruments were of pure silver—which, by the way, does not give forth so good a sound as brass, besides being far heavier to handle—inlaid with gold. The total cost of this band de luxe was a trifle under 3,000 guineas. A very different kind of band was that made last year by the firm for the Minkish Indians, a tribe of savages living near Alert bay, British Columbia. The band is nearly all drum, and the mouthpieces of the few brass instruments are tipped with india rubber, to obviate the inconvenience of applying metal to the lips in a temperature of some 30 to 40 degrees below zero.

A curious order was received a short time ago from the king of Morocco. It was for no ship's band. As the instruments were all in one key it is probable that they were to be played in unison. The effect upon an awe-struck people of clarinets blown simultaneously is probably to cause them to take to the hills in an aborigine. Or, a shrill piercing note from a paralyzing

MAN AND WIFE IN DISTRESS.

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