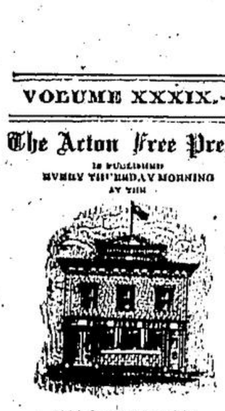
The Acton Free Press.

VOLUME XXXIX.---NO. 34. Every Subscription Paid in Advance ACTON, ONTARIO, THURSDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 19, 1914. Subscription Price, $1.00 Per Annum. SINGLE COPIES---THREE CENTS

The Acton Free Press

IS PUBLISHED
EVERY THURSDAY MORNING
AT THE



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ADVERTISING RATES — Transient advertisements, 10 cents per Nonpareil line for first insertion and 5 cents per line for each subsequent insertion. Contract display advertisements, for 50 or inches more, per annum, 10 cents per inch each insertion. Yearly contracts for reading matter 25 cents per inch each insertion.

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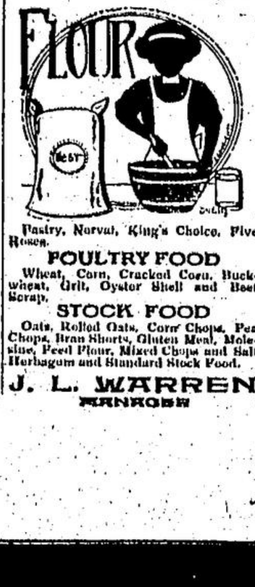

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Poetry.

KEEP SWEET

Sometimes just a little motto
Keep in mon'ry to repeat
Serves amazingly to help one
Rule his spirit and "keep sweet."

Here is one, and as you read it
Make a vow and oft repeat
That, no odds how ill you're treated,
You'll endeavor to "keep sweet."

Human dispositions vary
Some are kindly and discreet,
Others wicked and contrary,
All the more you should "keep sweet."

Let your heart, with stored up sunshine
For life's shadows, be replete;
Gloomy natures sure will brighten
When they see that you "keep sweet."

Nothing pays like being cheerful;
Those who have never known defeat
Who, though tired, were kind and patient,
Not forgetting to "keep sweet."

Sunny souls are always wanted;
How they cheer us when we meet!
See that you are always counted
With those only who "keep sweet."

—By James G. Butler.

Select Family Reading

What Did She See?

By DAVID LYALL

WHAT did she see in her man? That is one of the oldest questions in the world. It belongs to every age, and clime, though it is not always put into the same form. The answer? Oh, that is even more varied than the question. But there, are times when the answer, if not impossible to find, is difficult. That was what Mallony Bridge said when Christina Thorburn, its most respected and highly accredited spinster, deliberately married one, William Sprule, joiner and wheel wheel wright, and lazy man of the village.

His capacity for idleness was really prodigious. To behold him leaning with his arms over the parapet of the bridge, that spanned the Mallony Burn, smoking a capacious pipe, at an hour when other men willy-nilly were hard at work, ready to smile and pass the time of day with any chance passerby, even while his shop was bursting out at the door with waiting jobs, that was a lesson in philosophy. Christina lived opposite in a snug little cottage that had once been the toll house when the Mallony Bridge was closed for the receipt of custom. Her cottage stood sheer on the road, with two small garden plots in front, while William's house and outbuildings sloped away from the end of the bridge right down to the waterside, where the burn, more willing than the wheelwright, never refused to do its work.

Living opposite like this, Christina had full opportunity of observing and realizing the full magnitude of William Sprule's "idleness," as she expressed. She had a few fields behind her cottage which, with the aid of a hilfilin lad, in the summer, she managed to till into an amazing fertility. Early and late she was busy either indoors or out, and after dark, in the short winter days, the chance pedestrian could hear the pleasant whirr of her spinning wheel as he passed her door. A little sharp of speech, her heart was of gold, and in spite of her hard work, she had managed to preserve in middle life a large part of the charm of youth. Always neat in her dress, both at work and at play, she was careful of the money she so hardly earned, and jokes about Christina's stocking foot were frequent about Mallony Bridge.

Regarding her balance at the bank, however, she preserved a strict reticence, but she was never unwilling to help a neighbor, provided she was assured that he or she deserved it. One day she stepped out of her way to help William Sprule, even after her better judgment had dackled that he was just praying for.

It was a stormy March evening at the close of a long, hard winter that had sorely tried the mettle of the hill folk. The frost had been so long and dour, the snow so deep and so persistent in its down-come, the sun so scanty for its melting, that outdoor operations were much hampered, and stockholders especially grumbling hard. It seemed as if every implement for miles around had been put under inspection and found wanting. They were forthwith driven or hauled to William Sprule at Mallony Bridge, so that his little yard he/ came like an agricultural implement emporium.

Christina, a lady of leisure for once, was much diverted and occasionally rendered exceedingly wrathful as she watched the gradual accumulation. It was decided that William needed a lesson to cure him of his idleness, and a compact was entered into by the farmers which took operation on the March day when Christina was called into counsel.

About nine o'clock in the morning various persons and some horses began to appear on and about Mallony Bridge, and by three of the afternoon William's yard was empty. Not a single implement of any kind was left to his tender mercies. It was done quietly and William was so dumfounded that he forgot to protest. It happened that Miss Thorburn had gone to spend the day at the neighboring town to see sick friends, and it was dark before she drove up from the station in James Hornbinn's gig, which she had hired for the purpose.

She bade him good-bye at the door, and, once inside, quickly made a fire and set a lamp in the window, and another on the table, immediately creating the warm, home-like atmosphere in which her soul lived.

She put on the kettle and was enjoying a very fragrant cup of tea when somebody lifted the latch of the outer door and walked in.

Turning around she beheld William Sprule, still in his working clothes, unshaven and certainly an unlovely object, though he was no bad figure of a man, and in his youth had been rather admired by women folk. He was one of the men, however, who had been spoiled by a fool, a mother.

"Ye gotten your face washed yet, William," she said in her straight, cheerful way. "I've been in the toon; juist got hame."

"I ken. I saw Jamie's gig. I've been watching for it," he answered, and closing the door came forward and sat down in a chair.

Then he glanced around the cosy little room with obvious envy.

"You are very snug here, Miss Thorburn. It beats me hoo ye get it so clean. It sure must tak' a terrible heap o' wark."

"Yes, it does. Ye might try it for a change, William. There's more comfort in work than ye would think, an' siller forbye."

"I hate it," said William, with a frankness which made her smile. She was certainly not as old by at least six years as the wheel-wright, but the glance she cast on him at the moment was such that she might have cast on a child. "It's sich a terrible waste o' time."

"Ye seem to think that. Whiles I look across the Brig an' wonder when we are goin' to tackle the implements. It seems to me as if you had all the place and harrows in the Strath in your yaird. Hoo they put up with it I cannot think. I would not send you a beacon handle to mend, William, and fine ye ken it."

William did not look crushed at this. A sort of light seemed to come on his face.

"Maybe it was you put them up to it, then?" he said with a slow smile.

"Me put them up to what?" she asked innocently.

"Ye mean to say ye ken nothing about it, and you noticed nothing as ye came over the Brig?"

"It was pitch dark. I saw the light in your kitchen windy, an' a torn and dirty blind," she answered calmly.

"They're a' away," he said with a big silent laugh, "every ploo and harrow and barrow and cairt. The yaird's empty. They all came and took them away."

"No!" said Christina with vivid interest. "Well, an' are ye pleased noo? Ye will be able to take as much illeset as ye like and get no ill tongue wi' it."

"I'm not pleased though, Miss Thorburn, and it was an awfu'-like thing for them to do to me, for I have slaved for everyone o' them in my time, an' look how quick they are to take the bread out of my mouth."

"I think they've been extraordinary patient, if ye ask me."

"Ye would be terrible hard on a chap, Miss Thorburn. I came over thinking ye might help me a bit. I don't like my living being taken away frae me like that. I feel as if I could start work the noo and work a' nicht to get them mended. I think they might has given me another chance."

William spoke so disconsolately that Christina's heart, by no means a hard one, instantly melted.

"It has often vexed me, William, the way ye are living over by, for ye are a decent chap, an' a good tradesman. If I were at your elbow ye wad stick to your work I can tell you my man."

She spoke this in the innocence of her heart and without a thought of guile. But at her words an extraordinary light broke over William's perplexed face.

"That's what I need, Christina, as sure's death. Will ye come then? I'm willin' and I would promise to—to stick kis to please you. I'm tired—tetin' myself. There's nobody to work, d'ye no see, and it doesna tak' much to buy my bite and sup."

At this extraordinary and wholly unexpected speech, Miss Thorburn was covered with confusion.

"But that means that ye would be the most henpecked man in the strath, William," she said, striving to hide her laughter. "An' ye would not like that."

"I would if ye were the woman," answered William doggedly, and after he had gone, though she had resolutely refused to take his words as a serious offer of marriage, she could not get them out of her head.

It was not the first offer she had had, but never had one appealed to her more. The idea of making a man out of William Sprule, of fanning all his latent energies and showing him to the world for the first class tradesmen he was, appealed to her most mightily. In fact she could not get rid of it at all. That being so it was not to be wondered at that in the end she said "Yes," to William's proposal. It took the parish by storm and opinion was divided as to the merits and demerits of the case. There were many who pitied Miss Thorburn, and there were a few, and these considered themselves the most discerning, who secretly pitied William Sprule.

There have been worse combinations in the matrimonial contract. Anyway, Christina made a man of her husband, and incidentally gained an undoubted deal of happiness for herself.

HIS METHOD

He tapped on the back door of a suburban home and asked for something to eat. The good housewife responded that she would feed him on the back step provided he was willing to earn the meal by cleaning out the gutter. The tramp agreed, and when he had eated his way through several sandwiches to a feeling of happiness the housewife came out with a reliable-looking hoe. "You needn't have gone to that trouble, madam," said the weary one, sizing up the farm implement. "I never use a hoe in cleaning out a gutter." "Never use a hoe?" said the woman with a wondering expression. "What do you use, then, a shovel?" "No, madam," replied the hobo, starting for the back gate, "my method is to pray for rain."

GOOD-NIGHT

"It's not everybody I'd rent this room to," said the sad-faced landlady.

"This room is full of tender associations to me. My first husband died in that bed, with his head on that very pillow. My dear father passed away on that sofa under that window. My poor nephew, William, fell dead with heart disease right where you are standing. He was studying to be a doctor, and there are two whole skeletons and six abnormal livers preserved in spirits in that press yonder, while that bottom drawer is full of odd bones and skulls.

"Well, good night, and pleasant dreams."

FINDING HERSELF

Young Mrs. Harrison had grown infinitely weary of the fashionable world of which she was a part. Card parties, dancing parties, motoring parties, and dinners took up every waking hour. She had long been dissatisfied with herself as well as with the life she had led, but in the whirl of it all she scarcely knew how to extricate herself. She was rich, she was beautiful, she was popular, and she knew no other life. No wonder society claimed her as its own.

She was just leaving to go down into the city in search of a prize to be given at her bridge club that week, when she heard a timid knock at the door. She opened it herself, an unusual thing for her. There, facing her on the doorstep, stood a shabby little woman, with a worn, sweet face. She looked at the smartly gowned young woman, hesitating a little. Then she smiled gently. "Mrs. Harrison?" she asked.

"Yes."

"I am Mrs. Lyon. I feel I must apologize for intruding, but," she went on timidly, "I came from our Mission Circle. We"—she hesitated—"we were wondering if you would sing a little hymn for us at our meeting to-morrow. It would encourage us so much."

Young Mrs. Harrison drew back a little. "How did you know I sing?" she asked a trifle abruptly.

The shabby little woman smiled again. "Every one in Randolph knows that, do they not?" she replied, still gently. "Yours is a voice that having once been fortunate enough to hear, one longs to hear again. My daughter heard you not long ago at some sort of musicale. She has been talking of nothing else since. She said to me: 'Mother, if you could get a voice like that into your mission circles they would not drag so.' We do have such hard times," she went on. "There is not the interest or enthusiasm there ought to be. So many of the women nowadays have their clubs and their card parties. Missionary meetings are languishing because other things are being considered first."

Young Mrs. Harrison caught the look. There was a pause.

"It's a great gift to be able to sing," went on the gentle voice.

"Perhaps, but I rarely sing nowadays, I am going out so much. There is a club meeting almost every day in the week, and dinners and the theatre."

She did not herself understand her reluctance to talk to this shabby little woman, but there seemed to be something so restful about her face.

"I am going down to the city now to select a prize for my bridge club," she added.

The sweet pale face suddenly sobered.

Young Mrs. Harrison caught the look and half resented it.

"You, I suppose, don't belong to any clubs?" she added.

The little shabby woman shook her head. "I? Oh, no! I belong to the Mission Circle. I teach in Sunday School and I always try to go to prayer meeting."

"But your amusements, what are they?" demanded young Mrs. Harrison.

A quiet smile lighted the pale features. "Amusements? Why, hearing the birds sing, reading my Bible, meditating on God's goodness, and the privilege of working for Him. This is my life and I am so happy in it."

She looked at the beautiful eyes regarding her. "Do you know this life?" she added softly.

Young Mrs. Harrison shook her head. Something moved her to a sudden confession. "I don't know any life but the same old round," she answered half bitterly. "I go home from gay gatherings actually sick at heart. Oh, I don't know what is the matter with me, but I'm sick of everything! Sometimes the mood passes and I say to myself: What is the use? One must, I suppose, go on in the station one is born in."

The little shabby woman took the jewelled hand in both her worn ones. "Not unless God goes with us," she said earnestly.

Young Mrs. Harrison looked reflective. She had never thought of that.

"Was God in her gay parties? Would He be pleased with the life she led?"

"No," the answer came itself. "No, no!"

The woman saw the look. "I am sorry," she said gently. "You could do so much. You have such a fine face. Such a noble spirit lies behind it. Begin now. Give the Lord a portion of your time at least. Ask Him to guide you. Shall I tell you the secret of every happy Christian's life? Just one word—surrender."

She smiled.

"What a sermon I have preached!" she added. "And I am detaining you. May I tell the ladies that you will sing for us?"

"Yes," young Mrs. Harrison replied. "I shall miss a bridge party, but I will sing for you to-morrow."

She brought her prize for the bridge party home and put it out on her writing desk. It was a cut glass candlestick. She looked at it in silence. "And I must go on doing this years and years, getting prizes and giving them. How tired I am of everything."

"What are you doing Julia?" her husband asked that evening.

It was after dinner, and she sat under the electric light. In her hands was a red hymn book.

"You'll not laugh if I tell you?"

There was a note of entreaty in her voice. Her husband felt it.

"No, indeed."

"Well, this afternoon a sweet, shabby little woman came here and asked me if I would sing a hymn in a missionary meeting to-morrow. It is the afternoon of Mrs. Hale's bridge party, but I promised I would do it. I didn't know what a missionary meeting is like and I never sing hymns. And do you know, Harry, when I came to look for one, I found I hadn't a hymn-book in the house? I had to borrow one from Norah."

She was turning the leaves of the red book as she spoke.

"I don't go to church, either. But, do you know of late I've been thinking a great deal. Of what use am I in the world? Around I go like a squirrel in a cage, without getting anywhere. I sometimes think I was born for a different life."

Her husband looked at her.

Then suddenly she arose and went over to the piano, running her hands over the keys. "I believe I will sing this." And then the exquisitely sweet voice filled the room:

"Do you know the world is dying
For a little bit of love?
Everywhere we hear the sighing
For a little bit of love.
For the love that rights a wrong,
Fills the heart with hope and song.
They have waited, oh so long,
For a little bit of love?"

How grandly the wonderful voice sang the chorus! Her husband almost held his breath as he listened:

For a little bit of love,
For a little bit of love.
They have waited, oh so long,
For a little bit of love."

Her husband came and stood near her. "Julia," he cried I did not know you could sing like that. I've heard you sing all kinds of popular music, but I never before heard you sing a hymn. It's beautiful, beautiful. Sing it again, dear." And she did.

She went to the missionary meeting and sang to those earnest, consecrated women her little hymn.

And in the singing of it somehow, something new and vital took hold of her. She felt her feet set in new paths. She did not herself realize what it all meant. Afterwards she knew. For God had called her—called her to sing with that wonderful voice His songs, songs to lift the burdens of His people, songs to comfort those who mourned, to gladden sad and lonely hearts.

She did not say much; but when she got home from the missionary meeting she went straight to her husband.

"Harry," she said, softly laying her hand on his shoulder, "I am not going back."

He understood. For a moment he did not speak. There was silence. He broke it. "It's all right, dearest," he said. "I felt it when I heard you sing that hymn. Of course you cannot go back. And we will go on together, dear one."

And that is the way in which society, so-called, lost forever, the young and beautiful Mrs. Harrison.—Susan Hubbard Martin, in Nashville Advocate.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

Notes from the Free Press of Thursday, February 22nd, 1894

Mr. William Jeans has gone into the manufacture of gloves and mitts.

Mr. R. J. McNabb has been appointed Clerk of Division Court here.

A man who appeared to be tramping from Dashwood, near Goderich, was taken ill at the G. T. R. station here Tuesday night. He was taken to the cells, several young fellows remaining with him over night. He had been drinking heavily.

Two of the long-haired disciples of Prince Michael, proclaiming the "Flying Roll" doctrine, have been holding forth here during the week.

Six years ago Mr. Asa Hall, one of Acton's earliest settlers, was married to the widow of the late Charles Wright, who died some 21 years ago. She passed away last Thursday, after considerable suffering from illness. She was a woman of great ability, especially as an artist in her young days. After Mr. Wright's death she managed the affairs of the farm for a number of years. Four of her sisters were wives of Methodist ministers: viz; Revs. N. R. Willoughby, W. H. Laird, J. M. Totten and J. W. Holmes. One of her daughters is the wife of Mr. Z. A. Hall, son of her late husband, and one is married to Mr. J. P. Secord, of Orillia, formerly of Acton. A third daughter, Miss Edith Wright, has been living with her.

"Stella," a St. Bernard, mother of four six weeks' old youngsters, belonging to Mr. Samuel Laird, died suddenly on Sunday. Dog fanciers valued her at $50.

A sleighing party, comprising the choir and young people of St. Alban's Church, visited at the home of Mr. James Halner Monday night.

DIED

DENNEY—At Centreville, on Friday Feb. 13th: Hannah, wife of Mr. James Denney aged 54 years.

HALL—In Acton, on February 15th, Mary Jane wife of Asa Hall, Esq., aged 70 years, 11 months.

McPHERSON—In Maquasing, on February 11th, Janet, wife of Malcolm Matheson, aged 62 years, 4 months.

COMMANDMENTS OF GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Here are ten commandments for good citizenship:

1. Thou shalt know the town and keep its laws;
2. Remember thy cleaning day to keep it holy.
3. Thou shalt love and cherish thy children and provide for them decent homes and playgrounds.
4. Thou shalt not keep thy window down day nor night.
5. Thou shalt keep in order thy alley, thy backyard, thy hall and thy stairway.
6. Thou shalt not fill thy children's bodies with poisonous air, nor their schools with bad companions.
7. Thou shalt not steal thy children's right to happiness from them.
8. Thou shalt bear witness against thy neighbor's rubbish pile.
9. Thou shalt covet all the air and sunlight thou canst obtain.

RUSSIANS USE WOODEN SPOONS

The peasant class in Russia, which forms 77 per cent. of the total population, still uses the wooden spoon. The people of this class cannot afford plated ware. The middle classes use steel and plated ware, and the wealthy classes usually have sterling. Most of the steel and plated ware is manufactured in Warsaw. Probably 60 per cent. of the people of Russia use the very cheapest grades of table ware and only 10 per cent. of silver ware.

RIDDLES

What nut has no shell? A doughnut.

Why is a beggar mending his clothes like a rich man? Because he is making up his rents.

Why is there never such a thing as a whole day? Because each day begins by breaking.

Why is a man who marries twice like the captain of a ship? Because he has a second mate.

THAT LITTLE CHAP OF MINE

To feel his little hand in mine, so clinging and so warm,
To know he thinks me strong enough to keep him safe from harm;
To see his simple faith in all that I can say or do,
It sort o' shames a fellow, but it makes him better, too.

And I'm trying hard to be the man he fancies me to be,
Because I have this chap at home who thinks the world of me.
I would not disappoint his trust for anything on earth,
Nor let him know how little I fee' naturally sin worth.

But after all it's easier that brighter road to climb,
With the little hand behind me to push me all the time,
And I reckon I'm a better man than what I used to be,
Because I have this chap at home, who thinks the world of me.

HE WAS LONG WINDED

Travel invariably adds charm to the conversation of an agreeable person, but sometimes renders a bore more tiresome than ever.

"And I stood there, Aunt Rosale," said the old lady's slow-speaking but long-winded nephew, who had been talking or incessantly for the past two hours about his summer in Switzerland, until the old lady's eyes began to droop in the lamp-light—"and there I stood, Aunt Rosale, with the abyss yawning in front of me."

"Francis," said Aunt Rosale, speaking as one who had kept long silence, "was that abyss a-yawning before you got there or did it begin to yawn afterwards?"

CURIOUS MAYORAL ELECTION CUSTOMS

The election of mayors in England is in some places accompanied by quaint ceremonies. The Mayor of Lincoln for instance is inducted by placing on his finger an ancient ring.

At Cheltenham the mayor is presented with a gold-headed malacca cane, and at Grantham the new chief citizen is gravely tapped on the head with the town clerk's hammer.

From time immemorial the Mayor of Brightlingsea has been elected in the belfry of the parish church, whilst at Bournemouth the new mayor receives a solemn kiss from his predecessor.

HIS TURN TO ASK FIRST

A London correspondent of a Glasgow paper sent this pleasantory: An Englishman and a Scotsman were the players, and after holeing out at the first hole the Englishman said to the scot: "How many did you take?" "Eight," said the Scot. "I took seven," said the Englishman, "so it's my hole." On holeing out at the second hole the Englishman again made inquiry as to the number of strokes taken by his opponent. "Na, na, my mannie," said the Scot, "It's my turn to ask first."

SERVICE

The most blessed of human endeavors is service—the service that educates and builds, and a happier place in which to live and work. Service is the spirit of the hour. It blesses him that gives and him that receives; it is the brotherhood of man in business; it is a helping hand extended unselfishly; it is bread cast upon waters; it is a way of helping ourselves by helping others. The best that can be said of any man is this: He served others that they might better serve themselves.

THE SCOTS REPORT

The action at law came up in London. The lawyer was Scotch and the judge was English. The case in argument concerned certain water rights, and the lawyer had frequently to use the word "water," which he pronounced very broad.

"Mr. Macpherson," at last interrupted the judge, "do you spell water with two t's in your country?"

"Na, na, my lord," quickly retorted the lawyer, "but we spell manners wi' twa n's!"

NAMING THE TWINS

The vicar, called to admire the new twins. After praising them some time he said:

"Well, my good woman and what are you going to call them?"

"Cherubim and Seraphim," sharply answered the fond mother, "because they continually do cry."

ONLY ONE CHANCE

They were walking in the moonlight on a romantic country road.

"Nothing could ever come between us, could it, dearest?" asked Claude, pensively.

"I can't think of a single thing," replied Elsie, "unless I should become engaged to some other man."

A NEW METHOD

"What are those fellows doing?" asked the boy as he approached the schoolhouse.

"Putting in an electric switch," was the reply.

"Well, I quit right here," said the boy. "I won't stand for any school where they do the licking by electricity."

HER BEAUTY

"She's as pretty as a picture," said the young man.

"Yes," replied the young woman, with a glance at her rival's complexion, "and hand-painted, too."

Cheapest of All Oils.—Considering the curative qualities of Dr. Thomas' Eclectric Oil it is the cheapest of all preparations offered to the public. It is to be found in every drug store in Canada from coast to coast and all country merchants keep it for sale. So, being procurable and extremely moderate in price, no one should be without a bottle of it.

A Medical Need Supplied.—When a medicine is found that not only acts upon the stomach, but is so composed that certain ingredients of it pass unaltered through the stomach to find action in the bowels, then there is available a purgative and a cleanser of great effectiveness. Parmelee's Vegetable Pills are of this character and are the best of all pills. During the years they have been in use they have established themselves as no other pill has done.