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Acton Free Press. THURSDAY MORNING, APRIL 23, 1885.

POETRY FOR SUMMER-TIDE.

Sweet song of the summer, Intangible spirit!

The blue-bird is building Her bird-crowned nest

The quail is cooing, The robin is chirping,

The thrush is twittering, The dove is cooing,

The lark is singing, The sparrow is chirping,

The nightingale is singing, The cuckoo is calling,

The swan is swimming, The heron is standing,

The eagle is soaring, The hawk is swooping,

The owl is hooting, The bat is swooping,

The fox is cunning, The wolf is howling,

The bear is roaring, The lion is roaring,

The tiger is roaring, The leopard is roaring,

The panther is roaring, The hyena is roaring,

The jackal is howling, The dog is barking,

The cat is purring, The mouse is squeaking,

The rabbit is hopping, The squirrel is chattering,

The chipmunk is chattering, The beaver is chattering,

The porcupine is chattering, The mole is chattering,

The shrew is chattering, The bat is chattering,

The owl is chattering, The crow is chattering,

The raven is chattering, The magpie is chattering,

The jay is chattering, The blue jay is chattering,

The cardinal is chattering, The goldfinch is chattering,

The chickadee is chattering, The titmouse is chattering,

The nuthatch is chattering, The downy woodpecker is chattering,

The hairy woodpecker is chattering, The red-bellied woodpecker is chattering,

The white-headed woodpecker is chattering, The black-chinned woodpecker is chattering,

The red-breasted sapsucker is chattering, The yellow-bellied sapsucker is chattering,

The blue jay is chattering, The white-throated sparrow is chattering,

The song sparrow is chattering, The field sparrow is chattering,

The meadow lark is chattering, The vesper sparrow is chattering,

The chipping sparrow is chattering, The junco is chattering,

The white-eyed vireo is chattering, The blue-headed vireo is chattering,

The red-eyed vireo is chattering, The black-throated bluebird is chattering,

The indigo bunting is chattering, The yellow warbler is chattering,

The orange-capped tanager is chattering, The scarlet tanager is chattering,

The blue tanager is chattering, The green tanager is chattering,

The yellow tanager is chattering, The red tanager is chattering,

Do you know, Brother Spencer, what effect a good smoke has on me,

said Mrs. Rankin, who felt that his brother clergyman did not approve of the habit.

"Oh! I hope not, I hope not, brother, do not ascribe the power to tobacco that should be given to the Holy Spirit.

"But, Harry, my dear brother, do not say that. It is not the power of tobacco that I am speaking of, but the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Now, Harry, said Mrs. Rankin to her sister-in-law, as they were preparing for the meeting, "you must try and keep Mr. Jackson as much as possible from my immediate vicinity, it will never do to let him know how repugnant is the filthy weed to my nostrils, my duty as hostess must be done regardless of the inconvenience his pipe causes me. They are calling us, go down and make my excuses, say I will come later on, and send Charlie to me."

"Well," said Mr. Rankin when he had joined his wife, "we're in a nice fix with that person's pipe, what's to be done, you can't absent yourself from the table every day like you did to-night, he will soon suspect something is wrong."

"We will put in the leaves of the extension table, and let some of the children sit with us, and you can take him at your end of the table, I think at that distance, his perfume will not reach me."

At the close of the meeting, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Spencer were escorted to the residence of Mrs. Prescott, and there left for the night, with the parting instructions that breakfast would be ready next morning at sharp eight o'clock.

Mr. Jackson did not fail to notice the change made in the table next morning, but supposed that the children were placed near their mother, in order that she might attend to their wants easier, and for several days no suspicion of the discomfort his pipe was causing, entered his mind. Mrs. Rankin was a brilliant conversationalist and was always surrounded by a circle of friends at all the social gatherings. Several times had the Rev. Theodore Jackson tried to enter those charmed circles, but invariably found that his presence seemed to break the charm.

"I do not quite understand our hostess, Mr. Rankin," he remarked to his brother clergyman one night, as he sat by the open window, smoking his "retiring pipe."

"She seems to be able to converse on any subject brought forward, but when I asked her to-day if she approved of the plans for home missions she stammered out, 'No, yes—I am not interested in them,' and turned to that silly Hattie West, and began to discuss the style of Mrs. Creel's bonnet. It is my belief that all women are frivolous."

"May be so," replied Mr. Spencer, "I never thought her frivolous, rather took her for an earnest Christian woman."

"She is all things to all men probably, yet you certainly have a better chance of judging her character than I, as she is more in your company than in mine."

But it happened that Mr. Jackson was to see Mrs. Rankin in another light. It was announced at the Friday night meeting that Sacrament would be administered at the close of divine service next Sunday morning and that Brother Jackson would assist the officiating ministers. On Saturday evening after the ministers had gone to Mrs. Prescott's for the night, and they were seated in the parlor, enjoying the refreshing breeze that came through the open door, Mrs. Rankin noticed Mrs. Johnson, the nurse, leaving the house.

"Is she going home?" she asked of Mrs. Rankin.

"Yes, she likes to spend her Sundays at home when she can," said Mrs. Rankin.

"Then how are you going to get out to meeting in the morning if she is not here?"

"I am not going out, so can easily mind the child myself," replied Mrs. Rankin.

"Nonsense Mary," retorted her brother, "you surely are not going to stay at home to-morrow, after attending all the meetings so far and Mr. Jackson going to assist too."

"Well, that's just why I can't go, brother dear, how could I take part in such a sacred thing, and have my thoughts and feelings so much taken up with the bodily discomfort I would be in?"

"I think Mary is right to stay at home," said Mr. Rankin, "I know her falling and would certainly be uneasy during the few moments she would be in close proximity to Mr. Jackson."

"Do you call it a falling," spoke up Mrs. Rankin, "I always thought of it as a vile habit, but for a minister to smoke so incessantly as does our distinguished guest, I think it is positively wicked."

"Why, Charlie," said her husband, "I never knew you were so much against the habit before, Mary must have converted you to her way of thinking."

"I do not need her to show me how low the habit makes one look. I am sure if Mr. Jackson could see himself as I perceive him with his feet elevated above his head, puffing away at a cigar or pipe, he would feel disgusted with himself."

"I have often thought lately, do we all consider how clean our bodies as well as our consciences should be when we appear before the Lord's table. Think how much purifying was required of the priests in the old time, before they entered the tabernacle, imagine Aaron subjecting himself to the Holy of Holies with his breast and clothes smothered in tobacco."

"Now, Mary, you are too hard," said her brother, "that is going too far with the subject, since his smoking a good many things."

"Time has not changed the fact that our bodies are the temples of God, and especially man keep his body pure and holy, if he willfully and deliberately defiles himself with tobacco? I think this is a subject that should be well considered."

"I never thought of it in that way before, Mary," said her brother, "and if it is wrong for one man to smoke it for all men, and going over to Mrs. Rankin and taking her hands in his, he said, 'I here promise you, Mary, before your husband and my wife, never to use tobacco again; I am not so much addicted to the habit that it will be hard to break off, but if it was, I would so.'"

There was another person who promised the same thing, though silently. Mr. Jackson discovered on preparing to retire, that he had forgotten his pipe, having left it on the mantle in Mrs. Rankin's dining-room and crossed the street to get it just when those in the parlor began their discussion, and hearing his name mentioned, he almost unconsciously stopped to hear what was being said of himself, and after stopping a moment, found it impossible either to enter or leave the hall, he was so dumbfounded at this revelation of himself. How had he fallen, he, the popular preacher whom people delighted to honor, to be discussed in this way, this then, was the reason Mrs. Rankin turned from him to his brother clergyman in their little social chats, this was the why she was not interested in missions, how many things he could see now were done so as to hide her dislike to the habit, Mr. Rankin always suggesting that he come to the garden and smoke while he read the paper, Mrs. Rankin's sudden illness the night he arrived and the subsequent changes at the table, all this flashed into his mind, as he silently and quickly repressed the street, without another thought of the cause of all this mortification, his pipe. Next-morning Mr. Spencer appeared at the breakfast table alone, and to the surprise inquired as to where Mr. Jackson was announced the fact that he had accepted a pressing invitation to occupy the pulpit of a friend in Maplewood, a thriving village some miles from town. The invitation had been given on Saturday but he had not decided to accept till he had some one appointed to fill his place at the morning service. This was all very well, but it seemed to Mrs. Rankin—her sister-in-law, as very sudden. Had he heard them talking the night before?

"Can he have—have we offended him in any way, I wonder," said Mrs. Rankin, her face flushing at the thought of his having heard them discussing him.

"You certainly have not offended him, of that I feel sure," replied Mr. Spencer.

"For only this morning he said 'how thankful he was that he had come to this convention, he would go home a better man than he came, thanks to Mrs. Rankin,' so rest assured you have not offended him."

In spite of this, Mrs. Rankin was so disturbed in mind that she deemed it best to stay at home that day from the meeting, and she was looking forward almost in dread to the time when Mr. Jackson would return from Maplewood, but when he did return no allusion was made to it, and but for the determined look on his pale face she was wrong in supposing he had overheard them, but she soon noticed that his pipe was left untouched on the mantle.

On Monday-morning before the time came for them to depart on the train, Mr. Jackson came to her and when bidding her "good-by" thanked her for the good she had done him since he entered her house. Without specifying what that good was, Mrs. Rankin clearly understood that he had heard, and was going to give up his pipe in consequence, and though she felt mortified to think of how she had spoken of him, still she could not but feel glad that he had decided to give up smoking, for while it is certainly a "bad habit" in any man, it becomes something more than that when indulged in by a minister.

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