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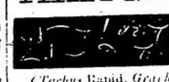

(*Tachus* Rapid, *Graphe* Writing.)

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A DELINQUENT SUBSCRIBER.

One day last week, while sad and dreary,
As we wonted, weak and weary,
Across the unswept floor;
We heard, at first a gentle tapping,
Then it became an earnest rapping,
At our sanctum door.

"Come in!" we said; while yet he pondered,
And in silence we still wondered
What for us could be in store;
Then the door-bolt gently turning,
In he walked. Our check was burning!
Thoughts of crimson gore.

"Are you the man who does the writing?"
(What word will rhyme with this but fighting!
Quickly thought we, o'er and o'er.)
"Sir, we are," we gently told him,
Nodding to the boys to hold him,
If he tried to beat us sore.

"Then you'll please give me a credit
Opposite that little debit,
For two dollars more.
I like your paper, and will take it
As long as you will strive to make it
As good as it has been before."

We jumped! He dodged! Thus we missed him,
Or surely we would have kissed him,
No matter if the boys did roar;
So seldom treated in this manner,
We felt inclined to sing hosannah!
Only this and nothing more.

THE STOLEN BRIDE.

I had been in Europe for six years, as companion to old Mrs. Gates, when her death at Venice released me from any further necessity of earning my daily bread, for out of her vast wealth she left me fifty thousand dollars. No sooner did I know this, than a strong desire seized me to return to Crofton, the village where I was born. I cannot call the feeling homesickness, for I never had a home there. Wilfred, my only brother, and I were left orphans when mere babies, and had been brought up in the family of a Crofton farmer until we were old enough to be sent to boarding school, where we remained until Wilfred was nineteen, I seventeen, our expenses paid by our bachelor uncle, Charles, who could ill afford the outlay. At nineteen, Wilfred had been taken into uncle Charles' counting house to learn the grain business, while I, advertising for a place as nursery-governess, was answered by Mrs. Gates, who wanted a companion to go to Europe with her. Having secured my services at a liberal salary, she treated me like her daughter for six years, and I, having never had a mother to love, loved Mrs. Gates with my whole heart, till her death left me doubly orphaned.

I brought a sad, desolate heart over the ocean, but in New York Wilfred met me, and sunshine came back to my life. For my happiness depends so entirely upon having somebody to love, that the first sight of Wilfred's dear face, the first pressure of his lips upon mine, brought a rest to my heart, in the certainty, that I had lost none of his affection by long absence.

I delayed my return to Crofton, because Wilfred had taken a room for me at his boarding-house, and wished me to remain some little time with him. In the long, pleasant evenings we passed together, I soon discovered that my brother had lost all the lighthearted gaiety of his boyhood, exchanging it, not only for the natural gravity of manhood, but for a settled depression that would not be thrown off, save by a violent effort. In our first glad talks this was not apparent, as it became later, when I had determined to remain in the city all the winter, and we had fully discussed all our adventures during my long absence.

All my adventures, I should have said, for it was not till later I knew of the blight that had fallen upon Wilfred's life during my sojourn in Europe. I had been at home several weeks, when one evening, talking of Crofton, I said:

"If you spend all your vacations in Crofton, Wilfred, you must know something of Amy Shaw. Do tell me if she grew up as pretty as she promised to be at sixteen?"

To my surprise and consternation, Wilfred turned white as death, and dropped his head upon his hands with a moan that was terrible to hear, it was so full of anguish.

"Wilfred!" I said, "is she dead?"

"Better if she were!" he answered, lifting his ghastly face.

"Can you tell me!" I asked, hesitating to force him to speak, when his distress was so evident.

"I was always fond of Amy, and we went to school together constantly."

"You ask me if she became pretty," Wilfred said in a low voice. "I was in Crofton when she came home from school for the last time, and was invited to a party her father gave in honor of her return. I never saw a lovelier face, and she was gentle and winsome as she was pretty. She was very cordial to me, and asked a thousand questions about you, making me bring some of your last letters to read to her, and telling me how intimate you were at school. I was in Crofton a month, and when I left I was betrothed to Amy, with her father's full consent."

"Oh, Wilfred! And never wrote it to me!" I said, reproachfully.

"Because Mr. Shaw wished it kept a secret for a little time; Amy was so young. That was our first mistake. You know how closely I am tied down here, and Uncle Charles had then the first of the strokes of paralysis that make him so feeble. All the business falls upon me. Then I had made nothing more than a living, and I was anxious to offer more than that to Amy."

"But her father was immensely wealthy."

"For that very reason I did not wish to come as a beggar to our wedding. So we said nothing of our engagement. But the next summer I visited Crofton again. Amy was true to me, and Mr. Shaw willing to tell our friends she was to be my wife. I came back to the city in October, two years ago, and was to return to Crofton for the Christmas holidays. Our engagement was to be announced then, and the wedding follow in the spring. In November Uncle Charles had a second stroke of paralysis, and was very ill. While I was engrossed with him and business cares, Mr. Shaw died suddenly. I could not go to Amy at once, as I wished, but I wrote every day. No letters came in answer, and in January I went to Crofton. I was received at the house by Mr. Shaw's brother, Amy's guardian, as well as uncle, and the trustee for the large estate. More than this, he is heir to all if Amy dies unmarried. I told him who I was, and he politely called me a liar."

"Wilfred!"

"I do not mean that he made use of any such offensive word, but he informed me that it was simply impossible his brother sanctioned any such absurd engagement as mentioned, and refused to let me see Amy. I staid three days in Crofton, vainly trying to see her but once, and was obliged to return here. As soon as I came, I wrote to Amy, and my letter was sent back to me opened. Two more met the same reception. In the summer I went to Crofton, to learn that Amy, after a terrible attack of brain fever, had become insane."

I gave an irrepressible cry of horror.

"She is in the Asylum?"

"The one near Crofton?"

"Yes. I went there again and again, but evidently I was excluded by strict orders."

"It is too dreadful!" I cried. "Do you think I can see her?"

"It is possible. But it may be that any of our name will be denied admittance."

"But you forgot that Mrs. Gates wished me to take her name. I am Leonie Gates to everybody but you."

"True! I had forgotten that."

"I will go to Crofton to-morrow. Mrs. Pierson will have a room for me."

"That will betray you at once. There is a hotel there now. Better go there as Miss Gates. Oh, Leonie, it would be an inexpressible comfort to me to know something of poor darling!"

"You shall know something!" I said, resolutely. "I will take the first train to-morrow."

It was piercing February weather, but I was up before light preparing for my journey. Uncle Charles looked sorry when I went to say farewell, for he had grown accustomed to my presence, and all my days had been spent near his chair, since my return. But I promised to be back speedily, and run down to the hack Wilfred had brought to take me to the depot. His warm words of gratitude for my promptness cheered me immensely, and I started off bravely.

All the long journey through, I was thinking of pretty Amy, the inmate of an insane asylum, her golden curls cropped short, her eyes glaring with madness. Dear, loving, gentle Amy, who might have been my sister!

It was after dusk when the railway coach took me any my luggage to the hotel, a structure erected since I had last seen Crofton. The next morning dawned clear and sunny, and I hired a hack and driver to visit the asylum.

My heart throbbed heavily as I presented myself in the parlor to a polite surgeon in attendance.

I told him I had an unfortunate friend,—I was thinking of Amy—who might need his care, and that I was anxious to assure myself of the kindly treatment of the patients. He fell into the trap at once, and offered to take me over the building.

I was convinced very soon that there was no fear to be entertained of ill-treatment. Some of the poor inmates were certainly under restraint that was heart-breaking, but evidently necessary. I had began to fear my mission was hopeless, when the doctor turned into a pleasant sitting-room.

"These are the apartments of a very interesting patient," he said to me, "a young lady of wealth and refinement, who is melancholy crazy. We seldom can rouse her from a dull apathy."

He rapped upon the door of an adjoining room, and a middle-aged woman opened it.

"Will Miss Shaw see a visitor?" he asked.

The woman motioned me to enter and I stood, in another moment, before a white wasted shadow of pretty Amy. My heart sank to see the little white hands folded idly, the drooping head, and downcast eyes. But some intuition, as sudden as a lightning flash, prompted me to speak. Rapidly assuring myself that the doctor and nurse were talking carnestly, I bent down and whispered:

"Do not cry out! Look at me, and see if you do not know me!"

The heavy blue eyes were raised, and in one second they flashed joyously.

"[illegible] come from Wilfred?"

"I do come from Wilfred to save you?"

For I knew she was not mad.

"To save me?" she whispered, eagerly. "Ah! Leonie, my Uncle will keep me here till I die, and he can keep my money."

"But you are not insane?"

"No. I was only delirious from fever. But I am so utterly hopeless!"

"Hush! the nurse is coming. Trust to me."

I joined the doctor at the door, and asked him many questions. To this day I cannot determine in my own mind whether he was a party to the monstrous fraud or shutting up a sane woman, of whether he really believed Amy's hopeless despondency arose from insanity.

I left the house, promising to call the next day. But I did not go back to the hotel. I walked to the part of the building where I thought Amy's window was, and waited there. Three long hours I paced up and down outside the high wall till I was rewarded by seeing the nurse at the window. I beckoned her, but she made no response; only left her post. Five minutes later she was beside me.

"You are the lady who came to see the poor dear to day," she said. "Are you a friend?"

"A true, loving friend," I said.

"Come away from here," she urged. "I must not be seen talking to you."

I led her to the carriage, and we got in, telling the man to drive slowly.

"Is Miss Shaw mad?" I asked.

"Indeed, ma'am that's what I want you to tell me. The doctor and her uncle say it is all a mad fancy that she has a lover they have taken from her, and that her being so sad is insanity, and not real grief. Many's the time, ma'am, I've been tempted to take her away. She's promised me a pile of money over and over again to do it. But if she really is mad, and they got her back, I'd lose my place, and do her no good."

"I do not think she is mad," I answered, "and I will pay you a thousand dollars down if you will bring her to me at the Crofton House, in time for the midnight train."

"A thousand dollars!" the woman said, "and she will give me more than that."

"She will if she promises it. She is very rich."

"Really and truly?"

"Yes. And you are sure of one thousand dollars."

"I dare not bring her to the hotel," the woman said, "but the train stops three miles beyond here, at Upper Crotton. If you will be at the road above the asylum at ten o'clock, to take us up, we will be there. You must take me, too, as far as New Haven. I have relatives there."

Punctually at the appointed hour I was waiting in the carriage at the turn of the road, and before I had time to become impatient, two figures came out of the darkness, and Amy was sobbing in my arms. We drove rapidly to Upper Crofton, caught the train, and were carried to New York. At New Haven the nurse left us, my promised reward in her hand, and Amy's to be sent to the address she gave us.

I gave her a telegram for Wilfred, and at the depot he met us. But by that time Amy was in an alarming state of prostration, not knowing him, fainting frequently, and death-like in appearance.

"What have you done, Leonie?" Wilfred asked, as he lifted the almost senseless form from my arms to a carriage.

"I will tell you soon," I said, "but now drive to the nearest hotel, and send for a physician."

"Will you not go home?"

"No. Your boarding house will be the first place they will look for Amy. I have stolen her for you, Wilfred. She is no more mad than you are!"

His eyes lighted as he whispered, "God bless you, Leonie!" and turned to give his directions to the hackman. Before noon we had a first-rate physician in attendance, and I had Amy in my care in a large airy room in the hotel Wilfred selected.

As I had foreseen, the next day Mr. Shaw and the doctor called upon Wilfred, who allowed a search in the house, and gave only a polite contempt to the uncle's inquiries. Had Amy been found that day, there is no doubt any physician would have returned her to the asylum at once. For many days she hovered near the grave, in a stupor; but slowly she recovered her strength, and could prove her entire rationality. Not until she was thoroughly strong, and the warm spring days had come, would I allow Wilfred to see her.

But in May we had a quiet wedding, and the bright self again—claimed her property. There was a long law-suit, and desperate efforts to prove her insane, but it failed in its object, and Mr. Shaw was legally required to give strict account of the trust and guardianship he had so foully abused.

We all live in Crofton now. Uncle Charles, wholly helpless, is my guest in a pretty cottage I have bought there, and Wilfred has wound up the business, so that he has a sufficient income.

For his own part, my brother finds his time fully occupied with the cares of the estate, which Amy is too ignorant of business to manage; while Mrs. Wilfred, with her two lovely children, her large house, and her numerous charities, has her hands full the year round.

A Plucky Woman.

A jealous lover donned petticoats in Painsville, Ohio, last Wednesday, in order to kill the girl he had left behind him. When an aged Spinster, clad in a long black dress, heavily veiled and gloved, alighted from the east bound train, and tottered into the omnibus, the loungers about the station saw little resemblance in the figure to the light-footed Johnny Blake, who had arrived on a visit to Mary Durban a year before. The distinguished Blake was taken to the hotel, and went to the dining-room and took supper, registering as "Mrs. Woodruff, St. Louis." At noon, on Friday, a phaeton was hired and the old lady hobbled down stairs, and with the help of the driver got into the veichle. About this time, Mary Durban, a compositor in a newspaper office, was going home to dinner. The phaeton stopped, "Mrs. Woodruff" sprang out, and the gentle Mary recognized her discarded lover, John Blake. She screamed. He embraced her, and brandished a razor. She screamed. He drew a revolver from his pocket and threatened to shoot her. She screamed. Sheriff Morley appeared upon the scene and overtook the couple. The man in the petticoats then fired, the ball whizzing by Mary's left ear. She screamed once and again. The Sheriff knocked down his man and led him off to jail. The blue-eyed maiden went home to dinner, returned in the afternoon to her case in the newspaper office, and set up with her own fingers the account of this diabolical attempt to assassinate her, smiling grimly at every adjective.

A traveller in Western Iowa, while riding along, came to a large sign, which implored him to "Look out for the locomotive." He accordingly rode down the track for a better view, and while he was obligingly "looking out" for it, it came along. He saw it, but he had to sit in the ditch and wait until a freight train of thirty-seven cars passed by, before he could get back to the other part of his horse.

A laborer at work in a yard hung his coat on a post. During the day some one in throwing a dish of water from a window unintentionally dropped the contents on the garment. When the man went to get it, on quitting work, he perceived its condition, and in some consternation, exclaimed: "Howly murder! I the coat wasn't a-thinking it was on my back all the time, and went to sweating widout knowing the chate."

Our Canadian Railways.

Some interesting statistics have recently been furnished to the public by a report submitted by Mr. Brydges, Superintendent of Government Railways, from which we learn that the total mileage in the Dominion in 1876 77 was 5,316, a net increase over the year previous of 418 miles. The total capital raised by the railways in operation up to June 30th, 1877, was $326,328,976.18, of which $65,348,599.61 was in the shape of government and local bonuses, the balance being ordinary and preference share capital and bonded debt. The number of miles laid with steel rails was 2,765½; iron rails, 27,813½, and wooden rails, 25½. The number of engines was 995: 497 first-class, 294 second-class, 241 baggage, and 21. 689 freight cars of all kinds. The number of passengers carried was 6,073,233, an increase of 528,419 over last year; and of freight, 6,331,757 tons, an increase of 528,039 tons. The Grand Trunk carried nearly half of all the passengers and freight. The traffic earnings of all the roads amounted to $18,742,053.48, a decrease from the previous year of $616,030.63. The expense of working was $15,290,091.48, leaving a profit of $3,451,962. The percentage of expenses to earnings [illegible] of 80 cent. in 1875-6. The total number of passengers killed was 5, injured 15, the killed being 1 in every 1,214,646 carried, and the injured 1 in every 337,402.

Gambling for Human Life.

But perhaps the most tragic, soul-harrowing scene that ever took place at a gaming table transpired at a public house in Port au Prince some years ago. Several parties were waiting about the room for the game to commence. Among the crowd of loiterers was a Captain St. Every, a noted gamster, deadly duelist and well known man of pluck.

Some one spoke up, "Who'll play?" "I will," said the captain of a French frigate, which had just arrived in the harbour, and seizing a dice box threw to win or lose the amount of a small sum of money that then lay upon the table. He was ignorant of the stake to be played.

"Monsieur commandant you have won," sai l Captain St. Every, pushing toward him several piles of gold.

Astounded at the sight of so much wealth the captain drew back saying: "Gentlemen, I should be wanting not only in common honesty, but even in good manners, were I to appropriate the sums, the winning of which I never expected in the least degree, for I thought I was playing for the trifling stake lying on the table. I cannot, therefore take the enormous sum as my own right.

"Sir," said Captain St. Every, "You must take it, for if you had lost you would have been obliged to pay the same sum."

"You are mistaken, sir, if you think so. I do not conceive my honor endangered in reference to paying a debt of honour which I never contracted nor in refusing to accept of so large a sum which I never expected to win."

"Monsieur le commandant," shrieked Captain St. Every, raising his voice to the highest pitch, "If you had lost you should have paid. I would have made you do so.

This was fire to the gunpowder, intended to provoke a challenge and it accomplished its purpose. "Sir," said Captain St. Every, "I don't wish to take any advantage of you, which my acknowledged ability in the use of the sword and pistol gives me, so I offer you terms of equality."

"Bring a pistol here at once, load it, and the chance of the dice shall determine which shall blow the other's brains out."

"Agreed," said the nothing daunted frigate commandant.

A shock of horror ran through the veins of the assembled crowd at the barbarity of the bloody curdling affair.

Some shrank from the room, others, more hardened in the sights of horror, crowded near the gaming table, perfectly cognizant of the desperate character of St. Every and inwardly lauding the bravery of the unknown.

Each party examined the pistols. The naval captain first threw the fatal dice.

He threw eleven.

"A good throw," said St. Every, holding for a moment his own; "the chances are now in your favor, but listen, if it turns out as it appears to me it will, that fortune favors you and not me, I wish neither mercy nor pity, as I would think either a coward who would spare the other."

"Sir," I need your impertinent remonstrances to back me neither now nor at any other time," replied the commandant.

St. Every took the box and threw fifteen.

The company were paralyzed with horror.

Monsieur le commandant arose. "Your life belongs to me, sir," said St. Every, throwing down the dice on the table.

"Fire, sir," said the commandant, placing his hand on his heart, "an honest man is never afraid to——"

St. Every's ball scattered the brains and blood of the unlucky commandant over the clothes and persons of the bystanders, as his lifeless body fell to the saloon floor.

St. Every deserted to the English, and soon after fell mortally wounded at the battle of Ireis as the English were carrying the day.—*Cincinnati Commercial.*

A Broken Engagement.

It was a beautiful evening in the dawn of summer. Two forms were sitting in close proximity to one another by the window of a $12,000 house—heavily mortgaged—in the upper part of the city. The hand of one rested lovingly on that of the other, and the arm of one described a semicircle around the other's waist. It is hardly necessary to say that they were lovers, and this was as far as the young man could go in geometry. There was no light in the room, but there was no occasion for any, with her taper waist and sparkling eyes and flaming words. This is a sample of their small talk:

"Dearest Flora, tell, oh tell me what I can do to make myself more worthy of your love. Bid me undertake any mission you please, and I will obey. Ay, even though it be—to cut my hair short—sacrifice my moustache—wear large boots, or work for my living—speak, anything you may command me."

"Oh, Charles! calm yourself. Do not speak in this terrible strain; you make me shudder. No, Charles, I love you for yourself alone." Then, placing her hand gently upon his brow, she murmured, "Soft, my love, speak soft, my own, and tell me do you love me as much as ever, and will I ever be the same to you as I am now?"

"Hear me swear!" cried the ardent youth, dropping upon his knees for the first time in his life, but suddenly arising with a troubled expression of the countenance, as something put him in mind of the tightness of his nether apparel.

"Oh, Flora, there is not a coat that adorns Wilson's establishment that has so high a place in my affections as yourself! You are to me what slander and gossip are to young church members, or funerals to married women—my life, my ambition, my all! A few days more and we shall be united forever. I can scarcely realize my happiness."

The fair one blushed and nestled closer to the vest pattern of the happy youth. So we leave them.

CHAPTER II.

It was a dark, gloomy night, two days before the time appointed for the nuptial ceremonies of the young pair. Charles bent his way—full of joy, hope and supper—to the mansion of his beloved. He rang the bell and was ushered into the parlor. Flora was not there, and, after waiting a few moments, he resolved to descend the stairs to the dining-room, ostensibly to seek for her, but most probably with visions of spoons dancing through the ever-teeming brain. With stealthy steps he approached the door and suddenly opened it, when there burst upon his astonished gaze a sight which froze the blood within his veins.

Upon the dining room table lay many dishes and other articles of crockery. Before it, with dishevelled hair and tucked-up gown, stood Flora, a huge carving knife in her hand, which she was in the act of plunging—into a pan of hot water.

She had been caught in the act of doing housework! With one loud shriek she fell to the floor, while her distracted and bewildered lover rushed from the house.

It is needless to add that the engagement, along with several brittle cups, was broken on the spot. Thus were two fond and doting hearts irrevocably separated.

If my story, dear reader, will be the means of persuading one young woman never, under any circumstances, to do any work about the house, but always to let her mother and the other servants do it, my object is more than accomplished. Farewell.

Murder and the locality of a free lunch will out.