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Acton Free Press.

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THE FREE PRESS.
THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 18, 1881.
POETRY.

The Strength of Gentleness.

Some look for power in sudden shocks,
Hot nature—loud of paradox—
Shows vigor in a thousand ways,
Where gentleness alone finds place.
The snow which comes in mildest guise
The solid earth soon caresses,
And leaves upon our placid side
A belt of beauty far and wide.
The sun which makes the green leaves grow
Comes in soft rays of liquid dew,
And, spared by needless, gentle powers,
The earth retains its verdure down.
Of all the things you know or seek,
This water nothing seems more weak—
It separated drops but just cohere—
A child can fling them from their sphere.
With one small finger of its hand—
Yet how firm the ocean stand!
Add not with what tremendous force
The torrent triumphs on its course!
So Truth is strong—although it plays
Upon our souls as summer days
Play on the far horizon's rim—
And gentle plus have strength for him
Whose willful acts would lead to scorn
The words of thoughtless ferns and fern.

and his slippers and dressing gown before the fire, but he did not come. She waited patiently till ten o'clock, then putting a wrap about her, she called the housemaid.

"Sit by baby's crib, Mary, and, when Mr. Mayfair comes, tell him I have gone to the Reindeer. Ask no questions, and take good care of baby, and you shall have a dollar extra this month."

"Very well, ma'am," with wond'ring looks.

Twelve o'clock—one!—and then the young husband let himself in with his night key, and came reeling into the sitting room. There sat the maid beside the sleeping child.

Frank looked about him a little anxiously.

"Fast asleep! Fine little fellow!" he said, bending over the crib. "Mary, my girl, where's your mistress—gone to bed?"

"No, sir; she's gone to the Reindeer hotel."

He stood and stared.

"What do you say, girl?"

"She went out at ten, sir, and bade me tell you when you came that she had gone to the Reindeer."

The young husband stilled something like an oath, and sat down before the hearth. Half an hour went by, then he started up and glanced at the clock.

"Great heavens! It is nearly two and she's not here!"

He seized his hat and rushed from the house like one mad. By the time he was half way to the Reindeer, he was perfectly sober.

"Could she have meant what she said?" he asked himself over and over again.

Presently a carriage came down from the lighted tavern on the hill, and, as it passed him, a woman's voice rang out, singing the chorus.

"We won't go home till morning."

It was his wife's voice. He caught at the horse's head, frantic with rage. Dolly's pretty curly head looked out as the vehicle stopped.

"Frank! old fellow—hic—is that you?" Get in—hic—get in! Why didn't you come up—hic. Oh, we'd a jolly time—hic—we did. Don't blame you for going out, Frank. Didn't know it was so pleasant—hic—I meant to go every night."

"You do?" he gasped, leaping into the seat beside her. Grasping her arm, he muttered, "Ever dare to do such a thing again, and you'll be no wife of mine!"

Dolly laughed uproariously.

"Nonsense, Frank! Let me do as you do; that's fair. Let me go, my arm! You hurt me! Besides, you'll break my flask of prime brandy! Frank, taste a drop!"

He caught it from her hand and swung it out of the window.

"Bah!" said Dolly, her cheeks flushed, her hair awry, "I wish I'd stayed at the Reindeer—hic. What makes you so cross, Frank?"

"Hush! Say no more, Dolly," he answered, his teeth set hard. "I can't bear it. I—I may do something I'll be sorry for. Keep silent—I don't want any more crooked words."

"Ban's horns, if I die for it!" cried Dolly.

Then she clapped her hands and laughed gleefully, breaking off into "A moonlight night for a ramble."

Frank let his head fall into his hands.

"God heavens! he groaned; 'I would rather have died than have seen this night!'

He got her home and into her own room at last, but she was very unmanageable, and persisted in cutting up all manner of capers—dancing and singing—her cheeks flushed and her hair streaming, and asking if they would not go again another night—it was such fun.

His pretty, modest little Dolly! Long after she had fallen into a sound sleep her husband sat over the smouldering fire with his face hidden in his hands.

"Dolly," he said, when she awoke late on the following morning, "what happened last night? Must never happen again."

She looked up with her old clear eyes.

"Very well, Frank; that is for you to say. Just as you do, so will I."

He was silent a moment.

"I would rather die than see what I

saw last night over again," he said.

"Frank," she said, her lips quivering, "I've seen the same sight once or twice every week since the day I married you, and God only knows what it has cost me!"

He caught her close to his heaving breast.

"Poor little wife!" he almost sobbed, "you shall never see such a sight again. I shall sign the pledge to-day."

"Frank," said his pretty wife one day, as they watched their children playing on the lawn, "I fooled you handsomely that night; it was all make-believe. I didn't go to the Reindeer that night, and not a drop of the hateful stuff had passed my lips. Didn't fool you that night and cure you in the bargain?"

"You little witch!" he cried, but the instant after his eyes filled. "Yes, Dolly," he said, drawing her close to his side, "you cured me of a habit that would have been my ruin. Heaven bless you for it!"

Something in the Bed.

Judge Pitman had a habit of slipping his watch under his pillow when he went to bed. One night somehow it slipped down, and as the judge was restless it worked its way down toward the foot of the bed. "After a bit," as he was lying awake, his foot touched it: as it felt very cold, he was surprised, scared, and jumping out from the bed he said—

"My gracious, Maria! there's a toad or something under the covers; I touched it with my foot."

Mrs. Pitman gave a loud scream and was out on the floor in an instant.

"Now don't go bolting and waking up the neighbors," said the Judge. "You get me a broom or something and we'll fix the thing mighty quick."

Mrs. Pitman got the broom and gave it to the Judge with the remark that she felt as if snakes were creeping up and down her legs and back.

"Oh, nonsense, Maria! Now turn down the covers slowly while I hold the broom and bang it. Put a bucket of water alongside the bed so we can stomp it in and draw it out."

Mrs. Pitman fixed the hacket and gently removed the covers. The Judge held the broom upflashed, and as the black ribbon of the silver watch was revealed, he cracked away at it three or four times with the broom, then he pushed the thing off into the basket.

Then they took the light to investigate the matter. When the Judge saw what it was he said—

"I might have known, it was just like women, to go sneezing and fagging about nothing. It's utterly ruined."

"It was you that made the fuss, not me," said Mrs. Pitman.

"You needn't try to put the blame on me." Then the Judge turned in and growled at Maria until he fell asleep.

Something to Give.

An amusing story is told of an old lady, who in her last illness, promised the priest to leave him a sum of money for charitable uses. When she was dying she begged the priest to come nearer to her bedside, and gasped out: "Father—I've given you—'Stay,' said the priest, anxious to have as many witnesses as possible to the expected statement, "I will call in the family," and opening the door, he beckoned them all in. "I've given you," repeated the old lady, with increasing difficulty, "given you—'a great deal of—'tisable." This incident may remind the reader of a passage in one of Lord Bellingbroke's letters, in which, writing to a friend, he says: "I am very sorry my Lord Marlborough gives you so much trouble. It is the only thing he will give you."

Latin.

A good story is told of an old farmer whose son had for a long time been ostensibly studying Latin in a popular academy. The farmer, not being perfectly satisfied with the course and conduct of the young hopeful, recalled him from school, and placing him by the side of a cart one day, thus addressed him:—"Now, Joseph, here is a fork and here is a heap of manure and cart what do you call them in Latin?" "Forkibus, cartibus et manurebus," said Joseph. "Well, now," said the old man, "if you don't take that forkibus pretty quick, I'll pitch that manurebus into that cartibus, I'll break your 'key-bellibus.'"

Joseph went to work busily forthwith.

Joseph Billings says: "These sinners, no pi in Natal History that has been more, and that more of than August 1881."

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THE FREE PRESS.
THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 18, 1881.

A NICE LITTLE GAME.
Frank sat before the glowing grate, his feet on one corner of the mantle, his chair tipped back. His young wife looked at him, and her pretty black eyes, which only a minute before had been brimful of tears, omitted sparks of fire. Her rosy mouth closed with a firm expression, and her dainty foot came down upon the rug in a very decided manner.

"I won't stand it!" she said, under her breath; "I can't—I will kill me to see him tonight after night boozed, degraded, ruining both soul and body. I must do something—I must save him for my baby's sake!"

Then she sat down and meditated. They had been married a little over two years, and the babe in the wicker cradle was a thriving boy. No happier woman than Dolly the world held, but for one thing. Her young husband would drink. He loved his social glass, his wine suppers and club dinners. He did not neglect his wife, but often he came home in the small hours in rather an unsteady condition. Dolly tried everything—tears, entreaties, persuasion—but he only laughed her off.

"Where's the harm, Dolly? Can't a fellow be merry now and then with his friends?"

But Dolly saw the fatal evil growing upon him day by day, and knew what her end would be. She shuddered, and her eyes filled with tears, but the minute after they flashed fire, and she smiled.

"I'll try it," she said to herself; "if it does no good, it can't do much harm." Then she said, "Frank!"

Her husband roused up, and opening his eyes with an imbecile stare, replied: "All right, Dolly."

"Frank, you believe that a wife should follow in her husband's footsteps, don't you?"

"To be sure. You're a sensible woman, Dolly."

"And you're a sensible man, Frank. What's right for you to do is right for me, isn't it?"

"Precisely! Just so, Dolly—exactly. You're a wise woman, you are."

Dolly smiled quietly.

"Very well, Frank; if you go to the tavern any more nights, I'm going, too!"

Her husband looked up, half sobered.

"Nonsense, Dolly!" he said; "that is running the thing into the ground. You will do no such thing!"

"You'll see that I will, Frank!" she answered, resolutely. "I love you, and what you do I shall do too! If you see fit to ruin yourself, soul and body, and shame your son, I shall follow your example. I care for nothing that you cannot share. As you do, so will I!"

His cheek paled and his lip quivered. He sat silent for a minute, then got up and said:

"Nonsense, little girl! Come to bed, Dolly."

She followed him obediently, and no more was said on the subject. For three or four nights Frank came home punctually, then his old habit asserted him.

Dolly had his supper all waiting,

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