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John Redesdale's Sermon.

A TALE OF TRUE LOVE AND ITS CONFLICTS.

The first beam I ever had was Ephraim Tucker. He was a tall young fellow, with eyes as blue as eyes could be, and yellow hair all of a kinky curl.

So we went about a good deal together, and where every one knew every body, it soon began to be said that Ephraim Tucker was courting Clara Speer.

For the matter of that, I did not mind hearing it said. I was a poor girl and made dresses for a living, and had had times often to please whimsical customers, or to make them pay for work I had toiled over all night, and except a solitary aunt, who lived miles away, and whom I saw hardly once in the year, had not a relative on earth, and it was a happy thought that I should be a mistress of a heart and a home, and in time to come, perhaps a mother; and, to tell the truth, my mind was rather set on being loved and cherished by some one and that one being Ephraim Tucker.

It was not the way a woman should love her husband; but I did not know it then, for I was as ignorant of any stronger liking as a babe at its mother's bosom.

Perhaps it might have gone on so, and I might have married him, and never guessed there was more to hope or wish for, if I had kept to my work one bright summer day, when Ephraim came tapping at the door, dressed in his best, to coax me to leave it.

"There is a camp meeting in the woods," he said, "and I want you to go to it. Besides, it's two weeks a day to stay in."

"But, Miss Prue Hollister's dress!" I said, looking at the lilac silk I was stitching.

"Plague take Miss Hollister!" said he. "She has fifty dresses, without doubt. Make her wait."

And he twitched it out of my hand and hung it on a peg.

"Go dress yourself," he said, and sat down to wait for me.

Well, the sun shone and the birds sang, and I longed for the free air, and I obeyed as we do obey orders we like. So in half an hour we were walking arm in arm, towards the woods, chatting merrily. We never were sentimental.

There had been no romance in all our acquaintance. I never expected it, and he, I fancy, never thought of it. We were both Methodists, and this was, after all, something like a Sunday holiday making; and when we came into the woods it was a very solemn thing to look across the bowed heads of the kneeling people, in the wavering leaf shadow, and to hear the prayer going up to God from his own temple, better than any church built by man.

We knelt down with the rest and sang with them, and went from group to group until the sun was sinking, and the exercises were suspended to give a chance for rest and tea-drinking.

Then all grew merry, and those who came from a distance bestirred themselves and kindled fires, and spread their meals on the grass, and in the gray twilight the flames of the burning wood—blue, gold and crimson—and the dark figures of those about them, made a thousand pretty pictures.

We had looked at them long enough, and were going home, when a hand came down on my shoulder, and a loud voice cried:

"You here, Clara Speer? Wa'at, I declare. How are you, Mr. Tucker? Come right along to our camp and have tea with us; do you?"

It was Deacon Bloom's wife; and whether we would or no we went back with her and found the deacon, all the children and two young men waiting about a gyve fire for the evening meal—the deacon, divided between his sense of duty and his hunger, in a way that manifested itself in his greeting.

"How are ye, Sister Speer and Brother Tucker? Sit down; charmin' meetin' we've had; refreshin' session (Ann Maria, the kettle's billy!)" Don't think I ever believed nothing more spiritual than Brother Bee's discourse; addressed itself to the highest—Ann Maria, then short-cakes will surely barn up you don't turn em—yes, amazin' appeal: 'twas the occasion of the conversion of seven souls. I say, why, now the ham's done we'd better stop, hadn't we? Brother Redesdale, say grace.

At that one of the young men arose, and I looked at him for the first time. Can I describe him? I could tell you that he was not tall, and that he was dark, and that he had black eyes, in each of which seemed to burn a flame, and mobile curled lips, and a cheek that flushed and paled by turns. And then you would know nothing of him. It was a face not to be described, but one that having been seen was never to be forgotten.

and I, fancying it was Ephraim, called, "Come in!" and in walked John Redesdale.

He stood a moment with his hat in his hand, and his own peculiar smile on his lips in a doubtful attitude.

"Are camp-meeting introductions good for anything?" he asked. "May I come in and sit down?"

And I answered, "Certainly, Mr. Redesdale."

Tucker heart never beat when Ephraim Tucker entered my door, but it did then. I never felt the blood rush to my cheeks when he spoke to me, but they flushed at the voice of John Redesdale. All in a moment the room seemed brighter, and life happier, and I wondered why.

He made a short call and went away, and I had no wish to work any more. I sent Maggie to bed and sat down by the window in the moonlight.

The church clock struck the hours one after the other. After eleven the old watchman began to call them; still I sat there looking at the stars. And when, in the gray dawn, I crept up stairs, I hid my face, as though by doing so, I could hide my heart from my own soul.

Ephraim came to see me the next Sunday. We went to church together, and he, rid of his pet, was very pleasant and coaxing. I felt like one in a dream, but I suppose he thought me vexed, for he took no notice of my manner. When we parted he told me he was going to New York for a fortnight. There were drugs to be bought and other business to be attended to, and the doctor, old and stout, loved his ease and had sent him.

"I shall like the trip," he said. "I enjoy New York. If I am ever in business for myself (as I shall be, of course) I will live there. Do you like the city?"

Then he stopped, and took my hand and looked into my eyes. I thought he was going to ask me to be his wife on the spot, but he said nothing. He was very prudent. I believe he was waiting to have a certain sum laid by before he committed himself.

The one feeling in my heart as I went into my little work-room, swept and tidied for the Sabbath, was joy that he had not spoken.

There are years that seem to leave no event in them, and days so full of change that they are like years.

That fortnight during which Ephraim was absent was a little life to me, for every evening brought John Redesdale with him. Sometimes we walked out together, sometimes we only sat a while and chatted. But every day he grew dearer to me, and Ephraim Tucker was only some one I longed to forget.

Whether I was right or wrong I could not judge then. There had been no actual engagement between Ephraim and myself, yet, I knew, thought me bound to him, and my conscience stung me on that score. On the other side, I understood now that I did not love him, and that to marry one, caring for another as I did, would be wicked.

John Redesdale gave me little time to think even had I tried to do so. He wooed with eyes and lips. The great love in his heart (or at least I thought so) would have won me, had I been twice pledged to any other living man.

So before the fortnight came to an end we were walking one day in the woods where we had first met, like the lovers we were, and at a fallen log, near a little stream that ran laughing through the woods, he made me stop.

"Sit down, Clara," he said, "I want to speak to you."

And I knowing well what he was going to say, sat down as he bade.

Then, taking my hands in his, he told me of his hopes and prospects—only those of a poor Methodist minister when he had gained his end. A wandering life; for in that church there is no lifelong dwelling in one pleasant parsonage, but changed at stated times, from one flock to another. And then he asked me if I were willing to share so poor a lot until death should part us. And I, out of my full heart, answered, "Yes." And a great flood of happiness broke over my heart, and I thought earth, heaven and men, angels.

That was on Saturday. On Sunday I dreamed of my new found joy. On Monday Ephraim returned.

He came in the evening. It had been a stormy day and was raining silt, and he was wet from head to foot. The rain dripped from the brim of his hat and from his curly hair. He did not sit down, but stood with one hand on a chair-back, clutching the wood as though it were a thing he hated.

"I want to speak to you alone, Clara Speer," he said. And I sent Maggie away. When we were alone, he said, in a voice not like his own, "What is this I hear about you, Clara?" I made no answer.

"Look at me, Clara Speer," he said, after a pause. "Don't hide your head like a guilty thing. If they have laid, who say you have been taking lover's walks, and giving lover's kisses to John Redesdale, I'll make them swallow their words. If they tell the truth, God keep me from committing murder!"

"We have never exchanged a promise," I said. "We are not engaged. I am not bound to you, and you know it."

"I know," he said in a sort of a hiss, "that it was all the same. Every one in town knows it. You know it, Clara Speer. You are bound to me in honor!"

At first I shrunk and winced; then the truth came to me. I grew brave. I told him how I felt to him, something of how I felt to John; and then I asked him which, as a true woman, I should marry; and while I spoke I pitied him, for my soul, but I knew better than ever that I had never loved him.

He listened to me until I had done. He said no word. The rage was in his face,

but pain was plainer there. I heard a gasping sob, and then the words:

"I wish you had told me you had changed. It is hard to think you never loved me!"

And Ephraim Tucker went out into the stormy night, and the door closed behind him.

My tears fell faster than the drenching rain that night; yet, wihal, I was truly sure that I loved John and had never loved Ephraim.

I did not see him often after that; sometimes not for months; and we never spoke or seemed to notice each other. If people remarked it, it was no strange thing to see engagements broken off; and after a while I became quite happy. Happier than ever, when, at last John Redesdale's studies were over, and he came to preach at the Methodist church in our town, for now we were to be married in a little while, and I should share his lot for life.

The church members were few but respectable—all steady going farmers and mechanics and their families, save one. She was Mrs. Edgar, a widow, and a prettish woman for her age. She had money, and dressed and lived well; but there had always been ill-feeling between her and the rest of the town, for she had been, they said, an actress when a girl, and had what people called bold ways; and to be an actress was, in the eyes of our village, to be but one remove from the arch fiend himself.

Her husband had joined been a Methodist, and she had joined the church also, and sat, Sunday after Sunday, in her gay bonnets and silk dresses far up the middle aisle.

People said that she was more constant in her attendance than ever, after the white haired old minister left, and John Redesdale began to preach, and twenty disagreeable stories were told me by so many people.

I cared not one whit for them all. I knew, or I thought I knew, the man I loved.

Once or twice, it is true, John went to her house to tea; but he went everywhere, and could not refuse her. And when he called on others, why should he not call on Mrs. Edgar also? I was a jealous idiot to think hard of that.

So I laughed at the stories until one morning, coming by a short-cut across the common from Aunt Brown's trimmings store, I saw Ephraim Tucker coming to meet me. I thought he would pass usual, but he paused instead and spoke to me:

"Clara Speer, if you are not in too much haste to hear a word of good advice, stop a while."

"I am always ready for good advice," I answered with a laugh, and stood still.

He took hold of my arm, and put his lips close to my ear.

"Two years ago," he said, "you jilted me for that cutting parson with the mutton-skin. You had your choice, but it's not too late to find out what he is yet. Watch him next time he visits Mrs. Edgar."

I laughed in his face.

"I have heard those ridiculous stories before," I said. "I trust John, as I hope he trusts me."

"You are a woman to be trusted!" he sneered. "No matter. I don't ask you to believe me; trust your own senses. Your standard bit of perfection is to take a Mrs. Edgar on Tuesday. Is there an arbor in her garden and behind the arbor a hedge. If you choose to wait and listen there after dark, you may know whether the stories you hear are true or false."

And he dropped my arm and stalked away, leaving me faint with terror.

I did little work that day. The next, Tuesday, I sat with my hands folded, and asked myself the question, over and over again—"Shall I watch him or not?"

At last I said, "I will go to prove the truth—not because I doubt him."

When night came—a dark night with a moon—I put on my hood and shawl, and crept out like a guilty thing. The way was clear to Mrs. Edgar's house, and I met no one; but when I got there I saw the windows all alight, and shrunk into the shadow. I was ashamed of watching my own true love at Ephraim Tucker's instance. But, for all that, I went around the garden fence until I found the hedge and the summer house, and there I stood and listened, as a prisoner might listen for his sentence, for there were two people in the arbor—a man and a woman.

They were talking in whispers—cooling, tender whispers—and at last one spoke out:

"No, John; I don't believe one half that you say."

It was Mrs. Edgar's voice; but there was more than one John in the world. The man's voice muttered something, and then the woman cried coquishly:

"I young and pretty! Oh, how you flatter!" And there was the sound of a slap—one of those little slaps some women are always bestowing on their masculine friends.

More whispering—words I could not hear, listen as I would, came near, and I had said again and again, "That is no one I know," when it came the words:

"You shan't kiss me! No indeed you shan't Mr. Redesdale! You know it all nonsense for Miss Speer! You keep it all kisses to pretend you like me best. I'll scream if you do—!" And then I heard a romp and a kiss.

An hour after I found myself lying in the dust of the road, where I must have fallen when I faint, and took my breaking heart home again. On the way I vowed that my lips should never speak another word to John Redesdale.

I found little Maggie sleeping like a baby in her attic, and the house all quiet, and lit a lamp in the work-room. The place looked gloomy to me; nothing seemed real. I found a carpet bag, and packed

in it some of my wardrobe. Of other things I made a bundle. I dressed myself for a journey, and put my little hoard, saved for my wedding day in my bosom.

Then I sat down and wrote two notes: one to Maggie, inclosing her wages and giving her the clothes I left behind—the other to my landlady, with the rent; and before the night was gone, or the people of the house awake, and left it far behind me, and was at the station, awaiting the early train for New York.

There, when the excitement was over, and I leaned back wearily in my seat amidst the crowd of strange fellow-passengers, I first began to realize the awful truth, and feel that life was worthless henceforth to me. There are women who would have taken their lives into their own hands, feeling as I felt. I knew I must strive to live while God so willed it; but the striving seemed so hard now, the shortest life so long! I felt ten years older than I had felt the day before; I think I looked it also.

How I lived, where I went, would not interest you. My home was humble, my days were cheerless, but I was too good a workwoman to suffer. I never saw one of my old acquaintance. I never heard the name of the town, save, perhaps, when I read it in the columns of some newspaper.

I knew no one. No one knew me. The people I worked for called me an odd, silent creature; soon the young women called me an old maid. Even on the Sabbath I staid at home, for the treachery of the man I had thought the best in the world, had made me believe all seemingly good people hypocrites.

Lonely, lonely, lonely, so lonely that I thought I should die of pure loneliness for five long weary years.

At last I awoke one Sabbath morning to hear the bells ringing for church, and out of the past came the memory of other Sabbath days. I longed, for the first time, to join the worshippers and bend my knees in prayer among them. So I arose and dressed myself, waiting for no breakfast, and went out into the frosty streets. The clocks were on the stroke of ten, and there was no time to lose, so I chose the nearest church and went in. The crowd was thick already, but as I passed up the aisle a woman whispered, "Koom here, sister," and moved her dress to make way for me.

Then a voice said, "Let us pray," and my face was covered. When I lifted it, the preacher stood in the pulpit ready to read the first hymn.

I was not mad—I was not dreaming, as I thought at first: I was awake and in my senses, yet the face I looked on was the face of John Redesdale, the eyes that mine rested on, his. I knew him in an instant, and he knew me. I saw it in his look—a look that came and passed so quickly that I hardly knew that I had seen him ere it was gone; and I would have left the church had it been possible. But even the aisles were full. I felt I must wait until the crowd dispersed and hide myself in that. But could I hear him preach and find I did.

He stood up, with the bible under his hand, and looked over the church first, then at me, and as his eyes paused there, he took for his text—

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

The sermon opened with remarks upon the vice of slander. By degrees it grew familiar and touched on daily events, in which the truth was forgotten and false accusations flung upon a neighbor or servant. And then in such a way that it seemed to every hearer natural and to the purpose, he began a story—a true one, he said.

He drew the picture of two lovers, friends so dear that their lives were interwoven. He painted a scene of homely happiness, with hopes of future bliss; a girl who trusted, and a youth who thought nothing on earth so precious as his promised wife. And I with my heart beating so furiously that I could hear it, knew that it was of our own happy time he was speaking. And into the earthly paradise a serpent—Slander—crept, unseen, unheard, until one day the lover found his betrothed wife gone, without a sign, without a word or message, and search as he might, could hear no tidings of her.

I saw faces full of interest turned towards the preacher. I know that in others this seemed only an incident related to force the sermon home to the heart of those who heard it; and I know also that, looking across the dense mass of worshippers, the fire in his black eyes burning into mine, John Redesdale was speaking only to me.

Himself the man he pictured, growing old from sorrow in his youth, striving to do his duty, but doing it without joy. Himself the slandered man, for whose sake tears dropped down the wrinkled cheeks of the old Methodist women and filled the eyes of the granddaughters by their sides. I heard how he had grieved in silence, knowing wrong had been done him, but not by whom or how, until a dying woman sent for him, a woman who had been an actress, whose beauty had turned to ghastliness, whose pleasures were vanity and vexation of spirit, but, who on her death-bed, wore rags upon her wan cheeks. And as he went on, I knew he spoke of Mrs. Edgar, and knew for the first time that that which I had listened to—I, who dared to doubt him—was a pre-converted scene acted in frolic, by the woman in India, by Ephraim Tucker to deceive me. Plainer and plainer it grew. I knew how mad I had been. I understood what I had done. And as that strangest sermon ended, I bowed my head and wept remorsefully, yet joyfully.

When I lifted it the worshippers had dispersed and John Redesdale stood beside me. Without a word he gave me his arm, and we went out into the street together. Quietly—for it was noon-day and eyes were upon us—until we left the crowded thoroughfare and were in a narrow, un-

frequented street. Then he paused, and, with his hand on mine, gave a gasping sob.

"I would have believed you—I would have believed you," he said. "Oh Clara, how I have suffered."

"And I also," I whispered. "But you believe me now?"

"And I could only ask forgiveness from my eyes. And we walked on again through the still street, arm in arm.

And in that Sabbath morn life's Sabbath of peace and rest dawned for us, and in its sunlight we have dwelt ever since together.

The Switzerland of America and the Switzerland of Europe.

"Carleton" writes from Zurich to the Boston Journal, as follows:

By the census of 1850 Vermont and New Hampshire contained six hundred and thirty thousand inhabitants, while Switzerland contained two million five hundred and thirty thousand. Of these about five hundred thousand are in the Alpine section, leaving two millions for the territory about as large as the western half of Vermont. How do they live? What is their occupation? Are they progressive or stationary? Is it possible for New England to maintain a population equally dense? These are practical questions, deserving attention, for it has been the limit of agricultural production; that she can only exist by importing bread from the West, and giving manufactured articles in return. The question of climate comes first. New England has hot, short summers and cold winters, with from three to five months of snow on her hills. Switzerland has longer, cooler summers and warmer winters. Here, as I write, on this second day of October, I can look from my window upon the rose in bloom in the garden, and upon the Alps white with snow. No frost as yet has touched with cold fingers the vines upon the surrounding hills; but it is not climate alone which enables the Swiss to produce two crops of grass yearly on their moving lands, but a husbandry such as New England farmers know nothing of. In climate, Switzerland has the advantage, but the hills of Vermont are naturally as fertile as those of this Republic: they are of the same geologic formation—dark gray limestone.

The next question is that of labor, which in Vermont is worth a dollar or a dollar and a quarter a day, while here it ranges from ten to twenty cents. No woman of Vermont wields the hoe all day long by the side of her husband, but here the wife performs quite as much labor in the fields as the head of the family. In a population so dense, every rod of arable land is under cultivation. But I wish that the farmers of New England could have a Swiss plow on exhibition at their agricultural fairs. I know of nothing which could be more attractive. Riding across the country last week, I laid my hands to one of them and saw it in operation. And such a plow! The Swiss plowshares will not be beaten into swords when the Millennium comes round; the reason why will be shortly apparent.

The instrument is of this size: a piece of oak joist, three feet long and three inches square, forms the foot: one end of the timber is scarfed and upon the scarf a thin piece of iron is nailed, which forms the point of the plow. Two uprights, framed into the foot, hold the beam; a straight board, without iron, without a line of curvature, projecting from one of the uprights, turns the furrow, while two handles complete the instrument, which simply scratches the ground. I measured the furrow, which was about five inches wide and three deep! I noticed in one field where the soil was hard that men and women followed the plow with hoes to deepen the furrow! I dare say that your readers will be astonished to learn that the largest part of the land is never trenched even by this rude instrument, but is turned solely by a hoe.

There are thousands of acres which might be plowed, which are as free from stone and as easy of cultivation as the magnificent meadow lands of the Connecticut, but which are dug over every season by men and women, with great clumsy tools, which contain more weight of metal than the plows!

There is a remarkable discrepancy in the industry and mechanics of Switzerland, in railroad engineering, in the construction of locomotives, in architecture, in the manufacture of watches they are unsurpassed; but in mill machinery, in agricultural implements, carriages, in labor-saving machines, they are away back in the 15th century.

Why do you not plow your land instead of digging it over? I asked of one of the people.

"Oh, labor is very cheap," was his reply.

The multitude have no conception of the true principle which underlies economy—that mind is more powerful than muscle. So ignorant are they of this principle that they use the hoe instead of the plow; themselves instead of horses. They transport everything possible on their backs instead of using carts. Their wheeled vehicles are mainly handcars.

But in the utilizing of manures and of fertilizers New England men can come here and take lessons. These hills and valleys of western Switzerland are not green the year around, because the winters are milder than at Boston, not because they are naturally more fertile, but because fertilizers are saved instead of wasted, and because they are applied in the best manner to the growing crop. I firmly believe that if the husbandry of New England was equal to that of Switzerland in the matter of saving and applying fertilizers that the state of Vermont might sustain a population of millions of inhabitants.

Anecdotes of Lincoln.

From Carpenter's "Six Months in the White House." HOW HE BORE ABUSE.

The president was once speaking of an attack made on him by the committee on the conduct of the war, for a certain alleged blunder, or something worse, in the southwest—the matter involved being one which had fallen directly upon the observation of the officer to whom he was talking, who possessed official evidence completely upsetting all the conclusions of the committee. "Might it not be well for me," queried the officer, "to set this matter right in a letter to some paper, stating the facts as they actually transpired?" "Oh, no," replied the president, "at least not now. If I were to try to read, much less answer all the attacks made on me, this snow might as well be closed for any other business. I do the very best I know how—the very best I can; and I mean to keep me out until the end. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference."

"IT IS THE PEOPLE'S BUSINESS." In August, 1864, the prospects of the Union party, in reference to the presidential election, became very gloomy. A friend, the private secretary of one of the cabinet ministers, who spent a few days in New York at this juncture, returned to Washington with so discouraging an account of the political situation, that after hearing it the secretary told him to go to the White house and repeat it to the president. My friend said that he found Mr. Lincoln alone, looking more than usually sad and careworn. Upon hearing the statement he walked two or three times in silence. Returning, he said with grim earnestness of tone and manner: "Well, I cannot run the political machine; I have enough on my hands without that. It is the people's business—the election is in their hands. If they turn their backs to the fire, and get scorched in the rear, they'll find they have got to sit on the blister!"

"LET 'EM WHIGGLE." Upon the appearance of what was known as the "Wade and Davis manifesto," subsequent to his renomination, an intimate friend and supporter, who was very indignant that such a document should have been set forth just previous to the presidential election, took occasion to animadvert very severely upon the course that prompted it. "It is not worth fretting about," said the president; "it reminds me of an old acquaintance, who, having a son of scientific turn bought him a microscope. The boy went around experimenting with his glass upon everything that came in his way. One day, at the dinner table, his father took up a piece of cheese. 'Don't eat that, father,' said the boy; 'it is full of wrigglers.' 'My son,' replied the old gentleman, 'taking at the same time a huge bite, 'let 'em wriggle, I can stand it if they can.'"

"DRAW IT DOWN!" Among the numerous delegations which thronged Washington in the early part of the war was one from New York, which urged very strenuously the sending of a fleet to the southern cities—Charleston, Mobile and Savannah—with the object of drawing off the rebel army from Washington. Mr. Lincoln said the project reminded him of the case of a girl in New Salem, who was greatly troubled with a singing in her head. Various remedies were suggested by the neighbors, but nothing tried afforded any relief. At last a man came along—a common sense sort of a man, who was asked to prescribe for the difficulty. After due inquiry and examination, he said the cure was simple. "What is it?" was the anxious question. "Make a plaster of psalm-tunes and apply it to her feet, and draw the singing down," was the rejoinder.

HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO RETALIATE. There are not found wanting assertions that he showed a criminal indifference to the sufferings of our prisoners at Libby, Andersonville and other places; and in proof of this it is stated that there is no record of his ever alluding to the subject in any of his public addresses or messages. The questions involved in the suspension of the exchange of prisoners are difficult of decision. Whoever was the cause of this, certainly has a fearful responsibility. That it was the president's fault, I do not believe. When the reports in an authentic form first reached Washington, of the sufferings of the Union prisoners, I know he was greatly excited and overcome by it. He was told that justice demanded a stern retaliation. He said to his friend, Mr. Odell, with the deepest emotion: "I can never, never starve men like that! Whatever others may say or do, I never can and never will, be accu-