

St. Tammany Farmer.

"The Blessings of Government, Like the Dews from Heaven, Should Descend Alike upon the Rich and the Poor."

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THE CARD TABLE.

Lydia Dearborn sat alone in her little sitting room, and her countenance was sad and desponding. She was not six and twenty, and though her face was pale and wan, yet she was beautiful. A warlike fire burnt in the grate, for it was winter, and the lamp burned upon the center-table, for it was evening. She sat thus, trying to read, when the door opened and a stranger entered. She started up with fear at thus seeing a strange man enter her apartment unbidden.

"Lydia—don't you know me?" The woman started at the sound of the voice, and the blood rushed to her brow and temples. She took a step forward and gazed more sharply into the intruder's face.

"James?" she murmured interrogatively.

"Yes, my sister. Don't you know me?"

But instead of answering in words Lydia rushed forward and sank upon the man's bosom, and there she wept for joy. It was, in truth, her own dear brother.

"And you didn't know me?" he said, with a smile, after he had taken a seat.

"Why, no, James. Five years have altered you wonderfully. But then that beard all over your face makes a good deal of difference."

"All the difference in the world, sister. Two years ago, while my ship lay at Canton, I had my beard all shaved off, and when I came aboard some of my men did not know me at first."

"Then I wish you'd shave it off now, for you look more like a bear than you do like James Barrows."

The brother laughed, and then the conversation ran for a while upon various topics suggested by the return of the loved one. James Barrows was now thirty-two years of age, and had been absent for five years from his native city, during which time he commanded a fine ship.

"By the way," said the brother, at the end of a half hour, "I stopped in New York on my way here, and I saw Kate Waldron there. She told me she heard you say you wished your husband had never known me. Did you say such a thing as that?"

Lydia's eyes filled with tears in a moment, and a deep sob broke from her lips. Her brother was startled. He moved to her side, and put his arms around her neck. "What is it my sister?" he asked anxiously.

"Alas, James, I will tell you. But first let me assure you that I did not mean exactly what I said to Kate. You remember five years ago, when you used to tell such stories about gambling scenes on the Mississippi, Ambrose asked you to play poker as you call it. You taught him the game, and one or two evenings you went with him to some social card parties."

"Yes, yes—I remember all that."

"Well, the spirit of gaming is now fastening itself upon him. I can see it plainly, though he tries to laugh away my fears. I know it is so, for I have been told by one who is my friend, and who told me out of pure kindness for Ambrose. But I have not dared to let him know how sure my information is, for he would be angry, did he know any one had told this to me. Oh, I know his impetuous nature, and I fear he will be lost before he is aware of it. Evil companions are leading him astray. He thinks them friends."

"And do you think he has gone to the card table to-night?"

"I am afraid so. And if he does—oh, I dare not think of it. He has much money with him. Before you came I was weeping over my fears. I have never let him know how much I knew concerning his course, for I feared it would only make him more excited. Alas! I know not what to do. I do not think he has yet lost much, but I know that he will never leave the fascinating habit until he is ruined, unless something can be done to move him."

"Bless my soul, Lydia, I did teach Ambrose to play—though God knows I never meant to teach him to gamble—and I will cure him

now if I can. Do you think he is at it now?"

"I think he would have been at home before this time, if he had not fallen in with some of his evil associates."

"Then you rest here while I go and find him. By my soul, I'll save him if I can."

"But you'll come back soon?"

James stopped and thought for a moment. "I don't know," he said. "But don't you be worried. No harm shall befall Ambrose to-night."

It was just nine o'clock as Ambrose Dearborn entered one of the gambling saloons of the city. His business had kept him later than usual, and having made fifteen dollars in trade since dark, he had determined to stake that amount upon the altar of fortune. His wife was right in her fears. The card table had gained a fascinating power over him, and he had lost some heavy sums.

But on the previous evening he had been cursed with a turn of winning luck and won back nearly as much as he had lost, and was now on his way to continue his luck! He meant to play an hour or so and then go home. He went up to the sideboard and took a glass of wine, and as he turned, he met a stranger, who had seemingly come for the same purpose.

"Good evening," said the stranger, in a pleasant tone, as he poured out a tumbler full of water from the pitcher and drank the same.

Ambrose returned the salutation.

"I came to take a few moments recreation at cards," said the stranger, "but I find no friends here."

"So did I," answered Ambrose, "and my friends are missing."

"Then suppose we take a hand or two, just to pass away the time until the others come."

"With pleasure," said Dearborn. And accordingly the two sat down and were soon on the best of terms. The cards were dealt and for a while the playing was on a small scale and the luck about even. By and by Ambrose began to win and he went on until he had won over a hundred dollars.

He would have felt ashamed somewhat, had not his antagonist maintained such good humor, and smiled so kindly when he lost.

But anon the luck changed. Ambrose lost all he had won, and soon lost over a hundred dollars besides. He had just one hundred dollars more in his portmanteau and this he took out. A new hand was dealt, he cut the cards carefully, and he held four jacks. 'Twas the best hand by far that had been dealt out during the game, it being the first "four of a kind" he had seen during the evening.

He bet ten dollars. His antagonist covered it and went ten big-er.

"I have an excellent hand," the stranger said, with a light laugh. "I have held better ones but this is good. I shall bet high on it."

Ambrose did not speak. He was very excited. He was afraid his antagonist would mistrust how good his hand was and stop betting.

But the latter went on until Ambrose had placed his last fraction of the hundred on the table.

"Shall I go higher?" asked the stranger.

"As you please."

"Then I must say a hundred. By the trump of trumps you shall have a chance to make a pile this time."

Ambrose hesitated a moment, and then he placed his hand in his bosom and drew forth a package of bank notes. There were four thousand dollars in the whole. It was a sum he had drawn from the bank that very day. It was the accumulation of over four years' labor and economy for the purpose of paying for his house and store. He drew out a hundred dollar bill and covered his antagonist's stake. He hesitated a moment more, and then he drew another hundred and "went that" over. The stranger "covered" that and "went five hundred better." Ambrose "covered" the five hundred, but he dared bet no more, and he called for his companion's hand. The stranger

smiled as he showed it—four queens!

Ambrose uttered a deep groan as he unfolded his cards and placed them on the table.

"By my soul, that's hard, my friend. Better luck next time. Come—I will deal for you this time."

A new hand was dealt, and this time Ambrose won a hundred dollars. He began to revive. Next he won two hundred more. He went and got another glass of wine, and then returned in better spirits; but at the next hand he lost five hundred. His spirits sank again. But he was now resolved to play carefully and win back what he had lost, and then stop playing.

There is no need of following the game step by step. The man who held the cards was not a professed gambler, nor did he now gamble at all for his own amusement. But he had been among gamblers much, and he could handle cards as he pleased. He kept Ambrose in good humor—let him have occasional flashes of luck—and finally, just as the clock struck eleven, Ambrose Dearborn staggered up from the table—penniless! All, all, was gone. His four thousand dollars—the sum which had been steadily growing beneath his efforts for the last four years—was now swept away.

The young merchant staggered from the hall—he tried to borrow first; to borrow something to commence again to win back something, but no one would lend. He made his way to the street, and without noting his course he staggered on. By-and-by he came to a narrow alley, which led down to the water, and turned down upon the wharf and sat upon an old spar. He had been there but a few moments when he felt a hand upon his shoulder. He looked up, and by the moonlight he could see the dark face of the man who had ruined him.

"Why do you sit here in the snow?" asked the stranger.

"Leave me!" cried Ambrose bitterly. "Oh, I would never see you more from this time!"

"But perhaps I may help you," replied the other. "You are young enough to learn."

"Learn! Oh, great heavens! have I not learned this night what never—never—"

The young man burst into tears, and his sobs were deep and painful.

"Come, come," said the stranger, "stand up and trust me, and I may yet help you."

There was something so kind in the voice that Ambrose could not resist, and he rose to his feet.

"Ambrose Dearborn," spoke the strange man, "I have this evening taken from you over forty-two hundred dollars, and I do not think you can afford to lose it. Here we are before God. Now promise me, upon your honor as a man, that you will never stake any amount at hazard again—that never again will you play at any game of chance for the value of anything—and I will restore to you every penny I have won to-night."

The young man stood for a moment like a man in a dream. Then he caught his companion by the arm.

"You do not trifle?" he said, in a hoarse whisper.

"Give me the promise and see."

Ambrose clasped his hands, and turning his eyes towards heaven, he made an oath embracing just the proposition which had been made to him; and when he had done this his eyes sunk to the snow-covered earth, and he burst into tears.

The stranger took a roll from his pocket and handed it over.

"Here," said he, "is the full sum, every penny, just as I took it from you. And now let us walk up into the city again. My way is toward Adams street."

"So is mine," whispered Ambrose, as he clutched the money.

"Ah—then we'll walk together."

"But tell me what this means," the young man uttered, energetically. "Who are you, sir?"

"Never mind, now. I shall see you again, and then I'll explain; let us go now, for it is cold here!"

On the way the stranger kept up

such a rattle of conversation that Ambrose not only had no chance to mention the subject of the evening's transaction, but by the time he had reached his own door his feelings had got back into their wonted channel.

"I would invite you in," he said, "but—"

"Never mind. Just let me step into the entry, for I want a light a moment."

Of course Ambrose could not object to this, and as he opened the door the stranger followed him in. He walked through the hall, and as he opened the door of the sitting room, his companion was at his back.

Lydia sat at her table, and her face was pale, but she had not been crying, for the words her brother had spoken to her before he went out had inspired her with a strange hope. She arose to her feet, and while her husband was wishing that his companion had remained in the hall, he was not a little startled to hear that individual speak jocularly as follows:

"Well, Sissy—you see I've brought him. And we are both of us all right, I can assure you."

For a moment the young man was thunder-struck, but the truth flashed upon him.

"Jim—Jim Barrows!" he gasped.

"Captain Barrows, at your service, sir. Ha, ha, ha—you didn't know me. He's just found me out, Lydia."

Ambrose tried to laugh, but he could not. He struggled a moment with the feelings that welled up in his bosom, and then, sinking down into a chair, he burst into tears. His wife uttered a quick cry, and then started forward.

"Don't be afraid," gasped Ambrose. "I'm safe—safe. But I can't help this. Tell her, Jim—tell her all. Tell her all now, for she's a right to know."

The stout captain drew his sister upon his knee, and then related to her all that had happened since he left her.

"Ah, Am," he concluded, "the moment I saw you take the second hundred dollars from your portmanteau I knew gaming would soon ruin you; and when I saw you draw the package, I only knew that I should take them every one from you, and that any experienced card player could have done the same. Now I taught you your first lesson in poker—this is lesson number two. I hope it may work well."

And it did work well. Captain Barrows remained with his sister a month and then went away. At the end of the year he came again, and this time he found Lydia happy as a princess.

INDIAN STRATEGY IN BUSINESS.

When the Carson and Colorado railroad treated for the right of way through the Indian reservation at Walker lake, Nevada, the Indians agreed to receive, in full pay, \$700 and the free shipment forever, over the road, of any fish or other produce which they might wish to bring to market between Hawthorne and the Mound house. Walker lake is swarming with fine trout. When the new road reaches it the Indians will be the bosses of the fish market of the State. They say that if Mr. Yerington had known how many fish they catch in a day he would never have entered into such a contract. The Indians laid their plan for this thing long ago, and when Mr. Yerington visited Walker lake they put up a job on him. They invited him to spend a day fishing, which he did, but gave him a bait which fish absolutely avoid.

Some of the backs also fished with him, some using no bait at all. The result of the day's toil was a small white fish and a couple of half-pound trout. The savages pretended that the day's sport had been very fine, and got up a big dance in honor of the catch, remarking that the fishing had never been so good for a year. In an unguarded moment he signed the fish contract.

If the "flower of the family" makes good bread, don't hesitate, young man.

ADVANCE PLEDGES.

One day in the years gone by a couple of wealthy farmers living in Wayne county, Ohio, got into a fisticuff difficulty, and when it was ended, both started for the office of a Justice of the Peace. A warrant and a cross-warrant were issued, and one of them drove into Detroit and secured the services of a lawyer to push his case. The trial was set for nine o'clock in the morning of a certain day, and the Detroit lawyer had to arrive at the village on the evening previous. He had just finished his supper, when a big six-footer asked him to take a little walk, as he had something concerning his case he wished to communicate. The lawyer cheerfully complied, and little was said until the pair were beyond the village and not likely to be interfered with. Then the stranger halted and said: "During the coming difficulty you can call me Spofford, and if you feel particularly affectionate, you can allude to me as John."

"What difficulty do you refer to?" asked the lawyer.

"Well, I'm going to lick you."

"No!"

"You bet I am. That's what I'm shedding my coat and vest for."

"But what have you got against me?"

"Well, you are the lawyer for Deacon Jones, ain't you?"

"Yes."

"I stood by and saw that fight, and I'm the witness for the other side. The Deacon struck first, and I'm going to swear to it."

"Well?"

"Well, you'll begin to pick on me and ask questions and abuse me. My nose is out of shape, and you'll rub me on that. I've got warts, and you won't forget it. I was in jail once for four days, and you'll make me out a State prison convict. I can't tackle you in the court-room, and you'll jump aboard the train as soon as the trial's over. Therefore I'm going to lick you now. Git ready for the combat."

"But say, you're mistaken in me!"

"No I ain't. I've been on the stand before!"

"I solemnly agree not to abuse you, not a word!"

"But you can't help it!"

"Yes I can!"

"Do you solemnly promise to let my nose alone?"

"I do! I won't say a single word about you."

"Won't say that I broke up a spelling school last winter?"

"Not a word."

"Nor ask if I was hired to see the Deacon strike first?"

"Not an ask."

"Nor run on my old dad?"

"Not a run."

"Well, then, I'll let you go, though I ought to have one crack at you for the trouble I've been to! If you deceive me I'll make jelly of you, if a thousand constables stand in the way!"

The trial was a very tame affair, and those who expected to see Spofford hauled over the coals were sadly disappointed. It was proved that the Deacon struck first, and he was fined \$25 and costs, and the Detroit lawyer never got a case in that township again.—Free Press.

A new song is entitled "How They Parted." We have not read it, but no doubt they parted in the usual way—about two a. m., after kissing each other "good night" at least thirty-seven times. "Well, I guess I must go," he says, with a sigh, about two hours before he does go. Then after another half hour's conversation about one thing and another he presses her hand with much impressiveness, says that he really must go, and—lovingly lingers another half hour. Then he says he didn't know it was so late; picks up his hat and moves toward the door, where he puts his arm around her to prevent her from falling in a swoon, and kisses her for five minutes in one inning, and still lingers. Then he gives her one more kiss just for luck, and reluctantly steps down and out into the back, lonesome night, and calls around the next night. That is how they parted years ago—if we have not been mistaken.—Nor. Herald.