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Acton Free Press. THURSDAY MORNING, NOV. 8, 1883.

POETRY IN THE LAST FEW.

OUR STORY. HER BEAUTY FAILED.

WHAT SHE SAID.

IRISH HUMOR.

FOUR AND TWENTY BLACKBIRDS.

LONDON'S VASTNESS.

A SIMPLE LAY—AN EGG.

IT ISN'T A GREAT WAY TO THE END OF A BAT'S NOSE.

BLEACHED MOUSE IS THE LATEST FAVORITE SHADE.

RATTLE SAYS THE CROWS EFFECTED BY LAYING ON OF HANDS.

THESE TWO THINGS, CONTRADICTIONARY AS THEY MAY SEEM.

A SUBSCRIBER WISHED TO KNOW IF IT IS WRONG TO EAT PIE WITH A KNIFE.

AN OLD FARMER HAS MADE THE SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY THAT DIFFERENT SOUNDS TRAVEL WITH VARYING DEGREES OF VELOCITY.

THE FIRST STROKE OF THE THUNDER BALL CAN BE HEARD BY THE WORKMAN AT THE FURRIEST CORNER OF A QUARTER SECTION FARM.

HAS TO BE REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES AS A DISTANCE OF TEN RODS.

mustn't know. I must obtain a white gardenia somewhere or other before to-night to reproduce the one I have wept and mused over during his absence.

"Oh, Ethel, what a hypocrite you are!" cried out Sophia.

"I'm no worse than other girls," retorted Ethel.

"I saw a lovely gardenia at the florist's last week," remarked Eleonara, "but they asked a pound for it."

"I haven't got a pound to spare, and that's the end of it," said Ethel, knitting her brows.

"Lucy Parke has one in bloom," said Sophia.

"I was looking at it only yesterday, and wondering how poor folks can keep such exquisite plants."

"Who's Lucy Parke?"

"She does sewing for me," said Sophia.

Mrs. Hoyt, of our Dress Society, recommended her. Supports an old uncle, or something of that sort, I believe. I never should have thought of the thing again if you hadn't chosen to mention a white gardenia."

"Good," said Ethel, "it shall be mine."

"I don't think she'd sell it."

"I'll have it, anyway, asserted the impatient young beauty. "What's her address?"

"No. 17 Raven Lane, third floor, front," said Sophia, referring to a little memorandum book in the drawer of her workstand. "It's rather a poverty-stricken sort of place, but—"

"I don't care," said Ethel. "I'll go there at once."

Lucy Parke was very busy that day, finishing an order for Miss Sophia Baker. She was a pale, pretty girl, with regular Grecian features, glossy black tresses, and an air of lady-like refinement which one would scarcely expect to find in a mere sewing-girl.

Lucy had not always occupied that humble sphere.

She, too, had had her dreams of a higher, more luxuriant atmosphere, from which alas! she had awakened to the realities of a life of toil.

But Lucy's heart was lighter than usual, for a generous friend was even then sitting in the adjoining room with her old uncle, and through the partially open door she could hear his voice.

"Do you think, Abner Parke, I would let my father's old clerk, the man who had broken down and grown gray in his service, suffer from want? Before I went away I was almost as poor as yourself; but now that I have succeeded in amassing a little money, I am going to make you comfortable. Yes, I know Lucy is a good girl—and a pretty girl—but that's no reason she should toil herself into a consumption. I've bought that Whartley place, and you shall be lodge-keeper at a good salary. There's a pretty little house for you and your old wife, and the country air will do Lucy good. And—"

But just then the girl's attention was called off the cheery monologue by a sharp, imperious rap at the outer door.

She opened it, supposing the new-comer to be some chance customer, of which commodity, poor child, she stood sadly in need.

And Miss Ethel Baker swung in, hung with jewellery, dressed with a faint odor of violets, and scented in the very extreme of fashion.

"I see you don't know me," she said, as Lucy rose in surprise. "I am Miss Baker, sister to the young lady who occasionally employs you."

Lucy bowed.

"And," added Ethel, looking past her at the superb crimson brooch which rose like a royal crown out of its glossy green leaves, "I want to buy that gardenia."

"It is not for sale," said Lucy, coloring deeply. "It was my mother's. She raised it from a slip before she died, and—"

"I detest," coldly interrupted Ethel, "but poor people oughtn't to talk nonsense about sentiment. I see, with a glance, that you need money. I'll give you half a crown for that plant."

"It is not for sale," repeated Lucy, constrainedly.

"Then you don't mean to oblige me," haughtily spoke out Ethel. "Very well; if you persist in your obstinacy, it will be the worse for you. I will tell my sister Sophia to withdraw her consent from you. Don't be an idiot; listen to the common sense of the thing. Here's half a crown; just wrap the plant up and let me take it away."

"But Miss Baker—"

"I have no time to argue the matter," interrupted Ethel. "Yes or no? I want the flower—and my sister is one of your best customers."

And Ethel Baker triumphantly bore the snowy blossom away.

Her footsteps had scarcely died out on the threshold before her uncle Abner's friend bent pityingly over Lucy's drooping brow.

"What, crying, Lucy? And only because that handsome visage has stolen away your one little flower. Believe me, child, she is not worth one of those glittering tear-diamonds. I will all your windows with flowers before night-fall."

"You are very kind, faltered poor Lucy, trying to smile; "but—but they will not be my poor mother's gardenia."

Miss Baker was in her most enchanting toilette when Mr. Wilde called that evening.

And on a gilded tripod in the window stood Lucy Parke's weeping white blossom.

blossom. "You see," said Ethel, smiling sweetly, "how I have treasured it for your sake."

Norton Wilde looked her straight in the face.

"Do you mean," said he, in that cold, blunt way of his that some how jarred upon her pretty conventionalities, "that this is the same flower I gave you before I went away?"

"Of course it is," said the unconscious Ethel.

"Miss Ethel," said Norton Wilde, drawing himself to his full height, "you are a woman—and from a woman's lips falsehood comes with a double-distilled terror; you brought this flower from Lucy Parke's house to-day; you wiled it from her by threats and entreaties alike. And now you would palm it off upon me for the same I gave you three years ago?"

Ethel stood with crimsoned cheeks, and fingers nervously working together—detected!

The platitudes which she would fain have uttered died away on her lips—she only felt that she had played out her game and lost it.

Norton Wilde took his leave—and when Mrs. Baker and the girls hurried in to enquire the reason of his unexpectedly brief sojourn, they found Ethel in a storm of passionate tears.

That was the end of her hopes on the subject of Norton Wilde.

And six months afterwards, when they heard of his marriage to Lucy Parke, Ethel Baker elevated her handsome eyebrows, and contentiously remarked:

"After all, Norton Wilde always had low tastes. To think of him marrying a dressmaker!"

What She Said.

A rather fast young man, becoming enamored of a pretty girl, finally decided to make her a formal offer of his hand and heart—all he was worth—and then he hoped to be indulged in love-like demonstrations, the young lady being so far coolly indifferent in her manner toward him. He attributed this to maidenly reserve, for it never occurred to him that she wasn't in love with him. He cautiously prefaced his declaration with a few questions, for he had no intention of "throwing himself away."

"Did she love him well enough to live in a cottage with him? Was she a good cook and bottle washer? Did she think it a wife's duty to make home happy? Would she consult his tastes and wishes concerning her associates and pursuits in life? Was she economical? Could she make her own clothes, etc.?" The young lady said that before she answered his questions she would assure him of some nautive virtues she possessed. She never drank, smoked or chewed; never owed a bill to her laundry or tailor; never stayed out all night playing billiards; never hung on the street corners and ogled ruddy girls; never stood in with the young boys for cigars and wine sippers. "Now," said she, rising indignantly, "I am assured by those who know that you do all these things, and it is rather absurd for you to expect all the virtues in me, while you do not possess any of them yourself. I can never be your wife," and she bowed him out and left him on the cold doorstep a madder if not a wiser man.

Irish Humor.

Some years ago there was a scene between the clerk of a criminal court and the Irish prisoner which brought out that inconsistency in ideas that makes Hibernian so amusing.

An Irishman was arraigned for assault and battery. The clerk, after reading the indictment, asked the prisoner, in accordance with the form then in their use, "Do you demand a trial on this indictment?"

"Niver a trial do I want," answered Pat, with the utmost nonchalance. "Ye need not give yourself the trouble of trying me. Ye may as well save the expence of that, and put me down as innocent. Confint I'd be to lave the house wid me blessin' on ye, indade, its anxious I am, for me boss is waitin' for me beyant, I want none of yez trials at all, as all!"

And Pat, thinking that he had settled the business, rose to leave the dock, but of course was prevented. When the laughter subsided, the clerk, changing the form of the question, asked—

"Are you guilty or not guilty?"

"Arrah, and how can I tell till I hear the evidence?" said Pat.

It was several minutes before the court could go on with the business.

Four and Twenty Blackbirds.

There is often a great deal of sense in the Mother Goose rhymes, if only we know what is intended to be taught by them. A writer in Golden Days thus explains the story of the "four and twenty blackbirds":

The birds are the twenty-four hours. The bottom of the pie is the earth, and the top crust the sky that overreaches it. The opening of the pie is the dawn of day, when the birds begin to sing: "The King sitting in the parlor counting out his money" is the sun, and the golden pieces that slip through his fingers are the golden sunshine. The Queen in the kitchen is the moon and the honey which she relishes herself is the moonlight. The maid in the day dawn and the clothes she hangs out are the clouds; while the bird who "tugs off her nose" is the hour of sunrise.

When it's bed not a bed?—When it's a little baby.

THE WAY THE RAIN BEHAVES.

Beating the clover Under and over, Tossing it thither, Flinging it hither— This is the way the rain behaves. Folding the garden, Hopping no pardon, Though all the roses Fall on their noses— This is the way the rain behaves! Drubbing and rubbing, All the leaves scrubbing, Then the leaves shaking, Leaving them quaking— This is the way the rain behaves! Splashing and dashing, Merry drops clashing, Each other bustling— Oh, what a bustling!— This is the way the rain behaves!

Two Dollars Ahead.

The "drop game" is frequent, played by thieves in city banks. Wh a some customer of the bank is counting the money which he has drawn a stranger calls attention to a bill which has apparently been dropped by the depositor. The customer stoops to pick it up, and on regaining his feet generally finds some if not all of the money which he has been counting gone, together with the stranger. The following story is told of how ex-Senator David Davis once outwitted a would-be thief: The judge was making a deposit at a Washington bank, and stood counting a large pile of money at a desk. A well-dressed young man stepped up and, with a bow and a smile, said: "Judge, you have dropped a bill." Sure enough, there lay a clean, crisp, genuine two-dollar bill at the depositor's feet. "Thank you," he blandly answered the judge, placing his ponderous right boot over the bill on the floor, and calmly resuming his counting. The sharper, taken aback by the coolness of the proceeding, disappeared, and the judge was \$2 ahead by the transaction.

Wise Words.

Childhood shows the man as morning shows the day. Nothing is so reasonable and cheap as good manners. The mind grows narrow in proportion as the soul grows corrupt. If you desire to be held wise, be so wise as to hold your tongue. He who can at all times sacrifice pleasure to duty approaches sobriety. Better be unborn than untanght; for ignorance is the root of misfortune. The darkest chapter in the nature of man is the tendency to pull down the reputation of his fellow man. Give me the benefit of your convictions, if you have any, but keep your doubts to yourself, for I have enough of my own. We must not roughly smash other people's idols because we know or think we know that they are of cheap human manufacture.

The Young Man Wasn't Consulted.

"You should learn some trade, my son," said an Auntin gentleman to his young hopeful. "Brick-layers are getting 56.80 a day, while laymen can't afford to ride on the street-cars." "Pa, why didn't you learn a trade when you were a boy?" "That's not only a silly, but also an impudent question. I didn't learn a trade when I was a boy out of regard for your feelings. I wanted to give you an opportunity to say that your father was a gentleman."

Too Much Wood!

"Well, what's the matter now?" asked Simpkins' wife as he staggered in about three o'clock this morning. "Well (hic), y'he I wash out (hic) with Henney (hic), an' e said: "Puth stick in m' so—(hic)—soda." So I sayth, "Puth stick in mine." Then I gesh—"Well I guess," remarked Mrs. Simpkins, laying considerable stress on the personal pronoun, "that he put a whole cord of wood in your soda, and that it all went to your head." And when Simpkins woke up the next morning he thought so too.

London's Vastness.

An American correspondent says of London: It covers 122 square miles, and I couldn't get through its streets in ten years behind Maud S. Its gin-palaces and beer shops would, if put in a line, reach seventy-five miles. There are 400,000 gas lamps in its streets. Twenty-seven miles of new streets are added every year. Every day 160,000 strangers come into the city, and 123 babies are born. I begin to feel crowded and shall get out.

A Simple Lay—An Egg.

A gold pen—a coin vault. Pressed for time—A mummy. Not what it is cracked up to be—A worm-eaten nut.

It Isn't a Great Way to the End of a Bat's Nose.

Bleached mouse is the latest favorite shade. This will probably be followed by the rat tan.

Rattle Says the Crows Effected by Laying on of Hands is an Old Story with Him.

His mother often indulged in the pastime in times past.

These Two Things, Contradictory as They May Seem, Must Go Together—Manly Dependence and Manly Independence, Manly Reliance and Manly Self-Reliance.

A subscriber wished to know if it is wrong to eat pie with a knife. Well, no, not exactly wrong, but we prefer to eat ours with the teeth, as our grandfathers did.

An Old Farmer Has Made the Scientific Discovery That Different Sounds Travel with Varying Degrees of Velocity.

The first stroke of the thunder ball can be heard by the workman at the furriest corner of a quarter section farm; while the call to work has to be repeated several times as a distance of ten rods.