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# The Bradford Reporter.

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Mr. Valencia turned round and faced the Major; his countenance stern, his lips drawn in. "Pardon me, Major Gore, but I would prefer to speak on some other subject. That is a petrel."

"I beg your pardon, sir; it is as well to be correct. Mrs. Clayton, not Miss Gore." "I beg your pardon, sir," replied the captain. "I had understood you were the Major's daughter."

"What do you want Simms?" "If you please, ma'am, Miss Auta is waiting to know which of the two berths you would be pleased to choose?"

"Which is the most comfortable?" "I think that one; it seems more airy than this."

"I'll take it, then," said Mrs. Clayton. "And the younger lady meekly began to put her own things upon the other."

"For a few days there was no great approach to intimacy. Mr. Valencia holding himself aloof. He was deferred to in every way, the new passengers held; and perhaps if there was one thing held in more reverence on board than Mr. Valencia himself it was Mr. Valencia's ebony chest that he kept secluded in his cabin, and before which a handsome curtain was generally drawn."

"The Gores had left their only son in a grave in Madeira, whither they had gone a year before, hoping to prolong his life. So much depended on it. Had he lived but two months longer he would have come into a large fortune, and could have willed it to his family. He died, and it went from them; and the Major was returning to England a bitterly disappointed man; returning to poverty and debt, and all sorts of humiliations, for he had fully counted on this coming money for years, and had lived accordingly."

"It was the elder-looking of the two young ladies whose descent he thus interrupted. She turned her imperious handsome face upon the boy, and her dark eyes flashed with the haughty questions, just as plainly as her tongue."

"The Don? Who is the Don? What do you mean, boy?" "That's him," said the boy, pointing to a distant part of the deck. "He is as rich as all the mines of Brazil knocked into one, and he's as good as master of the ship, for he's the law. If he had nothing else but his wealth in his cabin he'd be richer than he could count, for it's full of gold and diamonds."

"Beautiful gems that belonged to his wife. They were to have been her child's but the little lady died too. When Mr. Valencia was packing them in the chest he said he had half a mind to leave them behind, so little does he care for them. Only there were no relatives to leave them to."

"Nothing less than a Don—whatever that important title may imply—would travel with a chest of jewels such as yours," interposed Geraldine Clayton in a tone between jest and earnest; as she moved to his place at the ship's side, and looked at the bird, the harbinger of storm.

"Who told you I travelled with a chest of jewels, Mrs. Clayton?" "Who told me? Oh, it's the talk of the ship. That large, beautiful ebony chest, you know, in your cabin."

"Had his face turned pale? or was it only Mrs. Clayton's fancy, as she closely watched him. It changed; and the next moment sarcasm was pervading its every line."

"Joking apart, though, Mr. Valencia," she persisted, "does the chest contain jewels?" "It does. Valuable jewels."

"And what shall you do with so many?" "Bestow them on my wife when I marry again," he replied, looking full into her handsome face.

"Had he divined her secret thoughts? For once Mrs. Clayton showed that she was anxious; she turned to her cousin, speaking tartly. "Auta, how neglectful you are! Poor mamma keeps her cabin, and you sit here, never looking after her!"

"Auta Gore, meek as ever, and lovely in her meekness, was hastening away, when Mr. Valencia offered his arm. She blushed as she took it."

"Your cousin is curious as to my jewels, Miss Gore. It does seem strange, I suppose, for a single man to possess so many. They were my wife's. Had my child lived, they would have been hers; but she likewise died. My wife had a passion for costly gems. Many of them were heirlooms."

"The ship did arrive in port, and safely, in spite of the prognostics of the sailors; and the passengers parted at Southampton, only to meet again early in December, for Mr. Valencia had given a cordial invitation to the Major and his family to meet him in his paternal home in Norfolk—his now—and spend a long Christmas with him. And they arrived early in December, nothing left, finding a home replete with every convenience, every luxury, and a warm welcome from Mr. Valencia, who in his turn had been warmly welcomed by old friends around."

"It was an old-fashioned house, full of winding passages, in which Mrs. Clayton and Auta Gore lost themselves perpetually."

"This is a perfect home!" cried the Major, in a rapture of admiration. "You have given me every thing that I could wish for, and I am sure you will be happy and contented."

"Not quite perfect yet," dissented Mr. Valencia. "It wants one thing more, Major, which I suppose I shall have to give it—a mistress."

"Shall you add that?" inquired the Major, his eye resting, perhaps unconsciously, on his daughter.

"I hope so. The happiness denied me in my first wife may be mine in the second. What do you think, Miss Auta?"

"Geraldine colored so vividly at the unexpected question, that she was glad to escape it, and very self-consciously, said Mrs. Clayton, full of contemptuous pity, said Auta was growing more absurdly shy every day."

"The days went on for all parties in a sort of Elysium. Major and Mrs. Gore had never been so luxuriously off in their lives; Geraldine was indulging blissful visions, their whole basis, gold; and Auta was in the mazy depths of a first love-dream, whose idol was George Valencia. Her heart had gone out to him those days when they were on the broad sea, when he had talked to her in low tones, and she was his body, and gazed into the depths of her blue eyes."

"And the ebony chest? It was in Mr. Valencia's private rooms in the west wing of the house, its contents (as was understood) as yet undisturbed. Geraldine Clayton's desire to see those priceless jewels, so shortly, as she hoped, to be hers, was growing irresistible, fevering her spirit with its excitement. Why could he not show them to her? The question began to torment her more than was good for her equanimity, and it gave rise to thoughts justifiable, but, let us hope that accepted alone led to the step she was finally took. On Christmas Eve they were sitting out of door, when Mr. Valencia in taking something from his pocket, let fall a key, with a small silver chain attached to it. He did not perceive the loss, and Mrs. Clayton stealthily secured it. It was one of the mildest days ever known at that season, the sun shining, the air balmy as in spring, the violets and primroses raising their modest heads. Nothing of the unusual beauty saw Geraldine Clayton; that key, lying unsuspected in her hand, was obscuring her vision physically, and she had her eye fastened on it as the key of the chest, and she had resolved to take a sly peep for herself, like Bluebeard's wife."

"I do not understand it any more than you do, Major. I do know that this is the happiest hour of my life, for your niece has promised to become my wife; but what it is Mrs. Clayton would accuse me of I really don't know."

"She can never be your wife," retorted Mrs. Clayton. "You marry again! Would you take a second wife, to murder her as you did your first?"

"Murder my first wife!" he quietly rejoined. "Thank you, I was not aware that I had done anything of the sort."

"You know you did," came the panting answer. "You know that you have got her concealed in that ebony chest; that you had her in it on board while falsely pretending it was filled with jewels. The sailors knew what was in the chest, and nearly broke out in a mutiny; they said it brought a curse on the ship. I accuse you, George Valencia, though you have escaped accusation from others. I have seen the chest and its horrible burden; I have touched it—the cold dead face of her you keep concealed there."

"The bewilderment in Mr. Valencia's countenance gave place to a sudden smile of light, as if the puzzle had cleared itself. "We will go and see this dead face, if you please, Major, all of us. Mrs. Clayton, I must particularly request your company. It will not alarm you, believe me, Mrs. Gore. Auta, my dearest, do not tremble so; I will take care of you."

"It lay in the ebony chest, exposed at once to their view—calm, peaceful, infinitely pretty. Not the dead face of a once living woman, but the waxwork model of a lovely child, its dark eyes wide open, and a rose-red color on its smooth cheeks."

"When my child died, my little Auta, who was more precious to me than anything I have yet possessed on earth—I was fond and foolish enough to have a wax model taken of her," said Mr. Valencia, in a low tone. "I brought it home in my treasure chest. As you may perceive, I have not yet disturbed it. Mrs. Clayton; she died peacefully in her bed, surrounded by servants and friends, and she lies buried in Brazil. May I be allowed to inquire, madam, what can have given rise in your mind to so extraordinary a delusion?"

"Ah, they were soon to know. The culprit was Vincent. The explanation he had given to Mrs. Clayton on board the South Star, was the simple truth, though not quite all the truth. In his propensity for joking—and perhaps really wishing to guard the chest from sacrilege—he had whispered the foolish invention (of the body, not the ashes, and hinting at foul play) to the sailors, as the ship sailed out of port at Rio Janeiro; hence the disaffection and fear that arose among them—Mr. Vincent himself being perfectly aware of the state of things, but enjoying the joke too greatly to contradict it."

"Geraldine Clayton listened to the man's shamefaced explanation to his master, and rather wished the boarded floor would give way and let her in. "And those were jewels, the parcels lying in the chest! And as Mr. Valencia took them out, parure after parure, and tried their glittering beauty upon the shrinking, timid, happy girl, so soon to be his wife, she—that other one—had to stand and bear it."

## Selected Poetry.

### GOING HOME.

He stands in the door of his cottage—  
Him with the silver hair—  
Thinking of youth's lost summer,  
When life seemed bright and fair.  
The trees are folding their branches  
Around that gray old roof,  
And the sunbeam merrily mingles  
Its gold with their sombre roof.

He thinks as he stands in the doorway,  
Of a sweet and pure young life  
That he had fondly cherished,  
His darling, trusting wife;  
As he won her in her girlhood,  
And paired her beauty rare;  
And her silver laughter cheered him  
When his soul was racked with care.

He thinks of the angels at midnight,  
Staring o'er the threshold stone,  
Taking his treasure from him,  
And leaving him all alone;  
He thinks of the graceful willow  
That waves above her form;  
And wonders why he lingers,  
Since the loved one is now gone.

Twilight is fast approaching,  
And closed is the cottage door;  
He with the locks of silver,  
Wills and in its shade no more.  
Like golden drops of music,  
Like the echo of silver bells,  
Through the trees the wind's low murmur  
A tale of sadness tells.

Again in the watches of midnight,  
O'er that threshold stone,  
His Angel bent with a message  
To hear the old man's tone—  
Home, where his bride is waiting;  
Home, to that beautiful clime,  
Where love shall outlive e'en time.

## Selected Tale.

### THE CHEST WITH THE SILVER MOUNTINGS.

She was sailing out of Madeira, the good ship South Star, a fine, trim British vessel, built more for cargo than for passengers, but carrying the latter when she could get them. On her way home from Brazil she had encountered a succession of bad weather, and had put into Madeira for repairs and provisions. Some of the crew quitted her there, and whippers went about that they were afraid of her. Two passengers only had come in her from Rio de Janeiro, a gentleman and his servant. At Madeira she took on board a Major Gore, his wife, two elegant young ladies, and their maid servant, all in mourning. The Major's means were straitened, and the moderate charges of the sailing vessel, as compared with the passage-money of the regular packets, had been the inducement to choose the South Star. They had come on board at the last moment and the usual confusion prevailed.

"Not down there, please; that's the state cabin, and it belongs to the Don," cried a young boy, in a sort of uniform, whose duty seemed to be to show himself in all parts of the ship at once. "The Don doesn't choose for anybody to go into it."

"It was the elder-looking of the two young ladies whose descent he thus interrupted. She turned her imperious handsome face upon the boy, and her dark eyes flashed with the haughty questions, just as plainly as her tongue."

"The Don? Who is the Don? What do you mean, boy?" "That's him," said the boy, pointing to a distant part of the deck. "He is as rich as all the mines of Brazil knocked into one, and he's as good as master of the ship, for he's the law. If he had nothing else but his wealth in his cabin he'd be richer than he could count, for it's full of gold and diamonds."

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## THE ONE SPOT.

One single spot on the fair face of a sheet of the best letter-paper will cause its rejection when the manufacturer asserts it for sale. In obtaining recruits for the army, a single blemish in the eye, a little defect in hearing, the loss of a finger or toe, the slightest limp or halt in the gait, is the one fatal spot which causes rejection, however perfect the health in other respects. A faultless specimen of many vigor offers himself for examination, for the purpose of obtaining an insurance on his life, but at the very first trial of the pulse under the surgeon's finger, the certificate is peremptorily denied, because there is a fatal heart disease lurking under that fair exterior. Here is a man who for a lifetime has had uniform good health; never dreamed but that he was perfectly well; but noticed for the first time, an hour before, a little white pimple about the month, surrounded with several red ones giving a dull hurring, causing, however, not the slightest apprehension; but meeting the family physician accidentally on the street, he inquires very carelessly: "What is it?" On a close inspection, the experienced practitioner detects the disease, and a malignant tubercle, which he knows will rapidly spread with a discoloration, and end in death within twenty-four hours! as in the case of Miss M. A. B.—last week; of Mr. Henfield, six months ago; and of Mr. Casey, awhile before that, all of Brooklyn.

These are spots physical and fatal, all character, health, and life itself. I know a young wife, first at Rockaway, who could boast of family, fortune, education, health, and great personal beauty; fascinating in her intercourse with society, and a well-versed acquaintance with all the arts which were impossible for her neighbors not to love her with their whole hearts. But there was one spot, only one; that not known, even to her husband; she would take opium, and died of its over-use at 28. I have been delighted by the hour in listening to the recitations and reading the manuscript poetry of Mrs. L., of Kentucky. Neither beautiful nor ugly, but the spoiled and educated child of a rich father. She had a genius and a power which won all hearts, purely. One morning I learned she was dying, although in perfect health the day before. At intervals of a year, the demon of a drunken debauch came over her. It killed her husband, one of nature's noblemen. The one spot! I knew a wife, living yet I think, a model of personal purity, of domestic industry, system, order and thoroughness. A slave to the care of her family of beautiful beautiful children, there was no sacrifice, no self-denial which she was not ever ready to make or practice for their comfort. Her husband, as the world goes, was all that could be desired, as industry, system, temperance, regularity, and order. It ought to have been a supremely happy family. It was wretched. The one spot was her insufferable ill nature. It would be untrue to say she seldom came to the table without some expression of dissatisfaction. In twenty-six successive weeks, during which I daily sat at the same table, she never failed once to emit some venom either against the children, the servants, the food, or the weather, or something else. The whole house was kept in a turmoil; no single day ever passed without an angry word, and she was driven to her room in two years; thence to the gutter; her daughters married for a home, and she went to an asylum in her old age. There are many young men with whom you cannot help being pleased, frank, courteous, magnanimous, and kind; they always meet you with a smile and a welcome, and you know it is cordial and sincere. On inquiry, they "drink." The one spot! It blasts all things else. The daughter is beautiful, amiable, and courteous; in all she says or does there is nothing to hang an adverse criticism upon. At the moment she passes from her father's door, dressed in fitful taste, go to her room, and every article it contains has impressed upon it the one spot of an incorrigible sloven.

Let the reader this moment inquire, What spot have I? and begin on the instant to wash it out at any and every sacrifice, for they only who are admitted to the mansions of the blessed are those "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."—Hall's Journal of Health.

## FUN, FACTS AND FACETIÆ.

A RICHMOND paper says matrimony is as prevalent as cholera, and spreading with the same rapidity, and seems to be twice as contagious.

A MICHIGAN soldier, arrested for stealing a goose, said he found the bird hissing at the American flag and arrested him for treason.

A BURLING was once frightened out of his scheme of robbery by the sweet simplicity of a solitary spinster, who, putting her night-capped head out of the window, exclaimed: "Go away! ain't you ashamed?"

Mrs. GORDON is opposed to gambling. She calls it a Red Sea, like that of old, to destroy Faro and all his hosts.

The sugar wedding, thirty days after marriage, is the newest thing out.

ONE OF THE MAXIMS OF BAKIN'S.—When does a baker's wife become one of the fixtures of his shop?—When she is a little-lovin' (a little oven).

A BARBER in England during the prevalence of the cholera, expressed the opinion to a customer on which he was operating, that after all cholera was in the hair. "Then, you ought to be very careful what brushes you use." "Oh, sir," replied the barber, laughing, "I didn't mean the hair of the head, but the hair of the atmosphere."

"Why, Bill, what is the matter with you? You look down in the mouth." "Well, Pete, I guess if you had been through what I have you'd look so, too." "What's the matter?" "You know Sarah Salveys, don't you, Pete?" "Yes, what?" "I discarded her last night." "You did? What?" "Well, I tell you. She said she wouldn't marry me, and I'd discard any gal that would treat me in that sort of way."

A BOY'S idea of having a tooth drawn may be summed up as follows. The doctor hitched fast to one, pulled his best, and just before it killed me the tooth came out.

A GOOD deacon making an official visit to a dying neighbor, who was a very unpopular man, put the usual question: "Are you willing to go my friend?" "O, yes," said the dying man, "I am glad of that," said the deacon, "for all the neighbors are willing."

A WRITER beautifully remarks that a man's mother is the representative of his Maker. Misfortune and mere crime set no barriers between him and her son. "What a noble lot," says a man who has one friend on earth who will not desert him when he is needy. Her affection flows from a pure fountain, and ceases only at the ocean of eternity.

THOUGHT IT WAS A CONSUMPTION.—The last effusion of the renowned Artemus, we have not yet seen in print. It is said that A. W., being at one of the New York churches, recently edited the audience by his very unexpected reply to the preacher's text, which was, "How are the mighty fallen?" After a short pause, Artemus looked up inquiringly, and said meekly, "I'll give it up."

WHAT IS the use of sighing and weeping as we float down the stream of time? Why make the voyage of life a weary voyage?

IF you were obliged to swallow a man whom you would prefer to swallow? A little London porter.

THE Russian telegraph through Siberia will be economical on account of the number of Poles on the ground.

ADAM'S wife was called Eve because when she appeared, man's day of happiness was drawing to a close.